

UNIVERSITE NATIONALE DU RWANDA
FACULTÉ DES LETTRES

**RWANDAN TEACHERS AND THE COMMUNICATIVE
APPROACH TO THE TEACHING OF
ENGLISH**

by
Cyriaque NGOBOKA

Mémoire présenté en vue de l'obtention du
grade de Licencié ès Lettres, Département
ANGLAIS.

Director : Christopher TINGLEY

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To the memory of my parents and kin now resting
eternally,

To you my wife Marie-Thérèse MUKAVIRANGA whose
love spurred my efforts.

To you my son, heir of my name.

P R E F A C E
=====

So many have contributed generously to the completion of this project. To them all I offer my thanks with a satisfied handshake. I particularly think of Kagabo, Kayisire, Gatwabuyenge, Mbonigaba and Nsabimana.

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My thanks are extended to the professors of the U.N.R. English Department whose lectures not only oriented my research but also were considerable resources for it.

I do not forget to offer a smile to my two year classmates. The kind of solidarity we shared will never go to waste. The same smile is addressed to Miss Blandine Karwera who kindly busied herself to the typewriting of the manuscript.

N.C.

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INTRODUCTION

According to Dulay , Furt and Krashen, "Teaching a second language means creating for students a part or all of their new language environment. The entire responsibility for creating the language environment falls on the teacher who is teaching a language that is not used in the community."¹ This quotation implies that the teacher, placed in such a foreign language setting as the latter, must be the model for his students and, the provider of all the environment which is indispensable for language acquisition, and all the amount of language to be learned. To be these things, he would possess, as strevens notes, "personal qualities, technical abilities and professional understanding."² By "professional understanding", Strevens means methodological skills.

As far as Rwandan teachers of English are concerned, my interest has been aroused by the common complaint about the teachers' insufficient command of English ; a subject which, however, they are obliged to teach. This insufficient command of English on the part of Rwandan teachers is the outcome of a number of reasons summarized below.

The first reason is the status of English as a foreign language that came in after French, which can also be considered as a foreign

language, though it has acquired, owing to its use in administration, the status of official language. English is not given the same privileges as French though both are foreign languages vis-à-vis Kinyarwanda. French, however, has become an official language, and it is used for many purposes within the country, for instance as a medium of instruction, as well as being a language for world interaction, since a knowledge of it has never failed to pave the way to better relationships between Rwanda and other French-speaking countries. English, nevertheless, should serve some of the same purposes ; if not as a medium of instruction, at least as a language for interaction between Rwanda and Anglophone Africa on one hand, and the larger English-speaking world on the other.

The second reason is the way English was taught in Rwanda in the earliest days. Indeed, the "grammar-translation" method that by no means provided the ability to speak the new language and the poor quality of the teaching materials in use in the 1960's and even nowadays in some schools (for example Britain ; Easy Road ; Anglais I, II, III ; Tales from Britain) did not take account of the most important goal of teaching a modern language such as English, that is, to lead the student to the acquisition of " communicative ability."³ As Fatake says in his monograph The Major Types of English Lessons actually given at the T.C., English was taught like Latin or

Greek. That is, emphasis was put on translation and on learning by understanding the rules of language.⁴

Needless to say, this method did not pay any attention to the learner's need for being capable of communication through the new language.

The last reason, but a key point in my thesis, is the unfavourable conditions in which the teachers have been trained, and in which learners continue to be placed today. This reason is relevant to the possibility of effective application of the "communicative Approach" and to the possibility of its being handled by Rwandan-trained teachers. The need for a rich language environment, as required by the new approach, meant to make up for the learners' relatively low proficiency in English as a foreign language, has been noted by Crymes : "Students need exposure to a rich language environment, rich in both the amount and variety of meaningful language and in opportunities for using English as a vehicle for expressing their thoughts and ideas."⁵

In the Rwandan situation, especially in secondary schools, there is no rich language environment outside the classroom likely to give the learner opportunities for language use. The homogeneity of the peer group with which he shares ease in both Kinyarwanda and French means that he has no need to communicate in English. Even the teachers who would be able to speak

English with him are seldom met outside the class. The teachers themselves seldom use English in daily relationships because there is sometimes only one teacher of English in a school or, if there are more, they would sound pedantic or even unsociable if they used a language which the society around them does not understand. The lack of natural exposure to the language in class or outside limits the learner's motivation to his immediate intellectual satisfaction or to getting a good grade. This increases his difficulty with oral production.

All the above reasons brought together, and the actual attempt to find a solution, that is, to improve methodology and motivation⁶, have given birth to the subject of my mémoire : "Rwandan teachers and the Communicative Approach to the Teaching of English." It falls into a number of parts which have been chosen for their close relationship to the teaching of English as a modern language, and, therefore, a language for communication with English speakers, who are known to be politically, economically, commercially, socially, scientifically and culturally important, likely to enhance Rwandan access to modern scientific, technological and economic advances.

The first part, "The Status and Role of English in Rwanda", will provide a background insight as regards the failure of the teaching of English as a tool for communication, this being provided through a historical survey of teaching methods

applied in the last two decades and a study of the background of Rwandan teachers who were appointed to teach English in Secondary Schools to replace the expatriates, mainly Belgians, who taught it as a makeweight subject like History, Geography and so on. In fact, the colonial era did not favour English because, presumably, French was the sole medium used for interaction among the colonizers and the Rwandan educated elite on one hand, and between the same elite on the other.

The situation lasted until the time when graduates from the "Université Nationale du Rwanda" (U.N.R.) and the "Institut pédagogique National" (I.P.N.) were sent to teach English at secondary school. The latter tried new methods such as the "audio-lingual" approach but since the textbooks which had been used in the 1960's were still in use, none of the existing methods was applied alone but rather, the grammar-translation method and the 'audio-lingual' overlapped. This was confirmed by some teachers of English I consulted.⁷ Communication, therefore, was still going uncared for and for this reason, a new approach, the "communicative Approach" captures my attention.

The new approach constitutes the content of the second part of this work. The 'definition of terms' will largely be taken from Littlewood's Communicative Language Teaching, An Introduction. Stating the purpose of his book in the introduction, he says : "The purpose of this book is practical : to help teachers broaden their repertoire of techniques, so that they can enable learners to communicate more effectively in a foreign language."⁸ When he defines

"Communicative ability" he states that "since the relationship between forms and functions is variable, and cannot be definitely predicted outside specific situations, the learner must also be given opportunities to develop 'strategies' for interpreting language in actual use." This bears very much relevance to the interest of the new approach I advocate in Rwandan secondary schools, because the learner must not only master the language forms but also be able to use them with appropriateness and accuracy in communication. This part will be theoretical, being concerned with new theories of modern language teaching and learning, and their interest for foreign learners. To the definition of terms, I will add a specification of the type of material which may claim to be communicative in the teaching and learning process.

After the assessment of the importance of the 'communicative Approach', the third part will consider the present use of the communicative approach by Rwandan teachers and the last will consider future possibilities. These last two parts make up a tentative examination of the prospects for the improvement of the teaching / learning process in the field of English and the subsequent implications for teacher training. The 'Réforme Scolaire' ('School Reform')⁹ that has increased the time available for English teaching at secondary school breeds hope for a bright future for the learning of English, but problems remain as regards the teacher training programme for the success of teaching English as communication. Rwandan-trained teachers do indeed efficiently carry out the teaching of grammatical items, but fail to fit them in their appropriate context

of use. The reason simply lies in their limited practice of English during their secondary school training and the academic aspect of the language they studied at tertiary level. The 'bookish' English they are used to and the writing skills they have developed do not make them adequate teachers of English for communicative purposes since they themselves have never been prepared in such an area. The 'formal exposure' they have received leads them to cling too much to the textbooks at hand, to avoid devising new communicative teaching materials, a task for which they are not equipped.

Evidence for this statement can be found in the Rwandan government's constant appeal to the American Embassy as well as to the British Government to supply Rwandan teachers of English with "bourses de stage", so that they can benefit from a stay in an English-speaking country to improve their practical language skills. This ties in with the conclusion I will draw from my study, namely that there is nothing we can presently do to create a rich language environment unless we rely on well-trained teachers, competent in both practical language skills and methodology, to make communicative language teaching and learning come into effect in Rwandan secondary schools. On the student's part, his need for communicative skills in the language he is learning should be focussed through the whole learning process. This need has been felt by the English section of the Bureau Pédagogique de l'Enseignement Secondaire (B.P.E.S.) and it has somewhat been taken into consideration in the sample manuals : Anglais 2ème and Anglais 3ème.

(already prepared), and Anglais 4ème (to appear shortly). Unfortunately, the underlying theory is the audio-oral method which assumes the unconscious acquisition of communicative ability through intensive mechanical drilling and constant reinforcement, but does not provide natural exposure to language.

Notes

1. See Dulay H., Burt M., and Krashen S., Language Two, P.14.
2. See Strevens, Peter, New Orientations in the Teaching of English, pp.70-71.
3. Communicative ability is defined by Littlewood, William, Communicative Language Teaching, pp.1-7.
4. Fatake S., The Major Types of English Lessons actually given at the T.C., P.5.
5. Crymes, Ruth, "The Need for a Language Rich Environment." English Teaching Forum, pp.35-38.
6. Mukantanzwa A.Boily, Teaching English Through a Topic of Social Utility in Rwanda, p.4.
7. Ngomanzungu P.Celestin, Mapendano Baabo, Miss Moira Lewis, Karangwa Epaphrodite, Bertin (I do not remember his name). The informants in question were Rwandan teachers of English at Nyundo and Butare.
8. Littlewood W., op.cit., p.vii.
9. see Chapter IV.

C H A P T E R O N E

THE STATUS AND ROLE OF ENGLISH IN RWANDA.

1.0. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.

English as a foreign language was introduced into Rwandan secondary schools by the Belgian colonizers around 1960-1961 and was taught as a third language after French and Flemish. In 1961-1962, it replaced Flemish, which was suppressed. The decision to teach English stemmed first from its international standing, and second from the necessity for Rwanda to develop commercial bonds with English-speaking East Africa, through which most Rwandan imports and exports pass¹. Nevertheless, the Belgian administration's attitude towards English was rather unfavourable. It wanted educated Rwandan people to concentrate on French, so as to ensure effective communication between the colonizers and the Rwandans, and English was merely introduced to fill in the gaps in the school program, which was similar to the Belgians' home school program.

It is therefore obvious that the whole school program was sponsored by Belgians who did not view English as a necessity in Rwanda. This situation lingered on in the post-independence period. Indeed, English in the school system suffered a great setback, because Rwanda was still under the influence of Belgium, which imposed itself upon the new-born state as its tutor

until 1975. Most English teachers, as Nsabimana notes, were Belgians who were not really proficient in the language. They had learnt it either at school, or during the Second World War, or during a stay in an English-speaking country. Only a few were native speakers, mainly British and American missionaries.²

Until recently, English was considered as a makeweight in the languages program schedule, after French, which was regarded as a second language, and Latin and Greek, classical languages meant to make the learners 'classical scholars'. In fact, of the two modern languages, French and English, French was given much the greater importance, since it was the colonizers' mother tongue, whereas English was placed among secondary subjects such as History and Geography in almost all secondary schools. It was essentially learned through the understanding of rules and the reading and translation of literary extracts. No oral practice was allowed to the learners and the prescriptive method used by untrained teachers deprived the learners of the ability to speak English. This ability was all the more hampered by the students' lack of motivation, for they were geared to the colonial government's negative attitude towards English. The colonial government had the firm intention to replace Rwandan culture with its own. The ability to use French, then, was indispensable to acquire prestige and to have better jobs in the then colonial society. This is reflected in one of the Impala Orchestra's songs which says : "Hambere abantu bigishilizwaga gufasha ubutegetsu two mu gihe cya gikolonize" ("A long time ago, people were taught in order

to help the colonial administration"). There was no better job than serving in the administration. English played absolutely no role in the colonial administration and was thus not considered worth learning.

This situation underlies the lack of a clearly defined English teaching program from the early 1960's until 1975. Policy makers, as Barugahare notes, decided that English should be taught, but did not take into consideration all the requirements relevant to such a decision. These requirements are necessary for proper implementation : teacher-training in English, the development of materials and the establishing of a teaching program that includes the stating of goals.³

There were, therefore, neither qualified teachers, nor appropriate materials, nor a standardized, effective program. As said earlier, the majority of the early English teachers in Rwanda were untrained people who had neither professional skills nor a good command of the language they were appointed to teach. A brief stay in an English-speaking country and some hours of English courses given to Belgians in order to communicate with American and British soldiers during World War II did not provide enough language skills to become English teachers.

In addition to the teachers' inadequacy, there was no standard English-teaching program. Each teacher had to devise his own program, despite his virtual inability to do so. Besides, the time devoted to English teaching

varied from two to three hours a week, which was insufficient to ensure proficient learning of a language, and the then available approach, namely the 'grammar translation' approach, could not favour the learners' communicative competence. The textbooks used during that period were helpful neither to the teacher nor to the student. They led the latter to think of English as an abstract subject, merely a source of immediate intellectual satisfaction or of obtaining a good grade.

Books like Britain by Gijssels and Lievens and Anglais by Delree, De paepe and Gijssels are very far from being efficient with regard to the learners' need for communicative skills. To support this statement, an evaluation of one sample of these textbooks will be presented in the historical survey of methods which will come after the following discussion of the status and role of English in Rwanda.

1.1. THE STATUS OF ENGLISH IN RWANDA.

The place occupied by English vis-à-vis other languages in Rwanda has been investigated by certain graduates of the English Department at the National University of Rwanda (U.N.R.).⁴ According to their findings and to my personal research, English occupies the third place after Kinyarwanda and French, ranking before Swahili, which has recently been included in the language-learning schedule. Kinyarwanda and French have a prestigious position in Rwandan society. Kinyarwanda plays so predominant a role as a national

and official language that other languages are hardly used by most people. It is the main language of social, cultural, political and economic interactions among Rwandans. Rwanda can even, for practical purposes, be classified among linguistically homogeneous states owing to its unity of first language. From West to East and North to South, there is a mutual intelligibility. Kinyarwanda functions in interpersonal relationships through both the oral and the written channel. It remains the language of informal and private situations, and also of much formal communication. As a vehicle of the Rwandan socio-cultural heritage, it remains the most indispensable factor in the Rwandan people's unity. Therefore, it is a symbol of national identity and cannot be removed for any other language to take its place. On the domestic level, then, there is no perceived need for English, which finds no domain of use with regard to daily relationships.

In addition to Kinyarwanda, there is French, which has become a second language in Rwanda in the narrow sense of the term. Indeed, according to the Constitution of the Republic of 1961, it has acquired the status of an official language beside Kinyarwanda, and it has become a medium of instruction, as a legacy of the colonial era, at secondary school and at the University. During the colonial period, as noted above, French was meant to establish efficient contact between the colonial administration and the Rwandans. A knowledge of French was thus required of any Rwandan administrative agent in all official activities. For this reason, it has become a language of prestige and high social status. Every young Rwandan who enters school longs to be

able to speak French as 'white men' do. Even a literate Rwandan who speaks it fluently is considered to be a 'white man'. This need to resemble the white man via his language shows that the Belgians colonizers 'policy of assimilation was successful.

This policy of assimilation underlies the failure of post-independence decolonization to dismiss the colonial language, French, and have it replaced by Kinyarwanda. Actually, French had become a very important means of communication, not only between the Rwandan educated minority and the white colonizers, but also among literate and semi-literate Rwandans who had a hidden intention to sound like superior men in Rwandan society. In addition, it is still a vehicle of instruction and a language of administration on one hand, and a language for communication with the outside French-speaking world on the other. The role of French in Rwandan life, then, is so important that Rwanda can be classified among countries which adopt a Western language on a national level in order to obtain and retain as much tangible aid as possible, so as to meet the immediate operational demands of nationhood.⁵ Even if it is known only by a small group in the Rwandan speech community, the group which has had the privilege of attending secondary school, French remains a principal language. As Pierre Alexandre notes :

"It is striking to note that independent Africa is presently divided into "English-speaking Africa" and "French-Speaking Africa". These two phrases generate particularly dangerous illusions, for I do

not believe that the number of Africans able to express themselves in these two languages surpasses 10% of the total population. The fact nevertheless remains that French and English, immediately followed by Arabic, are the principal languages of Black Africa, not so much because of the number of their speakers..... but by the quality of their language and the high-ranking social and economic position they occupy."⁶

Alexandre's statement reflects the status of English as an international language which occupies a 'high-ranking social and economic position'. For this reason, the Rwandan government has made English an obligatory subject in the present educational policy beside French. Even though they do not share the same status within Rwanda, they play the same role as far as worldrelationships are concerned. English becomes more important when Rwandan commercial problems are considered because, for the reasons stated previously, the solution to these problems is more likely to be found in the kind of relationship which exists between Rwanda and English-speaking Africa than between Rwanda and French-speaking Africa.⁷

It would be pointless to discuss the status of English in Rwanda without relating it to its role. In fact, the status of a language depends upon the role it plays in the community which adopts it. Evidence for this is given by French, which has acquired the status of both a

second language and an official language for its use in administration and instruction on one hand and in international relationships on the other. However, these international relationships conducted in French are limited to the French-speaking countries, which do not contribute very much to Rwandan development. English-speaking countries occupy the first place in terms of international interaction.

On the regional level, for example, Rwanda would do better in terms of economic welfare to maintain good relationships with East Africa. On the world level, Foreign aid regularly comes from the United States of America and Britain, where English is the mother tongue, and commercial relationships are entertained between Rwanda and other wealthy foreign countries which use English for purposes of international communication, such as China and Japan. To integrate itself in the modern world, Rwanda requires English because it has become the main language used in technology, communication and even in personal interaction.⁸ Even though English is still considered as a foreign language in Rwanda, it plays a crucial role as an instrument of communication throughout the world, thus deserving the status of world language.

This interdependence between role and status has motivated the forthcoming discussion of the role of English in Rwanda. It is the importance of this role which makes necessary the changes required in the process of teaching and learning English in order to improve proficiency in English and to reach the goals established by the language planners.

As I said in the section on historical background, early language planners had never perceived the need for English in Rwanda, for they very much wished French to be the sole western language to be learned for internal administrative tasks and communication abroad. Besides, the colonial government wanted Rwanda to be part of the so-called 'Francophonie'. This unfavourable attitude towards English lasted from 1961 to 1976, the year in which an English Section was created in the Bureau Pédagogique de l'Enseignement Secondaire.⁹ The English Section was given the task of standardising English programs in all secondary schools where English was taught, and to send inspectors to evaluate the teachers' performance, so as to devise new methods or adapt appropriate new materials. This creation of the English Section was the first outcome of the Rwandan government's awareness of the real status of English and its important role in the country's development.

1.2. THE ROLE OF ENGLISH IN RWANDA.

The present and the desired role of English as a foreign language in Rwanda has been the subject of several English graduate students' theses. I would specially cite Mukantaganzwa Annunciata Boily (1981)¹⁰ and Jean B. Barugahane (1982) whose theses have very much inspired mine. These and others agree that Rwanda is one of the few countries where people speak one mother tongue, Kinyarwanda, and so have a feeling of solidarity.¹¹ Such a situation underlies the resentful attitude that Rwandans have towards foreign languages which they do not need to fulfil any social function.

Foreign languages, however, were introduced and imposed by the missionaries through the foundation of schools where French as a second language, Latin and Greek as classical languages, and English as a complement to the languages program schedule, were taught.

The historical background of English teaching in Rwanda, as approximately given at the beginning of this chapter, blocked the students' motivation and interest in learning English. They could not, as a matter of fact, perceive the reason why English was taught while French, as far as they were concerned, was prevailing as both an official language and a world language, leading to good jobs in the administration. In addition, as we have seen, the colonial attitude towards English was rather negative, English being taught by Belgians who did not concern themselves with the students' need for communicative competence. Even after independence, the English teaching program was still based on the same syllabus as the one left by the Belgians. This syllabus was only efficient to the extent that it provided the students with the ability to 'read and understand' literary works.

The Rwandan government, nevertheless, soon perceived the status of English as a world language and the wealth and knowledge associated with English-speaking countries. Being a landlocked new-born country faced with poverty and ignorance, Rwanda needed contact with these countries. Rwanda must overcome these problems in its efforts towards development. It is therefore worth looking at the role of English in solving the problems above, both at present

and in the future. I will consider three domains in which, English is very likely to play an important role as an instrument of communication, namely : foreign policy, economics and education.

In the domain of foreign policy, English answers the need for communication with people outside the Rwandan speech community. To use Nida and Wonderley's terminology¹², English is an 'outgroup' language that serves as a link between Rwanda and the English-speaking world. As Barugahare states, it answers Rwanda's urgent need to expand her participation in international affairs, mainly in the commercial, political and academic domains.¹³ Such participation will be effective only if good foreign relations remain in force. The Rwandan government has to maintain good diplomatic relations first with East Africa, to protect commercial interests, and second with other English-speaking countries all over the world, in order to catch up with the modern world in the realms of economics, education and scientific research. A good example of this is the effective diplomatic intercourse with the U.S.A., which results in considerable aid to Rwanda. The contribution of the English language in paving the way to better communication with the States is obviously considerable. In this connection, the American Embassy often organizes English Teaching Seminars in order to increase Rwandan teachers' skills in both speaking and teaching English. These seminars are indispensable for the secondary school teachers who can meet and renew their methods and practice their spoken English during the one or two week

period they spend discussing new techniques and strategies applied to the teaching of English as a foreign language. Moreover, Professors are sent from the States to teach English at the university and students are given scholarships to continue their studies in American universities. Guest lecturers from the U.S.A often give lectures at Ruhengeri campus, for they know that students understand English and that there can be a feedback from the debates.

The second domain in which English is highly important as an instrument of communication is that of economics. In this domain I will concentrate on trade and industry, which have great relevance to any country's economy. As far as Rwanda is concerned, English is the language of trade and commerce. Businessmen learn English just to conduct their affairs in English, for they are in regular contact with East African traders who speak it. Some of them travel to the U.S.A., China or Japan where a knowledge of English is required. To know it, they sometimes pay tutors who teach them at home or enrol at the English Teaching Institute, at the club Rafiki, at the American Embassy or at J.O.C. (Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique) in Kigali.

There is no need for English in home trade, for Kinyarwanda is used by both buyer and seller. In foreign trade, however, Rwandan commercial activities are normally carried out in English. Bankers, foreign correspondents in firms, translators and managers in Rwandan factories, industries and commercial cooperatives use English, and, Rwandan products meant for export are labelled in English.

We have phrases such as 'Made in Rwanda' on boxes of matches 'Made at Butare', 'Mironko Plastic Industries', 'Sulfo Rwanda Industries', 'Tea Shagasha, Produce of Rwanda', and so on. Rwandan managers of different commercial or transport companies travel to English-speaking countries in order to negotiate a market for their products. Similarly, international companies which are represented in Rwanda use English. Hatton and Cookson and Old East use English in their services. International agencies owning offices in Rwanda, such as Transintra, Kenatco (Kenyan National Transport Company) and Interfreit, use English. IATA (the International Air Transport Agency) has adopted English as its working language, and the crew of any aeroplane is expected to speak English.¹⁴

MAGERWA (Magasins Généraux du Rwanda)

the centre of foreign trade both for imports and exports, has adopted English in its transactions. People who have to carry out these transactions must have a good control of the English used in commerce to maintain effective operational relationships with international firms which commonly sell their goods to Rwanda. In this respect, English is vital for Rwandan development, because Rwanda is a materially poor country which relies on foreign trade, loans and aid. It is also vital in the respect that the instructions written on such imported products as medicines, food, machines etc., are given in English. To use these products efficiently, a knowledge of English is required. Finally, it is vital as a language of advertising, which helps to make Rwandan Industries prosperous by selling their products.

Furthermore, the Rwandan government's economic policy is to retain as much aid as possible from wealthy countries. Obviously enough, the maintenance of these countries' will to help the Rwandan people economically by offering funds for different local projects and sending experts to train local workers, is greatly enhanced by efficient communication between those foreign countries and Rwanda. In this respect, English is the most important language for the development of the Rwandan economy. It is, therefore, worth learning, and for this reason, it has been made a compulsory course in almost all the sections of secondary school.

Apart from its economic role, English is a language of specialised information, and this brings us to its academic role. Indeed, it has a strong role generally in connection with research and access to modern culture. Teachers, researchers and students very much want to learn English, because many of the most useful books for obtaining scientific information can be found in the university Library and at the American cultural Center, and are written in English. I was not surprised, when I interviewed a teacher of Geography, to hear him complain about his poor knowledge of English, which hinders him from using English materials. This reflects the need for English as a language of information.

More generally English is, as said above, a vehicle of modern culture. As our president often says, our cultural policy should be to draw good elements from other cultures and add them to the good things found in our ancestors' culture. These elements of foreign cultures are drawn by means of

the educational policy which opens the way to the reading and understanding of literary works (the best vehicles of culture), articles from magazines and newspapers, and the gathering of information from radio broadcasts. As far as Rwandans are concerned, the environment for learning English is the classroom. This kind of setting requires a teacher who is skilled both in the language itself and in the methods for bringing his students to an efficient acquisition of the language. English plays its academic role in the teacher-training process in the English Department of the National University of Rwanda, and Rwandan university students are not only trained to teach English but are also put in contact with the culture mediated by that language through literary works, and have a good deal of contact with professors coming from Britain or America.

I have so far considered the present role of English in Rwanda as an instrument of communication in politics, economics and education. This role was never clearly defined before the early 1980's¹⁵ but even so, some assumptions about the future of English in Rwanda may be put forward. English must be valued in Rwanda for the advantages deriving from its world and regional roles. The question remains : What are the primary needs of Rwanda with respect to its political, economic and intellectual interests ? Now that Rwanda has divested itself of colonial influence, it must create its own destiny, with an emphasis on the creation of wealth. For the

welfare of its economy, Rwanda needs good relations with East African countries, on which its economic development depends to a great extent. The Rwandan people should associate itself with that part of the continent. Unfortunately, the financial situation in Rwanda does not permit the change from French to English as a medium of instruction. That is to say, if Rwandan language planners decided that all the school subjects should be taught in English, the preparation of texts in English not formerly used as a medium of instruction would cost a lot of money. It would be desirable, however, to treat English as a third language and, in fact, the introduction of the School Reform in the Rwandan school system in 1981 brought specialisation to the teaching of English, thus giving hope that English will be effectively learned. Nowadays, English is taught with regard to what the students are being specially prepared for. That is to say, the students learn the kind of language related to their school option, and the time assigned to it has been increased accordingly. For literary options, for example, the time devoted to the teaching of English has been increased from three hours per week to five hours per week during the last two years. One may expect good results from this kind of timetable. The students of any option have their motivation maintained by the relation between the English they learn and the content of their learning process.

As seen earlier, English is an important language for such things as foreign affairs, diplomacy, information, research and banking. It is learned by older students, of about 13 or 14, who are likely to play a role in one of these domains at the end of their schooling. Unfortunately, the lack of specialization in the early English teaching programs led to a poor proficiency in the actual use of English. For this reason, interpreters are hired to interpret whenever English-speaking guests arrive in Rwanda. Henceforth, English should be taught with increased focus on its communicative role which is still not sufficiently taken into consideration.

In fact, the reformed educational policy gives hope for a bright future as regards proficiency in English. This future depends, however, upon the improvement of English teaching methods, the quality of teacher training and that of materials, and the capacity to create a suitable environment for learners to feel involved in the learning process. The methods available up to now have failed to lead to communicative competence. This is the reason why, in the following pages, I have devoted a section to a historical survey of those methods.

1.3. HISTORICAL SURVEY OF METHODS APPLIED TO THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH.

Basically, two methods were applied to the teaching of English in Rwanda from 1961 until the date of the school reform in 1981. These were what might be called

the "traditional" approach and the "audiolingual" approach. The latter was meant to be a reaction against the "traditional" approach, which was accused of being traced from the "grammar translation" method applied to the teaching of both Latin and Greek, two dead languages whose "acquisition" in the full sense was not needed, since they were not taught for communicative purposes; the teaching of Latin and Greek, which had the status of classical languages, being aimed at the creation of well-rounded cultured individuals in the context of a policy of 'humane education'. Owing to this, and perhaps to an unspoken assumption that all languages have the same structure, English was taught by the same method as Latin and Greek.

In the traditional approach grammar and reading and writing were highly emphasized. Grammar was taught by what Allen and Valette call a "deductive" approach: 'The rules, patterns, or generalizations were presented to the student, and then he or she was given ample opportunity to practice the new feature of grammar'. Allen and Valette present the general pattern that was followed: 1. Statement of the rule or pattern, 2. Sample sentences that students repeat, 3. Ample opportunity for students to practice the new pattern.¹⁶ The sample sentences were generally translated into French (in the Rwandan case). For reading skills, extracts from literary works were presented to the students to read and understand, but the selections were not accessible to the students, since they had no cultural relevance to the students' environment. The initial step was the presentation of the

English alphabet, which did not necessarily take account of all the sound-combinations. Nothing much can be said about 'writing' insofar as the students' written assignments were relatively free with some initiative for students ; but even so too much reliance on 'dictation' as the most effective way to improve the students' accuracy, and the recurrent translation of literary selections, carried serious problems. As Allen and Valette point out :

"The most serious writing problems arise when the student tries to transform a native language sentence word for word into a foreign language equivalent. At the early levels the teacher can combat this tendency by providing leading questions and cues in the target language (this was not the case in traditional methods). Assigning a written résumé or a free composition before students are ready to handle it can lead to frustration and negative learning."¹⁷

The traditional approach was applied to the teaching of English in Rwanda from 1961 until the creation of the English Section in the B.P.E.S. in 1976. This is shown, first, by the sketchy English program sent to secondary schools on October 11th, 1961.¹⁸ On the actual program, all the levels of education were assigned a place beginning with 'Phonology', the Grammar, Vocabulary, and

finally, homework to practice sentence making. There were no exercises included for phonology. The program as a whole was presented in French. This basically reflects the 'traditional' approach. As the English learning process went on, activities for writing and reading were planned. Nothing, again, was prepared for oral practice.

Second, the textbooks available during that period, that is Britain, Easy Road, Aglais I, II, III and Tales from Britain reflected the traditional approach. The forthcoming skim through Aglais II with an accompanying evaluation of 'Lesson Seven - Seventh Lesson' provides a good example of the 'prescriptive grammar translation' method applied to the teaching of English in Rwanda during the first decade. In fact, as the staff of the B.P.E.S., English Section, have informed me, Aglais II was one of the principal materials available in most of the secondary schools where English was taught.

Aglais II, is exactly the kind of material that fits the program described above. As its preface states, "chaque leçon comprend un ou plusieurs textes, des notions grammaticales et des exercices" ("each lesson comprises one or more texts, grammatical items and exercises"). At the beginning of the textbook, there is a set of rules on English pronunciation which corresponds to the first point of the program, that is, 'Phonology'. The texts that begin each lesson are meant to provide the grammatical structures to be learnt and increase the learners' vocabulary by presenting new words. They are about historical figures

such as King Alfred, The Prince of Wales and Captain Scott ; science like in Radar ; sentimentalism in Malachi's cove ; fancy and wizardry in The Bottle ; satire in Gulliver ; humour in Uncle Podger and The Gas-Oven and the 'suspense' of the detective novel in The Pocket-book.

The grammatical structures which were supposed to stem from the texts are presented through explicit rules. They are remote from any context whatever. The way it is presented is similar to the way the grammar of Latin was presented, insofar as it states the rules of formation, as the evaluation of the sample lesson will show, and the rules of usage with randomly chosen examples which are translated into French. All the rules are given in French and the examples, first given in English, are then translated into French. All the sentences chosen to exemplify the rules show word for word correspondence with their equivalents in French. This creates in the students the habit of relying on translation whenever they are asked to write a composition in the foreign language.

The teaching of vocabulary in Anglais II is also carried out through the same translation method. In fact two vocabularies are given in the appendix, after a grammatical précis (from page 249 to 290) with explanations in French. The first vocabulary is entitled 'Lexique ANGLAIS-FRANCAIS', that is English lexical items are given their translation in French instead of their explanation in English with examples of use as in the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English¹⁹. The second is 'Lexique

FRANCAIS-ANGLAIS, that is, French lexical items are translated into English. These kinds of vocabulary are likely to create in the language learners the bad habit of passing from one language to another whenever they are required to express an idea in oral or written form. The basic disadvantage of such a method of teaching vocabulary is the lack of context to relate the meaning to. This creates a wrong use of words or expressions. This sometimes appears in the students' compositions and oral reports even at tertiary level. For example, I remember a wrong word in a sentence from a student's composition which was wrong because it was the direct translation of a French word. It was audience, used to mean "Hearing". I guess the student was thinking of audience in French which he promptly translated into audience. In fact, the method tends to limit the use of a word or expression to one corresponding word or expression in another language, whereas a word or expression can have several different meanings depending upon the context in which it appears. Finally, it blocks the learners' fluency, especially in oral performance, since they have to go from one language to another before uttering anything.

A look at the exercises provided in Anglais II, leads us to the conclusion that they are not at all concerned with how the learner would use whatever he has learned to express himself. They are dealing, indeed, either with translating unconnected sentences from French into English or vice-versa, or filling gaps, or giving the plural of a list of words. They all rely heavily on conscious thought to

be accurately done. A learner who has a good memory can succeed in doing all the exercises, even those about pronunciation. According to the way in which the authors of the textbook describe the exercises, the aim of the exercises is to instil into the students a practical knowledge of the main language skills. Unfortunately, the way those exercises are presented and the way they must be done are not so devised to reach the true goal, which is none other than communicative competence. Here is what the authors say :

"Nos exercices sont nombreux et variés. Tous visent au même but : inculquer aux élèves une connaissance active des mécanismes essentiels de la langue. Une place importante a été réservée à des exercices d'ordre structurel que, très souvent, nous avons combinés avec l'étude des formes faibles dans les tables de substitution. D'autres exercices se limitent à une seule structure, dont les caractéristiques sont mises en relief par des phrases de version et de thème."²⁰

Apart from some but few substitution tables, which at least suggest a move away from the pure grammar-translation method, this textbook, on the whole, exemplifies the grammar-translation approach. I may, therefore, assume that this kind of material is far from reaching the goal of teaching a modern language, English in this instance, that is, to make the students acquire 'communicative competence.'²¹ As a matter of fact, the simple memorisation of grammatical rules cannot help the student to perform all the language tasks. In the sets of exercises, nothing has been prepared to develop the students' oral production. This underlies

the tendency to forget that follows the obtaining of grades or the leaving of school. Another disadvantage of such a method is the constant appeal to translation whenever a student has to write or speak about a given subject. The inappropriateness often found in the students' language is mainly due to their assumption of a one-to-one correspondence in the vocabulary of different languages.

After this skim through Anglais II, an evaluation of a sample lesson is necessary to support the general arguments made in the preceding paragraphs. I have chosen the seventh lesson at random as the sample lesson in Anglais II, and have made the following evaluation.

The seventh lesson begins with the third part of "Malachi's Cove" (adapted from A. TROLLOPE). New vocabulary items and new expressions are written in italics in the selection, and their explanations are to appear in the vocabulary, ANGLAIS-FRANCAIS, each with its translation into French. I guess the students have to refer to this vocabulary to look for the meaning of the new words and expressions, because nothing is prepared before or straight after the reading selection to make the students draw the meaning from the context. The comprehension questions are listed long after grammar exploitation, which comes straight after the text. The grammar points presented in this lesson are : 'le passé composé' ('The present perfect'), formation and use, and 'le pronom réfléchi' ('The reflexive pronoun'). The way the grammar is presented is absolutely prescriptive. A table is given which contains the conjugation of the verb 'play' in the present

perfect with the 'interrogative' and 'negative' forms. Two other unconnected examples with the verbs 'come' and 'stop' are inserted with their french translation. Finally, the rule of formation is formulated in French in this way :

have	+	participe passé
has		

On forme le passé composé en conjugant 'to have au présent', que l'on fait suivre du participe passé'. 22

The rule is followed by the contracted forms which are labelled in French : 'Forme élidée' (E.G. I've played) ; 'Forme contractée' (E.G. I haven't played).

The table goes on with the use of the present perfect and 'the reflexive pronoun'. All the rules are formulated in French and nothing more is given as to how those rules can be used in real life. There is even a rule of translation of '(all) by' when it introduces a reflexive pronoun. The rule is formulated as follows:

"

...(tout) seul = (all) by + pronom réfléchi.
--

 Le 'pronom introduit par 'by', 'all by', traduit 'seul', 'tout seul' "23

The table of grammar rules is followed by exercises. The latter are concerned with the reading of unconnected sentences such as those found in the substitution tables in exercises, 96, A and B, and 97.

" 96. Lire (Formes faibles) :

A. - He has [hi:z] - She has [ʃi:z]

He	has	broken the vase.
She		refused to do it.
		bought brown shoes.
		recognized him.
		lost a lot of money.

B. - I have [aiv] - We have [wi:v]

I	have	read it.
We		heard of it.
		corrected it.
		written it.
		thought of it.

97. Lire (formes contractées) :

She's already visited England. They've
 tried everything.
 - Haven't you got anything smaller? - He hasn't
 answered yet. - She's wished him evil. - I've
 seen him today. - "24

It is clear from this quotation that the sentences show no connection whatever. Exercise 98 : "Répondre" should have come straight after the selection, for it relates to comprehension. Nevertheless it is included in other exercises notwithstanding its necessity for clarifying the meaning of the extract. We have such questions as ; "why didn't Mally try to get weed from the big hole ?" ; Why was Barty angry with himself ?" ; "Why did Mally stop working ?" ;, which, if they were asked to the students right after the reading of the selection, should have helped them to understand

the text. Exercises 99 and 100 deal with 'putting the verb given in brackets at the end of each sentence into the appropriate tense' and 'gap-filling':

99. Mettre les verbes au passé composé :

I am fond of English books and quite a lot. (to read)

Everybody of Shaw. (to hear)

He a lot of plays. (.to write)

... you ... any of them ? (to see)

100. Mettre les verbes au temps adéquat (Passé composé ou prétérit):

I ... a letter to him last week. (to write)

My father ... never ... to Rome. (to be)

Your tailor ... to see you an hour ago. (to come)

... I ... you this before ? (to teach)

....."25

Again, the sentences, as they appear in these two exercises are unconnected and are not contextualised. Exercises 101 and 102 deal with the translation of French sentences into English and vice-versa. Most of the exercises are concerned with gap-filling and translation. It is obvious that such activities as described above cannot help the learner to improve his communicative skills to any great extent.

The basically traditional approach I have discussed so far has some advantages. These advantages, however, are not worthwhile when compared to the disadvantages. Explicit rules, as Allen and Valette state, are 'effective for the presentation of irregular patterns or exceptions to general patterns, for these by their very nature, cannot be discovered through an analogy'. They go on to note that 'in

the hands of a good teacher, the approach can save classroom time ' and that also 'some students prefer having the rule presented and then being allowed to demonstrate their comprehension by applying it to new sentences.'²⁶ The two authors have summarized the shortcomings of this "deductive" presentation in the following quotation :

"The drawback of the deductive presentation is that it may become dry and technical. The student may feel that he is being lectured and stop paying attention. If the examples are too tricky, the student is frustrated in his or her attempts to apply the rule. Learning a second language becomes a purely intellectual exercise instead of being a means to communication."²⁷

It is clear from this quotation that the traditional approach does not greatly enhance the acquisition of the language by the learners, for they will never use their 'creative construction'²⁸. Moreover the class may remain passive as it has only to take note of what is taught and simply memorize it. As I said before, translation can lead the learners to assume a one-to-one correspondence in the vocabulary of English and French. A sentence like 'I've got no money' means 'Je n'ai pas d'argent' in French, but a student who comes across it in a set of unconnected sentences to be translated into French can be misled by the verb 'get' which is often translated into French as 'trouver' and simply translate the sentence in French as 'Je n'ai pas trouvé d'argent', which corresponds to a different sentence in English, 'I've found no money'. This example shows to what extent a one-to-one correspondence can be misleading. Moreover, such exercises

as presented above, may be boring to some students, for they limit their productive ability, which, if encouraged, keeps them motivated and interested in the learning process.

I am not particularly stressing that the material does not teach anything, but that it is not appropriate to language learning, unless the teacher makes an adaptation likely to meet the learners' need for communicative competence. This adaptation was never made insofar as there were no trained teachers during the early teaching of English in Rwanda. The teachers actually had to stick to the available materials as the sole resource for their teaching. This explains the forgetting of the language that followed the obtaining of grades or the leaving of school. Some graduates from secondary school and some university students attending other departments than the English department have told me that they are able to read a simple text and understand it, but that they cannot summarize it and report it orally using their own words.

This situation was soon noticed by language planners and some changes were to appear in 1976 with the foundation of the English Section in the B.P.E.S. Contrary to other Rwandan official programs, which were devised in 1973, the English Program was worked out in 1975.²⁹ During the same period, a National Commission of Programs met and devised the English program in the Tronc Commun.³⁰ Nothing was yet prepared for the second cycle of secondary school ; for this reason, each teacher or each school worked out a different program.

In October 1976, the English Section set itself to the devising of programs, materials and the organisation of inspections in secondary schools, and an investigation in secondary schools revealed several different materials with some of the most important listed below :

1. Aglais by Delree, Paepe, Gijssels ;
2. An English course for French-Speakers by Cartledge ;
3. Let's learn English by Bryce ;
4. English for French-Speaking Africa by Mills ;
5. A Direct Method-English Course, by Gatenby ;³¹
6. Living English by Angels

The English Section endeavoured to standardize English Teaching and an English course for the first year of English³² was set out in 1978. The second year English course was to appear two years later (1980).

This period was the threshold of the 'Réforme Scolaire' ('School Reform') which was going to bring changes not only in the objectives but also in the structure of the education system. Before speaking of the school reform (detailed in chapter 3), I will look at the method which was advocated by the English Section through the evaluation of the textbook it sent to the first years of English in secondary schools in 1978. This textbook was English for French - Speaking Africa ('I want to speak English'), and was the result of three authors' work : David Mills, Boniface Zodeougan and Tim Doust. It is designed for first year English students in secondary school. As the book available here is a pupil's book, the objectives are not stated at the beginning, but one

can assume that they are implicitly perceived in the sentence "I want to speak English."

This sentence leads one to expect that the main goal of the textbook is to develop the students' communicative skills in English. That is, students will be able to use English in communicative situations they are likely to be involved in. Therefore, in this evaluation, I am going to see how English for French-Speaking Africa can develop the students' communicative competence. The focus will be on the situations presented in the textbook first, and then it will move on to the exercises proposed for the students' activity.

The textbook as a whole presents situations appropriate to the sociocultural situation, contrary to the selections, in Anglais II, which had no cultural relevance to the African situation. The situations in the textbook are chosen in the African classroom and school setting ; in the African home and Family environment. For this reason, the students' motivation is maintained, as the situations are familiar to them. We have, for example : "Coming to school" (Lesson 1, page 4) ; "Break" (Lesson 3, p.6) ; "Going home" (Lesson 4, p.8) ; "Can you do my homework, Dad ?" (Lesson 9, p.18) ; "Bring me my big stick" (Lesson 17, p.34). Nevertheless, coherence between successive situations is needed from time to time. The situations, indeed, should be linked to one another in order not to loosen the students' attention. For instance, there is no coherence between "The maths lesson" (Lesson 5, p.10) and "Buying some

groundnuts". (Lesson 6, p.12). A passage like the latter could better come after "At the football ground" (Lesson 8, p.16) and be termed "Buying some groundnuts on the way home".

This being an overall view of the situations presented by the textbook, an indepth look leads to the discovery of some inappropriate replies such as "Oh ! dear ! "(in lessons 5,10,16,17, and 19) which does not seem natural in a male student. The replies appears in "The maths lesson" in these few exchanges between Koffi and Fatima :

" Koffi : What's the time, Fatima ?

Fatima: It's quarter past twelve.

Koffi : Oh, it's maths now. Is Mr. Dossou in classroom ?

Fatima: Yes. Look, there he is. He's drawing on the blackboard. You're going to be late.

Koffi : Oh dear ! Goodbye, Fatima ."

In lesson 9, a man addresses his wife, "Listen to me mother."

This is strange because it is never heard of a man addressing his wife in Rwanda ; more important, it is not common English.

Such a sentence is also confusing, in that the student may ask whose mother it is. In lesson 11, "The school garden",

we come across this reply in the dialog between Mr. Acquaaah (the Science teacher), Yemi, Koudiratou and Ali (pupils) :

"But sir, ... don't pull my ear sir...

mangoes are more interesting than maize". This appears in this part of the passage :

" Mr. Acquaaah : Well, where's Ali ?

Yemi : I don't know, sir. I can't see him.

Koudiratou : Look ! There he is ! He's under the mango-tree with Koffi. They're picking mangoes.

Mr. Acquaaah : Come here, you two !

Ali : But sir ... don't pull my ear, sir...
mangoes are more interesting than
maize.

Mr. Acquaaah : Yes but maize is more important,
and more useful too. Go and weed
your garden. Quick-hurry up!"

Mr. Acquaaah pulls Ali's ear because he has been picking mangoes while other children were following a lesson about weeding a maize garden. So the reply "But sir ... don't pull my ear sir ... mangoes are more interesting than maize" would be somewhat inappropriate if it were meant to ask for forgiveness. Many other such inappropriate replies could be found if one looked into all the situations but, for the moment, let us limit ourselves to these as illustrative examples.

I have considered so far the interest of the situations proposed by the textbook, even though they appear to be deficient now and then. Nevertheless, the exercises following each dialogue deserve a good deal of attention, as they involve the students' activity in the language learning process. They are all concerned with grammatically correct sentences, and are intended to make the students unconsciously master the structural units they practice after each dialogue, making correct sentences following the given model, but, as far as communicative skills are concerned, one would wonder whether they acquire the ability to use those structures appropriately in real - life situations.³³ In lesson 6, for example, exercises 3 and 4 deal with the correct use of 'much', 'many' and 'a lot of ', in correct sentences. There are no wider contexts in which the sentences occur. The two

sample exercises are presented in the following way :

" 3. Make ten correct sentences :

I	haven't got	much	time.
You			money.
We		work.	
They		hair.	
He	hasn't got	many	chalk.
She			groundnuts.
			exercise-books
			Shoes.
			mangoes.
			pencils.

4. Make ten correct sentences :

I	've got	a lot of	time.
You			English books.
We			Chalk.
They			money.
He	's got		exercises to do.
She			pens.
Every-			groundnuts.
body			work to do.
			books to buy
			hair.

(p.13.)

As these exercises are meant to make the students speak, the latter should be given opportunity to speak by contextualized exercises. Unfortunately, the exercises are, to use Widdowson's terminology, centered on the mastery of 'usage' rather than 'use'.³⁴

This kind of exercise, overly concerned with correctness, as the two examples above show, leads students to be obsessed with error thus blocking their fluent oral production. As a matter of fact, some students may prefer not to speak for fear of making incorrect sentences. This kind of reluctance is considered in Krashen's Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning, in his section on "Individual Variation in the use of the Monitor". Krashen has brought together his study of a case and other linguists' studies of 'Monitor overusers' and has shown how an overconcern with correctness brings about hesitancy in the language user's performance.³⁵ As the exercises under discussion tend towards the mastery of grammatical structures in a way remote from their practical use in real-life communication, they may hinder the students' fluent speaking ability. It would therefore be better to introduce the exercises in meaningful contexts in order to develop both grammatical skills and communicative skills. In lesson 1, exercise 4, for example, such a formula as "let's" would have been more communicatively learned if the sentences it appears in were more contextualized. 'There's not enough air, let's open the windows' is better than 'Let's open the windows' for the students will know that they open the windows to let air in. In lesson, 6, exercise 3 (p.13), it would be more meaningful to say 'I haven't got much money, I can't buy sweets' instead of 'I haven't got much money.'

The exercises are not only remote from any context of use, but also some of them are useless

as they do not afford potential for future use. Let us consider Lesson one, exercise 6, for instance :

Make some sentences :

A question is given with possible answers in the following substitution table :

What's this ?	It's	an	old sandal. book.
			exercise. exercise-book. ear-ring. arm. ear. eye answer.

According to this table, the students have to make nine sentences beginning with It's an.... answering the question What's this ? Unless this exercise is done orally during in-class work, one student showing one of the things named in the last right column and asking what it is, the exercise becomes almost meaningless ; and in fact, a sentence like It's an arm (an eye, an answer ...) is virtually never used in communication. Moreover, the things listed in the right column should relate to the same topic to arouse the students' interest even though the exercise would still sound mechanical. Let us also consider lesson eleven, exercise three :

" Make some correct sentences":

Lagos		Nicer		my table.
My sister		easier		Geometry.
Your homework		wetter		Cotonou.
This ground	is	hotter		Aminatou.
Algebra		bigger	Than	mine.
Africa		drier		the ground over
The teacher's desk		fatter		there.
Koffi		thinner		England.
				Nzekwe.

It is clear from this table that the exercise deals with comparison. It would be more interesting to get students involved in situations within which they have to compare things. If a student prefers Algebra to Geometry for example, he is likely to say : " I prefer Algebra. It is easier than Geometry", and feel interested because he has expressed something relevant to his own experience. Otherwise, the exercise as it is presented, is not motivating except that the element of selection provides some stimulation.

In addition to the statements above, the exercises proposed in the available textbook are boring because they show no variety. They are almost all concerned with making correct sentences. The attempt to vary the way exercises are stated is confusing. Considering lesson ten, for example : instructions for exercises 3, and 4 are "Make some correct sentences " for 3 and "Make ten correct sentences" for 4, whereas those for exercise 6 are : "Make some intelligent sentences". Lesson 14 shows the same instructions varying

from "correct" in exercises 3 and 4, to "intelligent" in exercise 5. One is however unclear what is intelligent and what is not in these exercises, since they are all substitution tables. These all involve purely mechanical exercises, not even involving selection. The students then, especially the beginners, could be confused trying to sort out the difference between a correct sentence and an intelligent one. Besides, I wonder if it is possible to qualify a sentence as "intelligent".

One rather different variety of exercise is introduced, however, that is 'crossword puzzles'. These may be interesting exercises for vocabulary review. In addition, some other exercises on making dialogues, though only a few, are introduced at the end of some lessons. They can be motivating exercises, for they can lead the students to free conversation if the teacher reduces the emphasis on correction of errors and lessens control. One example of this kind is found in lesson 14, exercise 7 : "Make some more dialogues :

A : This pen isn't mine. Whose is it ?

B : I don't know. Perhaps it's Koffi's.

A : These pens aren't mine. Whose are they ?

B : I don't know. Perhaps they're Koffi's.

Use these words : book, shirt, headscarf,
knife, whistle, the teacher's, obi's, my brother's
your father's, your sister's ."

The first two exchanges between A and B stand for the model to be followed by the students in order to make as few errors as possible. This exercise could be made more interesting if the teacher uses concrete referents and pictures to stimulate his learners towards spontaneous interaction, instead of a

list of words out of context. As it stands in the textbook, it is very much controlled thus limiting the students' creative construction and becoming inadequate to the enhancement of their communicative competence.

I cannot pretend to have made a thorough evaluation of English for French-Speaking Africa, pupil's book 1. Indeed, my evaluation has not gone through all the details which can be found in each individual lesson. The general criticisms made in the preceding paragraphs seem to be the most striking points for their relevance to the main objective of language teaching, regardless of the status of the language being taught. Each language, unless it is a dead language like Latin and Greek, is taught for communicative purposes. The latter have many factors involved within which the sociocultural are most important, for they determine norms of language use and differentiate the situations of use. This brings in the appropriateness and accuracy of a speaker's utterance with regard to the setting, the role of the addressee and the function the addresser needs the language to serve.

The textbook I discussed above deserves praise with respect to the sociocultural elements which are appropriate to the students' level and environment, but, to a great extent, it does not stimulate the students towards the acquisition of communicative skills by the activities it proposes. It is much concerned with error correction and seems to concentrate on the grammatical structures of English, while its communicative function is given less importance. It would be of much help to both the teacher

and the student, however, if the vocabulary and structural items were centred around functions making immediate communication possible. Lesson 5 : "The Maths lesson", for example, would be a good occasion to introduce such a function as 'Apologizing'. The students and the teacher can, taking the following dialogue between Mr. Dossou and Koffi as an example, find other situations involving 'apologizing' :

Mr. Dossou : Who are you, boy ? Why are you late ?
Koffi : (running into the classroom) I'm Koffi, sir. I'm sorry, sir. Are you ... are you going to punish me, sir ?
Mr. Dossou : No, I'm not going to punish you this time. Go and sit down, and get out your exercise-book ."

The new situations can also provide good instances of role-play which is a good means to teach how language varies according to different situations and roles of interactants. The situations in the present textbook, however, are only used to introduce grammatical structures to be practised in uncontextualised exercises.

English for French-speaking Africa,

then, reflects a number of features which characterised the 'audio-lingual' Approach. It does not use translation, even in the first classes of English, and puts emphasis on the unconscious learning of grammatical points by stressing the students' correctness in all the exercises which are mainly related to grammar. Even if there are no drills of the conventional 'stimulus-reponse' kind, we may assume an implicit 'inductive approach' to the teaching of grammar through the substitution tables. They are meant for reinforcement of the

new learnt structure.³⁶ Evidently the theory is that the student should get the patterns unconsciously through constant mechanical practice. This is one of the basic principles of the audiolingual approach.

The latter came in to replace the traditional approach and was advocated by the staff of the English Section in the B.P.E.S. :

" Nous avons actuellement adopté l'emploi de la " méthode audio-oral" avec l'accent mis sur le côté communication verbale de la langue, la lecture et l'écriture suivant après ."

("We have now adopted the "audio-lingual" method with emphasis on the oral communication of the language, reading and writing skills following after").³⁷

The English Section wants the emphasis to be put on aural/oral skills first, then on Reading and Writing skills. It still relies on the teacher's professional skills to adopt this or that method he judges appropriate for his class. The attempt to adapt the existing materials has been done by Rwandan English graduates from the I.P.N. and the U.N.R.³⁸ who had acquired some notions about teaching second (foreign) languages. Their methodological skills were, however, not so developed as to fully adapt the books in use in the 1960's and still in use today. Besides, the time devoted to English lessons was so limited that it was almost impossible to motivate the students, who considered English to be a secondary subject with regard to French, which was given about six or seven hours per week. For these reasons, there had been no single method used in the teaching of English in Rwanda, but a mixture of prescriptive grammar and reading approaches.

The teachers I talked with confirm this. Even today, in some schools remote from the capital, some of the traditional approaches are still applied. I am particularly thinking of the Ecole Normale de Nyamasheke, where textbooks are scarcely found, and are out of date where found.

I have looked, so far, at the methods applied to the teaching of English in Rwanda from 1961 up to the present day. Despite their failure to equip the student with enough oral skills, they have at least succeeded in providing enough skills in both reading and writing, though the secondary school graduates who have the opportunity to go on to university studies often, so they have told me, rely mentally on translation from Kinyarwanda or French into English when they are asked to write an essay. The chief principle underlying all the methods was to make the students capable of communication in English. However, these same methods, the available materials and the time allotted to English constituted a great handicap for the achievement of this principle. Since the methods applied have failed to reach this objective, the improvement of methodology side by side with teacher training will help to ensure the students' acquisition of the language skills.

I cannot end this chapter, however, without a note on the background of Rwandan English teachers as one of the important factors which impairs proficiency in English in Rwanda.

1.4. BACKGROUND OF RWANDAN TEACHERS.

Most Rwandan teachers of English are graduates in English from either the I.P.N. (Institut Pédagogique National) or the U.N.R. (Université Nationale du Rwanda) who did not have the opportunity to continue their postgraduate studies to obtain the licence degree at the university. According to the principles of post - independence decolonization, all state servants in whatever domain should be Rwandans. In this respect, Rwandan teachers have replaced the Belgians in almost all secondary schools since 1970, when the first graduates from the I.P.N. were sent to teach. These had some notions about teaching second (or foreign) languages, especially about the audiolingual approach to teaching English, emphasizing listening and speaking.

Nevertheless, these graduates were by-products of the secondary schools' inadequate teaching / learning process. Before attending high school, the would-be teachers were taught through the same methods as described in section 1.3 of this chapter. As a result their oral achievement in English was poor. They had, however, an interest in learning English despite the discouraging quality of the teaching of English at secondary school. This is the reason why they wished to continue learning it in the course of their higher education. The only skills they had really acquired adequately before tertiary level were grammatical skills, reading comprehension and writing skills. Their oral communicative competence had never been taken into consideration because English, as a foreign language, was essentially learned by understanding the

rules of language, the ability to speak it being irrelevant.³⁹

The defects found in high school candidates' background can be attributed to these five major reasons : first, the inadequacy of teachers, who were untrained ; second, the poor teaching materials ; third, the lack of student motivation ; fourth, the poor language environment ; and last, the little time available for the teaching of English. These have in fact already been considered in the section on historical background; and it would therefore be repetitive to go over them again (I would refer the reader to the beginning of this chapter). The wisest course here may be to concern myself less with the reasons for the poor proficiency in English and more with how advanced studies improve the poor practical language skills to prepare the entrants to become efficient teachers. I will deal particularly with the former I.P.N. which was created for teacher training purposes.

The I.P.N. was created in 1967 and was given the task of training teachers for secondary schools. Among other departments of the Institute, there was an English Department working side by side with the French Department to constitute what they called the Section of Modern Languages. This section prepared all trainees to become teacher of both English and French, and, during the third year of the three-year training period, a two-month 'stage pédagogique' was organised for the trainees to practise teaching. The graduates from the I.P.N. were qualified to teach in the first three years of secondary school. The shortage of qualified teachers, however, obliged them to teach in the second cycle as well. With respect to teacher training, strevens has listed and

discussed four basic elements most teacher training courses contain. These are :

1. Selection, both initially, for acceptance as a trainee, and terminally, for acceptance as a teacher.
2. Continuing personal education of the trainee.
3. General professional training as an educator and teacher.
4. Special training as a teacher of a foreign or second language.⁴⁰

Let us consider these one by one, with respect to the I.P.N.

(1) Selection

As far as Rwandan-trained teachers are concerned, I can confirm that there was no 'selection' at all, because none of the I.P.N. students applied to be accepted for teacher training. The students simply applied for grants and the government sent them either to the I.P.N. or to the U.N.R.; by what criterion nobody knows. During the course of training (to use the words of Strevens based on his own experience as a teacher trainer)⁴¹ some individuals quickly marked themselves out as likely to become teachers of outstanding effectiveness, but also a number of individuals marked themselves out as unsuitable for the profession'. The latter category includes students whose personalities or attitudes run counter to those which the collective experience of educators regards as necessary or acceptable.⁴¹ The teacher trainers in Rwanda never identified these and, as a matter of fact, none of them was discouraged from entering the profession. Even those who failed during the training were appointed to teach because there was not only a shortage of qualified teachers but also a shortage of teachers

in general. In like manner any graduate was taken to be a good teacher notwithstanding the truth of the slogan that 'good teachers are born, not made.' As Strevens notes, "not every human being would make an adequate teacher, let alone a good one."⁴² I can, therefore, say that in the Rwandan case, there has never been 'selection' as regards teacher training and teacher appointment. Even those who prove to be 'bad teachers' are not forced to leave the profession, but are transferred from one secondary school to another and as is well known the policy-makers think it a good way to improve their personal qualities as teachers.

- (2) Continuing personal education of the trainee and (3) General training as an educator and teacher.

The I.P.N. has attained the necessary standard in this area. The trainee's personal education was improved simultaneously with his professional training, i.e. 'general training as an educator and teacher'. The latter was conveyed through such courses as 'Psychologie générale'; 'Psychologie génétique'; 'Rwandan educational policy'; 'déontologie professionnelle'. With respect to 'A commitment on the part of the teacher to keep abreast of developments in the profession of teaching'⁴³, seminars were often organized and articles about new methods in the teaching of languages were regularly sent to the teachers. The trainees were allowed to participate in the seminars on the teaching of foreign languages organized in Butare, often at the Groupe Scolaire de Butare. So the trainees had nothing to complain about as regards their personal education and their professional training.

- (4) Special training as a teacher of a foreign or second language.

The last basic element, as Strevens says , constitutes the core of most teacher-training courses and contains the three following different aspects :

- The 'skills' component ;
- The 'information' component and ;
- The 'theory' component.⁴⁴

Of the three aspects of 'Special training as a teacher of a foreign or second language', the most relevant in this section is the 'skills' component. This aspect comprises, in Strevens' discussion, three different kinds of skills required of the teacher : (a) Command of the language he or she is teaching ; (b) Teaching techniques and classroom activities ; (c) The 'management of learning'.⁴⁵

As far as Rwandan-trained teachers are concerned, the last two skills were subsumed under the training course curriculum, but the first, 'command of the language', needs further discussion. Owing to the poor secondary school background in English and the overloaded training program of the I.P.N., it would not be unfair to question the teachers' practical language skills. The formal nature of the classroom environment, the secondary school teachers' indifference about the students' communicative competence and the little time devoted to the teaching of English in Rwandan secondary schools did not favour the students' acquisition of practical language skills. During the I.P.N.'s formation, emphasis was put on highly academic subjects for the sake of 'continuing the trainees' 'personal education',

for the teacher trainers took for granted the trainees' communicative competence. Only certain courses in the language laboratory were given to enhance their oral skills. These courses, however, were not sufficient, for they simply involved pronunciation practice, and did not involve them in real communication.

All these factors, added to the lack of 'selection' before and after the training period, impair Rwandan-trained teachers' achievements as providers of communicative competence. This is reflected, first, by the Ministry of Education's policy of sending some graduates from the I.P.N. to an English-Speaking country (England or U.S.A.) to improve their skills in English⁴⁶, and second, in the constant complaints about the teachers' inadequacy. In the opening speech of the Seminar on English Teaching in December 1979, the Director general of pedagogic studies and research said :

"L'enseignement de l'anglais, en effet, se trouve dans une situation assez défavorable dans la plupart de nos écoles. Au manque de manuels appropriés et de matériel didactique adéquat s'ajoute bien souvent une maîtrise imparfaite de la langue de la part du professeur car l'anglais est ici une troisième langue vivante et une deuxième langue étrangère après le français."⁴⁷

In January 1981, Opening a second Seminar, the General Secretary of the Ministry of National Education noted the same deficiency :

"Les cas de maîtrise imparfaite de la langue de la part du professeur persistent encore."⁴⁸

One more piece of evidence showing the Rwandan-trained teachers' low proficiency in English is found in another workshop held in Kigali. The authors of the report on the Workshop of English

Teachers held from 8 to 11 August 1979, explaining why the report is divided into two parts, one in English, and another in French, say that Rwandan English teachers could not easily follow model lessons delivered in English :

"On remarque aussi que le rapport est en partie en Anglais et en partie en Français. En effet, après les deux premiers jours, on constata que certains des professeurs éprouvaient des difficultés à suivre et le prof. MORRIS dû conduire le reste du recyclage en Français."⁴⁹

The same problem can be found in the next Workshop held in 1980.

It is obvious, therefore, that Rwandan-trained teachers of English often have problems in understanding the language they are invited to teach. This will negatively affect the learners' acquisition of the language, because, as Strevens states :

"The teacher of a language is the learner's model, especially as the spoken language is concerned, and if the teacher's command of the language is inadequate, the learner's achievements will be impaired. Learners, including children, have a pretty good general idea of their teacher's standard, even though they themselves may be complete beginners."⁵⁰

Strevens goes on to say that "it is a source of great discouragement (and therefore a constraint upon learning) for a learner to have a teacher whose command of the language is uncertain about meanings and grammatical patterns, who has no confidence in his own grasp of the language. Consequently the skills component of a teacher training course must ensure that the teacher's command of English ... is at least adequate for

classroom purposes."⁵¹ He identifies one of the main causes of the learners' loss of interest in learning English when he says :

"This ought to be 'a make-or-break requirement', since the teacher without an adequate command of the language is probably wasting his own time and that of all his pupils, and he may be bruising their general enthusiasm as learners into the bargain."⁵²

This explains the tendency to forget English and the low proficiency in English which follow the obtaining of grades and the leaving of school in Rwanda, as said previously in the preceding section.

Notes

1. Nsabimana Justin, "Enseignement de l'Anglais au Rwanda", p.1.
2. I bid.
3. Barugahare J.B., The role of English in Rwanda : A sociolinguistic Perspective, pp.77-78.
4. Mukantaganzwa A. Boily, and Barugahare J.B., op.cit.
5. Barugahare, op.cit., p.59.
6. Alexandre, P., An Introduction to Language and Language in Africa,
Quoted by Barugahare, Op.cit, p.59.
7. Barugahare, op.cit., p.91 and ff.
8. Ibid ., p.80.
9. The Bureau Pédagogique de l'Enseignement Secondaire (B.P.E.S.) was created in 1975 and was given the task of standardizing all the teaching programs in secondary schools, evaluating the teachers' performances, supplementing teaching materials and adapting textbooks. The English Section was particularly designed for the enhancement of the teaching/learning of English which had been ranked at the foot of the school ladder.
10. See note four above.
11. I bid.

12. Nida E. and William L. Wonderley, "Communication Roles in multilingual societies", quoted in Whiteley W.H. (ed.), Language use and Social Change.
13. Op.cit., p.72.
14. Ibid. ., P.69.
15. Nsabimana, op.cit.,p.5.
16. Allen D.Edward and Valette M. Rebecca, Classroom Techniques : Foreign Languages and English as a Second Language, p. 85.
17. Ibid., p.285
18. ANGLAIS : PROGRAMME (11.10.1961)
19. Hornby A.S., Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, Oxford University Press, 1974.
20. Delree R., De Paepe A., Gijssels H., Anglais 2ème année, P.6
21. Communicative competence is defined in Pride J.B. (ed.), Sociolinguistic Aspects of Language Learning and Teaching, P.IX, as 'a possession of the individual language user. It has to do with the individual's achievement of appropriateness and effectiveness in his choice of language (and associated non-verbal behaviour), and in a very direct and obvious sense involves both teacher and learner alike'.
22. Op.cit., p.81.
23. Ibid., p.83 .
24. Ibid., p.84 .
25. Ibid., p.85 .
26. Op.cit., p.85.
27. Ibid.
28. This term is taken from Dulay, Burt and Krashen, op.cit., p.276.
29. Information obtained from the B.P.E.S, English Section.
30. The "tronc commun" was the first three years of secondary school before the school Reform (1971)
31. This textbook is still in use in some schools such as the Junior Seminary of Nyundo. As its name implies, it was not based on 'grammar-translation':
32. The first year of English corresponds to the second year of secondary school in Rwanda.
33. This is noted by Widdowson, Teaching Language as Communication, p.1.

34. Ibid., p.3.
35. Stephen Krashen, Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning, pp. 12-18 (see especially table 1).
36. See Allen and Valette, op.cit., p. 85.
37. "Enseignement de l'Anglais au Rwanda", p.1.
38. I.P.N. : Institut Pédagogique National (National Pedagogic Institute, created in 1967 for Teacher-Training).
U.N.R. : Université Nationale du Rwanda (National University of Rwanda).
39. Mukantaganzwa, op.cit., p.2.
40. Strevens, P., New orientations in the Teaching of English, p.71.
41. Ibid. , p.72.
42. Ibid., P.73.
43. Ibid. , p.71.
44. Ibid. , p. 7.
45. Ibid. , p.74.
46. This information was obtained from the English Section of the B.P.E.S.
47. Rapport du Recyclage National pour les Professeurs du cycle Supérieur, p.1.
48. Ibid.
49. Quoted by Barugahare, op.cit, p.75.
50. Op.cit., p.74 .
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.

CHAPTER TWO

THE 'COMMUNICATIVE' APPROACH.

2.0. INTRODUCTION.

Foreign language teaching remains a matter of fashion, especially when the existing methods are questioned. In fact, as Mackey points out, "Language teaching includes some of the most complex problems in the field of education."¹ However, many researchers in Language teaching agree that the main goal of language learning is the acquisition of 'communicative ability'.² In the introduction to Communicative Language Teaching, Littlewood writes : "The purpose of this book is practical : to help teachers broaden their repertoire of techniques, so that they can enable learners to communicate more effectively in a foreign language."³ In the introduction to the first chapter of the book, he clearly states the goal of foreign language teaching in these words : "This chapter will look more closely at this communicative view of language, in order to describe the goal of foreign language teaching ; Communicative ability'.

The acquisition of communicative ability is a process which calls many factors into play. As Brown states : "Total commitment, total involvement, a total physical, intellectual, and emotional response is necessary to successfully send and receive messages in a second language."⁵ The purpose of this new approach to foreign Language Teaching is to provide language teachers with a pathway to bring the foreign language learner to attain that' total commitment,

total involvement, total physical, intellectual, and emotional response' in order to maximize his learning of the target language. Many applied linguists have questioned the possibility of acquiring a language solely through the study of the structural items of the language. This is, indeed, the domain that has been the more emphasized in the teaching / learning process. The research done on former school-leavers' level of proficiency in a foreign language has shown that the mastery of the linguistic system of a language does not necessarily entail the mastery of the value of the language as communication.⁶ For this reason, many language teaching theorists, have devised an approach, the 'communicative' approach, which could involve the capacity for 'using language to communicate meanings as effectively as possible in concrete situations.'¹⁷ They have suggested ways of examining and comparing the tools at hand, and encouraged teachers to check their teaching techniques.

We can, therefore, assume that "Communicative Language Teaching" is not a negation of all the existing methods. Rather, it is a readaptation of those methods to suit the foreign language learner's needs. In fact, all the techniques can be efficiently used depending upon the present situation in which the teaching / learning situation takes place. Each teacher could devise this or that technique he judges the most efficient to carry out the teaching of such a skill, provided he maintains his learners' motivation and interest. It only differs from the earlier methods in that it shifts the focus from the teacher on to the learner and puts emphasis on human interaction, which had not been provided

for in the previous decades. Hence, the problem of "teaching language as communication"⁸ becomes crucial. In countries where no occasion for oral practice is found outside the classroom, it devolves upon the teacher to find efficient techniques to provide his learners with enough language to develop their communicative ability. The fashionable approach, at present, is 'communicative language teaching' whose principles are set in the following section.

2.1. DEFINITION OF TERMS.

The multiple facets a piece of language can take on when it moves from one context to another or depending upon the intended function the utterer wants it to serve has aroused language teaching theorists' interest in their research for an approach that could involve both the abstract knowledge of rules and a knowledge of how these language rules are put into practice to serve a communicative purpose. A sentence like "It is going to rain", for example, can have its signification found by recognizing that it is a declarative sentence, that the verb is present in tense and continuous in aspect and so on : the signification is thus derived from the relationship between the grammatical meanings of the syntactic choices and the dictionary meanings of lexical items. The sentence, however, might serve a number of different communicative functions depending on the situational circumstances in which it is used. It may serve as a warning or a threat, a part of a commentary about the weather, a rejection of the interlocutor's suggestion of going for a walk, an expression of pleasure when there has been a drought or some

other act of communication.

'Communicative language teaching may be said to have started in the early 1960's as a reaction against the assumption that 'language' is a sum of separate structures notwithstanding its aspect as 'part of human behaviour'.⁹ According to this assumption, "the learning of a language involves acquiring the ability to compose correct sentences."¹⁰ As Widdowson states "That is one aspect of the matter. But it also involves acquiring an understanding of which sentences, or parts of sentences are appropriate in a particular context."¹¹ As is now commonly agreed by many language learning theorists, a knowledge of the grammatical rules of a language does not necessarily imply the knowledge of how the language being learned operates in human interaction. This human interaction is the communicative aspect of language which comes into play in authentic situations. The shift in language teaching, then, has moved from the control of 'usage', that is, in Widdowson's terminology, the control of the language structures, to that of 'use', that is, in the same author's terms, the control of language in real-life situations.¹²

A communicative approach therefore, can be defined in terms of its main principles as an approach which devises teaching techniques likely to develop the language learner's skills in language use. In other words, the communicative approach relates language to its communicative functions. Widdowson states it in this way :

"If it is the case that knowing a language means both knowing what signification sentences have as instances of usage and what value they take on as

instances of use, it seems clear that the teacher of language should be concerned with the teaching of both kinds of knowledge. In the past, the tendency has been to concentrate on usage on the assumption that learners will eventually pick up the necessary knowledge of use on their own. This would seem to be too optimistic a view to take. The evidence seems to be that learners who have acquired a good deal of knowledge of the usage of a particular language find themselves at a loss when they are confronted with actual instance of use. The teaching of usage does not appear to guarantee a knowledge of use. The teaching of use, however, does seem to guarantee the learning of usage since the latter is represented as a necessary part of the former."¹³

Widdowson's argument that 'usage is represented as a necessary part of use' finds its place in Littlewood's presentation of 'four broad domains of skill which make up a speaker's communicative competence'. The four domains are the following :

- The learner must attain as high a degree as possible of linguistic competence. That is, he must develop skill in manipulating the linguistic system to the point where he can use it spontaneously and flexibly in order to express his intended message.
- The learner must distinguish between the forms which he has mastered as part of his linguistic competence, and the communicative functions that they perform. In other words, items mastered as part of a linguistic system must also be understood as part of a communicative system.
- The learner must develop skills and strategies for using language to communicate meanings as effectively as possible in concrete situations. He must learn to use feedback to judge his success, and if

- necessary, remedy failure by using different language.
- The learner must become aware of the social meaning of language forms. For many learners, this may not entail the ability to vary their own speech to suit different social circumstances, but rather the ability to use generally acceptable forms and avoid potentially offensive ones.¹³

By Widdowson's account as well as by Littlewood's, the 'communicative teaching of a language' is not a new theory of language teaching which completely denies the efficiency of the earlier methods. It only brings into focus another aspect of language that the other methods did not take into consideration, that is, the communicative function of language. Mackey points out that 'all language-teaching methods, by their nature, are necessarily made up of a certain selection, gradation, presentation, and repetition of the material'.¹⁵ In any case, all methods overlap depending upon what the teacher wants to teach and the procedure he finds suitable to his class. He may sometimes use translation when the classroom situation requires it, substitution drills to fix such or such structure in the students' minds, deductive grammar for reinforcement, especially with adult learners, nonsense sentences to train the students' organs of speech. I remember a sentence we had to repeat many times in order to produce the sound /ð/ with less difficulty. The sentence was ; "I wonder whether the wether will weather the weather or whether the wether will die". This sentence did not make sense at the time but it was funny and thus interesting to sing loudly in chorus or individually, while practising the

sound /s/. Widdowson refers to the same overlapping of all the methods when he writes :

" This being so, it would seem to be sensible to design language teaching courses with reference to use. This does not mean that exercises in particular aspects of usage cannot be introduced where necessary ; but these would be auxiliary to the communicative purposes of the course as a whole and not introduced as an end in themselves." ¹⁶

In the same way, Hymes has made a salient contrast between the 'actual' (i.e. what is said and heard) and 'the underlying' (i.e. rules of use). He says : "There are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless." ¹⁷

These 'rules of use' are involved in the notion of performance which relates to the language user's knowledge of abstract linguistic rules and his ability to use his knowledge of linguistic rules for effective communication. As Widdowson says,

"In normal circumstances, linguistic performance involves the simultaneous manifestation of the language system as usage and its realization as use. But we can separate one from the other if we wish by focussing our attention on one rather than the other." ¹⁸

However, the concentration on linguistic correctness relying on conscious acquisition of abstract linguistic rules tends to block the learner's development of communicative ability. From the experiments Dulay, Burt and Krashen describe in Language Two, they consider the 'available evidence for both child and adult second (or foreign) language learners in a

foreign language environment'.¹⁹ For beginning language learners, concrete referents appropriate for either a child or an adult create "a necessary environmental characteristic ." That is to say, in order to provide a good amount of language for beginners, the teacher must use concrete referents to help his learners' understanding. Even if foreign language learners are not given a language environment outside the classroom, the teacher should endeavour to create meaningful situations in class and be patient enough to let the learners use the language gradually, for they cannot acquire it straight away. The focus in fact, shifts from the teacher on to the learner who really does the learning and the teacher only acts as a 'catalyst' or 'guide' and no longer as the provider of all knowledge, as the traditional view implies. This approach, as Strevens states, is 'pragmatic', not 'dogmatic'. It is flexible and so gives the teacher relative independence in selecting content and interpreting the syllabus.²⁰ Given the fact that 'the development of communicative ability occurs through processes inside the learner', Littlewood describes the teacher's role in a communicative class as follows :

" The concept of the teacher as 'instructor' is thus inadequate to describe his overall function. In a broad sense, he is a 'facilitator of learning', and may need to perform in a variety of specific role, separately or simultaneously. These include the following :

- As a general overseer of his students' learning, he must aim to coordinate the activities so that they form a coherent progression leading towards greater communicative ability
- As classroom manager, he is responsible for grouping activities into 'lessons' and for ensuring

that these are satisfactorily organised at the practical level. This includes deciding on his own role within each activity.

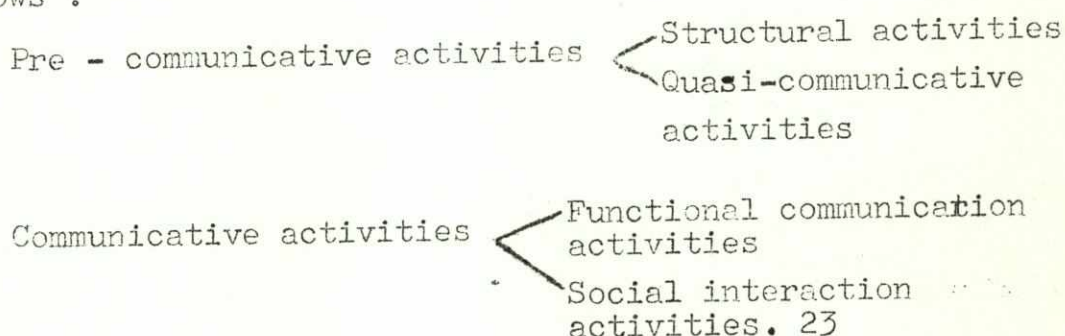
- In many activities, he may perform the familiar role of language instructor : he will present new language, exercise direct control over the learners' performance, evaluate and correct it, and so on.
- In others, he will not intervene after initiating the proceedings, but will let learning take place through independent activity. This will frequently be communicative, but may also be pre-communicative.
- While such independent activity is in progress, he may act as consultant or adviser, helping where necessary....
- He will sometimes wish to participate in an activity as 'co-communicator' with the learners. In this role he can stimulate and present new language, without taking the main initiative for learning away from the learners themselves."²¹

In other words, in the 'communicative approach', the teacher is the language provider and the acquisition facilitator. He is neither the great corrector, nor the great transmitter of knowledge because the class is no longer teacher centered but student-centered. His role, then, limits itself first to providing quantity of input, keeping the students motivated and interested, focussing on "learnable" rules, ~~correcting only~~ stigmatizing errors and, errors in meaning and finally, variety by choosing exercises from all the approaches available, thus being eclectic.

This role assumed by the teacher is appropriate to the learners' motivation and their need 'to express their own identity and to relate with people around them.' The students are likely to develop their communicative skills because they develop positive attitudes towards their

learning environment, in which they are involved. The interpersonal relationships which do not create inhibitions, but are supportive and accepting (when the teacher acts as a 'facilitator of acquisition') create a favorable atmosphere for the learning to take place. These relationships emerge among learners and between teacher and learners when the teacher's role is less dominant.²²

I have looked so far at the teacher's role in a 'communicative' approach as Littlewood has convincingly dealt with it. It goes without saying, however, that the idea of a less dominant role for the teacher is not sufficient on its own to make us understand what a communicative approach is. Littlewood's 'methodological framework' best defines a communicative approach. He represents it diagrammatically as follows :



The main objective of 'pre-communicative activities' is 'to provide learners with a fluent command of the linguistic system, without actually requiring them to use this system for communicative purposes'. The attempt to relate the language forms practised in these activities to their 'potential functional meanings' causes Littlewood to subcategorize the activities as 'quasi-communicative', "because they take account of communicative as well as structural facts about language, in contrast

with purely structural activities such as performing mechanical drills or learning verb paradigm."²⁴ An example of a quasi-communicative activity is given by Littlewood as the following :

P : By the way, has John written that letter yet ?

R : Yes, he wrote it yesterday.

P : Has he seen the film yet ?

R : Yes, he saw it yesterday.²⁵ (NB. : P = Prop ;
R. = Response).

This kind of exercise sounds communicative though it mainly teaches structural points.

'Communicative' activities, on the other hand, require the students to use their pre-communicative knowledge and skills for the communication of meanings. In practicing "the total skill of communication", "the learner may be placed in a situation where he must perform a task by communicating as best he can, with whatever resources he has available". Therefore he is engaged in "functional communication activities" and "the criterion for success is practical."²⁶ "When the learner is encouraged to take account of the social context and to use a language likely to develop greater social acceptability instead of simply "getting meanings across", this involves grammatical accuracy as well as socially appropriate speech."²⁷ Thus, the learner is involved in what Littlewood has labelled 'Social interaction activities'. That is, the learner is required to produce language appropriate to specific situations and relationships.

This methodological framework is supported by this quotation from Widdowson : ".... the teaching of language as communication calls for an approach which brings linguistic

skills and communicative abilities into close association with each other".²⁸ The communicative approach is the most likely to carry out the close association of usage and use because it not only requires the learner to recognize and integrate language forms, but also encourages him to use them as a medium to interact with other users of the language with relative accuracy and appropriateness. This approach satisfies 'three basic pedagogic principles' that have been discussed by Widdowson. These are : "the principle of rational appeal, the principle of integration, and the principle of control."²⁹

(1) Rational appeal : the use of translation.³⁰

This principle takes account of the 'cognitive code'. People should know what they are doing when they undertake language tasks. 'They should be led to recognize that these tasks relate to the way they use their own language for the achievement of genuine communicative purposes.'³¹ The principle associates the target language with the learner's previous knowledge and leads him to use the target language for the exploration and extension of this knowledge. In other words, the learner of a foreign language is used to performing tasks in his mother tongue, and thus he can be considered as a normal language user. This background knowledge of language use is likely to support the normal use of the new language to be learnt. For example, use of topics drawn from other subjects in the school curriculum makes 'the presentation of the foreign language relevant and significant as a communicative activity comparable to the learner's own language.'³² In short, this principle can motivate learners,

since it makes them feel that the language they are learning can be directly used to achieve communicative purposes.

(2) Integration and control.³³

The principle of integration is clearly explained in Widdowson's discussion of "the need for integration":

"In this book I have represented the learner's task as essentially one which involves acquiring a communicative competence in the language, that is to say, an ability to interpret discourse, whether the emphasis is on productive or receptive behaviour. If this definition of the learner's aim is accepted, it would seem to follow that any approach directed at achieving it should avoid treating the different skills and abilities that constitute competence in isolation from each other, as ends in themselves. What the learner needs to know to do is to compose in the act of writing, comprehend in the act of reading, and to learn techniques of reading by writing and techniques of writing by reading. If the aim of language learning is to develop the underlying interpreting ability, then it would seem reasonable to adopt an integrated approach to achieve it."³⁴

To put it another way, 'integration' means that communicative competence involves all the language skills as traditionally segregated : speaking, listening, reading and writing. As they all tie in with 'communicative competence' they are integrate with one another. Coherence in whatever task requires all the language skills to be developed to a certain level of mastery not separately each from the other, but each as an integral part to almost all activities. If we agree that communication is interaction between human beings, then it becomes indis-

pensable not to separate the four language skills because communication needs a channel to be carried out. The channel can be oral or written and insofar as feedback is expected from the decoder of the message, listening and reading are required from both encoder and decoder or addresser and addressee or simply the interactants.

The last principle of the approach is that of 'control'. This principle relates to the language sample presented to the learners. The language sample serves as the 'input' to which the learner is exposed in the 'filtering process'. Widdowson makes a distinction between the input and the intake. This difference lies in the fact that we do not internalize all the language we are exposed to at a time (input) because we unconsciously 'impose our own filter on the data and what we internalize from it is the intake'. Widdowson, then, advocates control of the intake instead of controlling the input, and states the advantage of this :

"Instead of controlling the input we can control the intake. That is to say, instead of restricting the amount of language to which the learner is exposed (as was the case traditionally) we restrict the amount of attention that the learner pays to what he is exposed to. We do this by limiting the kind of interpretation task the learner is required to undertake. The advantage of this kind of control is that it is a normal feature of communicative behaviour whereas control by limiting exposure is not. When we listen to talk or read something we are able to adjust our attention : the input is one thing, but our intake is another. We in fact impose our filter on the data."³⁵

The learners' intake after exposure to a piece of language data is perceived through their contribution to 'the completion of complex tasks'. It is this contribution that must give a pathway to the intake. More and more freedom must be allowed to learners to display their intake and give them opportunity to reorganize it to perform different tasks in communicative networks.

The reorganization of the intake takes place when the students' 'creative construction' is at work, thus developing language acquisition. I will not venture to contrast learning and acquisition³⁶ because, undoubtedly, and provided that language teaching is communicative, one involves the other. The acquisition that must occur for both child and adult learners leads one to consider the teaching guidelines as they are suggested by Dulay, Burt and Krashen. In conclusion to their research and studies on others' research on Second Language acquisition, they arrive at the following teaching guidelines which, in my opinion, are crucial to the effective use of a communicative approach to Second (or foreign) language teaching.

The first guideline they propose is 'the maximization of the student's exposure to natural communication'. They define 'natural communication' as the 'focussing of the learner on the message being conveyed, not on the linguistic form of that message'. In order to do this, much emphasis will be on the degree of reality and naturalness displayed in the language sample presented in the classroom. Instead of asking a student, for example, 'what's this ?'

holding up a pencil, it is rather natural and realistic to say : 'Is that your pencil ?' ; and the student will naturally respond : 'Yes' without being required to make a whole sentence because, to this kind of question, the answer is generally a one - word one like in 'What's his name ?' , Student : 'John'. If the teacher wants the student to answer using complete sentences, he should ask questions that naturally require them. For example : Teacher : "Why are you late ?"

"What happened to your foot ?" ³⁷

These kinds of question require complete sentences as responses and the student who has to answer them ~~feels~~ feels the necessity to provide sentences that wholly answer the questions, because the questions refer to his experience. In this natural communication, the teacher should not draw attention to linguistic errors unless the focus is on the form of the language, because such an emphasis on error correction blocks the spontaneity of communication. On the contrary, as Dulay, Burt and Krashen suggest, he should respond to content, that is, he should concentrate on intelligibility. Here is the example they propose :

Teacher : Why are you late ?

Student : I miss bus.

Teacher : Why did you miss the bus ?

By repeating the correct form of the student's answer he may not feel lectured and frustrated as when the teacher says :

"Do not say 'I miss bus'.", but say, "I missed the bus ."

Another way of correcting students' errors without focussing further attention on them is to say for example, "Oh, you missed the bus". In this way, the student notices his error and pays

attention to the correct form without a feeling of humiliation that comes out of direct correction by the teacher.³⁸

The second teaching guideline is 'the incorporation of a Silent Phase at the beginning of the Instructional Program'. According to the authors, the students should not be forced to speak in the target language before they are ready. The teacher should accept non-verbal responses, written responses or spoken responses if the students volunteer to speak in the new language. This relates to the teacher's patience when he deals with complete beginners. As the students have not internalized enough language to speak yet, the teacher should allow them enough time to reorganize their language intake and speak when they are ready. Some Rwandan teachers I talked with objected to this Silent Phase, saying that some students think that they are not obliged to speak, and acquire the habit of being passive during the whole learning process. This objection, however, fails to be convincing because when students are motivated and encouraged, and when the teacher subordinates his attitudes to the students' needs, the latter are geared to participation. The success of the Silent Phase, depends upon the degree of confidence that the teacher creates in his students.

The third guideline is 'the use of concrete Referents to make the new language Understandable to Beginning Students'. As defined by the three authors of Language Two, a 'Concrete Referent' is "anything or any activity which can be seen, heard, felt or smelled as it is being verbally described."³⁹ This is similar to the common use of visual aids

and 'demonstrable activities' (especially for adults). Concrete Referents are good supports to language learning. They help the students to fix the new language in their minds. The skillful teacher can even use concrete referents as stimuli to make the students speak, write or understand reading selections (with the use of flash cards and text pictures).

The fourth is 'the inclusion of Formal Grammar Lessons for Adults'. Indeed, as Dulay, Burt and Krashen affirm, "Many adults need to learn some formal grammar in order to feel that they are indeed learning a new language. Some adults can also consciously apply simple grammatical rules to produce sentences in the new language." Grammar, however, must be kept in its place. That is, the focus must be kept on learnable rules, and these rules can be taught through the 'Inductive method' or the 'Deductive method'.⁴⁰ In the inductive method, students with help from the teacher make sentences and finally come to generalizations. In the deductive, on the other hand, the teacher states the rule and the students deduce examples. With respect to learnable rules, Dulay, Burt and Krashen suggest the following classroom technique :

"Focus on low-level, easy rules, not complex ones, e.g. the 'it's/its' distinction is a low-level rule. When to put an apostrophe in 'its' can be taught. On the other hand, the definite/indefinite a/the distinction seems to resist explicit instruction. The rules governing the use of 'a' and 'the' are so complex, they are not adequately stated in many grammar books. This distinction will be acquired subconsciously, if it is acquired at all."⁴¹

The fifth teaching guideline I have selected from those proposed in Language Two, is the 'learning of the students motivations and incorporation of this knowledge into the lessons.' The making of groups for groupwork activities, for example, requires this knowledge of the teacher. In establishing social relations and teaching language varieties, this knowledge seems to be indispensable. Dulay, Burt and Krashen say:

"Knowing why your students are in your class, and knowing with whom they want to associate and like whom they want to sound will help explain their different success rates and the domain of the target language they learn."⁴²

The sixth is almost similar to the first. It is 'the creation of a non-threatening atmosphere'. This atmosphere results from situations 'where students are not embarrassed by their errors'. It is needless to restate that errors on the students' part should be expected and that consequently the teacher should not "focus on student errors during communication." In the teaching guideline, it is recommended to "use role playing activities to minimize students' feelings of personal failure when they make errors."⁴³ Indeed, students feel self-confident talking to each other. To use Douglas Brown's terms, "human learning is fundamentally a process that involves the making of mistakes."⁴⁴ Indeed, a language is not a stock of knowledge that a person stores in his brain, but an instrument that one has to manipulate every day in order to reach the purpose of communication. As the learner of a second (or foreign) language already has an established system of communication, that is, his first language,

what he tries to do with the new language he is learning, is to make hypotheses about it all the way through the learning process. At this stage, errors and mistakes recur, but in the end, when they have acquired enough language samples, errors and mistakes tend to disappear. The making of mistakes is necessary for the learning to take place because, when learners avoid mistakes at all costs, they shun all situations where they are obliged to speak, thus not taking benefit from the feedback on their errors. In other words, they miss out on the interaction which remains an effective way of language improvement.

In my early years of learning English, the teacher concentrated too much on formal correctness and, as we felt uncomfortable in English, we simply avoided speaking. This grew into a kind of inhibition in me so that, even though I tried hard to dismiss such a problem at the university, I sometimes feel embarrassed in informal situations and this impedes my fluency in English. The difficulty is, no doubt, a result of the relatively few opportunities I had for practice during my secondary school training and the fear of being laughed at or punished if I happened to make mistakes which the teacher did not like. The 'making of mistakes', nevertheless, is an integral part of human learning. 'Trial' goes hand in hand with 'error' and it is presumably why Brown says : "Second language learning is a process that is clearly not unlike first language learning in its trial-and-error nature."⁴⁵

The 'making of mistakes' closely relates to creative construction as far as language learning is concerned, whatever the foreign language environment. To let creative

construction develop naturally, the last guideline suggests 'non-reference to Students' first language when Teaching the Second Language!.Dulay, Burt and Krashen state :

"The Second Language is a new and independent language system. Since successful second language learners keep their languages distinct, teachers should, too. No reference need be made to the student's first language unless the student requests it." ⁴⁶

This discourages the tendency to contrast the first language and the second language when explaining grammatical structure. Translation should not be undertaken as a major technique. It can be referred to only when necessary to clarify meaning.

These few teaching guidelines support the eclecticism of communicative language teaching. This approach, in fact, favours acquisition through the kind of learning/teaching principles it devises. This section has emphasized methodology rather than teaching material. The forthcoming section will look at the type of material likely to develop the learners' communicative ability.

2.2. TYPE OF MATERIAL.

Needless to say, no material has been worked out which will satisfy all the requirements of a communicative teaching approach. I cannot claim to be certain of what happens in other countries but as regards Rwanda, this new approach is not fully applied because the textbooks used by Rwandan teachers are still discrete-point based. For this reason, there must be a heavy reliance on the teacher's ability

to adapt the available material to his students' needs, and in this sense we may accept the textbooks at hand, provided that they lend themselves to the kind of adaptation designed to render them communicative. Brumfit and Johnson note that "teachers, concerned as they are with student responses, must convert linguistic discussion into learning practice, and they cannot ignore either learning theories or successful classroom experience."⁴⁷ In fact, being the manager of the classroom activities and the only person (in the Rwandan situation) in constant interaction with the students, the teacher should be allowed enough freedom to adopt teaching materials likely to arouse his students' motivation.

The teacher, then, when preparing and structuring his lesson, may draw from a variety of the teaching materials at hand and find a context for this or that point he wants the students to learn. Some materials, however, can be said to be relatively communicative. Relatively because no textbook can really take account of all the requirements of the communicative approach, particularly when we come to consider the subject matter which must be relevant to the student's motivation and interest by its cultural and pedagogic appropriateness. That is, the materials must be linguistically and culturally authentic, in other words, accurate and up to date.

Considering all cultural differences in English-speaking countries, especially those from where textbooks are ordered, and the subsequent impossibility to devise teaching materials readily acceptable in all foreign settings, I may

assume that all teaching materials have want of adaptation to be 'wholly' communicative. After this discussion I will consider a number of teaching materials from those listed in the appendix to Brumfit and Johnson's Communicative Approach to Language Teaching and see how they fit into Littlewood's methodological framework described in the preceding section. The materials will be quoted at full length in order not to spoil the scenes they bring into view.

The first Extract I want to look at is Extract 3, from Say what you mean in English by J. Andrews, Nelson, 1975. This book is for elementary students.⁴⁸

From Teacher's Book (pp.88-91)

Unit 21 Can I help you ?

Pictures : - a tube of toothpaste with stripes (SIGNAL)
- a tooth brush
- a writing pad
- a shoe with laces
- a slip-on shoe

Listen to this : (Dialogue as language sample)

Shop Assistant : Can I help you ?
Customer : Yes, I need a tube of toothpaste.
Shop Assistant : Any special sort ?
Customer : Well ... no, not really.
Shop Assistant : How about this one ?
Customer : Is there a smaller size ?
Shop Assistant : Yes, here you are.
Customer : Has this got red stripes in it ?
Shop assistant : Yes, it has.
Customer : Oh, ... haven't you got a plain sort ?
Shop assistant : Here's one.
Customer : Good. I'll take that one.
How much is it ?
Shop assistant : Fourteen, please.
Customer : Thank you !

Now Say this (listen and repeat)

He needs a tube of toothpaste.
He doesn't want any special sort.
He wants a small size.

He doesn't want toothpaste with red stripes in it.
He wants a plain sort.

Listen to this :

Shop Assistant : Yes, please ?
Customer : I'd like a writing-pad.
Shop Assistant : Any special make ?
Customer : Not really ... anything will do.
Shop Assistant : How about this one ?
Customer : Is there a cheaper one ?
Shop Assistant : Yes, here you are.
Customer : This is blue, isn't it ?
Shop Assistant : Yes,.....
Customer : Oh... haven't you got white ?
Shop Assistant : Here's one.
Customer : Good, I'll take that one. How much is it ?
Shop Assistant : Seventeen, please.
Customer : Thank you.

Now say this (listen and repeat) :

He wants a writing pad.
He doesn't want any special make.
He wants a cheap one
He doesn't want blue, he wants white.

Look at this : (These tables can be used as reinforcement)

She says :	You say :
Can I help you ? Or Yes, please ?	Yes, I need a Or Yes, I'd like a
How about this one ?	Is there a smaller size ? Or Is there a cheaper one ?
Here is one	Good, I'll take that one.

Listen to this :

Shop Assistant : Can I help you ?
Customer : Yes, I want some brown shoes.
Shop Assistant : With laces, or slip-on ?
Customer : With laces, please.
Shop Assistant : What size ?
Customer : Nine, I think, but would you measure my foot ?
Shop Assistant : Certainly ! Yes, nine it is.
Now ... how about these ?

Customer : Well, they feel a bit tight here.
Can I try the next size ?
Shop Assistant : Of course. Try these.
Customer : They're a better fit, but I don't
like the colour.
Have you got them in a darker brown ?
Shop Assistant : I'm afraid not. These are all we have.
Customer : Oh well, I think I'll leave it, then.
Thank you very much !

Now say this (listen and repeat)

He wants some brown shoes with laces, size nine.
The first pair are a bit tight, so he asks for the
next size.
The second pair are a better fit, but he doesn't
like the colour.
He decides not to buy them.

(Teacher to students) : Now imagine you want to buy
some toothpaste. Can you say
the right things ? Try.

Shop Assistant : Can I help you ?
Customer :
Shop Assistant : Any special sort ?
Customer :
Shop Assistant : Yes, here you are.
Customer :
Shop Assistant : Forteen, please.
Customer :

Now act the part of the shop assistant,
and get your neighbour to be the customer. Do this without
looking at the book.

This material has potential interest for elementary students as
it is presented in a situation which they have experienced
more than once in their mother tongue. Indeed, the teacher
can legitimately predict that any student has been at least
once involved in a shopping bargain. Besides, it follows the
common process of developing the speaking skill. That is, from
manipulation, i.e, repetition with implicit pronunciation
drill, dialogue memorization, to communication. As the material
is for elementary students it remains controlled, since it is a

preparation for freer communication which requires the language sample presented by the material. Therefore, this material can be said to fit in 'Pre-communicative activities' in Littlewood's diagram. This set of dialogues not only provides the language that can be used by students when shopping or selling but also it may help them if they are asked to summarise the dialogues by the sentences listed under what is labelled "Listen and repeat". Indeed, these sentences sum up the content of the dialogue and may show to the students in what way they can report a dialogue orally or in a written form. As for listening, this material favours retention by repetition and provides recurrence of the same topic in the three dialogues. We may, therefore, assume that towards the end, the students can act the dialogues with relative ease and even find other articles to include in the dialogues.

The second extract is designed for a pre-intermediate level. It has been taken from Strategies by B. Abbs, A. Ayton, I. Freebairn, Longman, 1975. The materials presented in Brumfit and Johnson are taken From Student's Book (PP. 91-3).⁴⁹ The first exercise is "Discussing, about future possibilities". The topic chosen for this activity is 'Sports', namely, 'The world cup'. Most students are really excited by sports and would like to be informed about what happens all over the world concerning sports, especially 'football'. In many secondary schools, teachers involve students in forecasting football matches as a language exercise. It is clear from this that the teacher can take profit from the students' eagerness to support this or that team to carry

out this activity. He may first explain to students what 'Quarter Finals', 'Semi-finals' and 'Final' mean.⁵⁰ Instead of using this 'information chart' as it is made by the authors of Strategies, he may find alternative football teams in his country for they are best known by the students and better stimulate the students, who can naturally form groups according to what team each group supports. The information chart proposed by the authors of Strategies is the following:

Information chart				
Country	Last 20 matches			Other information
	Won	Lost	Drawn	
Argentina	6	5	9	New goalkeeper
Belgium	5	7	8	New captain
France	11	5	4	Lost against Italy last year
Poland	10	3	7	Weak defence
West Germany	13	3	4	New manager
Portugal	9	7	4	Beat Russia last year
Yugoslavia	14	4	2	Three players ill
Holland	9	6	5	Won Cup two years ago
Italy	8	5	7	Three new players
England	7	4	9	Weak attack
Australia	8	8	4	Weak goalkeeper
Spain	8	8	4	Weak defence but good goalkeeper
Russia	10	5	5	Brilliant center forward
Sweden	11	4	5	Strong defence
Denmark	8	7	5	In Cup final four years ago
Brazil	12	5	3	Won last World Cup

The Rwandan teacher or any other teacher of English in Rwanda can substitute a table presenting the strongest Rwandan football teams for the table above and involve the students in

a discussion about the next Whit-Cup. He can adapt this discussion from the following :

" Unit 10

The World Cup Discussion : Group or pairwork : Discuss the chances of different countries playing in the next World Cup. Use the information chart to help you make your decisions to find out who you think might win the cup. You first decide about all the teams in the quarter finals. Your discussion might go something like this :

A : Well, Argentina might beat Belgium,
but I doubt it.

B : Why do you think that ?

A:: They've won more matches than Belgium,
but they've got a new goalkeeper.

And Belgium's new captain is very good.

B : I don't agree with you. No, I'm certain
now that Argentina will beat Belgium.

Now discuss the chances of all the other teams in the same way. Write the names of the teams in the chart when you've made your decisions."⁵¹ The teacher may then replace the names of countries by the names of Rwandan teams such as "Rayon Sport", "Panthères Noires", "Mukura Victory Sport", "Kiyovu Sport", "Magerwa", "Standard", "Espoir", "Mukungwa" and so on. This is a subject of interest for the students and their will to speak arises naturally. For writing, each student can be given the task of writing an account of what he thinks may happen in the next Whit-Cup. This writing assignment will be relatively easy because as Baskoff notes, ' each student knows "what to say" because he is familiar with the topic ; he knows "how to say it" because the model gave him the structures

and idioms ; and he knows "how to organize it" because he has the outline to follow.⁵² The technique that has been applied to prepare the students for this task is "Groupwork."⁵³

The next material in the Appendix of The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching is designed for upper-intermediate and advanced students. It was taken from Functions of English by L. Jones. Cambridge University Press, 1977 : Here it is :

From Student's Book (pp. 41-3)

7.4 Presentation : asking permission

Sometimes we need to do more than just offer to do something—we may need to ask permission to make sure we are allowed to do it.

The expression to use depends on :

- a) The type of task you want to do and the degree of resistance you anticipate.
- b) Who you are and who you are talking to—the role you are playing and your status.

Here are some useful ways of asking permission. They are graded in order of politeness :

I'm going to leave early.
I thought I might leave early.
I'd like to leave early.
Alright if I leave early ?
Anyone mind if I leave early ?
D'you mind if I leave early ?
Is it alright if I leave early ?
Would it be alright if I left early ?
I wonder if I could possibly leave early ?
.....I hope you don't mind, but would it be at all possible for me to leave early ?

We tend to give permission in just a short phrase, like :

Yes, go ahead.
Yes, I suppose so.
Oh well, alright.

And we refuse permission like this :

I'd rather you didn't, if you don't mind.
I'm sorry, but it's not possible.

Discuss with your teacher when you might use the expressions.

7.5. Practice

Make a list of five things you would like to do, but which would need your teacher's permission. Ask for permission to do them-but be warned, he may ask you why ! Later he will change roles and play the role of the principal, so you may then need to change the way you ask.

7.6. Presentation : giving reasons

When you ask someone for permission, or refuse someone permission, he is likely to ask for reasons. Here are some useful ways of giving reasons :

Well, you see.....
The reason is.....
If I could explain.....
.... and that's why I'd like to....

Discuss with your teacher how you would give reasons using these phrases.

7.7. Practice

Build conversations following the pattern suggested in 7.4 and 7.6 using these prompts :

Leave room	Stay for tea
smoke my pipe	borrow umbrella
borrow car	use phone
day off	watch T V
open window	write in book

Here is an example :

A : Would it be **alright** if I left the room for a moment, you see I have to make a phone call.

B : I'd rather you didn't if you don't mind, you see this is a very important part of the lesson.

A : Oh, **alright**, I see.

7.8. Practice

Here are some things you want to do. Get together with another student and play the roles of boss and assistant. Keep changing roles after each scene. Remember to give good reasons for wanting to do these things :

Have the afternoon off - a day off - a week off.
leave 5 minutes early - $\frac{1}{2}$ hour early - 2 hours early.
Change your holiday - your desk - your secretary.
Get an assistant - your own phone - a company car.

7.9 Practice

Team up with two other students. Imagine one of you has just moved into a new flat and a lot of things need doing. One of you is very lazy, another very eager to do things, and the other normal. Decide together what needs doing (you will also need to cook a meal this evening) and who is going to do what .54

These materials follow one of the main principles of "Communicative" Language Teaching as Alexander states it :

"The students should clearly understand they will learn to do things through language, while at the same time mastering the grammatical structure necessary for this purpose. Because of this, the course is likely to be very different in appearance and in the methods used from any language course they might have previously experienced. The students themselves will be able to tell how well they are progressing to the extent that they are able to do the things they are being taught to do!"⁵⁵

In addition they bring the student to use more imagination but also avoid embarrassment with respect to the principle quoted above, the materials involve students in 'doing things through language' in this instance, 'asking permission', 'giving or refusing permission' and 'giving reasons'. As they suggest reference to the teacher, the student can assess how well he is progressing if he comes to know that he has been successful 'in doing the things he is being taught to do'. Nevertheless, these kinds of materials are not very much developed. The teachers, then, should make the available teaching materials worthwhile by providing them with context and meaningful situations through their own adaptation. They may encourage the

students to create more situations involving role-play thus developing their productive ability which is crucial to the acquisition of communicative ability.

Notes

1. Mackey, W.F., Language Teaching Analysis, P.V
2. Littlewood, William, Communicative Language Teaching, An Introduction, P.1
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Brown, H. Douglas, Principles of Language Learning and Teaching, P.1
6. See Mukantaganzwa and Barugahare, op.cit., see also Dulay, Burt and Krashen, op.cit., pp. 3-10.
7. Littlewood, op.cit., pp.viii-ix.
8. See Widdowson, op.cit., .
9. See Mackey, op.cit., p. 20.
10. Widdowson, op.cit., p.1.
11. Ibid.
12. Widdowson, op.cit., chapter One.
13. Ibid., p.19.
14. Op.cit., p.6.
15. Op.cit., p.157.
16. Op.cit., p.20.
17. See Hymes D.H., "On communicative Competence" in Brumfit and Johnson (ed.), The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching, pp. 5-60.
18. Op.cit., p.3.
19. See Dulay, Burt and Krashen, op.cit., pp. 13-43.
20. Op.cit., p.59.
21. Op.cit., pp. 92-93.
22. Ibid., pp. 93-94.
23. Ibid., p.86.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., p.10.
26. Ibid., p. 86.
27. Ibid.

28. 28. Op.cit., p. 144.
29. Ibid., p. 158.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid., P. 159.
33. Ibid., p.160.
34. Ibid., p. 144.
35. Ibid., p. 161.
36. Krashen, op.cit., pp. 1-11.
37. Dulay, Burt and Krashen, op.cit., p.264.
38. Ibid., p. 265.
39. Ibid., p. 266.
40. Ibid., p. 267.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Op.cit., p.164.
45. Ibid.
46. Op.cit., p. 269.
47. Brumfit C.J. and K. Johnson (ed.), The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching, p. 206.
48. Ibid., pp.207-226.
49. Ibid., p. 217
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid., p.218
52. Baskoff, Florence, "A Writing Laboratory for Beginning Students of English" in The English Teaching Forum (ed.), The Art of TESOL, Part Two, p.228.
53. Ibid., p.229.
54. Quoted in Brumfit and Johnson, op.cit., pp.223-224.
55. Alexander, L.G., Mainline, Beginners A, Teacher's Book, p.1.

C H A P T E R T H R E E .

THE PRESENT USE OF THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH BY
RWANDAN TEACHERS.

3.0. INTRODUCTION.

The first two chapters of this work have explored the place of English in Rwanda through its status and role, and the need for a new method to improve Rwandan learners' proficiency in English. I particularly wish to refer back to the section on 'the background of Rwandan teachers' prior to the forthcoming discussion of the present use of the communicative approach. In the section I am referring back to, I made a study of Rwandan teachers' communicative abilities in relation to their former training. I came to the conclusion that these skills show much room for improvement, despite the same teachers' praiseworthy academic achievements. A bright future, however, can be expected to arise from the responsibility assumed by the Rwandan government in encouraging the teachers to study in English-speaking countries so as to improve their practical language skills. I particularly advocate this as a solution to the problem of teachers' lack of a good command of English because, in order really to understand the problems of communication, one must live in an environment where he needs the language to get along with native speakers of that language.

This chapter is based on the results of research into the attitudes and practices of teachers of English, who kindly answered the questionnaire I submitted to them at a time when they were busying themselves to go for their vacation at the end of the second term of the school year 1983/1984 (see the appendix for a copy of this questionnaire). The questionnaire was meant to give an idea of the attitudes of some Rwandan teachers of English, first towards their background training in the language and their performances in the four language skills, then, towards various methods applied to the teaching of English since the beginning of English-teaching in Rwanda. A study of the attitudes of all Rwandan English teachers would have resulted in a more accurate and precise picture and provided a solid basis to forecast the future of English in Rwanda. Nevertheless, such a complete study being beyond the means of this thesis, I am obliged to rely on a sample of seventeen Rwandan teachers of English in certain schools I was able to visit, who completed the questionnaires, supplemented by personal interviews with five other teachers (two Rwandan and three non Rwandan) whom I happened to meet during the course of the research.

3.1. THE SEVENTEEN RWANDAN TEACHERS AND THEIR BACKGROUND.

The seventeen informants who answered the questionnaire have all studied English at tertiary level. Seven attended the I.P.N. and ten attended the U.N.R. . Fourteen out of seventeen attained the Baccalaureat. Among these six attained it at the I.P.N. and the remaining eight

at the U.N.R. Only three informants have attained the licence. Concerning their motivation to study English at tertiary level, ten of the informants say, in effect, that they chose to study English because 'they like it' ; one says that his choice of English was motivated by 'personal interest', which no doubt amounts to the same thing; two say that English provides privilege for the minority who have learned it ; one wanted to acquire a better knowledge of English as a language of information ; two simply said that they were appointed by the Ministry ; and one was undecided. These numbers show that most English graduates in this sample chose to study it because they had developed a liking for it during their schooling. It might be possible, however, to find alternative bases of motivation if the number of informants were increased.

It would seem pointless to ask for someone's attitude towards the profession he is involved in without first asking him what were his career plans during his studies. I accordingly asked each of my informants to say what his career plans were during his studies. Nine of the informants were planning to become teachers whereas eight were preparing for another career. Alternative projected careers given were : diplomacy, journalism, interpreting, and translation. This reflects the absence of selection before and after teacher training in Rwanda and helps to explain the frustration often found in certain teachers (of whatever subject), and some negative attitudes towards the teaching profession. Of course there are many other reasons which can make the Rwandan teacher reject the teaching profession, and I will cite some of these

later. Let us consider for the moment how the matter of career plans affects attitudes towards the teaching profession.

The informants were asked to say whether the teaching profession was "very rewarding", "rewarding", "fairly rewarding" or "tedious". Interestingly, the nine who had planned to become teachers say that the teaching profession is either "very rewarding" or "rewarding". The remaining eight who had another career in view invariably say that the teaching profession is either "fairly rewarding" or "tedious". The lack of selection in teacher appointment in Rwanda is the cause of this negative attitude towards the teaching profession. In fact, the way new teachers are appointed after their studies seems to imply that they have applied for the profession. We always listen to the radio at the beginning of september in order to be informed about the secondary school institutions where some of our friends are sent to teach. It is amazing to hear the speaker say: "Abaprofeseri tugiye kuvuga amazina bemerewe kwigisha mu mashuri akulikira" ("The teachers whose names follow, have been accepted to teach in the following secondary schools"), as if they had applied for the appointment. None of us is unaware of the paradox and the subsequent frustration it creates in the would-be teachers. Some are appointed unwillingly, but become reconciled to the profession when they are in service, but many others are frustrated to be called on to teach while they were aiming at another career. Moreover, it has often been very difficult for those who wanted to leave the profession. As this seems a digression from the point of this section, I will come to it later, and will rather look at how the graduate informants judge their

secondary school training.

Fifteen of the informants received their secondary school education in the former 'humanités générales' and all of them completed their schooling before the School Reform. As a matter of fact they were taught by the same methods as those described in the second section of chapter one. Their communicative needs were not catered for, because, as I pointed out earlier in this work, nothing was prepared for the students to practice the spoken language and be able to solve some of the problems of communication. These problems find their solution when the language learner has developed strategies for appropriately sending, receiving and interpreting messages through the language he is learning. In addition, there was and still is no language environment outside the classroom. The teacher's own adequacy in this kind of setting becomes crucial, and this led me to ask my informants whether their secondary school English teachers were native speakers or non-native speakers with an adequate command of English. The answers show that **eleven** of the informants have been taught by at least one native speaker, while six state that their English teachers, none of whom were native speakers had, on the whole, an adequate command of English. As regards the importance of English in the learning process at the time, English was assigned a number of hours varying from two to four hours per week. This time is insufficient for a foreign language learner in a foreign setting where he cannot find opportunities for oral practice outside the classroom.

Five of the informants, however, state

that English was given importance in the schools where they learned. Surprisingly enough, some teachers who attended the same school have different opinions about the importance given to English. I am particularly referring to former students at 'Collège du Christ-Roi' at Nyanza. Some believe that English was given a good deal of importance and others that it was not. One of the informants has raised a point which seems to explain the diversity of opinions about the importance given to the subject. This is what he wrote as a comment in the place reserved for the answer to the question : "But I am really convinced the teacher himself has something to do with the value of a course in spite of the school itself." This point of view is self-explanatory. Indeed, the value that the learners place on a school subject may depend upon the teacher's attitude towards the subject. The extent to which a student is interested in the learning process depends upon the teacher. It is common to hear some school leavers say that they did not like such or such a school subject because the teacher was either incompetent or not supportive enough. In fact, despite the number of hours per week, a subject can be taken to be important provided that the teacher concerned knows how to arouse his students' interest in that subject.

When asked how much encouragement they received to speak English in class, fifteen of the informants say that they were encouraged to speak. However, given the methods that are known to have existed earlier, oral practice was not encouraged as such, except in some schools where teachers volunteered to chair English club meetings where

English was spoken. Instead, where there were no clubs, the students were only called on to participate in the lesson by being active. This means simply by raising their hands to answer the teacher's questions, to make sentences whenever they were asked to, or to repeat sentences uttered by the teachers. Most of the time, the questions were related either to literary selections, or, as I pointed out earlier, to mechanical drills in which the learners were expected to master pieces of language automatically. Personally, I am convinced from my own experience that the encouragement to speak in class was not connected with spontaneous productive ability. The informants' evaluation of their performance in each of the language skills provides support for my statement.

As a preliminary to this evaluation, I asked them to say if they feel they were able to express themselves with relative ease in English at the end of their schooling. Twelve of the informants feel they were able to express themselves with relative ease and the rest feel they were not. These results are a matter of self-assessment and cannot be objective. But even so it is interesting that as many as five out of seventeen informants feel they were not able to express themselves with relative ease in English. This reflects the school's little emphasis on speaking skills.

I may conclude that the average positive attitude of the informants towards their background depends upon their overall attitude towards English, which is the foreign language of their choice. Besides, they chose to study it at tertiary level because they judged themselves

able to. It is therefore likely that they would positively answer the questions relating to their background ; otherwise, one would ask himself why they were accepted at all to study English at tertiary level, and then to teach it at secondary school. One more element which justifies this conclusion is the grades the former students, now teachers, obtained in English during their schooling. We generally base the evaluation of our success on grades we obtain. It has become a criterion for enrolment as a university entrant. It has become the only way to know our performance in such or such a school subject. This is the reason why, in the Rwandan case, the students' success results from emulation through grading.

All these elements may have interfered in how my informants view their expression in English. Their success at the University may also lead them to feel positively about their relatively easy expression in English.

3.2. ATTITUDES TOWARDS THEIR PERFORMANCES.

Keeping in mind that this is a matter of self-assessment, I am going to consider how the informants regard their performances in the following skills : reading, writing, speaking and aural comprehension or listening. The table below represents the skills and the number of teachers who feel that they perform either "very well", "well", "fairly well" or "with difficulty" in each of the skills :

Skills	Number of teachers who perform.....			
	Very well	Well	Fairly Well	With difficulty
Reading	6	10	1	0
Writing	2	12	2	1
Speaking	2	9	6	0
Aural Comprehen- sion	7	7	3	0

If we look at each skill and the number corresponding to each of the labels "very well", "well", "fairly well" and "with difficulty", we come to some interesting conclusions :

3.2.1. Reading.

Six of the informants state that they read English texts very well. Reading does not simply mean to recognize graphemes, but also to understand what meaning is conveyed by their different combinations in a text. The fact that six of the informants place their performances in Reading in the category "very well" is credible enough, since it shows consistency with the reading of literary selections which was taken by the advocates of the 'traditional' methods as a cardinal goal of the learning of English. The reading approach was, then, favoured during the early days of English teaching in Rwanda, as considered earlier in the historical survey of methods. Ten of the informants regard their performances in 'Reading' as in the "well" category and only one says that he reads "fairly well". These numbers

reflect the fact that in the early teaching of English in Rwanda, much emphasis was placed on the learners' acquisition of reading skills. It is perhaps dangerous to draw a conclusion from research done on a sample of seventeen teachers, but even so, their attitudes may well approximate to all teachers' attitudes since all have the same background learning experience. In fact this emphasis on reading skills tends to be continued in the U.N.R. English Department's strategy of making the students read a lot. Indeed, a good deal of time is spent on reading, and on book reports and literary criticism based on well known critics' theories, which also involve a great deal of reading and understanding. Thus, the reading skill was not only developed at secondary school but continues to be developed at tertiary level.

3.2.2. Writing.

Here again, the table shows that Rwandan teachers have a good opinion of their performances in writing. There appear to be, however, slight differences with how they regard their reading skills. Only two informants feel that they perform "very well" whereas six feel they perform "very well" in reading. Under the label "well", however, the number of informants catches up with that of good readers and even takes over ; twelve informants believe they perform "well" in writing while ten believe they are good at reading. Two believe they write "fairly well" and one "with difficulty". This is another minor difference but which becomes important when we look back at the way English was taught some years

ago. Insofar as one can generalise from seventeen informants, the reading skill seems to be more developed than the writing skill. If one also reads the numbers against the 'Aural comprehension' skill, it becomes clear that the informants feel more confident in receptive skills than in productive skills. This is perhaps not unexpected in any case, but it may also reflect earlier teaching methods which concentrated more emphasis on receptive skills.

If also one recalls the content of the section on the successive methods used in Rwanda from 1961 to 1982, one will not be surprised by the attitudes conveyed by the answers of the informants about their writing performance in relation to their speaking performance. Indeed, as written assignments were frequently given, and as evaluation techniques were commonly based on written tests and exams during the whole training at secondary school and on take-home exams or in-class written exams at the University, the writing skill might be expected to be the more developed, compared to the speaking skill. One reason for an emphasis on writing assignments at secondary level may be that they are the easiest to grade for a number of reasons. First, most secondary school class sizes amount to more than thirty students and the teacher, of whatever subject, has to go from class to class, thus increasing the number of students he must test and making it even more time-consuming and mentally demanding to administer spoken tests (see the following paragraph on the importance of the time element). Second, in addition to the subject the

teacher has graduated in, he is often given other subjects because of the shortage of qualified teachers. I remember that when I was a teacher, I taught civics, Kinyarwanda and French in addition to English, and I thus went from class to class, changing the subject each time. I was so overloaded with work that I had no time to concentrate on one subject at a time. It is not even rare to find graduates in English who also teach Geography and History. These situations give the teacher so much work that he cannot afford time and effort to devise oral language testing.

Finally, each teacher must teach from twenty to twenty-four hours per week, which, in my opinion, does not leave him time for preparation and gathering of new material to make language lessons at least more interesting and inspired. The time factor, therefore, impairs the use of oral techniques of evaluation and favours the intensive use of written tests, thus enhancing the students' writing skills. This question of time is given by the author of an article named "Evaluation" as one of the practical and valid reasons why speaking tests are seldom given. He writes : "Tests to accompany most textbooks do not include sections testing the speaking skill. And last, but certainly not least, is the question of time. Many teachers feel they do not have time to prepare or to grade speaking tests".¹

When the same author of the article suggests that one should "test all four language skills", he states :

"If the objectives in the course include all four Language skills, all four should be tested. The implication here is that each test should include one section to test listening comprehension, one for speaking, one for reading, and one for writing (given the fact that the teacher has reached the point in the course where he is teaching all four language skills). If the teacher customarily limits his tests to pencil-and-paper tests, these types of exercises become, in effect, the practical goals of the students. He can correct this common fault by including some items involving each of the language skills on each examination".²

The fact that the "pencil-and-paper" tests lead the students to take these types of exercises as the practical goals, is relevant to the fact that Rwandan teachers feel they perform well in writing skills as opposed to speaking skills.

3.2.3. Speaking.

Considering their speaking skill in English, the informants display more modesty. As shown by the table above, two informants feel that they speak "very well", nine feel they speak "well" and six feel they speak "fairly well". In the teachers' own estimation at any rate, this skill is less developed than the previous two. This correlates with the earlier point that little emphasis was placed on speaking skills in the teachers' background. The very little opportunity they had to practice speaking at the university could not make up for the shaky background training at secondary school as regards speaking skills.

It is therefore understandable that the informants feel they have less skill in spoken English. The difference with the reading and writing skills becomes more striking when we compare the number of informants who speak "fairly well" to that of informants who read and write "fairly well". While one informant feels that he reads "fairly well" and two feel that they write "fairly well", six informants feel they speak "fairly well". These numbers reflect the relatively low proficiency in oral English in Rwanda I noted previously.

3.2.4. Aural comprehension.

With regard to aural comprehension, seven informants feel that they understand spoken English "very well"; seven feel that they understand it "well"; three "fairly well" and none "with difficulty". The distribution under the four labels ("very well", "well", "fairly well", "with difficulty") is not unexpected, since all the seventeen informants have been exposed to native speakers during university studies. The students' success in the English Department, indeed, depends very much upon the degree of comprehension of the university lecturers, who are frequently native speakers, and those who could not understand the lectures in English in first year Baccalaureat will normally have preferred, since there was still time to do so, to change their subject. Some students in the French Department have told me that they left the English Department because they could not understand most teachers' lectures.

I have looked so far at how a selection of Rwandan teachers regard their performances in reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. It is clear from the results that they feel they perform better in the first two skills and the last than in the speaking skill. This correlates with the fact that their learning background simply fails to take into account oral practice in real-life situations. It is true that there are a number of opportunities for practice at tertiary level, namely by means of oral reports, some encounters with teachers, training courses (especially in the former I.P.N. and the present reformed U.N.R.), English clubs and discussion groups. These occasions, however, involve a great degree of formality, which does not take into consideration all aspects of real-life language. Besides, they do not present all the situations in which the students may happen to be involved after the university, apart from teaching English, such as meeting native English speakers coming to visit Rwanda or East African people who happen to meet him.... In my opinion, as well as in the opinion of many others, oral productive skill must be focussed on from the beginning of the language learning process.

3.3. RWANDAN TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS VARIOUS METHODS.

To arrive at Rwandan teachers' attitudes towards the kind of methods discussed in the first two chapters, I made statements concerning various methods and each statement was followed by these alternatives : "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Undecided", "Disagree", "Strongly Disagree". The results are included in the following table.

Statements	Number of teachers who				
	SA	A	U	D	SD
1. The reading of literature in English is a cardinal goal of the learning of English.*	2	10	1	3	0
2. Translation is a good thing, because it saves classroom time and makes things more straightforward.	2	3	3	7	2
3. A knowledge of the grammatical patterns of a language is a sufficient basis for the learner to write and speak the language with appropriateness and accuracy.	3	4	2	5	3
4. In the teaching of English, it is more important to develop the learners' aural/oral skills than his reading and writing skills.	2	9	2	4	0
5. The constant repetition of correct forms by the learners is sufficient to lead them to a competent basic grasp of the language.	0	3	3	6	5
6. Exercises must be closely controlled to ensure that students make as few errors as possible.	5	8	1	0	3
7. Pattern practice drills in non-authentic situations may bring about boredom.	5	7	1	4	0
8. Freer student-student questioning can loosen discipline in class.	1	5	1	7	3
9. Substitution techniques are an efficient way of teaching a language.	1	11	3	1	1
10. Considerable emphasis must be placed on the learner's contribution through independent learning, and this contribution is best done through groupwork.	5	7	3	2	0
11. Groupwork produces greater motivation and more creative work.	5	7	3	1	1
12. Role-plays should be encouraged because they give intensive oral practice in a natural way.	12	5	0	0	0
13. During groupwork activities and role-play, the teacher's authority is threatened.	0	0	2	8	7

NB.* One informant failed to answer.

SA : Strongly agree

A : Agree

U : Undecided

D : Disagree

SD : Strongly Disagree

The first three statements are closely related to the objectives of "traditional" methods. As most teachers were taught through these methods, it is interesting to know what they think of them. The first statement reads : "The reading of literature in English is a cardinal goal of the learning of English". Two of the informants strongly agree with the statement ; ten agree ; one is undecided ; three disagree ; and none strongly disagrees. This, on the whole, seems to reflect a favourable attitude towards an accent on reading skills, and remains consistent with the methods through which they were taught. The previous chapter has clearly discussed those methods and has found that they were based on literary extracts to be read and understood (see chapter one). The same informants, nevertheless, do not seem to support translation. The second statement reads : "Translation is a good thing, because it saves classroom time and makes things more straightforward". Indeed, the number of those who either strongly agree or agree cannot compare with that of those who are either undecided, disagree, or strongly disagree. Two informants strongly agree that translation is a good thing, and three agree with it, whereas in addition to the three who are undecided, seven

disagree and two strongly disagree. These varied opinions lead me to the conclusion that translation is on the whole rejected as a method by Rwandan teachers, even though some still support it.

The third statement, i.e., "A knowledge of the grammatical patterns of a language is a sufficient basis for the learner to write and speak the language with appropriateness and accuracy", has some advocates among the informants, but still their number is inferior to that of those who have a negative attitude towards it. Three informants strongly agree with the statement and four agree. On the other hand, five disagree and three strongly disagree, while two remain undecided. Compared to the statement about translation, an emphasis on teaching grammar still finds a good number of advocates. This may be considered on the one hand in relation to the grammar-based syllabuses often found in Rwandan secondary schools and, on the other, to the fact that most Rwandan teachers find it better to deal with grammar than any other field of language because it is less demanding.

The next question was meant to find out whether my informants placed more emphasis on spoken or written skills. The statement reads : "In the teaching of English, it is more important to develop the learner's aural/oral skills than his reading and writing skills". The results are as follows : two informants strongly favour the emphasis on aural/oral skills ; nine favour it ; another two

feel undecided ; four disagree with the statement and finally no informant strongly disagrees with it. A close examination of the numbers shows that Rwandan teachers differ in the emphasis they place on the relative importance of skills that ought to be acquired by the learners. This does not suggest, of course, that some teachers teach only this or that skill notwithstanding the importance of other skills, insofar as all the skills cannot be unconnected. The main idea brought about by these findings is that there is no generally orthodox approach to the question.

The following three statements are relevant to some of the basic principles of the audio-lingual approach. I asked the informants to give their opinions about each to know to what extent they favour the approach. The first statement reads : "The constant repetition of correct forms by the learners is sufficient to lead them to a competent basic grasp of the language". None of the informants strongly agrees ; three agree ; another three are undecided ; six disagree and five strongly disagree. On the whole, most Rwandan teachers do not support this principle. They possibly feel, as I do, unenthusiastic as far as constant repetition of correct forms as a teaching technique is concerned, because, correct forms, taken as an end in themselves, do not offer potential for future use by the learners since they are normally remote from any meaningful contexts of use. I am also convinced that correct forms presented in a context which is familiar to students do not need intensive mechanical repetition to be efficiently learned and

understood. Considering the informants' opinions, we find that only ~~three~~ have a favourable opinion on the statement.

The informants do, however, display more enthusiasm in respect of the degree of control of the exercises. Indeed, with the statement that "exercises must be closely controlled to ensure that students make as few errors as possible", five informants strongly agree; eight agree ; one is undecided ; none disagrees and three strongly disagree. These results leave no doubt that most Rwandan teachers are still strongly concerned with student errors and the constant correcting of them. The close control most Rwandan teachers advocate, moreover, makes me feel that this characteristic of the audio-lingual method is still largely reflected in some teachers' practice.

The same informants' attitudes towards the statement that "Pattern-practice drills in non-authentic situations may bring about boredom" confirms the overlapping of methods mentioned above. The results of the inquiry show that five informants strongly agree with the statement ; seven agree with it ; four disagree and none strongly disagrees, while only one is undecided. The fact that twelve informants out of seventeen feel that pattern-practice drills in non-authentic situations are boring does not necessarily mean that they never use them. Referring further to the table on frequency of use of methods, we find that the method that reads "Other controlled work involving sentence patterns" is used "very often"

by five informants, "often" by eight informants and "sometimes" by four informants. The fact of being boring does not imply that they could not be useful for teaching a pattern which the students find difficult. I sometimes used them to make the students practice a structure which I found wrongly used by many of them in a composition for example. I dealt mainly with adult students (sixth year of English). In order to avoid boredom, however, this kind of drill must be kept within reasonable limits and not have the whole lesson or even half the lesson devoted to it.

As the investigation comes to deal with more communicative language teaching techniques, the informants display more enthusiasm with some techniques. Freer student-student questioning, for example, is viewed by the informants as unlikely to loosen discipline in class. Not surprisingly however, a few informants find that such a technique will do so. Much, no doubt, depends on how the teachers consider their role in class and on their self-assurance. Some indisciplined learners may take the activity as an opportunity to tease the teacher and see how he reacts. The exact numbers are as follows: one informant strongly agrees and five agree with the statement that "Freer student-student questioning can loosen discipline in class" ; one informant is undecided ; seven disagree and three strongly disagree.

A statement on substitution techniques was included among other statements in order to see to what extent the teachers considered it as an efficient way of

teaching a language. It has no less supporters than other techniques. The statement reads : "Substitution techniques are an efficient way of teaching a language". One informant strongly agrees ; eleven informants agree ; three are undecided ; one disagrees and another one strongly disagrees. It is obvious that most informants still have a good opinion of substitution techniques. These large numbers may imply that Rwandan teachers are still convinced that actual language skills could be automatically acquired by the learners through mechanical drilling.

The four statements which follow in the questionnaire closely relate to the communicative approach. Groupwork and independent learning, including role-plays for intensive oral practice in a natural way, are undoubtedly communicative techniques, for they provide the students with opportunity for relatively authentic language use. These techniques are highly recommended by the advocates of the communicative method, and I personally agree with them, considering all the psychological factors which interfere with learning, especially with language learning. None can object to the common belief that students may sometimes learn better from one another than from the teacher's lectures. All of us have at least once experienced that peers' explanations of a mathematical formula they have understood are more straightforward and easier to retain than the teacher's. From such considerations stems the belief that groupwork produces greater motivation and more creative work. This is confirmed by the informants' opinions about the statements relating to

groupwork and role-plays.

To the statement that "considerable emphasis must be placed on the learner's contribution through independent learning, and this contribution is best done through groupwork", five informants strongly agree, seven agree, three are undecided and only two disagree while none strongly disagrees. The negative attitude of two informants is insignificant when one knows that twelve of the same informants agree with the statement and this leads one to conclude that, at present, the learner's independent learning through groupwork is emphasized. The statement that "groupwork produces greater motivation and more creative work" is rejected by only two teachers out of the consulted seventeen. One of the two disagrees with the statement and the other strongly disagrees. The remaining fifteen are distributed in the table as follows : five strongly agree ; seven agree and three are undecided. The table yields quite similar results in the first three categories concerning these two statements about groupwork. It seems therefore, that groupwork is becoming more and more accepted by Rwandan teachers of English as an efficient way of arousing the students' motivation, thus gearing them to more creative work.

The statement that "role-plays should be encouraged because they give intensive oral practice in a natural way" encounters no single dissentient teacher among the informants. All the seventeen informants agree

with the statement and, interestingly enough, twelve strongly agree and the remaining five agree. This clearly shows that the communicative approach is beginning to filter into the Rwandan attitudes towards the teaching of English, even if some teachers still favour the earlier methods. One more reason that leads me to be sure of the new approach on the part of Rwandan teachers is their attitudes towards the last statement I made on groupwork and role-plays. I am not surprised to find them consistent with the previous attitudes. My informants, in fact, do not accept that "During group-work activities and role-plays, the teacher's authority is threatened". Two informants, who however often use group-work and role-play as teaching techniques, are undecided while eight disagree and seven strongly disagree.

The above results hint at the approval of the communicative approach by Rwandan teachers of English, if not in its entire principles, at least in some of the techniques it recommends. To have a basic idea of how Rwandan teachers are changing in their approaches, a question on what methods they use to motivate their students was included and some of the methods I gathered from their answers may be really called communicative or moving towards it, creating a context for natural language use. Here are some of them : visual aids and concrete referents ; stories created jointly by teachers and students ; discussions of subjects of interest ; role-plays from rehearsed dialogues ; and creative writing by the students alone.

All these teaching devices are interesting, though they do not include games, puzzles and problem-solving which compel the learners to activate their brain to puzzle out the solutions. Much activity occurs in the learning process when the learners are eager to compete in games and problem-solving activities, and if the teacher is supportive enough to give the weak students more confidence and keep them motivated to participate in the activities.

Rwandan teachers' attitudes towards various methods not being sufficient to imply the use of these methods in the teaching process, I devised a set of questions investigating how often the teachers of English use some of the methods, in order to arrive at a convincing conclusion on the present use of the 'communicative' approach by Rwandan teachers of English. The results of the inquiry are gathered in a table which follows the heading of the forthcoming section.

3.4. FREQUENCY OF USE OF METHODS INVOLVING ALL FOUR LANGUAGE SKILLS.

The results of the research are summarized in this table which represents the methods and the number of teachers who use each method either "very often", "often", "sometimes", "rarely", or "never".

Methods	Number of teachers who use the methods				
	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
a. Systematic pronunciation practice.	2	10	5	0	0
b. Listening comprehension.	4	11	2	0	0
c. Substitution drills.	3	3	10	1	0
d. Other controlled work involving sentence patterns.	5	8	4	0	0
e. Groupwork activities including pairwork.	1	8	4	3	1
f. Role-play from rehearsed dialogues.	4	8	4	0	1
g. Role-play involving spontaneous conversation	3	6	5	2	1
h. Class discussion on subjects of interest.	8	4	2	2	1
i. Reading comprehension	8	7	2	0	0
j. Dictation	5	6	3	2	1
k. Totally guided writing assignments (excluding dictation) with one correct answer.*	0	8	5	1	2
l. Partially guided or free writing assignments with some initiative for students.	4	5	4	4	0

* One informant failed to answer.

According to the table, all the methods are used to some extent by all the informants, with one exception for each of the following methods : "groupwork activities including pairwork" ; "Role-play from rehearsed dialogues" ; "Role-play involving spontaneous conversation" ; "Class discussion on subjects of interest" , "Dictation" and ; "Totally guided writing assignments (excluding dictation) with one correct answer". The differences are found in the frequency rate of use and the number of teachers under each label of frequency. A detailed description of the table comes out with these features :

Systematic pronunciation practice is very often used by two out of the seventeen informants, often by ten informants and sometimes by five informants. Worth pointing out is the fact that the informants who use this method, either very often or often, are mostly those concerned with beginners. The intermediate level teachers use them sometimes. This appears to be fair enough, because English, as a foreign language in Rwanda, may suffer from the students' Kinyarwanda or French background if its sound system is not closely controlled and systematically practised to make the students acquire a relatively good accent in English. Indeed, as the learning of English begins later than the learning of French, it requires such a method, and for this reason, none of the informants uses it rarely and none never.

Listening comprehension involves more teachers

who very often use it than systematic pronunciation practice. Indeed, in the question on listening comprehension, we find four teachers out of seventeen who use it very often, eleven who often use it and only two who sometimes do. Along with pronunciation, the aural comprehension skill of the students must be developed right from the beginning of learning English if the ultimate goal is the acquisition of communicative ability. It is indispensable to develop the students' hearing ability in order to enhance their comprehension skill. With respect to the ability to handle spoken language, Widdowson makes this statement :

"With reference to language teaching, it will be readily agreed that, where the aim of the language course is to develop an ability to handle spoken language, what learners need ultimately to acquire is an awareness of how language being learned is used for talking. It may be, of course, that in certain circumstances it is expedient to spend time on the teaching of speaking and hearing first before moving on to the higher level communicative ability of talking."³

Substitution drills are used as well, but the table shows that they are less used than the preceding two methods. According to the table, ten teachers out of seventeen sometimes use substitution techniques, three teachers often use them while only three very often use them and one rarely. This may seem at first sight to contradict the teachers' favourable attitudes towards the early statement on substitution techniques namely that "Substitution techniques are an efficient way of teaching a language", but possibly,

teachers consider that the technique can be efficient for the teaching of a specific kind of language item (such as certain grammar points for example) which does not often occur in the language learning process. Therefore, the relatively low frequency of use of substitution drills may be explained by the fact that the area of language they better teach is not necessarily the most important to be developed, at least in the present theory of language teaching.

Other controlled work involving sentence patterns, however, is more frequently used by more teachers than substitution drills. It is very often used by five teachers, often by eight teachers and sometimes by four teachers. These findings reflect Rwandan teachers' belief (as I know from personal experience) in the necessity of formal grammar lessons for older school learners. In Rwanda, the students began to learn English at the age of twelve or thirteen before 1981, and since then they have begun at the age of fourteen. We can say that these students are approaching adulthood and need 'some formal grammar to feel that they are learning a new language.'⁴ The table shows that more than fifty percent of the informants often use this method. A question remains, however, as to whether the teachers keep sentence patterns in their place and teach learnable rules.

As regards groupwork activities including pairwork, only one informant very often uses them, eight often use them, four sometimes use them, three rarely and one never does. Role-play from rehearsed dialogues have

more teachers who teach through it than groupwork activities including pairwork (it seems that teachers do not regard role-play as being an aspect of groupwork). Indeed, while the latter are very often used by only one teacher, the former is very often used by four teachers ; while they are often used by eight teachers, the former is often used by the same number of teachers. The same number of four teachers sometimes use both. None of the teachers rarely uses role-play from rehearsed dialogues while three rarely use groupwork. Both methods have one teacher (not the same teacher) who never uses either. Role-play involving spontaneous conversation is used as well, but the number of teachers is less than for role-play from rehearsed dialogues. Three informants very often use it ; six often do ; five sometimes do ; two rarely do and one never does. This leads us to notice that as we move closer to more freedom on the students' part, the teachers become more and more hesitant. That is to say , the same teachers are not yet entirely geared to communicative language teaching principles. Class discussion on subjects of interest, nevertheless, is very often used by more teachers than the other techniques considered in this paragraph. I put these techniques together because they all take account of the students' productive ability, thus being likelier to develop their communicative competence than the preceding methods. These methods render the class student-centred and provide more speaking time for the students, giving them intensive oral practice in a natural way.

Reading the table of the results of the investigation, one may undoubtedly affirm that Rwandan teachers are trying to be more and more eclectic in their teaching methods. The exception of one teacher here and there who never uses this or that method thought to be communicative is not discouraging, for it cannot compare with the majority who more or less frequently use them. Besides, the communicative approach leaves more freedom to the teacher to adapt whatever technique he wishes to his situation. For these reasons, I may state that, on the whole, Rwandan teachers of English are geared to the teaching of English for communicative purposes.

As the communicative theory of language teaching takes account of all four language skills that must be acquired by language learners, the table includes "Reading comprehension" among other methods and three other methods connected with writing skills. Reading comprehension appears to be the most largely used method by almost all the informants. The table contains eight teachers out of seventeen who very often use the method ; seven who often use it and two who sometimes do. Like the first method and the second in the table, none of the informants rarely uses it and none never uses it either. Referring back to Rwandan teachers' attitudes towards their performances in the four language skills, and seeing how positively they regard their reading skill, it is not surprising to see the subsequent wish on the same teachers' part to lead their students to a relatively similar performance.

In respect ^{of} writing skills, three methods are to be found in the table. These are : "Dictation" ; "Totally guided writing assignments (excluding dictation) with one correct answer" and; "Partially guided or free writing assignments with some initiative for students". Five teachers out of seventeen very often use dictation ; six often use it ; three sometimes do ; two rarely use it and; one never uses it. This teacher who never uses dictation, uses the two other methods related to writing either very often or often. Totally guided writing assignments with one correct answer are often used by eight informants, sometimes by five of the rest, rarely by one of the rest and never by the remaining two. The exception of two teachers out of seventeen (with the one who failed to answer) makes no real difference if the rest teach writing skills through these methods. They do not, however, reach the same frequency rate as dictation and the last method since no teacher very frequently uses them. Partially guided or free writing is very often used by four teachers, but the five others who often use it cannot match the eight who often use totally guided writing assignments with one correct answer. None of the informants never uses it though four use it only sometimes and four unfortunately rarely.

So far, we may deduce from the table that nowadays, the English teaching process in Rwanda places more emphasis on the students' productive ability than was the case in the past. Indeed, the oral productive ability

seems to be more stressed than the writing productive ability. This foreshadows the development of Rwandan English learners' oral skills. Indeed, up to the present state of English learning in Rwanda, the students' proficiency in spoken English had suffered from a set back, since all the methods, as seen earlier, tended to develop writing skills rather than speaking skills.

To conclude this section, the argument that Rwandan teachers of English are becoming more and more geared to communicative language teaching at present finds evidence in the results of this investigation as they are presented in a somewhat detailed way in these pages. However, my personal interviews with a number of teachers resulted in a number of reasons which militate against the use of the new methods, especially with regard to their principle of improving the English spoken mode in such a way that students can be prepared to interact with other speakers of English. All the interviewees assert an interest in the use of the communicative approach and say it would be possible to use it, but they declare that the system of evaluation of both teacher (by school inspectors) and student impedes the applicability of such a method. As I said earlier, student evaluation remains almost totally based on the written mode and teacher evaluation often reflects an atomistic approach. The inspectors sent by the English Section of the B.P.E.S. require a written lesson plan from the teacher, in which grammatical structures and

vocabulary items to be learned by the students in a set of lessons are presented. The so-called official exams always each fall into four parts : reading comprehension of a literary text, vocabulary, grammar and phonology. Nothing has ever appeared on communicative skills.

Moreover, textbooks have never been common at all secondary schools. Individual schools, if not individual teachers have to find their own textbooks for themselves, apart from the two sent by the B.P.E.S. for the first and second years of English, and, the available materials are inappropriate to the type of material required by communicative language teaching. The shortage of communicative materials which include suggestions for the teacher and take into consideration the learners' motivation and interest in their content (see end of chapter II), and the auro-oral method recommended by the English Section in the B.P.E.S., constitute a great handicap to a broad use of the communicative approach. The teachers, however, knowing a great deal of the fashionable eclecticism of modern teaching techniques, endeavour to focus the students' attention on the communicative aspect of the language, and are happy to see the time devoted to English teaching increased by the ongoing school reform.

Notes :

1. This quotation is taken from an article headed "Evaluation", whose author is unknown.
2. Ibid.
3. Op.cit.,pp.60-61.
4. See notes on Chapter 2, note 39.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION : FUTURE POSSIBILITIES.

Barugahare's research on "Resources for implementing English in Rwanda",¹ demonstrated the incontestable motivation of Rwandan English learners. In fact, Rwandan English learners have a keen interest in learning English and would like to see the time allotted to English teaching increased. This interest in learning English is felt not only by secondary school learners, but also by the people living in Rwandan cities, such as Kigali and Butare. In Kigali, for example, people regularly attend the evening classes in the American Cultural Center and pay for their classes themselves. The importance of English in Rwanda can be said to be felt by almost all educated Rwandans, since the number of centers which sponsor evening classes of English is increasing side by side with the number of evening students in Kigali, Butare and recently in Ruhengeri at the campus of Nyakinama. In the American Cultural Center, for example, the number of people who wish to^{enrol} outstrips the number of available places.

The learners' motivation is^{one} of the factors which can affect second (or foreign) language learning. The same factor must be included among other facts which forecast the possibility of improvement in English teaching and learning in Rwanda. The Rwandan teachers' awareness of their students' motivation and, as the preceding results of

my investigation show, of the ultimate goal of learning a language, i.e., acquisition of communicative skills, allows us to make hypotheses about the future of English in Rwanda.

Teachers and learners, however, comprise only one side of the problem and not all the solutions can be sought there, even though their part is of very great importance. The administration's responsibility in preparing the bright future intended for the English language in Rwanda deserves more consideration. Indeed, language planners are part of the administration and bear the responsibility for any decision they make in the language teaching and learning process. As far as the government is concerned, some improvement in the education system has been carried out by the ongoing school reform with regard to the teaching of languages, especially English, to which the interest of this work is directed.

Owing to the status and role of English, as seen in the initial section of this thesis, and to the general interest manifested by informed Rwandan people in learning English, the Rwandan government has found it necessary to give English an important place in the young Rwandan's training so that he may be integrated in either the national or the international community at present and in the future. Thus, the ongoing school reform has taken into consideration the need for English in Rwanda and has assigned it a relatively satisfactory teaching time. Also, specification of English in the secondary school orientation very much affects the students' motivation in learning English, because they no longer feel they are learning it as a subject set apart from the whole

context of their learning orientation, but as an integral part of the content of their oriented learning process.

The secondary school students who are preparing to become accountants, for example, are taught English related to that domain, and they feel enthusiastic because they know they will need it to interact with others in government departments dealing with economics and commerce, for English is the main language of both economics and commerce.

They will have to handle correspondence in English; and now they will not need to call on someone else for help. In the literary options, the students are motivated as well because they aim at becoming multilingual and being able to get into easy contact with the foreign culture conveyed by English, French and Swahili. In this respect, the learners regard English as involved in their future career and display more enthusiasm in the learning process.

The school reform has improved not only motivation and teaching time but also, though implicitly, methodology. This quotation from Mesures générales d'Application de la Réforme de l'Enseignement implies more than mere specialisation :

"L'enseignement secondaire doit préparer à l'enseignement supérieur, mais aussi surtout former au moindre coût des cadres subalternes et moyens. Pour cela, il devient nécessaire de professionnaliser les établissements secondaires, c'est-à-dire de créer en leur sein une ou plusieurs filières professionnelles. Elles devront permettre aux élèves quel que soit le niveau où ils

ils ne quitteront, d'occuper immédiatement l'emploi sans avoir
de suivre de formation complémentaire."²

(underlined in the text)

In order to attain the objectives stated by this quotation, the program makers of different instructional disciplines have moved the focus from the disciplines as such on to the student himself, taking into account the skills he must have acquired at the end of his schooling. Therefore, the specialised secondary school options were conceived on a rejection of the former educational system which provided the learner with general knowledge leading to no efficiency in any particular profession. The former educational system, as we saw earlier, is one of the causes of the low proficiency in English of the early Rwandan school-leavers. Now, with the focus on the learner, one may expect good results in the future because it implies the improvement of methodology in order to maximize the learner's rate of relevant acquisition. Thus, the Rwandan government expects graduates from oriented sections, for example, to have a sufficient command of French, English and Swahili to efficiently carry out different administrative tasks.

As this thesis concerns itself with English, let us consider, in the light of the quotation above, how the ongoing school reform tends to improve English learners' proficiency. In respect of the reformed educational system, the English section of the B.P.E.S. has been assigned the task of defining the elements of language usage to be acquired by the learners and the degree of language behaviour they must have reached at each level of the learning process. They call these general

objectives, "Savoir et Savoir-faire" which mean, in Widdowson's terminology, "Usage and use" (see chapter Two). They have labelled the sum of these objectives the "curriculum". The final step in this task is the devising of materials which follow the curriculum and break it into practical units in class. In the same way, the English Section has defined the functions and profiles as well as the general frameworks of the sections where English is taught. It has also sent the curricula of the first two years of English into all the secondary schools.

As far as the teaching materials of the B.P.E.S. are concerned, the first year of English is catered for. One sample of these materials has been evaluated in the section on the historical survey of methods applied to English teaching in Rwanda. The evaluation has shown that the material still emphasizes usage rather than use. Fortunately, the staff of the English Section views the teacher's role as involving the adaptation of this or that method, as he judges appropriate to his class situation :

"Mais rien n'empêche que le rôle du professeur reste prépondérant dans l'adaptation de telle ou telle méthode qu'il juge appropriée pour sa classe"³

This freedom allowed to the teacher might lead the inspectors to evaluate him not only on the basis of the number of items of usage he has presented to his class, but also on the number of items of usage he has presented to his class, but also on the basis of how communicatively these items have been taught and learned by the students and on how far the teacher achieves the maximization of the learning process by his choice of

appropriate methods likely to satisfy his learners' needs. On the learner's part, the former type of evaluation should be revised so as (to use the school reform authors' terminology) to test learners' "Savoir-faire". That is, to test the learners' communicative competence rather than the degree of mastery of a particular number of usage items.

The school reform foreshadows the improvement of teacher training as well. Now English is a compulsory course in many sections of secondary school and has even been reintroduced in the sections where it had been suppressed at the beginning of the school reform.⁴ It therefore devolves upon the concerned Rwandan authority to work out an appropriate policy that should provide "good" teachers. Like the implementors of any language policy, teachers must be competent in both practical language skills and teaching methods if they are to be successful. So far, the English Section, financially supported by the American Embassy, has regularly organized workshops meant to familiarize English teachers with English teaching methods and inform them of new theories of language teaching. To some extent Rwandan English teachers do not starve for teaching methods, for they are taught a great deal of them during their tertiary level studies, where, as said before, the real training takes place. It is this training that must be improved mainly in the skills component, and especially as regards the command of English, and selection.

The latter, as pointed out by Strevens, should occur before and after training in order to recruit

teachers who really like the teaching career and wish to remain in the teaching profession ; and, most important of all, who display the qualities required of a good teacher. This, however, is an ideal that can be scarcely attained because of financial problems on one hand, and on the other, the shortage of qualified teachers and the large number of secondary schools all over the country. Nevertheless an effort in this direction is still possible and would be welcomed by any Rwandan who knows a little about the subsequent frustration the lack of selection creates in Rwandan-trained teachers. This does not call for further comments since it has been discussed in the **second** chapter.

The first point mentioned above, that is a good command of English, is the skill most needed on the Rwandan teachers' part. There is nobody who does not know that it is advantageous for a language learner to practice speaking in the native language environment. In fact, informal daily contacts enhance the understanding of all the problems of communication, for they establish a link between formal learning and everyday life, and thus favour the acquisition of the ability to use appropriate language for different circumstances. Rwandan-trained teachers have been exposed to formal learning during which opportunities for practice are never found outside language classes. For this reason, and to aid the learners' acquisition of communicative ability, the Rwandan government would do better to increase the Rwandan-trained teachers' "bourses de stage" in English-speaking countries to improve their communicative competence in English. The ease of expression and self-confidence of those rare teachers who got the opportunity to study in an English-speaking country is unquestionable. Fluency in a language is vital for the language teacher to impress his students and arouse their eagerness to become as fluent as he is.

In addition, to the increasing of scholarships to be allocated for Rwandan English teachers to go to improve their English in English-speaking countries, the Rwandan government should encourage the same teachers to undertake journeys to these countries to keep their language skills up to the mark. We cannot regard Rwandan graduates in English from the university as good teachers, but as potentially good teachers, if all the considerations above are taken into account. However, as the Rwandan authorities and especially language planners insist on careful planning of English teaching and on an efficient teacher training as well, we may unmistakably forecast a bright future for English in Rwanda.

The bright future has already been foreshadowed by solutions to some problems encountered in English teaching and learning in Rwanda. The problem of motivation, for example, no longer constitutes a great handicap to the teaching of English in Rwanda, because English is kept in the limits of the student's specific option and related to the general content of his learning process. English is therefore no longer considered by the students as a makeweight subject but as a necessary tool in their orientation. Moreover, the problem of time no longer arouses complaints since the ongoing school reform has relatively increased the English teaching time⁵ and the teachers I happened to talk with welcomed the innovation. For example, Miss Moira Lewis, teacher of English at the Junior Seminary of Nyundo, told me that within the actual five hours per

week devoted to English teaching, she can allow her students more speaking time and that her students enjoy having time to practice English, even though it is only during class time.

These solutions, along with the Rwandan teachers' use of teaching techniques likely to improve the students' communicative skills, indicate that the future of English in Rwanda gives cause for optimism. It is true that teachers still face such problems as earning good wages and just not minimum wages ; low social prestige and social status, and last but not least, lodgings sufficiently equipped to better the teachers' conditions of work. Here again, there is no reason to be pessimistic since the Rwandan authorities are aware of all these problems and have set specialised commissions to work in order to try to give the teachers satisfaction. We cannot, however, expect all the problems to be solved, especially when we recognize how deficient our country's economy is ; but still, the Rwandan government is endeavouring, within the limits of its means, to satisfy the most urgent needs, particularly as regards the educational system.

From the facts established above and the findings of this investigation, we may draw the conclusion that the situation of English teaching in Rwanda will be improved. I am particularly interested in the potential for English proficiency in Rwanda, bearing in mind the extent to which methodology is improving with respect to

the student's acquisition of communicative competence.

Notes

1. Barugahare, op.cit.,p.95
2. The quotation is taken from the text of the IIème Plan Quinquenal de Développement Economique, Social et Culturel 1977-1981, quoted in Mesures Générales d'Application de la Réforme de l'Enseignement, République Rwandaise, Ministère de l'Education Nationale (now Ministère de l'Enseignement Primaire et Secondaire), p.12.
3. Information obtained from the B.P.E.S., English Section.
4. The school reform began in September 1981, in secondary schools.
5. The time-table of May 1981 and that of August 1983 will appear in the appendix.

11. What were your career plans at the time ? - a teaching career
- another career

If another career please specify _____

12. How do you find the teaching profession ? - very rewarding
- rewarding
- fairly rewarding
- tedious

13. How long have you been teaching English ? _____

14. What methods do you use to motivate your students ?

Instruction for 15-18 : Give your opinion concerning each of the following statements by putting a tick (V) after one of the five alternatives :

15. a) The reading of literature in English is a cardinal goal of the learning of English.
SA (Strongly Agree) D (Disagree)
A (Agree) SD (Strongly Disagree)
U (Undecided)
- b) Translation is a good thing, because it saves classroom time and makes things more straightforward.
SA A U D SD
- c) A knowledge of the grammatical patterns of a language is a sufficient basis for the learner to write and speak the language with appropriateness and accuracy.
SA A U D SD

d) In the teaching of English, it is more important to develop the learner's aural/oral skills than his reading and writing skills.

SA A U D SD

16. a) The constant repetition of correct forms by learners is sufficient to lead them to a competent basic grasp of the language.

SA A U D SD

b) Exercises must be closely controlled to ensure that students make as few errors as possible.

SA A U D SD

c) Pattern practice drills in non-authentic situations may bring about boredom.

SA A U D SD

17. a) Freer student-student questioning can loosen discipline in class.

SA A U D SD

b) Substitution techniques are an efficient way of teaching a language.

SA A U D SD

18. a) Considerable emphasis must be placed on the learner's contribution through independent learning, and this contribution is best done through groupwork.

SA A U D SD

b) Groupwork produces greater motivation and more creative work.

SA A U D SD

c) Role-plays should be encouraged because they give intensive oral practice in a natural way.

SA A U D SD

d) During groupwork activities and role-play, the teacher's authority is threatened.

SA A U D SD

Instructions : Show how often you use each of the following
(20) methods by putting a tick (v) after one
of the five alternatives :

(19) To which year (s) do you teach English ? Please indicate
the size of the class in each case.

- 1st year of English
- 2nd year of English
- 3rd year of English
- 4th year of English
- 5th year of English

20. a) Systematic pronunciation practice.

- . Very often . Sometimes
- . Often . Rarely
- . Never

b) Listening comprehension. . Very often . Sometimes
. Often . Rarely
. Never

d) Substitution drills . . Very often . Sometimes
. Often . Rarely
. Never

d) Other controlled work involving sentence patterns.
. Very often . Sometimes
. Often . Rarely
. Never

e) Groupwork activities including pairwork.
. Very often . Sometimes
. Often . Rarely
. Never

f) Role-play from rehearsed dialogues.
. Very often . Sometimes
. Often . Rarely
. Never

g) Role-play involving spontaneous conversation.

- . Very often
- . Often
- . Sometimes
- . Rarely
- . Never

h) Class discussion on Subjects of interest.

- . Very often
- . Often
- . Sometimes
- . Rarely
- . Never

i) Reading comprehension.

- . Very often
- . Often
- . Sometimes
- . Rarely
- . Never

j) Dictation.

- . Very often
- . Often
- . Sometimes
- . Rarely
- . Never

k) Totally guided writing assignments (excluding dictation), with one correct answer.

- . Very often
- . Often
- . Sometimes
- . Rarely
- . Never

l) Partially guided or free writing assignments, with some initiative for students.

- . Very often
- . Often
- . Sometimes
- . Rarely
- . Never

A P P E N D I X II.

L'ANGLAIS AU SECONDAIRE APRES LA REFORME (MAI 1981)

	1ère	2è	3è	4è	5è	6è	TOTAL
01. Enseignement AGRICOLE et VETERINAIRE							
02. ENSEIGNEMENT NORMAL							
02.1 Section Normale Primaire	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
02.2 Section Normale Technique	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
03. ENSEIGNEMENT des SCIENCES							
03.1. Section Math-Physique	-	-	3	2	2	2	9
03.1.1. Option statistique	-	-	3	2	2	2	9
03.2. Section Biologie-Chimie	-	-	3	2	2	2	9
03.3. Section Latin-sciences	-	-	2	2	2	2	8
04. ENSEIGNEMENT DES LETTRES							
04.1. Section Littéraire	7	7	6	5	4	4	33
04.2. Section Secrétariat	7	7	6	5	4	4	33
04.2. Section Latin-Langues modernes	4	5	5	5	3	3	25
05. ENSEIGNEMENT SOCIAL							
05.1. Sect. Action sociale	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
05.2. Sect. Sciences du travail	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
05.3. Sect. Communication sociale	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
06. ENSEIGNEMENT D'ECONOMIE ET COMMERCE							
06.1. Sect. Economique	6	4	4	4	3	3	24
06.2. Sect. Commerce et Comptabilité (5ans)	6	5	4	2	2		19
07. ENSEIGNEMENT DE DROIT ET ADMINISTRATION (5ans)	2	2	2	2	2		10
08. ENSEIGNEMENT DES SCIENCES DE LA SANTE							
08.1. Sect. des Assistants médicaux	3	3	2	2	-	-	10
08.2. Sect. des Laborantins A2	3	3	2	2	-	-	10

L'ANGLAIS AU SECONDAIRE APRES LA REFORME (MAI 1981)

	1ère	2è	3è	4è	5è	6è	TOTAL
09. ENSEIGNEMENT DES SCIENCES INFIRMIERES							
09.1. Infirmiers A ₂	-	2	2	2	1	1	8
09.2. Infirmiers A ₃	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10. ENSEIGNEMENT TECHNIQUE ET DIETETIQUE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
11. ENSEIGNEMENT TECHNIQUE							
11.10 Sect. Alectroni- que A ₂	-	-	-	2	2	2	6
ENSEIGNEMENT D'ART							
11.11. Sect. Peinture A ₃ (4 ans)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
11.12. Sect. Sculpture A ₃ (4 ans)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
11.13. Sect. Arto Graphi- ques A ₃ (4 ans)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

NB. Les gilles horaires de Mai 1981 ont été modifiées en Août 1983. (Voir Handout on new schedule).

A P P E N D I X III.

L'ANGLAIS AU SECONDAIRE (Grilles-horaires Août 1983)

1ère 2è 3è 4è 5è 6ème Total

01. Enseignement Agricole
et Veterinaire

02. Enseignement Normal

02.1. Enseignement Normal Primaire.	-	3	2	1	1	2	9
02.2. Section Normale Technique	-	-	3	1	1	1	6

03. Enseignement des Sciences

03.1. Section Mathématique Physique	-	-	3	3	2	2	10
03.1.1. Option Statistique	-	-	3	3	2	2	10
03.2. Section Biologie- Chimie	-	-	3	3	2	2	10
03.4. Section Latin-Sciences	-	-	3	3	2	2	10

04. Enseignement des Lettres

04.1. Section Littéraire	-	5	5	5	4	4	23
04.1.1. Option Secrétariat	-	5	4	4	4	4	21
04.2. Section Latin et Langues Modernes	-	5	5	5	4	4	23

05. Enseignement Social

05.1. Action sociale	-	-	2	2	2	2	8
05.2. Sciences du Travail	-	-	3	2	2	2	9
05.3. Communication sociale	-	-	3	2	2	2	9

06. Enseignement d'Economie
et Commerce

06.1. Section Economique	-	5	5	4	3	3	20
06.2. Commerce et Comp;	-	5	4	4	2	2	17

07. Enseignement de Droit et
d'Administration

	-	3	3	2	2	2	12
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08. Enseignement des Sciences
de la Santé

08.1. Section des Assistants Médicaux	-	3	3	1	1	1	9
08.2. Section de Laborantins A2	-	3	2	2	1	1	9

09. Enseignement des Sciences
Infirmières

09.1. Section des Infirmiers A2	-	3	3	1	1	1	9
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10. ENSEIGNEMENT DES NUTRI-
TION ET DE DIETETIQUE

	-	-	3	2	2	2	9
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11. ENSEIGNEMENT TECHNIQUE
ENSEIGNEMENT D'ART

11.10. Section Electro- nique A2	-	-	-	-	2	2	4
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