

**Towards English for Academic Purposes in the Rwandan context:
The case of the first year of the Management Faculty**

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Declaration

I declare that “Towards English for Academic Purposes in the Rwandan context: The case of the first year of the Management Faculty” is my own work and all sources quoted have been acknowledged by means of complete references.

December 2001

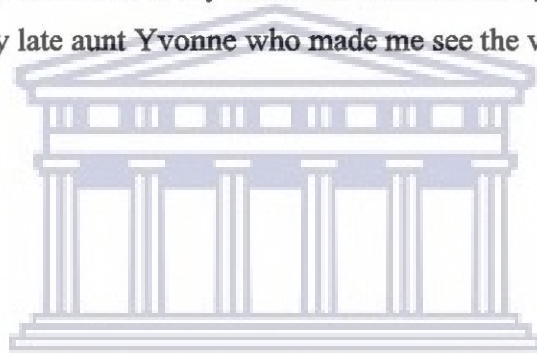
Anne-Marie KAGWESAGE.



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Dedication

This mini-thesis is lovingly dedicated to my husband Emmanuel Muyombano and our son Happy Axel; and to my late aunt Yvonne who made me see the value of education.



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Acknowledgement

I am absolutely indebted to many people. Only a few are mentioned but the contribution of all is acknowledged.

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Abstract

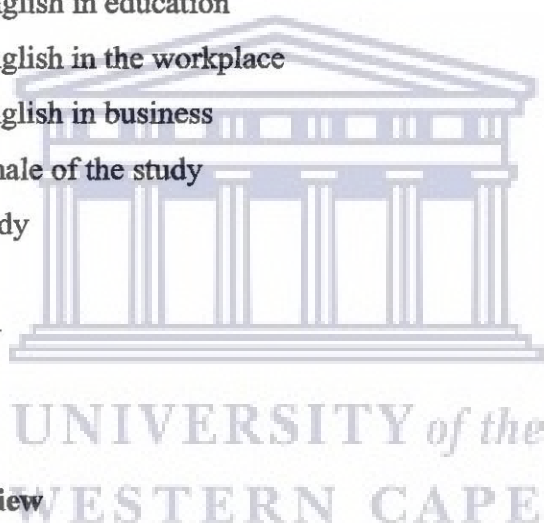
This study investigates the extent to which the one-year English course that the National University of Rwanda offers equips Francophone students with the linguistic tools they need in order to cope with content subjects offered through the medium of English. It argues that learning English in this context should go beyond foreign language learning to learning English for Academic Purposes, and beyond language learning to the understanding of content subjects. For the purposes of this study, the focus fell on students in the Management Faculty.

Different research techniques were used, namely, interviews and document analysis. The interviews were conducted with English teachers, students and lecturers in the Management Faculty. Document analysis was mainly concerned with analysing the textbook used as teaching materials for the English course, and the entrance and exit examinations. The findings revealed that the course failed to develop the study and academic skills that students need in order to function effectively in English as medium of instruction. For example, the varied accents of different lecturers, together with the limited subject-specific terminologies made it difficult for students to grasp the content of lectures during lecture time. Also, a lack of practice in speaking on academically demanding topics in their subject matter made them reluctant to engage in seminar discussions. In addition, the course did not deal with the specific genres and discourses required by the students' subjects. Furthermore, students lacked the academic study skills and critical thinking that every student at tertiary level is expected to possess. They only relied on memorisation and recall of information in order to meet lecturers' expectations.

The investigation concluded that English teachers should be empowered to design their own materials, which meet their students' needs. They should also work collaboratively with content lecturers in order to provide sound English support in the specialised terminologies, genres and discourses of Management studies. Above all, students should occupy a central place in the teaching and learning activities, the emphasis being on whether students are learning what they need to learn, rather than whether the teacher is completing a predetermined curriculum.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Language background in Rwanda

The teaching of English as a foreign language in Rwanda was introduced by the Belgian colonisers in secondary schools around 1960-1961. During this period, not many people paid attention to the newly-introduced language because there were two other languages, which were used to fulfil all their communicative or intellectual needs, thus occupying the most prestigious positions. These two languages were Kinyarwanda and French.

Kinyarwanda was used among Rwandans to serve many purposes. It was mainly used as a means of communication enabling all Rwandans to understand one another from west to east, from north to south. Kinyarwanda was the main language of social, political, and economical interaction among Rwandans. This is why not much importance was given to English. People could not see the gap that English would come to fill.

In addition to Kinyarwanda, there was French, the language of the colonisers. It was used as a means of instruction in secondary schools as well as at the university. All administrative personnel were chosen according to their level of competence in the French language. Therefore, everyone was motivated to learn French and wanted to speak it as fluently as white people did.

Indeed Rwandans did not give too much importance to English. Language planners did not perceive the need for English in Rwanda because they considered French as the only European language to be learned and used both to accomplish internal administrative tasks and to communicate with the outside world. It was only later that people began to notice the paramount importance of English in domains such as the economy, politics (especially foreign policy), education and many others.

In order to carry out tasks in those domains, knowledge of English was revealed to be essential. As a result, the government felt a need to give English the place it required. It is in this respect that in 1976, an English section was created in the then BPES (Bureau des Programmes de l'Enseignement Secondaire), the now DPES (Direction de l'Enseignement Secondaire) which is the National Office for Secondary School curriculum development.

The main task of the English department in the DPES was first of all to standardise English programmes in all secondary schools where English was taught. Secondly, it had to send inspectors to evaluate the teachers' performance so as to design new methods or appropriate materials. In short, there was a growing interest in English teaching/learning. This interest kept on increasing and reached its peak in 1994 and thereafter, when it acquired a new status. The importance of English from 1994 to the present is dealt with in more detail in the next section.

1.2. English in Rwanda after 1994

After the 1994 genocide, many Rwandans who had been living outside the country came back home. Some of them came from Anglophone countries such as Kenya, Tanzania or Uganda, which are the immediate neighbours of Rwanda, or even from Nigeria, the USA, etc. Others came from Francophone countries bordering Rwanda such as Congo, Burundi or from overseas countries such as France, Belgium and Canada. Here the point is that whether these Rwandans came from near or far, they inherited the language situations of their countries of exile. Thus, when they came back, each and everyone brought an inherited language situation, thus changing Rwanda into a multilingual country. In this case, Kinyarwanda and French, which were previously used almost exclusively in all domains, were no longer enough to fulfil the communicative needs of all citizens. Therefore, English had to be added to these languages of communication. English gained a new status. It was promoted to a national and an official language. Moreover, it came to be widely used in all domains. The wide use of English in domains such as education, trade and commerce (business) as well as the workplace is the concern of the next section.

1.2.1 The importance of English in education

After 1994 English enjoyed a new status in the Rwandan educational contexts. As a matter of fact, in addition to being learned as a school subject, it became a medium of instruction in some instances. The government policy was to promote bilingualism (Ntukanyagwe, 2001:2). Here, two scenarios may be distinguished, namely, the public schools scenario and the private schools scenario.

To start with public schools, the teaching of English as a subject, which used to start at secondary school level, was introduced at primary school level, starting from the third year. At present, children have to learn two foreign languages, French and English, at the same time. Later on, they switch to either English or French medium according to the dominant language of the region. At secondary school level, schools using the English medium exclusively were created. Even in the so-called Francophone schools, the number of hours for English as a subject was increased. The matric exam is set in either English or French according to the options followed by the student, that is, either the Francophone or Anglophone option. Similarly, at the end of primary school, the national examination, which all pupils all over the country have to write in order to gain access to secondary school, is set in all three languages namely English, French and Kinyarwanda. Therefore, each candidate uses the language he/she feels comfortable with. This highlights the importance that English has obtained since 1994. Before that period, it was impossible to find an exam set in English at primary school level.

Since both public as well as private schools write the National Examination and use the three main languages of the country, it is worth turning to the second scenario of private schools to show how English became important in this context.

Private schools, which most of the time have financial, material and human resources, adopted a strategy of implementing two parallel options, the one using French as medium of instruction, and the other using English. In cases where English is the medium of instruction, French and Kinyarwanda are learned as subjects. Alternatively, if French is the medium, English and Kinyarwanda are learned as subjects. In the private school setting, this situation applies for primary schools as

well as secondary schools. Again, this illustrates the increasing importance of English as far as education is concerned because before 1994 it was virtually impossible to find a secondary school, let alone a primary school, which gave instruction through the medium of English.

In addition to these formal education systems, one may also mention evening classes to illustrate how important English was becoming. In fact, people enrolled in evening classes in large numbers in order to improve their English or to start learning it. In this case, most of them were driven by what Harmer (1991: 4) calls instrumental motivation. They believed that mastery of English would be instrumental in getting them a better job, position or status. Therefore, they enrolled in the fee-paying evening classes, either individually or through non-governmental organisations (NGO's). Research done in this regard shows an increase in the number of English evening classes in both the capital city Kigali and the intellectual town Butare.

Of course this growing interest in learning English was motivated by the importance of English in other domains. In the next section, I would like to deal with the importance of English in the work place.

1.2.2 The importance of English in the work place

One of the reasons why many people rushed to learn English is that it was increasingly required in order to get better jobs. In fact, after 1994, many NGO's and UN organisations came into the country to distribute emergency aid. Many of these foreign aid workers were English speakers. At that time, only Rwandans who were proficient in English could get jobs, and well paid jobs. Knowledge of English was a requirement for all people who applied for jobs. This situation still applies today. Currently, even when it is not a requirement, knowledge of English is an asset. This means that someone who knows English stands a better chance of getting a job than someone who does not. In the Rwandan context, it seems that Phillipson (1988: 342) is correct when he claims that "the elite in the third world countries owe their position in part to their proficiency in English, and therefore accord a high priority to the learning of English".

English came to dominate (and is still dominating) the linguistic requirements of the workplace since it provides access to jobs and implicitly to money and other material

benefits. Proficiency in English has become, as Phillipson (1988: 344) notes, “the gateway to social and material benefits”. Heugh (1995: 22), while explaining the link between multilingualism and a prosperous economy in the BUA journal, emphasises the importance of English in the workplace by asserting that “English is best for the workplace”.

In short, the importance of English after 1994 became evident. This period saw a shift in the linguistic requirements of the workplace, with English replacing French. Thus, English in the Rwandan setting came to enjoy the importance that it enjoys in many other multilingual countries. Phillipson (1988: 342) notes this importance as follows:

English is considered as a symbol of modernisation, a key to expanded functional roles and an extra arm for success and mobility in culturally and linguistically complex and pluralistic societies.... (English) permits one to open the linguistic gates to international business, technology, science and travel.

The same applies in the field of trade, commerce or business, and the next section aims to show the importance of English in that field after 1994.

1.2.3 The importance of English in business

Business is one of the fields on which a country’s economy rests. Therefore, it has to be developed in order to promote the development of the country at large. The business sector also shifted to the wider use of English. One of the reasons is probably the fact that for business to prosper one must speak the language of one’s economic partners not only to buy from them, but also and most importantly to sell to them. So, since many of the Rwandan economic partners are Anglophone countries, namely, some African countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, South Africa, as well as some Asian countries, Rwandan businessmen have to speak English. In this perspective, English has become a useful resource for trade.

1.3 Background and rationale of the study

Nowadays, many people around the world use English as their first, second or foreign language. In Chamberlain and Baumgardner's (1988: 61) words, English has become the "worldwide lingua franca not only of diplomacy, tourism, aviation and pop culture, but also and more importantly of science, technology, and commerce". Many people, each one in his/her own domain have to read not only books but also technical reports, proposal contracts, letters and manuals, memos, journal articles and a variety of other written documents. To do this, they need reading skills, which range from scanning to intensive and critical reading. Also, they have to know about the subject which is being read. Hence, these people should be prepared while at school. The design of any pedagogical curriculum should be dictated primarily by the long-term needs of its students. To put it another way, the learning process should be purposefully guided towards some ultimate goal or standard. Therefore, the primary goal of any English teaching programme should be to meet the needs of a given group of learners, be they academic or professionals. The time is ripe, therefore, to evaluate existing language courses in Rwanda. In fact, although English is being used in almost all domains in the country, not many Rwandans are proficient in English. Yet they are required to use it in their every day activities. Therefore, each one in his or her domain needs the kind of English which would enable him or her to accomplish his or her duties properly. Among the Rwandans who are required to use English in their daily activities, there are Francophone students at the university who have to use it as a language of learning. They need English for academic purposes, which would help them to cope with their mainstream studies.

In 1995, when the National University of Rwanda re-opened, it received both Francophone and Anglophone students. Then it had to hire two different lecturers to give the same course in two different languages, namely, English and French according to the language background of the students. Obviously, this presented a major educational and financial constraint. Therefore, a policy was introduced to give a one year intensive language course to all students entering the university. Francophones were to follow a one-year English course whereas Anglophones were to follow a one-year French course, after which they would be required to study through medium of either language according to the availability of the lecturer.

Experience has shown that after the one-year language course, students still complain that it is hard for them to follow a lecture in English. This is the reason for my main research question: does the one-year intensive English course adequately prepare students to cope with their content subjects?

1.4 The purpose of the study

This study falls within the field of academic development and academic literacy. It is mainly concerned with English for Academic Purposes and content-based instruction. The study aims to investigate the extent to which the one-year English language course prepares students to cope with content subjects which are offered through the medium of English. In this regard, it starts with analysing students' needs in terms of the English language knowledge and skills they need in order to function effectively through the English medium of instruction. Then, it analyses the one year English course materials to consider the extent to which they address the academic preparation of students on the course. Furthermore, it investigates students' and teachers' perceptions about the helpfulness of the course. Possible constraints which prevent the course from fulfilling its assigned task, and the issue of whether students get any language support from content lecturers are investigated as well. Finally, the study proposes an adjustment of the course towards English for Academic Purposes. The data used in this study will be gathered using research techniques discussed below.

1.5 Research techniques

Two main research techniques are used in this study. These are interviews and document analysis. The interviews are conducted with English teachers, as well as lecturers and students in the Management faculty. Document analysis deals mainly with analysing the textbook which include the teaching materials of the English course, together with the entrance and exit examinations.

1.6 The scope of the study

This study will discuss the issue of curriculum in relation to communicative language teaching and learning which emphasises that language learning should be directed towards achieving a given goal. In other words, the language curriculum will be critically examined to find out the extent to which it equips students with the linguistic tools they need in order to access content knowledge and associated discourse. This study will be limited to students in the Management Faculty because it is among the Faculties which have many Anglophone lecturers and a sizable number of students.

The literature review will discuss curriculum paradigm issues and their implications for curriculum development and implementation as well as academic literacy and content-based instruction. This discussion will form the background to an analysis of the one year language course with reference to the kind of paradigm in which it falls and the extent to which it prepares students in the Management Faculty to cope with academic demands of the English medium of instruction. In this regard, it will be maintained that the link between language competence and conceptual attainment is so intimate that it is virtually impossible to separate them. So activities in the language curriculum will be analysed to see whether they achieve the goal of helping learners to cope with their Management-related subjects, and more broadly, whether they prepare students adequately for the English medium of instruction. A prepared checklist will guide the analysis.

In addition, the study will critically analyse how students activate the knowledge they got from the language course while dealing with their first year subjects in the Management Faculty. Here interviews with Management lecturers and their students will reveal the extent to which the one year language course is helpful, and the language support that content lecturers provide to their students. Furthermore, the students' entrance and exit examinations will be scrutinised to see if students make progress and in which area, whether the exit examination reflects what has been taught and is a fair reflection of students' abilities, and whether the kinds of skills tested are consistent with the language skills that students need to cope with academic study. Finally, the study will include conclusions and recommendations.

While I believe that it would have been possible to look at how English language skills are integrated into the Management curriculum, this is not, however, the focus of this study. This study is mainly concerned with the extent to which the English course helps students in the Management Faculty to access knowledge of their Management-related subjects offered through the medium of English.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter has given some background to English language use in Rwanda. It has shown how English has become increasingly important in almost all domains. At the university level, the new bilingual policy entailed the introduction of a one-year language course. However, it seems that the language course does not adequately prepare students to cope with mainstream subjects since they complain that they do not understand much from lectures delivered through the medium of English.

The rest of the thesis is divided into the following chapters: Chapter Two deals with the Literature Review. Issues related to curriculum, academic literacy skills and content-based language instruction will be the main concern of that chapter. Chapter Three will describe the research methodology adopted to collect data. Chapter Four will contain an analysis of the textbook, and findings from interviews and examination papers. Chapter Five will draw out the conclusions of the study and offer a set of recommendation towards English for Academic Purposes.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The previous chapter provided the background to the teaching of English in the Rwandan context. It argued that the one-year language course that students follow in order to help them cope with their mainstream subjects at tertiary level might not be fulfilling its task

appropriately. This chapter considers some curriculum theories in order to see in which paradigm the language curriculum that is the subject of this study can be located and the implications of this paradigm as reflected in language teaching and learning. In evaluating the language course in use at the National University of Rwanda, I will also use criteria thrown up by three different sets of considerations in relation to this one-year course. These are the requirements of academic literacy, the possibilities offered by content-based instruction, and the teaching of the four language skills.

Before turning to a discussion of approaches to curriculum development, it is worth giving a brief definition of the concept of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) on which this whole work is centred.

EAP is one of the branches of English for Specific Purposes or ESP (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987: 1). According to Harmer (1991: 5), it grew out of the concern that students had to attend English speaking higher institutions and yet their low proficiency in English could not enable them to follow their courses effectively. So they had to follow an English course before they started their actual university subjects, and the aim of the course was to prepare them for the English medium. to go to American, British and Canadian Universities had to take an EAP course so that they could For example, he says that students who had develop their academic skills such as writing a report or essay, functioning in seminars.

As far as its objective is concerned, EAP seeks to develop the academic skills that every student in a tertiary institution needs. It explicitly teaches skills that students

need to master content knowledge. Among these, we can mention effective reading techniques, paragraph and essay writing, note-taking, summarising, synthesising, interpretation of graphic information, critical thinking and language awareness, specific genres and discourses, learning to learn skills, etc. Students on an EAP course are expected to acquire academic English and other skills which will enable them to function fully in mainstream courses. The transfer of the skills gained on the EAP course to mainstream courses is expected to facilitate better understanding of concepts and principles. EAP is intended to assist students in improving their proficiency in English and gain skills that are crucial to the acquisition of content knowledge.

In situations where students make a transition from secondary school to university, EAP is designed to bridge the gap between high school and the academic demands placed on students who are second or third language speakers of English.

In short, EAP helps students to acquire academic English and develop skills that enable them to succeed in tertiary education. It focuses on the development of academic literacy skills and their transference to mainstream courses.

Having provided this background knowledge about EAP, I would like to turn now to a discussion of curriculum approaches which can guide the design of any EAP curriculum.

2.1 Curriculum approaches

2.1.1 History of curriculum development

Throughout time, curriculum development has evolved to meet educational demands. This section will discuss its evolution from Tyler's model (or ends-means model) to Stenhouse's process model.

Tyler's model of Curriculum Development

Tyler, an influential figure of the late 1940s, suggests four fundamental questions that should form the basis of any curriculum development. For him, due consideration should be paid to:

- What educational purposes does the school seek to attain?
- What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?
- How can these educational experiences be effectively organised?
- How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?

(Nunan 1988: 11)

Basically, Tyler advocates that in the curriculum development task, the specification of aims, goals and objectives should come first. Second, the content which is meant to meet the pre-specified aims and goals should be considered. Third, this content would be organised and sequenced. Finally, the evaluation would be designed.

This model was further developed by Taba (1962), and was also influential in the field of curriculum development. It has been criticised for seeing curriculum activity as consisting of a series of discrete and sequential stages. It was especially criticised for leaving evaluation until the final stage rather than viewing evaluation as occurring at each stage.

Thus, according to Nunan (1988: 12), this model was “linear” instead of being “cyclical”. This criticism led to another model of curriculum, which took into account the cyclical aspect of curriculum development. The model developed by Wheeler (1967) repeats the four elements suggested by Tyler with the innovation that evaluation provides feedback and subsequent modifications in aims, goals and objectives. By end of the 1960s, more sophisticated models of curriculum started to emerge. One example is Kerr's (1968) interactive model, which included four elements, namely, objectives, evaluation, knowledge and school learning experience. These elements interact in the teaching/ learning situation and a change in one element entails change in all other elements.

While Tyler's model suggests a curriculum as product model, there are other scholars who view curriculum as a process. One of the most influential figures is Stenhouse whose model is dealt with in the next section.

Stenhouse's model of curriculum development

Stenhouse was an influential figure in the field during the 1970s. He came to the scene with his "process curriculum". As Nunan (1988:12) notes, the process model represented a "paradigm-shift in language curriculum development". It consisted of three parts, namely, planning, empirical study, and justification.

The usefulness of the process model of curriculum development lies in three points. First, it stresses what is actually happening. At this point, it contrasts with other theories, which emphasise what ought to be happening. To put it another way, the process model is centred on the implemented rather than the planned curriculum. Implemented curriculum refers to what Cornbleth (1990:21) has termed "curriculum-in-use" or "curriculum practice". Second, it recognises that the teacher plays an important role in curriculum development. Third, it maintains that the teachers' critical analysis and reflection on their current practices will bring about curriculum change in the classroom. In other words, this model views teachers as agents of curriculum change.

On the whole, each model had its own conception of language teaching/learning situations, and thus influenced teaching and learning practices. The next section discusses such influences.

Implication of Tyler's ends-means and Stenhouse process models in Teaching

The previous section pointed out that curriculum development shifted from a product-oriented model to a process model. The main concern of this section is to discuss the implications of each model on language teaching and learning practices.

The two models of curriculum development had and still have some implications in the field of language teaching and learning. For example, Nunan (1988: 16) reporting

on the criticisms documented by Clark as regards Tyler's ends-means model notes three implications. The first is that the model reduces the teacher to the role of mere implementer of someone else's curriculum. Secondly, the formulation of objectives on which the model itself rests is defective because it is not easy to produce objectives for the expressive and creative functions of language. Third and probably most importantly, it concentrates most exclusively on the products rather than the processes of learning as if specifying that the end points of learning is all that the curriculum needs to do. In this curriculum context, the teacher becomes a prisoner of the curriculum while teaching. S/he is denied the right to adjust it depending on learners' needs. Above all, S/he has to follow an "imposed" curriculum, which is based on pre-determined knowledge and a mechanistic view of classroom interaction. It seems that there is no room for negotiation of meaning for better comprehension.

From the above, it becomes evident that Tyler's model falls in the category of "decontextualised", "technocratic" conceptions of curriculum. As a matter of fact, the technocratic conceptions of curriculum maintain that a curriculum is a product, that it is made of separate components, which can be ordered to make a coherent whole.

The curriculum product thus produced tends not to be used as intended in practical settings. In fact, what would happen while individual teachers are implementing such curricula is not taken into account. Some teachers may alter them or simply not use them. In such cases, then, they are not widely used as intended by developers.

According to Cornbleth (1990: 15), the fact that these models of curriculum are negatively perceived should not be surprising because "they represent a constructed or idealised logic rather than a practical logic in use". Advocates of this model believe that "problems and solutions are pre-determined, that knowledge is pre-determined as well. Also, knowledge is treated as an object that can be reproduced and given to students" (ibid: 16).

Therefore, learning in this kind of curriculum simply means acquiring the intended knowledge and being able to reproduce it. Cornbleth (ibid: 17) mentions that "possession is indicated by reproducing, recognising or applying the appropriate knowledge objects on a pencil and paper test".

It can be argued that in language teaching, this conception of knowledge and the way it is tested does not foster genuine communication. It emphasises language usage rather than language use. Language use refers to the ability to use the knowledge of the language system in order to achieve some communicative purposes whereas language usage refers to the ability to compose correct sentences, which manifests the user's knowledge of the language system (Rea-Dickins & Germaine, 1992: 88). Thus, the curriculum product is unlikely to be an appropriate model to draw on to design a language curriculum for students who intend to use the language as a medium of instruction.

By contrast, the Stenhouse model falls within a critical conception of the curriculum. The process curriculum emphasises what happens when the curriculum is being implemented rather than separating elements of the curriculum as independent components. Critical conceptions hold such views as well. As Cornbleth (1990: 24) points out, "the focus is on what knowledge and learning opportunities actually are made available to students, how they are created, and what values they reflect and sustain". Knowledge is no longer viewed as an object or commodity to be acquired, as was the case with technocratic conceptions. Instead, it refers to opportunities to construct, reconstruct and/or critique knowledge. So it is maintained that curriculum is constructed and reconstructed in actual situations. Since every situation is unique, it allows for flexibility so that adjustment can be made to encourage negotiation of meaning. The teacher and the learners are given opportunities to modify or re-create the curriculum.

Unlike the view of curriculum as a product, the curriculum as a process encourages language learning. Since the teacher and the learners play a central role, they choose topics which are of interest to them. In this case, language learning is enhanced because it is believed that languages are best learnt when content is relevant and when learners are free from stress, fear, and anxiety. It is assumed that their choice of interesting topics will foster language learning. Also, they can choose to deal with a given activity more deeply or superficially or to drop it all together. The curriculum is modified and negotiated on a continual basis to accommodate learner's needs.

To sum up, curriculum has evolved from product-oriented to process-oriented models.

While “curriculum as product” views rely on expert knowledge and technical conceptions, it is interesting to note that “curriculum as process” approach has given due consideration to the teacher: the teacher plays a central role in curriculum development. S/he is not just a passive implementer of expert products.

It is true that teachers play a crucial role in curriculum development, constructing it jointly with learners. The following section discusses such an approach to curriculum development.

2.1.2 The learner-centred approach to curriculum development

By “a learner-centred approach” to curriculum development, it is meant that the “curriculum is a collaborative effort between teachers and learners, since learners are closely involved in the decision-making process regarding the content of the curriculum and how it is taught” (Nunan, 1988: 2). This sort of curriculum jointly constructed or negotiated between teacher and learners is obviously different from the one which is prescribed by the teacher alone or by experts. In the learner-centred curriculum, since learners have a say in what they learn, they are the ones who suggest the content of the curriculum depending on what is important to them. Students are not just consumers of knowledge. Nunan (1988: 4) emphasises this by stating that “... what little time there is must be used as effectively as possible to teach those aspects that learners themselves deem to be most urgently required, thus increasing surrender value and consequent students motivation.”

He goes on to say that in such contexts, aims should include not only the teaching of specific language skills but also the development of learning skills. For him, learning skills may relate to:

- providing learners with efficient strategies;
- developing skills needed to negotiate the curriculum;
- encouraging learners to set their own objectives;
- developing learners’ skills in self- evaluation.

It seems to me that an English for Academic Purposes curriculum should take into account such an approach. It should give a central role to both the teachers and students. Students would have greater control over their own learning by suggesting the content which is relevant to their own needs. Also, they would be given opportunities to reflect on their learning, and to evaluate themselves to see the extent to which they are reaching their aim and the skills that they still need to cover. By adopting this approach, EAP would not only enable students to communicate effectively at tertiary level, but it would also assist them to become independent learners.

Nevertheless, the learner-centred approaches to language teaching in tertiary contexts might meet some constraints. For example according to Bock (2000:41), given the traditional power relationship between the teacher and the students, decisions are likely to be solely taken by the teacher rather than being taken following a process of collaborative knowledge construction between teachers and learners. In addition, teachers may not be competent enough to manage the implementation of learner-centred approaches. Alternatively, adequate resources to draw upon might be lacking. Furthermore, the need to follow a unique curriculum with pre-defined outcomes may be preferred over an open-ended learner driven curriculum.

With particular reference to the Rwandan context, one of the most significant constraints that could hinder the successful implementation of learner-centred approaches to language teaching seems to be the power relationship between teacher and learners in the classroom. While learner-centred approaches to language teaching emphasize the empowerment of learners so that they control their learning (Nunan, 1988), the responses to the interview questions revealed that the classroom interaction in the Rwandan context is currently teacher-dominated. Students are not accorded what Weideman (1998:19) has termed "sufficient opportunity to use the target language". Moreover, the adoption of ready-made or published materials does not encourage teachers to jointly create their own teaching materials with their students. Finally, the lack of adequate sources of information is also likely to be an umbrella excuse for those teachers who find it difficult to access and organize information in order to create their own materials.

On the whole, although some factors in the current educational context militate against the implementation of a learner-centred approach to curriculum development, it is worth encouraging since it can empower learners and give them an opportunity to articulate what they want to learn and how they want to learn it. In this way, they could participate actively in curriculum development. The next section is concerned with the elements of the curriculum development process.

2.1.3 The curriculum process.

This section will discuss three elements of the curriculum process namely planning, implementing and evaluation. A discussion of different approaches to these aspects can help shed light on the analysis of the language curriculum in use at the National University of Rwanda, which is the main concern of this work.

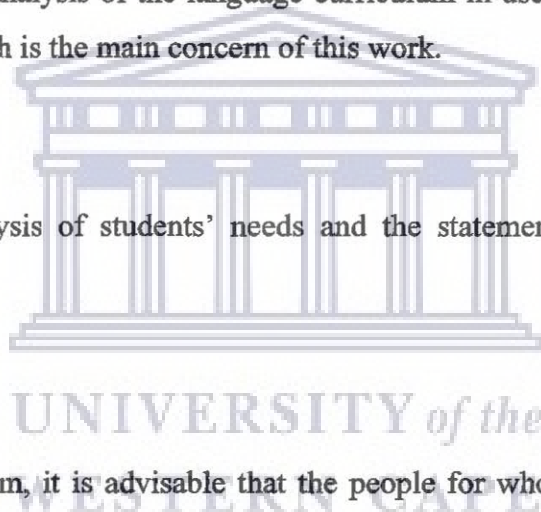
Planning

Planning includes the analysis of students' needs and the statement of goals and objectives.

Needs Analysis

When designing a curriculum, it is advisable that the people for whom the material and programme are to be developed be specified in advance. As Dublin and Olshtain (1986: 5) put it, one has to deal with "the actual consumers of the new programme, - teachers and learners". This is done during what they call the "fact-finding stage". During this stage, apart from finding out who the learners are and who the teachers are, it is also important to know where the programme will be implemented. Here, the programme is contextualised.

During the fact-finding stage, it is imperative to identify the needs of people for whom the programme is set up. Flowerdew and Miller (1997: 27) emphasise that identifying needs is an essential step for producing detailed specifications of language skills, functions and forms required to handle the target communication. In this perspective, the selection of content or teaching materials is informed by the needs of learners.



Still on the needs analysis issue, Pratt (1980: 80) also points out that analysing the needs of learners constitutes the starting point in any curriculum development or syllabus design. He notes that “curriculum development may begin either with a general assessment of needs or with a specific problem the curriculum designer attempts to solve”.

By making a detailed needs analysis, the starting point in curriculum development presents the advantage of focussing on the learner. In this case, it contrasts with the curriculum product, which is grounded on expert knowledge and other people’s intellectual interests. Pratt (ibid: 51) summarises the principal advantage of making needs analysis the starting point as follows:

This strategy immediately focuses attention on the learner. This is a valuable antidote to the inveterate tendency of educators to base curriculum on tradition, on the academic disciplines or on their own intellectual interests.

Also, another advantage that prior needs analysis presents, is that it facilitates the statement of the aims of the curriculum. The aims of the curriculum are dealt with in the following sub-section.

Aims and goals

A curriculum aim attempts to define the purpose of the curriculum. For example, in the case of a curriculum for students in the Faculty of Management some of the curriculum aims might be that students will be able to cope with their management courses through the medium of English. This would in turn entail skills such as note-taking, summarising, participating in seminars, and control of academic discourse as reflected in the various genres in use in Management studies. Writing the curriculum aim also becomes one of the first stages in the actual design of the curriculum.

When setting goals, the curriculum designers should attempt to incorporate the needs of each student and this has implications for the learning material to be used. In the case of curriculum as a process, learning material is not pre-selected, it is negotiated,

which makes the selection of content part of the implementation phase. Each teacher selects materials s/he finds to fit his/her specific situation.

Implementation

During the implementation stage, the curriculum should meet the needs of each student. Content must be selected and adjusted according to learners' needs. Dublin and Olshtain (1986: 26) point out that content should be selected according to the stated goals, which are meant to meet learners' needs. In this regard, they note that for adult learners in higher education who must cope with English in classes in their field of interest, their academic needs might consist of both language skills and general learning skills such as understanding lectures in the target language, taking notes, reading textbooks, etc. The course must set goals that incorporate the academic and professional situations faced by the students.

On the whole, if learners' needs are identified, activities should be selected by a competent teacher in relation to the identified needs and goals. All along the implementation process, the aim will be to meet learners' needs. However, a curriculum as process approach would see needs analysis as continuing through the implementation phase. Evaluation is a key part of this process. The next section contains a discussion of curriculum evaluation.

Evaluation

In the curriculum development process, the third important element is evaluation. In a curriculum as product approach, evaluation can take place after each stage or at the end of the course. Richards (1996: 31), while talking of course development, maintains that

Any part of the process of course development can be evaluated, including the assumptions about and analysis of students needs or backgrounds, goals and objectives, materials and activities, means of assessing students' progress, student participation, student roles, and the teacher's role.

As far as when to evaluate is concerned, Richards (1996: 31) distinguishes two kinds of evaluations. On the one hand, formative evaluation takes place during the development and implementation of the curriculum. The purpose of such an evaluation is to modify the curriculum as it is being developed. On the other hand, summative evaluation takes place after the curriculum has been implemented. Its purpose is to evaluate its success and improve it for future implementation.

The improvement brought about may range from altering and expanding the materials to changing the programme completely. For example, if the programme or materials do not address the learners' needs, a new programme is required, since the old one is no longer efficient; and the inefficiencies will only be noticed if the programme is evaluated. Dublin and Olshtain (1986: 10) note the importance of evaluation by stating: "it is necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the existing programme and materials. Often, a new programme is required because there is a serious gap between the results of the existing one and the needs of learners for English as a language of study". They also emphasise that since most new programmes are designed either to remedy the deficiencies in existing ones or to expand and improve them, it is imperative to begin any new endeavour with a thorough survey of existing conditions (ibid: 27). For them, five basic components of the programme should be examined while describing a programme currently in operation:

The existing curriculum and syllabus;

The material in use;

The teacher population;

The learners; and

The resources of the programme.

The question guiding the investigation is: "In what ways have the programme succeeded or failed?"

In a curriculum process approach, however, evaluation is done on a continual basis. It is the key part of the curriculum development process.

It seems that in the Rwandan context, an EAP course meant to prepare university students for English medium could be more successfully designed according to conceptions of the curriculum as process. The needs of the students would be analysed, goals and objectives would be set up, and the content would be jointly negotiated by students and teachers to meet students' needs. In addition, evaluation would continually take place to check if the course is fulfilling its task properly or if some adjustments need to be made. In this case, students would get a sense of why they are learning the language and would probably gain more from it.

Let us now turn to a discussion of the content-based model of language instruction.

2.2 Content-based instruction

The previous section has discussed issues pertaining to curriculum development. Attention has been paid to the history of language curriculum development and the elements involved in the curriculum process. It has been noted that teachers and learners should be given due respect in the curriculum development process since they are directly responsible for class management and the learning context. In this section, I discuss content-based instruction.

During the last decade, a new approach in the field of language education emerged. This approach proposes the integration of language skills and substantive content, thus contrasting with many existing methods, which emphasise the teaching of language skills in isolation. Advocates of the content-based model believe that language and content development should not be regarded in isolation from each other. Rather, they are related and therefore students can learn the target language while they are learning other subjects.

English for Academic Purposes can also draw on this shift in approaches. For students in the Management Faculty for example, a content-based model would assume that students learn English using their Management subjects as content. Language teaching would be integrated with management subjects.

2.2. 1 Rationale for integrating language and content

Snow, Met and Genesee (1989: 201-2) mention some of the reasons why language teaching should shift from an approach which teaches language skills in isolation to one which integrates it with content subjects.

The first reason comes from the assumptions that language development and cognitive development go hand in hand. This is true for young children learning their first language, but it is probably true for second language learning as well. Therefore, in the case of second/foreign language learners, dissociating language learning from cognitive or academic development would result in an imbalance between language development and cognitive development. Thus an integrated approach is best suited to bring second language learning and cognitive/academic development together. EAP can draw on this model as well. In the case of EAP, the teaching of language skills in integration with content subjects would promote cognitive and academic development. For example, if an EAP course in the Management Faculty uses content from Management subjects to teach English, language development might lead to cognitive development as well.

The second reason is that language is learned most effectively for communication in meaningful, purposeful social and academic contexts. As a matter of fact, people learn a language not for the sake of knowing the language, but because they need to use it in their everyday life. There is always an ultimate goal for which they need the language. Crandall (1987: 3), expressing this shift in language teaching/learning, stresses that “the focus is not just on learning the language, but in using it as a medium to learn something else”.

For students, using content materials as a basis for teaching language provides a purposeful and/or a meaningful use of the language and hence effective language learning. Snow, Met and Genesee (1989: 202) suggest that in subject matter learning, the role of the language as a medium of learning should not be overlooked. Also, in language learning, it should be remembered that content is being communicated. Therefore, they maintain that “when the learners’ second language is both the object and medium of instruction, the content of each lesson must be taught simultaneously

with the skills necessary for understanding it” (ibid: 202).

The third reason is that if language and content are integrated, content can provide both a motivational and cognitive basis for language learning. As far as motivation is concerned, students might find that the use of texts related to their content subject is interesting and they might be eager to learn. Therefore, providing interesting texts and activities becomes one way of increasing potential relevance and meaningfulness of the experience. Subsequently, language would be learned because it provides access to the content.

In addition, the use of content provides real meaning and thus a cognitive basis for language learning. As Snow, Met and Genesee (ibid: 201) note,

Meaning provides conceptual or cognitive hangers on which language functions and structures can be hung. In the absence of real meaning, language structures and functions are likely to be learned as abstractions devoid of conceptual or communicative value.

In order to maintain the motivational and cognitive aspects of learning, relevant and interesting content should be selected.

A fourth reason they mention is that different subject areas are characterised by specific genres and registers. Berknokotter and Huckin (1995: 1) define genres as “the media through which scholars and scientists communicate with their peers”. According to them, Genres are intimately linked to a discipline’s methodology, and they package information in ways that conform to a discipline’s norms, values, and ideology. Understanding the genres of written communication in one’s field is, therefore, essential to professional success. Thus, using the content of each content area will help students to master the specific genre and register required by this area, which contribute to academic development in general.

For example, in our case of Management studies at university, Management-related subjects should be taken into consideration to deal with different genres and discourses pertaining to management studies. Texts related to these subjects can be

used for text analysis, making summaries, oral discussions, etc. Thus, the use of such content would provide meaningful situations for language learning, hence promoting academic development. In other words, the use of Management-related content would help students to develop the cognitive academic language proficiency that tertiary education requires. Developing cognitive academic proficiency is the concern of the next section.

2.2.2 Developing cognitive academic proficiency

According to King, Fagan, Bratt and Baer (1987: 90), “the ultimate goal of an English as a second language program is to prepare Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students for success in mainstream classes”. To achieve this goal, the scope of instruction should be broad enough to embrace the language and the concepts of content area subjects. Teaching English, they suggest, is not an end in itself, but only a means to an end. They go on to state that: “the critical outcome is how well teachers equip students to succeed in school”. They implicitly seem to suggest that EAP, an English programme meant to prepare English second language learners to succeed in mainstream academic classes, should incorporate some of the content materials in the language classroom.

Indeed, the language used for academic instruction is different from the language used for social communication. Here, Cummins’ models of language proficiency BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) and CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) come into play.

In the first model, language is made easily accessible by the context in which the communication occurs. Language is context-embedded. Paralinguistic tools such as gestures and intonation can make comprehension easier, which is not the case for CALP. In CALP, context is seldom provided and the language is cognitively demanding. Whereas BICS are sufficient for everyday communication, CALP is essential for academic achievement, cognitive and conceptual development. It is the kind of language used in textbooks and lectures. Therefore, in order to succeed in an academic environment, CALP not BICS are needed. Baker (1996: 154) makes clear that BICS are not sufficient to cope with the cognitively demanding situation of the

classroom.

Learners with some conventional ability in their second language may falsely appear ready to be taught through their second language in classroom. Learners operating at the context-embedded level in the language of the classroom may fail to understand the content of the curriculum and fail to engage in higher order cognitive processes of the classroom, such as synthesis, discussion, analysis, evaluation and interpretation.

Fisher (1996: 64) points out that learners may develop their oral fluency and yet fail to cope with academic language. Talking about ESL students for whom she had developed a Social Studies course, she notes that

Although they had developed oral fluency, they were unable to make the transition to higher level, more abstract academic work. They had learned to read but had difficulty reading to learn. Simple decoding skills, effective earlier, were of limited use in deciphering complex patterns of information. Although they wrote charmingly about their personal experiences, they could not manipulate facts for an essay question.

In the Rwandan context, it seems that learners start their subjects in English medium while still at the level of BICS. I doubt whether they even reach the threshold level, which is, “the degree of language proficiency needed for survival in a second language environment” (King, Fagan, Bratt and Baier (1987: 90). In our case, as soon as conversational ability seems sufficient, student are assumed to be ready for English as medium of instruction. This is probably one of the reasons why students complain when they start their subjects with English as medium of instruction. Students’ ability in English is not yet developed in order to enable them to operate in an environment that is more cognitively and academically demanding.

The point to be made here is that students should not be prepared for mere communication if the goal is to learn language for academic purposes, and if the

language is to be used as a medium of instruction. Rather, academic language, which will help students to access content knowledge in the context-reduced settings of academic discourse, should be the focal point. If students can cope with academic language, it means that they are academically literate. The concept of academic literacy is dealt with in more detail in the following section.

2.3 Academic literacy

Leibowitz (1995: 35) provides both a narrow and a broad definition of academic literacy. According to her, academic literacy may be narrowly defined as “the ability to read and write effectively within the university context in order to pass from one level to another”. More broadly, academic literacy is defined as “... being able to read and write within the academic context with independence, understanding and a level of engagement in the work”.

Taylor (1988: 8) gives a functional definition of Academic Literacy. He mentions that literacy refers to “a student’s capacity to use written language to perform those functions required by the culture in ways and at a level judged acceptable by the reader”. Here, he specifies that the reader is a university academic, the requirement is the production of an essay or course paper and the function is analytical reasoning of one form or another. It becomes evident then, that literacy is intimately related to disciplinary orientation. It moves, as Nightingale (1988: 66) notes, “far past statements about surface level correctness to statements about the ability to satisfy the intellectual demands of communication in varied subject disciplines”.

This definition of academic literacy sheds lights on what should be the main concern of a language program meant to enhance literacy in the university. If the aim of a language course (EAP in our case) is to improve standards of students’ literacy, it should go beyond surface correctness and explore the relationship between language and the content that is expressed through that language.

Taylor (1988: 7) maintains that “the key to improving standards of students’ literacy lies not in inventing new methods for teaching spelling or punctuation (welcome as such initiatives might be for other reasons) but in exploring fundamental relationship

between the culture of knowledge and the language by which it is expressed”.

Academic literacy viewed as such distinguishes two dimensions of language competence, namely, the generalised literacy of contexts and control of the disciplinary dialect. On one hand, the generalised literacy of contexts has to do with correctness, coherence, appropriateness of style, voice and other formal features. On the other hand, control of the disciplinary dialect is concerned with those meanings, items and forms of language peculiar to the discipline. Much of the attention in this area of disciplinary language focuses upon items of technical jargon.

Scholars have argued that disciplinary language is not easy to acquire. For example, Ballard and Clanchy (1988: 19) point out that “... the acquisition of entirely new, highly technical jargon certainly constitutes a significant problem for students”. However, despite the difficulty of the disciplinary discourse, it has to be acquired so that students can function fully in an academic context. Ballard and Clanchy also emphasise that “...learning within the university is a process of gradual socialisation into a distinctive culture of knowledge” (ibid: 14). By this, they imply that each tertiary institution has a set or sets of values and beliefs regarding discourse conventions.

Thus, students must learn the way things are done within institutions of higher learning. To put it differently, first year students need to internalise certain rules and conventions of the academic environment in which they find themselves suddenly enclosed. For example, they have to take their own notes from the huge amount of words and sentences that the lecturers articulate. Thus they have to be able to differentiate between main points and details in order to take relevant notes. Both listening and speaking skills have to be developed so that learners can catch what the lecturer is saying and participate actively. In addition, they have to read many books and pick up important information to fit their purposes. Furthermore, they have to write assignments and exams for different subjects, all of which require different writing techniques. Therefore, they have to know each subject’s requirements.

In short, they need to be informed about such academic practices in order to become fully-fledged members of the academic society. Therefore, the kind of literacy that

EAP should aim to promote is the one which includes but goes beyond surface correctness to include the context of academic disciplines in which the language is being used. If students have control over the relevant language requirements of the particular disciplines, they are likely to perform the tasks of that subject satisfactorily.

To sum up, students at tertiary level have to be academically literate in order to cope with academic discourse in general and each subject's academic requirements in particular. However, it seems that academic literacy is intimately linked to the development of the four skills (speaking, reading, listening and writing). The following section discusses the roles of these skills in academic development and the place they deserve in the entire curriculum.

2.4 The role of the four language skills in academic literacy

The previous section discussed the concept of academic literacy. It was argued that language programmes, which deal not only with surface correctness but also draw on content subjects and academic discourse are best suited to help students cope with academic demands. In this section, I would like to deal with the four skills, the role they play in student's learning and their place in the entire curriculum. The argument is that all four skills play an important role in students' learning. Therefore, the language that students generate when they speak and write is as important in their learning as the language they read and hear.

2.4.1 Writing

Product vs. Process

Research in writing suggests two modes of writing. The first mode views writing as a product whereas the other considers writing as a process. The first mode suggests that writing is linear, that is, consisting of an outline of ideas first, followed by the writing of a draft, then revising and editing, in clearly and specified stages. Here, emphasis is put on the final polished product. On the other hand, the second mode encourages writing as a process, a mode which is not linear at all. According to Nightingale

(1988: 74), this mode of writing “leads one to integrate materials, allows review and re-evaluation, helps form connections and is active and dictated by one’s own patterns of thinking and doing”.

Here, as Nightingale later notes, the emphasis is “... on personal writing, the informal and perhaps loosely structured writing that occurs when one thinks in writing”(ibid: 74). As long as a new idea occurs in the writer’s mind, s/he can always go back and write it. As long as s/he needs to clarify some points, s/he is welcome to do so regardless of the stage where s/he is. The writer is able to move forward and backward among activities (generating ideas and planning, transcribing, revising and editing). It is only later that ideas can be finally organised in structured essays. S/he does not just progress from one stage to the next.

This kind of writing has implications for learning. For example, Nightingale (ibid: 75) maintains that writing informally can assist students to develop and to demonstrate the skills of written communication demanded by higher education. For her, it is evident that informal writing seems to help students to order experience, including intellectual experience such as reading, listening to lectures and discussing. Ordering is a vital part of the process of writing well about complex topics.

Contexts that influence students’ ability to write

According to Nightingale (1988:75), four contexts can influence students’ ability to write. These are the students’ cultural background, the relationship between writer and audience, the subject area and disciplinary culture as well as the classroom.

First, I would like to consider how the students’ cultural background can have an effect on the students’ writing ability. If we take first year university students as an example, it can be noticed that each one writes according to how s/he has been prepared in her/his earlier education. If s/he is used to giving a straightforward answer to the question, s/he is not likely to go through the process of providing an elaborate introduction or rephrasing the question while giving her/his answer. S/he might not even provide a conclusion. On the contrary, other students who have been trained to give an elaborate answer with many details and examples might do so.

Thus, the way the students write may reflect their previous training and the way their culture views writing.

A second context which has a bearing on students' writing is the relationship between the writer and reader. For example, students may produce different kinds of written materials for the same topic depending on whether they are writing to their fellow students, to their lecturers, or to any kind of audience. If their target audience has got the relevant background, for instance, they might go straight to the point. However, if they are writing to a readership that needs some information in order to follow their line of reasoning, they have to provide the necessary information. Similarly, in the Management context, students are likely to produce different written material according to whether they are writing to their lecturers or a managing director of a given company. Bhatia (1999: 26) emphasises the fact that different written materials can be produced to suit different audiences:

It makes a good deal of difference if the document is written for subordinates rather than for superiors. It makes a lot more crucial difference if it is written for outside clients rather than for insiders. It is an entirely different matter if one were to write to an established corporate client....

Not only is the content of what writers write altered depending on the audience, but also the style they use is chosen to suit the intended audience.

The third context which influences students' writing is the content area. As a matter of fact, not all disciplines require students to write in the same way. For example, Nightingale quotes Becher (1981: 112-13) to show how History and Biology require students to approach tasks in a different way from Physics and Sociology. He mentions that

Historians and biologists characteristically approach problems in an open-ended way, allowing hypotheses to emerge from the data rather than imposing them at the outset. Physicists and Sociologists seem more comfortable if they can draw on some initial hypotheses, however tentative it may be (1988: 75).

Other examples can be mentioned but the important point to be made is that different subject disciplines require different ways of writing from students. The implication in learning/teaching situations is that students should be made aware of each discipline's requirements. In this case, they might know how to approach the task effectively depending on the subject discipline. This point seems to be the discipline teacher's task to direct students towards appropriate learning by making explicit the requirements of his/her task. Consequently, the language teacher would need to become familiar with the subject discipline's requirements in order to help learners effectively.

The classroom environment, which constitutes the fourth context influencing students' writing ability, can be exploited to make students aware of different genres. In the classroom, students may learn to approach tasks effectively and hence write appropriately as required by the actual task. In addition, when they are given an assignment, the way the assignment is formulated may have a direct bearing on the kind of written answers that students provide. For example, if the assignment is phrased and sequenced in clear and well-understood terms, students may come up with a well-structured written answer. On the other hand, if the task itself is ambiguous, the students are likely to produce ambiguous answers as well. If students get appropriate constructive feedback from their lecturers, they can draw on this feedback to improve their writing ability.

Nightingale (1988: 77) mentions the issue of assignments which do not incorporate what students writers will be required to do once they graduate. She argues that most students' assignments are generally value-free tasks unlike those graduates will face when employed in industry. So she encourages writing teachers to stress skills of problem definition. According to her, in the pre-writing stage, "... students must learn to discover the organisational, technical and rhetorical contexts of the problem inherent to the task". She suggests that this would be best done via problem-based learning.

University students are required to write within specific genres and discourses as required by their field of study. They also need to adjust their piece of writing

depending on their prospective audience. Thus, they need to develop not only the language that different genres and discourses require, but also different strategies they may use to organise and express their ideas through language effectively depending on their audience. They need to go beyond language itself to consider other parameters, such as genre, academic discourse and audience when they write. In other words, they need to develop their rhetorical and meta-linguistic skills to draw on so as to carry out the writing task effectively. Their teachers should help them in this regard.

In short, writing plays a central role in the learning process. It can enhance learning depending on the kind of activities selected, and how one goes about the writing process. Apart from writing, listening and speaking can also have a direct impact on the learning process, as can be seen from the next sub-section.

2.4.2 Listening and speaking

There are times when a listener can process the information s/he receives successfully, but at other times s/he can fail. In each case, there are factors which are at the basis of a particular listening performance. Below are four factors, which according to Anderson and Lynch (1988:5-7) can determine a given listening performance.

Unfamiliarity with the speaker's accent

In some instances, a listener may not hear adequately what has been said because s/he is not familiar with the speaker's accent. In this case, the listener recognises that s/he has been talked to, but s/he does not have any idea of what the message was all about. (Anderson and Lynch 1988:5)

Comprehension or understanding

If the speech contains words or phrases that the listener can hear adequately but is not able to understand, s/he cannot not grasp the message either. Failure to understand may be due to the unfamiliarity with the syntax or semantics of the language. This might be one of the reasons why students following courses offered through the

medium of English fail to catch what the lecturer says. They might indeed hear what s/he says, but because they do not know the meaning of the words, getting the message maybe problematic. They fail to process sentences or phrases which are new to them appropriately.

Absent-mindedness

In this case, the listener may be perfectly able to hear and understand the speaker but still makes no attempt to process the information s/he receives. Anderson and Lynch (1988:6) rightly refer to this listener as being “switched off” consciously or unconsciously. In classroom situations, students might be thinking about a test they have to write in the following session. In this case, although they might seemingly be following the lecture, the incoming speech from the lecturer may flow past them, without their making any attempt to process it.

Full/ Complete participation

In this case, the listener attends to each part of the information and s/he tries to construct a coherent and sound interpretation. In this situation, listening is a co-operative activity in the sense that the listener can engage and interact with the speaker either by asking question for clarification or challenging him.

Based on this, Anderson and Lynch challenge the traditional view of listening as a passive or receptive language skill. Listening as a passive activity is, according to them, “... an activity in which you merely receive and record what you hear, rather than actively attempt to integrate the incoming information and seek clarification when that interpretation building process meets an obstacle”(1988: 6).

They maintain that listening involves more than language and that the role of the successful listener must be thought of as an active one. For them, understanding is not something that happens because of what the speaker says. The listener has a crucial role to play in the process by activating various types of knowledge, and by applying what he knows to what he hears and trying to understand what the speaker

means.

Anderson and Lynch also discuss the notions of ‘schema’ and ‘script’ as factors which influence the successful listening activity. According to them, a ‘schema’ can be defined as “... a mental structure, consisting of relevant individual knowledge, memory and experience, which allows us to incorporate what we learn into what we know” (ibid: 14), while a ‘script’ is the term used to describe a set of knowledge of probable sequences of events in familiar situations.

Once again, it becomes evident that listening activities are more complex than some people think. Fortunately, listeners have got a range of resources such as schema and script types to draw on in order to listen successfully. In a teaching/learning context, students might fail to listen to the teacher appropriately because they lack relevant schema or scripts.

Relationship between listening and speaking

The traditional method of developing listening skills, that is, getting learners to listen to a piece of language and then answer subsequent comprehension questions has limitations as a technique for developing reciprocal listening skills, partly because it separates the skills of listening and speaking. This sort of listening task also encourages a passive view of listening skills. Since speaking and listening are separated, the listeners are not allowed to interact with the input, that is, to indicate when there is a comprehension problem, or to provide feedback that they have understood the message. So, it can be argued that listening tasks which promote the integration of listening and speaking should be devised because when students are listening to a lecturer, they should be allowed to interrupt him as soon as they do not get the meaning of what s/he is saying. In other words, they should interrupt him/her and ask for clarifications. They should not wait until s/he finishes. They should do so while they listen, not after listening. Otherwise, they might forget the question (since they would have to follow the lecture).

Therefore listening and speaking should not be divorced from each other. Instead, they should be integrated, that is, reciprocal listening should be encouraged in order to allow learners to interact with the input and thus enhance comprehension. Listening

activities, which integrate listening and speaking and integrate them at the same time are likely to enhance language learning.

The role that reading plays in learning is the main concern of the next section.

2.4.3 Reading

Reading, like the other language skills, plays an important role in information processing. Therefore, the reader needs to develop or adopt some strategies in order to read effectively. This is certainly the case in academic contexts where students are required to read various books either to complete their assignments, to prepare for their tests/exams or to increase their knowledge about a given subject. This section deals with some of the strategies that students in higher education need, and how the reading teacher should help his/ her students to read effectively.

Strategies for reading

In defining reading, some scholars have considered the idea of reading levels as well as the link between reading and thinking. For example, Herber (1978: 9) quoted by Dupuis and Askov (1982: 20) defines reading as “a thinking process which includes decoding of symbols, interpreting the meanings of the symbol, and applying the ideas derived from the symbols”. Whatever the definition, Dupuis and Askov (1982: 20) maintain that an important aspect of defining reading is identifying the readers’ purpose, that is, the schema they have to connect with the reading. Knowing the purpose in reading is the reader’s first responsibility. Douglas (1994: 292) emphasises the role of purpose in reading. According to him, “efficient reading consists of clearly identifying the purpose in reading. By doing so, you know what you are looking for and can weed out potentially distracting information”.

In the context of academic reading, once students know the purpose of the reading task, they can choose the relevant reading strategy in order to complete the reading task. For example, they can choose to skim the text. Skimming consists of quickly running one’s eyes across a whole text in order to get the gist. Skimming as a reading strategy gives readers the advantage of being able to predict the purpose of the

passage, the main topic or message, and possibly some of the developing or supporting ideas. Skimming constitutes the starting point of more focused reading.

A second strategy that students can use in their reading tasks is scanning, that is quickly searching for some particular piece of information in a text. The purpose of scanning is to extract certain specific information without reading through the whole text.

A third strategy worth applying to the reading task is critical reading. Here, students need to distinguish between literal and implied meaning. When they write, writers often have specific aims. Sometimes they want to influence the way we think and see the world. It is very important for readers to notice that texts are rarely neutral. Therefore, readers should be able to use their imagination to think about the issues raised in the text. This personal way of interpreting or understanding a text is what is meant by critical reading. This strategy is important because most of the time, reading a text from the beginning to the end may not be the right way of searching for its meaning. Rather, asking questions about it, thinking about what is said in the text and planning how to go about searching for meaning are important strategies to get the meaning of the text. One needs to go beyond words, one needs to dig deeper than just the sentences on the surface.

Students in higher education need top-down and bottom-up strategies as well. These strategies pertain to the interactive model of reading (Carrell, Devine and Eskey 1988: 244). According to these authors, top-down refers to higher order mental concepts such as the knowledge and expectations of the reader, and bottom-up refers to the physical text on the page. The interactive model then suggests that there is an interaction among the levels. The reader starts with the perception of graphic cues, but as soon as these are recognised as familiar, schemata derived from both linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world in general are brought into play. As Carrell, Devine and Eskey (1988: 224) note, this model incorporates the implications of reading as an interactive process, that is, the use of background knowledge, expectations, context and so on.

Flowerdew and Peacock (2001: 185) summarise the reading strategies that students need to develop in macro and micro reading skills categories. According to them, the macro- reading skills include:

- The ability to make use of their existing knowledge to make sense of new material, and fit new knowledge in their schema. Such readers are able to use skimming and scanning skills in order to get an idea of the overall structure and organisation of a text, and the primary and secondary information in it, along with prediction skills;
- The ability to learn how to select and organise information, that is, to distinguish important from less important information in texts, to read selectively for a particular purpose and to know how to make notes from a text;
- The ability to evaluate the information, to use it in discussions or while performing a given task, and to see the implications of the reading.

As far as micro-reading skills are concerned, students need to be able to recognise discourse markers. If they can do so, it becomes easier for them to notice logical relationships such as cause and effect, comparison and contrast. Also, recognising the markers enables students to recognise examples, explanations, definitions, generalizations, and so on.

In addition to recognising discourse markers, students need to be able to cope with vocabulary. In this case, they need to identify and learn technical or field-specific terms as well as general terms with which they might have problems.

One strategy that students may use in order to cope with vocabulary problems is to use the context clues to work out the meaning. Indeed, the context can help to get the meaning of an unknown word.

All in all, it is important to know that there are some strategies that students can use in order to process information from written texts. The choice of a strategy depends on the purpose of the reading task. The reading teacher also plays an important role in promoting his/her students' reading ability. The next section looks at the role of the reading teacher in more detail.

The role of the teacher of reading.

The reading teacher plays an important role in the reading process. Since s/he is the one who selects the reading materials, s/he has to make sure that the materials match the students' needs and interests. Carrell, Devine and Eskey (ibid: 225) characterise the role of the reading teacher as follows:

It is first of all the teacher who must create the world of reading in a particular class. It is the teacher who must stimulate interest in reading, who must project his or her enthusiasm for books, and who must help students to see that reading can be of real value to them. It is also the teacher who must choose, edit or even in some circumstances create appropriate materials for students with varied needs and purposes to read in challenging but not overwhelming amounts and in a sequence of increasing difficulty which will lead to improvement but not to frustration.

They maintain that bringing students and appropriate materials together is a very large part of the reading teacher's job.

In academic contexts, students have to read a lot. Thus, practice in extensive reading is important so that students gain the ability to deal with the large amounts of texts that academic disciplines require. Moreover, students need instruction and practice in intensive reading in order to acquire particular reading strategies, such as reading for detail, and distinguishing the main idea from supporting ideas. Furthermore, students need to be made aware of the range of genres among different disciplines so that they process information effectively according to the genre of the discipline they are dealing with. All these activities can be carried out thanks to the valuable help of the

reading teacher. The reading teacher chooses activities depending on his/her learners needs and monitors their implementation in the classroom setting.

Effective reading is one of the skills that most if not all the students at tertiary level need in order to cope with academic demands. To complete their assignments, write exams or any other academic task, students need to read books, articles or any other printed matter, the aim being to extract relevant information and ideas to accomplish the task effectively. Therefore, they need to possess some reading skills and strategies, which enable them to process information from the written texts. The choice of a strategy depends on the purpose of the reading task. The reading teacher also plays an important part in guiding the students.

To sum up, although I have presented each skill separately, it has to be stressed that in real situations, such as university studies in our case, students have to activate all the skills in an integrated manner. Writing and reading are important, and so are listening and speaking.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with some issues surrounding the concept of 'curriculum'. Two curriculum paradigms, namely, curriculum as a product and curriculum as a process were discussed. The aim was to highlight some of the implications of each paradigm in relation to language teaching and learning, in order to see in which paradigm the English course offered by the National University of Rwanda can best be located.

In addition, the chapter discussed the concept of content-based instruction, a model of language teaching which integrates language and content with the aim of providing the linguistic tools necessary for subject matter understanding and concept attainment.

Furthermore, academic literacy as well as the acquisition of the four language skills have been the concern of this chapter. Students in the Management Faculty, like other students at the National University of Rwanda, need the kind of academic language and skills required by their field of study in order to function effectively in academic

contexts where English is the language of learning.

Having identified the appropriate academic language skills and strategies, we will discuss how they are dealt with in the one-year EAP course at the National University of Rwanda in Chapter Four. But before we do so, Chapter Three will discuss the research methodology used to collect the data in detail.



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CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The previous chapter was concerned with the theoretical framework that I used to analyse the one-year English course that the National University of Rwanda offers. This chapter deals with the research methodologies and techniques that I used to collect my data.

3.1 Research method

As stated in the main research question, the aim of this research was to find out the extent to which the one-year English course prepares Management students to access knowledge and skills through the medium of English. This type of research is considered to be qualitative in nature since the researcher is concerned with an in-depth understanding of the respondents' perceptions about the helpfulness of the course. The data used in this study were gathered using two main research techniques, namely, interviews and document analysis. The audio-recorded interviews included a number of participants such as English teachers, students and lecturers from the Management Faculty. Document analysis was mainly concerned with the analysis of the textbook used for the English course, as well as the entrance and exit English examinations. However, although I had not planned to use a questionnaire, two lecturers in the Management Faculty were not available at the time arranged, and offered to answer a questionnaire which I then drafted and administered.

3.2 Research site and sampling

This study was carried out at the National University of Rwanda. I decided to interview four lecturers from the Management Faculty, two English teachers and thirty students from the Management Faculty.

The first criteria for choosing my sample population was availability and willingness to answer my questions. However, selecting subjects from those who were available and willing to answer to my questions required purposive sampling. In purposive sampling, Cohen and Manion (1994: 77) maintain that “the researcher handpicks the cases to be included in his sample on the basis of his judgement of their typicality”. So, for example, students to be interviewed had to be from a Francophone background. In addition, they needed to be Management students studying through the medium of English, and should have completed the one-year English course offered by the university.

Lecturers in the Management Faculty were chosen for inclusion in the study if they lectured in English.

I also chose to interview two English teachers. One was chosen because he also taught oral and written expression in the Faculty of Management. I thought that he would be in a position to evaluate the helpfulness of the course and the language abilities that students gained from the course, since he dealt with the same students when they were following the course and after they had completed the course. Another English teacher was chosen because he was the head of the department in charge of the one-year English course, and also a teacher on the course. The two were available and willing to share their experiences, and to provide information relevant to my study. In short, informants were deliberately chosen because they had some special contribution to make (Denscombe 1998: 118-119). In order to make my informants feel at ease and share their experiences with me, I made it clear that their names would be kept anonymous. This is the reason why students are referred to as S1, S2, etc., while Management lecturers are referred to as MGT1, MGT2, MGT3 and MGT4, and English teachers are referred to as ET1 and ET2.

3.3 The procedure followed during interviews

Before starting the actual interviews, I explained the purpose of my research to my informants. I made it clear that I needed their views and opinions only for academic purposes, so that they would feel free to express themselves. Then I asked them if I

could record their answers and all of them agreed. The recorded interviews were transcribed afterwards.

While interviewing the three categories of my sample population, I used semi-structured interviews. I chose to use the semi-structured interview format because it is open and it allows flexibility and freedom. Denscombe (1998: 115) characterises semi-structured interviews as follows:

... with the semi-structured interview, the interviewer is prepared to be flexible in terms of the order in which the topics are considered, and, perhaps more significantly, to let the interviewee develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues raised by the researcher. The answers are open-ended, and there is more emphasis on the interviewee elaborating points of interest.

Thus, I let my interviewees speak for as long as they wished, and I explained and clarified the questions in case my informants did not understand. I could also follow up an incomplete or unclear response. The interview questions that I had developed after consultation with my supervisor were not strictly followed. I only used them as baselines for the interview, and further questions were asked depending on the kind of answers that my informants provided.

The interview with Management lecturers focused on whether their students experienced language problems in their subjects, the kind of language problems they experienced, how well they participated in the classroom, the kind of language support that lecturers provided to their students and their opinion on how effectively the English course prepared students to access knowledge through the medium of English.

The main interview questions were the following:

1. How well do Francophone students cope with the content of your subject offered through the medium of English? Can you tell me if they experience any language problems?
2. What general academic skills do they have? -Can they identify the main idea from supporting details? -Can they summarise an article? -Do they write coherent English? -Can they write an essay which develops an argument? -Can they take and understand course notes? -Do they understand exam or assignment questions?
3. Can they miss the point just because they have problems with English, the language of instruction?
4. Are students active participants in the classroom or do they just take what the lecturer says without questioning or challenging him/her?
5. What kind of language support do you provide to your students?
6. Do you have any other comments to make on these issues?

For lecturers in the Management faculty and teachers on the English course, the interviews were conducted in their offices, on a one-to-one basis. The one-to-one interview variety was relatively easy to arrange. Moreover, the interviews were relatively easy to control since the researcher had one person's ideas to grasp and interrogate, and one person to guide through the interview agenda (Denscombe 1998: 114). Although the offices had been thought to be quiet, the interview process was at times interrupted by people coming in or phone calls. These interviews were conducted in English.

The interview with English teachers focussed on the skills that the course covered, the strengths and weaknesses of the course, attitudes and competencies of the teachers on that course, the methodology they used and how the course equipped students with the linguistic tools they needed in order to study their subjects through the medium of English.

The main interview questions for English teachers were the following:

1. What general and academic skills do you cover?
2. Do you cover them on an equal footing?
3. What methodology do you use?
4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the course?
5. Does this course prepare students to cope with content subjects once they start to study them?
6. What is your overall attitude to, or impression of, the course?
7. Do you have any further comments to make on these issues?

With students in the Management faculty, I preferred semi-structured group interviews.

Denscombe (1998: 114) mentions the advantages of group interviews by quoting Lewis (1992: 413): "... they help to reveal consensus views, may generate richer responses by allowing participants to challenge one another's views, ...". Group interviews present disadvantages as well. For example, quiet people might not express their views. Also, group members who hold opinions contrary to the prevailing opinion within the group might prefer to keep quiet (Denscombe 1998: 115). However, in our case, although some students did not provide extended contributions, they revealed both disagreement and consensus.

The students were divided into two groups of ten students, and some individuals from each group answered each question. I also asked further questions for clarification. However, although I allowed them to use the language in which they felt comfortable, they did not provide extended contributions. I tried to encourage everyone to speak in order to get each one's opinion. Later on, I carried out another interview, again with a group of ten students. Right from the start, I told them that they could answer in Kinyarwanda, and I also asked my questions in Kinyarwanda. In both sets of interviews, it was clear whether they agreed with one another's views or not.

The interview with students focussed on the problems they encountered while following a lecture in English, the skills that they needed in order to function effectively in the English medium of instruction and their opinions and perceptions about how successfully the English course had prepared them in this regard.

The main interview questions for students were the following:

1. How does the English course prepare you to cope with your content subjects?
2. What difficulties do you meet when you follow a lecture in English? Can you explain in more detail?
3. Do you get any language support from your content lecturers?
4. What else do you need in terms of English language and skills?
4. What else would you suggest that your English course should deal with in order to address your needs?
5. Do you have any other comments to make on these issues?

Most of the students' responses were in Kinyarwanda and they were translated afterwards. Abridged responses to the interviews are attached as Appendix C.

On the whole, the interviews helped me to find out how students and teachers perceived the helpfulness of the one-year English course.

3.4 Document analysis

Another research tool that I used to gather the data for this study was document analysis. Document analysis included the analysis of the textbook or teaching materials used for the one-year English course. The analysis was carried out using a checklist drawn from the principles identified through my literature review. The description of the textbook is provided in more details in section 4.2.

The textbook analysis first sought to identify the curriculum paradigm in which the English course belonged, and to draw implications from this for its approach to language teaching and learning. Next, the analysis sought to evaluate the materials in

terms of their suitability for academic preparation. In other words, it considered whether the materials developed the four main language skills and other academic skills in a way that would equip students for academic settings using English as medium of instruction. It also considered whether the materials addressed the notions of specific genres and discourses. Finally, the analysis was concerned with establishing whether the materials reflected a content-based model of language teaching, and the extent to which it prepared students for academic study in the specialised field of Management Studies.

The following is the checklist used to analyse the textbook:

A. Curriculum paradigm

1. Is the content pre-determined or negotiated?
2. Does it focus on isolated grammar and structures or contextualised language use?
3. Is there sufficient room for flexibility in regard to change and adaptation? In other words, can the teacher adjust activities according to learners' needs?

B. Development of language and academic skills

4. Does it promote learner independence i.e. does it promote the skills that enable learners to study alone and reflect on their learning?
5. Do activities incorporate the language tasks that learners will have to perform in their English medium subjects, for example, summarising, note-taking, critical reading, etc.?

C. Specific genres and academic discourses

6. Does it focus students' attention on different genres within disciplines?
7. Do the materials take into account the context in which the language will be used, in this case, the genres and academic discourses of Management Studies?

D. Content-based instruction.

8. Is content from relevant disciplines used as a vehicle for language teaching?

Apart from the textbook analysis, the document analysis was also concerned with analysing the entrance and exit English examinations. I chose to analyse the examinations that the students I interviewed wrote. First, the analysis was meant to compare entrance and exit examinations results to see if students improved their skills. Second, the exit examination questions were analysed in terms of whether they reflected what had been taught, that is, the skills and knowledge contained in the textbook. Finally, the exit examination questions were analysed against the aim of the course as understood by the National University of Rwanda, that is, to prepare students for academic study in the medium of English. Against this perspective, exit examination questions were analysed to establish whether the kind of skills tested were consistent with the language skills that students needed to cope with academic study.

Entrance and Exit examinations are attached as Appendix B.

3.5. Limitations

It is worth mentioning that there were some limitations on this study. For example, the data collected did not include the views of all the students and lecturers, which might make generalisation of the findings difficult. In addition, the techniques used to collect the data might not have been sufficient to provide an in-depth understanding of the helpfulness of the course since techniques such as classroom observations were not used in this study. Such observations would have provided a means of triangulating findings from interviews and document analysis. Finally, although I wished to look at course notes from Management subjects, I could not get hold of them and they were not used in this study. As a result, discussions of students' academic needs in this field were based only on findings from interviews with lecturers and students, the academic literacy literature and the researcher's own assumptions about the kinds of texts and tasks they would encounter.

This chapter has outlined the research methodology used in this study. Research techniques such as interviews and document analysis, together with the sampling procedure were discussed. In the next chapter, we turn to the presentation and analysis of the collected data.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The previous chapter dealt with the methodology I used to carry out this research. Research techniques such as interviews and document analysis were discussed. The main concern of this chapter is to present and analyse the data collected. The data are analysed drawing on insights from the literature review.

First of all, students' English language needs in the first year of Management studies are analysed based on students' and teachers' interviews, and academic literacy literature.

Secondly, the textbook is analysed using the prepared checklist presented in chapter 3 (page 50-51). The analysis looks at the skills and knowledge that the textbook developed and discusses the extent to which they are appropriate for academic preparation.

Third, the entrance and exit examinations are analysed. Entrance and exit examinations results are compared to find out if there was any improvement in students' English language skills, and in which areas. Next, the validity of the exit examination is discussed, both internally as a reflection of the skills and knowledge taught and externally as an indicator of students' level of competence.

Fourth, student and teacher interviews are analysed to uncover their views and opinions about the role that the English course played in preparing students to cope with academic demands in English. In addition, the constraints that the course meets, together with the level of language support that content lecturers provided to their students are explored.

Viewed as a whole, the above-mentioned techniques should provide a clear picture of the extent to which the English course addressed the academic demands that students in the Management faculty encountered when studying through the medium of English.

4.1 Needs analysis

In order to provide sound language support to students, a thorough investigation of what the students need the language for is a prerequisite. Awareness of students' needs guides not only the way the teacher chooses the teaching materials but also the way s/he goes through the materials during the teaching/learning process. It is worth pointing out that the University has not yet carried out any needs analysis. Therefore, the needs analysis presented by me in this sub-section will constitute a basis for other analyses in this chapter.

The needs of first year students in the Management Faculty could be analysed in terms of target needs and learning needs (Hutchinson and Waters: 1987: 54). Target needs refer to what students need to do in the target situation, that is, in the Management Faculty, whereas learning needs refer to what students need to do in order to learn.

Based on the literature on academic literacy, the analysis of the target needs of first year students in the Management Faculty at the National University of Rwanda revealed the following:

Students needed to

- read a variety of books and other sources to complete their notes and widen their knowledge.
- write coherently and control specific genres and discourses required by Management Studies.
- produce written assignments or other kinds of works which meet standards of academic acceptability;

According to students' answers during interviews, they needed to:

- listen to and understand lectures. They also needed to take notes during lectures; and participate actively in seminar discussions on specialised topics in their field of study, in this case Management Studies;

As far as learning needs are concerned, the academic literacy literature revealed that students needed to be able to

- know some techniques of note-taking so that they take their notes effectively. In this regard, they needed to understand the topic under discussion, they needed to know what the important points were, and be able to make notes on them and the way they related to one another;
- master and apply the strategies and techniques for effective reading, and they should have been able to choose the ones which fit their purpose in reading.
- follow a lecture effectively. In this case, they needed to be made aware of the common structures that some lecturers use to convey their lectures.

The learning needs that emerged from interviews showed that students needed to:

- develop their ability to construct sentences, to write a paragraph and extended essays. They needed to know how to identify the main points from supporting details, to write coherently and make summaries;
- practice speaking about, and listening to, Management-related topics;
- practice listening to different kinds of accents so that they do not get lost once they have to follow a lecturer with an unfamiliar accent. They also needed to acquire interruption techniques so that they could interrupt the lecturer and ask questions for clarification or to give an opinion;
- master the specialised vocabulary of the Management field, together with rhetorical styles of Management studies. In this perspective, they also needed to be made aware of the existence of the different specific genres and discourses in Management. They also needed to practice them regularly.

These were the needs of first year students in the Management Faculty at the National University of Rwanda that I could identify based on interviews and the literature on academic literacy. The next section looks at how the textbook (teaching materials) reflected an awareness of students' needs.

4.2 Presentation and analysis of the textbook

In this section, I discuss the nature of the textbook used in the one year language (the New Cambridge English Course 1992). I analyse its content in terms of the curriculum paradigm it reflects and the way it deals with the four skills, genres and academic discourse to equip students for English as medium of instruction at tertiary level. I also consider the extent to which it incorporates the content-based model of language teaching with regard to preparing students for the academic demands of the Management Faculty.

4.2.1 Background

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the idea of setting up the one-year language course stemmed from staffing constraints. As a matter of fact, when the National University of Rwanda re-opened in 1995, it was like starting from scratch. The personnel, both academic and administrative, had been killed or were in exile. So a new staff was recruited among the returnees and these staff members had different linguistic backgrounds, either Anglophone or Francophone. Students had different backgrounds as well.

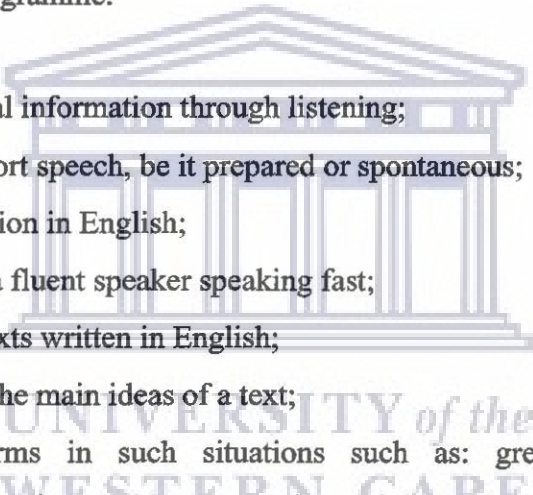
Students from English-speaking countries needed English-speaking lecturers and French-speaking students needed French-speaking lecturers. To meet this requirement, either perfectly bilingual lecturers had to be found or each course had to be taught by two different lecturers. The latter alternative appeared more feasible but had attendant and prohibitive financial implications. On the other hand, finding perfect bilinguals for all subjects was not possible.

To solve this problem, the National University of Rwanda decided instead to offer a one-year language course in both English and French, so that all students would be able to study through both languages.

A commission set up by the University council assigned general and specific objectives to the one-year English language course. As far as general objectives were concerned, it was stated that at the end of the programme, students would be able to:

- Acquire competence and proficiency that would allow them to express themselves generally and conceptually in English;
- Get linguistic tools that would enable them to follow courses in their faculty, taught through the medium of English; and
- To have access to bibliography and scientific research in the same language (Ntukanyagwe, 2001: 20).

To meet these specific objectives, students were supposed to be able to do the following at the end of the programme:

- 
- Disclose specific or general information through listening;
 - Understand a relatively short speech, be it prepared or spontaneous;
 - Follow broadcast information in English;
 - Listen to, and understand a fluent speaker speaking fast;
 - Read intelligibly simple texts written in English;
 - Understand and work out the main ideas of a text;
 - Work out linguistic forms in such situations such as: greetings, apologising, seeking information, making suggestions, giving orders, etc;
 - Make a short presentation of current issues giving a personal point of view;
 - Write sentences, paragraphs and small texts; and
 - Summarise texts in the English

(Ibid: 20-21).

Since the objectives were established, the remaining task was to develop a syllabus which would meet these objectives.

Using ready-made materials was preferred to creating new ones. In this regard, *The New Cambridge English Course* by Michael Swan and Catherine Walter 1993 was adopted as fulfilling the requirements for the teaching of English. The course has four

levels and is published by Cambridge University Press. The highest level offered by this course is upper-intermediate.

I assumed that students could function fully in the English medium at tertiary level after they had reached the highest level of the course, that is, the upper-intermediate level. Accordingly, the level four textbook used with students at the upper-intermediate level is analysed in the next section.

4.2.2. Organisation of Level four of the *New Cambridge English Course*

The material at each level of the *New Cambridge English Course* includes a student's book, a teacher's book and a set of class cassettes, a practice book for homework, an optional student's cassette, and an optional test book for the teacher.

The level four textbook consists of five blocks. Each block is made up of eight numbered lessons, followed by a three-part consolidation section. The first, third, fifth and seventh lessons of a block are general purpose, topic or function-based lessons. Work on grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary and skills leads up to communicative exchanges, discussions, dramatisations or writing exercises related to the theme of the lesson. The second and sixth lessons in each block focus on language systems, that is, points of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation which have been selected for special attention. The fourth and eighth lessons of each block provide training in particular aspects of listening, reading and writing skills.

Each block of eight lessons is followed by a summary. which displays the language learnt in the block, a revision and fluency practice section and a test.

The presentation of the book seems to reveal that structures and skills are covered in a balanced way. However, a careful analysis of the textbook throws up several significant issues. The following section therefore analyses the textbook from a variety of perspectives.

4.2.3 Analysis of level four of the New Cambridge English Course

The first aim of this analysis is to establish the paradigm in which the one-year English course is located and to trace the implications of this for language teaching and learning. The second aim of the analysis is to see how the textbook deals with the four language skills in terms of appropriateness of situations, adequacy of the complexity level, appropriateness of tasks etc, with regard to academic demands. A third aim is to evaluate the extent to which the materials and activities used are consistent with a content-based model of language teaching. The checklist presented in chapter three will guide this analysis.

As far as the process of curriculum design is concerned, one should note that students' needs were not an integral part of the systematic planning and building of this curriculum. As pointed out in section 4.1, neither formal nor informal information was gathered to determine the needs of the learners. The designed commission adopted a ready-made syllabus and course content. Thus the learner was not the main focus in course design or course content. The syllabus and course contents were chosen without real knowledge of the underlying needs of the students.

The curriculum thus constructed cannot be considered learner-centred as learners were not closely involved in the decision-making process. The knowledge included in the curriculum was pre-determined by outside curriculum specialists and the institution. Learners did not have any say in what they were to learn. There was little room for attention to emerging needs or for negotiating alternative content

Although the introductory section of the *New Cambridge English Course* states that teachers are allowed to adjust the materials according to their learners' needs, they are not encouraged to create their own materials. They transmit expert knowledge received from curriculum designers. Students are consumers of that expert knowledge, not producers of knowledge, since they are not in any way involved in suggesting what they should learn.

All these elements make the one-year English curriculum largely fall into the category of curriculum products. Beliefs about learning and teaching are discussed in relation to the content of the textbook in the next section.

While the introductory section of the course (NCEC level four) seems to provide most of the principles on which the book is based, it would not be wise to draw conclusions based on the introduction only. Therefore, in order to analyse the skills that the book covers and the extent to which it reflects a content-based model of language teaching, I have chosen to analyse a whole block (block D) in more detail. This block, like others in the course (NCEC level four) consists of eight lessons followed by a consolidation section. It is attached below in full as appendix A.

This block has been chosen because it is almost at the end of the book, and it presumably covers all the skills that students need in order to function effectively in English at tertiary level. In other words, it can give a rough indication of the language ability that students bring into their first year of content subjects.

Lesson D1

In this lesson, students learn structures and vocabulary used in describing people; they practice listening for gist and producing spoken and written descriptions.

In the first exercise, students have to listen to a song. Each verse of the song corresponds to a description of one of the four people whose pictures are in the book. This is an interesting way of teaching and learning vocabulary, in this case the vocabulary used to describe people. Students relax and language learning takes place. It is widely recognised that effective language learning takes place when learners are free from fear, stress and anxiety (Larsen-Freeman 1986). Thus, the use of the song to teach the vocabulary may relieve learners from the fear, stress or anxiety that students might otherwise have if the vocabulary were taught in a less interesting situation. Moreover, pictures are used, which means that the cognitive ability of students is enhanced by the use of realia. So language structures, in this case the vocabulary for descriptions, are contextualised. They are not taught or learned in isolation.

Similarly, exercises four, five, six and seven provide interesting and relevant situations in which the structures are to be used.

Exercise four deals with speaking. Students are required to use the vocabulary for description in order to describe one of the people in the pictures or even one of their classmates. This activity incorporates the use of language in real life situations. It combines the choice of vocabulary and oral abilities. Students have to describe the person in such a way that other students can guess who it is.

Since one learns a language in order to use it in real communication, such an activity can show whether the student is able to use the learned language in communication. It is far from the kind of exercise requiring memorisation or recall of structures which do not provide a basis for predicting whether the language can be used in real situation. The same applies to exercise five. Although words are given in isolation, a context in which they are to be used is provided. So the choice of a relevant word is linked to the thinking process. In order to complete the cloze passage, students have to think and understand what the paragraph means so that they can choose the word which really fits in the situation. This activity promotes reading for meaning.

Exercises six and seven also promote the use of structures in relevant situations. In six, students write about themselves. This implies that they not only have to know the relevant vocabulary but they also have to know how to apply it appropriately. In seven, the teacher reads the descriptions produced in exercise six. Students listen to the teacher and they guess who wrote the description. This suggests that they can recognise the vocabulary that is relevant to describe anybody in the classroom.

Exercise three, however, deals with structures in isolation. Students are given examples of how compound adjectives are made and they are asked to make adjectives as in the example. Here, it can be argued that students can produce the correct adjective without knowing its meaning. Students are likely to produce the right adjective without being able to apply it in real setting. They can even produce the right adjective without concentrating.

While most of these activities are aligned with principles of communicative or interactive approaches to language teaching, it is important to consider whether they are appropriate for academic preparation. Let us look at the table which provides a summary of the activities dealt with in lesson D1.

Table 1. Activities in lesson D1

Activity	Total
Vocabulary	3
Speaking	1
Listening	1
Writing	1
Listening and vocabulary	1
Total	7

As shown in table 1, vocabulary, speaking, listening and writing are dealt with. So a variety of skills are covered. However, the kind of vocabulary chosen for the task, describing people, may not be helpful when students are following their lectures through the medium of English. If for example they are discussing budget issues or poverty reduction strategies, it is doubtful whether the vocabulary for description will be of much help.

Similarly, the speaking activity is based on describing somebody in the pictures or in the class. The appropriateness of such a task in the context of academic preparation can be questioned. Students will be required to engage in discussions in English on topics in their field of study, not just to give descriptions of people. So, this task is not relevant for training students in the oral skills they will need in order to cope with English as medium of instruction.

The same applies to listening and writing. At tertiary level, students will seldom if ever be asked to listen to descriptions of people. Rather, they will have to listen to lectures, seminars, and discussions on topics of their subject disciplines, for example the integrated marketing strategy. Similarly, writing a description of someone will

not in any way help students to draw up a balance sheet, convince partners to invest in the country, or to make a summary of his notes or other readings.

In short, while the activities in this lesson are suitable for general communicative teaching, the topics and tasks are not appropriate for academic preparation. Let us now turn to the analysis of D2.

Lesson D2

This lesson is mainly concerned with grammar, phonology and vocabulary. In grammar, students learn the grammatical structures *I wish*, and *if only*, in phonology they learn polite and rude intonation and in vocabulary they deal with word families. The lesson focuses mainly on structures, but these structures are learned and practised drawing on relevant situations. For example, in exercise one, students are given a letter and they are asked to use the grammatical structure *I wish...had* to complete the thoughts of the person who received the letter.

In two, they are given a list of regrets. They have to choose three that they share and add two or more of their choice. In three, they have to look at the pictures and say what the people in the pictures are thinking. All these instances illustrate that, although the lesson is structural in nature, it tries to contextualise the structures. Situations which require the learner to demonstrate that s/he has really grasped the meaning of the structure are used.

The following table summarises how different activities are dealt within this lesson.

Table 2. Activities in lesson D2

Activity	Total
Grammar	3
Vocabulary	1
Pronunciation	2
Reading and vocabulary	1
Listening and grammar	1

Speaking and listening, speaking and grammar	1
Total	9

Table 2 shows that the exercises are predominantly structural. Six exercises out of nine deal with grammar, vocabulary or pronunciation. Three exercises out of nine are the only ones which integrate grammar or vocabulary items to skills such as speaking, reading, listening or writing. An example of an integrated task is exercise six which requires students to work in groups, listen to the teacher reading out the class wishes, to write these down and divide them into different kinds of wishes, and report to the class how many kind of wishes they have found and which are the most common. This exercise integrates different skills. In addition to integrating grammar, listening, speaking and writing, it initiates students to working in groups, and organising information.

While it is true that students will have to listen to their lecturers, take notes and organise their notes coherently, it is doubtful whether the activities in this lesson are meant to address that academic objective. If that were the case, the situations would not be appropriate because lecturers will not use such short and simple structures nor will they generally express wishes, but they will be using the cognitively demanding discourse of their subject discipline, for example Principles of Management. So it is doubtful whether listening to the teacher reading some wishes and subsequently noting them trains students in listening to Principles of Management lecture and taking notes appropriately.

In short, although skills are dealt within an integrated way, which can be said to reflect the demands of academic study, the situation and activities which are used to practice these skills are not appropriate for academic preparation. Let us turn to the analysis of lesson D3.

Lesson D3

This lesson is mainly concerned with the language of education. This theme is used to present the *present perfect progressive* in contrast with the *simple past*.

It is also predominantly structural though sometimes structural exercises are integrated to listening. Table three shows how different activities are dealt within that lesson.

Table 3. Activities in lesson D3.

Activity	Total
Grammar	1
vocabulary	2
Listening	3
Listening, speaking, and writing and grammar	1
Total	7

Table 3 shows a predominance of vocabulary and listening activities. Nevertheless, listening to children saying what they like or dislike about their teacher does not reflect the complexity of lectures that students will have to listen to in their subjects. Similarly, knowledge of the vocabulary about likes and dislikes might not help a student to understand a presentation on a Management topic. Thus, although the lesson emphasises the skills that students need in their subjects, that is, vocabulary and listening, the materials used to develop these skills do not seem to be adequate. Let us now turn to an analysis of D4.

Lesson D4

Lesson 4 is a skills focus lesson. It deals with scanning, reading for overall meaning; expanding a text from notes, and speaking in the form of a class survey. Table 4 shows the activities that the lesson covers.

Table 4: Activities in lesson D4.

Activity	Total
speaking	1
reading	2
Reading, writing and problem solving	1
listening, and vocabulary	1
Dictionary use	1
Total	6

Table 4 shows a spread of skills, with emphasis on reading. In exercise 1, students are asked to go through the text quickly and find answers to given questions. This exercise is related to scanning, a reading skill that students will definitely be required to possess in reading the huge amount of materials in their content subjects as well as in their ordinary life. However, the text given is not very relevant. It only deals with realities in the United States of America. If it can be adapted in such a way that it deals with students' future field of learning, it could be more meaningful. Thus the activity practices a very important reading skill worth possessing but the material is not content-driven.

Similarly, the second exercise deals with a skill that students will need in their content subjects, that is, summarising, but the activity is not adequately presented. What students need to understand is features of a summary, so that they can eventually make their own or know which elements to look for while criticising the suggested summaries. Summary writing is a skill that they will constantly need in their subjects. Therefore, giving them examples to help them understand the features of a summary, rather than asking them to criticise it without any guidelines would be more helpful.

In exercises 4 and 5, students practice speaking and listening. In addition, they try out a research skill, namely, interviewing. This activity helps learners to get used to the technique of interviewing as a research tool, and this will probably help them when they are asked to do any kind of research in their subjects.

Exercise 6 is concerned with expanding a text in writing. It promotes problem solving, a skill which might be required in their content classes and even in their day-to-day life. They have to know how to work things out by themselves.

On the whole, this lesson covers some of the tasks that learners will have to perform in their studies. These are scanning, summarising, problem-solving, dictionary use and research skills. However, the texts used to develop these skills are neither content-related nor relevant to the Rwandan context. They need to be adjusted so that students can benefit fully from the lesson. The next section examines lesson D5 in detail.

Lesson D5

D5 deals with the language used to describe places; it also gives practice in reading and writing skills, simple past and past perfect tenses as well as hearing unstressed auxiliary verbs.

The first exercise concerns reading. Extracts from the report of one space explorer are presented; they have to be matched with the pictures they describe. In my view, this is an interesting activity because it trains students in using visible clues, in this case, pictures in order to grasp the meaning of a given passage. Although the meaning of some words may be unknown, the pictures help them to know which place is being described.

The extracts are also relevant, not to students in the Management Faculty but Science students whose content is likely to draw on some of the information presented in the extracts. So, if the extracts are used as materials for language teaching, students might not have many problems reading Science-related documents which deal with space exploration. Similarly, they may not have too much trouble while following a

lecture on that topic, unless the lecturer's accent is not familiar. Nevertheless, the language class needs to go beyond matching extracts to corresponding pictures to include other activities such as vocabulary enrichment, reading or writing. Even the teacher's book suggests that the teacher should not explain difficult words such as "thermoanalytic". Thus, the extracts offer an opportunity of a content-based model of language teaching but it is not exploited.

Exercise 2 is an instance of grammar structures (*simple past or past perfect*) presented in isolation. Students are required to apply the rule. The teacher has to:

- Ask students to work in groups and discuss when the past perfect is used, and each group must write down an agreed rule
- Ask students to tell their rule
- Put up a correct rule on the board.

I doubt whether students will be required to use these tenses as presented in this lesson. What they will need is to be able to use these tenses while writing their assignments or in their speeches. Thus, it would be better to illustrate the difference between the uses of these tenses by providing two situations in which both tenses are used. The situations, unlike the rule, are likely to teach the students the correct and appropriate use of each tense.

While exercise 4 presents structures in isolation (pronunciation of unstressed auxiliaries), exercise 5 integrates writing or speaking/ listening and vocabulary use in a given context. This activity is more meaningful as far as vocabulary describing places is concerned. Instead of dealing with vocabulary in isolation, students are asked to use the vocabulary to write about or describe a well-known place. This activity deals with students' ability to use the language rather than the students' ability to produce the language structures.

In short, lesson 5 presents opportunities for content-based language teaching but it is not exploited so that students can benefit from the lesson. Also, the presentation of an activity which integrates writing and vocabulary use is dominated by other exercises

which are mainly concerned with isolated structures. The next section looks at lesson D6.

Lesson D6

The main concern of this lesson is grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. The following table illustrates the different activities that the lesson deals with.

Table 5. Activities in lesson D6.

Activity	Total
Grammar	5
Vocabulary	1
Pronunciation	1
Speaking	1
Total	8

As table 5 shows, seven exercises out of eight are related to structures (grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation). Grammar dominates others, with five exercises out of eight. Although the grammar points are sometimes practised in a real situation or based on pictures (exercises 2 and 3), instances where structures are presented in isolation or require the explicit statement of the rule (exercises 1,4,5,6 and 8) outnumber those in which situations are provided. The only skill that is included in this lesson is speaking in exercise 3. Even then, it is limited to one sentence and the aim is not to promote students' oral skills but to practice a grammar point.

Let us now turn to lesson D7 and examine the activities it deals with.

Lesson D7

Unlike the preceding lesson, D7 goes beyond language structures and deals with skills. A summary of the activities it deals with looks like the following.

Table6. Summary of activities in lesson D7

Activity	Total
Listening and writing	3
Listening and grammar	1
Listening and pronunciation	1
Speaking and listening	1
Reading and writing	1
Speaking, writing and listening	1
Total	8

Table 6 shows that this lesson presents skills in an integrated way. There is no evidence of language structures presented in isolation. Many exercises combine listening and writing (3 out of 8). However, one would question the kind of writing involved in some of these exercises in relation to the writing that academic subjects demand. For example, in exercise 2, students have to listen to the recording and write one word. The interesting part of the exercise is that students practice listening for specific information, otherwise the writing activity is not covered in depth. The integration of two or more skills represents the kind of activities that students will be required to do in their specific subjects. Now we shall consider lesson D8.

Lesson D8

Lesson D8 mainly deals with listening for specific information, the language of classification and paraphrase strategies.

In this lesson, structures are not presented in isolation. In exercise 1, vocabulary items have to be matched with the corresponding pictures. The pictures provide a context for vocabulary learning. Exercise 2 is an integrated activity in which students listen to a recording and complete a table. Here, they are required to give evidence of applied competence, that is, using knowledge gained from a text or any other source to complete a given task. Exercise 4 combines writing, organisation of information

and problem solving. Exercise 5 is mainly concerned with speaking skills. On the whole, the exercises included in this lesson, especially 2 and 4 incorporate the kind of tasks that students are likely to deal with in Management Studies, since they integrate two or more skills. This lesson also presents an opportunity for content-based language instruction though it is not fully exploited.

Summary of analysis

The analysis of the textbook sought to establish the curriculum paradigm in which the one-year English curriculum can be located, to consider how the curriculum deals with the four language skills and other skills, and the extent to which it addresses the issues of genre and discourse. Finally, it considered the extent to which the curriculum reflects a content-based model of language instruction.

First of all, let us deal with the curriculum paradigm in which the current English curriculum falls. Overall, the analysis seems to reveal that the curriculum predominantly includes elements of curriculum as a product. For example, the content is predetermined. Learners were not consulted before designing the course, that is, no careful needs analysis was conducted before designing the content of the course. Experts chose the content that they supposed would meet learners' needs. This practice pertains to curriculum products in which learners do not have a say in what they learn. In this case, like in the technocratic or decontextualised curriculum c.f p 15, learners are consumers of expert knowledge and the teacher is a passive implementer of the expert curriculum product. The teacher and students were denied their right to jointly construct materials relevant to their own needs. Thus, the curriculum falls predominantly in the curriculum product paradigm. It does not address students' needs accurately and the curriculum thus designed fails to address the actual needs of Rwandan students in the Management Faculty.

Secondly, the analysis shows that all the four language skills are covered, although superficially. It is doubtful whether the way in which they are presented is appropriate for academic preparation. For instance, writing tasks mainly deal with sentence or paragraph level writing. They do not go beyond those levels to include

the kinds of extended essay writing that students might be required to do in an academic setting.

Listening includes the pronunciation of isolated words, as well as listening to their peers. The model used is standard English. The point I would like to make here is that the listening materials do not include a variety of accents and yet students will have to listen to different lecturers, probably with different accents. So they should be made aware of the variety of accents. Also, the materials used to practice listening skills are not as complex as the ones students will have to listen to in academic situations.

Speaking skills, which include classroom presentations, and reading skills are also covered. However, reading activities do not seem to be practised as widely as other skills. The topics and texts used as a basis to practice these skills are also fairly general in nature. The topics used for the classroom presentations, reading, writing and listening activities are not at all the kind of cognitively demanding tasks that students will have to face in their Management-related subjects.

Other skills that students will need in order to study through the medium of English are also included. These are: scanning, summarising, problem-solving, group work, research skills, information organisation, classification and dictionary use. The only problem is that these kinds of skills are given a small share of the content, viz. only 6 out of the 55 exercises covered by the block. As a result, students are rarely given the chance to develop cognitive academic language proficiency. It is also significant to note that learning to learn skills which build metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness and promote values such as independent learning, and learner control over the learning process, are missing.

Another point that the analysis reveals is that not much attention is given to discourse-related features or specific genres. As a matter of fact, one can note only one instance of classification in D8. The letter writing in D7 is more related to grammar practice than genre awareness. There is no example of memorandum, journal keeping or any other specialised genre relevant to students in the Management faculty or any other faculty. It seems that students are not made aware of the organisational properties of texts, and how global coherence relations are achieved within specialised texts. In

short, there is no evidence of training students to move “from the informal every day discourse to abstract, systematic and rule- following academic discourses” (Lockett, 1999: 27).

Thirdly, the analysis indicates that most of the materials used are general in nature. Only D4 and D8 present opportunities for a content-based model of language teaching. However, these opportunities are poorly exploited. For example, in D4, students have to use the extracts to complete a matching exercise. They have to match extracts to corresponding pictures, with no further exploitation for grammar or vocabulary enrichment. In D8, students match pictures to their names and complete a classification exercise from listening.

In short, the book presents very slim chances of exploiting the content-based model of language teaching.

On the whole, the analysis of the curriculum used for the year-long English course at the National University of Rwanda has shown that it contains elements which belong predominantly to the curriculum as product and can therefore be located in the curriculum as product paradigm. The four language skills are dealt with, although neither on an equal footing nor as thoroughly as they should be for academic preparation. Moreover, almost no attention is paid to the specialised discourse or different genres pertaining to Management Studies, and the opportunity of content-based model of language teaching remains virtually unexploited. Therefore, while the materials seem to be adequate for general English learning, it is doubtful whether they are appropriate in preparing students to cope with academic situations where English is the language of learning.

Let us now turn to an analysis of examination papers (entrance and exit) to find out whether students make any progress when taking the course, whether the examination questions are related to what has been taught and whether they reflect the aim of the course.

4.3 Analysis of entrance and exit examinations

The previous section dealt with the analysis of the textbook. The main concern was to look at the English knowledge and skills that it develops, and evaluate the appropriateness of these skills for academic preparation. The analysis revealed that while the materials were suitable for general language learning, several adjustments needed to be made if the students needed to develop their skills in English for academic purposes.

In this section, the entrance and exit examinations are analysed. First, the entrance and exit examinations results are compared to see whether students make progress and in which areas. Second, the exit examination is analysed in terms of its internal validity, that is, whether it tests what has been taught and is a fair reflection of students' abilities. Third, the exit examination is analysed in terms of its external validity, that is, to see whether the kinds of skills tested are consistent with the language skills that students need to cope with academic study.

4.3.1 Comparison between entrance and exit examinations

This section is concerned with comparing entrance and exit examinations results in order to identify students' progress. The following table illustrates the performances of five students on each section of entrance and exit examinations. For the sake of anonymity, they are referred to as S1-S5.

Table 7. Comparison between entrance and exit examinations performances.

STUDENT	ACTIVITY	ENTRANCE PERFORMANCE	EXIT PERFORMANCE	Improvement (%)
S1	Listening	25%	80%	55
	Reading	22.5%	60%	37.5
	Writing	35%	50%	15
	Speaking	42.5%	-	-
S2	Listening	62.5%	50%	-12.5

	Reading	20%	80%	60
	Writing	25%	60%	35
	Speaking	13/20	-	-
S3	Listening	0%	55%	55
	Reading	15%	50%	35
	Writing	0%	55%	55
	Speaking	25%	-	-
S4	Listening	25%	75%	50
	Reading	10%	70%	60
	Writing	30%	70%	40
	Speaking	52.5%	-	-
S5	Listening	30%	10%	-20
	Reading	0%	70%	70
	Writing	0%	50%	50
	Speaking	50%	-	-

Table 7 compares students' performances before they took the English course and on completion of the course. If an increase in the mark implies an increase in students' language abilities, it becomes obvious that all the above students improved their reading and writing skills. Only S5 and S2 fell back in listening. We cannot say anything about speaking since it was not included in the exit exam.

Despite these generally positive marks, we cannot assert a hundred per cent that the course helped all the students to improve their language abilities in all skills, by just looking at the marks of the five students. Such an over-generalisation would not be accurate since other factors might have interfered with students' performances. For example, all the questions were not the same in both the entrance and exit examinations, which made it difficult to tell whether the increase in marks stemmed from an increase in students' abilities (gained from the course) or the difference in question formulation. Also, I must acknowledge that five students are not a representative sample. Therefore, concluding that all students' language skills

improved by the end of the English course, based on five students only, would not be accurate.

On the whole, it is true that over-generalisation might be inaccurate, but the comparison between students' performances on entrance and exit exams revealed individual improvements in some general communicative language skills.

The next section analyses the exit examination questions in relation to whether they reflected what had been taught.

4.3.2 Exams vs course content: internal validity

As Brown (1987: 22) puts it, " validity refers to the degree to which the test actually measures what it is intended to measure". This section aims to establish the final examination's internal validity, that is, the way it reflected what had been taught.

The exit examination which is analysed in this work was set by the English teachers themselves. It covered the following: First, students had to listen to a text read by someone else other than their teacher. Then they answered multiple-choice questions on the text and other questions which related to matching events with feelings. Second, students were given a text "the History of Canada" in which some words had been deleted. The words were presented separately and students were asked to choose the appropriate word to fill in the blank. Another exercise included in the reading comprehension section was one in which students were asked to read a given text "Electric Fish" and to answer two sets of questions. One set of questions asked true and false questions. In the other set, students were given a list of statements and were asked to say whether the statement was similar or different to the sentence from the passage. The third exercise concerned writing. Students were given a topic: they had to write why they had chosen the faculty they would like to study in the following year. No question was included to assess speaking skills.

Although an analysis of the examination questions (attached as Appendix B) did not show total alignment between the textbook and the exam questions, it did reveal that on the whole, questions were consistent with the content of the textbook.

There were three main exceptions to this. The only question about vocabulary was 2.1, which was integrated with a reading task. Yet the textbook mainly dealt with vocabulary in isolation. Only 1 out of 55 exercises in block D dealt with the integration of vocabulary to reading. Isolated vocabulary structures, which represented 10 out of 55 exercises, were not tested. Similarly, there was no overt testing of grammar or pronunciation, and yet these kinds of tasks occupied a non-negligible proportion of the book. The texts given in the exam for reading comprehension were not as general as the ones in the course book. They tended to be more specialised. For example, “The History of Canada” seemed to be related to History whereas “Electric Fish” was mostly important for students in the Science department.

Having identified the extent to which the examination questions reflected what had been taught, let us now turn to consider the skills tested in relation to the skills that students needed in academic contexts.

4.3.3 External validity

The third part of this analysis concerned external validity. Here, the main concern was to assess the extent to which the exams measured students' ability to function effectively in English at tertiary level. This was the aim of the course as far as the University was concerned. In this case, the results of the exit examination should have reflected how successful students would be in using English at university. As was discussed in section 4.1, university students need study skills and academic skills such as listening, note-taking, reading skills such as scanning, skimming, guessing meaning from the context and using the dictionary; speaking skills for participation in seminar discussions and oral presentations; essay or report writing skills; research skills such as using the library, using references, etc. Whether the exit exam included these skills was the main question here.

By looking at the exit examination questions in relation to how they test students' ability to cope with English as medium of instruction at tertiary level, it was doubtful whether these questions relevantly incorporated the study and academic skills that

students needed to possess in order to cope with the academic demands of studying in English. For example, as far as the reading comprehension section was concerned, a gap-filling exercise was not likely to give accurate information of students' ability to read and understand their academic subjects. Similarly, true and false questions as well as S and D (see Appendix B 2.2) might not have accurately measured students' ability to think critically. In addition, topics for writing were still too general and yet, an ability to write about personal experiences does not guarantee an ability to manipulate facts on an essay question in their content subjects (Fisher, 1996: 64). It was particularly striking that no section on oral ability was included in the exit examination.

In short, the exit examination did not give an indication of students' ability to function effectively in the English medium of instruction at tertiary level. It was not set in line with what the University wanted to achieve. Thus it lacked external validity. The lack of external validity might explain partially why students did not cope well with the demands of academic literacy despite their generally positive results in the examination.

To sum up, this section has been concerned with an analysis of entrance and exit examinations. A comparison between both examinations revealed that students made progress in some general language skills. The analysis also showed that the exit examination reflected what has been taught. However, the exit examination did not test students' ability to cope with English as the language of learning and teaching at tertiary level. In other words, students' performances in the examination did not reflect their ability to cope with English as medium of instruction.

The next section analyses students' and teachers' views about the extent to which the course prepared students to cope with the academic demands of English as the medium of instruction.

4.4 Analysis of interviews

In order to get a more accurate picture of the role that the year-long English course played in preparing students for academic studies in English at the National

University of Rwanda, I used interviews in addition to document analysis. The interviews were meant to reveal teachers' and students' thoughts, feelings, opinions and attitudes about the English course. Findings are dealt with in detail below.

4.4.1 Teachers' and students' perceptions of the English course

The following discussion will analyse interviews conducted with two English teachers, two lecturers and thirty students from the Management Faculty. Answers from two other lecturers in the Management Faculty who did not have time for interviews but offered to answer my questionnaire will be referred to from time to time.

English teachers' and Management lecturers' views

English teachers and Management lecturers held divergent views on the effectiveness of the one-year English course in preparing students for academic studies in English.

For example, ET1, when asked his opinion about the helpfulness of the English course, said: "It helps a bit for those who are interested. Yes, but for others who are not interested and who are not going to the Faculty of Arts, it is time consuming for them".

From what ET1 said, it appeared that the course was helpful to some students and not helpful to others. According to him, not all the students benefited from the course, and it seemed that Management students were included among those who did not benefit from the course.

ET2 gave an almost totally opposite answer to the same question: He said,

Yes it does. If we go to different faculties and ask teachers if our students follow, they tell us that when they compare the students they had before this programme was implemented [with those who have taken the English course], there is a big difference. One, they follow their courses without any problem. The language is not an obstacle. Second, it also prepares [them] to react. They speak, they do not fear.

So, this course does not only prepare them to follow the course in either language, but also, it awakens them if I can say. They react and there is a kind of interaction between teacher and students....

ET2's statement suggested that by the time students completed their English course, they were able to function well in English. However, content lecturers in the Management Faculty did not share his opinion.

MGT1 acknowledged that there were some students who were able to follow their lectures in English, but he did not specify whether they did so thanks to the abilities gained on the English course. "They are able to answer the questions but we cannot put all of them in the same pattern. Some of them have an advanced English, some of them have not developed it".

Thus, MGT1 seemed to suggest that although some Francophone students followed his subject well, others still had serious problems. Implicitly, he suggested that students' ability to cope with English as the medium of instruction was not the result of the English course only.

MGT2 also revealed that Francophone students experienced serious language problems while following lectures in English. According to him, "Students do not understand lectures at all. It is a shame to say that the university students do not know how to write and read, but it is unfortunately the case".

Nevertheless, like MGT1, he pointed out that all Francophone students could not be put in the same category. There were some who had a good command of English. It seemed unlikely that students who followed the same course, for the same purpose, could end the course with widely different levels of competence (ranging from advanced to real beginners with problems of sentence construction). It is possible that the ones who had a good command of English gained such an ability somewhere else, probably from secondary school. For others who lacked such a background, the course failed to provide adequate preparation.

Another lecturer who answered the questionnaire (MGT4) showed how the English course failed to prepare students for their studies through the medium of English by highlighting some of the problems that Francophone students experienced. According to him, they could not identify the main idea from supporting details, they could not summarise an article nor write coherent English and they could not write an essay which developed an argument. Lecturer MGT3 who also answered a questionnaire gave substance to the view that some Francophone students experienced serious problems with English. Referring to his own experience, he said that six students failed to write their final exam in English, but wrote in Kinyarwanda instead.

It became evident that students were still struggling with the basics of the English language. Thus they could not be expected to use English successfully in academic settings, which are highly demanding cognitively.

Basically, all four lecturers in Management reported that Francophone students were not well prepared for English as medium of instruction, although there were exceptions. The one-year English course did not seem to help these students. Therefore, ET2's statement quoted above which suggests that Francophone students had virtually no problem in accessing knowledge through the medium of English needs to be examined critically.

First of all, there is no point in comparing current students with those from the time before the English programme was implemented, because Francophone students did their subjects through the medium of French prior to the implementation. Studies through the medium of English were only offered to Anglophone students.

Secondly, it is not clear where ET2 received the impression that the language was not an obstacle for students because all the other lecturers that I interviewed acknowledged that many students still had problems with English. None of the students' interviews provided any support for ET2's view either.

MGT2 mentioned that some of those who performed better did so not because they understood, but because they memorised their work. He stated this on the basis of his

experience that a change in the exam or test question resulted in students' failure to answer the question:

...I think that some of the students are making it through courses by memorising rather than by understanding, and you can see it easily. If you ask them a question that requires that they transform the question, sometimes they can't do it at all because it is not the kind of question they memorised. They do not understand, they just memorise.... If you ask them a question, which requires their own thinking, or where they have to express their ideas in their own words, they can't say anything. They just memorise what the lecturer gives to them and give it back to him in exams or any kind of evaluation.... if you ask them a question for which they are not prepared, they have not prepared before, they do not answer appropriately.

While it would seem from MGT2' statement that students experience language problems, further research is needed to confirm whether students' practices stem from language problems only or from other factors such as beliefs about learning.

As evidence of students' language problems, and to strengthen MGT2's view that students did not perform well on questions which required their own thinking, the following example from an *Oral and Written Expression* course in the first year of Management can be used.

Students were given the following paragraph about the causes of road accidents. They were asked to make three criticisms about the paragraph and to re-write it with improvements. A total of seven marks was awarded for the question.

Road accidents happen for a variety of reasons. First, many people buy their driver's licences instead of going through serious tests, and they always fail to the tests. Next, people should not drive old cars because they are too expensive to maintain. Last but not least, drunkenness and fatigue are frequently blamed for causing accidents. A drunk and tired driver can hardly be alert to his environment.

Out of 21 students who wrote the test and whose copies were made available to me, 16 students (76%) failed this question. Nine students out of 16 (56%) scored 0/7 on the question, and the remaining 7 students (43%) scored between 1-2/7.

The question of improving the paragraph remained a problem for everybody. Fourteen students out of 16 (87%) received 0/4, and the highest mark obtained was 1.5/4.

From the responses that students gave, it was evident that they did not understand the question, which was an indication that students experienced problems with the English text, although the question itself is not clear. For example, 6 re-wrote the same paragraph. A further 3 dropped the question altogether and left blank spaces, 2 tried to improve it though not appropriately and 4 came up with responses which were not in any way linked to the question. One wrote a letter to the traffic police officer, another one outlined points he thought might cause road accidents and the other two provided completely irrelevant answers. So, it was evident that students could miss the point just because of a language problem such as not understanding the question in this case. In addition, other possible factors such as lack of previous practice with this sort of task, or a badly conceived task with a question that was confusing might have interfered with students' performance on the question.

Let us examine some of the students' answers in order to highlight the fact that they experienced serious problems with English, which could have prevented them from using it successfully as a language of learning.

One student wrote the following response to the question of re-writing the paragraph with improvements.

We know that some problems, causes of it

According me: I think that for to say these points. Are basics of road accident: sometime not. Because: you can do accident without these criticism. For example

1) for lack experience

- 2) familial problems
- 3) cause for a bad road
- 4) Insecurity
- 5) Illness
- 6) If you are old, sometime: you can commite an accident.
- 7)

Clearly, English was still an obstacle for this student. He could not order the points into a coherent piece of writing, he made grammatical and structural mistakes, and above all, he added irrelevant details. For him and others like him, studying through the medium of English was likely to cause many problems.

Another student wrote:

To: Policy's director officer
 From: Policy's director in Butare.

For this student, the word *policy* was used instead of *traffic police officer*. Here, it could be assumed that whenever he heard the word *policy* he thought of traffic police or the police in general. For example, should he be confronted with the topic of *national development policy* in the course of his studies, he would be confused because he would link the word *policy* to the meaning of *police*. Similarly, if he were asked to produce a written assignment about that topic (national development policy), he would not manage to write an appropriate response.

This student experienced a vocabulary problem which was likely to affect his subject matter understanding and performance. In order to cope with university studies through the medium of English in the Management Faculty, students need to control a sufficient range of vocabulary relevant to Management Studies.

In short, the responses to the question of criticising and improving a paragraph showed that English was an obstacle to some students, which questions the accuracy of LT2's statement. Some students lacked subject-specific terminologies, and some of them were still struggling with the basics of the English language such as grammar

and sentence construction. They would clearly struggle with the cognitively demanding language of their specific subjects.

A further assertion to be considered in ET2's statement is the one that "the English course prepares students to react, that there is a kind of interaction between teacher and students". What lecturers in the Management Faculty as well as their students' interviews revealed was that classrooms were mostly teacher-dominated, and students seldom spoke, either to ask questions, give answers or engage in discussions.

Let us now turn to the students' views on these issues.

Students' views

In interviews, students in the Management Faculty emphasized that the one-year English course did not help them very much to access content knowledge through the medium of English. As one student remarked,

In the Management Faculty, many subjects are offered through the medium of English. So, the English we learn in EPLM [(Ecole Pratique des Langues Modernes- where students follow the one-year English course)] is not really enough to enable us to follow all those courses in English. The English we learn in EPLM doesn't even have anything to do with Management.

This student pointed out that the course dealt with general academic skills only and failed to address faculty specific discourse and genres. Here, he confirmed the findings in section 4.2 from the textbook analysis which revealed that while the course seemed to be adequate for general communicative purposes, it did not prepare students for academic study.

Students said that they did not have many problems in general English, probably because the course had trained them in that field. As a matter of fact, all of them said that the English course helped a bit because even the little English they had was

gained on that course. However, when it came to their specialised fields of study, they struggled.

And in these general topics, students can sometimes talk. It is like when we read novels. You can read novels or talk with someone in English without problem but when it comes to following a lecture, or like when people are presenting or giving a conference in the specific language, we are completely lost. Perhaps not all of us, but many of us do not understand when it comes to the specialised English of the field of study. It is not only in the Management Faculty, but even others. Take for example those who are doing Geography. Many of them do not understand the English used to forecast the weather. Yet, they are supposed to know the matter. Even those in Science, they have their scientific language which is complicated and sometimes prevents them from understanding the subject matter though they might be able to communicate in everyday life situation.

Again, it becomes evident that the one-year English course did not fulfil the academic preparation goal of the course as expected by the University. It did not adequately prepare students to study in English, since it did not go beyond general communicative language teaching to include the specialised discourses and genres that students were to encounter in their academic studies.

Academic literacy skills

As far as academic literacy skills are concerned, the only academic skill in which students did not encounter many problems was note-taking. However, as they suggested, this was not because they knew how to take their own notes perfectly, but because the lecturers provided them with notes.

We do not have problems because we do not take our own notes. The teacher dictates to us. Of course sometimes we leave blank spaces but you check from your neighbour and you complete. We do not get many

difficulties to take notes. Sometimes, the teacher can make notes for us.

The practice of completing their notes from one another revealed their inability to understand lectures. As a matter of fact, as the students themselves pointed out, and as confirmed by MGT2, if one student happened to make a mistake, all the other students reproduced it, even in the examinations. This shows that students really did not understand what they wrote (and what they learned), because otherwise they would have been able to correct themselves. But, since the mistake reappeared even in the exam, it was a clear indication that they did not understand what they learned. They just took the notes as such and struggled to memorise them.

Note-taking was the only writing activity that the students mentioned, probably because it was the one they came across frequently. Genre writing or essay-writing kinds of tasks were kept to a minimum. Lecturers in the Management Faculty preferred to concentrate on questions based on memorisation and recall of information. MGT2 pointed out that some lecturers in the Management Faculty did not give the essay-writing tasks that each lecturer was supposed to give in the evaluation of his/her students. Also, MGT3 (who answered the questionnaire) maintained that some lecturers were conservative. They relied on transmission teaching, and evaluation was mainly based on memorisation and recall of information.

If we take into account the long-term perspective however, it can be argued that students did not gain anything from the transmission mode of teaching and evaluation. In fact, it is true that if students were asked to give back the teacher's notes correctly, they were spared the demands of writing subject specific genres or discourses. Seemingly, writing exams or tests did not cause too much trouble as long as they could memorise the teacher's notes, since they were asked to reproduce the teacher's language, not to produce their own. Nevertheless, in the long term, such a practice would not help because by the time students graduate and enter the workplace, they would be obliged to produce their own language, not the teacher's, and to apply what they had learned at University. They would be judged on their ability to work things out, not on the ability to memorise facts and theory. They would need to analyse, synthesise, evaluate and work things out rather than reproducing memorised

information. University graduates are expected to possess these higher order intellectual capacities. As Nightingale and O'Neill (1994: 10) note, the essence of higher education lies in "transforming the student, empowering her and enhancing her by developing higher order intellectual capacities which allow her to critique, her experience and herself". So, students should be encouraged to produce knowledge, not to just rely on the teachers' knowledge.

Even the teachers on the English course asked questions which required memorisation and reproduction of information in situations where genre writing or specific discourse would have been more appropriate. For example, let us consider the following English exam questions:

- The major types of information included in a resume are:....
- The 3 main stages of report writing are:....

Here, it is highly likely that students may know the major types of information included in a resume and yet fail to write it appropriately. Similarly, they may state the stages of report writing correctly without being able to write an appropriate report when asked to do so. Thus, a student who writes such an exam will not immediately meet the demands that writing a report or a resume entails, but when s/he graduates, s/he will face these demands. He will need to apply for a job and will therefore write his/her resume; once s/he gets the job, s/he will participate in meetings and will have to take minutes; s/he will write reports, memorandums, etc. In this case, no one will ask him/her to simply state elements which are included in a resume or stages of report writing. Instead, s/he will be judged on how correct the written resume or report is.

In short, it is important to equip students to meet the demands of specific genres and discourses during academic training because, whether students like it or not, they will have to face them in professional life. However, neither the English course nor the Management-related subjects seemed to deal with them in any detail.

As regards listening skills, students stated that they encountered many problems in listening to lecturers. Most of the time, their listening ability was handicapped by

their limited specialised vocabulary and the varied accents of lecturers. Here are some of their responses during the interviews:

There are difficulties of listening. Because we do not have enough vocabulary, it is not easy for us to follow a lecture in English. Also, the intonation is not the same.

Some of the expressions are not well caught at the same time....

The difficulties I meet concern especially the listening. Because the English language has got so many accents and various difficult pronunciations depending on the speaker, I do not listen to different lecturers well. Listening to them is a big problem for me.

MGT1 also supported the students' expressed difficulties by saying that

...very often they ask the professor to go slowly, not to teach so speedily. So, well, and also they want the pronunciation must be clear and they need some more explanation to the technical terms

Again, the above statements implicitly suggest that the English course did not address vocabulary and listening skills adequately for the academic needs of the students. While it can be assumed that English teachers were probably not well equipped to teach technical vocabulary, there did not seem to be any reason why they did not give their students practice in listening to a variety of accents. In fact, they could have recorded news broadcasts from different channels, other radio or television programmes, as well as authentic lectures. All these situations would have provided varied and authentic materials with varied accents which could have been subsequently used as materials to practise students' listening skills. Although this strategy might not have remedied all the listening problems that students experience, at least it would have provided opportunities for students not to listen to their teacher's voice only, but to many others as well. Thus, the shock of listening to many lecturers with varied accents once they started their studies in the Management Faculty would probably have been alleviated.

However, instead of adapting the listening activities that the course suggested in order to meet their students' needs, some teachers on the English course tended to neglect this part of the course. As ET1 revealed,

We do not emphasise listening skills because students do not understand. They say, well, we are confused. People are using the various kind of accents they do not understand. So, we have to use our own accent because we are used to it.

Here, it can be argued that using the local accent only as a way of helping students to practice their listening skill for academic purposes provided little help, if any. The fact of the matter was that most of the lecturers in the Management Faculty were foreigners, not Rwandans. So it would have been of little help to give students practice in an accent they would rarely, if ever, have to listen to. As long as they were not exposed to foreign accents, they would always find the lecturers' accents new to them and consequently problematic. As long as the course did not deal with such listening materials, it could not pretend to provide relevant practice in listening to lectures.

A further possibility might be that the lack of authenticity and interest in the materials used for listening tended to bore students. The voices were carefully recorded for pedagogic reasons and thus students found that the listening texts were not the kind of speeches they were likely to hear in real situations. Hence, they did not find any reason why they should spend time on such materials. It was likely that varied, authentic, interesting and appropriate recorded materials would have made them eager to listen and consequently familiarise them with different accents.

In short, it was not easy for students to listen to lectures because they lacked training in the various accents of the lecturers. In addition, their knowledge of subject specific terms was limited. The English course did not help the students to address this problem since the teachers did not give them enough listening practice on varied materials.

The third skill I would like to consider is speaking, which is linked to students' participation in the classroom. The analysis of the data showed that, despite ET2's statement which maintains that there was interaction between teacher and students in content subjects, classroom interaction was teacher-dominated. Students did not really participate. MGT2 said, "With Francophones, it is one-way communication. They just take what the lecturer says, no discussion or challenge".

Two reasons can be given for the lack of teacher-student interaction. First, students might have failed to engage in discussion because they feared to challenge an answer from an expert lecturer. In this case, students adopted a receptive role in the classroom. They just looked to the teacher to provide the information needed to pass tests successfully. One student said, "We have to memorise the notes quickly so that we get what to write in the exam".

In the second place, students failed to participate because they experienced problems with English. They did not ask or answer questions because they lacked the words. Some students expressed their failure to participate as follows:

My problem concerns speaking. If a teacher asks a question and he asks me to answer, I can't express myself. I do not have the words to say my answer and I am afraid to make mistakes, because I do not speak English very often.

When I am following a lecture in English, I am not able to answer to comprehension questions. I can't express myself in the class in English. I know what to say, I can say it in Kinyarwanda, or French but many difficulties are there for me to express it in English.

It is not easy to ask questions. We do not feel free to express ourselves. Our expression does not come easily. Even when a lecturer asks a question, we know the answer but it takes time to make the sentence in order to give the answer to the question.

From the above, one can conclude that the students failed to participate because they feared to make mistakes in talking in a language they were not used to. Students

assumed that in answering questions or in giving an opinion, they ran the risk of revealing their weak English. I believe that some of these problems of poor oral participation in English could be traced to the English course, which failed to address them. For example, as shown in section 4.2, speaking was not in any way linked to the actual topics that students encountered in their studies. So this may explain why students did not give their answers easily. They had to think twice before they could give the answer because they were dealing with a topic which was more cognitively demanding than the ones that they were used to in the English class.

In addition, students did not participate because they lacked fluency in English. The lack of fluency reflected the lack of practice in speaking. Regular practice enhances and develops one's fluency in speaking a language. Therefore, since the English class was virtually the only situation in which these Rwandan students could practise speaking English, the English course may be blamed for not having provided sufficient opportunities for students to practice their oral skills.

Although it was clear that students experienced problems in expressing themselves fluently, MGT1 still maintained that students participated actively. According to him, they asked questions to get clarity on their problems. However, this may possibly not have been the case, since later on he mentioned that he did not reserve time for questions. He also mentioned that it was not easy to implement a participatory mode of teaching in the first year, given the large number of students. For example, his first year class had 234 students. It can be inferred that he did not implement a participatory mode of teaching, and therefore did not have an accurate picture of students' participation. Hence it was not clear on what grounds he stated that students actively participated in class.

Students and their teachers did not mention anything related to reading across the curriculum. Whether the English course developed students' reading skills appropriately or whether they were not required to activate such skills needed further investigation. In the scope of this study, the reason why neither students nor lecturers did not complain about students' reading abilities seems to be that Management lecturers provided ready-made notes, which students felt were sufficient. Here, it can be argued that such a practice limited students' chances of practising and improving

their reading skills in the Management field. Also, it made students rely on the teacher rather than encouraging them to become independent learners. Yet university students should be responsible for their own learning by going beyond the teachers' notes to consult other sources as well.

The data from this study, which took into account views from both lecturers in the Management faculty as well as their first year students, showed that the English course failed to address some of the academic demands of studying through the medium of English, namely, listening to lectures and recognising specialised vocabulary, taking notes, writing coherently and relevantly according to each discipline's requirements, answering or asking questions, etc. Students and their teachers also mentioned some of the constraints which prevented the course from reaching its goals. The following section deals with these constraints in more detail.

4.4.2 Constraints

The first constraint that teachers and students felt was at the basis of the English course's failure to attain its assigned goal was related to time. According to ET1, students did not gain from the course because the time was not enough. Teachers rushed to finish the programme even if students did not understand anything, and students learned to get marks. The issue of getting knowledge was left aside, and instead, covering the book and succeeding seemed to be the main issue. ET1 said:

They say that at the end of the month we will have a test. So we have to rush. And we rush, we do not emphasise on the matter. So, students learn in order to get marks but they do not learn in order to get knowledge. Yes, this is how things areYou say, well, we have an exam next week and you have three units to cover, so I rush.

He went on to say that the course would be helpful if they had enough time.

So, I see EPLM can help if we have enough time. But because of the circumstances, which are prevailing here, we have to rush, and at the end you ask a student: 'what have you mastered?' They say, well, we

studied in order to get marks, in order to succeed, but you know, they do not acquire the language. So, from EPLM they do not get anything.

However, this view was not shared by ET2 who maintained that a whole year was enough to prepare students not to fear the University.

From what ET1 said, it could be argued that if the time was not enough, they could use the little they had to cover those skills that students deemed to be much needed for their purposes. Perhaps ET2, who noted that time was not a constraint, knew how to choose relevant activities and did not have to go through the whole book. Nevertheless, teachers like ET1 rushed to cover the book. Here, it became evident that most teachers followed the book from cover to cover, without modifying or adjusting the activities to fit their own situation.

In this case, it became clear that the chances of the course meeting its assigned goal were really slim. Full coverage of the book did not guarantee development of skills needed to handle the target communication. What came out was that learners were not given a central role in the teaching and learning activities. What mattered was the completion of the book, not the knowledge that the teacher imparted to the students.

Students also emphasized this hurry to finish the book over learner-centredness. According to them, the teachers wanted “to finish his course load. Whether students gain something or not, it is not his business”. Such a practice gave a false idea of students’ abilities in English at the end of the year. It was assumed that they were ready to follow courses through the medium of English whereas actually the academic preparation had not been addressed throughout the course. Students were trained to cover the programme and succeed in the exams, not to function successfully in English as a language of learning.

Another constraint on the course was the negative attitude of students. Both ET1 and ET2 acknowledged that students held a negative attitude towards the course. ET1 said: “Yeah, they have a negative attitude towards EPLM. They say that they are just spending one year for nothing”. ET2 also strengthened this view by saying that

“When they come, they like English but they say that they are going to do many years at University....”

It was essential to establish the reasons for this attitude. One major reason seemed to be that the course students were following did not address their needs. This was because students were not part of the planning process. Had they been asked to state their needs as part of the planning process, they would have found that the course dealt to a greater extent with what they needed to learn and they would thus be actively involved. As Flowerdew and Peacock (2001: 179) note,

Students need to be part of the planning process and teachers should ensure that they have an overview of the goals of the course, and each lesson. This encourages student participation in the learning process and reduces potential frustration and disappointment.

However, even if students had not been part of the planning process in the Rwandan case, teachers needed to give their students a sense of learning by selecting motivating and relevant activities. It follows without saying that adjusting some activities in the book to address learners' needs was required.

A third constraint that my informants found to contribute to the failure of the English course to prepare them for their studies in English, related to the adequacy of the materials. According to ET2, the materials were not relevant to the Rwandan context, but reflected European realities. In addition, as pointed out in section 4.2, they were not even adequate for academic preparation. Once again, it became the individual teachers' task to take into account the real needs of their students and to adapt the materials accordingly. Teachers' commitment to help students rather than teachers' hurry to finish the programme would have made the course more helpful.

Teachers' competence and the question of feedback were also mentioned to be the stumbling blocks which prevented the course from fulfilling its task properly. All the teachers on the course were not equally competent. Some of them had been teaching for ten years or so, and others were fresh graduates. While the relationship between

teaching experience and teachers' competence might be arguable, it seemed that feedback was needed to check whether students were gaining from the course.

On the whole, despite the other constraints mentioned, the most important stumbling block seemed to be teachers' rush to finish the course, regardless of the skills that they imparted to their students. Students were not given a central place in the teaching/learning activities. Yet, the course was primarily designed to assist them. Teachers could have used the available time to deal with the academic skills that students needed in order to cope with English as medium of instruction at tertiary level. Thus, by shifting to a programme-centred rather than a learner-centred approach, the course shifted away from its assigned goal. It no longer aimed to provide students with the linguistic tools they needed in order to access content knowledge, but instead simply aimed to cover the book.

The next section considers the language support that Management lecturers provided to their students.

4.4.3 Lecturers' language support

The previous section pointed out that even after the one-year English course, students still experienced problems with English as a language of learning. This section aims to find out how lecturers in the Management Faculty assisted their students in terms of the language they needed for subject matter understanding.

The lecturers in the Management Faculty that I interviewed acknowledged that they did not provide any language support to their students, arguing that peer support was more adequate than teacher support. However, students deplored the fact that their lecturers did not, for example, explain some of the words, which bear different meanings according to whether they are used in general English or in disciplinary discourse. As an instance of such words, one student highlighted the use of "good will". According to him,

The word goodwill as a general term does not mean the same as goodwill in economic situation. For example a shop, which is nearer to

the market gets many clients than the one, which is in an unpopulated area. The shop nearer to the market sells better than the other one. This is where the economic term goodwill can be applied, and it does not mean what it means in general terms.

So, according to students, lecturers did not alert students to the slight but significant differences between such words. Consequently, they became confused, and frequently assigned certain words wrong or inappropriate meanings.

An explanation of such words would have helped students to understand the subject matter. Nevertheless, lecturers declined to do so. It seemed that there were two beliefs underlying this position.

First, lecturers believed that by attending the lecture, students were automatically learning and acquiring knowledge, which was not true. As pointed out in the previous section, most of the time students did not understand much from the lecture due to language problems. It was only later during study time that they explained to one another in Kinyarwanda, but lectures were delivered without regard to whether students were able to follow. Subsequently, students memorised the points they grasped from peer explanation so that they succeeded in the tests or exams. They tried to learn what they needed in order to pass the tests. As one student pointed out:

This is almost what I was saying before. Those Indian lecturers come, we do not understand their pronunciation and even the language is complicated. So, since we do not understand, we just look for notes. We take the notes, and though we do not understand them, we memorise. Sometimes, if there is someone who understands, he can explain to the others during study time. But if the time is not enough, we have to memorise the notes quickly so that we get what to write in the exam.

From the above, it can be argued that students resorted to memorisation because they lacked the language of the subject. Here, the language of the subject refers to the processes and modes of analysis and argument appropriate to the subject, and each subject lecturer was best suited to make students aware of the language of his subject.

Since they did not provide the language of the subject however, students were obliged to learn the correct answer and regurgitate it during any kind of evaluation. The concept of evaluation and analysis appeared to be totally lacking.

This inappropriate mode of learning at tertiary level stemmed from the failure of the English course to address the higher order intellectual capabilities such as analysis, synthesis, evaluation, etc. on the one hand, and the failure of subject lecturers to assist students in the language of the subject on the other hand. Normally, tertiary education is supposed to foster higher order intellectual capabilities. Nightingale and O'Neill (1994: 8) characterise students' abilities at higher/tertiary education as follows: "Unless they were able to form and substantiate independent thought in a coherent and articulate fashion, we would have to say that we were not in the presence of higher education".

Thus, lecturers in the Management Faculty at the National University of Rwanda needed to address the subject-specific language problems that students encountered. They also needed to set the kinds of questions, which required analysis, evaluation and synthesis extensively, instead of the ones which tested the ability to memorise and recall the answer.

A second reason why content lecturers did not provide any language support to students might have been that they did not believe it to be their task, but that of the English teachers. Presumably, they supposed that students had gained enough English from their English course, and they did not bother to consider the failure of the English course to deal with discipline-specific terms and discourse. Yet many students complained that they did not have enough subject-related terminologies, which might have helped them to understand lectures.

It seemed that this reluctance of lecturers in the Management faculty to deal with English problems while delivering their lectures was not specific to the Rwandan case only. Drawing on their research in Hong Kong, Flowerdew and Miller (1995:365) found that

All lecturers are faced with the problem of introducing and using a large repertoire of discipline-specific technical terms. Some lecturers try to at least draw students' attention to this technical lexis. Others, however, while aware of the problem, do not feel it is their role, or that they are capable of dealing with this issue, which for them would constitute English teaching, which is not part of their job.

Lecturers forget that English teachers might not be able to remedy their students' problems, although they might be willing to. Since the English teachers at the National University of Rwanda probably knew little if anything about Management-related subjects, there was no guarantee that they could manage to provide full English support to students. Therefore, lecturers in the Management faculty needed to provide some assistance because they knew their field and its requirements best. They should not just have left students to struggle on their own, because the English course definitely did not address the subjects-specific requirements adequately.

To sum up, the belief that by attending lectures students automatically learned, together with the finding that Management lecturers did not seek to address the language problems of their students, perpetuated students' problems in accessing subject matter knowledge. There needs to be a shift in the paradigm, that is, Management lecturers need to consider their role in helping students with their course-specific language problems. The English teacher should not be considered the only one to address students' language problems.

This section has been concerned with teachers' and students' views as regards the role that the one-year English course plays in preparing students in the Management Faculty to cope with English as medium of instruction. It also sought to discover the constraints that the course faces, and to establish whether content lecturers provided English language support to their students. On the whole, the data revealed that the course failed to prepare students to cope with the academic demands of English as medium of instruction. Although the sample was small and these findings would need to be tested on a larger group, it emerged that students did not really understand lectures in English.

Most of the time, the varied accents of different lecturers, coupled with their own limited subject-specific vocabulary made it difficult for them to grasp the content of lectures. Also, the lack of appropriate vocabulary together with the lack of practice in speaking English made them reluctant to participate in the classroom. They did not ask questions, they did not answer questions, nor did they engage in discussions although they might have been willing to, which made the classroom interaction teacher-dominated. In addition, they lacked the discourse of the subject. Sometimes, they missed the point due to language problems, just because they did not understand the question. Some of them struggled to complete their notes during class time. The only way they could meet the lecturer's expectations was to memorise and give back his/her notes during any kind of evaluation. In addition, they lacked the ability to analyse, synthesise and evaluate information through the medium of English. The situation was not made any better by content lecturers who did not provide any language support despite the fact that they were the ones who knew their field better and therefore were best suited to help their students.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the presentation and analysis of data from interviews and document analysis. The analysis revealed the failure of the one-year English course at the National University of Rwanda to prepare students for English as medium of instruction at university.

The findings from the textbook analysis indicated that the content was predetermined, which prevented it from meeting the actual needs of students to function in English. Also, the activities dealt with were not complex and challenging enough to develop the cognitive academic proficiency that students needed to control in order to cope with the academic demands of studying in English. In addition, the opportunity of a content-based model of language teaching was not exploited, although this could have provided meaningful and motivating situations for the learning of English. Furthermore, although the four language skills were dealt with, the tasks were not appropriate for academic preparation. For example, writing did not go beyond paragraph writing on a general topic to deal with more extended essay writing, specific genres and discourse. Reading rarely went beyond reading a text for

grammatical practice to include critical reading, text analysis, reading to complete notes, etc. Listening dealt with the materials carefully recorded for pedagogical reasons instead of including a variety of authentic materials and accents. Alternatively, teachers dropped listening activities altogether. Practice in speaking was mainly on general topics. Speaking activities did not incorporate the context in which students would use the language, that is, seminar discussions, question asking in a lecture, giving opinions on relevant topics, etc.

The interviews showed that even after the one-year English course, students still had problems in listening to lectures. The varied accents of different lecturers coupled with problems in specialised vocabulary recognition and understanding prevented students from following lectures. Students also failed to express themselves and to participate actively because they had not mastered the language of the subject.

Other factors such as time, students' attitudes, teachers' level of competence, the inadequacy of materials and the lack of follow up were cited to contribute to the failure of the course. Moreover, the beliefs that Management lecturers and English teachers held about teaching and learning was another issue worth considering. They implemented a transmission mode of teaching which reduced students to mere consumers of teachers' expert knowledge. Students were not given a central role in the teaching and learning activities, which limited their opportunity to acquire English for Academic Purposes.

Furthermore, students lacked the learning-to-learn skills such as self-monitoring, an awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses, which forced them to rely on teachers' transmitted knowledge instead of becoming independent learners. Lecturers in the Management Faculty who did not provide any language support to their students did not improve this situation.

In short, the one-year English course that the National University of Rwanda offered in order to prepare students for English as the medium of instruction failed to reach that goal, at least as far as students in the Management Faculty were concerned. It did not develop the language and academic skills that university studies through the medium of English require. The next chapter will deal with conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This study has investigated the role played by the one-year English course that the National University of Rwanda offers in preparing students in the Management Faculty to cope with English as medium of instruction. Based on the findings and relevant theoretical concepts used in this study, I can conclude that the course does not prepare students adequately for the demands of their studies through the medium of English.

First, the content is predetermined and fails to address the abilities in English that the Management Faculty requires.

Second, tasks for reading, writing, speaking and listening are not complex enough or as cognitively demanding as those that students will have to face in their studies.

Third, the course does not equip students to recognize and use the range of genres required by the Management Faculty. Neither does it draw students' attention to specific discourses pertaining to specific subjects.

Fourth, the content-based model of language teaching, which could provide motivational and cognitive bases to learn English, is not exploited.

Fifth, the specialised vocabulary required in Management Studies remains one of the aspects that the course fails to provide.

Certain factors uncovered in this study pointed to some of the reasons why the course failed to reach its goal. An important reason seemed to be the adoption of ready-made materials, which were predetermined and thus failed to address

students' needs in academic studies. The materials were not appropriate for developing the academic and language skills that students in the Management Faculty needed in order to cope with the academic demands of the English medium of instruction. Coupled with this, there were teachers who did not adjust the materials in order to address learners' needs, but aimed only to finish the book.

The following section offers recommendations as to how to provide more meaningful assistance to students who need to use English as a medium of instruction in their university studies, with particular reference to students in the Management Faculty.

5.2 Recommendations

This section deals with recommendations which are meant to serve as guidelines towards designing an English for Academic Purposes course.

In order to give a purpose to the learning of English and to increase students' motivation to learn English, English teachers need to assume the role of developing their own courses, instead of implementing the one designed by experts. This would mean moving towards an understanding of curriculum as a process and a more learner-centred approach to language teaching. In order to do this, teachers would have to know their students' needs and aim to design materials which meet the academic and learning needs of the students. In addition, English teachers should seek to develop the language and study skills that students need to function effectively in English. Finally, since there might be some disciplinary requirements that the English teacher might fail to deal with appropriately, co-operation between the English teacher and the subject discipline teacher is of paramount importance. Let us deal with each point in turn.

5.2.1 Teachers as course developers

In this section, I would like to suggest that the course should shift into a more transformative paradigm. In other words, instead of being predetermined, it should be jointly negotiated by the teacher and students, the aim being to equip students with the linguistic tools they need to function fully in the English medium.

In order for the English course to adequately prepare students for English as medium of instruction, students should be grouped not only according to their level of English proficiency, but also to their prospective faculties or field of study. If possible, an English communication department should be created in each faculty so that each English teacher can deal mainly with one field of study. In our case of Management Studies, the English teacher would ask the students what they need to learn most. As Lubisi, Parker and Wedekind (1998: 4) suggest, “...the development of learning programmes and materials should put learners first, recognising and building on their knowledge and experience, and responding to their needs”.

The English teacher would also ask lecturers in the Management Faculty which English language knowledge and skills they think students should possess in order to cope with their subjects through the medium of English. Then, s/he would design the course in such a way that it includes those elements that students need. Continuous evaluation should be done to find out whether the course is meeting learners' needs and to establish whether any adjustment or adaptation is needed. Here, the point I want to make is that English teachers should shift from being transmitters of expert language knowledge to facilitators of the knowledge jointly constructed with their students. This would probably resolve the problems of time and negative attitude, which are partially responsible for preventing the course from fulfilling its task. Instead of rushing to cover the book, teachers would seek to equip students with the knowledge they need. The course should, as in the case of Outcomes-Based Education make *what* and *whether* students learn successfully more important than *when* and *how* they learn it. In other words,

accomplishing results should be more important than providing programmes (Lubisi, Parker, Wedekind, 1998: 28). In this case, I hope that students would view the course not as a waste of time, but as an invaluable language support programme.

To be effective, the course would be given in two parts. The first part would be offered the year before students start other subjects and the second part would be offered during the first year of tertiary study, when students are dealing with their subjects. The first part would try to address some of the skills that students need to fully function in English whereas the second part would be concerned with those aspects of the English language that students find to be problematic when they are following their subjects. Students would note the kind of English problems they meet when they are following their lectures in English. The English teacher can also attend the Management-related lectures by prior arrangement with Management lecturers in order to familiarise him/herself with the kind of problems related to English that students encounter in their subjects. Subsequently, the teacher and students would deal with these problems during the English class.

In all cases, materials would be jointly constructed by teacher and students and would allow for flexibility and change whenever necessary. Materials should, as Hutchison and Waters (1987: 107) suggest, “encourage learners to learn”.

5.2.2 Developing English and academic skills

In the Rwandan context where students are learning English to use it as a language of learning at tertiary level, the development of study and academic skills needs to be emphasised during the course.

First, students should be made aware of how to follow a lecture effectively and make notes. For example, a framework that most lecturers follow while presenting their lectures can be dealt with. Although this framework is likely to vary from lecturer to lecturer, Justus, Tucker and Volbrecht (1992: 90)

suggest that there are common elements to most types of lectures. According to them, a lecture includes:

- A general theme
- Several major topics
- One or more key concepts
- Supporting points for the major topics /examples or illustrations
- A list of reference works for further reading.

If the English teacher makes students aware of this pattern of lecture presentation, they would probably be in a position to follow the lecturer appropriately. They would know at which point the lecturer is, instead of being confused altogether. I suggest that this would even help them to take notes effectively. As far as note-taking is concerned, the English teacher should also offer hints which could help students to take notes during lectures.

For example, when students listen to a lecture, they have to do three things.

1. Understand the topic and what is being discussed. Therefore, students should be informed that the title and the introduction signal the topic of the lesson, that they have to follow carefully right from the beginning so that they do not get lost.
2. Know what the important points are: It should be stressed to students that most lecturers signal what is important by repeating the information, stressing it or using any other kind of device. Therefore, students should follow the lecturer carefully so that they do not miss the important points.
3. Make notes on important points and the way they relate to one another and the topic. After students have written the main points, it is worth noting supporting details, then note how important points relate to one another and subsequently to the topic. Since it is virtually impossible to take all what the lecturer says in the classroom, students should be trained to take main points which would serve as a structure to write up more detailed notes later on. The teacher should also remind them to take notes as soon as possible when they still have details in the memory. Otherwise they might forget the details.

These hints may help students to take their own notes if a lecturer does not provide ready-made notes or even when he is explaining. Also, the hints may be helpful even in other situations such as conferences or simposia.

Second, students should be taught effective reading techniques. They should be taught how to identify main ideas from supporting details, scanning and skimming techniques that they can use according to the purpose of the reading task.

The reading strategies should also teach students that effective reading consists of three stages, namely the pre-reading, the while reading and the post-reading stages. At each of these stages, questions to bear in mind depending on the reading task should be dealt with. Whenever possible, training students to develop the reading skills that they need in the English medium of instruction should be based on topics drawn from Management subjects. In addition, intensive and extensive reading skills need to be covered.

Since tertiary studies require students to read various sources of knowledge for different purposes, developing students' reading strategies would probably enable them to cope with academic reading demands.

Third, writing should include those activities that university studies through the medium of English require. For example, the English writing programme should include paragraph and essay writing with emphasis on identifying and recognising topic sentence from supporting details, topic development and idea development, coherence and cohesion and the use of transition or discourse markers, summarising and synthesising.

Specific genres such as memoranda, job application letters, report writing and taking minutes should be included in the writing activities as well. The topics for writing should be taken from the subjects in the Management Faculty. Moreover, topics should be challenging. As Leki (1995: 256) notes, "...we

need to think of functional, task models, that is, rather than consistently assigning English class essays, also giving ESL writing students the opportunity to experience and to grapple with such tasks as taking an essay exam or conducting and reporting on a survey.”

Furthermore, the academic discourse that Management Studies require should be dealt with. In this regard, the subject lecturer would inform the English teacher of the kind of discourse that the subject discipline requires. Luckett (1999: 27) emphasises the fact that each subject discipline has its own corresponding discourse. According to her, “Different academic discourses display fundamental differences in their cultures, and epistemic assumptions, they have different ways of arguing and reporting and require different types of evidence for making knowledge claims”. Thus the subject lecturer is best suited to inform the English teacher of the kind of discourse that his/her subject requires, so that the English teacher can prepare students to gain access to the discourse practices of their subjects.

Fourth, the English class should also address the oral abilities of students. In an academic setting, students should be able to convey their ideas, opinions and problems. To do so, they need to develop their oral skills. In the Rwandan context, developing oral skills is not an easy task since the environment does not provide any English language support. Students switch to Kinyarwanda as soon as they go outside the classroom, and even when they are talking among themselves in the classroom. Students interviewed in this study suggested that they should be given opportunities to practice their oral abilities in English speaking countries. Of course this might be a way of helping students to improve their spoken English, but this alternative does not prove to be financially easy. Instead, students themselves should be committed and adopt the habit of speaking English among themselves, at least on campus where the linguistic environment allows them to do so. The English teacher should also encourage students to speak by promoting discussion activities, debates, and seminar presentations on topics which are of interest to students. In our case of preparing students for English as medium of instruction, topics from the Management subjects, previously negotiated with students, should be

used. In large classes, these activities might be time-consuming but group work might help to solve the problem. Furthermore, the English class should deal with expressions that students need to use in order to express themselves in content subjects, to ask questions, to ask for clarification, to interrupt the lecturer, to give their opinions, etc. Content lecturers should also encourage students to speak and should not monopolise the classroom interaction. In short, the teacher should try to give enough speaking practice to his/her students so that they participate actively in the classroom.

Finally, listening skills should be developed by designing varied listening materials which deal with various accents. Students should be exposed to various accents and different topics relevant to Management Studies. For example, recorded conference presentations, interviews, television and radio news on Management and economic issues, budget presentations, etc., can be used as materials to practice listening skills. Whenever possible, available and willing content lecturers, or even authentic lectures, should be recorded and used as listening materials for the English class. Also, English teachers need to draw students' attention to semantic markers or any other cues that speakers use, so that they can follow the speaker or lecturer at any time. The ability to recognise various semantic markers that the speaker or the lecturer uses would help to distinguish important points from minor points. The English teacher should also address the problem of specialised vocabulary, but in case s/he fails, s/he could seek help from the subject teacher.

5.2.3 Collaboration between Content lecturers and English teachers

In a situation where the English programme is meant to prepare students for English as a medium of instruction, the co-operation or collaboration between the English teacher and the content lecturers is much needed. The fact of the matter is that there are some subject-specific requirements that the English teacher has not mastered. Discourse specific requirements and specialised vocabulary may be cited as examples of language aspects in which the English teacher needs to work collaboratively with content lecturers.

The point I want to make is that in the Rwandan context, if the English language programme is to prepare students to function fully in English as a medium of instruction in the Management Faculty in particular and in all Faculties in general, the English teacher should not work independently from the content lecturers. Instead, they should work collaboratively in order to provide sound support to their students. The English teacher should try his/her best to know about the students' field of study. Flowerdew and Peacock (2001: 181) emphasise that in the context of EAP, "teachers should be willing to ...familiarise themselves with the language of the students' special subjects and to take an interest in and to acquire a knowledge of the students' world".

A further suggestion is that in-service teacher training should be devised to empower teachers in the field of course design. Continuous follow-up and evaluation should also take place to check if the programme is fulfilling its assigned task. The programme should be revised each year to accommodate learners' needs. Finally, the teaching methodology should shift from transmission teaching to a more participatory and learner-centred approach.

This study has been limited to document analysis, and students' and teachers' interviews. I believe that further studies are needed. For example, in-depth classroom observation to investigate how individual teachers implement the English curriculum in their classes might reveal more. Also, further studies could investigate more deeply the strategies that students develop as a response to the academic demands of English as medium of instruction.

This study was by no means exhaustive. However, I hope that the present study will benefit not only students and teachers in the Management Faculty, but also those in other faculties as well.

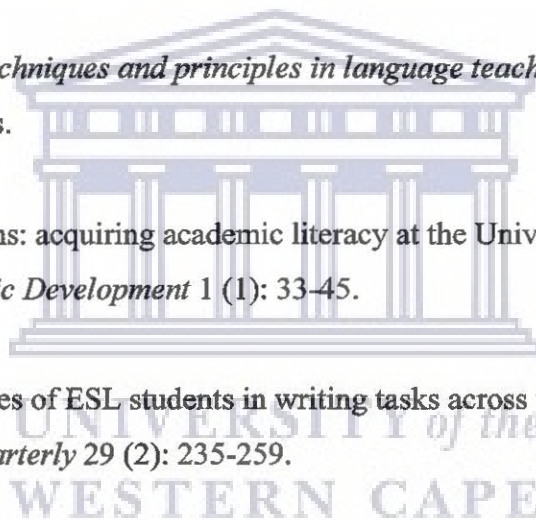
Throughout the study, it emerged that the one-year English course needs some rethinking. If the National University of Rwanda is seeking to provide comprehensive language support to students, the one-year English course needs to shift to a genuine English for Academic Purposes course, in a learner-centred paradigm.

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D1 What do they look like?

Grammar and vocabulary for descriptions; listening skills: listening for gist; speaking and writing skills: descriptions.

1  Listen to the song. (The words are on page 119.) Each verse describes one of the four people in the pictures. Which picture goes with which verse?

A



B



C



D



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**APPENDIX B: ENTRANCE AND EXIT
EXAMINATIONS**

*National University of Rwanda
School of Modern Languages (EPLM)
English Department
Academic year: 1999-2000*

*Name
Reg.n.
Group n.
time: 2H30*

First sitting/ July 19th, 2000 /40 (Exit Examination)

Instructions

1. Write clearly your answers in the given space or circle the right letter for multiple-choice questions.

I. LISTENING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS (10 MARKS)

A. Multiple choice questions (4 marks)

1. The man and his wife

- A. couldn't find their seats B. had not got seats C. got lost in the dark
D. found their seats with difficulty

2. The old man came in

- A. after B. before C. at the same time D. by chance

3. The old man used his stick because

- A. it was dark B. he was blind C. he was tired D. people were in his way

4. The lack of lights was

- A. frightening B. dangerous C. surprising D. amusing

5. Perhaps there were no lights

- A. because it was afternoon B. to make the seats cheaper C. because they were being repaired
D. to save

6. People who came in later sat

- A. near them B. in front of them C. behind them D. alongside them

7. The cinema was

- A. nearly empty B. half empty C. nearly full D. very full

8. The man's wife was

- A. impatient B. tired C. irritable D. worried.

What events were connected with these feelings? (6 marks)

1. Surprise
2. Impatience
3. Disappointments

II. READING COMPREHENSION (10 marks)

2.1 Read the following words or phrases and use them to complete the passage (5 marks)

Consisted of, effect, unwilling, eventually, struggle, legislation, remain, included, lasted, managed to

The history of Canada, 1774-1867

The American Revolution, the war in which the United States separated from England and became an independent nation, had a profound (1) _____ on Canada. A large number of Americans wished to (2) _____ loyal to England. As a result of the revolution, they decided to migrate to Canada. There they created four English colonies where previously there had been one.

Forty thousand people went to Canada after the American Revolution. Ten thousand settled in Quebec, where they were (3) _____ to accept the French legal system. As a result, in 1791, the British Parliament passed the Constitutional Act. This (4) _____ divided Quebec into Upper and Lower Canada. Upper Canada, now known as Ontario, (5) _____ most of the new settlements. It was populated for the most part by immigrant Loyalists and English settlers. Lower Canada, present-day Quebec, (6) _____ the original French settlements. Two other colonies were formed as a result of Loyalist settlements. These were Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

Friction between the British and the newly independent United States of America (7) _____ caused problems in North America. In 1812, the war between Canada and the United States began. The first and only war between these two countries (8) _____ for two years. During this time, with the help of England, the British colonies (9) _____ avoid annexation by the United States.

Less than a quarter of a century after the war with the United States, the colonists began their (10) _____ for "responsible government," that is, a government _____ by the people and responsible to the people.



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Electric fish

The idea of a fish being able to generate electricity strong enough to light lamp bulbs - or even to run a small electric motor - is almost unbelievable, but several kinds of fish are able to do this. Even more strangely, this curious power has been acquired in different ways by fish belonging to very different families. 5

Perhaps the best known are the electric rays, or torpedoes, of which several kinds live in warm seas. They possess on each side of the head, behind the eyes, a large organ consisting of a number of hexagonal shaped cells rather like a honeycomb. The cells are filled with a jelly-like substance, and contain a series of flat electric plates. One side, the negative side, of each plate, is supplied with very fine nerves, connected with a main nerve coming from a special part of the brain. Current passes from the upper, positive side of the organ downwards to the negative, lower side. Generally it is necessary to touch the fish in two places, completing the circuit, in order to receive a shock. 10 15

The strength of this shock depends on the size of the fish, but newly born ones only about 5 centimetres across can be made to light the bulb of a pocket flashlight for a few moments, while a fully grown torpedo gives a shock capable of knocking a man down, and, if suitable wires are connected, will operate a small electric motor for several minutes. 20

Another famous example is the electric eel. This fish gives an even more powerful shock. The system is different from that of the torpedo in that the electric plates run longitudinally and are supplied with nerves from the spinal cord. Consequently, the current passes along the fish from head to tail. The electric organs of these fish are really altered muscles and like all muscles are apt to tire, so they are not able to produce electricity for very long. People in some parts of South America who value the electric eel as food, take advantage of this fact by driving horses into the water against which the fish discharge their electricity. The horses are less affected than a man would be, and when the electric eels have exhausted themselves, they can be caught without danger. 25 30

The electric catfish of the Nile and of other African fresh waters has a different system again by which current passes over the whole body from the tail to the head. The shock given by this arrangement is not so strong as the other two, but is none the less unpleasant. The electric catfish is a slow, lazy fish, fond of gloomy places and grows to about 1 metre long; it is eaten by the Arabs in some areas. 35

The power of producing electricity may serve these fish both for defence

and attack. If a large enemy attacks, the shock will drive it away; but it appears that the catfish and the electric eel use their current most often against smaller fish, stunning them so that they can easily be overpowered. 40

2.2 Say whether the following statements are true or false according to the information given in the passage.

- 1 Some fish produce enough electricity to drive electric motors.
- 2 Electric rays are likely to be found in the Arctic Ocean.
- 3 The torpedo's electric cells are in its head.
- 4 Usually you will not get a shock by touching the electric ray in one place only.
- 5 Only adult electric rays can produce electricity.

2.3 Say whether or not the statement is similar in meaning to the sentence from the passage indicated by the line number in brackets.

- 1 It is hardly strange that this power has been acquired by different families of fish in different ways. (lines 3-5)
- 2 They possess behind the head, instead of eyes, a large hexagonal organ, rather like a honeycomb. (lines 7-9)
- 3 Current travels in a downward direction from the upper side of the organ, which is positive, to the lower, or negative side. (lines 12-13)
- 4 A newly born one can be trained to provide light from a pocket flashlight while its fully grown partner knocks their victim down. (lines 16-19)
- 5 ... in that fish, the torpedo, the electric plates run lengthways. (lines 22-23)

III. Writing (20 marks)

Why did you choose the faculty you would like to study in next year?



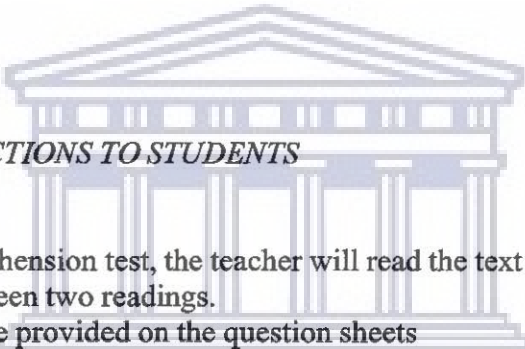
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**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF RWANDA
SCHOOL OF MODERN LANGUAGES (EPLM)
ACADEMIC YEAR 1999-2000
BUTARE**

NOVEMBER 22, 1999

ENGLISH TEST TO ENTER BACC I (ENTRANCE EXAMINATION)

NAME OF STUDENT:.....



INSTRUCTIONS TO STUDENTS

1. For the listening comprehension test, the teacher will read the text twice with a pause of 2 minutes between two readings.
2. Answer only in the space provided on the question sheets
3. Use overleaf for draft
4. The whole test will last two hours.

- | | |
|------|---------------------------------|
| I. | Listening comprehension...../20 |
| II. | Reading comprehension...../20 |
| III. | Writing...../20 |
| IV. | Speaking...../20 |

Total...../80

I. Listening comprehension (20marks)

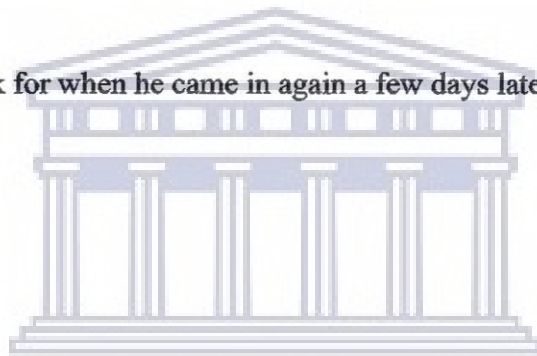
Listen to the passage and answer the following questions

1. How often did the man go to the “Uhuru Bar”?

2. a) What did the barman ask him one day?
(answer in direct speech)

b) What did the man answer him?
(answer in indirect speech)

3. How many glasses did he ask for when he came in again a few days later?



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TEXT : THE OLYMPIC GAMES

The Olympic Games have lost most of their ancient splendour. First of all, they have become highly competitive contests ; the athletes don't go there for the fun of the game, nor do most of the spectators. The participants go there to win, and the outcome of the games is a matter of national prestige. Analyse the newspaper reports and the television comments on the Olympics and you will be shocked by their war-like vocabulary. But the trouble is not merely confined to the games and the outcome of them: the misuse of the Olympics for political and social ends already starts with their organization. Where will they be held ? Which nations are going to participate and which ones will refuse to do so ? Which countries will be shut out ? And even when everything seems to be settled, there remains the threat of boycotts and incidents. We may well say that, apart from their competitive nature, the Olympics have become a direct expression of the hostility between various countries and races.

The ancient Greek games, as revived by Pierre de Coubertin (1896), were meant to be peaceful sporting events confined to amateurs. Sorry to say, the games are no longer meant for amateurs, as most competitors receive official subsidies to permit lengthy training. Moreover, most participants are coached and many of them use drugs to build up their tremendous strength.

Although negative aspects obscure the splendour of those time-honoured contests, we should go on admiring the true significance of the games, which are above all examples of self-discipline and fair-play. It's a delight to watch the peak performances of the medal-winners who break world-records. But the best thing about the games is the sight of able athletes who just try to perform well without worrying about the ultimate results. The Olympics set an example for the spectators to make the best out of themselves.

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Reading comprehension questions (20 marks)

1. How have the Olympic games declined in magnificence?

2. According to the text, what is hidden behind the mere competitiveness of the Olympics?

3. Why aren't the Olympic games nowadays played only for the love of them?

4. Tick the right answer

- 4.1.
 - a. Nobody has anything to learn from the games
 - b. The Olympics don't set any valuable standard
 - c. Olympic standards belong to the past
 - d. The Olympics call on us to make the best out of ourselves

- 4.2.
 - a. There is no fun in watching the game
 - b. Self-discipline and fair-play are the greatest value
 - c. World-records constitute the highest value of the game
 - d. It is the medals which make the Olympics into important games.



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III. Writing

Write a one page composition on the following topic:

Do you prefer living in the city or in the country? Why?



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Appendix C: Shortened interviews

Interview with English teacher 1(ET1)

A: Interviewer

ET1: Interviewee

A: Ok. Thank you. I am lucky because you also teach in EPLM, and I would like to ask some questions about EPLM.

ET1: Ok. You are welcome.

A: I think that the students that you teach have already completed EPLM?

ET1: Yes, they are mixed. This year it was special. We gave one exam and those who succeeded went immediately to the faculty. But most of them passed by EPLM.

A: Can you notice the difference between those who went straight to the faculty and those who passed by EPLM?

ET1: Coming back to what you are saying, what I realised is that when I was trying to teach these students, those who went to EPLM were impressing but by the end, all students were at the same level. There are even those who passed by EPLM who failed my courses. So, I think that EPLM, may be it is a tool of helping students but if someone has got excellent teachers at the secondary school, I can say that EPLM is not necessary.

A: So, for you EPLM is like a waste of time or is not useful at all?

ET1: Well, it helps, but if someone has so far got some tools, has got some background, it is useless for him, yes.

A: What is the reason of being of EPLM? Isn't it to help the students get used to the language of instruction since they have to follow their courses, or at least some of them through the medium of English?

ET1: Yes. They help but even the methodology, which is being used during the academic year and if you are teaching, there is a problem because they say they say that at the end of the month we will have a test. So we have to rush. And we rush, we do not emphasise on the matter. So, students learn in order to get marks but they do not learn in order to get knowledge. Yes, this is how things are. And then, somehow, there is this contradiction. There are students who failed last year, and even this year, they failed. So, they went back. So, I see EPLM can help a bit if we have enough time. But because of the circumstances, which are prevailing here, we have to rush, and at the end you ask a student: "what have you mastered?" They say, well, we studied in order to get marks, in order to succeed, but you know, they do not acquire the language.

A: So, from EPLM they do not get anything?

ET1: No, they get a bit. Those who are interested. You know, learning is interest. If you are interested in something, you learn it. But a large number of students who are at EPLM, they study in order to get marks and then we go. Yeah.

A: So, they study to get marks?

ET1: Yeah, and they go to the faculty.

A: And even, teachers rush to finish the programme. Even if students do not get anything like knowledge provided that you finish the program, that's all?

ET1: Yeah.

A: What is the students' attitude?

ET1: Yeah, they have a negative attitude towards EPLM. They say that they are just spending one year for nothing. And if I try to compare EPLM with Outreach language program because I taught Cambridge one, the English course one, during 60 hours, I only taught seven units but in EPLM, for two months, you teach one book or two. So, you rush. But those who are at outreach language teaching program, they go slowly and you can see how people/students are performing and they are interested in language learning because they are given material. The problem is, students rush in order to finish and go to their faculty, and teachers rush, so you get something from there, another thing from there and you combine, though they do not understand, you go on. You say, well, we have an exam next week and you have three units to cover, so I rush. And we do not stick on the listening skill because you know, if you go into details, students are bored. They do not want listening skills, I do not know why. This is the problem. Students, if you teach them listening skills, they have that kind of problem. They are always complaining because of various accents. I do not know but the problem is that if you teach them listening skills, they have that kind of problem.

A: So, the one year language course does not help? Does it?

ET1: It helps a bit for those who are interested. Yes, but for the other are not interested, and who are not giving to the faculty of arts, it is time consuming for them.

A: What kind of skills does it cover?

ET1: All the skills. We teach listening skills, Ok, we teach reading, writing and speaking skills but we do not focus on listening skills because students do not understand. They say well, we are confused. People are using the various kind of accent they do not understand. So, we have to use our own accent because we are used to it.

A: But, then, they should know that when they go in their faculties they will have to listen to different lecturers with different accents.

ET1: Yeah, that is the problem. Even those who are being taught by Indian lecturers. They have this kind of problem of accent. I think that we should teach listening. I

myself prefer teaching listening instead of reading, because reading you can read books but if you teach this course of phonology, you make students aware of the various accents that they are likely to meet during their life.

A: What is your overall attitude or impression about the course?

ET1: The course is very interesting because it has got materials to teach but when it comes to evaluation by the end of the year, I can see that students have got, let me say, 30% of what has been taught and 70% are left aside. And also the attitudes of teachers or lecturers, there is a program, which they have to follow and they have to rush and finish four books in one academic year. And if you are teaching for instance a student who is, who hasn't got any knowledge in English, and you teach those four books within a year, I think frankly speaking a student cannot try to cope with, but this is the situation, which is prevailing, we have to stick to the regulations by the academic regulations.

A: Do you think you need additional training or some of them need it?

ET1: Some of them need additional training and others need, you see, teaching a language you have to, we have various methodology of teaching language but we have to stick, because we are teaching students who will be evaluated at the end of the year, so, we have to use the same methodology. And what I am getting at is that there are those who are called co-ordinators, they are there but do not help a lot. And they do not even come and see how teachers are teaching. They say, we are going to have a seminar at the end of the year. Tying to make to make an evaluation. But they do not come and see, and give remarks to those teachers who do not follow the methodology set by the school. Yes.

A: All in all, the EPLM course and oral and written expression, nothing is linked to the content subject? What would you suggest so that our learners get prepared to cope with content subject offered through the medium of English? I think that general English is not enough.

ET1: Yes, it is not enough.

A: So, what would you suggest?

ET1: I would suggest a revision of the program. We are having a meeting with a department head, I thought that we are going to try to, because we are reshuffling everything.

A: Thank you.

ET1: You are welcome.

A: Any other comment?

ET1: No, No

A: Ok. Thank you.

Interview with English teacher 2 (ET2)

A: represents interviewer (Anne)

ET2: represents interviewee (English Teacher 2)

A: What skills does the language course cover?

ET2: What we cover as far as skills are concerned, ok, since the students we have, we teach them for academic purposes, to mean that almost all the skills have to be covered. Listening, ok, because the students now we have trained, they are the students who have to enter the faculties being able to follow their courses either in English or in French. So, they have to listen to the lecturer, that is listening; the student has to, after having understood, the student has to react. He/she may react by speaking. He may react by writing. So, to mean that speaking and writing have to be also covered to prepare our students to be able to react by speaking or writing. But we also have to cover some sub-skills such as grammar, vocabulary, but also very important but this one is not a sub-skill but a full skill in English and any other language teaching. We have to ...for example if you teach students, you give them a paper, as far as documentation is concerned, they have to read and understand in order to get information he/ she needs. So, we also reinforce reading through ...books they read, which do not have. So you see, we cover listening, speaking and reading. And I think you've looked at the tests we give. You've realised that for example the test is structured, the first part is listening, the second part is vocabulary and sometimes vocabulary and reading together depending on the form of the question, grammar and writing.

A: Do you cover all of them on equal footing or you emphasize some and you deal with others specifically?

ET2: Those four are covered equally and this is what we recommend through our department meetings.

A: What kind of methodology do you use?

ET2: Each one has his/her own way of teaching. It depends on the teacher, and all the teachers do not have the same language competence. Some of us have already taught for about ten years, for others it is their first year or second year of teaching, but through department meetings, we try to see how we could harmonize fundamental ways of teaching but it differs from one teacher to another but we take each skill and we discuss about how to approach it in teaching.

A: Are those teachers qualified as far as language teaching is concerned?

ET2: Most of them are qualified. They have done English department in different Universities here or from outside Universities but most of them have done English language.

A: What are the strengths and weaknesses of your course?

ET2: Ok, the weaknesses may be of the kind of for example the tapes which are recorded which go with the textbooks. Sometimes it is boring because you find some texts even some recordings reflect the realities of Europeans, not African realities. So, students are not motivated to listen to the recordings. This is the main problem we encounter but this course helps.

Coming back to the kind of methodology we try to use, what we recommend is to make our students participate more than we do as teachers. As far as language is concerned, the communicative way of teaching, the teacher does not stand in front of the class and speaks alone. No. he/she makes them participate.

A: This is what you recommend. Is it what is actually done?

ET2: This is what is done.

A: What about strengths of the course?

ET2: The course in general is progressive. The first and second book for beginners, the third is for intermediate and advanced levels. So, students can teach themselves using the practice books, which contain exercises and they can ask the teacher once they do not understand how to do exercises. It has also got a test book. But a course book is not enough. So we draw other material from outside to complete the course book.

A: Does this course really prepare students to cope with their content subjects once they start them?

ET2: Yes it does. If we go to different faculties and ask teachers if our students follow, they tell us that when they compare the students they had before this programme was implemented, there is a big difference. One, they follow their courses without any problem. The language is not an obstacle. Second, it also prepares to react. They speak, they do not fear. So, this course does not only prepare them to follow the course in either language, but also, it awakens them if I can say. They react and there is a kind of interaction between teacher and students because a whole year is enough to prepare students not to fear the University. So, once they enter the faculties, they are prepared.

A: What is your overall impression or attitude about the course?

ET2: The impression I have, one, students in general all Rwandese are in general eager to know English and in particular, our students. When they come, they like English but they say that they are going to do many years at University but when they finish EPLM, they say that this course is very helpful.

A: Any other comments?

ET2: My comment is, this course should be introduced and taught at primary and secondary schools. But this is not enough. There must be a kind of follow up.

A: You mean there is no follow up?

ET2: There is no follow up. Ok, may be here, may be in general but here I am concerned with English. English in primary and secondary school, there is no kind of follow up; and you know that the government has always advocated for this kind of policy: bilingualism as a government policy but there is no follow up. This is even why students come here from secondary school, they are supposed to be bilingual but it is not the reality. So, this is one of the problems. There are other problems such as qualified teachers and materials.

A: Thank you.

ET2: Don't mention it.

Interview with a lecturer in the Management Faculty (MGT1)

A: Interviewer

MGT1: Interviewee

A: I would like to know if your students have any language problem. How well do they cope with your subject?

MGT1 Yes, the students now are facing some problems. How Francophones are facing problems when they follow their courses in English? I would like to narrate my experience while teaching a group of Francophones in English. Normally, they are sure of what they want, say normally they do not find many difficulties but when they are following a lecture by the professor they come and very often they ask the professor to go slowly, not to teach so speedily. So, well, and also they want the pronunciation must be clear and they need some more explanation to the technical terms.

A: Are francophone students studying through the medium of English able to ask questions clearly or they don't ask questions because they do not know how to ask them?

MGT1: They are able to answer the questions but we cannot put all of them in the same pattern. Some of them have an advanced English, some of them have not developed it. Those who know better, they are able to put the questions and even others who do not know the complete or better English, they try. But of course, there are difficulties in the initial stages, so, I used to give them the chance to say, to interrupt me in the middle of the hour. Normally, I do not reserve any time for questioning. They can ask me questions at any time. At the end, there is a small discussion of what I taught in the particular session and then I open the house for the discussion but even in the middle they can ask questions.

A: How well do they participate? Are they active or the teacher is talking alone?

MGT1: They are very good.

A: If you teach for 60 min., is 40 min. for student's talk or the teacher talks more than students.

MGT1: You know, here one of the problems professors are facing is that of, say, exactly we do not divide the time like that. It depends on the particular course and the objectives and methodology that we adopt. Say, if it is in case of a content course like accounting or principles of management, the teacher's role will be to introduce the concept or a theoretical aspect followed by intensive content work. Ok? So, then the role of the students will be more in their participation and discussion. Whereas on the other hand if you go to theoretical courses like management and say, organisational behaviour, the teacher has to take the measure portion of the time followed by the discussion and when you change the lecture type to participatory techniques like case study, etc and when you talk about those techniques other than the lecture type, the student's capacity is required and they have to prepare well in advance for which they need more library time and library space and books and journals availability. Some of these are the constraints for us, so we are unable to advance in those areas and in senior classes we are using those techniques where the number of students is less compared to the "tronc commun". In tronc commun, the class contain more than 200 students. So, the current tronc commun that I teach contains 234 students, so I can't use those techniques.

A: When they answer to you questions for example in the exam, do you notice that they are able to write coherent English? Can they follow any argument or any line of reasoning?

MGT1: They are able to follow and say, most of students are able to give the relevant answer to the question. And more logically, I do not find many problems. Say, in accounting programs, I found that one girl with a French background did well and also other two fellows, two boys were also Francophones. They do not find many difficulties in the language. In my class, Francophones are in the leading position.

A: So you do not need to give them any language support?

MGT1: For francophone students? No. for example you see, what kind of support can we give them? Here there is a system of EPLM, they are studying the language for the whole year, and later, they are studying the content, the class itself is a learning place. But even after the teaching hours, I found most of them sitting in the classroom making groups and studying. Here, the personal support is more important than the external support. So I found that once the student is having the desire to learn, that will contribute much to the learning of language.

A: So, according to you, they do not need any language support?

MGT1: I do not say for everybody. But in a class of 240 students, we can't see everybody at the same level of knowledge and understanding and capabilities. Some of the students are still lagging behind. For example, even in my class, I have many students who are still lagging behind and who are not coming and mainly, I attribute it to lack of initiative. If they take initiative and try to make a plan of improvement, and I hope they can do it, but most of them lag behind because of lack of initiative. I believe that group discussions and teaching themselves if they do like it, they can

improve. I believe definitely that first years have some problems because it is their first year after EPLM. This means their second year of learning the other language. But here, the students are hard working. They can double their efforts and definitely they can manage. But obviously, if someone is holding a discontentment or a negative attitude towards the language, he/she cannot lean it and if he/she comes up with a positive attitude, they should take it as an advantage. The government is providing them the opportunity to learn languages, they should not deny that it is an advantage. But even after the one year, all say that they have not yet fully developed their grammar and sentence construction, paragraph writing, essay writing, etc. still, some of them are complaining.

A: Thank you very much.

Interview with a lecturer in the Management Faculty

A: Interviewer

MGT2: Interviewee

A: I am working on EAP or language support for francophone students who are following their subjects through the medium of English. Can you tell me if they meet any problem in your course?

MGT2: I think your research is very important, that is to say, the University claims to be producing bilingual University graduates, I think they will end up with people who are not really bilingual and in fact I think that some of the students are making it through courses by memorising rather than by understanding, and you can see it easily. If you ask them a question that requires that they transform the question, sometimes they can't do it at all because it is not the kind of question they memorised. They do not understand, they just memorise. If you ask them a question, which requires their own thinking, or where they have to express their ideas in their own words, they can't say anything. They just memorise what the lecturer gives to them and give it back to him in exams or any kind of evaluation. Because they do not understand well what the lecturer says during the class time, and many do not even attend, they self-explain during study time. Sometimes, you find that they have the same mistakes and this is obvious because the one who explains the others pass on his poor understanding to others. Same with their notes. They have got the habit of copying notes from "regular" students. So if these ones happen to take erroneous notes, all the others are going to copy the same errors and in the exam, you find that everybody is writing the same mistakes and you wonder why. So, the reason is that they copy each other's mistakes and they memorise the notes as such.

A: Do you mean that they do not understand lectures?

MGT2: Students do not understand lectures at all. It is a shame to say that the University students do not know how to write and read, but it is unfortunately the case. For example, as I said before, if you ask them a question for which they are not prepared, they have not prepared before, they do not answer appropriately.

Sometimes, they do not even understand the questions. However it is not a homogenous group. Some francophones have a good command of English, and some others have not. Same to Anglophones. People just assume that francophones know French and Anglophones know English, which is not true at all.

A: Can they at least participate in the classroom? I mean, are they active? Do they ask questions during the lecture and answer when the teacher asks a question or they just take what the teacher says as such?

MGT2: With francophones, it is one way communication. They just take what the lecturer says, no discussion, or challenge. Sometimes, the lecturer asks a question and a student gives an answer and the lecturer says right, and you find that others are asking what was right. They note the answer. They do not really like the discussion

A: Are they able to take their own notes?

MGT2: Some of them can't take notes like when the lecturer explains. Sometimes, the lecturer has to walk around to see if they are taking notes. This might even be the reason why they produce the same mistakes during exam.

A: Do you provide any language support to your students?

MGT2: First years are large classes, more than two hundred students. It is not easy to help them. Lecturers do not ask thinking questions. They are supposed to give three types of evaluation but most of them just give one. And students do not get any feedback since they do not get back their papers. The essay type or discussion type of questions are left aside because classes are large. So, students do not get opportunities for improvement.

A: How does the English course prepare them to cope with their subjects then?

MGT2: The course is not enough. Students still have problems. For example they cannot use authors' ideas, they can not write a correct bibliography. I think they need some more language support.

A: What else would you suggest?

MGT2: Lecturers should also encourage group work and discussion questions in order to allow students to express themselves.

A: Any other comment?

MGT2: I think that the problem will end when students who are in secondary schools now start the University. That is all I can say.

A: Thank you very much

MGT2: it is a pleasure.

Interview with students in the Management Faculty.

A: Interviewer

S: Interviewee

A: Hello everybody. I would like to ask you some questions about your last year English course. Feel free to express yourselves, I need your views only for academic purposes. You can use the language you like.

A: Now, how did the English language course prepare you to cope with your content subjects?

G1:

S1: It was not helpful, because we were not taught things related to our field of study, I can say that it did not help us at all.

S3: For me, I can say that it helped me a bit.

A: How did it help you a bit?

S3: For example, we were taught how to take notes.

A: Ok. Any other idea?

G2:

S1: First of all, I was taught some of technical words that I often meet in classes given in English. I do not encounter many problems in writing as I thought I would do.

S2: My English language course have not been so important to me, because about all of what we studied, I had already seen it in secondary school. It should be better to improve the content.

S1: In general, the knowledge got from the first year is not enough so that someone can follow easily the courses in the following studies, I mean in faculties. We are taught the communication language from the uncomfortable listening materials, we are not taught in the same way from our teachers.

A: What do you mean?

S1: I thinkthey do not like teaching or incompetency.

A: Do you meet any difficulties when you follow lectures in English? Tell me, what difficulties do you meet while following a lecture in English?

S3: We are....new highly technical concepts unknown to us make our understanding of a given lecture in English a bit difficult.

S5: We have problems with technical terms. But also the diversity of teachers' pronunciation is somewhat disturbing.

S6: I have problems to catch what the teacher says. Sometimes, I do not hear some words or a whole sentence because the teacher is fast, or he has a strange accent.

S4: when I follow a lecture in English, it takes me along time to be familiar with the pronunciation of the new teacher.

S7: There are difficulties of listening. Because we do not have enough vocabulary, it is not easy for us to follow a lecture in English. Also, the intonation is not the same.

S1: some of the expressions are not well caught at the same time. Always, we are translating from our mother tongue. As we are in reform system, all students cannot listen in the big rooms of three hundred students.

S8: The difficulties I meet are about pronunciation of lecturers because I do not hear what they say. New technical words cause problems too.

G1:

S3: When I am following a lecture in English, I am not able to answer to comprehension questions. I can't express myself in the class in English. I know what to say, I can say it in kinyarwanda, or French but many difficulties are there for me to express it in English.

S4: As he was saying, we can't really express ourselves in English correctly. So, we do not speak in class though we might wish to answer or ask some questions. We really fear to speak.

S5: new words are very difficult for us because when we do not know the meaning of some words, it is difficult for us to follow a lecture. So, difficulties occur when meeting new words. Another problem that we meet is about pronunciation of teachers. Some teachers have an accent, which is a bit complicated.

S4: Since I am not a native English speaker, I encounter problems such as technical words, which are often relative to the course and whenever he speaks quickly, and his expression that I realise of him, I mean his being authoritative or strict. This is a big problem because it makes me fear.

S5: the difficulties I meet concern especially the listening. Because the English language has got so many accents and various difficult pronunciations depending on the speaker, I do not listen to different lecturers well. Listening to them is a big problem for me.

S6: My problem concerns speaking. If a teacher asks a question and he asks me to answer, I can't express myself. I do not have the words to say my answer and I am afraid to make mistakes, because I do not speak English very often.

S1: In fact, we fear to speak in the classroom because English is not the language we speak everyday. Even in the English class, we are not encouraged to speak. So, we only take notes, and often we do not take them correctly, because the teacher is fast in dictating or we do not understand his accent or new technical words. Really, in some lectures, we have problems about listening and expressing ourselves in English.

A: What should be supplemented to you in terms of English language and skills?

G2:

S7: For many students, we have problems in listening. We don't have the listening skills. I think that it should be better to find occasions where we can improve our listening skills.

S8: If we can get material to exercise our listening skills, for example, materials like books, tapes and so on. Perhaps in case of listening to many speakers, this can help us to listen to our teachers.

S9: Our faculty should organise some English practice course where we can speak and express ourselves without complex. This will help us in terms of getting fluency in English. It should also put us in touch with other university students who are native English speakers, because if we have to speak English everyday and everywhere, we will not fear to speak it in the classroom. Our faculty should organise some competitions in English.

G1:

S7: Teaching methodologies should be revised. Perhaps we would enjoy it and gain more. That is when English lesson would help us.

S9: speaking should be given priority of course reading and other skills should not be left aside, but more emphasis should be put on speaking because until now, we do not feel free to express ourselves in English.

S2: The preparation of the English course should be done each year and it should take into account the student's field of study.

S10: We find that technical words are not enough. If the English language can deal about a lot of technical words relevant to the department that is being followed, it would be helpful.

S1: Speaking remains a big problem for me. I suggest that more opportunities to speak English should be created, for example, organisation of students' debates, competitions, etc.

A: What else would you suggest your English class to deal with so that it helps you to cope with your content subjects?

G2:

S10: It should deal with more technical terms, speaking and other skills. Programs should be revised each year.

S2: First, the class should contain the students who will deal with the same faculty. After this, then make up an appropriate programme related to the our faculties and this must be done in the proportion of 50% and the 50% remaining be concentrated on communication and other language skills. If in the faculty there are many foreign teachers, bring them to teach sometimes, so that the students are familiar with them, because it has been seen that the English intonation is different.

S8: To increase the period of learning English course in order to deal with the Listening section, grammar section or speaking, learning new words, I mean technical terms.

S5: I suggest that English class should deal with technical terms encountered in the content subjects. In this regard, each department, even each option should organise its specific program to be covered in English course.

S6: Making available technical dictionaries would be helpful. We would get technical words that we meet in content subjects from dictionaries.

G1:

S10: I would to propose an organised competition in a determined course and winners could be given benefits or prizes which could motivate people to learn more English relevant to their courses.

S4: It would be better to consider that we are not used to English language. Then, it would be better to give us sufficient time to express ourselves. But also, the lecturers should try to speak standard English language, I mean British or American. This is because sometimes we ask ourselves if really our lecturers speak English or other languages. You know, because....., I don't know if it is because English has many accents or if it is because we are not very familiar with English language, but I say, and I think I am not the only one, there are some teachers who come in and when they start to talk, we do not hear them, we do not know if they are speaking English or if it is another language. So, they should try to speak standard English. We get something when the teacher speaks well.

S9: When they elaborate English language teaching programs, speaking and grammar should be given a lot of time. Listening also should be given much time because normally, when we follow our lessons, we do not get many things. We can't even answer questions or ask questions because most of the time, we do not understand. But at night, during our study times, some of our classmates who understand better have to go through the course again in kinyarwanda or French. They explain to others and we get the content of the lesson. So, why don't we get it when the teacher is teaching? Because we don't listen to him well, we do not hear what he says. So, if the language course can put more emphasis on listening, with enough listening material, it would be helpful.

S4: Authorities should look for competent teachers, I mean teachers who have methodologies in teaching languages, because starting from when we started the bilingualism system, we find that we have handicaps or problems in both languages ie English and French.

S7: They should organise meetings with native speakers or send us in English speaking countries. In that case, we would gain more and be able to follow our lecturers. Because if we listen to many people who speak different accents, we will be able to hear what our teachers say in their accent.

G3

A: How well does your English course prepare you to cope with your subjects?

S1: Most of the time, we have Indian lecturers and their pronunciation is not easy to us. Mostly, we have to resort to memorisation even if we do not understand some words in order to be able to succeed in the exam.

S2: I would say that the one year language course we get in EPLM is a bit helpful. It should continue since our problems in English do not end by first year. They should continue to help us in English until when we feel that our command of English is in equilibrium of our command in French. For example, in the management, (SESG) faculty, many subjects are offered through the medium of English. So, the English we learn in EPLM is not really enough to enable us to follow all those courses in English. The English we learn in EPLM doesn't even have anything to do with management.

S3: I would like to add something on what my friend has just said. You see, some teachers who teach that course are not technicians. So, if someone is not a technician in something, for example, someone who has studied mathematics in Uganda or South Africa (an Anglophone country), who says that he/she can teach English only because he/she speaks it, that it is easy to teach it. You see, the way this person teaches, the methodology he/she uses so that the student gains something, it is not easy. Of course he knows English, he can speak it, but the techniques he uses, the methodology he uses so that the student understands is not easy or appropriate. So, all these factors render the course somehow less useful. People who speak English because it is the language they use in their country are not necessarily qualified to teach it. If the teacher is qualified in terms of English language teaching and good methodology, students gain a lot from the English course. For example, if he gives practical works so that students are given opportunities to go to speak in front of others, students work hard, and when the teacher helps them, they gain a lot.

S4: There are other teachers who are able to teach nicely, but who are only interested in the marks. For example, a teacher enters the classroom and closes the door so that the others who come late do not get in the class. Then, in order to penalise them, he gives a test or another activity that he will mark so that the ones who were late get zero. So, you see if he does like that, you do not learn anything in that session. Sometimes, or most of the time, we do not even correct or discuss the answers of the test or the activity. The teacher wants the students to fail. He also wants to finish his course load. Whether students gain something or not, it is not his business.

A: If you deal with topics for discussion or speeches, what kind of topics do you deal with.

S5: He gives a lot of topics so that each student gets a topic and goes in front to speak about a given time.

A: What kind of topic is it? Is it related to management or it is just any kind of topic?

S5: It is any kind of topic. And in these general topics, students can sometimes talk. It is like when we read novels. You can read novels or talk with someone in English without problem but when it comes to following a lecture, or like when people are presenting or giving a conference in the specified language, we are

completely lost. Perhaps not all of us, but many of us do not understand when it comes to the specialised English of the field of study. It is not only in the management faculty, but even others. Take for example those who are doing geography. Many of them do not understand English used to forecast the weather. Yet, they are supposed to know the matter. Even those in science. They have their scientific language which is complicated and sometimes prevents them from understanding the subject matter though they might be able to communicate in everyday life situation. So, I think that if the teacher could give topics related to management, we could be able to talk as much as we do in normal topics.

S1: This is almost what I was saying before. Those Indian lecturers come, we do not understand their pronunciation and even the language is complicated. So, since we do not understand, we just look for notes. We take the notes, and though we do not understand them, we memorise. Sometimes, if there is someone who understand, he can explain to the others during study time. But if the time is not enough, we have to memorise the notes quickly so that we get what to write in the exam.

A: How do you manage to answer to the exam questions using the notes that you do not understand? Do you at least understand the exam questions?

S6: Answering is not a problem. Most of the time, the question is clear and short.

A: does your English course in EPLM become helpful then?

Yes, the EPLM course helps a bit. (in choral).

S7: Going back to how the language course prepares us to follow our courses in the faculty, I can give you an example. The word goodwill as a general term does not mean the same as goodwill in economic situation. For example a shop, which is nearer to the market gets many clients than the one, which is in an unpopulated area. The shop nearer to the market sells better than the other one. This is where the economic term goodwill can be applied, and it does not mean what it means in general terms. The course at EPLM does not prepare us with the vocabulary we need in the faculty.

S7: For example the students who are in third year accounting. There are some accounting courses they have in English (courses which are offered through the medium of English). But because they lack the kind of English required in order to understand those subjects, they fail those courses. Most of the time they fail not because they do not understand the subject matter, but because of language problems. Once it is offered through the medium of English, they do not understand. Now, everybody is discouraged because of the language problem only. The teacher comes and he assumes that you know the language. So, he starts his teachings. And the way they teach here, a teacher can't explain a difficult word. For instance goodwill" he can't tell you that it has two meanings; that in one context it has such a meaning and in other context, it has such other meaning. No! here they just rush. They suppose that we know everything. They can't prepare a lesson and remember to mention some of the key words, which are complicated. They do not help us with terminology though it is our biggest problem. They only rush. At least, if the English courses were dealing with specialised vocabulary; even if we memorise them. If we have enough technical terms related to management, we would not have many problems.

A: Yes, I understand that technical words cause problems and are not dealt with in your English course. What about writing, listening, and other skills?

S8: We do not have problems because we do not take our own notes. The teacher dictates to us. Of course sometimes we leave blank spaces but you check from your neighbour and you complete. We do not get many difficulties to take notes. Sometimes, the teacher can make notes for us.

A: How do you participate in the class? How often do you speak?

S9: If I take into account the prevailing system, sometimes a teacher does not want students to use his time to ask questions. He wants to rush. There are even some lecturers who come in, they do not even greet you, they dictate until it is time to leave. They do not even ask whether you understand or whether you have problems.

A: Do you ask questions?

S10: It is not easy to ask questions. We do not feel free to express ourselves. Our expression does not come easily. Even when a lecturer asks a question, we know the answer but it takes time to make the sentence in order to give the answer to the question.

S2: All that is due to lack of standardised programme. The programme should take into account the field of study of students. Therefore, programmes should be different according to whether students are doing management, science, law, etc. may be in that case it would help us; and may be we would talk during other subjects because we would get tools. Why are we talking Kinyarwanda now? Because we cannot express ourselves adequately in English. We do not feel free to express ourselves in English.

A: Do you get language support from your content subjects lecturers?

S10: No, they do not. They just come, they teach, that is all.

A: What would you like the language course to deal with in order to help you cope with content subjects?

S1: The biggest problem is that we do not understand the specialised vocabulary. So, if the English course could provide us with technical terms of our faculty, it would be very helpful for us. Even if the teacher could give some terms, the students could add up some more terms.

S2: The programme should be adapted according to the faculty of the students, and topics should be relevant to our field of study and it should deal with many accents that our lecturers use.

S3: The programme must be elaborated depending on the faculty and teachers would have to follow the programme.

A: thanks a lot.