



Influence of joining English Conversation Club on Students' Speaking Ability in Rwanda Public Secondary Schools: A Case of Kabutare Secondary School, Huye District

Ally Majaliwa¹, Nadege Kwizera², Ernest Mateso³, Jacques Twahirwa⁴ & Patrick Ujwiga Anguru⁵

^{1,2,3,4}Rwanda Polytechnic (Huye College)

⁵College of Education, University of Rwanda

Email: majaliwaally@gmail.com

Abstract: In Rwanda's public schools, speaking English as a foreign language has always been a topic of debate due to the dominant national language, Kinyarwanda, the mother tongue of Rwandans which they find easy to use in every communication with interlocutors. This research paper aimed to investigate the impact of joining the English Conversation Club on students' speaking abilities in public secondary schools in Huye District. Specifically, the study's objective was to examine the relationship between joining the English Club and speaking abilities of students in Kabutare secondary school. A sample size of 125 participants, including students and teachers, were involved in the study. Besides, a questionnaire and interview guided this study in the collection of reliable data. Thereof, data screening was performed by applying descriptive statistics of means, standard deviation, and regression analysis. Thus, the results show that, there is a strong correlation between joining the English Club and students' speaking abilities in secondary schools of Huye District, with the correlation coefficient (r) of 0.868 and the p -value standing at 0.001. Furthermore, multiple linear regression analysis reveals that joining the English Club contributes to 67.9% of the variation of performance in speaking English, indicating a significant role in enhancing students' speaking abilities. Therefore, using techniques such as debate and public speaking exercises to promote oral skills should be used to encourage positive attitudes towards speaking English. Therefore, these techniques can benefit students with many job opportunities outside the school environment. Teachers of English language should consider implementing such techniques to motivate students and improve their speaking abilities.

Keywords: Joining English Club, Relationship, Students, Interlocutors, Speaking ability, Debate, public speaking, impact, attitudes, school environment, job opportunities, English Conversation and Huye District

How to cite this work (APA):

Majaliwa, A., Kwizera, N., Mateso, E., Twahirwa, J. & Ujwiga, P. (2024). Influence of joining English Conversation Club on Students' Speaking Ability in Rwanda Public Secondary Schools: A case of Kabutare Secondary School, Huye District. *Journal of Research Innovation and Implications in Education*, 8(2), 53 – 65. <https://doi.org/10.59765/vfrw3598unri>.

1. Introduction

Speaking is a crucial language skill that students must master. To speak effectively, it is paramount for speakers to know what they will talk about, that is the topic of the

conversation. Thornbury (2007) argued that the knowledge speakers bring to speaking forum includes both extra-linguistic and linguistic knowledge. Such knowledge is seen in cultural and background knowledge of the topic, as linguistic knowledge includes grammar, vocabulary, phonology, discourse knowledge, and speech act

knowledge. Speaking serves various functions, such as expressing opinions and feelings, asking for something, conveying knowledge or information directly, and the like that promotes speaking skills. The ability to master speaking is an indication of how well a student has learned the language they are studying (Nawshin, 2009). Indeed, this is the evidence that students can express what they have learned in other subjects in the language they are taught.

To help students develop efficient communication in speaking, some activities are used in the classroom to promote the development of speaking ability. Freeman (2017) emphasized that, these activities can increase students' speaking ability such as discussion, speech, role play and conversation. Discussion is the most commonly used strategy to promote speaking skills in classroom activity. Obviously, discussion makes the teacher activate and involve students in speaking. Thus, teachers can encourage students to experiment and innovate with the language they are learning and create a supportive atmosphere. This allows them to make mistakes without fear of embarrassment. This forum contributes to their self-confidence as speakers and to their motivation to learn more as (Harmer, 1970) equally elaborates on it.

One recent trend in oral skills pedagogy is to build the capacity of students in their analysis and evaluation of the language they produce, or the language others produce. In other words, it is not adequate to have students produce lots of language skills. Rather, they must become more than metalinguistic allies who are conscious of many features of the language they use to become competent speakers and interlocutors in English as (Brown, 2003) supported it. One speaking activity which is particularly suited to this kind of analysis is conversation, the most fundamental form of oral communication. According to Torky (2016), speaking skills are different from the other three (listening, reading and writing) because, speaking is the most basic means of human communication and this skill needs more practice to master it. Students who have good speaking ability may have a greater chance to further their education to gain many benefits such as employment, promotion, training and the like that develop career opportunities. Moreover, speaking English will make students get up-to-date information in all fields such as politics, economics, society, entertainment, and education in this world where English has become an international and global language of today's businesses. Thus, improving English speaking ability requires either practising it individually or in a group. The English extracurricular program is an example of practising English in groups to improve the speak ability of users. This way, students can practice speaking English together intentionally to improve their English-speaking ability (Melviza, 2017).

Rwanda is one of the few countries in the world where the whole population virtually speaks the same indigenous language: more than 99% speak Kinyarwanda (Gömleksiz, 2014). This makes this country a practically homogeneous linguistic community. However, English, French and Kiswahili are foreign languages which are the official languages in addition to Kinyarwanda (Kagwesage, 2012). Indeed, English and French are taught as compulsory school subjects. In contrast, Kiswahili is taught as an elective subject except for learners who are taking languages as major subjects in high school. In 2008, English became the official language as the medium of instruction in all Rwanda schools from the third grade of primary school, replacing French that used to be the main medium of instruction (Eysette, 2022). Still, in 2008 only 4% of the population spoke English, which significantly increased to 38% in 2018 due to effective development of the Government of Rwanda language policy (English Proficiency Index, 2015.). However, there is still a significant number of teachers, with little to no credible English proficiency. This leaves students ill-prepared for a possible secondary or tertiary education where English proficiency is considered a must (UNICEF, 2020). For these reasons, this paper sought to find the best way to apply this language policy through the promotion of English conversation club.

1.1 Problem Statement

Nowadays English is an invaluable language to any cosmopolitan. Mastering English means being proficient in the four language skills, namely: Listening, Speaking, Reading and writing, which cannot be separated from one another considering that, the development of one skill will contribute to the development of the other skills. This proficiency development of the four skills is integrated, that is all skills are performed interchangeably. This implies that, speaking feeds on listening, and writing feeds on reading and speaking. However, some people think that speaking is the most difficult one. For sure, speaking makes one communicate with one another. When someone feels confused with something, they can directly ask their interlocutor what the matter they mean is about. This why, Svinicki (2011) stated that, speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information. This process is often spontaneous, open-ended, and evolving, but it is not completely unpredictable. In addition, when speaking activity takes place, a speaker expects a listener to understand well what they are talking about. One can practice English with their friends and similarly join an English-Speaking Club. English Speaking Club may be the means to solve speaking problems in English. It is a place where affective filters operate to make learn English through the practice of many activities. The teacher can

initiate debates, games, speeches, poems, songs, personal arguments, to motivate speaking skills. English Speaking Club will connect participants with one another. In this English-Speaking Club, members can practice English more easily, and enjoyably without shame, apprehension and nervousness because, members are roommates or classmates. By joining English-Speaking Club, students can share knowledge, information or ideas with others as (Laviette, 2012) strongly highlighted it.

In October 2008, the Government of Rwanda made an unprecedented decision announcement declaring that, French, the then lingua franca and medium of instruction (MOI) that had been used for over 60 years, would be dropped from national policy, and English would take over as the primary form of official communication in the country. Thus, a Cabinet meeting report of October 8, 2008, requested “the Minister of Education to implement an urgent program to teach using English as medium of instruction in all primary schools, secondary schools and in all public institutions of higher learning and those subsidized by the Government (Uwambayinema, 2013).

Before this change, English had been one of the three national languages identified by the government (along with French and Kinyarwanda, the native language of Rwandans). However, it was only spoken by a minority. The implementation of this policy was swift, and without warning (Samuelson & Freedman, 2010). Thus, the effects of the policy shift encompassed the entire country, and for the Education sector, these effects were readily apparent. In secondary schools, students were suddenly navigating a language with which they had never had any prior experience. Moreover, teachers were required not only to learn this foreign language, but; also, how to effectively teach subject-specific content in this language, with minimal training and resources. The benefits of adopting English as the Medium of Instruction were heralded widely across the country, and seemingly the population comprehended this move without fail (Du, 2009). However, the reality of this linguistic situation was extremely difficult for teachers to cope with a large part of the inflicted burden. This was because of their unpreparedness to shift from French to English as today’s medium of instruction with all the drawbacks of stammering while teaching subjects in English. It is against that background that this paper attempted to examine the influence of joining an English conversation club on students’ speaking ability in public secondary schools of Rwanda with a case study of Kabutare secondary school in Huye District. This paper sought to close the hole in the failure to speak English via conversation club in English.

1.2 Research Hypotheses

This study sought to achieve the following research hypothesis:

H₀: There is no influence of joining the English Club on students’ speaking ability in Kabutare secondary school in Huye District.

2. Literature Review

This section reviewed different considerations of previous researchers that are linked to the present study.

2.1 English Club

An English club is a place for ESL language learners to use English beyond the ESL classroom and in real-life situations. In the English club, students have a chance to use different skills and discuss a variety of topics. English Club not only allows students to learn and discuss a variety of topics in their learning process, but also the most important is learning based on their environment, where they learn English by travelling anywhere as (Malu and Smedley, 2015) put it.

English Club is a travelling learning in accord with Musty (2013) who argued that, mastering a foreign language often involves overseas travel, which can be lengthy and expensive, disrupt schedules, and lead to unfamiliar and sometimes uncomfortable surroundings. Indeed, there are many reasons for creating an English club (Malu and Smedley, 2015). For students who lack interaction and motivation in the classroom, either because they are introverted or shy, extroverted or talkative or have a low language level, the English club might be a good solution to involve them with their friends in doing various activities and to make beginner students active. The good thing about creating an English club is that it gives students a chance to study English with fun and it is a place for students to improve their English-speaking skills (Gömleksiz, 2014).

They also watch documentaries and films, listen to songs, and engage in discussions with their teacher; they can play games and sports to change the atmosphere and practice the language in funny ways. English club paves the way for students to build up their personality, discover, understand, become themselves, and develop their cultural competencies. It makes them aware of the national and international issues and events. Consequently, they become useful for themselves and their community to develop their sense of citizenship and belonging as (Kenworthy, 1981) emphasized it. Indeed, this is a salient advantage of being together to share ideas and culture. However, this can only

work if people can join a discussion forum, a club which is a breeding ground for speaking and learning from one another as members of the same group.

Brown (2004) stated that affective factors cause students to have mental blocks in English. To make students avoid these mental barriers, students may be invited to engage in fun and communicative club activities. At the English club, students can develop an awareness of English for communication, class instructions, and basic vocabulary. English club is multigenerational and multicultural in that it tends to create more fun during club activities. Compared with traditional classes that focus on paper and pencil assignments, English club is a stress-free alternative. It is an English class that takes communicative values into account (Yulindasari, 2019) because it promotes speaking skills, and there is no examination to intimidate slow performers of the club. Everyone feels comfortable as a family of friends and relatives who share the same goals for their ultimate development.

2.2 Speaking Ability

Speaking is part of everyday life where interactions or communication with other people using the same language to convey emotions, thoughts, and feelings meet. Brown (2004) stated that, speaking is an interaction process that involves the production, reception, and processing of information. Whereas, Krashen (2011) reinforced that, speaking is an oral skill that a person uses to express and convey information accurately using good vocabulary and the right language, according to context, and interacting with other speakers fluently. Speaking is not only an individual pronunciation process, speaking includes many aspects because speaking is a complex cognitive skill. Where the speaker issues a set of meaningful words with body language so that the listener can understand thoughts explicitly or implicitly (Lewis and Hill, 1993). On the other hand, Laviolette (2012) raised an issue that, there are several problems with speaking, where students usually tend to explore ideas and explain them to others. Speaking is the most difficult skill after writing and is the most important skill because it is the basis for verbal communication. The mother tongue, age, experience of learning English, phonetic ability, attitude, and motivation are some factors that affect speaking ability. In addition, more practice is required to make it easier for the learner to speak English (Khamkhien, 2010). Thus, without practice it is categorically impossible to develop speaking skills because practice makes perfect. This skills development can only transit through a speaking club.

The ability to speak will work out of habit, although there may still be some common mistakes. Indeed, phonetic abilities also support speaking skills, where students have

better hearing which has an impact on the success of their speaking skills. Nunan (2001) stated that, speaking is a systematic verbal skill to convey meaning, whereas; Brown (2004) avowed that, oral skills produce meaningful words to the listener who can understand and respond with positive feedback. Thus, good interactions are formed in daily activities with thoughts, opinions, and feelings. Malikha (2012) elaborated that, self-confidence significantly contributes to the willingness of students to learn foreign languages. This means that, to communicate in English with English-speaking people students should be confident. Confidence is important because it will affect the smoothness and success of communication when performing a speech act, that is an utterance in terms of the speaker's intention and the effect it has on a listener. Specifically, it is the action that the speaker hopes to provoke in their audience, the interlocutor. Speech acts are performed when the speaker offers an apology, greeting, request, complaint, invitation, compliment or refusal. Performance reveals someone's ability to speak, and listeners can judge their competition. When students succeed in explaining sentences directly, their language competence will be explored. Therefore, speaking is an oral skill that is used to express something, the meaning of which is conveyed accurately using sufficient vocabulary and in an adequate context. Also speaking is an important and most difficult basic skill after writing skills. However, speaking is an important skill that must be mastered because this skill is used in daily activities. For this reason, through speaking students can communicate and share information, ideas, knowledge, and feelings.

2.1.1 Aspect of speaking abilities

Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information (Freeman, 2017). This implies communication that exists between the sender of the message, that is, the speaker and the receiver of the message, the listener; to establish full mutual feedback to credit authentic communication between the sender and the receiver of the message, thus; engage interlocutors into fair exchange on the conversation topic. Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including participants themselves, their collective experiences, their physical environment, and the purposes for speaking. This is often done spontaneously, open-ended, and evolving. However, speech is not always unpredictable. Language functions (or patterns) that tend to recur in certain discourse situations (e.g., declining an invitation or requesting time off from work), can be identified and charted (Malu & Smedley, 2017). There are many various aspects of speaking skills. Brown (2004) proposed four aspects of speaking skills, namely: fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and vocabulary.

Pronunciation: it is the way for students to produce clearer language when they are speaking. It means that students can communicate effectively when they have good pronunciation and intonation, though they have limited vocabulary and grammar. Pronunciation refers to the traditional or customary utterance of words. Therefore, pronunciation makes students produce the utterance of words clearly when they are speaking (Kline, 2001). However, English language pronunciation does not amount to the mastery of a list of sounds or isolated words. Instead, it amounts to learning and practising, specifically the English way of making a speaker's thoughts easy to follow (Lightbown & Spada, 2001).

Grammar: It is needed for students to arrange correct sentences in conversation both in written and oral forms. Grammar is defined as a systematic way of accounting for and predicting an ideal speaker's or hearer's knowledge of the language. This is done by a set of rules or principles that can be used to generate all well-formed or grammatical utterances in the language (Harmer, 1970). Moreover, Greenbaum and Pearson (2014) argued that Grammar refers to the set of rules that combine words in our language into a larger unit. That said, grammar is the description of what people speak out.

Vocabulary: This is essential for successful second language use because, without an extensive vocabulary, it is impossible to use the structure and function that have been learned for comprehensible communication. One key to success in communication is the power of words. Vocabulary means the appropriate diction and most important thing a language can describe, especially in speaking. Furthermore, knowing many words will make it easy to express ideas, feelings, and thoughts both in oral or written form. In speaking, vocabulary is extended every day (Hermerka, 2009). This implies that in speaking the vocabulary used must make the understanding of discourse clear. Vocabulary is a basic building block of language learning. Students need to know words, their meanings, how they are spelt, and how they are pronounced. Thus, when learning vocabulary, teachers have to ensure that they explain the meaning of spelling and pronunciation as well (Heugh, 2013).

Fluency: It is defined as the ability to speak communicatively, fluently, and accurately. Fluency usually refers to expressing oral language freely without interruption. In the teaching and learning process, if the teacher wants to check students' fluency, the teacher allows students to express themselves freely without interruption. The aim is to make students easily produce the flow of words. The teacher does not correct errors immediately, whereas; the idea is that too much correction interferes with the flow of words in conversation (Fasold and Connor-Linton, 2006).

Comprehension: It is an ability to perceive and process stretches of discourse, to formulate representations of the meaning of sentences. Comprehension of a second language is more difficult to study since, it is not directly observable and must be inferred from overt verbal and nonverbal responses, by artificial instruments, or by the intuition of the teacher or researcher. So, comprehension refers to participants' full understanding of the nature of the research project, even when procedures are complicated and entail risks (Howatt, 1980).

3. Methodology

This research paper adopted a descriptive research design using quantitative and qualitative approaches. This study involved all members of the English club who joined the club and 3 English teachers from Kabutare secondary school. The researchers described the effect of English club on students' speaking ability at Kabutare secondary school in Huye District. This study used a proportionate stratified random sampling technique to obtain a sample. It is a sampling technique where a study population has members or elements that are not homogeneous and proportionally stratified. For this reason, a total number of 178 students and 3 teachers of English were selected as the target population. Thus, totally this study involved 181 persons.

The sample size was calculated using Yamane (1973)'s simplified formula to get the required sample size. As a result, the supervisors and staff's responses were obtained by applying this equation:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = population size

e = the level of precision

1 = Constant

$$n = \frac{181}{1 + 181(0.05)^2} = 124.6 = 125$$

$n = 125$ respondents.

Therefore, a sample size of 125 respondents were targeted to participate in this study. This formula was used to estimate a representative sample.

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire and interview guide. The questionnaire was administered using questionnaire and drop and drop-and-pick later method. The pick-up later method was preferred due to the convenience of the respondents. Based on the 5-point Likert scale, the questionnaire used five alternatives. This scale was stated in five choices, and at first, the researchers determined the score of each statement in the questionnaire to determine student scores. The

questionnaire consisted of items and which each respondent had five choices with a scoring scale of 1 to 5. Where 1 means Strongly disagrees, 2 Disagrees, 3 Neutral, 4 Agrees, and 5 Strongly agrees. The Likert scale produced interval data. The questionnaires were given to 122 students and researcher assistants interviewed 3 teachers.

Before the actual analysis of data using SPSS Version 21, the data were screened, edited, checked for accuracy, and coded. Thus, the data for this research were analyzed by means of descriptive and inferential statistics. Quantitative data were collected and analyzed via the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and results were presented through percentages, means and standard deviations. A regression model was used to test the effect of Joining the English conversational club on employee Students' speaking abilities. This enabled the evaluation of the relationships between the dependent and independent variables of the study.

This study also used Pearson's correlation to examine the relationship between the independent variables (IVs) and the dependent variable (DV). To test the relationship, in this section, the mediator in this study is treated as a dependent variable. Correlation coefficients provided a numerical overview of the direction and strength of the linear relationship between the IVs and DVs. Pearson's correlation coefficients (r) range from -1, 0, and +1 for the indication of positive (+1), 0 (no correlation), negative correlation (-1).

A regression model was used to test the effect of Joining the English conversational club on employee Students' speaking abilities. This enabled the evaluation of the relationships between the dependent and independent variables of the study. The study used a 95% confidence level. The extent to which a variable causes a change in the other variable was determined by regression analysis. Thus, multiple linear regression model was used because it allows researchers to analyze the relationship between multiple independent variables and a dependent variable, helping to identify the factors that influence the outcome.

The researcher analyzed and interpreted the link among variables through the collected data as follows: The equation for the regression was: $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$
Where:

Y is the dependent variable (Students' speaking abilities)
 β_0 is the regression constant β_1 is the coefficient of independent variables

X_1 is Joining the English conversational club
 ϵ is the error term

A mixed method, that is, quantitative and qualitative, was used to relate qualitative data to quantitative data. Inferential statistical methods and descriptive methods were used to analyze the data. Frequency and percentage were used in the descriptive analysis to describe the population characteristics. However, Pearson's correlation was used in the inferential statistics to determine the correlation between the variables under study. The significance of the model was also tested using ANOVA (analysis of variance).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

The study included a total of 122 students who were asked to complete a questionnaire. Additionally, three English teachers were interviewed. However, only 108 questionnaires (88.5%) were returned to the researchers. To determine the sample size, the researchers combined the 108 returned questionnaires with the three teacher interviews, resulting in a total sample size of 111 respondents, representing 100% of the sample.

4.1.1 Descriptive statistics

4.1.1.2 Influence of joining an English club on students' speaking ability

The study attempted to determine the influence of joining an English conversation club on students' speaking ability in public secondary schools in Rwanda. A

Table 1: Level of agreement of joining English club and students' speaking ability

Statements	Mean	Std Dev
1 The English club gave students self-confidence to apply their speaking abilities in front of each other	4.11	.60
2 The English club taught students how to pronounce words	4.42	.84
3 The English club made students care about grammar in speaking	4.29	.45
4 The English club made students speak fluently	4.15	.70
5 The English club made students find and master a lot of vocabulary	3.93	.84
6 The English club taught students how to speak politely in English and have a deeper understanding of formal and informal conversations.	4.71	.90

Primary data, 2024

Note: D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree, M = Mean, Std = Standard deviation.

Table 1 analyses the impact of English club on public speaking abilities of secondary school students. The data consist of six statements that carefully evaluate the influence of English club on students' speaking skills. The first statement examines the impact of English club on instilling self-confidence in students to use their speaking abilities in front of their peers. The majority of respondents strongly agreed with this statement, with a mean score of 4.11 with a standard deviation of 0.60. This indicates that English club normally plays a significant role in building students' confidence in communicating effectively. The second statement investigates whether or not English club improves students' pronunciation and vocabulary knowledge. Most respondents strongly agreed with this statement, with a mean score of 4.42 and a standard deviation of 0.84. The data deviation is far away from the mean. This suggests that English club contributes little to enhancing students' pronunciation and vocabulary, which, however, are essential components of effective language communication. The third statement evaluates whether English club fostered an interest in grammar among students. The majority of respondents agreed with this statement, with a mean rating of 4.29 and a low standard deviation correlation of 0.45. The standard deviation results are very close to the mean. This suggests that English club highly improves students' interest in grammar, which is a fundamental aspect of language learning. The fourth statement assesses whether English

club makes students speak fluently. The majority of respondents strongly agreed with this statement, with an average rating of 4.15 and a high standard deviation of 0.70. This indicates that English clubs contribute little to improving students' fluency in speaking, which is a crucial skill required for effective communication. Thus, there is still a long way to go for the development of fluency in the club.

Moving on to the next question, the fifth statement, students were required to learn and master a significant amount of vocabulary in the English club. The majority of respondents agreed with this statement, with a lower mean score of 3.93 than the previous statements, and a higher standard deviation of 0.84, far away from the mean. This indicates that learning vocabulary in the club is still a problem. A lot of exercises should be performed to bring this to normal distribution of smoothly gaining vocabulary if one participates in the English club. The last statement six examines whether the English club makes students become polite by applying formal and informal language while speaking English. Respondents strongly agreed with a mean score of 4.71 and a high standard deviation of 0.90. The deviation is far away from the mean. This indicates that, the English club has to work hard to develop polite speaking skills in English. The Club leaders should sensitize their members in distinguishing between formal and informal language while using English.

4.1.2 Inferential statistics

Table 2: Correlation analysis between independent and dependent variable

		English conversation club	Students Speaking ability
English conversation club	Pearson correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	122	
Students Speaking ability	Pearson correlation	.868**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	122	122

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Primary data, 2024

According to the findings reported in Table 2, the Pearson correlation analysis showed that the English conversation club is positively and significantly related to students' speaking ability with an $r=0.868$, and $p=0.000$. The correlation is statistically significant since the p-value was less than 5% with a perfect positive correlation (+1) observed diagonally across the table. The findings, therefore, show that there is a strong association between English conversation club and Students 'speaking ability in Kabutare secondary school in Huye District. This relationship confirms the influence of English club on the speaking abilities of students, and; thus, invites the school

leaders to reinforce English speaking club for students' improvement of oral skills.

These findings are relevant to Swain (1985) study which stated that, learning English speaking skills by joining an English Club allows students to focus on the learner-centeredness approach. For this reason, students should work in small groups according to their language proficiency, that is, high, medium, and low levels. Students can have an opportunity to work together by using this technique. It equally provides insights to other speakers while performing speaking during debates in the

classroom. The friendly atmosphere of working in groups can lessen their fear of making mistakes when speaking English. Indeed, students in the group can support their peers who need a push in the speaking activities of the team. They can express themselves successfully while working in groups. This can lead to self-monitoring, more confidence in speaking, freedom and enjoyment can encourage them to participate in the English language learning. Therefore, results of this study back the effectiveness of the English Club in improving English speaking skills.

4.1.3 Multiple Regression

A multiple regression analysis was performed in this section to identify the predictor and its contribution towards the criterion. It aimed to determine the prediction of a single dependent variable from a group of independent variables. The multiple regression analysis was performed with the assumption it complied with. The following tables give details:

Table 3: Model summary

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate
1	.824 ^a	.679	.669	.48571
a. Predictors: (Constant), Students speaking ability				

Table 3 shows the variance quantity that is explained by the predictor variables. The first statistic R is the multiple correlation coefficient between all the predictor variables and the dependent variable. In the model, the value is .824 indicates that there is a great deal of variance shared by the independent variables and dependent variables. The next value, R Square, which is the coefficient of determination is simply the squared value of R. R square indicates how

much the variance of the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variables. In other words, this is frequently used to describe the goodness of fit or the amount of variance explained by a given set of predictor variables and its value is 67.9 % of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by independent variables in the model.

Table 4: Significance of independent variable

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	62.518	4	15.630	66.250	.000 ^b
	Residual	29.490	125	.236		
	Total	92.008	129			
a. Dependent Variable: English conversation club						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Students' speaking ability						

Source: Primary data, 2024

Table 4 indicates standard regression which provides the effect of individual predictor variables. That variable is the English conversation club. The table shows the output analysis and whether or not there is a statistically significant difference group mean. As seen, the significance value is 0.00^b and the mean square is 15.630

which is above 0.05. Therefore, there is a statistically significant difference in the mean length of the model. The result was a significant correlation of the data. This demonstrates the impact of English club on speaking ability of students.

Table 5: Coefficients^a

	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	-12.368	1.372		-9.014	.000
1	English Conversation club	1.537	.144	.654	10.665	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Students' speaking ability

Table 5 shows unstandardized beta coefficients that were used to deduce the regression equation as shown below.

$$Y = -12.368 + 1.537X_1 + +\epsilon$$

The model shows the effect measure of each variable on students' speaking ability. Similarly, the findings reveal that the English Conversation club had the greatest significant effect on Students' speaking ability in Kabutare secondary school in Huye District.

From the coefficients (see Table 5), the t-test results for the English conversation club are 10.665, with the probability of this occurring by chance of being 0.01, that is, ($p < 0.05$) 95%, confidence interval, two tails) implying that this is statistically significant.

Hypothesis testing is used to examine a regression analysis test. A regression test was used to examine the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The hypothesis testing was performed by using the SPSS tool and the result is presented in Table 6.

In statistics, the significance of testing the p-value indicates the level of relationship of the independent variable with the dependent variable. If the significance number found is less than the critical value, also known as the probability value (p), which is statistically set at 0.05, then the conclusion would be that the model is significant in explaining the relationship, or else the model would be regarded as non-significant.

4.1.4 Hypotheses Testing

Table 6: Summary of Hypothesis

S/N	Hypothesis	Rule	P-Value	Comment
1	H ₀₁ : There is no significant influence between joining the English Club and students' speaking ability at Kabutare secondary school in Huye District	Reject H ₀₁ if value is p<0.05	p<0.05	English conversation club has a significant effect on Kabutare secondary school in the Huye District

Source: Primary data, 2024

The regression R-value obtained, in which $r = 824^a$ (see Table 3) represented the correlation coefficient of the model whose order value > 0 . This illustrates that the incorporation of many variables improved the model when analyzing the effect of joining an English conversational club on students' speaking abilities. The adjusted r^2 value of $r = 0.679$ also indicates that the multiple linear regression model could explain approximately 68% of the variations in Students' speaking ability. This indicates that

joining English conversational has a great effect on students' speaking abilities. To identify the independent variables that were mostly responsible for effective devolution in the area, the beta value was used. The null hypothesis is well-tested and verified, but it is rejected because the p-value is below 0.05. This suggests that there is a great influence of English Club on students speaking abilities because before the null hypothesis was that the

English Club does not influence speaking abilities of students at Kabutare secondary school.

4.2 Discussion

The study conducted at Kabutare Secondary School investigated the impact of English conversation clubs on students' speaking abilities. The major findings of the study indicate that, the English club had a positive influence on students' confidence levels when speaking in front of other people. This is so because, students were given opportunities to practice speaking in a supportive and friendly environment. This allowed them to overcome their fear of speaking in public. As a result, they were able to speak more fluently than before the initiation of the club and express their ideas clearly. In addition to improving confidence levels, the English club developed students' pronunciation skills. Still more emphasis should be laid this aspect because the majority of students are far from producing accurate sounds in English. Through regular practice and feedback from their peers, students were able to identify and correct their pronunciation errors, which ultimately led to more accurate and clear communication. Furthermore, this study reveals that, the English club was instrumental in making students focus on grammar rules when speaking. By engaging in conversations with their peers and receiving feedback on their grammar usage, students were better able to understand the nuances of grammar and use it more effectively in their speaking. Similarly, the English club was effective in expanding students' vocabulary. However, effort is needed to increase the learning of vocabulary since there is still a lot more to do in this language area. Indeed, through regular exposure to new words and phrases, students were able to develop a more extensive vocabulary, which in turn allowed them to communicate more effectively and with greater precision.

Overall, the study concluded that the English conversation club played a crucial role in improving students' speaking abilities. It not only boosted their confidence levels, but on average the club improved their pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary skills, which are essential for effective communication in English.

Upon gathering test results, the researcher proceeded to determine the significance of the correlation coefficient between variable X and variable Y. Using the formula for determining the significance of the coefficient correlation, the researchers calculated a t-count of 10.665. A 5% (0.05) significant level was used in the critical value of students. The value of Beta was .654, while the value of t-counted was 10.665. This means that the t-statistic, which measures the number of standard errors estimated, deviated from the hypothesized value $t = (\beta - 0) / SE(\beta)$, where; t is the t-statistic, β is the estimated coefficient of the feature, and $SE(\beta)$ is the

standard error of the feature. The t-count was higher than the t-table. This indicates a strong correlation between joining an English conversation club and students' speaking ability.

The research study aimed to explore the effectiveness of English conversation clubs on the speaking abilities of students at Kabutare Secondary School via interview to verify and complete previous quantitative analyses of this study.

To gather additional data for the study, interviews were conducted with English teachers who had experience with students who joined the English Club. The participant teachers in the study were asked to share their observations and opinions on the speaking abilities of students who joined the club. The findings from the interviews indicate that, students who participated in the English Club exhibited a higher level of commitment towards improving their speaking abilities. These students demonstrated greater proficiency in speaking during classroom activities, such as presentations, group discussions, and debates. They also showed more confidence in expressing themselves and engaging with their classmates in English.

Interestingly, the teachers noted that, the English Club provided a relaxed and informal setting for students to practice their speaking skills. This environment allowed participant students to experiment with vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation without fearing mistakes or criticism. Additionally, the club activities were tailored to the students' interests, which motivated them to participate more actively and enthusiastically in the designed speaking activities.

One of the interviewees A reported that:

Most students said that they are not confident talking in front of many people because of some reasons such as feeling anxious about making mistakes and not preparing the material. There are some benefits that students gain by joining a debate English club. Such as enhancing the students' vocabulary, increasing students' critical thinking and self-confidence, speaking well organized, and improving the students' pronunciation. Other students think that the debate is a challenging activity since they have different motions in every meeting of the debate club. But I'm convinced that English clubs give students a chance to practice English in a relaxed, informal environment, and to meet new people. (October 11, 2023).

Another teacher B was interviewed on what are the students' purpose to join the English conversation club. They stated that:

The purpose of joining English conversation club was to improve their speaking skills, to get new vocabulary, to gain more confidence in public speaking, to practice more English with friends, to improve pronunciation. Besides, I think that the benefits of joining English conversation club were that students could practice English every week, students improve their speaking skills, students get new materials, students get more knowledge about English, students get many new friends to practice English, students improve public speaking, students are more confidence in public speaking. (December 4, 2023)

These findings concur with Frank (2022) confirmed that, the English club is a place where most activities are conducted in English. In the English club, students get more training and opportunities for speaking than just studying in class. The English club participants who join share a high interest in English. Joining English club extracurricular activities makes students improve their speaking skills. However, from the results of interviews and preservation, there were still some English club participants who were unable to speak well. Therefore, this study has investigated whether or not there is a relationship between joining and participating in an English club that will affect students' speaking ability.

One of the studies related to the correlation between students' participation in English club and their speaking ability was conducted in Hamad (2018). This study investigated the correlation between students' learning strategies and their speaking ability. Another study was conducted by Malu (2015) on the correlation between students' motivation to learn English and their speaking ability which established that there is a harmonious correlation between self-confidence and speaking ability.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

From the findings of this study English Club is one of the best ways to improve students' speaking fluency at Kabutare Secondary School through the organization of the English-Speaking club. The English Club involves many activities such as discussion, problem-solving, and role-playing which can be used in a language classroom. Other important factors in using English Club are the order or sequence of these activities in the organization of the functions in the club in breaking club members into small groups according to their individual English language proficiencies, and the optimal group size should be four individuals. This leads to success and achievement in learning foreign languages. The teacher's roles should be

changed as a provider, a facilitator, an assistant, and a consultant to increase the effectiveness of the learning environment. Speak-freely interaction in the language classroom can decrease students' anxiety in learning English speaking skills. Students should change their roles from passive to active learners. Therefore, the English Club at Kabutare Secondary School is a wheel that can turn students' fear into real speakers of the English language.

5.2 Recommendations

Considering the conclusion drawn from this study, the following recommendations can be retained.

1. For the English teacher, this study suggests that debate is to be used as one of the techniques in teaching of speaking to foster the students' speaking skills and give them a lot of opportunities to speak English.
2. In implementing the debate technique, the teacher should consider the students' English level, the material, the number of students, and how to run the activity to be appropriate for teaching speaking.
3. For the students, the research study highly advises students who have not joined the club to do so. This is one best way to enhance speaking skills and oral comprehension of other speakers.
4. Students should initiate by themselves speaking before the public to downplay their speaking apprehensions. This could be something like giving verbal announcements in English, introducing oneself, introducing their peers to the public and the like that can improve their public communication.

References

- Brown, D. (2004). *Language Assessment Principles and Classroom Practices*. California: Longman.
- Du, X. (2009). The Affective Filter in Second Language Teaching. *Asian Social Science*, 5(8), 162-165
- Fasold, R. and Connor-Linton N. (2006). *An Introduction to Language and Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Frank, L.V. (2022). *Authentic assessment for English language learners: Practical approaches for teachers*. New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing.
- Freeman, R. (2017). *The Relationship between Extracurricular Activities and Academic*

Achievement. Doctoral dissertation: National Louis University.

Gömleksiz, M. N. (2014). The Effects of age and motivation factors on second language acquisition. *Firat University Journal of Social Science*, 11(2), 217-224.

Hamad, A. (2018). The Effectiveness of English Club as a Free Voluntary Speaking Activity Strategy in Fostering Speaking Skill in Saudi Arabia Context, Saudi Arabia: *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation (IJLLT)* 2(1)- 2617-0299

Harmer, J. (1970). *The Practice and Learning English as A Foreign Language*. Ann Harbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Hemerka, V. (2009). Low speaking performance in learners of English. Doctoral dissertation: Masarykova Univerzita, Pedagogická fakulta).

Heugh, K. (2013). *Language Contact and Linguaging*. In B. Zanie and G. Mheta (Eds). *Language, Society and Communication: An Introduction*, pp.337-366. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Howatt, A.P. R. (1984). *A History of English Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Kagwesage, A. M. (2012). Higher Education Students' Reflections on Learning in Times of Academic Language Shift. *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 6: (2)18.

Kenworthy, J. (1981). *Teaching English Pronunciation (Longman Handbook for Littlewood, W., & William, L. Communicative language teaching: An introduction*. Cambridge University Press.

Krashen, S. (191). *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning*. Oxford: Pergamon Press Inc

Laviolette, G. (2012). English Language Acquisition and Mastery: Rwanda's Urgent Economic Need. *The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, 43-48.

Lightbown, P. M. and Spada, N. (2001). *How Languages are Learned*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Eysette, J. (2022, June). *How Rwanda became a melting pot of official languages*. Retrieved from Quartz: [https://qz.com/africa/2183742/how-](https://qz.com/africa/2183742/how-rwanda-became-a-melting-pot-of-official-languages)

[rwanda-became-a-melting-pot-of-official-languages](#).

Pearson, P. (2014). Policy without a plan: English as a medium of instruction in Rwanda. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 15:1, 39-56.

Malu, K. F., & Smedley, B. (2015). *The English Club Handbook: A Guide for English Club Leaders*. The U.S. Department of State, United States Embassy, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Malikha, F. (2012). *The Impact of Participating in English Club on Students' Speaking Skills. A Case of the eleventh-grade students of SMA Islam Sultan*.

Melviza, Z. (2017). Students' Perception Toward English Club Activities. *Research in English and Education*, 2(2), 101-109.

Nawshin, F. (2009). (2009). *Problems in teaching speaking in traditional ESL classrooms*. BRAC University.

Nunan, D. (2003). *Practical English Language Teaching*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Samuelson, B. and Freedman, S.W. (2010). *Language policy, multilingual education, and power in Rwanda*. *Lang Policy*, 9, 191-215.

Svinicki, M. (2011). "Encouraging your Students to Give Feedback." In *Techniques and Strategies for Interpreting Student Evaluations*, Lewis. K. (Ed), Jossey-Bass: San Francisco.

Thornbury, S. (2007). *How to teach speaking*. Longman

Torky, S. A. E. (2016). "The Effectiveness of a Task-Based Instruction Program in Developing the English Language Speaking Skills of Secondary Stage Students". Online Submission.

UNICEF. (2020). *Education Budget Brief*. Kigali

Uwambayinema, E. (2013). Science teachers' challenges implementing Rwanda's English as a medium of instruction policy: a case study of Nyarugenge District rural secondary schools. *Unpublished Master's Thesis*, California State University, Fresno, USA.

Williams, E. (2014). Research and policy on language education in Africa. In K. King & B. Trudell (Eds.). *Language politics and the politics of language in education. Network for Policy*

Research Reviews and Advice on Education and Training (NORRAG) NEWS, 34, 34-37

Yuliandasari, K. (2015). Students' Perception of English Club Extracurricular in Speaking Practices at

Madrasah. Department of English Education, *Unswagati Cirebon*, 3(2), 2354-7340.

Yamane, T. (1973) *Statistics: An Introductory Analysis*. 3rd Edition, Harper and Row, New York