

Students' English Language Acquisition and their Proficiency Improvement at IPRC Kigali, Rwanda

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Abstract

This study entitled “**Students' English Language Acquisition and their Proficiency Improvement at IPRC Kigali, Rwanda**”, was carried out to evaluate the effect of students' English language acquisition on their proficiency improvement at IPRC Kigali, Rwanda. It had three (3) specific objectives which were to: assess strategies used for teaching English Language at IPRC Kigali, identify ways in which IPRC Kigali students use to learn English as a language of instruction, as well as identifying factors affecting English acquisition as the second language at IPRC Kigali. The methodology that was used in data collection is descriptive survey. Purposive and stratified random were used as sampling techniques. Questionnaires were used as data collection instruments. The sample size was determined by Slovin's Formula as the population size is definite. 153 students were selected to answer to research questions. 93 of them responded and returned questionnaires. The data collected was analyzed using SPSS software. The study came up with the following findings: The mostly used strategies for the English Language Acquisition at IPRC Kigali include lecturers creating the learner-centered classroom to set students' learning responsibilities (79.6%), and building in students' motivation including value, self-efficacy and attributions (75.2%). The most ways in which IPRC Kigali students use to Learn English as a language of instruction include imitation (100%), repetition and practice to pronounce words and memorize them (100) conversations and discussions with colleagues and lecturers (76.4%), using English in different situations like in meetings, in shopping malls, ... and other extra-curricular activities (75.2%). It has also been revealed that age (76.3%), attitude towards English (67.8%), motivation (100%), first language proficiency (89.3%), technology (100%), and Intellectual capacity (86.0%) affect the Acquisition of English as a Second Language. It has been recommended that It is of paramount importance to enhance teaching of English as a subject but also keeping in mind that this is a Medium of Instruction in Rwanda. Lecturers should interlink this philosophy with methodologies and strategies that allow students to take lead in the teaching and learning process. Lecturers should consider the students' individual differences to help them improve individually. Drama and play should also be integrated in teaching and learning/acquisition of English to improve students' speaking skills through performance.

Key words: Learning, acquisition, proficiency, medium/language of instruction

1. Introduction

Human beings need to communicate on a daily basis for different purposes. They communicate to inform each other, to express their feelings, to influence others, to meet social expectations, to do business, to gain knowledge and skills, and so on. The factors that will lead to effective communication, a language, message and attitude play a big role for this purpose. A language is a tool of communication. Erlinda (2010) stated that both animal and human beings can communicate to each other. Languages are acquired or learned. English is one of those tools of Communication.

Rwanda is a landlocked and developing country in East Africa. It needs to get connected to the rest of the world. It is in this regard that the government always strives to look for appropriate communication tools that will link the country with other nations to meet its goals like Vision 2050, National Strategy for Transformation (2017 – 2024), as well as meeting other regional and international goals like 2063 Agenda of the African Union Commission and the Sustainable Development goals (SDGs). Thus, languages are the main tools to enhance cooperation between Rwanda and other countries; they will facilitate trades and labor at the regional and global levels, and facilitate movement of people from one place to another.

Historically, English language has been adapted in Rwanda since 1960. It cannot be forgotten to mention that during this period the Government of Rwanda made it an official language in 1964. In 2009 it was made a Language of Instruction; from this period, English language was to be learnt by Rwandans in addition to Kinyarwanda, French and Kiswahili (Hababakize & Dr Mukamazimpaka, 2021)

English is the recent language introduced in Rwanda as a language of instruction after 1964, replacing French that has been reigning since the Belgium colonial period. English was taught in Rwandan schools as a subject since 1960s (Sibomana, 2014) and later on become the language of instruction (2008) as stated by (Tabaro, 2015). There are reasons for shifting from French to English as a language of instruction in schools. Those include: the country relying on trade with Anglophone East African Countries like Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya and joining the Common Wealth Member States even though the country has never been a British Colony (Mwiseneza, 2015).

In addition, after genocide perpetrated against Tutsis in 1994 not only human lives were destroyed, but also different sectors of life, education included, were significantly affected; Rwandans who had been living abroad as refugees for many years came back home. Most of them had been living in neighboring English speaking countries and taking their education in English. At that time Rwandan education system was using French and Kinyarwanda as languages of instruction.

Hence, when schools reopened in 1995, Rwanda had two groups of students to cater for as language of education is concerned: French/Kinyarwanda education and English education background Rwandans. The education system needed to be revisited so that all learners could benefit from it. Taking into account those who had been learning in English and those whose education was provided in French and Kinyarwanda, the Government of Rwanda declared English an official language, alongside Kinyarwanda and French. Then French-English parallel learning schools were introduced in Rwandan education system. According to the Ministry of Education, this was said to be justified by economic, social and political factors: “Rwanda has

chosen the path of multilingualism, and this has economic, social and political justification. Apart from the mother tongue (Kinyarwanda), French and English have been introduced in all schools both as curriculum subjects and the languages of instruction from primary grade 4” (MINEDUC, 2003:14)

However, the system did not bear positive fruits since learners failed to develop communicative competence either in English or in French. This can be justified by the fact that Rwandan community is purely monolingual where Kinyarwanda keeps the lead in our daily activities. It can also be justified by the fact that when the system was introduced, Rwanda had no experts in both English and French linguistics; (a challenge that the country is still facing despite its move to declaring English a language of instruction). As McGreal (2008) states, from 1996 to 2008 the language policy required the first three years of schooling be taught in Kinyarwanda, after which the students chose English or French as the primary language of instruction. University students were expected to perform equally well regardless of their linguistic choice. For the first 16 years after the genocide, French was more widely used among both groups in Rwanda, including returnees from Francophone countries. However, the linguistic reforms of 2008 advocated the shift from French into English as the language of instruction at all levels of education.

Fifteen (15) years ago, since 2009, English has been adopted as a language of instruction. Shifting from French to English has been a challenge to the majority of teachers who were mainly French speaking citizens, as well as their learners. This created a big gap in both students and teachers’ performance. The Government of Rwanda has deployed different efforts to improve teachers and learners’ proficiency. Training sessions have been organized and conducted, mentoring programs have been established, foreign teachers have been recruited ... but challenges remained unchanged. Up to now, some students are not able to fluently speak in English. Therefore, it will be hard for them to master other subjects. This was the reason for this study to evaluate strategies used for teaching the English Language at IPRC Kigali, identify ways in which IPRC Kigali students use to learn English as a language of instruction, as well as identifying factors affecting English Acquisition as the second language at IPRC Kigali.

2. Review of related literature

Teachers play an important role in learning processes. English language acquisition or learning will not only depend on the students’ ability to learn. Lecturers, teachers/trainers must play their part to help learners acquire the language of instruction.

2.1.Strategies of teaching in second language acquisition

Yang (2008) stated that there are different strategies of teaching in second language acquisition. Some of them are the following:

Strategy 1: Analyzing characteristics of the second language learners: Teachers should educate different language learners in accordance with their special characteristics and offer an individualized quality education or modify different way of teaching to suit the special requirements of the second language learners.

Some characteristics of the more successful and less successful learners are identified as follows: (1) Is an active or passive learner; (2) Can or cannot monitor language production; (3) Can or cannot practice

communicating in the language; (4) Can or cannot use prior linguistic knowledge; (5) Can or cannot use various memorization techniques; (6) Can or cannot ask for clarification; (7) Whether or not there is language anxiety occurring when a learner is expected to perform in second language learning; (8) Can or cannot be influenced by self-esteem, shyness, stage fright, embarrassment, test anxiety, social evaluative anxiety and communication apprehension; (9) Whether or not worry about making mistakes in second language learning; (10) Whether or not worry about the consequences of failing the second language class; (11) Whether or not worry about getting nervous and confused in language class; (12) Whether or not feel self-conscious about speaking the second language in front of classmates; (13) Whether or not feel heart pounding when I am going to be called on in language class; (14) Whether or not thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course; (15) Whether or not worry about feel confident while learning the second language (Yang, 2008).

Strategy 2: Creating the learner-centered classroom to set students' learning responsibilities: Learning a language is like playing on a soccer team. The teacher is the coach who presents different kinds of plays, gives advice and opportunities for practice, and provides feedback and support when it comes time to play a game. Students are the team players who actually play and must make decisions and evaluate themselves during the game. In the learning process, the teacher can guide, facilitate, present materials clearly and answer questions, but the teacher cannot learn the language for students or even make students learn the language. Students must decide themselves that they want to learn, and they need to take initiative for seeking opportunity for learning. A learner-centered classroom is an environment that creates and fosters independent students who are aware of their learning processes and who, through this awareness, are able to take control of their learning. A learner-centered classroom must initially be created by the teacher and then accepted by students. It does not occur automatically, but rather must be worked at so that all participants support the environment and are supported by the environment (Yang, 2008).

Strategy 3: Setting goals for the language learners to lead to increased motivation: A crucial step toward a learner-centered classroom is getting students involved in learning by having them set language goals for themselves. Having the language learners set personal language goals increases their involvement by increasing the stake they have in the learning process. Giving students the opportunity to establish their own goals, in addition to or in collaboration with those set by the instructional program, allows students to reflect on their reasons for learning a second language, which may in turn lead to increased motivation (Yang, 2008).

Strategy 4: Integrating theories of second language acquisition with practice: Stephen Krashen's theory is one of them that understanding it can help teachers develop appropriate instructional teaching strategies and assessments that guide students along a continuum of language development, from cognitively undemanding, context-embedded curricula, to cognitively demanding, context-reduced curricula. However, it is more and more important to unite theory with practice as follows:

(1) Strategy of the acquisition-learning hypothesis: According to Stephen Krashen there are two independent systems of second language performance: "the acquired system" and "the learned system". The "acquired system" or "acquisition" is the product of a subconscious process very similar to the process that children undergo when they acquire their first language. It requires meaningful interaction in the target language—natural communication—in which speakers are concentrated not in the form of their utterances,

but in the communicative act. The “taught system” or “teaching” is the product of formal instruction and it comprises a conscious process that results in conscious knowledge “about” the language, for example knowledge of grammar rules. According to Stephen Krashen “learning” is less important than “acquisition”.

(2) Strategy of the monitor hypothesis: The acquisition system is the utterance initiator, while the teaching system performs the role of the “monitor” or the “editor”. The “monitor” acts in a planning, editing and correcting function when three specific conditions are met: that is, the second language learner has sufficient time at his/her disposal, he/she focuses on form or thinks about correctness, and he/she knows the rule. It appears that the role of conscious learning is somewhat limited in second language performance. Stephen Krashen suggests that there is individual variation among language learners with regard to “monitor” use. He distinguishes those learners that use the “monitor” all the time (over-users); those learners who have not learned or who prefer not to use their conscious knowledge; and those learners that use the “monitor” appropriately. An evaluation of the student’s psychological profile can help to determine to which group they belong. Usually extroverts are under-users, while introverts and perfectionists are over-users. Lack of self-confidence is frequently related to the over-use of the “monitor”.

(3) Strategy of the natural order hypothesis: For a given language, some grammatical structures tend to be acquired early while others late. This order seemed to be independent of the learners’ age, background, conditions of exposure, and although the agreement between individual acquirers was not always 100% in the studies, there were statistically significant similarities that reinforced the existence of a natural order of language acquisition. Stephen Krashen however points out that the implication of the natural order hypothesis is not that a language program syllabus should be based on the order found in the studies. In fact, he rejects grammatical sequencing when the goal is language acquisition.

(4) Strategy of the input hypothesis: The input hypothesis is only concerned with “acquisition”, not “learning”. According to this hypothesis, the learner improves and progresses along the “natural order” when he/she receives second language “input” that is one step beyond his or her current stage of linguistic competence. Since not all of the learners can be at the same level of linguistic competence at the same time, Stephen Krashen suggests that natural communicative input is the key to designing a syllabus, ensuring in this way that each learner will receive some input that is appropriate for his or her current stage of linguistic competence.

(5) Strategy of the affective filter hypothesis: Stephen Krashen claims that learners with high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image, and a low level of anxiety are better equipped for success in second language acquisition. Low motivation, low self-esteem, and debilitating anxiety can combine to “raise” the affective filter and form a “mental block” that prevents comprehensible input from being used for acquisition. In other words, when the filter is “up” it impedes language acquisition. On the other hand, positive affect is necessary, but not sufficient on its own, for acquisition to take place.

Strategy 5: Building second language learner motivation including value, self-efficacy and attributions: Learners’ motivation, through complex and multifaceted, is critical for all types of learning. Motivation affects how hard students are willing to work on a task, how much they will persevere when they are

challenged, and how much satisfaction they feel when they accomplish a learning task. Good teaching strategies can increase students' motivation for second language learning tasks. Value, self-efficacy and attribution are several critical components that play a great role in second language learner motivation (Yang, 2008).

2.2. Ways in which learning takes place

There are several ways in which learning may take place, also known as learning methods, styles. Those may include, but not limited to, imitation, Repetition and Practice, Play and drama, Conditioning and association of ideas, Memorization, Investigation and discovery, Incidental learning, Trial and error, Experience, and Latent learning. Below, some of these learning styles will be explained and their implication in learning a language discussed.

1. Imitation

Imitation learning techniques aim to mimic human behavior in a given task. An agent (a learning machine) is trained to perform a task from demonstrations by learning a mapping between observations and actions. The paradigm of learning by imitation is gaining popularity because it facilitates teaching complex tasks with minimal expert knowledge of the tasks. Generic imitation learning methods could potentially reduce the problem of teaching a task to that of providing demonstrations; without the need for explicit programming or designing reward functions specific to the task (Hussein et al., 2017).

In the study carried out by Whitehurst and Vasta, (1975), to investigate if language is acquired through imitation, it has been revealed that the role of imitation in language acquisition is examined, including data from the psycholinguistic, operant, and social learning areas. From the psycholinguistic data, four empirical statements have been extracted: (1) there is no evidence that spontaneous imitations of adult speech influence grammatical development, (2) imitation of speech does not appear to occur with frequency beyond age 3 years, (3) speech and hence imitation are not necessary for the comprehension of linguistic structures, and (4) most utterances of a child are novel and therefore could not have been exactly modeled.

They (Whitehurst & Vasta, 1975) explained that the first and second propositions are seen to be based on a too restrictive definition of imitation-immediate and exact copying. Selective imitation-a functional relationship involving similarity of a particular form or function of the model's responses-is proposed as an alternative, thus leaving the validity of statements (1) and (2) in question. They added on that concerning assertion (4), certain data from the operant literature are presented as evidence of the compatibility of novel responding and modeling, imitation, and reinforcement. They finally proposed that statement (3) suggests a mechanism by which selective imitation can be understood. A three-stage process is proposed in which comprehension of a grammatical form sets the stage for selective imitation of that structure, which leads in turn to spontaneous production. Therefore, they affirmed that imitation is a process by which new syntactic structures can be first introduced into the productive mode.

2. Repetition and practice

“Practice makes perfect”. This saying shows that repetition is vital for ones to master different concepts or practices. Repetition is essential to secure the new learning as long-term memories. The Repetitions are tasks which use the new learning, rather than repetitions of the teaching. The idea is that effective repetitions secure the learning so that no repetition of the teaching is needed (Bell, 2020). In their explanations, CPD News Team (2020) indicated that we should repeat learning that we wish to undertake several times, to allow our brain or body to retain the information or skills as necessary. They continued saying that this is true whether it be reading a mathematics formula until it is memorized or kicking a football at a goal until we have perfected the technique.

Apparently, repetition facilitates foreign language learning by teaching us to pronounce words and memorize them. Moreover, the more we talk, the more we understand them and learn to use them in a variety of contexts. The findings of a study carried out by Zamani (2017) to examine the effect of task repetition on foreign language out-turn, revealed that task repetition resulted in significant differences in subjects’ oral discourse in terms of fluency and accuracy; and recommended that researchers and teachers might find it very beneficial to devote some of their time to design effective task repetition to help language learners improve their oral production.

3. Play and drama

Play can generally be described as the voluntary activities of children, which are inherently enjoyable. It involves intrinsic motivation focused on process rather than product. It also involves pretence, implicit (implied but not expressed) and flexible rules. Play is therefore a pleasurable activity that is engaged in for its own sake (REB, 2020). Drama is a type of play that is written and performed to imitate some actions.

Thus, it has been explained by REB (2020) that play allows children to use their creativity while developing their imagination, dexterity, and physical, cognitive, and emotional strength. Play is important to healthy brain development. It is through play that children at a very early age engage and interact in the world around them. Play activities involve the child’s total self and use of all forms of energy. Play is comparable to food as a necessity for the growth and development of a child. It has been argued that play gives a child the reason for existence and gives assurance of immortality.

Games and other play-based activities should be selected with clear learning goals in mind and for a specific group of learners. If the pedagogic goals are purely linguistic, teachers will need to specify which language structures and/or skills will be practiced and how. Relevant language resources should be provided and necessary patterns drilled in speech or writing (Guz, 2016).

4. Investigation and discovery

Children are natural explorers, ready to touch, taste, smell, see and listen to everything around them. Wherever children go, they are curious about what they see and do. This curiosity leads to questions that can spark significant discovery and learning, especially in math and science (Brain Building in Progress, 2023).

This popular theory motivates students to build on past experiences and knowledge. Due to this method, they make use of their intuition, imagination, & creativity. Students can search for new information to find facts,

correlations, and new truths. In such an environment, learners actively seek answers and solutions. Meanwhile, the teacher acts as an instructor or a guide (Mirzoyan, 2021).

Alfieri et al. (2018) conducted study to assess the effect of Discovery-Based Instruction on learning. The aim was to first examine the effects of unassisted discovery learning versus explicit instruction and assess the effects of enhanced and/or assisted discovery versus other types of instruction (e.g., explicit, unassisted discovery, etc.). The findings for this study retrieved from random effects analyses of 580 comparisons revealed that outcomes were favorable for explicit instruction when compared to unassisted discovery under most conditions, $d = -.38$ (95% CI = $-.44/-.31$). In contrast, analyses of 360 comparisons revealed that outcomes were favorable for enhanced discovery when compared to other forms of instruction, $d = .30$ (95% CI = $.23/.36$). The study therefore, suggested that unassisted discovery does not benefit learners, whereas feedback, worked examples, scaffolding, and elicited explanations do.

5. Incidental learning

Incidental learning is learning that occurs unintentionally, from activities where learning is not the conscious goal of the learner. For example, when a person plays a sport just for fun but ends up improving his/her skills over time, they are engaging in learning by accident.

A study to examine the effects of age and of incidental-learning tasks on recall of a categorized word list was conducted by Eysenck (1974). Ss were 50 18-30 yr old college students and 50 55-65 yr old teachers. The control groups were instructed to remember the words; incidental-learning groups performed orienting tasks, but were not informed that they would have to recall the words. 2 orienting tasks required that Ss process the meaning of the words; the other 2 orienting tasks did not involve semantic processing.

The researcher therefore indicated that the analysis of the free-recall data indicated that the semantic processing tasks led to much greater recall and organization of recall than the non-semantic orienting tasks. In recall, there was a significant interaction between age and orienting task, with old Ss only manifesting incidental learning that was inferior to young Ss, whose orienting task involved semantic processing. The results for this study indicated that the presence or absence of an age-related decrement in incidental learning is predictable from the depth of processing of the incidentally acquired material (Eysenck, 1974).

2.3.Factors influencing second language acquisition

A good number of research studies have been carried out on the factors influencing the second language learning. Most of them have found out similar determinants while others have found different ones. Sun (2019), in his study analyzing the factors affecting the second language acquisition and its implications for teaching and learning, classified those factors into two: internal factors and external factors. The revealed internal factors were including age, attitude, personality, motivation, and first language proficiency. On the other hand, external factors are concerned with political factor, economic factor, and technological factor.

The same internal findings have been displayed by Khasinah (2014). He found out that Motivation, attitude, age, intelligence, aptitude, cognitive style, and personality are considered as factors that greatly influence

someone in the process of his or her second language acquisition. In his abstract, he indicated that experts state that those factors give a more dominant contribution in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) to learners variedly, depending on who the learners are, their age, how they behave toward the language, their cognitive ability, and also the way they learn.

3. Methods

The research used the descriptive survey. The descriptive survey was used to collect and analyse data from a few sample considered to be representative of the students in IPRC Kigali. The target population was the students studying at IPRC Kigali, in Year one (Level 6) Civil Engineering Department. The accessible population was 248 students from five (5) different Options.

The sample size is determined by Slovin's Formula as the population size is definite. That formula is given and explained as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Na^2}$$

Where:

a= level of significance or reliability level (equals to 0.05)

N: Population size

n: sample size.

The students sample size was: $\frac{248}{1 + 248 * (0.05)^2} = 153$

Thus, the sample size drawn from the target population of 248 is 153 students. Note that only 93 (60.7%) of research participants responded and returned the questionnaires.

In IPRC Kigali, Civil Engineering Department, there are 5 options. We used the non-probability sampling technique whereby we used the purposive sampling. Purposive sampling refers to the selection of sample on the basis of informed judgment that the group is likely to be representative. Participants from each option were selected proportionally to the number of class registered students. This sample represents the students who attend English modules at IPRC Kigali. The study was conducted using questionnaires. The questionnaires were containing close-ended questions to allow the respondents not to deviate from the research objectives, to determine their attitude about the ways in which English is acquired/ learned at IPRC Kigali, as well as the challenges they encounter while learning this language of instruction. Attitude scale method was used. This is a method called Likert Method of summated ratings. It consists of collecting a number of statements about a subject, and assigning a five-scale value to each of the responses.

4. Findings presentation and discussion

The findings of this study are presented based on the research objectives which were (1) to establish strategies used for the English Language Acquisition at IPRC Kigali; (2) to identify ways in which IPRC Kigali students

use to Learn English as a language of instruction, and (3) to identify factors affecting English Acquisition as the second language at IPRC Kigali.

4.1. Strategies used for the English Language Acquisition at IPRC Kigali

To assess the strategies used for the English Language Acquisition at IPRC Kigali, 5 questions have been asked to the research students. The summary of respondents’ views is presented in the following table.

Table 1: English Language Acquisition strategies at IPRC Kigali

Statement	SDA (%)	DA (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
When teaching us English, our lecturers consider our individual differences and help us to improve individually (Analyzing characteristics of the second language learners)	9 (9.7)	18 (19.4)	28 (30.1)	29 (31.2)	9 (9.7)
When teaching us the English language, our lecturer creates the learner-centered classroom to set students’ learning responsibilities	0 (0)	6 (6.5)	13 (14.0)	37 (39.8)	37 (39.8)
When learning the English language we set together with our lecturer goals for the language learning leading to our increased involvement by increasing the stake we have in the learning process.	16 (17.2)	37 (39.8)	10 (10.8)	29 (31.2)	1(1.1)
When teaching us the English language, our lecturer gives us sufficient time to interact with our classmates at his/her disposal, he/she focuses on form or thinks about correctness, and he/she knows the rule.	0 (0)	28 (30.1)	18 (19.4)	28 (30.1)	19 (20.4)
When teaching us the English language, our lecturer builds in us motivation including value, self-efficacy and attributions, and this affects how hard we are willing to work on a task, how much we will persevere when we are challenged, and how much satisfaction we feel when we accomplish a learning task.	0 (0)	18 (19.4)	5 (5.4)	51 (54.8)	19 (20.4)

The table above summarizes all the respondents’ perceptions towards the strategies used in English Language acquisition at IPRC Kigali. The findings above show that more than 50% of all the respondents (59.2%) did not agree or were neutral about the statement saying that when teaching them English, lecturers consider their individual differences and help them to improve individually (Analyzing characteristics of the second language learners). In addition, the majority of them also did not agree, some were neutral, with the statement saying that when learning the English language they set goals together with their lecturers for the language learning leading to their increased involvement by increasing the stake they have in the learning process (67.8%). On top of that, it has been revealed that 49.5% of all the students who were investigated did not agree (30.1%) and were neutral (19.4%) for the statement assessing if their lecturers give them sufficient time to interact with their classmates at their disposal, focusing on form or thinking about correctness, and knowing the rules.

However, the study revealed that lecturers create the learner-centered classroom to set students’ learning responsibilities (79.6%), and builds in students’ motivation including value, self-efficacy and attributions (75.2%). They ascertain that this affects how hard they are willing to work on a task, how much they will persevere when they are challenged, and how much satisfaction they feel when they accomplish a learning task. Therefore, learner-centered methodology and motivation of students have been revealed in this study as the fertilizers of acquiring English as a second language at IPRC Kigali, Rwanda.

4.2. Ways in which IPRC Kigali students use to Learn English as a language of instruction

The second objective of this study sought to identify the ways in which IPRC Kigali students use to learn English as a Medium of Instruction. 6 statements have been made for the respondents to show their perceptions towards this objective. The respondents’ views are presented in the table bellow:

Table 2: Ways in which IPRC Kigali students use to Learn English

Statements	SDA	DA	N	A	SA
I learn English by imitating, my lecturer, my colleagues and anyone else speaking this language.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	55 (59.1)	38 (40.9)
I learn English by repetition and practice to pronounce words and memorize them, hence learn to use them in a variety of contexts	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	54 (58.1)	39 (41.9)
I learn English through drama and play	30 (32.3)	36 (38.7)	6 (6.5)	21 (22.6)	0 (0.0)
I learn English through investigation and discovery activities	0 (0.0)	27 (29.0)	15 (16.1)	41 (44.1)	10 (10.8)
Mostly, I learn English incidentally through conversations and discussions with my colleagues and my lecturers.	0 (0.0)	11 (11.8)	11 (11.8)	38 (40.9)	33 (35.5)
I improve my English proficiency by using it in different situations like in meetings, in shopping malls, ... and other extra-curricular activities	0 (0.0)	12 (12.9)	11 (11.8)	35 (37.6)	35 (37.6)

The findings summarized in the table above show that the respondents affirm, on one hand, that they learn English by imitating their lecturers, colleagues and anyone else speaking this language (100%), by repetition and practice to pronounce words and memorize them, hence learn to use them in a variety of contexts (100%), learn English incidentally through conversations and discussions with colleagues and lecturers (76.4%), and improve their English proficiency by using it in different situations like in meetings, in shopping malls, ... and other extra-curricular activities (75.2%).

On another hand, it has been found that the majority of students at IPRC Kigali do not affirm that play and drama and investigation and discovery are part of the ways used to learn English. Therefore, there is a need to improve English language acquisition at IPRC Kigali by introducing or reinforcing the use of play and drama as well as investigations and discovery activities.

4.3. Factors affecting English Acquisition as the second language at IPRC Kigali

The third objective of this study sought to identify the factors affecting English Acquisition as the second language at IPRC Kigali. 6 statements have been made for the respondents to show their perceptions towards this objective. The respondents’ views are presented in the table below:

Table 3: Factors affecting English Acquisition at IPRC Kigali

Statement	SDA (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
My age affects my Acquisition of English as a Second Language	4 (4.3)	15 (16.1)	3 (3.2)	31 (33.3)	40 (43.0)
My attitude towards English affects my Acquisition of English as a Second Language	5 (5.4)	13(14.0)	12(12.9)	38(40.9)	25(26.9)
My personality affects my Acquisition of English as a Second Language	0 (0.0)	24(25.8)	27(29.0)	22(23.7)	20(21.5)
Motivation affects my Acquisition of English as a Second Language	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	48(51.6)	45(48.4)
My first language proficiency affects my Acquisition of English as a Second Language	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	10(10.8)	45(48.4)	38(40.9)
Changes in languages of instruction affected my Acquisition of English as a Second Language	20(21.5)	8(8.6)	27(29.0)	22(23.7)	16(17.2)
Technology facilitates my Acquisition of English as a Second Language	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	41(44.1)	52(55.9)
Intellectual capacity plays an important role in my Acquisition of English as a Second Language	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	13(14.0)	33(35.5)	47(50.5)

The results summarized in this table reveal that age affects Acquisition of English as a Second Language (76.3%), attitude towards English affects Acquisition of English as a Second Language (67.8%), motivation affects Acquisition of English as a Second Language (100%), first language proficiency affects Acquisition of English as a Second Language (89.3%), technology facilitates Acquisition of English as a Second Language (100%), and Intellectual capacity plays an important role in Acquisition of English as a Second Language (86.0%).

The findings also showed that respondents did not affirm that personality affects Acquisition of English as a Second Language. This was expressed by 25.8% students who disagreed with the statement and 29.0% who were neutral. This makes a total of 54.8% of all the respondents. They didn’t also affirm that changes in languages of instruction in Rwanda affected Acquisition of English as a Second Language. This has been claimed by 21.5% student-respondents who participated in the study and strongly disagreed with the statement. 8.6% of them disagreed with the statement while 29% of them were neutral. This shows that 59.3% of all the research participants did not agree with the statement. Therefore, changes in languages of instruction have no impact on acquisition of English as a second language.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effect students’ English language acquisition on their proficiency improvement at IPRC Kigali, Rwanda. It had three (3) specific objectives which were to: assess

strategies used for teaching the English Language at IPRC Kigali, identify ways in which IPRC Kigali students use to learn English as a language of instruction, as well as identifying factors affecting English Acquisition as the second language at IPRC Kigali. Amongst 153 selected respondents sampled from the target population of 248 students, 93 responded and returned the questionnaires (60.7%).

The findings from this study indicated that the mostly used strategies for the English Language Acquisition at IPRC Kigali include lecturers creating the learner-centered classroom to set students' learning responsibilities (79.6%), and building in students' motivation including value, self-efficacy and attributions (75.2%). It was also indicated that the most ways in which IPRC Kigali students use to Learn English as a language of instruction include students learning English by imitating their lecturers, colleagues and anyone else speaking this language (100%), by repetition and practice to pronounce words and memorize them, hence learning to use them in a variety of contexts (100%), learning English incidentally through conversations and discussions with colleagues and lecturers (76.4%), and improve their English proficiency by using it in different situations like in meetings, in shopping malls, ... and other extra-curricular activities (75.2%). Finally, it has been revealed by the objective 3 that age (76.3%), attitude towards English (67.8%), motivation (100%), first language proficiency (89.3%), technology (100%), and Intellectual capacity (86.0%) affect the Acquisition of English as a Second Language.

Basing on the outcomes of the study, the researcher recommends the following that aim at further improvement of English Language Acquisition at IPRC Kigali. It is of paramount importance to enhance teaching of English as a subject but also keeping in mind that this is a Medium of Instruction in Rwanda. Lecturers should interlink this philosophy with methodologies and strategies that allow students to take lead in the teaching and learning process. Lecturers should consider the students' individual differences to help them improve individually. When learning the English language students should set together with their lecturers' goals for the language learning leading to their increased involvement by increasing the stake they have in the learning process. Drama and play and play should be integrated in teaching and learning/acquisition of English to improve students' speaking skills through performance.

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