



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

**EFFECTIVE LEARNER-CENTRED APPROACH AND ITS EFFECT ON LOWER-
LEVEL LEARNERS' PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH: A CASE OF KAGARAMA
SECTOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

BY

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**A Dissertation Submitted to the School of Education in Partial Fulfilment of Requirements
for the Award of the Degree of Master of Education (English-Education)**

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Kigali, June 2024

DECLARATION

I, Jean Baptiste Ntandayera, student number 220020209, declare that this dissertation entitled **“Effective Learner-Centred Approach and its Effect on Lower-Level Students’ Performance in English: A Case of Kagarama Sector Secondary Schools”** is the result of my own work and has not been submitted before for any degree at the University of Rwanda or in any other institution.

Date: June, 2024

Signature:



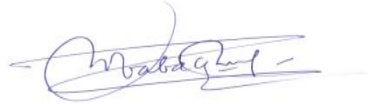
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APPROVAL

I acknowledge that this research entitled: **“Effective Learner-Centred Approach and its Effect on Lower-Level learners’ Performance in English: A Case of Kagarama Sector Secondary Schools”** is the original work of Ntandayera Jean Baptiste and has been done under our guidance and supervision.

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DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to:

-My Almighty God,

-My family,

- My brothers and sisters

-My parents,

- And all of my friends.

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The completion of this dissertation involved the guidance, expertise, support and help from various people, and I thank them all.

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ABSTRACT

Rwanda Education Board, as an important organ in charge of Education, has recommended the use of Learner-Centred Approach (LCA) in teaching English to improve the quality of education. So far there is not enough research done to assess the implementation of that approach and its effects on students' performance in English. We have conducted this research to make a contribution in that regard. The aim of this research is to evaluate the extent to which Learner-Centred Approach is implemented, weigh up the impact it has on the students' performance in English in Secondary Schools in Kagarama Sector, Kicukiro district, and indicate the challenges faced during the implementation. In this work, mixed research methodology was employed. The research sample consisted of 12 English teachers and 112 students. Questionnaires, interviews and class observation were used to collect data. On the one hand, questionnaires and interviews have shown that Learner-Centered Approach is implemented at the highest degree. On the other hand, findings from class observation indicated that it is not implemented as expected. The reasons for that contradiction are many, but the most important one is the lack of training for English language teachers to be able to apply that approach as required. As a matter of fact, there are teachers who prefer the use Teacher-Centred Approach and this has negative effect on students' performance in English. This study identified other challenges teachers face in the LCA implementation: overcrowded classrooms, syllabus overload, lower level of English among students, lack of learning and teaching resources, and the approach which is time consuming. As a recommendation, the Government should provide regular training to teachers of English language and avail necessary teaching and learning resources.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CGFK: College of George Fox Kagarama

ELS: Expeditionary Learning School

GTM: Grammar Translation Method

MINEDUC: Ministry of Education

OCS: Oral Communication Skills

REB: Rwanda Education Board

TBT: Task-Based Teaching

TBI: Text-Based Instruction

IBL: Inquiry-based Learning

LCA: Learner-Centred Approach

CBC: Competence-Based Curriculum

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the following points are presented: background to the study, case study history, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, assumptions of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation as well as other related concepts.

1.1. Background of the study

In education, teaching approaches are among the factors that contribute a lot in the performance of learners. Researchers have specified the value of approaches used in education. For any teaching, to be effective there must be important changes on the side of the student through, different ways of teaching and various approaches. The effectiveness of teaching approach is indicated by results in the form of grades, marks, and others (Atandi et al., 2012, pp.16-17).

Researchers provided advice to anyone who needs to be successful in teaching and the image one holds in case of failure. To make easy the process of imparting knowledge, teachers are advised to use suitable approaches and strategies which go with particular objectives. When learners fail, the used teaching approaches and strategies will be questionable. The outcome of a fruitful teaching approach is always indicated by the performance of learners (Ganyaufu, 2014, p.29).

In their study on possible influence of learning styles on students' results, Tan & Laswad (2015) agreed that approaches are associated with academic performance (p.24). The same observation was made by Davidson (2002) who confirmed that the teaching and learning approaches can be considered as an essential component in impacting the standard of student' learning results (p.11). This is to prove how the approaches and strategies used in teaching English language have an effect on students' performance.

In the past, many teachers widely used the Teacher-Centred Approach. In Rwanda, the policy of languages has been changing overtime. Today, the syllabus of English language urges teachers to use modern approach. For researchers in the field of Education, evaluating the implementation rate of that approach in teaching, especially teaching English language is necessary. So, a thorough investigation about the outcome of recommended approach in English language teaching and learning in Rwandan schools is needed.

In teaching, traditional approaches are opposed to modern approaches. The traditional approaches are known to emphasize on teachers themselves and are Teacher-Centred. Their characteristics are unchanged practice, repeating what the teacher said and cramming. Approaches used to teach languages in the past prioritized the knowledge of grammatical structure as the foundation of language ability (Richards, 2006, p.36). People believed that learning grammar should be done through intense repetitions. Grammar rules are given to learners and they start practicing the same rules (deductive). This is opposed the approach known as inductive where learners are presented sentences which have a grammar rule and they are requested to find out the rule for themselves.

Modern or current approaches are called so mainly because they are Learner-Centred. In practice, they aim to provide many opportunities to learners making them more active and participative.

A research to examine and evaluate the application of Learner-Centred Approach and the effect on students' performance in English is needed since that approach is recommended to teachers of English language in Secondary Schools in Rwanda. Such studies are almost inexistent in our schools.

1.2. Summary of the study

Kagarama Sector is one of the 8 Sectors of Kicukiro District, Kigali City. This sector has 8 nursery schools with 766 pupils; 7 primary schools with 3553 students; 3 public Secondary Schools and one private Secondary School with 2426 students.

According to the figures disclosed by the District Officer in charge of Education, the average of students' results in English National Exam varied between 60% and 64% for the last three school years. This means that the average grade value was 4 in 2019, in 2020-2021, and in 2021-2022 school years. Kagarama Sector was one of the sectors that did not perform well in comparison to others in the district.

In the new system of grading in Rwanda, grade value 6 stands for "Excellent" (70% - 100%); Grade value 5 stands for "very good" (65% to 69%). Grade value 4 stands for "good" (60% to 64%). Grade value 3 stands for "satisfactory" (50% - 59%). Grade value 2 stands for "adequate"

(40% -49%). Grade Value 1 stands for fair (20% - 39). Grade value 0 stands for “fail” (0% - 19%).

1.3. Statement of the problem.

Since the introduction of the new syllabus of English in Secondary Schools, all English language teachers were recommended to start implementing the new approach in teaching. In Kicukiro district the performance of students in National Exam in English is static. Such results are a sign of existing problems in English in those schools. Kagarama Sector has the following secondary schools: Kagarama Secondary Schools; Groupe Scolaire Muyange; Groupe Scolaire Nyanza, and CGFK. As a matter of fact, their English teachers themselves confirmed the lack of improvement. Their results in O’level National English Exam were as follows:

Table 1: O’level National English Exam Results in Secondary Schools of Kagarama Sector

	CGFK				Kagarama Secondary School				GS Nyanza				Groupe Scolaire Muyange			
	Dist	Sat	Fair	Fail	Dist	Sat	Fair	Fail	Dist	Sat	Fair	Fail	Dist	Sat	Fair	Fail
2019	0	55	19	32	40	76	8	0	0	84	39	71	0	17	39	26
2020-2021	4	62	27	46	88	44	6	0	0	40	5	51	0	23	40	12
2021-2022	35	54	64	8	141	3	0	0	17	56	67	51	0	34	35	10

This table indicates O’level students’ results in English language for three consecutive school years in Kagarama Sector. Figures in bold show the grade of majority of students per school and per academic year. Causes of such performance need to be investigated so that corrective measures be taken.

Many factors can explain causes of such performance. Whenever learners score poor result, the blame has to go to their teachers, particularly in teachers of languages. Such performance is caused by the use of inappropriate teaching techniques by the teacher (Bellwether, 2013, p.20). That is why, in this research, we focused on exploring the implementation rate of the recommended Learner-Centred Approach in different Secondary Schools in Kagarama Sector and evaluate its effect on the performance of students in English language. A survey, interviews and class observation have been conducted in those schools.

1.4. Objectives of the study

This study is made of the general objective and the specific objectives.

1.4.1. General objective:

The general objective of this study is to evaluate the implementation of the Learner-Centred Approach and identify its effects on English learners' performance in Secondary Schools of Kagarama Sector.

1.4.2. Specific objectives

This study has three specific objectives, namely:

- i) To determine the implementation rate of Learner-Centred Approach in teaching English in Secondary Schools of Kagarama Sector.
- ii) To identify the effect of the Learner-Centred Approach on students 'performance in English in Kagarama Sector Secondary Schools.
- iii) To illustrate the challenges in the implementation of Learner-Centred Approach in teaching English in Secondary Schools of Kagarama Sector.

1.5. Research questions

This research has been guided by the following questions:

- i) To what extent is the recommended Learner-Centred Approach implemented in teaching English language in Secondary Schools of Kagarama sector?

- ii) To what degree do the Learner-Centered Approach impact the performance of students in English language in Secondary Schools of Kagarama sector?
- iii) What are the challenges in the implementation of Learner-Centred Approach in teaching English language in Kagarama Sector Secondary Schools?

1.6. Significance of the study

This research is an added contribution to studies that are available today conducted by other researchers concerning English teaching approaches and their effect on the learner's performance. It has an important significance for other researchers, teachers of English language, Education managers, students as well as parents since it will provide reliable information on a better teaching and learning. Particularly, the outcome of this research work will help teachers to apply what they understand. In teaching English language and in implementing LCA correctly a teacher should first know his/her students, their ability in a given language and what they need for a better communication.

1.7. Limitations of the study

Students' academic performance may be influenced by many factors. Some of them are personal motivation and others are environmental motivations. For a learner to perform well the mastery of the four skills is necessary. Teachers also must have an advanced knowledge in the language they are teaching. The Ministry in charge of Education should help teachers to have needed training in order to be able to help student get a better performance in all subjects they are taught in English (Mosha, 2014, p.75).

This research is limited to the Learner-Centred Approach in teaching English, and the impact it has on students' performance in English, and challenges faced during its implementation. It focused on Secondary Schools of Kagarama Sector. So the generalization of the study findings is limited to those schools only.

1.8. Scope of the study

This research is limited to Kagarama Sector, and it only covered Secondary Schools found in that sector. A limited number of students and teachers is used.

1.9. Organization of the study

This work is made of five chapters. Chapter 1 describes the back ground of this study, the summary of the case study history, the statement of the problem, the objectives and the research questions, the significance of the study, its scope, and its organization. Chapter 2 outlines the theoretical literature review on Learner-Centred Approach and some of its strategies. It also provides empirical literature review conducted in different corners of the glob, in Africa and in our region. It discusses the theoretical framework which guides this study, and presents the conceptual framework. In chapter 3 the research methodology is outlined. It presents the research design, methods and procedures that have been used to collect data as well as the analysis of the collected data. The sampling techniques, the sample size and the validity, reliability and ethical considerations are discussed in this chapter. Chapter 4 focuses on the research findings which were discussed. The analysis of data and results presentation for the study are also covered in this chapter. Chapter 5 deals with the research conclusion and contains a summary of the findings, the contribution of the research, recommendations as well as suggestions for further research in the area of English language teaching.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter presents an overview of various and different research works linked to this dissertation. It outlines theoretical literature, where Learner-Centred Approach and some of related strategies are discussed. The empirical literature is also highlighted as well as some of past studies from a global to the local situation. Research gap identification, theory used for this study and explanations about how the variables relate to each other are provided.

2.1. Theoretical literature

Evaluating the implementation rate of Learner-Centred Approach in teaching English to lower-level Secondary Schools learners of Kagarama Sector is central to this research. The most influential theories that inform this study and provide an overview of literature on teaching English are discussed in this chapter.

2.1.1. Learner-Centred Approach

Learner-Centred Approach is used in teaching various subjects. It is mainly used in teaching English and other languages. In this approach, students have responsibilities, and share activities in various sessions. Many studies have been conducted on this approach and different characteristics have been proposed with some points in common such as active participation and working together with colleagues. Learner-Centred Approach is opposed to Teacher-Centred Approach. The latter follows the behaviourist theory which is inspired by the idea that behaviour changes are caused by external stimuli. According to this theory, the students are passive. The teacher is responsible of learning, teaching and holds ultimate authority. In addition, the content and tasks are set by the teacher.

2.1.1.1. Advantages

Learner-Centred approach has advantages for both Students and Teachers. Rao (2020) has managed to make a list of this approach advantages as follows:

- i. Students develop learning and other skills and gain meaningful knowledge that will help them throughout life.
- ii. It can help to build social skills and self-esteem.
- iii. And also students gain more emotional and cognitive support from their peers.

- iv. The relationship between rights and responsibilities is learned.
- v. Students discover that learning is interesting and fun.
- vi. Teachers have less traditional work to do.
- vii. Students are more attentive and willing to participate in the class.

Advantages of the Learner-Centred Approach are many. The ones listed above are some of the examples researchers mention very often. The list can be stretched since advantages of LCA can't be exhausted.

2.1.1.2. Disadvantages

The disadvantages of the Learner-Centred Approach have also been mentioned in different researches. Rao (2020) has shown a list of backsides of that approach:

1. It requires a longer time for students. So, it is difficult to achieve curriculum targets.
2. It takes a long time for teachers. Therefore they do not want to use cooperative learning in general.
3. It requires special skills of teachers. For that reason, all teachers are not able to use cooperative learning.

Even though the Learner-Centred Approach is presenting some disadvantages, it is the most preferred approach in teaching different subjects, especially languages such as English, since it is judged effective.

2.1.2. Learner-Centred strategies

Learner-Centred Approach is designed for the learner. In a research on understanding Learner-Centred Teaching, the author showed that learners must be actively involved in order to have a good performance. It has been observed that learners who participate actively develop a positive attitude regarding their learning, and in the end, they have higher performance (Erdogu, 2019, p.76). Different scholars described how activities in class are carried out. When language teachers apply the LCA, students get new knowledge and ability to use that language. (Matsau, 2007, p.29). The teacher has to choose appropriate exercises which focus on different skills.

2.1.2.1. Differentiated instructions

Differentiated instructions consider a classroom as a gathering of people with differences but also with similarities. It is a way of making an environment where every learner succeeds. For some scholars, in differentiated instructions the teacher makes their best to have an answer to a variety of learners with different learning styles (Subban, 2006, p.941). If a teacher manages to reach an individual or a group and use different methods for each with the purpose of making the best learning ever, he/she is applying Differentiated Instructions. This way of teaching gives each student choice and flexibility in how to learn, and helps personalizing learning.

2.1.2.2. Inquiry-Based Learning

In this strategy, a student is given enough time to ask a variety of questions as much as possible to allow them develop their ability of thinking. A student is getting knowledge using questioning. The teacher will be pushing learner to ask correct questions, and it is a good way of them to have a personal understanding on a given topic (Celeste, 2020, p.30).

2.1.2.3. Expeditionary Learning

Researchers provided definitions of Expeditionary Learning to make the reader understand what it is and see what is supposed to be done when applying the strategy. Expeditionary Learning is a strategy which aims at developing a learner who can not only succeed but also work with a great motivation in difficult tasks and highly committed at work. It develops a will of working as a team, and enhance good citizenship among learners (Beesley et al., 2021, p.4).

The intension of ELS is to encourage the development of learners who work with others, who can take responsibilities, respectful, feel strongly that the school is theirs (school ownership), and fight for the success of the community. A learner is expected to highly succeed by active learning since they learn by doing.

2.1.2.4. Personalized learning

In Personalized Learning each student receives a learning adapted to his/her needs, personal interests and personal abilities. It is a strategy which takes into consideration relationship between teachers and learners' families and learners' differences (Marilyn, Sam and Twyman, 2016, p.3). In this strategy it is obvious that all students don't learn the same way. Adapting the learning to individual helps students to be able to apply what they understand. People understand

thinks differently, and this should not be a barrier to effective learning. Traditionally students are put in the classroom, taught the same way and have different understanding. In the end some will score high grades, and others fail. Personalized learning is opposed to that and considers personal pace, and each learner has a word on how he/she wants to learn.

2.1.2.5. Game-based learning

Researchers have demonstrated how learning can take place in a form of games and when well exploited the outcome is great in comparison to other strategies. Game-Based Learning is a strategy which prioritizes the influence of games in learning. It can be used to achieve the aims of education (Connolly et al., 2012, p.19).

Game Based learning is strategy used in learning to enhance learners' motivation. The learner is attracted by the entertainment found in games and get interested and engaged for them. Learning games make the learner wants to keep playing but also learning. In this kind of learning motivation is high since learners can't be separated from games, and it increases their participation.

Game-Based Learning makes the learning into a very exciting and engaging journey that keeps the learner coming back for more playing. When students are playing, they stay motivated to learn again and again.

2.1.2.6. Debate

Debate is a popular strategy used in teaching English. It is practiced in different level of classes to enhance speaking skills among learners. A debate can be described as activity in which two individuals or group of people are exchanging different ideas opposing each other on the same topic and at the end a decision is made to determine the winner (Snider & Schnurer, 2006, p.6).

The researcher described debate contribution in developing learners' different skills:

Basic academic debate can contribute greatly to the foreign language teaching. With adjustments, it can be used at a variety of levels to develop speaking and listening skills, note-taking skills, research skills, and brainstorming skills. It engenders teamwork, leadership and creativity (Lockett, 2016, p. 6).

Debate can also help in developing critical thinking skills. The reason is that students are debating assigned positions, they don't want to be embarrassed about defending their own

opinions and position. This helps them to overcome a reluctance in giving their opinions in front of other people. Furthermore, students find that taking part in debate is fun and can be rewarding.

2.2. Empirical literature

The empirical literature consists of findings in other studies conducted on Learner-Centred Approach and related strategies in teaching languages and the impact on students' performance. In this empirical literature many other works carried out by other worldwide experienced researchers are described. They are classified into three parts: Those conducted outside Africa, Africa and the region, and studies conducted in Rwanda. The reason was to go through various thoughts from different researchers in the world on the topics related to this study.

2.2.1. Studies conducted outside Africa

This part is taking a look at related literatures to this study that were conducted in various parts of the world, Africa excluded. The available studies were from Indonesia, Russia, Irak, Afghanistan, Colombia and Some European countries.

Researchers conducted a study trying to know more about the application of Student-Centred Approach in some Public High Schools in Indonesia. They used five English language teachers in five schools. When teachers were in classes, they were observed and after interviewed about what they have experienced in teaching English using Student-Centred Approach. In the end, they came up with conclusion that the application of this approach was not as fruitful as expected. In their responses, teachers shared confusion they had concerning the approach. It was noticed that roots of that issue were the lack of regular appropriate training that could help them acquire skills they need to deliver Student-Centred Approach effectively when teaching English (Nonkukhetkhong et al., 2006, p.13).

Glukhova and Sorokina (2018) conducted research in Chelyabinsk State University in Russia on Student-Centred Learning which is known as the best and fruitful method in the learning of a language. Their research was aiming at analysing the effect of the LCA in language teaching. It was based on facilitating fruitful learning, which implies high collaboration between the students and the facilitator. In their findings they mentioned an error caused by making groups of learners based on their level of knowledge. It is a particular concern for the English language since many

of the learners new little English. Additionally, they found out that there are only a few learners who took and succeeded the Exam of English at the end of the module. They noticed also Student-Centred Learning could become a basis that would help English facilitators even though the level of English was low. (p.3).

Abbasian (2022) conducted research in Irak. His goal was to find out the easy way of implementing Learner-Centred Classroom in English language, in Cihan University in Ebil-Kurdistan/ Iraq. The results indicated that it was a fruitful approach since it provides the opportunity of communication to learners. Unluckily majority of students in the Department of English were poor in English language, the approach failed. Teachers and students had a high motivation in that approach, but in the end, it became Teacher-Centred Approach because they needed to complete the module content following their calendar. The other core challenge for LCA regarding this research was the teaching time which was very short, only 50 minutes. During that time, it was hard for the teacher to leave the stage and leave student doing everything required by themselves. Another challenge was the number of learners which was high. Their sitting as well could not allow collaboration among students. They could not be asked to take part in discussions. (p. 117).

Ahmadzai et al. (2021) conducted research to show the importance of applying Students-Centred Instruction approach to increase students' speaking ability in Afghanistan. Researchers aimed to examine the impact of using that approach in improving and developing learners' speaking proficiency. They also intended to show the importance of using Learner-Centred Approach with second year students of English department at Said Jamaludd University, Afghanistan. It investigated the role of Learner-Centred Approach and its positive influence on students' speaking proficiency. Their findings show that Student-Centred Instruction was a useful method to be adapted in developing the students' speaking proficiency. After analysing the questionnaires, researchers deduced that this approach had an effective and positive impact on the learners' speaking performance. It improves the learners' speaking proficiency and encourages learners to use their second language fluently wherever they are. Additionally, it develops their self-confidence in producing the language (p. 294).

Pantoja (2020) carried out a study at Universidad Del Cauca in Colombia examining how students in the modern languages program could improve their English-speaking abilities in the third semester by using a Student-Centred Approach. Finding out if the LCA helps in improving English speaking abilities was the goal. The outcomes were in favour of using the LCA to build and enhance English language speaking abilities. According to the study's data utilizing collaborative learning methodologies in a Learner-Centred Approach would be engaging for both the facilitator and the students, and would meet the students' needs for English education (p.63).

Mariko et al. (2016) conducted a study in three European countries. The objectives were to critically assess the most recent findings in Student-Centred Learning and conduct empirical research on the pedagogical approaches used by teachers in three European countries (Lithuania, Slovenia and Poland). According to this study, teachers have extensive knowledge on a wide range of Learner-Centred topics. However, educators require additional professional development opportunities that will not only familiarize them with didactic and pedagogical concerns but also expedite their personal development and cover other subjects (such as information technology use). Researchers discovered that pupils who demand model solutions, inactive students and lack of passion for learning appear to be the most common issues teachers encounter while using the Student-Centred Approach (p.24).

After going through different researches that were carried outside Africa, it is obvious to note that the application of Learner-Centred Approach was successful in some countries. It is clear that when the requirements are fulfilled, the Learner-Centred Approach can serve as a good tool in teaching English language.

2.2.2. Studies conducted in Africa

Researches related to Learner-Centred Approach have also been conducted in different African countries. Some of the findings are presented in this unit. This study compiled results of researches conducted in the following African countries: Algeria, Lesotho, Tanzania and Zambia.

Bernekki (2022) carried out research in Algeria to assist Secondary Schools' learners with English learning. Group Investigation Model was used (a Student-Centred Approach which assisted the researcher to develop students who are able to share knowledge with their

colleagues). The students were acting as teachers when they explained and gave tasks to their colleagues. Only when it was necessary, the teacher intervention could be made. It also contributed to build up the spirit of cooperation in groups, as well as encouraging activities and creative learning. It made students much more interested in taking part in tasks given by their teachers. This has led to creation of an effective classroom where students help, cooperate, share, act courteously, and engage in pleasant interaction with one another (p.510).

Wakati (2017) carried out a study in Tanzania to identify the ways teachers implement the Learner-Centred Approach. Their curriculum stipulates that the subject should be covered in a Competence Based Approach where there is an emphasis on Learner-Centred Strategies. The researcher concluded that Teacher-Centred Strategies dominate the curriculum implementation, whereas Learner-Centred Strategies were not used at all. The research shows that the most dominant method of teaching is lecturing, with 61% of teachers saying it is being used all the time. It shows that the use of role playing as a teaching and learning strategy is very low, with 61.5% of teachers reporting that they have never used it. The use of debate was found almost not existing in many classes (p.117).

Matsau (2007) carried out a study in Lesotho to assess the implementation of the Learner-Centred Approach for English or Sesotho language education at Secondary School level. A number of conclusions are reached: while children have fun, they engage in activities that lead to more learning and develop a range of skills such as language or life skills. The following are expected to be achieved: creativity, development of confidence and independence, general and intercultural knowledge is acquired with a particular emphasis on relationship building, the learners' ability to demonstrate strong social working relationships and cooperation (p. 141).

Nyimbili, Namuyamba, Wanga and Chakanika (2016) were interested in carrying out research with the objective of finding out the way children were learning English language through the Learner Centred approach. Identifying difficulties in the use of LPA in Secondary Schools of Lundazi in Zambia was their second objective. At the end of their research, they came up with a number of conclusions. First, they found out that teachers were not motivated to use LCA. It means they were working without complying with the Government policy of implementing LCA. They were not flexible regarding pedagogical changes. Learners could not develop important skills which are acquired only when LCA is applied.

Secondly, students were many in a way that teachers could not supervise them in group discussions (p.18).

The researches that have been used in this part indicate that in many African Countries Learner-Centred Approach is recommended in their education system. In some parts of the continent, they are successful, but in others they still have difficulties to be applied.

2.2.3. Studies conducted in Rwanda

Rwanda has attempted change of its instruction framework and has since been esteemed as a central location to back different national formative objectives beneath vision 2020. The major change was the Competence Based educational modules (CBC). The objective of this approach was to create a more participatory learning environment, where students are more active in classrooms. The CBC curriculum recommends the use of “Learner-Centred Pedagogy” as the teaching and learning approach.

Kwok (2021) conducted a study on the use of LCP in Rwanda. In his conclusions he mentioned the challenge of making teachers get what LCP is and how to apply it. He raised the issue of many students in classrooms which hinders the use of some activities related to LCA (p.171).

Sibomana (2022) also pointed out the current situation English teaching in Rwanda. He pointed out the issue of transition from traditional to modern methods of teaching. This is a challenging situation for those learners and teachers due to their English language proficiency which is limited. The result of this situation is the use of drillings and other repetitive practice. (p.21).

This statement indicates that the most used approach in teaching English in Rwandan schools is the direct method since its main focus is oral skills and it uses repetitive drilling. The use of code switching in class is another indicator that teachers use grammar translation method, a strategy used in Teacher-Centred Approach. Therefore, it is clear that Teacher-Centred Approach is dominating in teaching English.

2.3.4. Critical review and research gap identification

Various authors demonstrated the effect of teaching approaches on students’ performance. Whalen (2012) explained that various forms are used to clarify how much the teaching approach is fruitful: marks, grades and many other forms (p.19). Similar observations were made by Doymus, Simsek, and Bayrakceken (2004). They conducted a study to find out the impact of

traditional teaching methods and cooperation learning techniques on examination results. Their conclusions confirmed that learners who studied through collaboration were far performing well than students who used the old learning approach. (p.198). Wakati (2017) conducted research in Tanzania and concluded that teacher's decision in the teaching strategies choice impacts the learners' performance (p.2). This is a way to highlight how much the approach and methods of teaching impact the performance and success of the learners.

In Rwandan schools, the curriculum and syllabus request teachers to adopt Learner-Centred Approach. Particularly, in Secondary Schools, performance in English must have roots in the way students are taught. So far, there is not enough studies carried out on LCA applied to English language teaching and its impact on performance of students in Rwanda. Therefore, this research is crucial to inform parents, students, teachers, the MINEDUC and other education decision makers about the impact of approaches used in teaching English and how the recommended Learner-Centred Approach is implemented.

2.3.5. Theoretical framework

As this study focuses on the Learner-Centred Approach, different theories can be referred to for English language teaching and learning. Theories play a role of guiding any research to be conducted, and can say overhead what will occur following some conditions. They also help in interpreting the research findings. A theory is a set of connected concepts with a well-ordered phenomenon view stating interrelation among variables with the aim of describing and foresee the situation. (Kivunja, 2018, p.45).

This study was guided by Krashen theory. He used Input Hypothesis to explain necessary requirements for a learner to acquire a new language. The learner should be in an exposure of the language which is a bit beyond his current ability. This theory foresees that when a second language is presented with new elements that a learner can understand, they will acquire that language (Dayan, 2015, p.141).

The Krashen theory consists of five fundamental hypotheses: The acquisition or learning hypothesis, which refers to a gradual growth of a language through comprehension and its use for communication; the natural order hypothesis which refers to the gradual acquisition of some grammatical features earlier and others later; and the monitor hypothesis which refers to the utterances produced in a second language initiated by acquired system and conscious learning.

There is also the affective filter hypothesis which states that being successful in a second language acquisition most of the time relates directly to language acquisition. Finally, the reading hypothesis states that reading is responsible for competence especially in comprehension, writing style, vocabulary, spelling, and advanced grammatical proficiency. (Dayan, 2015, p.142).

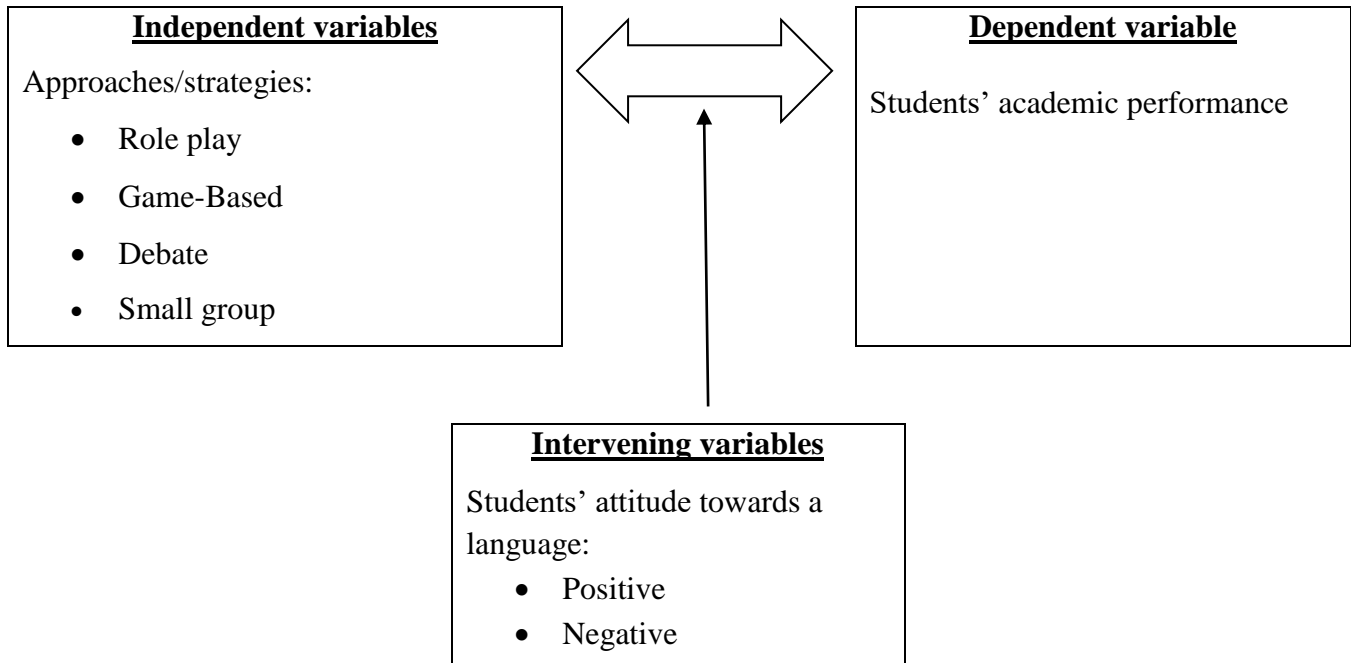
Krashen advises teachers to assess their learners' ability and requirements before undertaking any actions related to teaching and learning. Students must be motivated to learn the target language. It is easy for students to get bored when the teacher uses a language that is hard, complicated or the other way round. This theory puts much more emphasis on reading since it is responsible for fostering proficiency in comprehension, writing style, vocabulary, spelling and advanced grammatical skills. Furthermore, the researcher adds that exposing the learners on reading creates an important influence on the growth of learners 'linguistic abilities.

2.3.6. Conceptual framework

Scholars have explained the conceptual framework differently but with some common features. The underlying thinking, structures, plans and practices of the entire research project are all formed by the conceptual framework. Drawings or diagrams are used to explain the relationship between different variables (Kivunja, 2015, p.47).

This study conceptualized a framework made of independent and dependent variables. The independent variables include teaching approach. The dependent variable is the performance of students in English.

Figure 1: The conceptual framework of the study



The figure above indicates how independent variables influence dependent variables. The independent variables include teaching approaches/methods/ strategies. The dependent variable in this figure is the performance of students in English language. The study conceptualizes that the independent variables, through the intervening variables, influence the dependent variable where the independent variables could either lead to a good performance in English language or the opposite.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the instrumentation and methodology used to collect and analyse the data for the study. It covers the research design, population of the study, sample and sampling techniques, instruments used to collect data for the study. In addition, the chapter presents data analysis techniques and the ethical considerations.

3.1. Research approach and design

In this study mixed method was used. In that method the researcher gathers information and analyses them, combines the results, and makes conclusions using both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007, p.4).

This methodology was employed to take a look at the teaching strategies used by English language teachers and their possible effects on students' performance. The qualitative and quantitative approaches have also been integrated. When they are used together, they give a clear picture and comprehension of the research problem and questions than using one of them by itself (Cresswell, 2012, p. 39).

Therefore, questionnaires were used and distributed to the subjects. We also used interviews to gather information from students, and classroom observation was done to see what really happens in the classroom. The latter has a purpose to supplement what teachers and students have provided in the questionnaires and interviews regarding the implementation of Learner-Centred Approach.

3.2. Target population

The target population in research is fundamental. It is a group of all participants to the study who fulfil the requirements (Burns & Grove, 1997, p.236). The population for this study is constituted of students of Secondary Schools who sat for the National Exams (O'level exam), and their teachers of English language.

3.3. Sampling procedure and sample size

The researcher used simple random sampling to select a sample. Random sampling from a finite population refers to the method of sample selection that gives each member equitable chances of being selected. (Kothari, 2004, p. 60).

Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) agrees that 10% of the accessible population is adequate to serve as a study sample (p.86). For that reason, as Kagarama Sector has 4 Secondary Schools, they were all selected, accounting for 100% representation. Since the upper level in those schools has a total number of 1120 students, a sample of 112 was used, then all 12 teachers were considered. Therefore, the total number of 124 sample of respondents were involved in the study.

Table 2: The sampling matrix

Category of population	Total population	Percentage	Sample
English Teachers	12	100%	12
Students	1120	10%	112

3.4. Research instruments

The researcher went to schools to gather information, using three research instruments, namely the questionnaires, interview guides, and class observations.

3.4.1. Questionnaire

Questionnaires, filled in by teachers, helped to collect data on the implementation of Learner-Centred Approach, effect on students' performance, and challenges. They were based on the study objectives and were designed to elicit independent information, opinions and views. In our understanding, they were appropriate since they were less costly and they would give respondents a free room to provide their thoughts.

3.4.2. Interviews

Students answered questions that were asked in the interviews. Interview is a set of questions asked for a fixed objective. Boyce (2006) explained that it is a qualitative research technique which helps in collecting data with a rigorous response since respondents can get further

clarifications on a question which seems to be vague or difficult to understand. Probing is used for that matter (p.4). The interview provides the most detailed and rich data from the respondents and makes them comfortable and appear interested in what they are saying. During the interviews, students were asked questions about the way they are taught English and this lead to guess the approach their teachers use. In addition, students were asked about their performance and relationship between their results with teaching approaches.

3.4.3. Class observations

The researcher used classroom observation to complement questionnaires and interviews. Teachers and students were observed in different sessions of English language. The observation sessions provided insight and deep view of what really happens in English class where teachers were supposed to be applying Learner-Centred Approach and students being actively involved all along the lessons.

3.5. Validity of the instruments

Validity of instrument is its quality of measuring what it is supposed to measure. Roberts & Priest (2006) revealed that validity indicates if the instrument used will really provide sufficient information and measure what it is expecting to measure (p.43).

Validity of the instruments the researcher used had to be improved in order to make it accurate. Gall (1983) suggest that to make the instrument clearer it has to be checked by knowledgeable and experienced people (p.39). That is the reason why the researcher presented research instruments to the experts in UR, College of Education, to evaluate, and construct validity and suitability. He got recommendations from the experts to improve validity of the instruments.

3.6. Reliability of the instruments

Reliability of the instruments was established by the extent to which consistency of the responses were given by the instrument. That is the instrument important feature which is to provide unchanged outcome when used several times to the subjects in research (Tahedoost, 2016, p.33). To ensure reliability, standardized questions were constructed and pretested on subjects other than those to be sampled. A comparison was done, and consistency in response and the tools was regarded as reliable.

3.7. Data Analysis

Data analysis is a process of scrutinizing collected information and making conclusion. Bhatia (2017) explained that the objective of data analysis is to transform the obtained information into a language which can be understood easily (p.166). In this study, questionnaires were revised in order to remain with the necessary items. The data that were collected, were entered in the computer for analysis. Data are presented in tables in form of figures and percentages for easier interpretation.

3.8. Ethical considerations

Research is field that requires cooperation with many other people from different fields.

As it is an ethical requirement, the researcher sought for a letter of authorization from the University of Rwanda. Then, before going to the field in data collection, the researcher had requested for permission from the office of the mayor of Kigali City. The researcher also sought consent of the respondents to ensure confidentiality. Respondents' names were to be kept anonymous in the time of collecting data and publication. The document was clear about withdrawing from the research. Respondent could do it any time. The researcher adapted to the time that was accepted by the respondents to avoid disturbance at work. The author highlighted the importance of ethical considerations in any activity carried out in the research process. The ethical standards enhance confidentiality, collaboration, mutual respects and fairness (Gajjar, 2013, p. 8).

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter the researcher presents the findings of the study arranged according to the category of groups of people, the topic and sub-topic generated from research objectives and related questions. The characteristics of respondents are considered, Learner-Centred Approach implementation rate highlighted. The chapter also discusses the LCA effect on students' performance, assumptions of the various categories of respondents, and challenges.

The interpretation and analysis in this research used the 'mixed methods approach'. The latter is a study in which the researcher collects information and analyses them, combines the results, and makes conclusions using both qualitative and quantitative approaches in one and same research (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007, p.4).

4.1. Response frequencies

The researcher provided research instruments to the respondents and the rate of responses is indicated by the data on table 3.

Table 3: Response rate

Instrument	Response		Non response		Total
Category	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
Questionnaire	12	100%	0	0%	12
Interview	112	100%	0	0%	112
Total	124	100%	0	0%	124

Data on table 3 shows that 12 (100%) of English language teachers returned the questionnaires, and 112 (100%) students were available for the interview. The data further reveal that 124 (100%) respondents took part in this research.

4.2. Interpretation of collected information

In this section results of collected data are analysed and interpreted accordingly. They are presented in form of tables for a better understanding, and the interpretation is given after each

table. This section begins with the demographic characteristics of respondents, the rate of Learner-Centred Approach implementation, the effect rate of the LCA on students' performance in English, class observation and teachers' focus on the main language skills. Challenges they faced in applying the Learner-Centred Approach are also presented.

The conclusions are presented in accordance with the study goals and address the research questions. The following are questions that guided this study: (i) To what extent is the recommended Learner-Centred Approach implemented in teaching English language in Secondary Schools of Kagarama sector? (ii) To what degree do the Learner-Centred Approach impact the performance of students in English language in Secondary Schools of Kagarama sector? (iii) What are the challenges in the implementation of Learner-Centred Approach in teaching English language in Kagarama Sector Secondary Schools?

4.2.1. Demographic characteristics of respondents

The information about the population's composition are found in the demographic profile. A mental picture about the divisions in the population is created by it. This study involved 124 subjects that were made of 12 English language teachers and 112 upper-level students from Secondary Schools in Kagarama Sector, Kicukiro District.

4.2.1.1. Gender

The following table reveals how the respondents of this study were distributed by gender.

Table 4: Gender distribution of respondents

Category of respondent	Male		Female		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
English language teachers	5	42%	7	58%	12
Students	38	34%	74	66%	112

Table 4 indicates that majority (58%) of English language teachers in Kagarama Sector Secondary schools were females, and 66% of students were females as well.

4.2.1.2. Age distribution of English language teachers and students

The age distributions of the respondents are shown in table 5.

Table 5: Teachers' and students' age distribution

Teachers					Students		
Age Interval	16-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	11-15	16-20	21-25
Frequency	2	4	5	1	15	93	4
Percent	16%	33.3%	41.6%	8.3%	13.3%	83%	3.5%

The findings in the table 5 reveal that majority (41.6%) of English teachers were in the age between 36 and 45 years, and that the majority of students were aged between 16 and 20 years.

4.2.1.3. Academic Qualification

Data on table 6 reveal the findings on academic qualifications of English language teachers.

Table 6: English language teachers' academic qualification

Academic Qualification	Master's degree	Bachelor's degree	Diploma
Frequency	0	11	1
Percentage	0%	91.6%	8.3%

According to the findings in table 6, during the time of this study, 91.6% of English language teachers had bachelor's degrees. Only 8.3% of them had a diploma and 2 teachers representing 16.6% were not specialized in teaching (Education).

4.2.2. Learner-Centred Approach implementation rate

This part clarifies on the LCA implementation rate. Table 7 shows teachers' views about the Learner-Centred Approaches and its rate in teaching and learning English, table 8 shows students' views in that matter, and table 9 illustrates the results of English class observation.

Table 7: Approaches adopted by teachers

	Frequency	Percentage
Teacher-Centred	4	33.3%
Learner-Centred	8	66.6%
Total	12	100%

Table 7 illustrates that according to the feedback of English language teachers, the majority of them (66.6%) implement Learner-Centred Approach in teaching English. This implies that Learner-Centred Approach is used at a large extent in teaching English. The remaining part of teachers, accounting for 33,3% implement the Teacher-Centred Approach at a fair degree. This implies that even though the majority of teachers comply with REB instructions at the highest degree, there are still many of them who still use Teacher-Centred Approach in teaching English.

Regarding challenges faced during the implementation of Learner-Centred Approach, English language teachers revealed some of them: Lack of appropriate training; big classes; time consuming approach; lack of learning and teaching resources; lower level of English among students; and students' fear to speak.

Overcrowded classes is an issue for teachers to impart some important skills in students as the LCA is designed for. Skills like critical thinking and solving problems can't be developed in such populated classrooms. One of the teachers said, "*Big classes are made of big number of students, around 65-70 students in one class*". This issue was raised by many teachers when answering questionnaires. In a class of more than 65 students, it is almost impossible to make students work in adequate groups and monitor them at the same time.

Participants also raised the challenge related to the lack of learning and teaching resources. Participant 5 wrote, "*The challenge for students is that they lack materials like books.*" The same challenge was raised during the interview with students, and this was noticed during class observation.

Time consuming approach is another challenge mentioned in teachers' responses to the questionnaires. According to them, the content was huge, so that some activities would be left out since the time allocated to everything consumes time. When they try to do it as instructed, the module can't be covered on time. Participant 6 responded, "*The methods used are very time consuming. If time is not well used, the syllabus can't be covered.*" Majority of respondents also mentioned the same issue. To find a solution, teachers resort to the use of lecture so that they finish the content on time.

The challenge of ‘fear to speak’ was also revealed by both sides: teachers, and students. One of the teachers explained, “*Fear to speak: Fear to try and fail as Englishman said try and fail but don’t fail to try* (Participant 4).

Most of the time fear to speak is one of the consequences of lower level of English among students. The application of LCA requires a certain level of English as a language of instruction. If learners don’t have the minimum of English language in English class, it will be difficult for students to participate in certain activities in class.

Table 8: Students' revelation on the rate in the use of LCA

	Frequency	Percentage
Teacher-Centred	16	14.3%
Learner-Centred	96	85.7%
Total	112	100%

Table 8 illustrates students’ point of view on the implementation rate of LCA. The majority of them (85%) had shown that their teachers implement the Learner-Centred Approach at a great extent, considering the way they are taught. The remaining part of learners (14.3%) had confirmed that some of their teachers still use the Teacher-Centred Approach.

During the interviews, students highlighted some challenges such as poor students’ skills on expressing their ideas in English. English was adopted as the medium of instruction from 2009 to date. However, during the interviews with students, it was noticed that learners were still struggling with listening and speaking English language. This is a barrier for effective implementation of Learner-Centred Approach. As a consequence, some students are not able to participate in group works by providing their thoughts due to the language barriers. As consequence, the language barrier reduces the level of understanding and grasping what is explained in class.

During the interview, one of the students revealed that language barrier is a problem. Some of them don’t even understand what the teacher is teaching. There is a poor level in speaking and listening English among students. As consequence, students’ discussions in groups are held in Kinyarwanda as a common language to them.

The challenge of language barrier was also identified during class observation. Students were discussing in Kinyarwanda during group works. This challenge has also been mentioned by many teachers of English. The consequence is that when students are asked to make oral presentation about their work, they don't know what to say. Therefore, teachers prefer to skip such activities.

Table 9: The use of Learner-Centred Approach as per class observation

Principles of learner-centred teaching	Always	Often	Rare	Never
1.Social and emotional markers	(2.5%)	(25%)	(62.5%)	(6.25%)
Free opinion sharing	2	6		
Positive encouragement from the teacher		7	1	
Students' success celebrated			5	3
Students' misbehaviour effectively handled			7	1
Student's voice heard in all activities		1	7	
Students joy in class		1	7	
Teacher's joy			8	
2.Intellectual markers	(0%)	(16.2%)	(67.5%)	(13.5%)
Setting rules in the classroom				8
Prior knowledge is activated, needs assessment, pre-reading, pre-listening, writing and speaking activities		5	3	
Students have opportunity to share thinking		1	7	
Teacher encourages all students to participate		2	6	
Clear objectives and relevant to the students			6	2
Students get opportunity to discuss with their peers		1	7	
Activities and interactions appeal to a variety of learning styles and unique learning needs.			6	2
Discussions are moving from student to student			8	
Learners acquire strategies that help them learn like asking for clarification		1	6	1

Students have active role in their learning		3	5	
Checking students understanding (Formative Assessments)		2	6	
3. Physical markers	(0%)	(0%)	(7.5%)	(91.5%)
Desks or seats are arranged to facilitate discussion or collaboration.			1	7
Flexibility to a variety of seating options			1	7
Posting objectives or essential question where they are visible.				8
4. Structural markers	(0%)	(0%)	(75%)	(25%)
Students are not always reminded what to do (routines and procedures are in place)			5	3
Lessons are structured to include different learning styles			4	4
Lessons are structured in a way to avoid downtime (idling time)			7	1
Lessons include frequently changing activities			8	
Various “brain breaks” are present in the lesson structure (funny stories, making the body relaxed ...)			6	2

Table 9 is the results of class observation and illustrates the frequency of Learner-Centred markers in teaching English. The table is made of 4 main principles, and each has specific markers.

The main purpose of class observation was to verify whether what teachers and students’ responded, respectively on the questionnaires and during the interviews, could be noticed in various English language sessions. The observation focused on social and emotional markers, intellectual markers, physical markers, and structural markers.

Firstly, following the frequency of each marker in the table, social and emotional markers are dominated by the frequency “rare” 62.5%. This implies that in 8 classes observed, majority of English language teachers often don’t take into consideration students’ emotion and social

markers in class. Secondly, many of intellectual markers are at 'rare' frequency (67.5%). The implication is that students are not much active in class as suggested by the Learner-Centred Approach. Thirdly, many of physical markers are dominated by 'never' frequency (91%). Almost all teachers could not arrange desks to facilitate students' collaboration. Lastly, most of structural markers are at rare frequency (75%). The interpretation of this frequency is that majority of teachers don't give learners time to relax in class. This means that English lessons tend to be boring for students.

As the Table 9 indicates, teachers of English language rarely apply the Learner-Centred Approach. It is an indicator that students depend on teachers in their learning.

As far as challenges are concerned, lesson observation showed that classes are overcrowded in a way that students could not even be able to work in groups. There are some teachers who only gave written activities on the blackboard and asked students to work on them, but it was very hard to monitor everybody's work. Books were not used in classes. They were kept in libraries. During the class observation, it was obvious to see many students who could not say a word of English when asked by the teacher. Only some students were active in class, and many of the teachers used the Teachers-Centred Approach. The researcher noticed that Learner-Centred strategies were hardly used in classes.

A conclusion that can be drawn from the table 7 and 8 regarding the rate of implementing Learner-Centred Approach is that views of teachers (66.6%) as well as those of students (85.7%) confirmed that the approach was implemented to the great extent. But, the minority of teachers (33.3%) and students (14.3%) showed that there is an important number of English teachers who prefer the use of Teacher-Centred Approach at fair level despite REB instructions that urge all teachers of English language to use Learner-Centred Approach. However, as shown in table 9, class observation has shown that Learner-Centred Approach is not applied to the level of producing expected results.

4.2.3. Teachers' focus on main language skills

Table 10 is showing the extent to which teachers agree with focusing on each skill. This helped the study to determine which importance is given to each of the four main skills in teaching English language.

Table 10: Rates of main skills use

	To no extent		To little extent		To some extent		To a large extent		To a very large extent	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Freq.	Perce.
Reading	0		0		3	25%	5	41.6%	4	33.3%
Writing	0		0		1	8.3%	5	41.6%	6	50%
Speaking	0		0		0		0		12	100%
Listening	0		0		0		2	16.6%	10	83%

According to the table 10, teachers put much more effort on speaking and listening skills and are considered as primary skills. Whereas reading and writing skills come as secondary skills and are less exploited compared to the first two skills. And this has a great repercussion on students' performance in the National Exam or any other written work. If writing is not developed, their performance in the exams will always be unsatisfactory.

Table 11: Effect of LCA on students' performance as per teachers

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	7	58%
Agree	4	33.3%
Undecided	0	0
Disagree	1	8.3%
Strongly disagree	0	0

Table 11 establishes that majority 58% of English language teachers strongly agree that the LCA affect students' performance in English. The other part of them (33.3%) agrees only that the LCA has a fair effect on students' performance. While few of them accounting for 8.3% don't agree with that. In summary, majority of teachers totally agree that the performance of students

is affected by the LCA.

Table 12: Students' views on the effect of LCA on their performance

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	101	90.2%
Agree	11	9.8%
Undecided	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0

According to the table12, majority of students 90.2% believe to the great extent that LCA used by teachers impact the performance of students. The other part of students believes that it fairly affects their performance. So, the effect of LCA on students' performance is obvious from both sides: students and teachers.

CHAPTER FIVE:

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter a summary of this study is presented together with its conclusion. This chapter further covers recommendations as well as suggestions for further studies. The objective of this dissertation was to evaluate the implementation of the Learner-Centred Approach and identify its effects on English learners' performance in Secondary Schools of Kagarama Sector. Some of the challenges also were to be identified.

5.1. Demographic characteristics.

According to this study, all 124 respondents (100%) participated in it meeting the researcher expectations: 12 English language teachers and 112 students. All the students were in the Upper-Level Secondary Schools.

Regarding participant's gender, the majority of English language teachers (58%) were females while 42% were males, and the majority of interviewed students (66%) were females, while 44% were males. As far as their age is concerned, majority of English language teachers (41.6%) were aged between 36-45, and 33.3 % were aged between 26-25. The other part made of 16% were aged between 16-25, and 8.3% were between 46-55 years of age.

Regarding students who took part in this study, majority of them (83%) were between 16-20 years of age, and 13.3% were between 11-15. Other students (3.5%) were between 21 and 25 years of age.

Concerning teachers' academic qualifications, 91.6% of them had bachelors' degrees. Only 8.3% of them had a diploma, and only 2 teachers representing 16.6% were not specialized in teaching (Education).

5.2. Implementation rate of the recommended approach

The first objective sought to determine the implementation rate of Learner-Centred Approach in teaching English in Secondary Schools of Kagarama Sector. On the one hand, the results show that 66.6% of teachers and 85% of interviewed students confirmed that the Learner-Centred Approach is highly implemented. On the other hand, some of the teachers (33.3%) prefer the use of Teacher-Centred Approach at a moderate degree. The same opinion is shared by 14.3% of the

interviewed students. However, the results from the class observation made in different classes indicated that the Learner-Centred Approach is rarely used in most of English classes. Most of English language teachers strongly believe that Learner-Centred Approach is helpful, even if they still have many challenges.

5.3. The effect of the Learner-Centred Approach on students' performance

The second objective was to identify the degree to which the Learner-Centred Approach impact students' performance in English in Kagarama Sector Secondary Schools. Majority (58%) of English language teachers strongly agree that the Learner-Centred Approach affect students' performance. And 90.2% of students believe to the great extent that the Learner-Centred Approach have a good impact on the performance of English language students. Respondents showed that some skills, speaking and listening, are considered as more important than others. The remaining skills, reading and writing, are considered as secondary ones. The performance of students in English is measured through written tests only, and speaking and listening are not assessed, which is problematic. The assessment of the latter could increase the performance of learners since teachers focus on them much while teaching. Learners who are better at them could feel victimized.

5.4. Faced challenges in implementing the Learner-Centred Approach

The third objective was to illustrate the challenges in the implementation of Learner-Centred Approach on students' performance in English in Secondary Schools of Kagarama Sector. English language teachers in Secondary Schools of Kagarama Sector have revealed the difficulties they have in implementing the Learner-Centred Approach: Lack of appropriate training, overcrowded classrooms, syllabus overload, lower level of English among students, lack of learning and teaching resources, fear to speak in public for students, and the approach which is time consuming.

5.5. Conclusion

The findings presented above are based on to conclude that the Learner-Centred Approach is implemented. Some teachers of English language still use the Teacher-Centred Approach despite REB instructions. The study reveals that if the LCA is used properly, it can bear good achievement and improve the results of learners. This research has discovered that the speaking

and listening skills are not properly taught and assessed, yet they could have a positive impact on the performance of students who are better at them. Finally, the study shows that the full implementation of the Learner-Centred Approach is facing a number of challenges such as the lack of regular and appropriate training, overcrowded classrooms, lack of teaching and learning resources, overloaded syllabus, and the lower level of English among students.

5.6. Recommendations

Based on the results presented in in this study, the researcher recommends that:

- The Government should provide regular training to teachers about the LCA.
- The Government should provide necessary teaching and learning resources.
- The Government should increase the numbers of classes to each school to avoid the overpopulation of classrooms.
- The Government should recruit addition language teachers to buck up the overloaded teaching staff.
- The Government should include speaking and listening in the national exam.

5.7. Suggestion for further studies

Further research is suggested in looking at Effective Learner-Centred Approach and its effect on Secondary Schools learners' performance in English language in rural areas. Such studies can determine the efficacy of the recommended Learner-Centred Approach in rural area schools.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: Questionnaire to Teachers

University of Rwanda
College of Education
School of Education

Dear teacher,

I am a master's student at the University of Rwanda, in the School of Education working under the direction of Dr. Cyprian Tabaro.

I am writing to request your participation in my dissertation study which will explore Effective Learner-Centred Approach and its effect on lower-level learners 'performance in English in Kagarama Sector Secondary Schools. Teachers of English language will provide their responses regarding teaching methods they use in teaching and their correlation with students' performance.

These questions will take approximately 20 minutes of your time. You do not have to answer any question you do not wish to answer. There are no known personal risks or benefits to participating in this study. Unfortunately, there will be no compensation provided for your time and effort other than my eternal gratitude.

Data will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. I will be happy to answer any question pertaining to this study before or after you have completed the surveys. Please contact me at:

0788848064 (MTN); 0730672390 (AIRTEL)

NTANDAYERA Jean Baptiste

I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and I have received a copy of this description.

Signature of participantDate.....

A/General information:

Kindly fill the questionnaire below to the best of your knowledge. The information provided will be treated with confidentiality and will only be used for the intended purpose. Please, don't indicate your name.

1. Please, mark the box that best describes you:

Male Female

2. Please, mark the box that best shows your age:

Under age 16- 25 Age 26-35 Age 36-45 Age 46-55 Age 56 and more.

3. Please, mark your educational level

Diploma Bachelor's degree Master's degree Others

4. Please, mark the length of time you have served as a teacher at this school.

Less than 1 year ; 1-3 years ; 4-6 years ; 7-10 years ; Others

3. a) To what degree do you focus on the following skills:

	To no extent	To little extent	To some extent	To a large extent	To a very large extent
Reading					
Writing					
Speaking					
Listening					

b) Explain the reason why you focus on some of the skills and not on the others.

4. To what extent do the following skills impact your students' performance in English in National Exam

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Reading					
Writing					
Speaking					
Listening					

5. The method I use in teaching are

- chosen by myself
- requested by the school leaders
- instructions from curriculum or any other place

6. Is there any reasons behind the chosen methods?

- Yes No

If yes, what are those reasons?

7. Is there any effects of the methods you use in teaching on the performance of students?

Yes

No

If yes, explain.

8. Indicate challenges that your students, your school and you personally have that hinder the achievement of performance of your dream in English language?

.....

.....

.....

.....

9. Mention your recommendations to MINEDUC, District, Parents, Teachers, Head teacher, Students, that should help your students to have a performance of your dream in English language.

.....

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.....

APPENDIX II: Interview guide questions with students

The following questions will be used to collect data to help the researcher to provide relevant results on the effective learner-centred teaching methods and Students' academic performance. These questions will be asked students.

A. Teaching and learning

1. Gender Age Class

2. When learning English in class, do your teachers talk alone till the end of the session?
3. Are students allowed to say something while studying in class?
4. Do your teachers of English give you tasks individually or in groups?
5. Do your teachers give you tasks that require discussion among students?
6. Have you got time to make presentations in class? When and how?
7. Do your teachers give you rules to follow in class or you set them yourselves?
8. Among the following skills: **Reading, speaking, listening, writing**. Which one do your teachers of English focus on much in Class and why?
9. Decide how much you agree with the following ways of learning and teaching:

I understand better

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
When the lesson is translated in my mother tong					
When the teacher does everything for us					
When I am given a work to do myself					
When given an opportunity to exchange ideas with my colleagues in class					
When we work in small teams in class					
When I can discover a rule myself					

B /Students’ performance in English

1. When have you sat for the national test after your lower secondary studies?

2. How was the performance of students in English at that time?

3. Can you provide some reasons behind that performance?

4. Is it possible that the teaching ways of your teachers had an influence on that performance in English?

5. To what extent did the following skills impact your performance in English in National Exam

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Reading					
Writing					
Speaking					
Listening					

6. If you were a teacher of English, what would you do to improve on students’ performance in English and make them excellent?

C/ Challenges

7. What should be the obstacles you faced to have an excellent performance in National Exam of English?

APPENDIX III: Class Observation checklist

The application of learner-centered instruction strategies (observation checklist)

Principles of learner-centered teaching	Always	Often	Seldom	Never
1.Social and emotional markers				
Free opinion sharing				
Positive encouragement from the teacher				
Students success celebrated				
Students misbehavior effectively handled				
Student’s voice heard in all activities				
Students joy in class				
Teacher’s joy				
2.Intellectual markers				
Setting rules in the classroom				
Prior knowledge is activated, needs assessment, pre-reading, pre-listening, writing and speaking activities				
Students have opportunity to share thinking				
Teacher encourages all students to participate				
Clear objectives and relevant to the students				
Students get opportunity to discuss with their peers				
Activities and interactions appeal to a variety of learning styles and unique learning needs.				
Discussions are moving from student to student				
Learners acquire strategies that help them learn like asking for clarification				
Students have active role in their learning				
Checking students understanding (Formative Assessments)				
3. Physical markers				

Desks or seats are arranged to facilitate discussion or collaboration.				
Flexibility to a variety of seating options				
Posting objectives or essential question where they are visible.				
4. Structural markers				
Students are not always reminded what to do (routines and procedures are in place)				
Lessons are structured to include different learning styles				
Lessons are structured in a way to avoid downtime (idling time)				
Lessons include frequently changing activities				
Various “brain breaks” are present in the lesson structure (funny stories, making the body relaxed ...)				



RESEARCH AND INNOVATION UNIT

Rukara, 22nd May 2023

Ref: 03/DRI-CE/080(b)/EN/gi/2023

The Mayor
Kigali City
Rwanda

Re: Research recommendation letter for Mr Jean Baptiste NTANDAYERA

On behalf of the University of Rwanda-College of Education (UR-CE), I introduce Mr Jean Baptiste Ntandayera, a postgraduate student at the School of Education of UR-CE. He is writing a thesis entitled: “**Effective learner-centered Teaching methods on lower-level Secondary school Learners’ Performance in English Writing skills. A Case of Kagarama Sector**” to complete his Master of Education in English Education.

This research will involve English teachers and students of the upper-level secondary schools selected in the Kagarama sector, Kicukiro district, one of the districts of Kigali city. Therefore, we kindly request your permission for him to collect data for this study in the identified secondary schools.

We very much hope to get your usual cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

For Director,



Assoc. Prof. Eugene NDABAGA
Director of Research and Innovation
University of Rwanda-College of Education
E-mail: ndabagav@yahoo.ic
Mobile: +250788308862

Cc:

- Principal, UR-CE
- Postgraduate Program Coordinator, School of Education

University of Rwanda (URCE)
Tel: 0788848064
Email:jbntandayera@gmail.com
Date 25th May, 2023

The Mayor of Kigali City,

Dear Sir,

Re: Request for a Data Collection Authorization

Reference is made on the letter dated on 22nd May 2023 from the Directorate of Research and Innovation, UR-CE, I write this letter to request for a Data Collection Authorization for my Masters Research Project entitled **Effective Learner-Centered Approach and its effect on lower-level learners' performance in English. A case of Kagarama Sector Secondary Schools** that will be conducted in 4 selected secondary Schools in Kagarama Sector, Kicukiro district.

I am a student in Master's Program (Masters of Education, English Education, Cohort 2) in the University of Rwanda, College of Education (URCE). The requested data collection authorization is necessary for enabling and helping me as a justification to the district and to school officials to allow me conducting this research.

Please, find attached to this letter a copy of the letter from the Directorate of Research and Innovation from University of Rwanda, College of education.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



Jean Baptiste Ntandayera

CC:

District Executive Administrator (Kicukiro)

District Director of Education (Kicukiro)

Heads of Schools:

Kagarama Secondary School

GS Muyange

GS Nyanza

CGFK



Republic of Rwanda
City of Kigali



Ref. n° *1174.1*/07.01.16/23

Kigali, on... *06 JUN 2023*

Mr. Jean Baptiste NTANDAYERA
Tel: 0788848064
Email : jbnntandayera@gmail.com

Dear Sir,

Re: Your request for data collection authorization

Reference is made to your letter dated on 25th May 2023 requesting for authorization in Kagarama Sector/ Kicukiro District in the City of Kigali on “*Effective learner-centered teaching methods on lower level secondary school learners ‘performance in English writing skills. a case of Kagarama Sector’*”;

We would like to inform you that your request is hereby granted. However, before starting your research, you must first introduce you to the **Administration of Kagarama Sector** , and clarifying your need.

Sincerely,

for [Signature]
Joseph NIYONGABO
Director General of Corporate Services



Cc:

- City Manager of the City of Kigali
- District Executive Administrator/ Kicukiro
- Executive Secretary of Kagarama Sector

KIGALI

List of schools visited during research data collection

The Research Project entitled Effective learner-centered teaching methods on lower level secondary school learners' performance in English writing skills. A case of Kagarama Sector, has been conducted in 4 secondary Schools in Kagarama Sector, Kicukiro district. The researcher, NTANDAYERA Jean Baptiste, visited them and distributed questionnaires to teachers of English language and conducted an interview with selected students from the upper level secondary.

Those schools are:

SK
NKURUNZIZA Samuel
Kagarama Secondary School



GS Muyange

MUKUNABANTU Martin NT G.S MUYANGE
Kamp



GS Nyanza

UWIZERA Bernadette NT GS NYANZA
UW



CGFK

Kibinda Sebega Amable

