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INVESTIGATING FACTORS HINDERING SPEAKING SKILLS PERFORMANCE AMONG
THE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND
ARTS OF BYUMBA (UTAB)

A Research Submitted to the University of Rwanda, in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Award of a Master's Degree of Education English Education.

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Kigali July, 2024

DECLARATION

I, Costase Nsengiyaremye, hereby affirm that this dissertation is truly my effort, and where the contribution of others has been replicated, due acknowledgment has been made. This dissertation has never been submitted for any award to any institution or university.

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APPROVAL

This is to certify that this study entitled “Investigating factors hindering speaking skills performance among the undergraduate students at the University of Technology and Arts of Byumba (UTAB)” is the work of Costase Nsengiyaremye and has been done under my supervision.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my: parents, sisters, brothers, friends, and relatives.

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I begin by expressing my gratitude to the Almighty God for His guidance and blessings throughout this journey. I am also grateful for the support of the Government of Rwanda in advancing education, particularly in the Masters of Education in English Education program at the University of Rwanda, College of Education, Remera Campus. I sincerely thank my supervisors, Dr. Jean de Dieu Amini Ngabonziza and Assoc. Prof. Epimaque Niyibizi, thank you for your valuable time and invaluable guidance during this dissertation.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the factors hindering English speaking skills performance among undergraduate students at the University of Technology and Arts of Byumba (UTAB) in Rwanda. Effective oral communication (speaking) is an essential skill for success in academic, professional, and personal aspects. Despite its importance, there is a noticeable deficiency in speaking proficiency among undergraduates in Rwanda, which impedes their ability to express ideas confidently and communicate effectively. This research aimed to examine socio-cultural and educational environment factors that hinder the English-speaking performance of undergraduate students at UTAB. Adopting a descriptive quantitative research design, the study sampled 272 undergraduates using Yamane's formula from a total population of 850 students enrolled for the academic year 2022-2023. Data collection involved questionnaires and speaking tests, while data analysis employed tabulation, descriptive statistics, and Pearson correlation. By adopting socio-cultural theory, the research explored various factors affecting speaking skills development, including socio-cultural and educational environment factors. The results indicate that sociocultural factors such as lack of social support, limited opportunities for language practice outside the classroom, and insufficient English exposure at home significantly hinder students' speaking skills. In addition, educational environment factors, including fear of judgment, lack of public speaking opportunities in school settings, and psychological factors like anxiety and self-esteem, notably hinder English speaking abilities. Based on the findings, the study recommends implementing multimedia aids, establishing a language lab, and revising the curriculum to provide more opportunities for English-speaking practice. These measures are expected to enhance students' speaking proficiency and overall communication skills.

Keywords: socio-culture factors, Educational environment factors, speaking performance, English speaking interventions

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CBI: Content-Based Instruction

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

DV: Dependent Variable

EAC: East African Community

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

EMI: English as Medium of Instruction

ESL: English as Second Language.

FAEMRE: Faculty of Agriculture, Environmental Management and Renewable Energy

FBE: Fluency Building Exercises

HLI: Higher Learning Institutions

IELTS: International English Language Testing System

IL: Interlanguage Theory

IV: Independent Variable

SSMDS: Faculty of Social Science Management and Developmental Studies

TBLT: Task-Based Learning Theory

UR: University of Rwanda

UTAB: University of Technology and Arts of Byumba

CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This first chapter of the study discusses the background of the study, the problem statement, research objectives, research questions, research hypotheses, the significance of the study, and the overall structure of the study.

Background of the Study

1.1.1 Speaking Skills and Related Challenges

Speaking is a critical component of language proficiency and an essential skill for effective communication in both academic and professional settings (Gaspard et al., 2024). The English language is widely spoken all over the world with around 1.5 billion as either a first or second language. Among fifty-four countries in Africa, twenty-four of them use English as their main language. The ability to speak a foreign language fluently opens doors to new opportunities in education, employment, and personal connections. According to Tabaro (2015), Effective communication skills, particularly speaking skills, play an important role in academic success and future professional opportunities, though some people found no immediate connection between the mastery of a language (English) to a better life in terms of jobs, studies, and communication. English is a worldwide language of communication between native and non-native speakers around the world. Being able to speak English is the key to success in all aspects of life (Jusuf et al., 2021).

According to Hecheng & Peihao (2020), in the Arab world, students studying English as a foreign language struggle with developing their English-language speaking skills for various reasons. Even though English is the most popular language spoken and studied in many countries, English speaking is the most challenging skill to master among the four language skills (Keong et al., 2015). In East Africa, English is spoken and taught in all countries either as a first or second language with different accents and dialects. English speaking in Africa is hindered by the mother tongue, its teaching, or the culture of the country. English has been selected as the common language of instruction in the East African Community (EAC), and specifically the language of medium of instruction in Rwanda. Uwambayinema (2016) added that students in Rwanda like other EFL learners are still facing the problems of vowels that are not common in their first languages.

1.1.2 Historical context of English in Rwandan education

After many years of using French and Kinyarwanda in education, in 2008 the Rwandan government declared English to be the sole medium of instruction (Tabaro, 2015) and (Uwambayinema, 2016). Its teaching and learning became very cumbersome with experiences from those other languages of instruction used before it in universities. Since English is not the first language, we may expect limited exposure to English-speaking environments, inadequate language proficiency, and insufficient language learning resources that can hinder students' ability to express themselves clearly and confidently.

1.1.3 Factors promoting speaking skills performance

There is growing concern about poor speaking skills performance among undergraduate students. This issue has implications not only for individual students but also for the country's development goals, which rely on a skilled and competent workforce with the required skills. Factors that may hinder speaking skills among undergraduate students are interference from the local native language, general language learning strategies, and written English exposure. Other problems that affect students' speaking skills include lack of vocabulary, lack of pronunciation, and mother tongue hindrance.

The first factor is pedagogical practices. The pedagogical practices employed by lecturers may hinder speaking skills development. Traditional lecture-based methods, which prioritize passive listening and note-taking, may not effectively cultivate students' speaking ability. Insufficient opportunities for oral practice, lack of interactive discussions, and limited feedback from instructors can further hinder the development of effective speaking skills. Additionally, the teacher's proficiency level is important because if English only is being used, and a teacher is not proficient, it will yield no positive effects (Dearden, 2014). Even though Marie (2013) suggests that the use of students' mother tongue to explain lesson content is necessary, it lessens students' proficiency level as they fail to commit themselves to learning a language that would be done better with their both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Tabaro, 2015).

The second factor is socio-cultural factors. The hindrance of socio-cultural factors should also be considered. Cultural norms, such as fear of making mistakes and a lack of confidence in public speaking, can significantly hinder students' willingness to engage in speaking activities. These cultural barriers may limit students from actively participating in class discussions or seeking out speaking practice opportunities outside of the classroom. According to Tang, many students love reading textbooks in English and they can answer in English but reference in their mother tongue language. They do not like to participate in the Communication Arts program because they are having cultural anxiety to learn EMI

courses (Tang, 2020). This is almost the same in Rwanda where students can do their best in writing, listening, and reading, but fail to speak English due to some socio-cultural barriers and they prefer to speak in their mother tongue.

Lastly, I would like to talk about technological factors. Inadequate access to technology, limited availability of language learning software, and a lack of digital literacy skills could hinder students' ability to utilize digital tools for self-study or interactive language practice (Ibrahim & Hashim, 2021). Scholars believe that the use of technology in teaching speaking (skills) is one of the changes in how languages are taught in schools which focuses on the use of communicative language rather than just passing the (written) examination (Sosas, 2021).

1.1.4 Need for targeted interventions

Understanding the factors that hinder English speaking skills performance among undergraduate students in Rwanda is essential for designing targeted interventions and effective language teaching strategies. By identifying these factors, educators and policymakers can develop comprehensive solutions to enhance speaking skills development, improve pedagogical practices, and provide additional language learning resources. Finally, addressing this issue of English speaking would empower students to communicate effectively, widening their academic and professional opportunities, and contributing to Rwanda's overall development and competent workforce (Uwambayinema, 2016).

1.2 Problem statement

Effective communication in English, particularly in speaking, is very crucial for the academic, and future professional success of students in today's interconnected world. English proficiency has become increasingly important, particularly for university students who must engage in complex academic discourse and professional communication (Crystal, 2012) as Rwanda continues to integrate into the global economy. However, undergraduates at the University of Technology and Arts of Byumba continuously face difficulties in mastering these skills. These challenges are always seen in poor classroom participation, difficulties in presentations, and inadequate performance in oral assessments, which according to Garcia & Lin (2019) can severely limit their overall academic success and employability.

Research has proved that socio-cultural factors, such as the predominance of Kinyarwanda in daily communication and limited exposure to English outside the classroom as observed during pilot study at UTAB, play a crucial role in impeding students' speaking performance (Mukamana, 2020). In addition, there are numerous psychological factors such as lack of confidence and anxiety that fuel the hindrances

that students face when they try to communicate in English (Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). In line with Kagwesage (2013), these challenges are compounded by the educational environment at UTAB, where traditional teaching methods and insufficient resources fail to provide students with adequate opportunities to practice and improve their speaking skills.

Although these challenges are well recognized, there is still a gap in the literature regarding specific factors that hinder the development of speaking skills among UTAB undergraduates. The prior studies have mainly focused on language acquisition and general English proficiency, however, they insufficiently addressed the solitary combination of sociocultural and educational environment factors affecting speaking performance at UTAB as highlighted in the research of Niyibizi (2018). This absence of targeted research hinders the development of effective interventions that could address these challenges and thus improve undergraduates' speaking abilities.

The effects of being unable to speak English effectively are far-reaching, affecting undergraduates' academic performance and limiting their employability and integration into the professional world. With no ability to communicate effectively in English, UTAB graduates may find themselves at a competitive disadvantage in international, regional, and local job markets, where this language is often the lingua franca as argued in the research of Kirkpatrick (2010). Therefore, addressing these barriers is critical to ensure that our students are well-equipped with the needed communication to succeed academically and professionally. For that reason, this research aims to fill this gap by investigating factors that hinder speaking skills performance among UTAB undergraduates. By identifying and analyzing these factors, the study contributes to the development of targeted interventions for improving English speaking proficiency and eventually enhancing undergraduates' academic and career success.

1.3 Research objectives, questions, and hypotheses

1.3.1 General objective

This study had a general objective of investigating the factors that hinder speaking skills performance among undergraduates at UTAB

1.3.2 Specific objectives

The main objectives of this study were as follows:

1. To examine socio-cultural factors that hinder the English-speaking performance of undergraduate students at the University of Technology and Arts of Byumba (UTAB).

2. To examine educational environment factors that hinder the English-speaking performance of undergraduate students at UTAB.
3. To propose targeted interventions to overcome barriers to speaking skill development among undergraduate students at UTAB.

1.3.4 Research questions

The proposed research addressed the following questions:

1. What are the specific sociocultural factors and educational environment elements that hinder the English-speaking performance of undergraduate students at the University of Technology and Arts of Byumba (UTAB)?
2. How do socio-cultural and educational environment factors at UTAB specifically affect the development and performance of undergraduate students' speaking skills?
3. What targeted interventions can effectively address and overcome the identified barriers to English speaking skills development among undergraduate students at UTAB?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The findings from this study were significant in different ways such as improving communication skills, enhancing employability prospects, informing educational policies and interventions, and contributing to the wider knowledge of speaking skills among students. Through this study, the Rwandan community will benefit from new generations that can communicate effectively. Effective communication is an essential skill in various aspects of life, including academic, professional, and social contexts. By identifying the factors that contribute to poor speaking skills, the study can provide valuable insights into areas where interventions and improvement strategies can be implemented. By implementing those interventions and suggested strategies, Rwandan undergraduates will successfully communicate which will enable them to strongly compete in the labor market locally and internationally.

The next significance is education and human capital development. Rwanda is a rapidly developing African nation that places considerable emphasis on education and human capital development. The proficiency of undergraduates in communication skills, particularly speaking, is an important component of their preparation for the job market. Enhancing speaking skills will help students to excel in job interviews, presentations, and public speaking, thereby increasing their employability prospects and contributing to the economic growth of the country. The significance of this study is the provision of valuable information for educational policymakers and institutions. By investigating the factors that lead to poor speaking skills among undergraduates in Rwanda, the study will provide valuable information for

educational policymakers and institutions. Understanding these factors will guide the development and implementation of targeted interventions, such as curriculum improvements, teaching methods, and language support programs. Additionally, it will help in the design of communication training programs for undergraduate students, equipping them with skills necessary for effective communication in various academic and professional settings.

Lastly, it will contribute to the existing body of literature and degree awards. The study's findings will have implications beyond Rwanda, as it will contribute to the existing body of literature on communication skills and factors affecting speaking performance among undergraduates. This will facilitate cross-cultural comparisons and the identification of common challenges faced by students in different contexts. Thus, other scholars might base on this research and do further research on their contexts and countries. In addition, the successful completion of this research would award the researcher a Master's Degree in Education in English.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

Due to the financial and time hindrances, this study was geographically limited to one higher learning institution which is the University of Technology and Arts of Byumba (UTAB). However, the countrywide study would provide even more clarification about factors that hinder speaking skills performance among undergraduates. Timely, this study lasted one academic year (from September 2023 to August 2024). In addition, this research is strictly limited to factors that hinder speaking performance at the undergraduate level.

1.6 Content Dissemination

This study investigated the factors that hinder speaking skills performance among undergraduates and provided some interventions and strategies to overcome this problem. The findings from this research ought to be disseminated during different occasions such as workshops, conferences, and educational meetings.

1.7 Overall structure of the dissertation

This dissertation has five chapters. The first chapter deals with a general introduction that includes a background of the study, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, research hypothesis, significance of the study, and scope and limitation of the study. The second chapter deals with the literature review. It includes an empirical review, theoretical review, and a conceptual framework. The third chapter is the research methodology which contains the design of the study, the population of the

study, and instruments for data collection and data analysis. The second last chapter is a data presentation and discussion while the final chapter is a summary of the findings, conclusion, and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Being able to communicate in English properly has become increasingly important in today's globalized world, especially in Higher Learning Institutions (HLI) like The University of Technology and Arts of Byumba (UTAB). However, numerous factors hinder the development of speaking among undergraduates at UTAB, such as socio-cultural hindrances, and the educational environment. This literature review explores theories of language acquisition, factors influencing speaking skills among undergraduates, and potential interventions to solve the difficulties in enhancing speaking performance.

2.1 Socio-Cultural hindrances on speaking skills

The first and foremost factor is Socio-cultural background which is essential in shaping students' ability to speak English fluently. As Alrasheedi (2020) points out, factors like cultural norms, linguistic diversity, and students' prior exposure to English necessarily affect their performance. In my context (at UTAB), undergraduates sometimes come from linguistic backgrounds where Kinyarwanda is dominant. It has been observed and experienced that most of the students at UTAB come from families and areas where English is neither the first nor dominant language. This linguistic diversity can lead to fear, anxiety, and unwillingness to actively participate in different class activities, as highlighted by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) who asserted that fear of a foreign language is a barrier to language development and acquisition. In addition, Tabaro (2015) argued that motivation to learn English as a medium of instruction is sometimes hindered by sociocultural context that can impede or facilitate their eagerness to participate in English-speaking tasks.

2.2 Educational environment and speaking skills

The educational environment at UTAB also contributes to the difficulties undergraduates face in developing English speaking skills. Kagwesage (2013) debates that Rwandan students face when coping with English as a medium of instruction, focusing on the need for supportive learning environments that foster language acquisition. This is echoed by Dearden (2014), who shed light on the global trend of using English as a medium of instruction and the difficulties it presents to non-native speakers. At UTAB, the absence of adequate resources, like language labs and trained instructors fuels these challenges, making it difficult for undergraduates to practice and improve their speaking abilities.

Scholars like Kuning (2019) emphasized the role of technology in language learning by integrating technological tools in teaching speaking skills. In a similar aspect, Sosas (2021) argued that technology can strengthen undergraduates' learning experience by giving interactive platforms for language practice. However, technology use in language teaching is limited in the classroom at UTAB potentially hindering undergraduates' ability to develop their speaking skills effectively. In addition, Ibrahim and Hashim (2021) propose that videoconferencing and other digit tools can improve speaking performance. Yet, these resources are not utilized in the Rwandan higher education context, especially at UTAB.

2.3 Teaching methodologies and speaking skills development

Teaching methodologies employed by lecturers must effectively enhance undergraduates' speaking skills. Chesler and Fox (1966) suggested using role-playing methods in the classroom because they have been proven effective in improving students' confidence and speaking fluency. The authors were also supported by Garcia and Lin (2019), who asserted that role-play activities significantly increase undergraduates' speaking abilities. Furthermore, Niyibizi (2018) argues that students should be given opportunities to practice English speaking using more active methods. Despite great suggestions regarding modern teaching technology that supports the enhancement of speaking skills, at UTAB, there is still a dominance of traditional teaching methods that merely focus on rote memorization, limiting chances for students to engage in meaningful speaking practice. Furthermore, students should acquire a language more effectively when they are exposed to "comprehensive input" – language slightly beyond their current proficiency level, known as "i+1" (Krashen, 1982). This means students at UTAB should be exposed to quality input in an educational environment, which is rarely available to enhance their speaking skills.

In addition, Gudus (2015) also highlighted the benefit of classroom activities while teaching speaking, putting more emphasis on interactive tasks like group discussions, debates, and presentations to be more effective in improving undergraduates' oral proficiency. Unfortunately, these great activities are often underutilized in UTAB's classroom, where lecture-based teaching remains a habit. Felpeto (2019) argued that new approaches to teaching spoken English like task-based learning and communicative language teaching, should be adopted to address the gap in students' speaking performance.

2.4 Psychological factors

Anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and negative confidence are considered critical psychological factors that may hinder effective speaking performance as argued by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986). The

authors claimed that language anxiety stems from fear of making mistakes, fear of being judged, or previous negative experiences in language use. In addition, MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) added that the increase in language anxiety can lead to avoidance behaviors, such as reluctance to speak, which in turn inhibits the development of speaking proficiency. Furthermore, Gregersen & Horwitz (2002) added that low confidence is a psychological factor that hinders students' speaking development. The authors explained that students with low confidence (who doubt on their English speaking abilities) are unlikely to take risks in speaking, reducing the English practice opportunities and hindering their speaking development.

2.5 Strategies for enhancing speaking performance among undergraduates

To overcome the factors hindering speaking skills performance, various strategies have been proposed by different authors. Prayuda (2021) focused on the need for targeted strategies that solve students' specific language learning needs, not excluding the use of interactive methodologies, technology, and a supportive learning environment. In the same line, Mahmood and Murad (2018) argue for the benefit of understanding undergraduates' interlanguage development and providing feedback that guides them toward more accurate and fluent speech. Tang (2020) added that there should be professional development for instructors to ensure that students are well-equipped with the needed skills and knowledge, to effectively teach English as a medium of instruction. This is needed specifically for UTAB, where many instructors may have been taught in French and later asked to teach in English. This shift of language of command caused problems for instructors and thus affected students, limiting them from practicing English. Finally, Keong, Ali, and Hameed (2015) also stressed the need for continuous assessment and feedback to track students' progress and change teaching strategies accordingly.

2.6 Theoretical review

This study opted for sociocultural theory for its emphasis on the need for society and peers to teach practices in language learning and acquisition, specifically speaking skills in the context of society and educational settings.

2.6.1 Theory 1: Sociocultural Theory by Lev Vygotsky (1962)

This is the theory proposed by Lev Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist in the 19th century (Van Compernelle, 2021). It focuses on the role of social culture and interaction context in language development and learning. According to Banković (2008), Vygotsky stressed that language learning

occurs in a social context (environment) where the students and undergraduates interact with other knowledgeable figures like teachers, peers, or cultural tools, which mediate learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Specifically, in the context of speaking skills, this theory suggests that undergraduates' speaking performance is significantly hindered by the social and cultural environment in which they are submerged.

At the University of Technology and Arts of Byumba (UTAB), undergraduates come from almost the same cultural background which remarkably hinders their language learning process. Since 2008 when English was adopted to be used as a language of medium of instruction while it is a predominantly non-English-speaking environment presents unique challenges. These challenges are fueled by sociocultural including societal attitudes toward English, the availability of the English community within social networks, and students' previous exposure to English. Students in Rwanda often struggle with the English language as a medium of instruction due to the limited exposure and practice in their daily lives Kagwesage (2013).

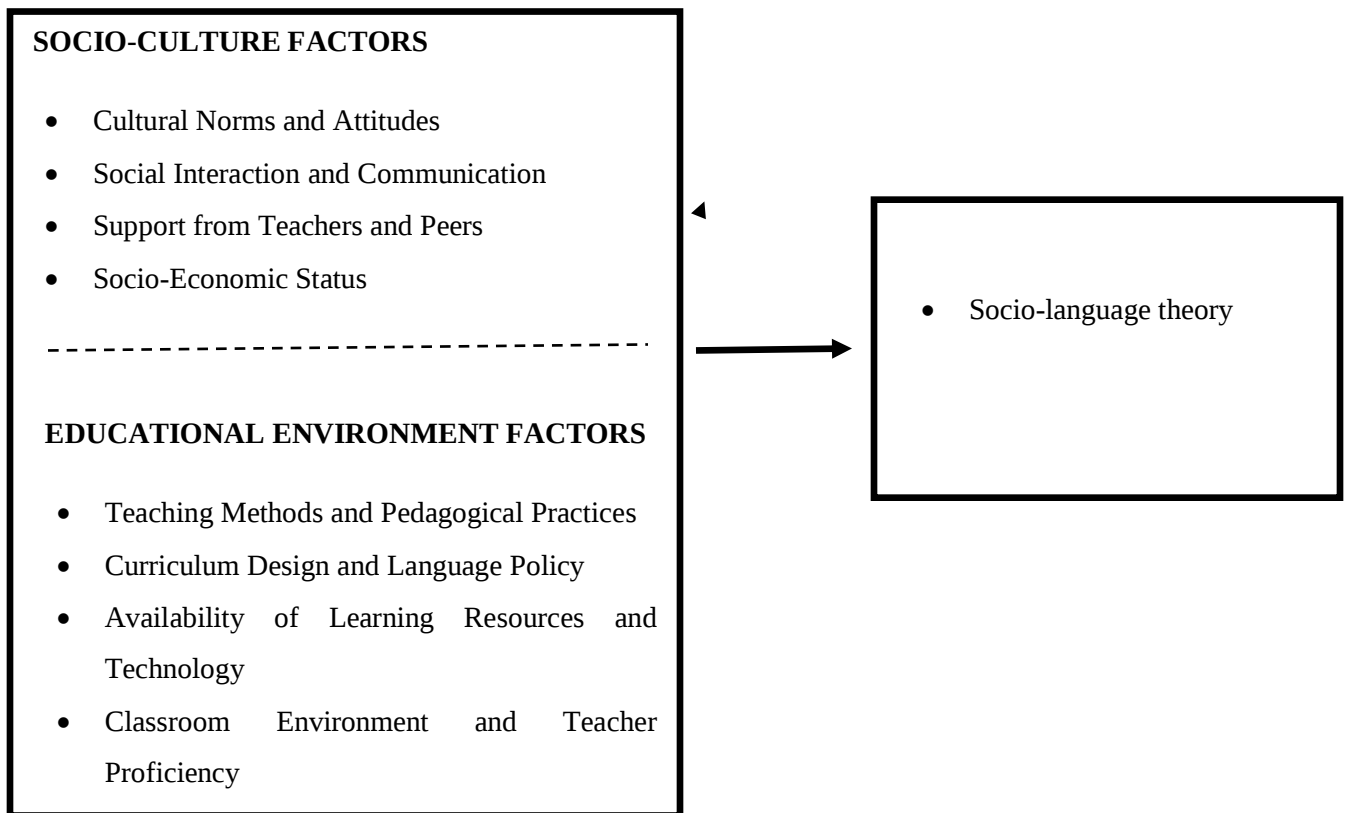
Other authors like (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986), argued that this lack of practice and the absence of an English-speaking environment may lead to anxiety and lack of confidence which are barriers to speaking performance. In addition, according to Gudus (2015), this socio-cultural theory emphasizes the benefits of collaborative learning and scaffolding, where students learn through interaction with more proficient speakers. Balbay & Dogan (2018) added that SCT considers "social interactions as the essence of cognitive development, which may differ among cultures." According to Dongyu et al. (2013), the critical difference between SCT and the cognitive approach is that SCT stresses the participation metaphor of development in language learning, unlike the cognitive approach which focuses on language learning through internal mental processes.

In the context of UTAB, opportunities for such interactions are limited, thus hindering students' speaking skills. The cultural norms bordering communication, such as preference for listening over speaking may also affect undergraduate students' willingness to practice speaking performance in class or social settings. This theory suggests that to improve speaking performance, it is necessary to create a supportive social environment that supports active participation and interaction in English.

2.6.2 Theoretical Framework

Figure 1: Theoretical framework

In the figure below, the researcher has visually shown that socio-culture theory answers the first research question while Interlanguage theory answers the second research question.

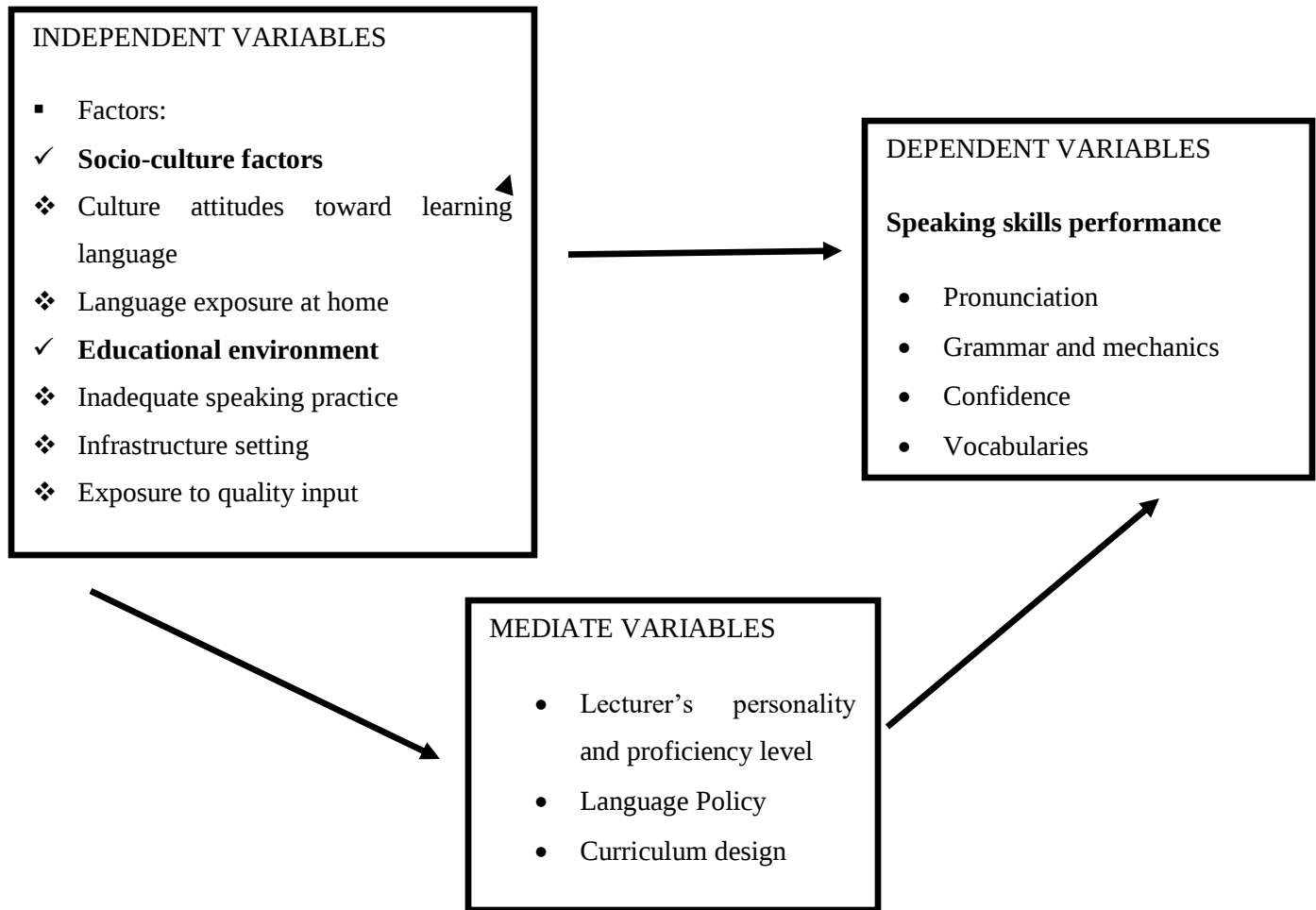


Source: The researcher, 2024

The figure above shows how opportunities for social interaction and communication with people around the students support the development of speaking skills (socio-cultural theory).

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a representation of the relationship expected to be seen between variables of the study. Here is the conceptual framework for this study:



Source: The researcher, 2024

Figure 1: Relationship among research variables.

Under the control of Empirical review, the independent variables that have been used in this research were factors such as Socio-cultural and educational environment that support the dependent variable which was speaking skills among undergraduate students. They explained the reason why undergraduate students are still struggling with pronunciation, errors in Grammar and mechanics, confidence, and vocabulary. Mediating variables were understood as variables that transmit the effect of one variable to another variable. Therefore, with all the mentioned factors along with the lecturer's personality and proficiency level, language policy, and curriculum design, undergraduate students can speak poorly or effectively.

2.7 Research Gap and Synopsis Literature Review

Many scholars found speaking skills to be challenging to ESL learners, but there is little known about the Rwandan context specifically at UTAB which is a country where the first language (Kinyarwanda) is spoken by the majority of people (more than 90%) and thus English is learned from school only. Rwanda with its own culture, language, and beliefs needs to be studied in depth so that the new generations would be able to communicate with the outside world in terms of business, relationships, and cultural diversity. The review of the literature on investigating the factors that hinder speaking skills among undergraduate students in Rwanda, a case of UTAB, was carried out based on factors influencing speaking skills among students and effective teaching strategies for speaking proficiency development. The study was framed by three main theories including sociocultural, Interlanguage, and Krashen's theory.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This research methodology section sets out the research design adopted for this study and the reasons why such design is deemed appropriate. The research methodology outlined the procedures and techniques that were used to investigate the factors hindering speaking skills among undergraduate students in Rwanda, a case of the University of Technology and Arts of Byumba. This study aimed to identify and analyze various elements that may hinder students' speaking proficiency in English. In addition, this chapter outlined the population of interest and sampling designs as well as the data collection methods and data analysis methods used in presenting and explaining the results of the study. It also briefed about the ethical clearance process and limitations of the study.

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive quantitative research design, which is suitable for investigating the factors that hinder speaking skills performance among undergraduate students at the University of Technology and Arts of Byumba (UTAB). This design allows for data collection and analysis of numerical data to show the current status of speaking skills performance and identify the factors contributing to the challenges in this area (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). By using this design, the study sought to quantify the hindrance of various factors on speaking performance, thereby providing insights that can inform targeted interventions.

3.2 Population and Sampling Techniques

3.2.1 Study population

Based on the meaning of population, according to Shukla (2020) and Rahim (2008), the population of this study about the factors that hinder speaking skills performance among undergraduate students in Rwanda is all undergraduate students enrolled in the academic year 2022-2023. The total population is 850 undergraduate students enrolled at UTAB in the academic year of 2022-2023 in three different faculties. This targeted population includes 640 students from the Faculty of Education, 70 students from the Faculty of Social Sciences, Management and Development Studies (SSMDS), and 140 students from the Faculty of Agriculture, Environmental Management and Renewable Energy (FAEMRE).

3.2.2 Sample size and sampling technique

In scientific research, there are two main types of sampling which are probability and non-probability sampling. On one hand, probability sampling includes some statistical elements of probability for any member to be included in the research while non-probability sampling is a method where the elements in the population do not have a known probability of being selected (Rahim, 2008). In this study, the researcher used therefore probability sampling due to its nature. On one hand, Taro Yamane's formula was employed to select the sample size of 272 students from three faculties. On the other hand, stratified random sampling was used to ensure that the sample was representative of the three faculties at UTAB. This approach involved putting the population into strata based on faculties at UTAB, and then, randomly selecting participants from each stratum in proportion to the size of the stratum with the population (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). Yamane's formula is as follows:

Formulae: $n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$ Where:

n was the sample size, N was the total population and e was the margin of error. The margin error, e, can be given based on the fact that the investigator considers 5% as a confidence level calculated by just dividing by 100. Therefore, 5% is equivalent to 0.05.

By using this formula our sample size was calculated as follows:

$$N = 850 / 1 + 850(0.05)^2 = 272 \text{ students}$$

By using stratified sampling, our sample size would be divided as follows:

Table one: Sample size by faculties

Faculties	Sample	Percentage
Faculty of Education	205	75.3%
Faculty of Social Sciences, Management and Development Studies	22	8%
Faculty of Agriculture, Environmental Management and Renewable Energy	45	16.5%

Total number	272	100%
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Source of data: May 2024

3.3 Data collection methods

To achieve the objectives of this research, a quantitative approach was employed. The primary of this research were collected in the following stages: questionnaires and tests.

3.3.1 Questionnaires

According to (Bryman, 2016), the questionnaire is a widely used tool in descriptive quantitative research for collecting data on respondents' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. A structured questionnaire was developed by the researcher to collect data on factors hindering speaking skills performance among undergraduate students at the University of Technology and Arts of Byumba (UTAB). The questionnaire consisted of both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions, allowing the quantification of responses. Furthermore, the questionnaire was divided into three sections which are Demographic information, Socio-cultural, and educational environment factors. This stage lasted one month.

3.3.2 Speaking test

Furthermore, a speaking test was administered face to face and online by a panel of evaluators objectively to assess the speaking skills of the participants. The speaking test was designed to evaluate key aspects of speaking performance like pronunciation, fluency, accuracy, and coherence (Luoma, 2004). In its structure, the speaking test included tasks that require students to speak on topic, engage in discussions, and express their opinions. This stage lasted 3 months. The rubric used during testing undergraduate students' speaking levels was adopted from international English language proficiency tests like IELTS (O'Sullivan & Weir, 2011).

3.3.3 Observation

Observation as a data collection instrument was employed to gather data on students' speaking behaviors and classroom interactions in a real context. This provided the researcher with real, additional, and vivid insights into the factors hindering speaking skills performance among undergraduate students such as confidence, participation levels, and the impact of classroom environment. For this stage, the researcher prepared a structured observation checklist to record specific behaviors and interactions during classroom activities. The content of the checklist

included elements of students' engagement, peer interaction, and the use of English during class discussion. In addition, this allowed the researchers to catch real-time data that could not be fully revealed through questionnaires (Mertens, 2010).

3.4 Data collection procedure

In the data collection process, the researcher collected data in two stages. After obtaining authorization from UTAB authorities, questionnaires were given to students to select samples of undergraduate students at UTAB. Enough time was given to students to complete the questionnaires and the research was always for students in case they needed any support. On the other hand, in the second phase, speaking tests were administered to the same group of people. The researcher scheduled the participants at different times. During speaking tests, the researcher always made sure that the environment and place were supportive (quiet) for the speaking test. In addition, speaking sessions were recorded with the participant's consent to allow for detailed analysis and to ensure the accuracy of the assessments.

3.5 Data Management and Analysis

3.5.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data collected from questionnaires were systematically recorded and entered into Excel software for analysis. The use of Excel facilitated the organization and preliminary analysis of the data. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and mean were employed to summarize the responses. On another hand, the analysis was focused on speaking tests administered to the students. The students' performances were evaluated using an IELTS-adopted scoring rubric. This rubric assessed various aspects of speaking skills such as pronunciation, vocabulary usage, Grammar, and coherence. Each student's performance was scored based on these criteria, resulting in a set of final scores. Finally, the researcher used Pearson correlation to test the research hypothesis. By calculating the Pearson correlation coefficient, the researcher was to determine whether there was a statistically significant relationship between these factors and the students' speaking performance (Moore et al., 2006).

3.5.2 Validity and Reliability of Data

3.5.2.1 Validity

To ensure content validity, the questionnaire and speaking test were reviewed by the supervisors who are an expert in language education and research methodology.

3.5.2.2 Reliability and Piloting

A pilot study was carried out on a small students' number to test the study's feasibility, validity, and reliability before expanding the study to 272 students enrolled in the academic year of 2022-2023 as the selected sample size. The methods used were the same as the ones used in the whole study such as questionnaires and a speaking test. The Pearson correlation was used to assess internal consistency.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance was sought from both the University of Rwanda the University of Technology and Arts of Byumba (UTAB) and the University of Rwanda (UR). Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and measures were taken to ensure voluntary participation. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout this research process, with all data being stored and used solely for academic purposes (Resnik, 2020).

3.7 Limitations of the study

Although this research aims to provide valuable insights into the factors hindering speaking skills performance among undergraduate students at UTAB, some limitations must be admitted. Due to students' level of development, the use of self-reported data in the questionnaires may introduce bias, as respondents might provide socially desirable answers, but Observation allowed the researcher to bring back the balance in scientific and reliable data. Additionally, the findings may not be generalizable to other institutions with different socio-cultural and educational environments. Despite these limitations, the study's rigorous methodology and comprehensive data collection approach yielded meaningful results.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

To achieve the aims of this research explained in the previous chapters, the researcher collected data from the sample size of the respondents through questionnaires and speaking tests. The purpose of this chapter is to present, analyze, and interpret the results related to the factors that hinder speaking skills performance among undergraduate students in Rwanda, a case study of the University of Technology and Arts of Byumba (UTAB).

4.1 Data Presentations

4.1.1 Demographic features for respondents

Demographic information is essential in research for several reasons. This section provides insights into the characteristics of the population studied, like age, gender, education level, income, occupation, and cultural background, helping researchers understand diversity and varied responses (Mertens, 2014; Creswell, 2013). Researchers can conduct targeted analyses, compare responses across groups, and assess generalizability. Demographics is very important as it reveals diversity within the population and also shows how demographic factors can hinder the outcomes (Babbie, 2016). Demographic data can help the researcher to analyze targeted analyses and be able to compare responses across various groups, making his research findings valid and reliable (Field, 2013; Trochim, 2006). Finally, the research findings from this section are key to informing policy decisions, as they allow interventions and strategies development needed for specific groups (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014). Therefore, in this research, the researcher analyzed gender and age factors potentially contributing to factors hindering speaking performance among undergraduate students.

4.1.1.1 Gender characteristics of respondents

Understanding how gender hinders the development of speaking skills is crucial for addressing gender-related issues and disparities in language learning and development among undergraduate students (Connell, 2002; Ridgeway, 2011).

In the table below, the researcher summarized the gender-related data of participants:

Table 2: Gender of the participants

GENDER	Number	Percentage
Male	140	71.1%
Female	57	28.9%
Total number	197	100

Source: Field data (May 2024).

The table above revealed that the majority of the participants were males 71.1% and females 28.9%. During speaking tests, female respondents kept emphasizing their responsibilities after school. Most of them stressed social-related issues that females always get busy at home with housework, limiting them from practicing English-speaking activities outside of school. Responses from the participants especially females said, they never get opportunities for English movies, songs, conversations, etc because they have socially grown being told that they are responsible for work at home including cooking, mending, washing, etc. The research conducted by Alrasheedi (2020) revealed that linguistic diversity and social and cultural norms significantly affect speaking performance. Here the research started to evaluate this as a challenge for females to improve their speaking performance.

On the other hand, many males responded that they never practice speaking because they spend most of their time (outside of school) doing other stuff like playing and watching football, Kinyarwanda, or translated movies. According to Krashen's Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982), individuals improve their speaking when they are exposed to quality input. This is one way of getting exposed to a better English-speaking environment by watching movies, music, and news from English native speakers, yet it is used by many UTAB undergraduate students. Briefly, females' and males' mindsets regarding outside activities should be adjusted, and some activities that help them to improve their speaking performances.

4.1.1.2 Description of the age of respondents

According to (Baltes, 1987; Neugarten, 1979), age is a key factor in research for its correlation with developmental stages, affecting attitudes, behaviors, and cognitive abilities. In the context of this

research, age-related data is necessary for designing potential interventions for improving speaking development, ensuring that the needs of each generation are met in education, health, and psychology (Baltes & Smith, 2004). Comparing answers from different age cohorts helps the researcher to identify the trends and disparities, which in turn supports in development of effective policies and programs (Neugarten, 1996).

The table below shows the age of the participants who participated in this research entitled Investigating Factors Hindering Speaking Skills among Undergraduate Students in Rwanda:

Table three: Age of the participants

Age of participants	Number	Percentage
18-20 years	17	8.5%
21-25 years	87	44.2%
26-30 years	64	32.5%
Above 30 years	29	14.8%
Total number	197	100

Source: Field data (May 2024).

As presented in the table above, most of this study's participants are youths 168 equal to 85.2% (less than 30 years old). The majority of participants are youth 44.2% aged between 12-25, followed by 32.5% aged between 25-30, and a smaller group of 8.5% aged between 18-20. The minority of the participants is 14.8% aged above 30 years old. According to (Baltes, 1987), younger students especially those who are in their early twenties should be more advantageous for being adaptable to learning a new language and acquiring new skills compared to those who are in their late 30 years. Even though this category of students is likely to learn and acquire language quickly, they are likely to face the challenge of anxiety and lack of confidence in speaking which are potential factors hindering speaking performance (Horwitz et al., 1986).

According to (Kagwesage, 2013), students in their later 30 years may face diverse challenges related to their life experience, interference of their mother tongue that they have been exposed to for many years, and possession of deep-seated linguistic habits that can barely change. It may also be due to more responsibilities than those who are still young as life responsibilities increase with age (Neugarten, 1996).

4.2 Study results related to objectives

This dissertation specifically aims to investigate factors hindering speaking skills performance among undergraduate students in Rwanda, specifically at UTAB. After identifying these factors, the researcher would suggest possible interventions to boost speaking skills performance among undergraduate students, which is helpful to become successful in their academics, professions, and careers after school.

4.2.1 Finding 1: Identify and examine Sociocultural factors that hinder English speaking skills

This section answers the objective of the study which is to explore the extent to which socio-cultural factors hinder speaking skills performance of undergraduate students at UTAB. The findings are presented in this section. Therefore, it aims to answer the first objective of the study, identifying socio-cultural and educational environment factors hindering speaking performance among undergraduate students.

The findings related to the socio-cultural factors hindering speaking performance among undergraduate students at UTAB are summarized in the table below:

Table four: Students’ Perceptions of Socio-culture Factors Hindering their English Speaking Skills Performance ((NOTE: Strongly Disagree SD, Disagree D, Neutral N, Agree A, Strongly Agree SA)

STATEMENTS	D	SD	N	A	SA
I feel comfortable speaking English in social situations outside of the classroom.	41%	30.9%	2%	15.5%	10.6%
English is commonly spoken in my home environment.	84.9%	12.3%	0%	1.2%	1.6%
I have adequate opportunities to practice speaking English outside of class (e.g., online resources, and language learning apps).	43%	22.7%	13%	11.3%	20%
My cultural background influences how I learn and use English.	25%	13%	5%	38%	19%
I believe that my cultural identity is challenged when I speak English.	12.6%	10.6%	16.7%	36.5%	23.3%

My friends and family encourage me to improve my English-speaking skills.	49.8%	44.3%	2.5%	1.4%	2%
Total number of respondents for each statement:					197(100%)

Source: Field data (May 2024).

Undergraduate students' perceptions regarding socio-cultural factors affecting their speaking performance are summarized in the table above. The findings highlight the significant hindrance of sociocultural factors on the speaking performance of UTAB undergraduate students. It sheds light on complex interactions between cultural identity, environmental influence, and social dynamics that work together to affect students speaking fluency.

First of all, the overwhelming majority of the participants 94.1 % disagreed with the statement that friends and family encourage them to improve their English speaking skills. The results revealed that there is limited social support for English-speaking development within the students' community (specifically among their very close social members). This lack of social support leads to a lack of motivation and confidence and eventually impedes speaking performance and development. This completes the findings of Vygotsky (1978) in socio-cultural theory that suggests social interactions are the key to intellectual cognition including, language. This also aligns with Gudus (2015) who argued that the lack of social support and opportunities to practice a language outside of the classroom significantly contribute to hindrances of language acquisition especially speaking.

The second most prominent socio-cultural factor is limited English exposure in the home environment. The most striking finding is that 97.2% of the participants disagreed with the statement that they live in a home where is spoken. This is a critical barrier to language acquisition because the home environment is essential for language practice and motivation. This aligns with Karashen (1982) who noted that continuous exposure to quality language input in different contexts supports effective language learning. This is a challenge in the Rwandan context, where Kinyarwanda is the dominant language. Most students added that the common language to be used at home is their mother tongue language which does facilitate English speaking practice, ultimately hindering speaking performance.

Other socio-cultural factors present from the research findings include Speaking English in social situations outside the classroom, inadequate opportunities for practicing English outside class, cultural identity and language use, and the hindrance of cultural background on learning English. According to Chesler and Fox (1966), social interaction is vital to language practice and the development of communicative competence. Yet, the results show that 71.9% of the participants did not participate in

Speaking English in social situations outside the classroom. This is due to cultural or linguistic preferences like Kinyarwanda which is common to most social members. On the other hand, Felpeto (2019) argues that language practice is essential for developing English speaking, yet the findings show that 65.7% of participants claimed that there are no adequate opportunities for practicing English outside class. Regarding cultural identity and language use, the findings reveal that 60.1% of the participants' English speaking challenges their cultural identity as it is viewed as being arrogant and mean to others. Finally, data shows that 57% of participants agreed that their cultural backgrounds influence the way they learn, speak, and use the English language.

4.2.2 Finding 2a: Identify and examine Educational environment factors hindering English speaking skills

The findings related to the Educational environment factors hindering speaking performance among undergraduate students at UTAB are summarized in the table below:

Table five: Students' Perceptions of Educational Environment Factors Hindering their English Speaking Skills Performance (NOTE: Strongly Disagree SD, Disagree D, Neutral N, Agree A, Strongly Agree SA)

STATEMENTS	D	SD	N	A	SA
My teachers provide constructive feedback on my English-speaking skills.	39.3%	20.9%	5%	15.5%	19.3%
The use of English as the medium of instruction helps me develop my speaking skills.	12.9%	13.3%	2%	53.2 %	18.6%
I feel confident when speaking English in front of my classmates.	43%	22.7%	10%	14.3%	10%
Group discussions in class have improved my ability to express myself in English.	35%	28%	0.8%	28%	8.2%
Multimedia aids (e.g., videos, and audio recordings) are used effectively in my English classes.	40.1%	20.3%	7.1%	26.5%	6%
There are adequate opportunities for speaking practice during my English classes at UTAB.	49.8%	17.9%	0.9%	14.1%	17.3%
Total number of respondents for each statement:	197(100%)				

Source: Field data (May 2024).

Data from the table above highlights barriers within the educational environment at UTAB affecting undergraduate students' speaking performance. The findings show that most of the students (60.2%) confirmed that they do not receive constructive feedback from their instructors regarding their weaknesses and strengths in speaking performance, hindering students speaking development as emphasized by (Niyibizi, 2018). However, the good news is that 71.8% revealed that using English as the language of a medium of instruction helped them to improve their speaking skills, which aligns with Karashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis that emphasizes the fact that individuals acquire a language especially speaking skills due to their exposure to quality Input which is slightly higher than their level. Regarding being confident while English speaking, the findings revealed that 65.7% of the participants present a lack of confidence when they are speaking in front of their classmates, which reflects a gap between learning a language and being able to use it effectively.

According to Kuning (2019) and Ibrahim and Hashim (2021), interactive activities like group discussions play an important role in enhancing speaking skills by providing opportunities for authentic practice. Yet, at UTAB, responses from students (63%) show that they do not believe that group discussions helped them to improve their abilities to express themselves in English. The lack of perceived effectiveness in group discussions may indicate either a deficiency in the way these activities are conducted or a lack of support structures, such as teacher facilitation, which are crucial for maximizing the benefits of such interaction. In addition, the findings highlighted the ineffective use of multimedia resources. The majority of the population (60.4%) disagreed that multimedia aids are used effectively. This contrasts the impacts of technology on language learning as noted by Kuning (2009) and Sosas (2021). This underutilization of technology does not only limit authentic practice for speaking skills but also shows a lack of exposure to a diverse comprehensible linguistic input, which would enhance language learning as proposed by Krashen (1972). Thus, this also contributes to undergraduate students' speaking performance.

Finally, the findings alarm that 67.7% of students feel they do not have adequate opportunities for speaking practice during English classes, which hinders their English speaking performance. Yet, Muhamood and Murad (2018) suggested that students improve their language through regular practice that helps them move beyond the interlanguage stage and achieve fluency. Lack of adequate speaking practice opportunities contributes to the struggles students at UTAB face, leading to the challenges observed in the UTAB context. Briefly, although the data suggests that some aspects of the educational environment support learners' language learning, significant gaps remain, especially in providing constructive feedback, improving confidence in students, supporting group discussions, and effective use of multimedia resources in teaching the English language, specifically speaking skills.

4.2.3 Finding 2b: Identify and examine Educational environment factors hindering English speaking skills

The table below summarizes the findings from 8 observation sessions. It supplements the findings from the questionnaire.

The researcher attended English lessons to vividly check in-classroom environments that affect students' speaking skills performance. The responses are summarized below:

Table six: Observation data quantifying table (in 8 sessions) From February 2024 up to June 2024.

Observation items	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S8	Tot	%
1. Student Engagement									
Students are actively participating in class discussions	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	5/8	62.5%
2. Peer Interaction									
Students collaborate effectively during group discussions	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2/8	25%
3. Use of English									
Students use English consistently during class activities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0/8	0%
Students switch to their mother tongue when they struggle with English	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	7/8	87.5%
4. Confidence and Anxiety									
Students appear confident when speaking in front of the class	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2/8	25%
Students hesitate or avoid speaking tasks	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	5/8	62.5%
5. Classroom Environment									
The teacher encourages all students to participate in speaking activities	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8/8	100%

There are sufficient opportunities for students to practice speaking 0 0 1 1 0 0 1 3/8 37.5%

6. Technological Integration

Students use technological tools (e.g., audio, video) to aid in speaking 0 0 0 1 0 0 1 2/8 25%

Technological tools are used effectively by the teacher to support speaking tasks 0 0 0 0 1 1 0 2/8 25%

Data from observation supplemented the findings from the questionnaire and the reviewed literature of this study. 62.5% of observation sessions showed that students actively participate in class discussions. However, these class discussions are not effective in enhancing undergraduate students' speaking skills performance. The majority are still giving their ideas and opinions in Kinyarwanda which is their mother tongue, limiting their opportunities for English practice. However, according to Ibrahim and Hashim (2021), these group activities should be effective in improving students speaking skills. Although they appear working in groups (collaboratively), the minority of the observation sessions (25%) are only effective. In most cases, lecturers do not support these discussions by ordering, organizing, and controlling the way these discussions are conducted. There is no adequate participation, and many others are passively participating in the discussions, especially in the English language. The results of all these is that a great number of students as observed in this study (87.5%) keep switching from English to Kinyarwanda. In the same point, our observation sessions confirmed that there is no consistent use of English language during class activities (0%). This is a critical challenge for English speaking practice and it may affect students' confidence and anxiety, hindering effective oral communication in English Muhamood and Murad (2018).

Confidence and anxiety are other factors as revealed from our observation sessions. From the data, only 25% are confident during speaking activities in front of their classmates. Many undergraduate students at UTAB appear to read throughout their presentations instead of having effective presentations with public speaking skills, which indicates low confidence. This result aligns with MacIntyre & Gardner (1994) who noted that this is a barrier to English speaking and development. This can explain why in most cases (67.5) students avoid such kinds of activities. Although lecturers (100%) keep encouraging all students to participate in speaking activities, findings from observation revealed that only 37.5% are given opportunities to participate in those activities. This also supplements the findings from questionnaires that there is a lack of opportunities for students to practice English speaking, which also affects undergraduate students' speaking performance.

Finally, the researcher noticed a lack of effective integration of technology in teaching English language and speaking skills during the observation period. UTAB like many other universities from developing countries has basic tools for technology. However, the findings revealed that even the existing tools are not effectively used. Students use technological tools (25%) to support their speaking skills and this is equal to the level lecturers use technology to support speaking tasks. Few students use their phones to check correct pronunciations for some difficult words while a lesser number use some applications like YouTube to access content they are learning.

4.2.4 Finding 2c: Undergraduate students speaking performance

The table below summarizes the English speaking performance as collected from speaking tests. It helped the researcher to understand the nature of the problem, identifying specific areas where students are struggling and providing targeted interventions.

Table seven: Students speaking performance from speaking test

Grading criteria for English speaking skills	Number	Percentage
Fluency and Coherence	76	38.5%
Lexical Resource	68	44.6%
Grammatical Range and Accuracy	101	51.2%
Pronunciation	44	22.3%
The mean of their performance in speaking:	72	(39.15%)

Source: Field data (May 2024).

These speaking test results give extensive and valuable insights into the challenges faced by undergraduate students at the University of Technology and Arts of Byumba (UTAB) in their speaking performance, in alignment with both socio-cultural and educational environments. First of all, the findings show that 38.5% of the students passed in fluency and coherence, which suggests that many students struggle with organizing their thoughts and expressing them fluidly in English. This finding is in alignment with the research conducted by Niyibizi (2018) who noted that lack of regular practice and exposure to English can hinder the development of fluency. Lack of fluency which is closely connected to the frequency and quality of opportunities may be due to the students' reluctance to speak and lack of confidence as observed in class, as noted in the previous findings (Kuning, 2019).

The second point is that there is a moderate rate (44.6%) of vocabulary acquisition among undergraduate students at UTAB. This level of performance in lexical resources may be the result of limited exposure to English outside of the classroom and insufficient use of multimedia aids, which are educational environment factors as noted by (Ibrahim & Hashim, 2021). Social cultural factors such as lack of encouragement from peers and family for English use as identified in the previous findings significantly hindered their vocabulary development. However, the findings look good when it comes to Grammatical range and accuracy. The findings show that the pass rate of 51.2% is relatively high compared to other components of speaking skills. However, it still leaves a layer for struggles in grammar, which can be attributed to inconsistent feedback to language errors provided by lecturers (Selinker, 1972; Mahmood & Murad, 2018). As observed, the educational environment at UTAB does not sufficiently render the corrections and reinforcement needed for improving grammatical accuracy. This is due to the class size which can be a barrier to the individual needs.

Finally, the findings show that the most concerning area of speaking for UTAB students is the low pass rate of 22.3%. Since pronunciation is considered a critical component of oral communication, difficulties in this area may result in speaking skills impediment and rarely understood (Krashen, 1982). The outcomes are consistent with literature that suggests sociocultural factors, like the hindrance of the mother tongue and limited exposure to native speakers contribute to challenges in mastering English pronunciation (Ibrahim & Hashim, 2021). Overall, the test results deepen the need for target interventions to solve the gap in students' English-speaking performance at UTAB. The insufficient scores in the areas of fluency, coherence, and pronunciation are especially troubling. This suggests that students are not receiving sufficient opportunities and support to improve these skills.

4.3 Testing the first hypothesis (H1)

4.3.1 Finding 3a: There is a correlation between Sociocultural factors and undergraduate students' speaking performance.

In this section, the researcher calculated the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) to show how educational environments correlate with students' speaking skills performance. According to Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken (2003), the Pearson correlation shows the relationship between two variables, not the cause of the other.

Decision rule: $r = 0$, there is no correlation between the two variables, and when $r \neq 0$ this means there is a correlation between two factors. It is also important to note that a correlation can be negative (1) or positive (+1).

By applying the Pearson correlation formula which is:

$$r = \frac{n(\sum xy) - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{[n\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2][n\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2]}}$$

$$r = \frac{4 \cdot 17555 - (241)(289)}{\sqrt{4(14755 - (241)^2)(4 \cdot 22537 - (289)^2)}} = 0.90$$

Interpretation of the Pearson correlation for H1:

The results regarding my findings are interpreted as follows:

- a) If the correlation coefficient is -1, it indicates a strong negative relationship. It implies a perfect negative relationship between the variables.
- b) If the correlation coefficient is 0, it indicates no relationship.
- c) If the correlation coefficient is 1, it indicates a strong positive relationship. It implies a perfect positive relationship between the two variables.

Conclusion: with the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of 0.90, the researcher concluded that there is a strong positive correlation between sociocultural environment and English-speaking performance. This means that as the quality of the sociocultural environment improves, speaking skills performance tends to improve significantly as well. In brief, this means promoting the use of English in social settings, increasing exposure to English media, and encouraging community and family support for English language learning.

4.3.2 Finding 3b: Testing second hypothesis (H2): There is a correlation between the educational environment and undergraduate students' speaking performance.

In this section, the researcher calculated the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) to show how educational environments correlate with students' speaking skills performance.

Decision rule: $r = 0$, there is no correlation between the two variables, and when $r \neq 0$ this means there is a correlation between two factors. It is also important to note that a correlation can be negative (1) or positive (+1).

$$r = \frac{n(\sum xy) - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{[n\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2][n\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2]}}$$

$$r = 4*10693 - 124*289 / \sqrt{(4*64090 - 124^2)*(4*22537 - 289^2)} = 0.81$$

Interpretation of the Pearson correlation for H2:

The results regarding my findings are interpreted as follows:

- a) If the correlation coefficient is -1, it indicates a strong negative relationship. It implies a perfect negative relationship between the variables.
- b) If the correlation coefficient is 0, it indicates no relationship.
- c) If the correlation coefficient is 1, it indicates a strong positive relationship. It implies a perfect positive relationship between the two variables.

Conclusion: with the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of 0.81, the researcher concluded that there is a strong positive correlation between the education environment and the speaking performance of undergraduate students at UTAB. While the correlation is a slightly lower perfect correlation (+1), this coefficient indicates that improvement in the educational environment is strongly associated with better speaking skills among undergraduate students at UTAB. This suggests that as the quality of the educational environment like better teaching methods, more resources, and supportive classroom interactions undergraduate students' speaking skills tend to improve as well.

Finding 3: Potential interventions for improving English speaking skills

The findings in this section answered this study's third objective, which is to provide potential interventions to enhance English-speaking performance among undergraduate students.

In section D of the questionnaire, the students from UTAB highlighted key interventions that they believed would significantly enhance their English speaking performance. Their ideas are visually categorized into five categories, which are: public speaking and presentation skills, peer-led learning and feedback, real-life application and consistency, interactive group activities, as well as multimedia and technological integration. In addition, each of these addresses specific challenges that students face in English-speaking development.

The first key intervention is public speaking and presentation skills. This aligns with Krashen's Input Hypothesis which suggests that exposing a student to a slightly higher language source helps that individual to learn a language better. If the students are given these opportunities to speak in public particularly when they are with their colleagues, lecturers, and administrators, students will do their best to lock their oral communications. The people with high linguistic levels may also support the students which may help them to gain more English speaking skills. It is also supplemented by the research of Alrasheed (2020) who emphasized the benefits of active language use in structured environments like presentations for speaking development. Peer-led learning and effective feedback may be the solution to the issues of speaking performance. Peer-led learning permits students to interact and work collaboratively, supporting each other toward success. Feedback from peers or lecturers may be meaningful for scaffolding students' linguistic capacities. This aligns with Mukamana (2020) who noted the benefits of collaborative learning.

Furthermore, Real-life application and consistency can be essential to enhance students' speaking capacity. It gives opportunities to students for language use in their real context (of UTAB). This intervention ensures that the interim language is progressively refined through the practical use of language, leading to the elimination of errors. On the other hand, Effective interactive group activities are another potential intervention. This intervention aligns with the sociocultural theory proposed by Vygotsky. This theory emphasizes the role of social interaction in learning and group activities that provide a good context for meaningful language use. According to Mukamana (2020), the creation of effective group activities allows students to practice a language that enhances their speaking ability.

Finally, I would suggest incorporating multimedia technological resources in teaching and learning a language. This is an essential intervention as it aligns with Krashen's Input Hypothesis. Multimedia resources provide a diverse range of comprehensible input, which is essential for language acquisition. Technology gives access to various content that would both engage and motivate students to learn speaking skills. Students get opportunities to get in touch with native speakers who are considered higher in language speaking, which is essential for enhancing students' speaking performance. Overall, the University of Technology and Arts of Byumba (UTAB) needs to adopt these interventions to help students improve their English speaking performance due to their tested benefits from the mentioned theories, existing literature, and findings from research participants.

4.5 Discussion of the findings

As the researcher highlighted in the previous chapters, this research is geared toward three objectives which are identifying and examining sociocultural factors hindering English speaking performance,

identifying and examining educational environment factors hindering English speaking performance among undergraduate students at UTAB, and suggesting potential interventions for enhancing undergraduate students' speaking skills performance. The finding revealed that some educational environment factors such as the provision of constructive feedback from instructors, anxiety and confidence in English, and poor group discussion. Lack of multimedia resources and technology integration, and inadequate opportunities for speaking practice contribute to poor speaking performance for UTAB undergraduate students' speaking skills.

The findings from this research complement Alrasheedi (2020) who mentioned insufficient exposure to the target language, low motivation, anxiety and lack of confidence, inadequate language knowledge, and ineffective teaching pedagogy as key factors that contribute to poor speaking skills among undergraduate students. This study added to his research that other key factors include improper use of technology in English teaching and learning speaking skills. Undergraduate students should be taught to use some phone applications and websites that allow them to access quality content from native speakers, which aligns with Krashen's Input Hypothesis. This theory emphasizes the need of individuals who are slightly higher than students to help them learn a language. Students should not use their phones for only calling and chatting, but also as a tool for learning and upgrading their speaking skills performance. In classrooms, lecturers need to create more opportunities for students to effectively interact, collaborate, and discuss in English, which is essential for language development Ibrahim and Hashim (2021).

This also reflects the proposed theory of socio-cultural factors in English language learning. This research added to Kuning (2019) who asserted that technology is the vehicle to get access to this modernized world. He also said that people should use it in their daily activities including trading, socializing, and educating. During this research process, the researcher acknowledged that many students are relying on technology rather than engaging themselves in discussion activities that would boost their speaking skills. For example, students are explained that during their class assignment, they just ask software to generate the answers and then, copy and paste. As a researcher, I believe this way of relying on technology does not only reduce their verbal communication skills but also weakens their social attitudes. Students should learn with technology but also should be encouraged to humanize their answers and engage in discussions. The findings from this research agreed with Sosas (2021) on the fact that technology should be regarded as an added tool for teaching and improving students' speaking skills.

The results of this research fit Hecheng & Peihao (2020) who argued that lecturers should expose learners to quality language inside and outside of the class. He added that it formally and informally helps learners to practice the language. As a researcher, I would not limit teaching speaking skills to a classroom like

Akinyi & Thinguri (2016) who firmly insisted on in-class activities by saying that teaching speaking skills requires the inclusion of activities like group work, dramatization, simulations and games, and discussion. I believe teaching and developing speaking skills should include outside-of-class activities that engage students in practical conversation such as debate, and public speaking; spelling challenges and storytelling challenges help students to improve their speaking skills. If there is a schedule for these activities, the students learn to speak with confidence, in standing positions, get ideas on the topic, and keep an eye on the audience which is necessary during verbal communication. Sadly, these activities are not found in our area of study which contributes to the poor speaking habits among undergraduate students from UTAB.

For the second objective, the findings show that some sociocultural factors such as students' use of English in social situations outside the classroom, inadequate opportunities for practicing English outside class, cultural identity and language use, and the hindrance of cultural background on learning English contribute to poor performance. This aligns with the findings of Chesler and Fox (1966) who noted that social interaction is vital to language practice and the development of communicative competence. Limited engagement in extracurricular activities that promote speaking skills, and Fear of judgment or criticism from peers affect speaking confidence. Students are observed laughing at others when they make English-speaking mistakes. This creates language fear which makes those students, limit language practice opportunities. These psychological factors from society and schools result in English-speaking failure Gregersen & Horwitz (2002).

The findings align with social-cultural theory which emphasizes the need for support from others especially those who are closely related (family members) to improve speaking skills. The research proved that many students where Kinyarwanda is the dominant language and English is a language for school. This is a critical issue as it makes it impossible for language practice, leading to poor performance in English speaking skills, as noted by Krashen (1982). Overall, since students have limited opportunities for English speaking practice at home, they should be willing to create more effective opportunities by scheduling English movies, music, and documentaries, which I believe to help enhance English speaking skills performance. They can access quality pronunciation, sentence structures, and a variety of vocabularies, leading to better performance in English as noted by Niyizi (2018).

4.6 Conclusion

Chapter four discussed the findings related to socio-cultural and educational environment factors that hinder English speaking skills among undergraduate students at the University of Technology and Arts of

Byumba (UTAB). It also provided potential interventions that can help to improve students' speaking skills.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

5.0 Introduction

This last chapter of the study discusses the general conclusions of the study, recommendations, and suggestions about factors influencing poor speaking skills among undergraduate students in Rwanda, in a case study of UTAB.

5.1 Summary of the findings

The general objective of this research was to identify and examine various socio-cultural and educational environment factors that hinder speaking skills among undergraduate students at the University of Technology and Arts Byumba (UTAB). The research proved that socio-cultural factors like Fear of judgment or criticism from peers, Cultural attitude toward language learning and proficiency, Community support, Cultural norms regarding communication style & politeness, Cultural values on language use, and Language exposure at home contribute to English speaking performance among undergraduates at UTAB. On the other hand, the study also revealed that educational environments such as Lack of public speaking opportunities in academic coursework, Limited access to resources or training for improving speaking skills, Psychological factors such as anxiety or low self-esteem, Lack of encouragement or positive reinforcement from instructors, Multimedia and technology integration, Limited engagement in extracurricular activities affect English speaking skills performance among undergraduates at UTAB. This research also revealed that some potential interventions are provided to enhance English-speaking performance among undergraduate students at UTAB. Those interventions are multimedia and technology integration, interactive group activities, real-life application and consistent, peer-led learning and feedback, and public speaking and presentation skills.

5.2 General conclusion

In this study, the researcher explained various socio-cultural and educational environment factors that hinder English speaking skills among undergraduate students at UTAB. By investigating factors hindering English speaking skills among undergraduate students at UTAB, the researcher has revealed a multifaceted issue rooted in several key areas that are either classified as sociocultural factors or educational environment factors as explained in previous sections.

5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations are given to the Higher Learning Institutions in Rwanda (HLI) due to the findings from this research:

Researchers' recommendations start with enhancing Teacher Training and Professional Development. HLI should invest in comprehensive training programs for English language teachers, focusing on modern, interactive, and communicative teaching methodologies prioritizing speaking skills. Institutions provide regular professional development opportunities to keep teachers updated on the latest pedagogical techniques and technologies for language teaching. In addition, HLI should revise and enrich the curriculum. Integrating more speaking and listening activities into the English language curriculum would ensure a balanced approach that includes all language skills. Developing curriculum materials that encourage active student participation, such as role-plays, debates, and group discussions is the key to improving English-speaking skills performance. Furthermore, the HLI should implement peer mentoring and tutoring programs where advanced students can help their peers practice and improve their speaking skills.

The second recommendation is to improve access to resources. To equip schools and universities with language labs, audio-visual aids, and other technological tools that facilitate interactive language learning can enhance English speaking skills. Provide access to English language media, such as films, podcasts, and online platforms, enhancing students' exposure to authentic English usage. It is also important to recommend promoting an English-speaking environment. Encouraging the use of English in both academic and social settings through initiatives like English clubs, speaking contests, and conversation partners may help to improve English speaking skills among undergraduate students. Fostering a supportive and non-judgmental atmosphere where students feel comfortable practicing their speaking skills without fear of making mistakes could be a boost for practicing and improving English speaking.

Finally, using technology and online platforms allows learners to access quality input as proposed by Krashen's Input Hypothesis. Leveraging online learning platforms and language learning apps that offer interactive speaking exercises and real-time feedback can help to improve English-speaking skills. It is also important to encourage students to participate in online language exchange communities and virtual conversation clubs to practice speaking with native and fluent English speakers. Furthermore, HLIs are recommended to reduce psychological barriers. Incorporating confidence-building activities and workshops to help students overcome fear and anxiety related to speaking in English can help students practice speaking skills freely.

5.4 Recommendations to UTAB:

The researcher recommends University of Technology and Arts of Byumba (UTAB) invest in language labs equipped with modern technology to facilitate interactive speaking exercises. At campus, the technological infrastructure needs improvements. If the language center is well equipped and exploited, students could get ample opportunities for language practice. This is also important as it provides access to multimedia resources including English language films, podcasts, and online speaking platforms. UTAB is also advised to establish English clubs, speaking competitions, storytelling sessions, and conversation groups where students can practice speaking in a supportive environment. In addition, UTAB should engage parents and community members in supporting students' English-speaking practice at home and in the community. Finally, UTAB should organize community events where students can practice speaking English in a social setting. It is also important to implement regular assessments and feedback mechanisms to check students' speaking progress and identify areas for improvement.

5.5 Suggestions:

Due to the time and financial limitations, this study was restricted to one Higher Learning Institution, and the researcher suggested further research countrywide to tackle these issues of English speaking among undergraduate students and provide solid solutions.

5.6 Conclusion

Chapter Five discussed general conclusions and recommendations to the Higher Learning Institutions (HLI), and the University of Technology and Arts of Byumba (UTAB) for improving speaking skills among undergraduate students.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: INTRODUCTORY LETTER TO THE RESPONDENT

Dear Participant,

My name is Costase Nsengiyaremye, and I am a tutorial assistant at UTAB. I am conducting a study titled "Investigating Factors Contributing to Speaking Skills among Undergraduate Students" to identify and analyze the factors affecting speaking proficiency among undergraduates in Rwanda. Your participation in this research is crucial and highly valued. Enclosed is a questionnaire designed to collect your insights, which will remain confidential and used solely for this study. Your input will significantly contribute to understanding and addressing the challenges students face in developing their speaking skills. If you have any questions, please contact me at c.nsengiyaremye@utab.ac.rw or +250788276916. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Costase Nsengiyaremye.

Appendix 2: Questionnaire for students

A. Instructions:

- Please read each question carefully before answering
- Ensure you understand the question before selecting your response
- Provide honest and thoughtful responses based on your experiences and perspectives
- There are no right or wrong answers; your insights are valuable
- For multiple-choice questions, select the option that best represents your view
- Make sure to answer all questions in each section of the questionnaire.

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Gender:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

2. Age:

- ☐ 18-20
- ☐ 21-23
- ☐ 24-26
- ☐ 27 and above

3. Primary Language(s) Spoken at Home:

- ☐ Kinyarwanda
- ☐ English
- ☐ French
- ☐ Other (Please specify): _____

Section B: Socio-Cultural Factors

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements by ticking the appropriate box. (NOTE: Strongly Disagree **SD**, Disagree **D**, Neutral **N**, Agree **A**, Strongly Agree **SA**)

STATEMENTS	D	SD	N	A	SA
I feel comfortable speaking English in social situations outside of the classroom.					
English is commonly spoken in my home environment.					
I have adequate opportunities to practice speaking English outside of class (e.g., online resources, and language learning apps).					
My cultural background influences how I learn and use English.					
I believe that my cultural identity is challenged when I speak English.					
My friends and family encourage me to improve my English-speaking skills.					

Section C: Educational Environment Factors

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements by ticking the appropriate box. (NOTE: Strongly Disagree **SD**, Disagree **D**, Neutral **N**, Agree **A**, Strongly Agree **SA**)

STATEMENTS	D	SD	N	A	SA
My teachers provide constructive feedback on my English-speaking skills.					
The use of English as the medium of instruction helps me develop my speaking skills.					
I feel confident when speaking English in front of my classmates.					
Group discussions in class have improved my ability to express myself in English.					
Multimedia aids (e.g., videos, and audio recordings) are used effectively in my English classes.					

There are adequate opportunities for speaking practice during my English

classes at UTAB.

Section D: Open-Ended Questions

Please provide brief responses to the following questions.

1. What do you think are the main challenges you face in improving your English-speaking skills at UTAB?

.....
.....
.....

2. How do you think these challenges can be addressed to help you improve your speaking skills?

.....
.....
.....

3. What additional support do you believe UTAB could provide to enhance your English-speaking abilities?

.....
.....
.....

The end!

Appendix 2: SPEAKING TEST

Speaking Test for Investigating Factors Hindering Speaking Skills Performance

The test was structured in a way that allowed for assessing various aspects of speaking skills, including fluency, coherence, lexical resource, grammatical range and accuracy, and pronunciation. The grading rubric is adapted from the IELTS Speaking Test.

Part 1: Introduction and Interview (4-5 minutes)

The examiner asked the candidates general questions about themselves, their background, and their interests.

Questions:

1. Can you tell me about yourself and your studies at UTAB?
2. Why did you choose your field of study, and what are your career aspirations?
3. How often do you use English outside of the classroom?
4. What challenges do you face when speaking English in academic settings?

Part 2: Long Turn (3-4 minutes)

The candidate was given a topic and asked to speak about it for 1-2 minutes. They had one minute to prepare before speaking. After the candidate had spoken, the examiner asked follow-up questions.

Question: Describe a situation where you had to give a presentation in English

(Expected possible answers should reflect the following: *What the presentation was about. How the candidate prepared for it. How the candidate felt during the presentation. And explain what challenges the candidate faced in delivering the presentation in English?*)

Part 3: Discussion (4-5 minutes)

The examiner asked the candidate more abstract and complex questions related to the topic from Part 2. This part was designed to evaluate the candidate's ability to discuss issues and express opinions on broader topics.

Questions:

1. Do you think speaking skills are more important than writing skills in your field of study? Why or why not?
2. How does the educational environment at UTAB support or hinder the development of English-speaking skills?
3. What role does technology play in improving or hindering students' speaking abilities in English?
4. In what ways can teachers at UTAB help students overcome speaking anxiety in the classroom?

Appendix 3: Grading Rubric (Adapted from IELTS)

Band	Fluency and Coherence	Lexical Resource	Grammatical Range and Accuracy	Pronunciation
9	Speaks fluently with only rare repetition or self-correction.	Uses a wide range of vocabulary with precision.	Uses a full range of structures with natural control and error-free sentences.	Uses a wide range of pronunciation features with full control.
8	Speaks fluently with occasional hesitation.	Uses a wide range of vocabulary to convey precise meanings.	Produces a majority of error-free sentences with good control of grammar.	Uses a wide range of pronunciation features with only occasional lapses.
7	Speaks at length with occasional repetition or self-correction.	Uses less common and idiomatic vocabulary.	Produces frequent error-free sentences, though may make occasional errors.	Shows all the positive features of Band 6, but with more control over features.
6	Is willing to speak at length, though may lose coherence occasionally.	Uses an adequate range of vocabulary for the task.	Produces a mix of simple and complex sentence forms.	Uses a range of pronunciation features with some control.
5	Produces basic sentence forms with reasonable accuracy.	Uses a limited range of vocabulary but attempts to use less common words.	Produces basic sentence forms with limited flexibility.	Shows some control of pronunciation but may have occasional lapses.
4	Can talk about familiar topics but can only produce basic sentence forms with some accuracy.	Uses a narrow range of vocabulary with some inaccuracy.	Produces frequent grammatical errors and lacks complex structures.	Mispronunciations and lapses are frequent and can cause difficulty for the listener.
3	Frequently loses coherence and struggles to express ideas.	Uses very limited vocabulary and makes frequent errors.	Struggles to produce sentences and makes frequent grammatical errors.	Pronunciation is poor, making comprehension difficult.

Note: The final score is determined by averaging the scores from the four criteria. Each criterion is equally weighted.

Appendix4: RESEARCH OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Observation Checklist for Investigating Factors Hindering Speaking Skills Performance Among Undergraduates at UTAB

This checklist was designed to systematically observe and record behaviors and interactions related to speaking skills performance during classroom activities. The observation focuses on students' engagement, interaction, use of English, and the impact of the educational environment.

a) Observer Information

Date of Observation: _____

Observer's Name: _____

Course/Subject: _____

Classroom/Location: _____

Number of Students Present: _____

b) Observation Items

1. Student Engagement

- ☐ Students are actively participating in class discussions.

2. Peer Interaction

- ☐ Students collaborate effectively during group discussions.

3. Use of English

- ☐ Students use English consistently during class activities.
- ☐ Students switch to their mother tongue when they struggle with English.

4. Confidence and Anxiety

- ☐ Students appear confident when speaking in front of the class.
- ☐ Students hesitate or avoid speaking tasks.

5. Classroom Environment

The teacher encourages all students to participate in speaking activities.

- ☐ There are sufficient opportunities for students to practice speaking.

6. Technological Integration

- ☐ Students use technological tools (e.g., audio, video) to aid speaking.
- ☐ Technological tools are used effectively by the teacher to support speaking tasks.

Additional Notes:

.....

.....

.....

.....

End!

Appendix 5: Observation data quantifying table (in 7 sessions) From February 2024 up to June 2024.

Observation Item	Sess 1	Ses s2	Ses s3	Sess4	Sess 5	Sess 6	Sess7	Total Observ ed	Percentage
Student Engagement									
Students are actively participating in class discussions.									
Peer Interaction									
Students collaborate effectively during group discussions.									
Use of English									
Students use English consistently during Class activities									

Students switch to their mother tongue when they struggle with English.									
Confidence&anxiety									
Students appear confident when speaking in front of the class									
Students hesitate or avoid speaking tasks.									
Class Environment									
The teacher encourages all students to participate in speaking activities.									
There are sufficient opportunities for students to practice speaking.									
Technological Integration									
Students use technological tools (e.g., audio, video) to aid in speaking									
Technological tools are used effectively by the teacher to support speaking tasks.									

Appendix 6: Ethical clearance

RETHC: EthicalResearchApprovalForm



**Directorate of Research and
Innovation (U R-DR/)**

SECTION: Project Information

SECTION B: Ethical Review Application (*To be filled by Applicant(s)*) Please answer all of the following 2 questions

Project title:" INVESTIGATING FACTORS HINDERING SPEAKING SKILLS PERFORMANCE AMONG THE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND ARTS OF BYUMBA (UTAB)"	
Investigators: COSTASE NSENGIYAREMYE	
Student No. 221028286	
Co-Investigators(if applicable): NONE	
Supervisor/s:(if applicable)Dr. Jean de Dieu AMINI NGABONZIZA	
Contact details of Investigators:	Phone+250788276916Fax E-mail:nsengiyaremyecostase1993@gmail.com
Degree enrolled in (if applicable):	Masters in English Education (Med)
Project location:	University of Technology and Arts of Byumba (UTAB) is located in the Northern Province, Gicumbi district.
Project duration:	8months
1. Who are there search participants and how will be recruited?	
1.1. Research participants are mainly students and lecturers at UTAB.	
Etc	
2.'Provide a brief summary of the project:	



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3. Outline the research plan: The researcher will start by asking for formal consent from the institution, then participants will be asked to answer research questions willingly. Afterwards, the researcher will analyze the collected data and finally write the findings.

4. How will informed consent be obtained from participants? The main exercise is to explain the purpose of the research to the participants and its relevance before participating in the research. They will also be informed that participating is free of will so that none of them would be forced to answer the research questions.

5. Provide details of procedures for establishing confidentiality and protecting the privacy of participants. To keep and protect the privacy of my research participants, I will make sure that all participants are safe by using their identity and information for the purpose of the research only. I will also use no true identity in this research so that they remain protected.

6. Provide details of data collection, security and storage: All collected data from questionnaires will be decoded into numbers and stored in computers. The recorded interviews will also be stored in computers and used during data analysis.

7. Give details of whether and/or feedback will be available to participants: I am planning the dissemination of research results through meeting with leaders and students. They will also be given a published copy stored in UR library.

8. Does the project involve any of the following procedures?

a) Participant involvement by any "vulnerable groups." (If YES! Show in details), **No**

b) **Does the project involve any other disciplines and/or Ethics Committees?** (If YES, please state which and what approval has already been obtained - attach documentation.) No

c) **Will payments of participants be made?** (If YES, state the amount and whether payment is for out-of-pocket expenses, or free.):

d) **Will the project receive financial support?** **No** (i) If YES, specify the nature and source of the support: If YES, have any restrictions been imposed upon the conduct of the research? (If YES, specify the nature

of the restrictions): None
e) Will any restrictions be placed on the publication of results? (If YES, please state the nature of the restrictions):
f)Are there any other points you wish to make in justification of the proposed study?
f) Please complete the items on the checklist shown below. (Write either YES or NO in the box following each item) <i>YES/NO</i>



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RWANDA

RETHC: Ethical Research Approval Form

**Directorate of Research and
Innovation (U R-DR/)**

Approved by UR-RPGS Committee on 18 February 2014. Revised 10 July 2018

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Directorate of Research and Innovation (U R-DR/)

(i) Have you completed all the questions on this form that are applicable to your project?	YES
(ii) Have you attached an informed consent form (see below)?	YES
(iii) Have you attached a sample questionnaire or interview schedule (if applicable) --	YES

Signature of the proposer:  Date: 12/03/2024

SECTION C: Ethical Scrutiny by supervisor

To be completed by supervisor: [Delete A or B]

A. This research is considered ethically acceptable. It does not involve any of the following:

- Research on live animals other than non-intrusive observational studies in the wild research involving children under the age of 16, people diagnosed as suffering from a serious physical or mental disease or handicap, people who have undergone what would generally be regarded as traumatic experiences related to the area of research now or in the past, or people who would be judged by any reasonable person to be especially vulnerable experiments or clinical trials carried out on human subjects a power relationship such as teacher/pupil doctor/patient, employer/employee etc. covert methods or where informed consent cannot or will not be sought, except for research on 'public situations' such as the behaviour of crowds or groups of people in

circumstances where the researcher has a right to be present. research where the identity of the subjects/informants/participants cannot be concealed, unless they are specifically to be made aware of this and provide their signed consent research, which might reasonably be judged at risk of causing harm, distress or discomfort to people or groups (including social stigmatization/penalty, commercial disadvantage or environmental damage or degradation)

B. This proposal should be referred to the Research and Ethics Screening Committee (RESC) for review.

Signature: 

Date: 13/03/2024

Name: Dr. Jean de Dieu AMINI NGABONZIZA



Directorate of Research and Innovation (U R-DR/)

SECTION D: Ethical Review by Chairperson of Review Committee

To be completed by chairperson of University or College RESC (whichever applies): [Ring the identification letter of one statement]

✓ This research may proceed without further review

This research may not proceed; it clearly breaches ethical guidelines without providing justification, or it contravenes decision already taken by the RESC.

This research should be referred to the full RESC. Reasons:

Signature: 

Name: Prof. Ndabaga Eugene

Chairperson University or College RESC (whichever applies)

Date: 17/03/24

To be completed after a full University or College RESC meeting (whichever applies): [Ring the identification letter of one]

✓ This research may proceed This research may proceed if the

conditions below are implemented. This research may not proceed.

Reasons (and conditions, if appropriate):

Signature: 

Name: Prof. Ndabaga Eugene

Chairperson University or College RES-C (whichever applies)

Date: 17 / 03 / 24 _

Appendix 7: Authorization letter

Dr. NIYONZIMA ELIEZER

Deputy Vice-Chancellor in Charge of Academics and Research (DVCAR)

University of Technology and Arts of Byumba (UTAB)

niyonzima@utab.ac.rw

0788483467

November 15, 2023.

COSTASE NSENGIYAREMYE

The University of Rwanda Student

Master of Education in English Education

Dear Costase,

Subject: Authorization to Conduct Research at the University of Technology and Arts of Byumba (UTAB)

I am pleased to inform you that your request to conduct research at the University of Technology and Arts of Byumba (UTAB) has been approved. As part of your master's degree program, we authorize you to conduct research activities within our institution from November, 2023 to September 2024. The details of your research are as follows:

- **Title of Research:** investigating factors hindering speaking skills performance among undergraduate students at the University of Technology and Arts of Byumba (UTAB)
- **Research Objectives:** Investigate the correlation between socio-culture and education environmental factors and students' performance in English speaking. Finally, this study will provide potential interventions for improving English-speaking skills.
- **Supervisors:** Dr. Jean de Dieu Amini Ngabonziza (main), Assoc. Prof. Epimaque Niyibizi (Co-supervisor)

During your research period, you will have access to our library, laboratories, and other relevant resources. Please ensure that your research activities comply with the university's guidelines and policies. Any data collected must be handled with the highest level of confidentiality and integrity.

We wish you success in your research endeavors and look forward to your valuable contributions to the academic community.

Sincerely,



Dr. Eliezer Niyonzima, DVCAR at UTAB