

Instructional Materials and Their Influences on Students' Academic Performance: A Case of Post-Basic School English Curriculum in Burundi

Alfred Irambona ¹, John K. Chang'ach ²

*Post Graduate Researcher, Department of Curriculum, Instruction and Educational Media,
Moi University, Kenya ¹*

*Professor, Department of Educational Foundations School of Education,
Moi University, Kenya ²*

alfredirambona66@gmail.com, changach65@gmail.com

Corresponding Author: alfredirambona66@gmail.com

Received 20 August 2023 | Received in revised form 28 August 2023 | Accepted 06 September 2023

APA Citation:

Irambona, A. & Chang'ach, J.K. (2023). Instructional Materials and Their Influences on Students' Academic Performance: A Case of Post-Basic School English Curriculum in Burundi. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics*, 8(3), 2023, 309-323. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21462/jeltl.v8i3.1184>

Abstract

This study investigates how instructional materials affect students' academic achievement in Burundi post-basic English curriculum. This paper is a report of part of research conducted in 2023 to evaluate the instructional influences of the post-basic school English curriculum on learners' achievement in Burundi. This study utilized a convergent parallel research design and pragmatic paradigm, supported by Communicative Language Teaching for the 21st Century and the Social Learning Theory. To gather data from 16 English teachers and 330 language learners at the post-basic school level in the second and third years in the Bujumbura Municipality, a learners' questionnaire, teachers' interviews, and classroom observations were used. This study employed stratified and random sampling techniques to select respondents, and the data was analyzed descriptively and thematically. The study established that learners' textbooks were level-appropriate, with 66.5% of the respondents understanding the content of the pupil's textbook. The investigation also demonstrated the authenticity of the activities in the learners' textbook since the developed themes were daily life-based issues. However, it was found that the learning activities were insufficient because some themes were not fully developed. The study further demonstrated that the majority of the sampled schools had an alarming scarcity of teaching materials including textbooks, and audio and audio-visual teaching aids. This research finally revealed

that instructional materials had a moderate influence on students' academic achievement (overall mean = 3.257, SD = .6901). The government is advised to provide the missing teaching and materials to facilitate the smoother teaching and learning process and enhance students' academic performance.

Keywords: Academic achievement, instructional materials, post-basic English curriculum

1. Introduction

Academic achievement can be defined as the performance outcomes that demonstrate to what extent a person has advanced in a set of activities in educational contexts like school, college, and university (Suleiman, 2023; Briones et al., 2021). At the secondary school level, it is seen as a significant indicator of the learners' future (Buba et al., 2019), and that is a result of high-quality teaching. The quality of education hinges on the teaching and learning processes, which are in turn greatly impacted by a range of elements, such as the availability, adequacy, and appropriateness of instructional materials. Instructional materials, according to Musuluve and Werunga (2020), serve as vital in the implementation of any educational program since they convey the information contained therein. They are considered a means through which knowledge is channeled. On top of that, those instructional resources should be of good quality as well as tailored to the level of the users—learners. In the language angle, which is the main concern of this paper, languages are taught for communicative purposes, and this calls for tackling all four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing. All linguistic skills should be catered for in those instructional materials to be successful. In their quest to reach that goal, the respective governments put much effort into attaining that purpose. According to Musuluve and Werunga (2020), nations, organizations, and individuals spend lots of funds on the provision and consumption of education for their people. Lest their efforts end in smoke, they should consider supplying the missing and adequate instructional aids in order to help students enhance their academic achievement, as a lack of instructional materials may result in downgrading their academic achievement. Olugbuye (2017) mentioned that the availability, adequacy, and relevance of instructional materials can influence the performance of learners either through quality of teaching or in-depth understanding by the learners. Research has shown that instructional materials are among the most influential factors (Fadhli et al., 2022); therefore, it is important for respective governments, especially Burundi, to know how far they influence learners' academic achievement, hence the objective of this study.

English has been given an important place in Burundi's education since the country's formal admission to the East African Community (EAC) in 2007, where it is now taught at the basic school level. The government of Burundi expected that all post-basic school leavers, especially in the language section, should be able to compete with other citizens of the region as well as those of the rest of the world in all aspects of life through English use. Through education, that aim can be progressively attained. It is believed that education is the cornerstone of human understanding and success in all countries. Suleiman (2023) argues that the degree and quality of education in a country are directly related to how well its citizens perform academically. In response to this, the Burundian government made significant investments in the teaching of the English language to ensure that its citizens could understand and use it in their daily lives (World Bank Document, 2018). To that end, the process of teaching and learning was facilitated by multiplying teaching materials, among many other things. However, the post-basic school leavers' academic achievement did not meet the expectations of the government of Burundi as it was demonstrated that their academic achievement was low in English use (Mbonigaba & Muhimpundu, 2018; Nimpoza, 2018), and this situation pushed the researcher to undertake this research to discover where the problem lies. It is undisputed that much research has been conducted on investigating the factors that impact learners' academic success. As a result, we know that learners' academic achievement is the result of many factors, namely school-based and non-school-

based (Hanover Research, 2019), in which instructional materials are among other influential school-based factors that determine learners' academic achievement (Iskandar, 2018; Atchia & Chinapah, 2019). Thus, respective governments, especially the Burundi government, should be aware of the extent to which these factors impact learners' achievement and leverage that problem accordingly in order to boost their academic achievement in English. Drawing on the prevailing issue above, there is a pressing need for in-depth research to determine how much instructional materials influence the academic performance of post-basic school learners in English in Burundi.

This study sought to evaluate the extent to which the instructional resources influence the learners' academic achievement in the post-basic English curriculum in Burundi.

2. Literature Review

Academic achievement in education is a result of a plethora of factors, including but not limited to instructional materials. Furthermore, a number of theories of education that the teaching practice is based on also play a preponderant role, for they serve as a bridge to reach the stated objectives. As far as teaching language for communication purposes is implied, two theories—the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) for the 21st Century (Savignon, 2001) and the Social Learning Theory (SLT) developed by Bandura (1977)—were used to guide this study. Given their complementarity and shared emphasis on placing students at the center of instruction, these two theories are consistent with the study's objective. To begin with, the CLT is a set of principles that contends that second and foreign language instruction should center on helping students foster their communicative competence which entails the process of expression, interpretation, and meaning-negotiation (Savignon, 1997). Some of the core tenets of CLT can be summarised in the following lines: Language teaching, as outlined by Savignon (2002), is based on a view of language as communication, either in written or oral form, in non-test situations.

CLT is based on the premise of communicative competence, according to which learners of a language should be able to understand foreign languages and be able to effectively communicate in those languages (Sekiziyivu & Mugimu, 2015, as cited in Mugimu & Sekiziyivu, 2016). As a learner is put at the center of instruction, CLT states that learners should actively use language to complete their language learning goals through a communicative approach. Abrejo et al. (2019), citing Savignon (1984), pointed out that a communicative approach puts emphasis on a syllabus and numerous high-quality instructional materials. To be effective, they should be picked from the learners' and teachers' current living environments, societies, and communities (Dos Santos, 2017b; Tweedie & Johnson, 2018; Dos Santos, 2020). Those instructional materials should be authentic in order to reflect the needs and circumstances of our everyday lives. CLT thus requires a thorough integration of authentic instructional materials—both print and non-print—into the curriculum that spark curiosity and offer reliable models of language use inside and outside the classroom. This is in line with Mugimu & Sekiziyivu's (2016) belief that authentic materials reinforce instructional strategies, inspire students to actively produce language, and bring, according to Sundari et al. (2018), authenticity to the classroom by addressing the students' needs, learning goals, and real-world demands.

In addition to CLT, Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory (SLT) constituted another theory in this study. It highlights how crucial the learning environment is to fostering learning. Thanks to this theory, people can learn from one another in their surroundings through their different interactions in a certain social setting. Social Learning Theory (SLT) holds the view that learning occurs through social observation and subsequent imitation of modeled behavior (Manik, S. et al., 2022). According to Bandura (1977), a new behavior is learned from the environment through the process of observational learning before being imitated. In other words, this theory states that learning happens as a result of observing, modeling, and imitating the actions, attitudes, and feelings of others. By observing or listening to others, one learns how new behaviors are performed, and this coded information then acts as a guide for behaviour on later occasions.

As an implication, this theory illustrates how instructional materials acting like symbolic models—TV, books, audio, and audio-visual materials, for instance—influence how learners learn English, particularly in terms of improving their listening and speaking skills. When combined, both CLT and SLT place a particular emphasis on the role that instructional materials play in shaping learners' academic performance, either directly or indirectly.

2.1 Students' Academic Achievement

In today's competitive world, all education stakeholders, whether in the public or private sectors, fight for the outstanding academic achievement of their learners at the end of their studies. According to them, attaining high-quality education has a significant role in how both individuals and nations develop (Mehndroo & Vandana, 2020). Students' academic achievement in educational institutions, as contended by Illahi and Khanda (2015), may be taken as any successful learning that is observed in the learners. It is referred to as the knowledge attained and talent or skills developed in academic courses. In the school setting, according to them, it is referred to as the demonstration of knowledge acquired or skills developed in academic disciplines.

It can also be referred to as the representation of performance outcomes that demonstrate the degree to which an individual has attained specified objectives that were the focus of activities in instructional environments, especially in school, college, and university (Steinmayr et al., 2015). In the words of Esdal (2016), learners make academic achievement progress when they have gained the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to equip them to lead happy and successful lives. Based on the definitions given above, learners' academic achievement is a multifaceted concept that covers a variety of domains in the learning process and goes beyond earning good grades, contrary to what many people think. Since this study focuses on academic achievement in English, it is understood as the extent to which learners have reached in their ability to use the English language in various situations. However, there are many factors at play, including instructional materials, which influence how learners perform academically.

2.2 Instructional Materials and their Influence on Learners' Academic Achievement

The importance of instructional materials in education is undeniable. Anything used by teachers and learners to simplify the teaching and learning process is instructional material. Sale (2016) asserts that they are designed as means for simplifying, emphasizing, and enhancing the teaching and learning process. They are described as any living or inanimate items, as well as human and nonhuman resources, that a teacher may employ in teaching and learning situations to achieve desired learning outcomes (Adesola et al., 2022). According to Tuimur and Chemwei (2015), these instructional resources make learning more engaging by motivating students to learn. They have the ability to assist teachers in adequately explaining new ideas in the classroom, which will aid students in grasping what is being taught. Isma'il & Lukman (2022) view them as all the items or materials that a teacher might employ as part of the teaching process in order to deliver successful and effective teaching that can promote positive students' learning outcomes. They include anything that is used to facilitate the learning of language (Tomlinson, 2001, as cited in Batd & Elald, 2016).

These instructional materials range from print to non-print materials. According to Guthrie et al. (2012), they are any object or tool used in the teaching process, such as books or other printed material, video and audio recordings, digital content, and computer software. In addition to that, they may also encompass "linguistic, visual, auditory, or kinesthetic forms, which can be presented in print, through live performance or display, on a cassette, CD-ROM, DVD, smart board, or the internet" (Crystal, 1987; Tomlinson, 2001, as cited in Batd & Elald, 2016). In light of the aforementioned definitions, the term "instructional materials," otherwise known as "teaching resources," can be regarded as any tools or didactic materials created to facilitate the process of teaching and learning.

In this way, they give teachers the ability to make the teachings considerably clearer in order to improve students' academic performance. They all influence the quality of classroom instruction through various interactions to improve communicative language use, regardless of the format or kind of instructional materials used in language teaching and learning. Hence, whatever function instructional materials may have, as stated by Iskandar (2018), their main objective is to boost language learners' communicative language use. Research has shown that there is a close link between instructional materials and learners' academic achievement in many ways. The instructional materials are used to enhance the knowledge and abilities of learners while also keeping track of their information retention. Edessa (2017) asserts that instructional materials give students the knowledge and abilities they need to understand the realities that enable them to build successful professional careers. In this way, they contribute to the overall growth and upbringing of learners. Additionally, learners benefit a lot from these instructional materials because they allow them to clarify some key concepts by captivating and retaining their interests, as well as creating opportunities for them to share important experiences for new learning, allowing the learning to become more permanent (Marbas, 2015). Similarly, Mbeng's (2018) findings show that instructional materials engage learners to take an active role in the learning process. They increase response to questions, help learners improve communication competence, provide immediate feedback, and permit learners to increase attention in the classroom. Furthermore, they allow learners to quickly pick up the material they have learned, which in turn promotes their academic achievement. Many other academics have addressed the same subject and have come up with a number of functions or benefits that instructional materials play in education. Dike (1987), cited by Onyia (2013), views them as another means or channel of communication via which a teacher or instructor could gather condensed information and make it more interesting for his learners.

Moreover, it has been discovered that students who are taught using instructional materials perform better than those who are not (Nwike & Onyejebu, 2013; as cited in Alkali et al., 2016), and in the teaching of English, it was observed that they boost learners' communicative competence (Adelodun & Asiru, 2015; Ajoke, 2017) as they support the learners in having a real-life imagination of the context of what is being taught. In the same vein, many researchers have demonstrated that the effectiveness of the language program hinges on the teaching materials, indicating that they even instill learners' interest, curiosity, and motivation to actively engage in learning by appealing to their various learning styles. They also assist teachers in overcoming physical challenges, saving time, and supplying meaningful and useful information sources in the process of teaching (Pakkan, 1997, as cited by Batd & Elald, 2016; Işk, 2018; Olokooba, 2021; Okwelle & Allagoa, 2014, as cited by Tekir & Akar, 2020).

From what precedes, it is clear that instructional materials give students the chance to engage in genuine learning through touching, experiencing, and/or seeing them, in addition to improving the teaching and learning process in the classroom. In other words, language learning instructional materials place students in a multi-dimensional learning environment where they are given the chance and capacity to put what they have learned into practice, which is the basis for increasing their communicative language skills.

2.3 Selection of Instructional Materials

A thoughtful choice of instructional materials is of the utmost importance in education. Since they serve the purpose of aiding in the simplification of the learning process and making it practical, effective, and more understandable for students, instructional materials are not chosen arbitrarily because they are thought of as the foundational tools that define the quality of education students receive in schools (Onyia, 2013; Olaitan & Agusiobo, 1994, as cited in Ajoke, 2017). They have the goal of improving the quality of education in order to help learners in schools perform better academically (Ajoke, 2017). To that end, teachers are encouraged to choose instructional materials that are of good quality and responsive to all learners because recent research has shown that the quality of instructional materials can also impact and create a big difference in learners' learning, meaning that their achievement is also implied (Bugler et al., 2017; Armstrong, 1994; and Gardner, 1993 in Tekir & Akar, 2020). Moreover,

the same authors suggest that teachers should consider the disparities among students since they have quite varied needs. The instructional materials should be adjusted to what learners are expected to do in line with national standards.

Thus, what are the parameters teachers should examine when deciding on the quality of instructional resources, given how difficult it can be to choose appropriate teaching materials? Many scholars and authors have put forth some important factors to consider while choosing educational materials. The following is what Bugler et al. (2017) recommend:

1. Accuracy, visual appeal:
 - a. no errors; correct information,
 - b. well written, and
 - c. strong visual appeal
2. Alignment to standards, and depth of knowledge:
 - a. aligned to standards,
 - b. efficiently addresses standards,
 - c. appropriate depth of knowledge, questions, and activities
3. Ease of use, support:
 - a. Easy for teachers, students, and parents to use,
 - b. complete set of instructions, materials, activities, assessments, and answers
 - c. appropriate support for new teachers
4. Engagement, ability to meet student needs:
 - a. Engagement: Sparks student interest; relevant,
 - b. Differentiation: Appropriate material by skill level, language ability, cognitive capability, and learning style,
 - c. Cultural and background knowledge: Culturally relevant; aligns with prior background knowledge,
 - d. Diverse activities: Group and individual, hands-on, requires movement, longer investigations.

Furthermore, Guthrie et al., (2012) also proposed some general criteria to use in selecting and evaluating instructional materials of quality by saying that they should be:

- i. aligned to the curriculum and the objectives of the instructional program;
- ii. appropriate for recommended age/grade levels;
- iii. accurate in terms of content;
- iv. reflective of the pluralistic nature of the society in question;
- v. representative of differing viewpoints;
- vi. appropriate format for the subject matter;
- vii. recent copyright date as appropriate to the subject;
- viii. acceptable literary style and technical quality;
- ix. cost-effective in terms of use.

In addition to that, Marbas (2015) suggests a number of factors to consider while selecting quality and appropriate instructional materials. She opines that educators should mind about:

- i. Content: They ought to be in line with the curriculum and standards. Additionally, they must be accurate, valid, and reliable with examples from the real or authentic world. Apart from being free from bias, they should also be tailored to the requirements and interests of every learner at every ability level. Like that, they improve the conceptual understanding of learners and stimulate their higher-order thinking skills.
- ii. Equity and Accessibility: They ought to be durable, easily stored and transported, and easily accessible to everyone. Materials should be easy to update, adapt, and customize to match the school's resources.

- iii. Appropriateness: The materials ought to be relevant for both the topic matter and the learner's capacity or levels of learning.
- iv. Presentation: The comprehensiveness of student and teacher resources, the alignment of teaching components, the organization of the teaching resources, the readability of the teaching resources, the pacing of the content, and the ease of use and durability of materials.
- v. Learning: Motivational techniques; teaching of a few "big ideas"; explicit instruction; direction and support; learner active participation; targeted teaching techniques; targeted assessment strategies
- vi. Cost: They should not be expensive.

Teachers should then, first of all, consider why they are selecting the educational materials they are using, regardless of which instructional tool they employ. Teachers are urged to be cognizant that instructional materials are typically used to act as the foundation for much of the language input learners get and the language practice that takes place in the classroom. (Richards, 2001, as cited in Batd & Elald, 2016).

In light of what precedes, we can assert that the instructor or teacher has to first understand the demands and learning level of his or her learners for whom the teaching materials are selected. Putting it another way, the instructor or teacher ought to select educational resources that address the demands for language learning and check if they are appropriate for the communicative needs of learners. More importantly, instructors should keep in mind that there are as many different instructional tools as there are distinctive learning goals to attain. To emphasize this, Hutchinson & Waters (1987), as cited in Batd & Elald (2016), assert that educational resources cannot be judged as good or bad. That is why, in the case of evaluating educational resources, teachers must therefore make every effort to determine whether they are suitable or appropriate in light of whatever objective they are meant to achieve. Then, teachers should choose educational resources that fall in line with learners' backgrounds and stay away from those that stereotype or discriminate against them. It is also worth noting that teachers should be creative in developing the teaching materials.

To that end, they should not only use the materials available to them but also be able to create new teaching materials in addition to what is already offered to them by the schools or their respective institutions. Tomlinson (2001) made it clear in Batd & Elald (2016) when he said that "teachers are also material developers and ultimately responsible for the materials that their learners use." Another important aspect to keep in mind is that these materials should be motivating. In addition, they should not only be diverse in that they present various degrees of difficulty but they also ought to encourage learners to use them. Furthermore, these educational tools should be relevant and authentic. In order to meet the demands of each student in terms of their individuality and diversity, they should also be varied.

3. Research Methods

Using pragmatism as the philosophical paradigm, this mixed methods study used the convergent design. It consists of collecting both qualitative and quantitative data at approximately the same time, analyzing each type independently, contrasting or combining them, and then interpreting the results before drawing possible conclusions. This study used all public post-basic schools in Bujumbura Municipality, in Burundi, that have a language section as the population. This research area includes 32 post-basic schools with a language section, 29 teachers of English, and 1860 learners in the second and third years of the language section as constituents of the target population. As a sample size, sixteen post-basic schools were randomly chosen, of which sixteen teachers of English and three hundred and thirty-three post-basic school learners in the second and third years of the languages section in the Bujumbura Municipality constituted the sample.

To increase the credibility and validity of the study's findings, the triangulation method was employed. A questionnaire was designed to gather quantitative data from learners. Concerning

qualitative data, they were collected through semi-structured interviews given to teachers and classroom observations. To validate these research instruments, expert professional judgment was made by experts in the curriculum studies field. As a result, some amendments of the data collection tools were made to align them well with what they were intended to measure.

Concerning reliability, a pilot study was conducted, after which Cronbach's alpha statistics were run and came out with a coefficient α of 0.778. To analyze the data the quantitative data were analyzed descriptively, where the mean, standard deviations, and percentages were calculated using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. The mean verbal interpretation that was used was the following: 1.00-1.79 = Very Low, 1.80-2.59 = Low, 2.60-3.39 = Moderate, 3.40-4.19 = High, and 4.20-5.00 = Very High. The qualitative data were analyzed thematically. It involves transcription, reading and familiarization, coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and finalizing the analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

This study sought to establish the extent to which instructional materials influence the learners' academic achievement in the post-basic English curriculum in Bujumbura Municipality, in Burundi. The table below shows the results of the study, and they are presented in the form of standard deviation, means, and percentages.

Table: The standard deviation, means, and percentages.

Items	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev.
I understand the content of the English pupil's book	18 5.7%	35 11.1%	53 16.8%	133 42.1%	77 24.4%	3.68	1.127
The English pupil's book include enjoyable activities with songs, dramas, role plays and games	66 20.9%	56 17.7%	37 11.7%	81 25.6%	76 24.1%	3.14	1.489
Each learner has his/her English pupil's book	43 13.6%	59 18.7%	35 11.1%	85 26.9%	94 29.7%	3.40	1.425
The content in the English pupil's book provides me with realistic activities to transfer learning into practice in my real life	64 20.3%	68 21.5%	39 12.3%	80 25.3%	65 20.6%	3.04	1.451
Our English teacher uses projector, radio, videos in English lessons	43 13.6%	55 17.4%	64 20.3%	99 31.3%	55 17.4%	3.21	1.298
In our school, we listen to English news and watch movies/other programs on TV	60 19.0%	56 17.7%	49 15.5%	79 25.0%	72 22.8%	3.14	1.443
The available teaching materials help me to develop my communication skills	46 14.6%	48 15.2%	72 22.8%	92 29.1%	58 18.4%	3.21	1.310
The lack of teaching and learning materials influences my academic achievement	40 12.7%	66 20.9%	63 19.9%	84 26.6%	63 19.9%	3.20	1.320
Overall Mean and Standard Deviation						3.257	.6901

Legend: (SD) = Strongly Disagree, (D) = Disagree, (N) = Neutral, (A) = Agree, (SA) = Strongly Agree, Std. Dev. = Standard Deviation

Source: Research Data (2022)

From the table above, we can read that the majority of the respondents (66.5% of students) admitted that the content in the English student book they used in class was comprehensible. With a mean of 3.68, it means that the learners understood the content of the pupils' books at a high level. These results are comparable to those of Senowarsito et al. (2022), who examined how students and teachers perceived features in an English textbook for junior high school in Semarang. Their findings indicated that the content of the English textbook with a pragmatic perspective was appropriately tailored to the students under investigation. These results, however, conflict with Azizah's findings (2023). Her research showed that the language and sentence structures did not correspond to the pupils' abilities in the school under scrutiny. In a similar vein, Afersa et al.'s study from 2022 demonstrated that lexical knowledge in reading texts was not appropriate to the level of students, particularly those in the second grade.

The table also indicated that almost half of the respondents (49.7%) reported that their books featured pleasant activities, which included songs, plays, role plays, games, and the like (mean = 3.14, SD = 1.489). That is consistent with what the researcher witnessed while conducting his classroom visits. He realized that most of the activities included in the students' books were generally representative of what the students actually perform or see in their families or neighborhoods, despite some themes which were not fully developed. These results line up with the one for Azizah (2023), whose research showed that the textbook contained some incomplete explanations of the subject matter and mostly focused on the application of exercises. However, the current study showed that the themes in these books were authentic in that they were familiar to the students. They are the ones they typically face in their everyday lives. Pictures were, however, not enough in those materials. They were insufficient, as the majority of the teachers of English mentioned it. Pictures provide more fascinating insights into the subject matter being studied.

According to Hussain and Khan (2022), the use of pictures in language teaching is highly beneficial. By employing the images and pictures displayed in English language textbooks, teachers can make their lessons more engaging, fruitful, and intriguing. Integrating pictures into language teaching activities is very supportive, as research has shown that they assist students in learning more vocabulary items and enhance their overall participation in the learning process, both of which boost their communicative skills (Lavalle & Briesmaster, 2017; Khafidhoh & Carolina, 2019; Yiu & Chou, 2021). Additionally, the table shows us that 56.6% of the learners agreed that each learner had a pupil's book. That was rated at a mean of 3.40 with a standard deviation of 1.425.

That, however, doesn't match with what was seen on the field because many learners in most of the visited schools had issues with books. It was seen that six students share a single book in certain schools. In some sampled schools, it was found that in their small libraries, there were no extra reading books, such as English novels, for the students to read to polish their speaking abilities. These results are in line with the findings of many other studies whose research findings revealed that teaching materials were not enough (Alfred & Kumaidi, 2015; Oeamoum & Sriwichai, 2020; Umuhoza & Uworwabayeho, 2021).

Concerning the use of teaching aids like projectors, radios, videos, and TVs, 48.7% of the respondents answered that they are used in their English lessons (mean = 3.21, SD = 1.298). In other words, in the eyes of the learners, the use or availability of these teaching materials is moderate. But these findings don't fall in line with what was observed on the field. In most of the visited schools, teachers were complaining about a shortage of teaching materials. The interviews' findings revealed that the majority of the schools visited had teaching materials-related problems. The majority of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the prevailing alarming situation. It came to light that the available and usually used instructional materials were generally textbooks for learners and teachers' guides. Other teaching materials, for example, radios, tapes, TV sets, projectors, etc., were not available. Some teachers complained about it, saying that they face hard times when it comes to instructional

materials. They said that they were not given any further instructional resources other than the students' books, which were insufficient.

In addition, it was noticed that in four of the sampled schools, radios were available. However, one of the respondents revealed that they don't make use of them since they don't have tapes for teaching listening. Another one asserted that the radio is there just like a toy since it hasn't worked in a long time. These findings concur with the ones of Ndayimirije (2015) in her study appraising the adequacy and implementation of the English Language Curriculum for State Primary Schools in Burundi. Her research found that there was a lack of instructional tools, including audio teaching aids. Similarly, these findings corroborate the study by Mupa and Chinooneka (2015), whose findings indicated that there was an absence of audio and audio-visual teaching aids. They assert that there was a lack of instructional materials, and the ones that were available were limited to textbooks and syllabuses; they do not go beyond that. The teaching and learning of languages greatly benefit from the use of audio and audio-visual teaching aids. Research has demonstrated that audiovisual aids encourage learners to demonstrate interest, increase their motivation to learn, visualize concepts, make information concrete and memorable, provide hands-on experiences, and ultimately help them in the quick and efficient acquisition of language (Farooqui, 2020). In the same vein, Ismail's (2020) study on the effectiveness of instructional materials in teaching the Arabic language in selected secondary schools in Ibadan North local government revealed that the investigated schools lacked the necessary teaching resources for teaching Arabic studies, which culminated in low academic achievement in the use of Arabic language.

Research done in the psychology of visual aids proved that under 1% of what is learned is derived from the sense of taste, whereas 1.5% of what is learned is gained from the sense of touch, 3.5% of what is learned is from the logic of smell, 11% of what is learned is from the logic of hearing, and 83% of what is learned is from the sense of sight. According to the same source, it was found that people typically remember 10% of what they read, 20% of what they hear, 30% of what they see, 50% of what they hear and see, 70% of what they say, and 90% of what they say as they do a thing. Therefore, it is undeniable that technical devices have a stronger influence and a more dynamic informative system (Cuban, 2001, as cited in Shabiralyani et al., 2015).

Drawing on the previous information, we can realize the extent to which audio and audio-visual aids are important in the learning process in general and language learning in particular. We might simply infer that it is challenging to properly learn another language without hearing native speakers do so. With these instructional aids, students can hear how that language is spoken, thereby helping them improve their speaking skills. Moreover, since learning a language is also linked to its culture, learners can also get an opportunity to see the various gestures pertaining to that language without traveling to the country where that language is spoken. These instructional aids provide learners with vocal, spoken, and visual communication, which they can refer to improve their communication abilities.

Lastly, it was established from the table that the overall mean of the construct is 3.257 and its standard deviation is .690. This suggests that the instructional materials had a modest or moderate impact on student's academic success and that the low standard deviation (.690) indicates that the instructional materials are clustered in a small number of schools while others have almost nothing. That moderate influence can probably be explained by the fact that the available instructional materials are not only enough but also very limited in terms of their accessibility. These findings conflict with what Piper et al. (2018) found in their study on identifying the essential ingredients to literacy and numeracy improvement. Their study demonstrated that some factors, including students' books and other instructional supports, had small to medium effects on students' achievement. In the same perspective, another study conducted by Asogwa et al. (2021) found that instructional materials had an increasing effect on students' achievement in fishery in secondary schools in Nigeria.

As a summary, the findings presented above and the literature review illustrates how instructional materials are potent factors in arousing learners' academic achievement. They influence learners'

academic achievement to a considerable extent. Instructional materials like, for instance, textbooks, charts, maps, and audio-visual and electronic instructional materials such as radio, tape recorders, television, and videotape recorders contribute much to making learning more interesting, and their importance is also evident in shaping learners' academic performance (Atkinson, 2000; Adeogun, 2001, as cited in Tety, 2016). Their presence is very meaningful in the process of teaching and learning. Providing them would allow students to learn by doing. It was observed that there are some schools in pathetic conditions in terms of instructional materials. Drawing on the CLT and SLT theories, which call for the use of differentiated instructions, instructional materials should be varied to cater to each learner's needs in terms of communication skills. Teaching without instructional materials is like handling the subject in an abstract manner. To some extent, it was noticed that some teachers need to be upgraded on the use of ICT in order to effectively assist learners in enhancing their academic achievement.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, we can draw the conclusion that instructional materials are catalyst ingredients for igniting learners' academic achievement. We have realized through this research that they moderately affect learners' achievement. As much research has shown, there is a considerable difference in learners' academic achievement between those who were taught using instructional resources and those who were not (Nwike & Onyejebu, 2013; as cited in Alkali et al., 2016). However, the lack of instructional materials, especially audio and audio-visual aids, is a shared alarming issue in most of the sampled schools in Bujumbura municipality. In order to enable learners to reach their maximum potential in English use, there is, therefore, a need for the government of Burundi, through the Ministry of Education, to allocate sufficient funds for the provision of the missing instructional materials, both in print and non-print formats, in each school. There is also a need to train teachers on the use of ICT because it was revealed that some of them lack knowledge of how to manipulate ICT tools. Now that many instructional materials may be found online and that much depends on the creative abilities of the teacher, teachers are advised to be more innovative by looking for other possible instructional materials online to effectively facilitate their teaching and learning process.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors of this article declare no conflicts of interest.

About the Author

Alfred Irambona has been an assistant lecturer at the University of Burundi for about 5 years. He is a master's degree holder in educational research and evaluation from Yogyakarta State University (YSU) in Indonesia. His fields of interest are research and evaluation, teaching methods, and curriculum studies. He is now a PhD candidate in curriculum studies at Moi University in Kenya. His publications are available at the following links:

https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C5&q=alfred+irambona&oq=alfred+Ira or at <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Alfred-Irambona>

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