Influence of Family Background on English Language Proficiency among Learners in Nine and Twelve Years Basic Education Schools: A Case of Musanze District, Rwanda

Léandre Ntabwoba[1]
Dr. Cyprien Sikubwabo, PhD[2]

[1]ntabwobaleandre@gmail.com (+250785118184/+250782961187)
[2]cyprianov@gmail.com (+250788221063)

[1]University of Kigali, Musanze, [2]School of Education, University of Kigali, Kigali Independent University ULK, [1,2]Rwanda

ABSTRACT

This study sought to investigate the influence of family background on English language proficiency among learners in Nine and Twelve Years Basic Education (YBE) from selected schools in Musanze district, Rwanda. The study adopted the convergent parallel design, utilizing a mixed approach. The study was carried out in 10 selected schools in different sectors within Musanze district. The population of the study counted 9321 subjects, from which a sample of 384 individuals was selected, comprising 225 students, 100 parents, and 59 teachers. The sample size was determined using Yamane's formula. Random and purposive sampling techniques were used in selecting the involved participants. The data were collected using a structured questionnaire (with 5-point Likert scales), an interview guide, and a document review guide. The data were analyzed using percentages, frequencies, means, standard deviation, and regression analysis. The findings revealed that parents' and siblings' educational levels have a positive and significant influence on English language proficiency among learners in 9 and 12 YBE schools in the Musanze district of Rwanda (standard beta coefficient =.972; p-value =.000<0.05). It was found that family location has a positive and significant influence on English language proficiency among learners in 9 and 12 YBE schools in the Musanze district of Rwanda (standard beta coefficient =.981; p-value =.001< 0.05). It was found that family economic status has a positive and significant influence on English language proficiency among learners in 9 and 12 YBE schools in the Musanze district of Rwanda (standard beta coefficient =.983; p-value =.002< 0.05). It was also found that family language of communication has a positive and significant influence on English language proficiency among learners in 9 and 12 YBE schools in the Musanze district of Rwanda (standard beta coefficient =.985; p-value =.000<0.05). The study recommended that the Ministry of Education should implement comprehensive language programs, provide regular professional development for teachers, foster a language-rich environment, and utilize technology for language learning as a means to create an environment that promotes English language proficiency and support students in developing their English proficiency.

Key words: English Language Proficiency, Musanze District, 9 and 12 YBE Schools, Rwanda

I. INTRODUCTION

In 2009, Rwanda launched the Nine-Year Basic Education Program (9YBE) as part of its Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP), aiming to ensure universal access to quality education, provide a comprehensive education, equip students with relevant skills for the workforce, promote socio-economic development, and align with global education trends (Republic of Rwanda Ministry of Education, 2015). The program includes a cycle of six years of primary education and three years of lower secondary education. In 2012, Rwanda expanded the basic education cycle to twelve years with the Twelve-Year Basic Education Program (12YBE), providing a comprehensive learning experience (Republic of Rwanda Ministry of Education, 2017).

However, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2019), limited English language exposure, insufficient qualified English teachers, inadequate teaching materials and resources, cultural linguistic diversity, and limited English language immersion opportunities are the major challenges that contribute to the lower level of English language proficiency in nine and twelve-year basic education schools in Rwanda. Addressing these factors requires a comprehensive approach involving curriculum enhancements, teacher professional development, resource allocation, and creating an English language-rich environment both inside and outside the classroom.

English, as the third most spoken language globally, after Mandarin and Spanish (Kachru, 2005), serves as the official language in 67 countries, such as the United States, Australia, Britain, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa, and a second (L2) language in 27 others, like the Philippines (Lasagabaster, 2003). It is widely taught worldwide and plays a paramount role in today's globalized world. English facilitates international communication as a lingua franca, diplomacy, and cultural exchange (Crystal, 2003). Moreover, it is the language of science, technology,

and innovation, providing access to cutting-edge research and employment opportunities. Proficiency in English promotes global citizenship, online participation, and facilitates travel and tourism (Graddol, 2006).

The Council of Europe (2021) defines six proficiency levels in English. A1 (beginner), A2 (elementary), B1 (intermediate), B2 (upper-intermediate), C1 (advanced), and C2 (proficient). At all levels, learners are expected to have basic skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The top five countries on each continent ranked in terms of English proficiency according to the British Council (2022) and Education First (2022) are as follows: (i) Europe: Netherlands (C2), Sweden (C2), Denmark (C2), Norway (C2), and Finland (C2); (ii) North America: Canada (C2), United States (C2), Bermuda (C2), Bahamas (C2), and Barbados (C2); (iii) Oceania: Australia (C2), New Zealand (C2), Fiji (C1), Papua New Guinea (C1), and Samoa (C1); (iv) Asia: Singapore (C2), Philippines (C1), Malaysia (C1), India (B2), Hong Kong (B2); (v) Africa: South Africa (C2), Kenya (B2), Nigeria (B2), Ghana (B2), Uganda (B1); (vi) South America: Argentina (B2), Uruguay (B2), Chile (B2), Brazil (B2), and Colombia (B2).

The Council of Europe (2021) highlights that each continent's unique circumstances and policies contribute to its overall English language proficiency levels. Factors such as historical influence, a strong education system, economic opportunities, tourism, global communication, and cultural influence attribute high proficiency levels in English to Europe and North America. Increased access to online learning, government support, and motivation driven by economic challenges also play a role. In Africa, countries like South Africa and Kenya have improved English proficiency through enhanced education access, technology utilization, and involvement in trade and development initiatives. However, Rwanda, Libya, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo still face challenges like poverty, conflict, limited education access, and socio-economic disparities, resulting in lower English proficiency levels.

Samuelson and Freedman (2010) and Laviolette (2012) found that the amount of English found on the Rwandan streets (in taxis, markets, churches, stadia, and shopping centers) is very limited, and none of the Rwandan teachers from urban, suburban, and rural schools reported having adequate skills to teach in English. As pointed out by Rosendal (2010), the proficiency in the English language learned formally is poor in Rwanda, especially in Nine and Twelve Years Basic Education (9 and 12YBE), and other researchers (e.g., Sibomana, 2010) have found that the ability to read in English is relatively low for primary, secondary, and university students. Lightbown and Spada (2013) argued that the teaching of English in Rwanda is traditional: the focus is on the language itself (vocabulary and grammar) rather than on the information that is carried by the language, or, in other words, accuracy rather than fluency. Given the previously mentioned limited use of English in Rwanda, the opportunity for the learners to produce output, which Yule (2014) describes as one of the hardest things to provide in second language classes, is very limited.

The Ministry of Education (MINEDUC, 2018) prioritized that the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Rwandan secondary schools should enhance the learning and teaching of the English language through various contexts such as speaking, reading, writing, and listening skills, as well as grammar, as a means of helping learners to be proficient in English. Every year, the English curriculum is assessed through an English national examination. The indicator for effective English language proficiency in Rwanda at the secondary level, according to MINEDUC (2018), is that the percentage of learners achieving at least minimum proficiency in English in senior three (S_3) and senior six (S_6) private and public schools, including nine and twelve-year basic education schools, should have been 71.3% in 2016/17; 73.9% in 2017/18; 76.40% in 2018/19; 79.0% in 2019/20; 81.50% in 2020/21; 84.10% in 2021/22; 86.60% in 2022/23; and 89.60% in 2023/24.

Notwithstanding the persistent attempts to improve language education in the country through enhancing English language acquisition and practice in Rwanda, proficiency in English language by some learners in Rwanda in Nine and Twelve Years Basic Education (9 and 12 YBE) schools in Musanze district is relatively low (REB, 2020). According to the World Bank (2020), less than 30% of Rwandan learners in primary, lower, and upper secondary schools are proficient in English, the language of instruction in many of the country's schools. Many learners are still exhibiting high failure rates in English language examinations, limited vocabulary, difficulty with grammar and sentence structure, pronunciation issues, limited writing skills, and inadequate listening comprehension.

A recent report by the report by the Rwanda Education Board (REB) painted a concerning picture of English language proficiency among primary and secondary school students (REB, 2020). Only around 55.5% of primary and secondary school students can read English as expected (REB, 2020). This challenge goes beyond reading fluency. The REB report identifies issues like stammering pronunciation, difficulty expressing themselves orally, limited English use in daily life, and a lack of confidence in speaking the language. Students also struggled to grasp cultural context, formulate thoughts in English, and show waning enthusiasm for English learning, leading to reduced participation in class. The overall picture is concerning: a significant portion of Rwandan students lack fundamental English skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and comprehension, and this problem persists in certain districts like Musanze.

This study delved into family life to see how it affects English learning (e.g., parents' and siblings' education, where they live, how much money they have, and the language they speak at home). By examining these factors, the researchers gained a clear picture of what influences how well students learn English. The findings underscored the importance of creating a conducive learning environment both at home and in schools to support language development and enhance educational outcomes.

1.1 Research Objectives

To understand how family background affects English learning in Musanze, Rwanda, this study looked at things from many angles. Researchers visited ten schools (five with 9YBE and five with 12YBE schools) across four areas: Cyuve, Nyange, Kinigi, and Shingiro sectors. Here is what researcher wanted to find out:

i. To explore the influence of parents and siblings' educational level on English language proficiency among learners in 9 and 12YBE schools in Musanze district.
ii. To assess the influence of family location on English language proficiency among learners in 9 and 12YBE schools in Musanze district.
iii. To examine influence of family economic status on English language proficiency among learners in 9 and 12YBE Schools in Musanze district.
iv. To measure the influence of family language of communication on English language proficiency among learners in 9 and 12YBE schools in Musanze district.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Influence of Family Background on English Language Proficiency among Learners in Secondary Schools

Numerous studies in the existing literature have examined how the family background of secondary school learners influences their English language proficiency. However, the majority of these studies focus specifically on the influence of the family's language of communication on English language skills within secondary school settings. The following are a few examples of such studies.

2.1.1 English Language-Speaking family

According to UNESCO (2019), English-speaking families globally, including those in Europe, North America, Oceania, and Africa, recognize the global importance of the English language and actively support their children's language learning. They create English-speaking environments, engage their children in English-medium schools, and prioritize English as the primary language at home. In Africa, specifically in countries like Ghana, Kenya, and Rwanda, English-speaking families also play a significant role in promoting high proficiency in English. These families understand the opportunities that English provides in education, careers, and cultural exchange, and they are committed to equipping their children with strong English language skills alongside their native languages. This commitment reflects their understanding of succeeding in a globalized world.

Hoff (2006) stated that growing up in an English-speaking family provides constant language exposure, leading to a strong foundation in English. A language-rich environment enhances listening, speaking, and comprehension skills. Huttenlocher et al. (2010) found that English-speaking families use diverse vocabulary, expanding children's word repertoire. Accurate language input helps children learn grammar, idiomatic expressions, and proper pronunciation. Nagy et al. (2014) found that speaking natively at home promotes meaningful conversations and vocabulary in both languages. However, limited exposure to English hinders English language development.

Britto et al. (2006) highlight the role of older siblings in children's language development. Family support, such as assignments and daily conversations, aids in foreign language learning. Hoff (2006) and Cummins (2000) stress that English-speaking families ensure consistent and accurate language input, fostering native-like language skills. Creating an English-speaking environment facilitates vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation acquisition. Thomas and Collier (2012) discuss challenges faced by English-speaking families, including linguistic confusion, limited English proficiency, and cultural pressures. Inadequate school support hampers language development.

The study by Hoff and Core (20130) found that English-speaking families face challenges in enhancing their children's English language proficiency due to limited exposure to native speakers. Native speakers provide models for accurate pronunciation, vocabulary, and cultural nuances. Kim and Elder (2019) found that to overcome these limitations, families can seek interaction with native speakers, engage in immersive language activities, and utilize multimedia resources. Cummins (2000) found that limited resources hinder English language enhancement for English-speaking families, but strategies such as accessing learning materials, online resources, and language

exchange opportunities can mitigate this issue. Studies show there are ways parents can help beyond textbooks. Garcia (2009) suggests surrounding kids with English at home, using technology like educational apps, and even finding after-school language programs. But what if parents themselves feel nervous about English? Gkonou and Daubney (2017) found that language anxiety can hold them back. The good news is that there are solutions! By creating a supportive atmosphere, encouraging parents to learn alongside their kids, and making language learning fun (think games), these anxieties can be eased.

2.1.2 Non-English Language Speaking Family

It turns out that even families who don't speak English at home can play a big role in helping their kids become English whizzes (UNESCO, 2019). This is true around the world, from Germany and France in Europe to Rwanda in Africa. Why? Because parents everywhere recognize the importance of English in today's world. So how do they do it? Some families choose bilingual schools or language immersion programs. Others provide all sorts of English resources, like books and apps. Some even get involved in language exchange programs or find English-speaking communities. In Rwanda, where Kinyarwanda and French are also common, families prioritize English education by enrolling their kids in extra classes, exposing them to English TV shows and music, and even practicing English at home through conversations and cultural activities.

Parents everywhere are finding success in helping their children learn English, even if it is not the family's first language (Cummins, 2008; Olsen & Jaramillo, 2012). Talking some English at home, no matter the amount, makes a difference. Plus, making learning fun by incorporating English into family traditions and activities keeps kids engaged. Finally, partnering with teachers creates a supportive learning environment that benefits children both at home and in school. Baker and Park (2011) and Gandara and Rumberger (2009) found that engaging in extracurricular activities can help English language learners improve their academic skills and overall language development. Participation in activities outside of school can provide motivation, a sense of purpose, and a connection to cultural identity that support language development.

Holobow et al. (2008) and Genese (2015) found that bilingualism has a positive influence on cognitive and social development, and children growing up in bilingual households have an advantage in learning English as a second language. An immersion environment with exposure to English both inside and outside the home aids in the development of English language proficiency. Jenkins (2007) found that code-switching, the alternation between languages in communication, is a natural part of bilingual discourse and can be beneficial for developing linguistic competence. But switching between languages too often, or doing it in a confusing way, can slow down English learning.

Children from families who don't speak English at home can face hurdles in learning English (Garcia, 2009). Limited exposure to English books, movies, and TV shows can make it harder to pick up the language. Additionally, some families might worry that learning two languages is confusing for their children. This can lead to hesitation or shyness when speaking English in class, for fear of making mistakes (Bialystok, 2018). The challenges extend beyond academics (Huang, 2014). Children might struggle to express themselves or feel isolated because English isn't their first language. This can impact their self-esteem and sense of belonging. Fortunately, there are ways parents can support a child's English learning journey (Garcia, 2009). Enrolling them in English classes or events provides opportunities to practice with others in a safe space. Celebrating their cultural background and heritage reinforces the value of bilingualism. Finally, familiarizing themselves with the education system can help navigate expectations and support their child's learning experience (Huang, 2014).

To summarize, this section delves into investigations examining the influence of family background on English language proficiency among learners in 9 and 12 YBE schools in Musanze district, Rwanda. All studies confirmed that family language of communication significantly influences the proficiency in English language among learners in secondary schools. These are namely the studies of UNESCO (2017), Hoff (2006), Hottenlocher et al. (2010), Nagy et al. (2014); Chen (2011), Britto et al. (2006), Hoff (2006) and Cummins (2000), Garcia and Li (2014), Thomas & Collier (2012), Hoff and Core (2013), Kim and Elder (2019), Cummins (2000), Garcia (2009), Gkonou and Daubney (2017), Cummins (2008), Olsen and Jaramillo (2012), Baker & Park (2011); Gandara &Rumberger (2009), Holobow et al. (2008); Genese (2015), Jenkins (2007), Garcia (2009), Huang (2014), and Bialystok (2018).

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a convergent parallel design utilizing a mixed approach to find out the influence of family background on English language proficiency among learners in 9 and 12 YBE schools in Musanze District. Creswell (2014) opined that a mixed research design combines the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches within a single study. Qualitative research focuses on understanding phenomena through descriptive data, often in the form of words or images. It explores experiences, meanings, and perspectives. Qualitative findings provide rich detail and an in-depth understanding of the "why" behind a phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). Quantitative research emphasizes the collection and analysis of numerical data. It uses surveys, experiments, or other methods to measure variables and test hypotheses. Quantitative findings provide generalizable data and reveal the "what'' and "how much" of a phenomenon (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2007).

3.2 Population and sampling

The study was conducted in 10 schools with 9 and 12 YBEs only. These are, namely: G. S. Kabara, G. S. Nyange, G. S. Kagano, G. S. Kampanga, G. S. Muhe, G. S. Kinigi, G. S. Bisate, G. S. Tero, G. S. Gitinda, and G. S. Rushubi within Musanze district. The study targeted learners from senior three (S3) at the at the ordinary level and senior six (S6) at the at the advanced level, teachers, and parents to investigate the factors influencing English language proficiency. By involving learners, the research directly captured their experiences and challenges, while teachers' insights provided valuable information on instructional practices and collaboration opportunities. Parents' involvement sheds light on the home environment and cultural perspective.

The study aimed to develop effective strategies, interventions, and policies that address the specific needs of learners, taking into account the important role of parents in promoting English language learning in Musanze district, Rwanda. The population of the study counted 9321 subjects, from which a sample of 384 subjects (225 students, 100 parents, and 59 teachers) were selected. Students were selected using random sampling, and parents and teachers were selected using the purposive sampling technique. The sample size was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula. According to Yamane, the formula for determining sample size is as follows:

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

Where N stands for population, n stands for sample size, and e stands for sampling error, which is equal to 0.05.

3.3 Instruments

This study used structured questionnaire and interview guide to collect primary data. The study also used documentary review to collect secondary data (from journal articles, books, theses, etc.). The questionnaire contained close-ended questions only in the form of Likert scales (*1= Strongly agree, 2= Agree, 3= Neutral, 4= Disagree, 5= Strongly disagree*). The questionnaire was to be filled by ticking in the appropriate box with regard to the participants' understanding.

3.4 Validity and reliability

Before collecting data, a pilot study was done to establish the validity and reliability of the instruments. The validity of the instruments was verified by using expert judgment techniques. The experts suggested some adjustments and corrections. The reliability was verified using a pilot study along with the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient. The pilot study was done by having 25 learners fill out the questionnaire and give their feedback on it. The Cronbach alpha scores were extracted as shown in the following table.

Table 1

Reliability Results

Variables	Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Comments
Parents and siblings education level	25	0.923	Satisfactory
Family location	25	0.898	Satisfactory
Family economic status	25	0.899	Satisfactory
Family language of communication	25	0.798	Satisfactory
Overall		**0.879**	**Satisfactory**

A Cronbach's alpha value ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating greater internal consistency. A commonly accepted threshold for satisfactory internal consistency is a Cronbach's alpha of 0.7 or above. When Cronbach's alpha is above 0.7, it suggests that the items on the scale are highly correlated with each other and are measuring the same construct reliably. This means that the scale is consistent and dependable in measuring the intended construct (George & Mallery, 2003; Streiner, 2003).

As shown in table 1, the overall calculated Cronbach's alpha was 0.879, which is above 0.7. This indicates that the scale has a high degree of internal consistency, meaning that the items are measuring the same construct consistently, which is known as "the influence of family background on English language proficiency among learners in nine and twelve-year basic education schools in Musanze district." This value of 0.879 is important because it ensures that the scale is reliable and produces consistent results. This also ensures that the scale has a high level of precision. This implies that a scale can precisely gauge the intended construct, thereby minimizing measurement error. Furthermore, this value of 0.879 indicates that the scale has a high level of homogeneity. Homogeneity refers to the extent to which the items on the scale are similar to each other in terms of content. A high level of homogeneity suggests that the items are measuring the same aspect of the construct, enhancing the validity of the scale.

3.5 Statistical Treatment of Data

In this study, both qualitative and quantitative research data were analyzed using different methods. In qualitative research, data analysis involves coding and categorizing the data to identify themes and patterns. This was done through techniques such as content, thematic analysis, and grounded theory. On the other hand, quantitative research data analysis involved statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, and regression analysis to analyze numerical data and test hypotheses. The IBM SPSS statistics 2022 were used to produce percentages, frequencies, means, standard deviations, and regression analyses.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Demographic characteristics of respondents

Table 2

Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Valid percent
Male	156	40.6
Female	228	59.5
Total	**384**	**100.0**

The Table 2 above, indicates that the study involved 384 participants, including 225 students, 59 teachers, and 100 parents. In terms of gender, this study involved 156 (40.6%) male participants and 228 (59.5%) female ones.

Table 3

Distribution of Respondent by Age

Age	Frequency	Valid Percent
Less than 15 years	6	1.6
15-20	39	10.2
20-25	85	22.1
Above 25	254	66.1
Total	**384**	**100.0**

According to the Table 3 above, concerning the age of respondents, it is clear that, 6 (1,6%) were less than 15 years old, 39 (10.2%) were 15 to 20 years old, 85 (22.1%) were 20 to 25 years old, and 254 (66.1%) were above 25 years old.

Table 4
Distribution of Respondents by Educational Level

Educational levels	Frequency	Valid Percent
No education	54	14.06
Primary six	46	11.97
Senior three	130	33.85
Senior six	95	24.75
Advanced diploma A1	9	2.34
A0 with education	35	9.15
PGDE	14	3.64
Masters and above	1	0.24
Total	**384**	**100.0**

The Table 4 above, shows that, 54 (14.06%) of respondents were parents with no education level, 46 (11.97%) were parents with primary six education level, 130 (33.85%) were students in senior three, while 95 (24.75%) were students in senior six, while 9 (2.34%) were teachers with advanced diploma A1, 35 (9.11%) were teachers with A_0 with education, and additionally, 14 (3.64%) were teachers with Post-Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE), and lastly, 1 (0.28%) was a teacher with a masters level. This means that some parents did not receive any formal education, while others have a basic level of education but may not have pursued further studies. The A_0 level is the entry level for teachers in Rwanda, and it signifies that these teachers have undergone specific training in the field of education to ensure that they are knowledgeable enough to provide effective instruction for learners in 9 and 12 YBE schools.

Table 5: Distribution of respondents by Professional Experience

Professional experience	Frequency	Valid Percent
Less than one year	2	3.4
Three years	6	10.2
Five years	8	13.6
More than Five Years	43	72.8
Total	**59**	**100.0**

With regard to Professional Experience, shown in Table 5 above, 2 (3.4%) were teacher with less than one year of professional experience in teaching, 6 (10.2%) were teachers with three years of professional experience in teaching, 8 (13.6%) were teachers having five years of professional experience in teaching, while 43 (72.9%) were teachers with more than five years of professional experience in teaching.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics and Inferential Statistics for Family Language of Communication and English Language Proficiency

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with selected statements on a scale of 1 to 5 where: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree and 5=Strongly Agree. As shown in Table 6 and other subsequent chapters, **N** the number of the respondents; **Min**: Minimum; **Max**: Maximum; **M**: Mean; **STD**: Standard deviation.

4.2.1 Descriptive Statistics for Family Language of Communication

The results in Table 6 show the opinions of respondents about different statements defining family language in communication. Considering the mean of the responses, it is clear that all statements are in the category of high mean. The results in all these categories show that the respondents agreed with the statements related to the influence of family language communication on English language proficiency.

The statement with high mean are: Kinyarwanda language spoken by my family influences me in English language proficiency in this school (μ=4.6792 and STD=.80665), English language spoken by my family influences me in English language proficiency in this school (μ=4.2021 and STD=.85512), French language spoken by family influences me in English language proficiency in this school (μ=4.5505 and STD=.85790), Swahili language spoken by my family influences me in English language proficiency in this school (μ=4.4333 and STD=.97313), Kinyamulenge language spoken by family influences me in English language proficiency in this school (μ=4.3115 and

STD=1.00798), Rufumbira language spoken by my family influences me in English language proficiency in this school (μ=4.2438 and STD=.76555), sign Language (used by deaf community) used by my family influences me in English language proficiency in this school (μ=4.5438 and STD=.82765), Gitonga language spoken by my family influences me in English language proficiency in this school (μ=4.2635 and STD=.70075), Bashi language spoken by my family influences me in English language proficiency in this school (μ=4.4375 and STD=.77423), Rukiga language spoken by my family influences me in English language proficiency in this school (μ=4.3984 and STD=.83439).

The results from Table 6 show that the overall mean of agreement is high (**μ = 4.40636, high mean)** and the overall standard deviation is **0.840335**. This high mean suggests that the respondents tend to agree with the statements. This implies a relative strong or positive influence of family language communication on English language proficiency among students in nine and twelve-year basic education schools in Musanze district. The low standard deviation indicates that the results are more representative of the population, with less variability in the measured variables.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for Family Language of Communication

Statements	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std.
Kinyarwanda language spoken by my family influences me in English language proficiency in this school	384	1.00	5.00	4.6792	.80665
English language spoken by my family influences me in English language proficiency in this school	384	1.00	5.00	4.2021	.85512
French language spoken by family influences me in English language proficiency in this school	384	1.00	5.00	4.5505	.85790
Swahili language spoken by my family influences me in English language proficiency in this school	384	1.00	5.00	4.4333	.97313
Kinyamulenge language spoken by family influences me in English language proficiency in this school	384	1.00	5.00	4.3115	1.00798
Rufumbira language spoken by my family influences me in English language proficiency in this school	384	1.00	5.00	4.2438	.76555
Sign Language (used by deaf community) used by my family influences me in English language proficiency in this school	384	1.00	5.00	4.5438	.82765
Gitonga language spoken by my family influences me in English language proficiency in this school	384	1.00	5.00	4.2635	.70075
Bashi language spoken by my family influences me in English language proficiency in this school	384	1.00	5.00	4.4375	.77423
Rukiga language spoken by my family influences me in English language proficiency in this school	384	1.00	5.00	4.3984	.83439
Overall	**384**			**4.40636**	**0.840335**

4.2.1 Descriptive Statistics for English Language Proficiency

The results in Table 7 show the opinions of respondents about different statements defining English language proficiency. Considering the mean of responses, it appears that statements are in the following category: moderate mean and low mean. The results in all these categories show that the respondents agreed and disagreed with the statements related to their English language proficiency.

The statement with moderate mean are: I am accurately able to understand and interpret written texts in English language (μ=3.0000 and STD= .77121), I am effectively able to express my thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written English (μ=2.9084 and STD=.83404), I have a wide range of words and phrase in English including both general and specialized terms (μ=3.004 and STD= .59901), I have the ability to accurately understand and apply the rules of English grammar correctly (μ=3.9901 and STD=.67752), I am able to articulate English sounds and words accurately (μ=3.6854 and STD=.71142), I am familiar with commonly used idioms and expressions in English (μ=3.5467 and STD=.80056), I am skilled to organize thoughts and ideas logically and coherently in speech and writing(μ=3.7559 and STD=.90086), and I have the ability to analyze information, evaluate arguments, and express well-reasoned opinions in English (μ=3.9068 and STD=.85173).

These moderate means suggest that respondents have mixed opinions about the statements. It indicates a neutral or moderate relationship between the independent variable, which is family background in terms of family language of communication, and the dependent variable, which is English language proficiency regarding proficiency

in reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. The statements with a low mean are: I have accurately understood the spoken English language in various contexts and accents (μ = 2.6580 and STD =.66652), and I am accurately able to communicate orally in English with ease, using appropriate vocabulary and grammar (μ = 2.8803 and STD =.78760).

The results from Table 7 show that the overall mean of agreement is moderate (μ **=3.33358, low mean),** and the overall standard deviation is (STD =.760047, **low standard deviation**). This moderate mean indicates that the respondents tend to disagree with the statements related to English language proficiency among learners in 9 and 12 YBE schools in Musanze district, Rwanda. It indicates a neutral or moderate relationship between statements in the dependent variable. The low standard deviation shown above, in Table 3, indicates that the results are more representative of the population and that there is less variability in the measured variable. Considering these points together, it suggests that a significant portion of the learners might have English language proficiency levels that lean towards disagreement with statements about strong proficiency.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics for English Language Proficiency

Statements	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std.
I am accurately able to understand and interpret written texts in English language	384	1.00	5.00	3.0000	.77121
I have accurately the ability to understand spoken English language in various contexts and accents	384	1.00	5.00	2.6580	.66652
I am accurately able to communicate orally in English with ease, using appropriate vocabulary and grammar	384	1.00	5.00	2.8803	.78760
I am effectively able to express my thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written English	384	1.00	5.00	2.9084	.83404
I have a wide range of words and phrase in English including both general and specialized terms	384	1.00	5.00	3.0042	.59901
I have the ability to accurately understand and apply the rules of English grammar correctly	384	1.00	5.00	3.9901	.67752
I am able to articulate English sounds and words accurately	384	1.00	5.00	3.6854	.71142
I am familiar with commonly used idioms and expressions in English	384	1.00	5.00	3.5467	.80056
I am skilled to organize thoughts and ideas logically and coherently in speech and writing	384	1.00	5.00	3.7559	.90086
I have the ability to analyze information, evaluate arguments, and express well-reasoned opinions in English	384	1.00	5.00	3.9068	.85173

4.2.2 Inferential Statistics

Table 8 indicates that R-Square (R =.965). This indicates that independent variables have a strong explanatory power in relation to the dependent variable. This shows that 96.5% of the variation in the dependent variable (English language proficiency) can be explained by family language of communication, and the remaining percentage can be attributed to other variables that are not explained in this model.

Table 8

Model Summary for Family Language of Communication and English Language Proficiency

Model summary				
Model	**R**	**R-Square**	**Adjusted R-square**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**
1	.981[a]	.965	.965	.16292

***Predictors: (Constant), Family language of communication.

***Dependent variable: English language proficiency.

The results from Table 9 shows that family language of communication has positive significance influence (p value= .000 < 0.05) with English language proficiency among students in Nine and Twelve Basic Education schools in Musanze district, Rwanda. Thus the null hypothesis number three ($H_{0.4}$) which says that there is no significant influence of family language of communication on English language proficiency among students in 9 and 12YBE schools in Musanze district can be rejected and alternative one is accepted.

Table 9

Analysis of Variance for Family Language of Communication and English Language Proficiency

ANOVA[a]					
Model	**Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Regression	65.060	1	65.060	2452.081	.000[b]
Residual	2.122	383	.026		
Total	**67.182**	**384**			

***Dependent variable: English language proficiency

***Predictors: (Constant), family language of communication

The results in Table 10 indicate that the standard beta coefficient is.985 and is positive. A positive coefficient suggests a positive relationship. Therefore, there is a positive and significant influence of family language communication on English language proficiency. Meaning that as the independent variable increases (family language of communication), the dependent variable (English language proficiency among students in Nine and Twelve Years Basic Education school) tends to increase by 1.543 units while holding constant other variables, like parents' and siblings' educational level, family location, and family financial status.

Table 10

Coefficients for Family Language of Communication and English Language Proficiency

Coefficients					
Model	**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized coefficients**	**t**	**Sig.**
	B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
Constant	2.764	.136		-19.861	.000
Family language of communication	1.543	.029	.985	50.525	.000

***Dependent variable: English language proficiency

4.3 Ordinary Least Squares Regression for Family Background and Learners' English Language Proficiency

This part shows the Ordinary Least Square Regression Analysis that indicates the impact of the four independent variables (parents' and siblings' educational level, family location, family economic status, and family language of communication) jointly on the English language proficiency among students in Nine and Twelve Years Basic Education Schools in Musanze district, Rwanda. The findings were presented in Tables 11 to 13..

The analysis of the results shows that all the predictor variables were able to explain the reality of the dependent variable, as shown in Table 11. The R-square is 97.9%. This indicates that all independent variables have a strong explanatory power in relation to the dependent variable. Using the ordinary least squares regression model, the research tested the hypothesis that the predictor variables altogether have a positive influence on the dependent variable.

Table 11

Model Summary using R-square for Family Background

Model Summary				
Model	**R**	**R-Square**	**Adjusted R-square**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**
1	.988[a]	.979	.978	.12423

***Predictors: (Constant), education, location, economic, language

***Dependent variable: English language proficiency

The results from Table 12 show that family background variables (parents' and siblings' educational level, family location, family financial status, and family language of communication) have a positive significant influence (p value =.000 < 0.05) on the dependent variable (English language proficiency) among students in Nine and Twelve Years Basic Education schools in Musanze district, Rwanda. Thus, the study rejects all four null hypotheses, as the independent variables (family background) have a significant positive influence on the dependent variable (English language proficiency), based on the results presented above in Table 12.

Table 12

Analysis of Variance for Family Background

ANOVA[a]					
Model	**Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Regression	65.067	4	15.060	1066.081	.000[b]
Residual	1.184	380	0.010		
Total	**66.251**	**384**			

***Dependent variable: English language proficiency

***Predictors: (Constant), education, location, economic, language

The results in Table 13 indicate that the standard beta coefficient is.972 and is positive for the independent variable (parents' and siblings' educational level). A positive coefficient implies a positive relationship. Therefore, there is a positive and significant influence of parents' and siblings' educational level on English language proficiency among students in nine and twelve-year basic education schools. This means that a unit of change in parents and siblings educational level increases English language proficiency among students by 1.190 units, while holding constant other factors of family location, family financial status, and family language of communication.

Additionally, there is a positive and significant influence of family location on English language proficiency among students in Nine and Twelve Years Basic Education schools in Musanze district (standard beta coefficient =.981). This suggests that a unit of change in family location increases English language proficiency among students by 1.398 units while holding constant other variables of parents' and siblings' educational level, family financial status, and family language of communication.

Moreover, there is a positive and significant influence of family financial status on English language proficiency among students in nine and twelve-year basic education schools in Musanze district (standard beta coefficient =.983). This implies that a unit of change in family economic status increases English language proficiency among students by 1.202 units while holding constant other variables such as parents' and siblings' educational level, family location, and family language of communication.

Furthermore, there is a positive and significant influence of family language communication on English language proficiency among students in nine and twelve-year basic education schools in Musanze district (standard beta coefficient =.985). This means that a unit of change in family language communication increases English language proficiency among students by 1.543 units while holding constant other variables such as parents' and siblings' education level, family location, and family financial status.

Table 13

Regression Coefficients for Family Background

Co-efficient[a]					
Unstandardized Coefficients			**Standardized Coefficients**		
Model	**B**	**Std. Error**	**Beta**	**t**	**Sig.**
Constant	1.528	1.309		11.557	.000
Education	1.190	.27	972	39.555	.000
Location	.028	.981	.981	47.863	.001
Economic	1.202	.21	.983	49.873	.002
Language	1.543	.029	.985	50.525	.000

***Dependent variable: English proficiency

Based on the findings in Table 13, the fitted regression model was as follows:

$Y=1.528+1.190X_1+ 1.398X_2+ 1.202X_3+1.543X_4$.

Where Y refers to changes in English language proficiency as (dependent variable),

X_1 refers education (parents' and siblings' education level).

X_2 refers to location (family location).

X_3 refers to economic (family economic status).

X_4 refers to language (family language of communication).

4.4 Discussions

As mentioned earlier, this study aimed at investigating the influence of family background on English language proficiency among students in nine and twelve-year basic education schools in MUSANZE district, Rwanda.

Objective 1: Concerning objective number one, which was to determine the influence of parents and siblings' educational level on English language proficiency among students in 9 and 12YBE schools in Musanze district, the study found that there is a positive and significant influence of parents' and siblings' educational level on English language proficiency among learners in 9 and 12YBE schools in Musanze district, Rwanda (standard beta coefficient =.972, p value =.000 < 0.05).

The findings on the objective one are similar to the findings in the study by Davis-Kean (2005), who found that parents and siblings with tertiary educational levels create a language-rich environment by engaging in conversations, reading English books, and providing exposure to vocabulary and grammatical structures. Additionally, they set high academic expectations, offer support through homework assistance and access to educational resources, and emphasize the importance of education and language proficiency (Davis-Kean, 2005), while the social context provided by highly educated parents supports language development (Hoff, 2006).

Objective 2: With regard to objective number two, which was to assess the influence of family location on English language proficiency among students in 9 and 12YBE schools in Musanze district, the study found that there is a positive and significant effect of family location on English language proficiency among learners in 9 and 12YBE schools in Musanze district, Rwanda (standardized beta coefficient =.981, p value =.001 < 0.05).

These results are analogous to the findings in the study by Sampson (2018), who found that city families have advantages in language learning. According to the author, urban students have access to more resources, like libraries and cultural events. This exposes kids to a wider range of English, helping them learn new words and understand things better. Being around different cultures in a city also helps children learn about the world (Lareau & Weininger, 2003). Good schools with special English programs can give kids a strong foundation (Zhang & Lam, 2017). Technology in cities, like online resources and language apps, is another plus for learning English (Liu & Huang, 2012).

Objective 3: The third objective of this study was to examine the influence of family economic status on English language proficiency among learners in 9 and 12 YBE schools in Musanze district, Rwanda. The analysis revealed a statistically significant positive correlation (standard beta coefficient =.983, p-value =.002 < 0.05) between family economic status and English language proficiency. In simple terms, students from families with greater financial resources tended to score higher on English proficiency tests.

A new study found results similar to previous research, suggesting that students from wealthier families tend to have an advantage in learning English. Just like Lubienski and Lubienski's study (2014), this research shows that families with more financial resources can afford extra help, such as experienced tutors who provide personalized attention and targeted practice. The study also highlights the benefits of various English learning resources beyond the classroom, like textbooks, online courses, and apps. These resources, often more accessible to wealthier families, allow students to learn at their own pace and focus on specific areas for improvement. This access to additional support may contribute to the observed link between family income and English proficiency (Warshauer & Matuchniak, 2010).

Objective 4: The fourth objective of this study investigated how the language spoken at home (family language of communication) influences learners' English skills in 9 and 12 YBE schools in Musanze district, Rwanda. The results showed a strong positive connection (standard beta coefficient =.985, p-value =.000 <0.05) between the family's home language and English proficiency. In other words, students whose families spoke English at home generally performed better on English tests.

This study echoes findings by Cummins (2008) on how the language spoken at home can boost English skills. Cummins suggested that children learn by observing and imitating the language used by family members. Parents and siblings act as role models, showing proper grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. This modeling helps children internalize the language more effectively, leading to improved proficiency in all language skills. Moreover, a study by Cummins (2008) found that children who were exposed to a rich language environment at home had significantly higher language proficiency levels compared to those with limited exposure.

Furthermore, the findings of objective four are similar to the findings in a study by Genesee (2008), who found that the family language of communication at home creates a supportive environment where children feel comfortable practicing and experimenting with English. According to the author, children can freely express themselves, ask questions, and receive immediate feedback from family members. This supportive atmosphere fosters language development and encourages children to take risks when using English. Research by Genesee (2008)

suggests that a supportive language environment at home positively impacts children's language proficiency and overall language development.

Regarding the findings from the interview conducted with parents and teachers on the intervening variables such as instructional materials, teacher's ability, and learner's motivation, it was revealed that (i) instructional materials play an important role in enhancing proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills for learners in secondary school. It was revealed that instructional materials provide learners with authentic texts and resources, multimedia resources, and task-based activities, which ensure a positive influence of instructional materials on English language proficiency among learners in 9 and 12 YBE schools in Musanze district.

The findings on instructional materials are similar to the findings in the study by the Council of Europe (2021), which found that instructional materials incorporate authentic and engaging materials to enhance English language proficiency. They found that when students interact with authentic materials, such as newspapers, literature, films, or online resources, they are exposed to genuine language usage and are more likely to develop their language skills. Also in the study by Kress and van Leeuwen (2001), it was found that instructional materials employ a multimodal approach, incorporating various modes of communication such as text, visuals, audio, and interactive elements to enhance language learning outcomes. This study shows that using different learning tools, like pictures and sounds along with text, can improve how students grasp information, learn new vocabulary, and express themselves better.

The interviews with parents and teachers showed that good teachers are crucial for helping students learn English. Teachers with strong skills can use effective teaching methods, give helpful feedback, and create a positive learning environment. This study found that these teacher abilities have a clear and important impact on how well students in 9 and 12 YBE schools in Musanze district learn English.

This new study echoes previous research on how good teachers can make a big difference in students' English skills. Just like Echevarria et al. (2007) found that teachers with strong teaching skills can significantly boost students' English proficiency. These skilled teachers can design engaging lessons that encourage students to participate actively and use English more. They can also tailor their teaching to each student's needs, which helps them learn English more effectively. Dornyei and Csizer's work (2002) adds another layer, highlighting the importance of a positive teacher-student relationship. They found that skilled teachers build strong relationships with their students, providing helpful feedback and creating a safe space for students to take risks and practice English. This positive environment motivates students to work harder and persist, ultimately leading to better English skills.

The interviews with parents and teachers highlighted the importance of student motivation in learning English. It was found that motivated students are more likely to put in extra effort and practice, be willing to take risks and try new things, and maintain a positive attitude that helps them keep going. This motivation plays a key role in improving their reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. This ensures that learners's motivation has a significant positive influence on English language proficiency among learners in 9 and 12 YBE schools in Musanze district.

The findings on learners's motivation are similar to the findings in the study by Dornyei (2001), who found that learners who have high levels of intrinsic motivation tend to have better language learning outcomes. He asserted that, when learners are genuinely interested in learning English, they are more likely to invest time and effort, engage in autonomous learning, and seek opportunities for language practice, which lead to improved language proficiency. Also in the study by Locke and Lantam (2002), it was found that learners who set realistic and attainable goals, monitor their progress, and experience success are more likely to maintain their motivation, persist in their language learning efforts, and achieve higher levels of proficiency. Additionally, a study by Ryan and Deci (2000) found that when learners feel supported, encouraged, and valued by their teachers and peers, their motivation to engage in English language learning activities increases.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

This study in Musanze, Rwanda, examined how learners' family backgrounds impact their English skills in 9 and 12 YBE schools. Parents' and siblings' education, family location, economic status, and the language spoken at home were all found to positively influence English proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. But that's not all! The study also considered how factors like teaching materials, teacher skills, and students' motivation play a role. By looking at both the family background and the learning environment, we gain a clear picture of what helps students excel in English. Ultimately, the findings highlight the importance of a multi-faceted approach to supporting students' English language development in Musanze district, Rwanda.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the study recommended that:

Parents should foster a language-rich environment at home through conversations, reading English books, and exposure to diverse vocabulary. This means balancing English learning with their native language at home and exposing them to different cultures through fun activities. Additionally, they have to establish high academic expectations and provide support for their children through homework assistance and access to educational resources. Moreover, parents should talk regularly with teachers to get regular feedback and work together on strategies to boost their child's English skills.

Students have to practice reading, writing, speaking, and listening to English as much as they can every day, join a language club, use a learning app, or find other ways to use English outside of class. Mistakes are just stepping stones to becoming an English pro. They have to embrace them as learning opportunities. Additionally, they have to breakdown their learning goals into smaller, achievable steps and celebrate their progress along the way. Moreover, they have to explore all resources available, including libraries, websites, and apps, to boost their English skills on top of what they learn in class.

The Ministry of Education should develop a clear and comprehensive English program that aligns with international standards, provide ongoing training and development opportunities for English language teachers, and allocate enough resources, like textbooks and technology, to support effective English instruction. Additionally, it should regularly monitor and evaluate English programs to ensure quality and identify areas for improvement. Moreover, the Ministry of Education should encourage community engagement initiatives that involve parents, local organizations, and community members to support English learning outside of school.

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