LANGUAGE LEARNING MOTIVATION AND ORAL PROFICIENCY IN LEARNERS OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: THE CASE OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN RWANDA

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ABSTRACT

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Building on existing research on the role of motivation in language learning, the present study investigates the relationship between EFL learners' motivation and their oral proficiency. Participants were university students from Rwanda. The study is guided by the following research questions: *What is the status of oral proficiency and motivation in university EFL learners in Rwanda; Is there a relationship between their proficiency and motivation? To what extent are they related?* Data collection tools included a survey (106 students) and interviews with students (41) and teachers (3). Interviews with students were used as both qualitative data and speech samples. The latter were rated by five native speakers of North-American English for their accentedness, comprehensibility and fluency, and the results were used as oral proficiency data. Some motivation constructs as used in the literature were found to work differently for the current population, where the *Ideal L2 Self* and *Integrative Motivation* turned out to contribute to one construct identified as *Integration into the Global Community*. Results from the survey and interviews with both students and teachers revealed that students were highly motivated, while their oral proficiency was found to be average. Correlation analyses were run to gauge the relationship between students' motivation to learn English and their oral proficiency. Findings revealed a weak correlation between learners' motivation to learn English and oral proficiency. Based on results of the study, appropriate pedagogical implications and recommendations as well as avenues for future research are proposed.

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To my Better-half Kagoyire
My two sons Hirwa and Munana.
My dear Mother who made me what I am today.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Brief history of the research site: Rwanda

Rwanda is a country located in east central Africa, with 28, 336 square kilometers, and 12, 133, 1338 people. It is a landlocked country, surrounded by Uganda in the north, Burundi in the south, Tanzania to the east, and The Democratic Republic of Congo in the west. It is known as the country of a thousand hills because of its mountainous landscape. The main sources of income are agriculture (mainly subsistence), tourism, industry and services. The main exports are coffee and tea.

Rwanda has known five main historical periods: precolonial, colonial (1889-1962), post-colonial, genocide (1994) and post-genocide areas (1994 to date). There are three official languages in Rwanda: Kinyarwanda (native language) French (Foreign language), and English (Foreign language). From the colonial period (Belgian colonial period) until 1995, French was used as the medium of instruction from middle school to university. From 1995 to 2008, both French and English were used as mediums of instruction. From 2008 to date, only English has been used as the medium of instruction from middle school to university, while Kinyarwanda is the medium of instruction in primary school.

There are four levels of education in Rwanda's education system: Primary school (6 years), junior secondary school (Ordinary level, 3 years), senior secondary school (Advanced level, 3 years), and college (4-6 years depending on the field of study). Since 2013, Rwanda has had only one public university which encompasses 6 colleges: College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences, College of Arts and Social Sciences, College of Business and Economics, College of Education, College of Medicine and Health Sciences, and the College of Science and Technology.

1.2. Introduction of the study

In recent years, the status of English as an international language has been raised more than ever before. According to some researchers, English has taken on the status of a global language. English is gaining dominance in the most important activities of today's world, namely education, business, technology, science and international relations (Nunan, 2003, Pineda, 2011; Ryan, 2006; Ushioda, 2011). This has led education systems in various countries to incorporate the English language in their programs to make sure that their students are equipped with a tool that will enable them to operate in today's world that has become a global village.

The education system in Rwanda was not left behind in this endeavor. The English language has gained a very high status among the most important activities in the country. In education, English is now taught from primary school and, in 2008, the Ministry of Education took a step further and made it the sole medium of instruction from the secondary to the tertiary levels, thus replacing French. In administration, English is one of the three official languages alongside Kinyarwanda and French. On the international relations side, Rwanda has joined regional and international communities that use the English language as a lingua franca: The East African Community (2007), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, and the Commonwealth (2009). It seems reasonable to assume that, given the increasing use of English worldwide and the role it plays in Rwanda's academic institutions in particular, students' motivation to learn this language will also increase because learners see tangible benefits in learning it.

Before delving into the ins and outs of L2 motivation and learning achievement, it seems appropriate to set the scene of the learning context and background that characterize the population under study. The participants in the present study were first-year university students. In 2013, all public higher learning institutions were merged into one public university under the name of

University of Rwanda. This one is composed of six subject-based colleges which, in turn, have 14 branches across the country. The research site for the present study serves as both the headquarters of one of the six colleges and a campus. Students in this campus come from around the country.

The students who participated in the present study have a complex linguistic background. They completed their studies under three different languages of instruction: they started their formal education in Kinyarwanda (students' L1) as the medium of instruction throughout primary school, moved on with French in Ordinary Level (middle school) and finally shifted to English from Advanced Level (high school), following the Government of Rwanda's decision to replace French with English as a language of instruction starting from middle school in 2008. Since then, French has been studied as a subject in both primary and secondary school, and, as mentioned by some of the students in this study, it is optional in some schools. University students take all their field-specific courses in English, and are required to study English as an academic subject in their first year and second year of university. Given the prominent place of English in these students' academic life, it would be reasonable to assume that their motivation to learn English and their investment in it would be high.

The present study examines the relationship between university students' motivation to learn English and their oral proficiency, also known as speaking skills. Researchers on motivation assert that the greater the motivation, the more successful learners will be in learning the language. One of them is Gardner (2005) who argues that

> students with higher levels of motivation will do better than students with lower levels because they will expend more effort, will be more attentive, will be more persistent, will enjoy the experience more, will want more to learn the material, will be goal directed, will display optimal levels of arousal, will have expectancies, and will be more self-confident with their performance (p. 5).

The current study seeks to find out whether this commonly-held assumption is borne out by evidence in the EFL context where students have very limited opportunity for language use and exposure. The choice of oral proficiency was based on two main reasons. The first one is that oral skills are considered to be a very important component of language skills and basic linguistic competence. Lazaraton (2014, p. 106) stated that “speaking is the main skill by which language is acquired.” She goes on to say that people will ask you how many languages you speak, not how many languages you write. In addition, there are many examples of people who can speak a language but cannot write in it, while the opposite phenomenon is difficult, if not impossible to find. In the academic context, speaking skills are considered important because they are one of the mediums learners use to contribute to, and/ or show evidence of their learning.

The second reason that triggered my interest in investigating the status of oral proficiency in this study is the fact that, from my experience as a college-level English teacher, oral skills are often left behind, especially at university level, where emphasis is put on reading and writing for academic purposes. This is particularly true of Rwanda’s context where the issues of large classes make it hard for teachers to organize speaking activities for classes of 60 to 100 students. This is detrimental to the development of this language skill, especially in the EFL context where learners have very limited opportunities to use the spoken language outside the classroom. Investigating the status of oral proficiency and motivation as well as their relationships in this context might shed light on what motivation can and cannot do and what teachers can do to help motivated university students to develop this under-taught and yet essential language skill.

The present study was conducted using a mixed-methods approach in an attempt to account for the multifaceted nature of motivation. A survey was used to gather as much and diverse information as possible about L2 learners’ motivation to learn English, while interviews were

meant to provide in-depth information. Since this is an exploratory study, it was deemed important to combine both traditional and emerging perspectives on language learning motivation in order to avoid missing any information concerning the current population's motivation to learn English.

We believe that the present study will contribute to bridging what some researchers consider to be the gap between L2 motivation and mainstream second language acquisition research research. In his seminal work on the new motivation framework, *the L2 Motivational self-system*, Dörnyei (2005), pointed out that L2 motivation and second language acquisition seem to work in isolation, the only link being the comparison between "motivational attributes" with "general learning outcomes." (p. 110), what he qualified as the traditional approach to motivation. He called for L2 motivation research that focuses more on "*language behaviors*". He encouraged researchers to "look at how motivational features affect learners' specific behaviors, such as their increased willingness to communicate in the L2, their engagement in learning tasks, or their use of learning/communication techniques and strategies" (p. 110). It is along these lines that the present study utilized a combination of approaches in order to understand the nature of language learning motivation in the current population. We investigated the relationship between motivation and oral proficiency, which, we believe, is also a legitimate way of relating L2 motivation to learning outcomes. We also used interviews as a tool that would facilitate access to the above-mentioned language learning behaviors. Interview data enabled us to look at language learning motivation from an emic perspective and provided an account of the complex and dynamic nature of L2 motivation.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Motivation and second language learning: Historical background

Motivation, one of the variables of individual differences in language learning, has captured the attention of teachers and researchers in the field of second language acquisition, because it is considered to be among the main factors that influence second language learning success (Dörnyei, 1994, 2005; Gardner, 1985, 2001; Gardner & McIntyre, 1991; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). According to Encyclopedia Britannica, the word motivation refers to "forces acting either on or within a person to initiate behavior". It is derived from the Latin word "*motivus*", meaning a "*moving cause*", from the verb "*movere*", meaning to "move". Motivation is known to be a complex construct that involves *affect*, *cognition* and *behaviors* (Dörnyei, 2014; Gardner, 1983,), which makes it difficult to define. Various researchers tried to provide definitions that reflect this complexity. For Keller (1983), motivation "refers to the choices people make as to what experiences or goals they will approach or avoid, and the degree of effort they will exert in that respect." (p. 389). In simple and clear terms, Gardner (1985) defined motivation as "the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes towards learning the language." (p. 10). Gardner's description of motivation is echoed by Dörnyei (2001a), who pointed out that

> motivation concerns the direction and magnitude of human behavior, that is, the choice of a particular action, the persistence with it, the effort expended on it. […] Motivation is responsible for why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to sustain the activity, and how hard they are going to pursue it (p. 519).

Many researchers agree on the important role of motivation in second language acquisition. Dörnyei (1998), takes motivation as a sine qua non of successful second language learning as expressed in the following quote:

> All the other factors involved in L2 acquisition presuppose motivation to some extent. Without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long term goals, and neither are appropriate curricula and good teaching on their own to ensure student achievement. On the other hand, motivation can make up for considerable deficiencies both in one's language aptitudes and learning conditions (p. 2)

Since the 1990s, a lot of work has been done in an effort to conceptualize motivation and investigate how it works. In this process, Dörnyei (2005) discussed the four main phases that have characterized the evolution of motivation: The Social Psychological Period, the Cognitive-Situated Period and the Process-Oriented Period, and his new conceptualization of motivation, the L2 Motivational Self system.

2.1.1. The socio-psychological period

For a long time, research on motivation drew its inspiration from the social psychological perspective, Robert Gardner and Wallace Lambert being the most influential proponents of this movement (Dörnyei, 1994). The social psychological period was popular between 1959 and the 1990s. It emerged in Canada during the period of what Dörnyei (2005) called "confrontational coexistence of the Francophone and Anglophone communities" (p. 67). Lambert and Gardner and their associates viewed second language learning as a socioculturally-motivated phenomenon, and their initial conception of motivation advocated integrative motivation as the core construct of the motivation to learn a second language (Dörnyei, 2005). According to Gardner (2001), integrative motivation, "a complex of attitudinal, goal-oriented and motivational attributes" (p.6), consists of integrativeness ("genuine interest in learning the second language to come closer to the other language community" (p. 5), attitude toward the learning situation and motivation. He posits that,

among these three components of integrative motivation, "it is motivation that is responsible for achievement in the second language" (p. 5), with the other two playing a minor role. This conceptualization of language learning motivation was largely influenced by the Canadian context of Francophone and Anglophone communities, where Gardner, Lambert and their associates asserted that the learning of the other community's language would serve as a mediation between them, both socially and culturally (Dörnyei, 2005). Other researchers adopted this view of motivation and extended it to other learning contexts until the 1990s, when other lines of thinking started to question the static and monolithic status of integrative motivation (Nikolov, 2001, cited in Dörnyei, 2005; Williams and Burden (1997, cited in Dörnyei, 2005). In an effort to explain his sociocultural perspective vis à vis the relationship between second language learning and motivation, Gardner (2001) proposed a conceptual framework of motivation known as the "socio-educational model of second language acquisition" which emphasized that motivation is influenced by educational setting and cultural context, and, together with Smythe, introduced standardized assessment techniques and instruments called the "Attitude/Motivation Test Battery" (Gardner, 2001). It was originally applied to English-speaking Canadians who were learning French, but was later adopted and/or adapted by other researchers and is still used today.

According to Gardner (2005) motivation and ability are the main components of this model that greatly influence language learning success and account for "individual differences in achievement in language learning context" (p. 9). Motivation is, in turn, influenced by the learning situation, integrativeness and, to a certain extent, instrumentality. The learning situation is comprised of all favorable learning conditions such as the teacher's competence and dedication, well-designed curriculum and lesson plans, and effective assessment system. For Gardner, instrumentality has to do with utilitarian reasons for learning another language and was thought to

play a minor role. Some of the shortcomings associated with Gardner's integrative motivation were that it was more socially oriented, did not give enough attention to such important aspects as the classroom context and cognitive processes, and was seen as a static rather than dynamic phenomenon (Dörnyei, 1994). In addition, Gardner's terminology used to describe motivation was rather confusing for some researchers (Dörnyei, 2005). This gave rise to other perspectives on L2 motivation, namely the cognitive-situated period and the process-oriented period.

2.1.2. The cognitive-situated period

The cognitive-situated approach emerged in the 1990s. Without entirely rejecting theories and applications of the previous period, proponents of the cognitive-situated period based their conception of motivation on two frames of reference: a cognitive perspective which involved the learner's self-perception in relation to language learning, and a narrow perspective of motivation. The latter was a shift from Gardner and associates' macro-perspective of L2 motivation that was more concerned with language learners within larger communities to a micro-perspective that would look at motivation as it unfolds in "actual learning situations such as the classroom", taking into account the learners' past and present learning experiences (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 74). Among influential scholars of this period, Dörnyei (2005) listed Kimura, (2003), Nikolov (2001), Brown, (1990); Julkunen, (1989); Skehan, (1989), (1991); Dörnyei, (1994a); Williams& Burden, (1997); and McGroarty, (2001). This new conception of motivation gave rise to three perspectives: the self-determination theory, language attributions, and task motivation (Dörnyei, 2005).

2.1.2.1. Self-determination theory

Noels and associates proposed a motivation construct, the *Self-Determination Theory*, with three components: intrinsic reasons, extrinsic reasons and integrative reasons (Noels et al., 2000). In addition, Noels et al. found the influence of learning conditions on the development of self-determination, and posited that learning conditions that promoted autonomy and informative feedback lead to the enhancement of intrinsic motivation, which is believed to play a bigger part in successful language learning. They devised an instrument that measured different constituents of self-determination theory, the "Language Learning Orientation Scale" (Noels et al., 2003).

2.1.2.2. Attribution theory

The attribution theory gained popularity in contemporary motivation theories and research in psychology in the 1980s (Dörnyei, 2005). Bernard Weiner (2000) contended that learners' past experiences, in this case, successes and failures, would have an impact on their future achievements. The theory was supported by various research findings. Ushioda (1996, 1998, 2001, cited in Dörnyei, 2005) proposed attributional models that characterize the attributional theory: "(a) attributing positive L2 outcomes to personal ability or other internal factors (effort, perfectionist approach), (b) attributing negative L2 outcomes or lack of success to temporary shortcomings that could be overcome." She concluded that it is these attributions that direct the learner's motivation (Dörnyei, 2005).

2.1.2.3. Task motivation

Dörnyei (2005) pointed out that the kinds of tasks that learners perform also play a part in their motivation. According to the author, there are "complex motivational mindsets and contingencies activated during task performance and feed into a dynamic task processing system which consists of three interrelated mechanisms: task execution, appraisal and task control…" (p. 94). In explaining the relationship between motivation and task performance, Dörnyei argued that as learners carry out the task, they make use of "their action control system" which enables them to assess and improve task performance. Egbert (2003) stated that task motivation can also be related to the degree of focus and engagement that learners invest in the task at hand, referred to as "flow", which, he argued, is the result of the balance between the task challenge and learners' level of competence, clarity of task goals, the interest the learner finds in the task as well as the control he has over the processes and results of the task.

2.1.3. The process-oriented period

During the process-oriented period, researchers brought up another aspect of motivation that deserved particular attention, the "*dynamic character and temporal variation*" (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 83). From this perspective, motivation was seen as something dynamic with continuous changes, and was examined by considering "its relationships with individual learner behaviors and classroom processes" (Dörnyei, 2005, p.83). Williams and Burden (1997, cited in Dörnyei, 2005) looked at motivation as a process with three stages and placed it on a continuum, from "reasons for doing something" to "deciding to do something" and finally "sustaining the effort or persisting" (p. 83), which they summed up as "initiating and sustaining motivation." Within the same perspective of process and dynamicity, Manolopoulou-Sergi (2004) used the Information Processing Model he borrowed from second language acquisition, that is input, processing and

output, to describe the role of motivation in the language learning process. He argued that motivation is the driving force behind the three learning processes in that, without motivation, learners can neither focus their attention to input nor expend their effort to make sense of the input and engage in classroom tasks that involve output production.

Dörnyei and Otto (1998) devised a model with components that indicated how motivation evolves with time, whereby wishes lead to goals, goals to intentions and the realization of those intentions. From these components of the motivation process, they derived three main stages, namely the preactional stage which generates motivation and is thus called choice motivation, the actional stage which maintains and protects motivation (executive motivation), and the postactional stage which consists of learners' self-evaluation.

2.1.4. New conceptualizations of motivation

2.1.4.1 The L2 Motivational Self-system

New conceptions of motivation after the three main periods emerged in an attempt to understand the ever-changing nature of motivation and the driving force behind today's foreign language learners' motivation, which Ryan (2006) describes as "extraordinary effort to learn a language that holds out little immediate prospects of material rewards and offers scarce opportunities to establish direct contact with its speakers." (p. 23). In this regard, Dörnyei (2005) introduced a new theoretical framework for motivation, *The L2 Motivational Self-System*. It is a "reconceptualization of L2 motivation as part of the learner's self-system" (Dörnyei, 2009) which links the second language field and mainstream personality psychology that takes into consideration individual differences (Dörnyei, 2005). L2 motivational self-system is built on Marcus and Nurius' (1986) concept of possible selves which refer to a representation of "what we

could become, what we would like to become and what we are afraid of becoming" (Marcus & Nurius, 1986, p. 954). Dörnyei's (2005) L2 motivational self-system is composed of three dimensions: the '*Ideal L2 self", "Ought-to L2 self"* and *"L2 learning experience".*

According to Dörnyei (2005), the L2 ideal self is intrinsic in nature and is related to integrative and instrumental motivation in its traditional sense. It is a vivid representation of what the language learner aspires to, and is seen as the most "powerful motivator to learn an L2 because of the desire to reduce the discrepancy between the actual self and ideal selves." (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 29). The Ought-to L2 Self is oriented towards "extrinsic instrumental motives", and refers to attributes the learner thinks s/he should have to "meet expectations or avoid possible negative outcomes" (p. 29). Dörnyei argues that the Ought-to L2 Self is less motivating than the Ideal L2 Self because it is external to the learner. The last component of the Motivational L2 Self is the L2 learning experience. According to Dörnyei (2005, 2009), L2 learning experience corresponds to the learner's "situated, executive motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience, [and involves] the impact of the teacher, the curriculum, peers, and the experience of success." (p. 29). Dörnyei argues that L2 learning experience has a big influence on the learner's motivation.

Several studies have been conducted following Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self-system framework to investigate its application to different contexts of L2 learning, and two of them deserve particular attention because they tested the above-mentioned framework. Tagushi et al. (2009) carried out a comparative study on three Asian settings (China, Japan and Iran) based on the L2 Motivational Self-system and some motivation constructs from Gardner's AMTB. Using a questionnaire adapted from Dörnyei et al. (2006), Tagushi et al. collected data from 5,000 students. They investigated the relationship between integrativeness and the Ideal L2 Self and

compared them with intended effort to learn English as a criterion measure. They also investigated two aspects of instrumentality, that is, instrumentality with a promotion focus and instrumentality with a prevention focus, which, according to Higgins (1998, p. 16) are concerned with "accomplishments, hopes and aspirations" for the former, and "protection, safety, and obligations" for the latter. The questionnaire for Chinese and Japanese students was composed of 67 items while the one for Iranian students was composed of 76 items. Participants were middle-school students, university students majoring in English, non-English majors, and adult learners of English. The findings indicated a significant positive correlation between Ideal L2 self and integrativeness. The results also showed that the Ideal L2 Self correlated with Intended Effort as a criterion measure more than with integrativeness, which, according to Tagushi et al. (2009), is a justification for using the Ideal L2 Self in place of integrativeness when investigating L2 motivation. There was also a higher correlation between instrumentality- promotion and the Ideal L2 Self than between instrumentality-prevention and the Ideal L2 Self. On the contrary, instrumentality-prevention showed a higher correlation with the Ought-to Self than instrumentality- promotion, which means that the two are separate aspects of instrumentality. In the Chinese and Iranian contexts, instrumentality promotion was found to be related to the Ought-to Self, due to socio-economic responsibilities that await those students once they finish their studies. Chinese and Iranian students were also reported to have a "more balanced and salient Ideal Self" (p. 86) than their Japanese counterparts, who, conversely, displayed the highest correlation between instrumentality-prevention and Ought-to Self.

In a similar vein, Csizér and Kormos (2009) examined the validity of the L2 Motivational Self-System by using multiple-group structural equation modeling and a model they designed themselves. This model illustrates the relationship between "students' learning experience, the

self-concept and motivated learning behavior" (p. 100). They investigated the difference in motivation between 202 secondary school and 230 university students in Hungary by examining the contribution of the Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self and learning experience to motivated learning behavior.

On the whole, survey results confirmed the validity of the Motivational self-system. However, according to the same results, the Ideal L2 Self and learning experience contributed significantly to the motivated learning behavior of both groups of students, while the Ought-to L2 Self contribution to motivated learning behavior was very limited. Also, the results indicated that the Ideal L2 Self was a stronger predictor of motivated learning behavior among university students than secondary school pupils. The Ideal L2 self and learning experience were found to be equally important for university students, while, for secondary school pupils, the role of learning experience was bigger than that of the Ideal L2 Self. The results also showed that for this population, *International Posture* was more related to the Ideal L2 Self than the Ought-to L2 Self. Csizér and Kormos (2009) attributed these differences to learners' age and life experience.

2.1.4.2. Motivation from the Complex Dynamic System Theory Perspective

Building on the existing theories of motivation, especially the L2 Motivational Self System, motivation researchers have introduced a new conceptual framework for the study of language learning motivation, the *Complex Dynamic System Theory* (Dörnyei et al., 2015; Larsen-Freeman, 2015). Dörnyei (2015) pointed out that the term *Dynamic System Theory* was borrowed from the field of natural sciences to explain the complex and changing nature of language learning in general. It is built on four interrelated theories, namely, the Complexity Theory, the Dynamic Systems Theory, Chaos Theory, and Emergentism (Dörnyei, 2014, p. 82). According to the

complex dynamic systems theory, there is no linear relationship between input (e.g. motivation) and output (e.g. achievement). Dörnyei (2014) vividly describes this non-linearity by arguing that "in non-linear systems a huge input can sometimes result in very little or no impact while at other times even a tiny input can lead to what seems like a disproportionate 'explosion' (a phenomenon sometimes called the '*butterfly effect*'" (p. 82). Several researchers have tried to apply this new perspective to language learning motivation, and argue that it is in a better position to account for language learners' motivation in that it takes into account various factors involved in motivation and their interrelationships over time and space (Larsen-Freeman, 2015).

The main features of the dynamic systems theory are the "multi-faceted complexity" of language learning and learners' internal and external factors that influence the learning process, focus on individual learners, merging qualitative and quantitative methods (mixed method), and emphasis on change and development, which involves longitudinal research." (Dörnyei, McIntyre & Alastair, 2015, pp. 3-4). The proponents of the complex dynamic systems theory of motivation advocate for a view of motivation, not as a state, but as a process in which various factors interrelate in an unpredictable way (Dörnyei, Ibrahim & Muir, 2015; Larsen-Freeman, 2015; Verspoor, 2015**)**. They argue that current research on motivation mainly looks at motivation as static and studies it in a linear fashion, which does not do justice to the multi-faceted, complex and dynamic nature of language learners' motivation (Larsen-Freeman, 2015). For this reason, they express the need for a new motivation research paradigm that looks at motivation from the micro level and accounts for the intricacies resulting from the interaction among different factors such as the learners' goals and their change through time and space, and the learning environment including learners and the teacher to name but a few. In the complex dynamic system, time scale,

the language learner, and the learning goals and context are of paramount importance in shaping language learners' motivation. de Bot (2015) argues that:

> Motivation to learn a language can vary from one moment to another and may be influenced by different types of motivation on different timescales. Long-term motivation may come from career plans, short-term motivation from the wish to pass an exam, an even shorter-term motivation from the wish to express a view in class. The motivation at different timescales interacts with other processes and may vary in strength over time. (p. 36).

Although not based on the complex dynamic system theory due to practical limitations such as the time constraints that would not permit a longitudinal study, to some extent, the present study addresses some motivation issues from the dynamic system perspective, particularly when dealing with qualitative data from learners' accounts of their motivational experiences across time and space. It is within this context that interview questions were included in the data collection instruments, whereby students were asked to describe their motivation to learn English across their academic trajectories and how that motivation varied as they engaged in learning activities. For the most part, the present study will draw heavily on Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self-System, with some common features from Gardner's socio-educational framework.

2.2. Oral proficiency

2.2.1. Aspects of oral proficiency

Oral or speaking skills are one of the four language skills along with writing, listening, and reading. Oral skills constitute a complex construct with various subskills (De Jong, 2013; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004), and researchers approach it from different perspectives. For example, there is abundant literature, both theoretical and empirical, that looks at oral skills in terms of accuracy, fluency and complexity (Ellis, 2009; Housen & Kuiken, 2009; Larsen-Freeman, 2009; Norris & Ortega, 2009; Skehan, 2009). Other researchers addressed oral skills by examining

learners' accentedness, fluency, intelligibility and comprehensibility, either separately or in combination (Derwing & Munro, 1997; Derwing et al., 2007; Isaacs & Trofimovich, 2012; Kennedy & Trofimovich, 2008; Munro & Derwing, 1995; O'Brien, 2014; Trofimovich & Isaacs, 2012). It is the latter perspective of oral proficiency minus intelligibility that the present study aims to investigate. Based on the argument that comprehensibility is the main goal of communication, the present study aims to investigate the factors that contribute to the comprehensibility of L2 speech produced by learners who have very limited opportunities to speak English. Findings from the present study may help their teachers make informed choices regarding which aspects of oral skills to focus on in order to enable the students to express themselves in a comprehensible manner.

2.2.1.1. Accentedness

Accentedness, as Kennedy and Trofimovich (2008) define it, refers to "how closely the pronunciation of an utterance approaches that of a native speaker" (p.461). Derwing and Munro (2009) stated that accent is one of the most noticeable aspects of speech which can be traceable to a regional or social dialect, or phonological changes brought about by the influence of the first language (L1). They arrived at two different definitions of accent: a general definition which refers to "different ways of producing speech" (p. 477) and a specific definition which refers to how second language speakers' speech deviates from the standard form of speech. Citing Harding (2011), Ockey and French (2014) defined accent as consisting of "segmental and suprasegmental differences in pronunciation, including variation in vowel and consonant sounds at the segmental level, and stress and intonation at the suprasegmental level" (p. 2). The present study investigated accentedness with reference to both Derwing and Munro (2009), and Harding's definitions. In the second language acquisition literature, there have been two opposing perceptions regarding accentedness. Levis (2005) referred to them as the *"nativeness principle"* versus the *"intelligibility*

principle". He mentioned that proponents of the nativeness principle advocate native-like pronunciation by L2 speakers and see accent as a bad thing to eradicate. Along these lines, Griffen, (1980, 1991, as cited in Munro & Derwing, 1995, p. 74) contended that "the goal of instruction in pronunciation is that students (or patients) should learn to speak a language as naturally as possible, free of any indication that the speaker is not a clinically normal native." This line of thinking was espoused by many language teachers, program designers, and more particularly, test administrators who often equated accentedness with a lack of intelligibility (University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations, 2008, as cited in Trofimovich & Isaacs, 2012). In this way L2 speakers with an accent were affected in many ways, be it in social interactions, job market or proficiency tests (Derwing & Munro, 2005).

A number of researchers suggested handling the issue of accentedness with care because there was not enough empirical evidence, if any, that supported the nativeness claims. They pointed out that people mainly followed their intuitions and impressions (Jenkins, 2002; Derwing & Munro, 2005), and thus called for more research to have a deeper understanding of accentedness. They expressed the need for a close collaboration between researchers and practitioners to carry out the research that is relevant to the classroom context.

The supporters of the intelligibility principle contend that, attaining a native-like accent may be both unrealistic and unnecessary (Levis, 2005; Derwing & Munro, 2005). They argue that there is no correlation between accent and intelligibility, given that a speaker with a heavy accent can be totally intelligible (Munro & Derwing, 1999; Levis, 2005), and it is possible that a speaker with reduced foreign accent may still be unintelligible (Kang et al., 2010). In an experimental study on accented speech from Cantonese, Japanese, Polish and Spanish intermediate ESL students, Munro and Derwing (1997) found that strong accent did not affect intelligibility. However,

proponents of the intelligibility principle concede that accent can sometimes hinder intelligibility (Derwing & Munro, 2005). For them, the main focus for language instructors should be providing learners with pronunciation instruction that would enable them to be intelligible (Jenkins, 2002; Field, 2005, Derwing & Munro, 2005). This seems to be a reasonable and more realistic objective of pronunciation instruction that today's researchers and practitioners could aim for. There are two main ways researchers have looked at accentedness. Some investigated it at the segmental level (Larson-Hall, 2006; Saito, 2011), and others considered both the segmental and suprasegmental levels (e.g. Trofimovich & Isaacs, 2012). Since the present study addressed issues of accentedness from raters' perspectives, both the segmental and suprasegmental features of learner speech were addressed as they emerged from raters' comments.

2.2.1.2. Comprehensibility

Derwing and Munro (2009) defined comprehensibility as "the listener's perception of how easy or difficult it is to understand a given speech sample" (p. 479). It is now considered as the most important aspect of oral proficiency because the success or failure of communication between interlocutors largely depends on it (Isaacs & Trofimovich, 2012, Derwing & Munro, 2009). Comprehensibility and intelligibility are closely related but different concepts. Their difference lies in how they are operationalized. While comprehensibility is a subjective account of the ease or difficulty in perceiving the speaker's message (Derwing & Munro, 2009), intelligibility is an objective measure of what the listener actually hears. Comprehensibility is measured by using a scale, the most common being the 9-point Likert scale (Derwing & Munro, 2005), where the listeners' judgment is based on the amount of time and effort they put into processing the speech. But for intelligibility, the listeners write down what they have actually heard (Munro & Derwing, 1995, Gass & Varonis, 1984).

Comprehensibility results from a variety of factors: a complex interplay between lexicon and grammar, phonology and semantics as well as pragmatics. For instance, in their study involving native French learners of English, Isaacs and Trofimovich (2012) found that lexical variety, grammar, discourse, fluency and word stress impacted comprehensibility at varying degrees depending on the learners' levels of proficiency. Derwing and Munro (1997) found that both segmentals and suprasegmentals have an influence on raters' judgment of comprehensibility, whereas Kang et al.'s (2010) study revealed that, for the most part, comprehensibility was assessed based on speech rate.

2.2.1.3. Fluency

Fluency is one of the important components of second language proficiency (Ginther et al., 2010; Kahng, 2014). To some extent, it is often equated with overall oral proficiency (Guillot, 1999, as cited in Baker-Smemoe et al., 2014; Lennon, 2000). Fluency is used as one of the determinants of oral proficiency in different proficiency tests, and is a dependent or independent variable in many research studies that deal with second language speech (Bosker et al., 2012; De Jong et al., 2015; Derwing et al., 2007; Ellis, 2009; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004). Even so, the concept of fluency is difficult to define and or describe. It is understood from different perspectives, which explains the different definitions assigned to it (Derwing et al., 2008).

Lennon (2000) looked at fluency in both a broad sense, which he called a higher order fluency, and a narrow sense representing a lower order fluency. According to him, fluency in the broad sense refers to overall second language proficiency, while the narrow definition refers to a smooth, fluid, effortless, natural flow of speech. He also provided a working definition of fluency which is applicable to both oral and written fluency: "the rapid, smooth, accurate, lucid and efficient translation of thought or communication of intention into language under the temporal

constraints of on-line processing" (p. 26). Segalowitz (2010, as cited in Bosker et al., 2012, p. 160) proposed three facets of fluency, namely cognitive fluency, utterance fluency and perceived fluency. He defined cognitive fluency as "the efficiency of operation of the underlying processes responsible for the production of utterances", whereas utterance fluency, an acoustically measurable component, refers to "the features of utterances which reflects the speaker's cognitive fluency". Utterance fluency is, in turn, broken down into three sub-components: breakdown fluency, speed fluency, and repair fluency. Concerning perceived fluency, Segalowitz defines it as "the inferences listeners make about speakers' cognitive fluency based on their perception of their utterance fluency", which resembles Lennon's (2000, p. 27) definition: "the impression the listener has that the psycholinguistic processes of speech planning and speech production are functioning more or less easily and effortlessly."

To assess these aspects of fluency, researchers use different methods. The most effective way of tapping into cognitive fluency is the administration of an oral proficiency test coupled with immediate stimulated recall, whereby participants provide qualitative data on what was going on in their mind when they were taking the test (e.g. Kahng, 2014). As for utterance fluency, which is concerned with the temporal aspect of fluency (Baker-Smemoe, 2014), it is gauged by means of either objective acoustic measures (e.g. De Jong, 2011) or subjective judgment from listeners (e.g. Derwing et al., 2009). That is where perceptual fluency comes in, as illustrated by O'Brien's (2014) study on learners' assessment of accentedness, fluency and comprehensibility, where listeners' ratings were based on the temporal aspect of fluency which consisted of repetitions, self-corrections, filled and unfilled pauses as well as speech rate. The same measures of fluency were also used in an Oral Proficiency Test (OEPT) by Ginther et al. (2010) in an attempt to investigate the relationship between fluency and oral English proficiency.

The present study is more concerned with utterance fluency. However, given that this component of fluency will be assessed by individuals who will rate speech samples and express their perceptions of speakers' utterance fluency, this automatically also involves perceived fluency. Some of the features that raters will consider are related to speed fluency (speech rate, frequency, location and length of pauses), breakdown fluency (hesitations and false starts), and repair fluency (self-repetition, reformulations).

2.3. Language learning motivation and oral proficiency

According to various researchers on language learning motivation, the higher the motivation, the more successful learners will be (Dörnyei, 1994b, 1998, 2005; Hernandez, 2010). However, there are few empirical studies that investigated the relationship between language learning motivation and proficiency. Lukmani's (1972) study is among the few studies in this area. She explored the relationship between high school students' proficiency in English and their motivation for learning English, their self-concept and ideal self-concept. Participants were Marathi-speaking female high school students from what Lukmani called "comparatively non-westernized section of Bombay society". In this society, the Marathi language was the medium of instruction. The results revealed that Marathi - speaking students' motivation in learning English was more instrumental than integrative and the correlation between their motivation and proficiency scores was very significant. However, Lukmani's study is less informative in terms of proficiency in that the only measure was a cloze test. It is hard to determine the learner's proficiency by simply asking them to fill in the blanks.

In the same vein, Petrides (2006) examined how task motivation, instrumental motivation and attitude influenced learners' performance in both speaking and listening skills. Participants were year 6 pupils from various primary schools in Cyprus. A total of 250 pupils took part in the

study. To measure motivation, Petrides (2006) used a questionnaire, whereas speaking and listening tests were administered to participants as measures of performance. For the listening test, participants were required to listen to questions from a female native speaker of English and match the printed statements with the questions. The speaking test was composed of three parts: personal information, questions on a picture, and story making based on a series of pictures. The results indicated that there was a positive correlation between attitude and motivation on the one hand, and listening and speaking test scores on the other. Overall, pupils with instrumental motivation scored higher than those who had different motives such as being good students or pleasing their parents. Moreover, pupils who had a positive attitude toward English also performed better than others.

Petrides' (2006) study has some potential limitations: first, the assessment of the speaking test was not elaborate. The rater had to mark either 1 for understandable speech and 0 for non-understandable speech, which might not have been informative enough. The assessment of comprehensibility on a continuum, rather than in absolute terms, would have yielded more informative results. Second, all the speech samples were marked by one person, the researcher, which calls into question the reliability of the results. Finally, though the author mentions instrumental motivation in the interpretation of results, Petrides did not use a clear framework of reference that would compare instrumentality to any other motivation construct. In addition to addressing these limitations, my ongoing study also includes a more elaborate assessment of oral proficiency and involves adult learners who are more aware of their learning experience and goals.

Contrary to the studies above, Gardner's (2010) and Samad et al.'s (2012) studies revealed that integrative motivation was a predictor of proficiency. Using the Attitude-Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), Gardner (2010) investigated the relationship between language learners'

integrative motivation and achievement by looking at students' scores on integrative motivation and their overall grades in English, and the consistency of the components of integrative motivation compared to other elements of the AMTB. He also examined the influence of gender and classroom environment on participants' scores. Participants were students from two cities in Poland. They were divided into two groups based on age, the older group and the younger group.

The results revealed a strong correlation between integrative motivation and grades for both groups of students, but the correlation was higher in the younger group than in the older one. Concerning the consistency of the elements of integrative motivation, for both groups, there was a positive correlation between grades in English and integrativeness, whereas grades negatively correlated with language anxiety. For the younger group, grades also strongly correlated with attitude toward the learning situation, but it was not the case for the older group. Gender had an effect on the correlation between grades and integrative motivation in the younger groups, where grades were higher for students who both had higher integrative motivation and were girls. Unlike gender, class environment had no effect. This means that both integrative motivation and gender were predictors of language achievement for the younger groups. The older group had slightly different results: integrative motivation was found to be a predictor of English grade, but neither gender nor class environment influenced that prediction. This suggests that integrative motivation was the only consistent predictor of English grades across groups.

Gardner's study is related to the present study because it is among the few studies that examined the relationship between motivation and language achievement in a more elaborate way. As shown by the results, integrative motivation was a predictor of language achievement, which challenges the currently held view that integrative motivation in the Gardnerian sense has less influence on language learning, especially in an era of the expansion of English as a global

language where learners have no specific target community to identify themselves with. However, the results of this study may have favored integrative motivation because there was no other construct of motivation for comparison. In contrast, the present study looked at various variables of motivation including integrative motivation to see which was more related to language achievement, more particularly, oral proficiency.

Samad et al.'s (2012) study lent support to Gardner's (2010) findings. This study looked at the differential effect of integrative versus instrumental motivation on students' language achievement. Participants were 100 EFL Iranian postgraduate students doing their master's or doctoral studies in a Malaysian international university, Universiti Teknologi Malysia. They were divided into two categories: High achievers (54) and low achievers (46). The former were students who got an IELTS (International English Language Testing System) band score of 6 or above, whereas the latter got below 6 in IELTS. There were two types of data collection instruments: a five-point Likert scale survey questionnaire adapted from Gardner's AMTB which consisted of 19 items, 10 for integrative motivation and 9 for instrumental motivation. The second type of data were IELTS band scores that students were asked to provide in the space provided at the bottom of the questionnaire.

Data were analyzed using a two-tailed Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient and results showed a significant positive relationship between integrative motivation and IELTS score, with r =.72, whereas the relationship between instrumental motivation and IELTS scores was not statistically significant, with r = .35. According to the results of the multiple regressions, integrative motivation was also found to be a predictor of students' performance on IELTS tests, which lends support to Hernandez' (2008) findings that integrative motivation can be the predictor of success in learning a foreign language. The study also showed that the majority of high achievers

(57%) had integrative motivation while the majority of low achievers (76 %) were instrumentally motivated.

Samad et al.'s (2012) study is relevant to the present study because it deals with language learning and motivation in a foreign language learning context. However, they differ in two main respects: first, Samad's study looked at learners' overall proficiency while the present study focused exclusively on oral proficiency. Second, the present study goes beyond the integrative-instrumental divide to include the L2 motivational self-system.

Interestingly, Soozandehfar's (2010) study that investigated the effects of integrative motivation and instrumental motivation on learners of English as a foreign language at Shiraz University yielded rather neutral results. Participants were junior high school students who were studying English literature. They were divided into two groups: 13 students with integrative motivation and 22 instrumentally motivated students. The participants' oral proficiency was examined by looking at their scores on two courses of oral reproduction. They were also asked to fill out a motivation questionnaire which consisted of 16 items, with four items for each of the following constructs: motivation orientation, motivational intensity, instrumental motivation, and cognitive motivation.

According to the results, there was no significant difference between the group with integrative motivation and a parallel group with instrumental motivation. The findings did not support Gardner and Lambert's (1959, 1972) theory that integrative motivation is more related to successful second/foreign language learning than instrumental motivation. They suggest that both types of motivation are equally beneficial for L2 oral proficiency. Soozandehfar's study is more related to the present study in that it is one of the few studies that deal with the relationship between

language learners' motivation and oral proficiency. However, in the present study, motivation is investigated from a broader perspective that also includes the Motivational L2 Self System.

This attested impact of motivation on successful language learning and acquisition drew my attention for a number of reasons. First, it is interesting to know the extent to which motivation can contribute to language performance, especially in the foreign language learning context where opportunities for language use and exposure are very limited. Second, if the findings of the present study, though exploratory, remarkably support the existing body of research, this will be an eye-opener and encouragement to those teachers who are unaware of the role that motivation plays in language learning, which would eventually lead them to adopt appropriate motivational strategies that cultivate, nurture and protect their students' motivation (Dörnyei, 2001; Papi & Abdollahzahed, 2012). Third, if that relationship does not significantly correlate with language performance due to other factors such as language use and exposure or type of instruction, this would serve as a red flag to future research on motivation and language learning so that researchers could pay particular attention to other factors when examining the impact of motivation on language learning. It would also inform teachers concerning other strategies that need to be combined with motivation to achieve successful teaching and learning.

The purpose of the current study is threefold: exploring the status of motivation and oral proficiency in EFL learners at the university level in Rwanda, the degree of impact that motivation can have on foreign language leaners' oral proficiency, and other possible factors that could account for that proficiency. The study will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. *What is the status of motivation and oral proficiency in university EFL learners in Rwanda?*
2. *Is there a relationship between their proficiency and motivation? To what extent are they related?*

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the present study is threefold: investigating the status of participants' oral proficiency and motivation, and the relationship between the two. Participants were 111 college students and three teachers of English from one campus of the University of Rwanda. Data collection tools include a survey, interviews, and speech samples. A detailed description of the research design is provided in the next section.

3.1. Participants

3.1.1. Students

The students in this study were enrolled at the University of Rwanda in their first year at the time of data collection. Although their level of proficiency in English is hard to determine in the absence of a test, be it in-house or standardized, their proficiency can be estimated as between Intermediate-Low to Intermediate-Mid on the ACTFL scale based on the content of the English language curriculum. Their age ranged between 19 and 26 years, with a mean of 21.3 years. Their age of learning English was between 3 and 13 years and they had been learning English for a period ranging between 12 and 19 years. Apart from their first language, Kinyarwanda, they speak a variety of languages including French, English, and Swahili. As mentioned in the introduction, their languages of instruction varied as they progressed academically: from Kinyarwanda in primary school, they shifted to French in ordinary level (Middle school) school, and then to English from their first year advanced level (high school). The participants came from different departments: Agriculture (37), Electronic and Telecommunication Engineering (38), Economics and Business (4), Chemistry (2), Computer Science (2) Geography (2), History (17), Law (1), and Medicine (1); No field mentioned (2). Their main contact with English is in the classroom, and

English is a required course. There is no standardized test for their proficiency. They only take exams at the end of each semester. Most of the participants were to study English for two years divided into 4 semesters, each semester having a separate module, that is, a specific content to be covered in the course of a semester. The time allotted to English classes ranged between 3 and 4 hours per week, and other courses were offered in English.

3.1.2. Teachers

Three teachers agreed to participate in the interview phase. Their experience in teaching English at the college level was 7.5 years for one teacher, and 9 years for the other two. They have all been teaching at the same institution. Two of them have a B.A in Linguistics, whereas the other has a B. Ed. in English. They all speak Kinyarwanda as their mother tongue, and English, French and Swahili as foreign languages.

3.1.3. Raters

Raters were three female and two male native speakers of North-American English at a large Midwestern university in the US. They all speak at least one foreign language and are currently pursuing their studies as follows: four of them are in a master's program in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) and one is in a PhD program in Second Language Studies. They have varying degrees of teaching experience: three of them teach ESL students at the university, while the other two are private tutors. Only three of the raters reported some experience in rating L2 speech, but all had experience listening to accented English.

3.2. Instruments

3.2.1. Survey questionnaire

The questionnaire was used to gather quantitative data from the students. A total of 111 participants completed a survey questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of two main parts: part one was about students' background information and their experience in using the English language. Part two was concerned with motivation. Items on the motivation questionnaire were drawn from established questionnaires in the literature, namely Gardner's (1985) Attitude-Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) and Dörnyei's (2010) Combined-group items pool. It is worth noting that some of the items were slightly modified to suit the current population (See full questionnaire in Appendix A.)

3.2.2. Interviews with students

Interview sessions were conducted to elicit the following information from a subset of 41 students: background information, language use experience, reasons for learning English (motivation), perceptions of the learning environment, and any other information the participant wanted to share with the researcher. The questions used in the interview were adapted from Ushioda's (2001) interview questions she used in her study on Irish college students who were studying French. (See interview questions in Appendix B)

3.2.3. Interviews with teachers

Interviews were also conducted with three teachers who taught the majority of the students that participated both in the survey and interviews. On the whole, interview questions were related to the teachers' experience in teaching English as a foreign language, the teaching and assessment

of oral skills, and perceptions of students' oral proficiency and motivation (Interview questions for teachers are in Appendix C)

3.2.4. Rating scales

As mentioned earlier, the interviews with learners also served as measures of oral proficiency. The components of proficiency that were measured are accentedness, fluency and comprehensibility. All three components were subjectively measured by raters using 9-point Likert scales. These raters were native speakers of English who teach English as a second language. Their choice was based on the fact that their experience with second language learners combined with their linguistic training would enable them to provide more informative data than lay people. The rating scales used in the present study were adopted from Derwing et al (2004). The endpoints of each scale were defined as follows: *accentedness* (1= no accent; 9 = very strong accent); *fluency* (1= completely fluent; 9 = completely dysfluent); *comprehensibility* (1= very easy to understand; 9 = very difficult to understand). The rating rubric contains the features of those three components of oral proficiency. The raters were expected to base their judgment of oral proficiency on those features but were also encouraged to report in writing any other criteria that might have guided their judgment. The rating rubric is provided in Appendix E.

3.3. Procedure

3.3.1. Data collection with questionnaire

The data collection process took place between May 11 and June 2, 2015. I met with students from the University of Rwanda after their class time. I presented my research project and invited them to participate in the study. I also discussed the consent form with them and those willing to participate filled out a survey questionnaire. Given that it was not possible to carry out

a pilot study, I was present when students were filling out the questionnaire so that I could provide clarifications whenever necessary. No major problem concerning questionnaire items was identified. The total number of students who completed the survey was 111. The students who were willing to participate in interview sessions wrote their contact information at the end of the questionnaire.

3.3.2. Interviews with students

The number of students who offered to participate in the interview exceeded the number fixed by the researcher, that is, 41. It was thus necessary to select those who would have an interview with the researcher. The selection was done on a first-come-first-served basis, provided that the student had answered all the questionnaire items. Students who participated in the interview were given a compensation of $15 each. The interviews were designed to provide two types of data: speech samples for oral proficiency assessment and qualitative data on motivation. The first part of each interview was in English to allow the assessment of oral proficiency, while the second part was in the students' first language (Kinyarwanda) to make sure that they could express themselves well and provide rich and detailed data on motivation. Interviews were recorded using a voice recorder and saved on a password-protected computer to which only the researcher has access.

3.3.3. Interviews with teachers

Only three teachers agreed to participate in the interview. They were teaching the majority of the students who participated in the survey and interviews (88.4%). Interviews with teachers were done in English and took place at different times depending on their availability, and lasted between 30 minutes and 1 hour. Topics included (a) their experience in teaching English as a

foreign language in general, and speaking skills in particular, (b) their assessment of oral skills, (c) common errors found among students and possible reasons, (d) challenges they encounter when teaching speaking skills and how they go about addressing them, (e) their perception of students' oral proficiency and motivation, and (f) what they do to keep their students motivated. Given that the interview was semi-structured, the order of questions was not strictly followed. However, the researcher ensured that teachers answered all questions and provided as much information as possible. Any background data that were substantially incomplete were not used in the study.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Survey data

4.1.1. Analysis and presentation of the results

To answer the first part of the first research question, *What is the status of motivation in university EFL learners in Rwanda?,* survey and interview data on motivation were analyzed. Starting with the survey data, the initial survey involved a hundred and eleven participants and was designed to provide a general picture of the population under investigation. Responses to each survey item were tabulated. Reverse coding was used for negatively worded items. Responses were checked for instances of invariance. Data from five respondents were excluded from further analysis because they were incomplete, leaving data from a hundred and six respondents for subsequent analyses. Reliability was then assessed for each of the scales as they had been presented in the literature; for example, *Knowing a foreign language makes me feel proud* was considered part of the scale Ideal L2 Self, while *I study English to understand other courses* belonged to the Instrumental motivation scale. Table 1 shows the reliability of the initial motivation constructs.

Table 1: Reliability scales for initial motivation constructs

Construct	Number of items	Cronbach's α	Sample item
Attitude toward learning English	10	.56	I would really like to learn a lot about the English language
English language anxiety	4	.48	I am afraid to speak English because other people would laugh at me
Ideal L2 Self	7	.65	I can imagine myself speaking English with international friends and colleagues
Instrumental motivation	9	.52	Studying English can be important to me because I think someday it may be useful in getting a good job
Integrative motivation	5	.36	Studying English will enable me to participate freely in activities of other cultural groups.
Intended learning Effort	5	.23	I am willing to work hard at learning English.
Interest in the L2 culture	3	.45	Learning English is important to me because it will enable me to learn about the culture and media of its speakers (British or Americans)
Linguistic self-confidence	5	.45	I am sure I have a good ability to learn English.
Ought-to L2 Self	6	.68	I consider learning English important because people I respect think I should do it.

As can be seen in Table 1, the majority of the scales showed very low reliability, which could be due to the fact that the participants in the present study were not familiar with the items of those scales, or that the scales were not relevant for the current population. This issue of the lack of reliability in some of the L2 motivational self-system and other motivation constructs has also been identified in other studies. For example, Lamb (2012) found that some of the items on the Ideal L2 Self, Language anxiety, Learning experience and the entire Ought-to L2 Self scales

showed a very low reliability for Indonesian junior high school pupils, which led him to exclude them from further analysis. Csizér and Lukács (2010) also found the Ought-to L2 Self less reliable in their study that compared motivation, attitude and selves among Hungarian learners of English and German. In addition to the Ought-to L2 self, Kormos and Csizér (2008) also excluded instrumental motivation from further analysis because those items showed very low reliability. They also removed some of the items related to the Ideal L2 self to increase its reliability.

Given the number of low item-total coefficients and the relatively low reliability of each of the scales used in the present study, the grouping of items was re-examined and the following changes were made: first, negatively worded items were omitted because responses to these items violated the reliability model assumptions. It is possible that the respondents, whose first language was not English, did not completely understand the wording of such items. Findings from this preliminary analysis suggested that for this population, some of the remaining items appeared to address constructs other than the ones expressed in the literature. Although the sample size was not sufficient to permit a principal component analysis involving all items, subsets of items were analyzed to guide their realignment into scales reflecting meaningful constructs for the current population. Based on loadings and scree plots, four components were identified as shown in Table 2, each having good reliability (Cronbach's alpha of .71 or .72)

Table 2: Revised motivation constructs and their Cronbach's alpha (106 participants)

Variables	**Number of items**	**Cronbach Alpha (α)**	**Sample item.**
Attitude toward learning English	5	**.71**	Studying English will allow me to be comfortable speaking with other people who use English.
Functional value of English	5	**.72**	Studying English is important to me because it will make me a more knowledgeable person
Ideal L2 Self (International orientation)	8	**.72**	I can imagine myself speaking English with international friends and colleagues.
Ought-to L2 self	3	**.71**	Learning English is important to me because people who can speak a foreign language are admired.

After the initial analysis, the survey data from a subset of the population, that is the 41 respondents who took part in the interviews, were re-analyzed to ensure that they represented the entire population (106). Data from eight participants showed insufficient variance and were thus excluded from further analyses, which left 33 participants. The scale reliability analysis suggested that these 33 participants were representative of the population. The summary of the reliability of scales in presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of scale reliability for 33 participants

Constructs	**Item number**	**Cronbach's alpha**	**Sample items**
Attitude toward learning English	5	**.83**	Studying English will allow me to be comfortable speaking with other people who use English.
Functional value of English	5	**.83**	Studying English is important to me because it will make me a more knowledgeable person.
Ideal L2 Self (International orientation)	5	**.61**	I can imagine myself speaking English with international friends and colleagues.
Ought-to L2 self	5	**.74**	Learning English is important to me because people who can speak a foreign language are admired.

For each of the above scales, Tables 4, 5, 6, and 7 show the overall scale reliability, and for each item within the scale, the item-total correlation and the influence of its deletion on Cronbach's alpha. They all showed acceptable reliability and satisfactory item-total coefficients of at least .30 except for one item in Table 5 which was kept to align with the optimal number of items per scale (that is, 5) given that the reliability was high enough. The tables also present the mean and standard deviation for each item.

Table 4: Attitude toward learning English

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.833	5

Item-Total Statistics

	Mean	Standard deviation	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
I would like to have more English classes at school.	5.85	1.121	.664	.791
Time passes faster when I am studying English.	5.88	1.219	.496	.837
Whenever I think of my career, I imagine myself using English.	5.97	1.262	.874	.723
Studying English will allow me to be comfortable speaking with other people who use English.	5.97	1.262	.874	.723
Learning English is an important goal in my life	6.33	1.109	.302	.880

Table 5: Functional value of English

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.833	5

Item-Total Statistics

	Mean	Standard deviation	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
A knowledge of English would make me a better educated person.	6.19	1.203	.696	.781
I have to study English to be successful in my future career.	6.16	1.194	.759	.762
Studying English will enable me to participate freely in activities of other cultural groups.	6.13	1.238	.749	.764
Learning English is important to me because it will enable me to learn about the culture and media of its speakers (British or Americans).	6.13	.942	.183	.896
Studying English is important to me because it will make me a more knowledgeable person.	6.06	1.268	.788	.751

Table 6: Ideal L2 Self

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.609	5

Item-Total Statistics

Items	Mean	Standard deviation	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
I like meeting people from English speaking countries. (America & Great Britain).	6.16	1.505	.410	.529
I study English to keep updated and informed about what is going on around the world.	5.88	1.385	.386	.543
I study English to communicate with other speakers of English who don't know my native language.	5.69	1.749	.307	.600
Studying English is important to me because I would like to travel internationally.	6.47	.983	.370	.564
I can imagine myself speaking English with international friends and colleagues.	6.03	1.356	.396	.538

Table 7: Ought-to L2 Self

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.740	5

Item-Total Statistics

	Mean	Standard deviation	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
I study English because an educated person is supposed to be able to speak English.	5.67	1.555	.486	.702
Learning English is important to me because people who can speak a foreign language are admired.	5.21	1.781	.623	.648
I study English because close friends of mine think it is important.	3.27	2.050	.377	.749
I consider learning English important because people I respect think I should do it.	4.09	1.974	.540	.680
Studying English can be important for me because other people will respect me because I have knowledge of a foreign language.	5.09	1.646	.522	.689

4.1.2. Discussion of the results

4.1.2.1. Attitude toward learning English

For the current population, attitude toward learning English appears to be more complex than it is usually conceived of. The items that make up this construct can be divided into two categories. The first category refers to learners' eagerness to study English (*e.g. I would like to have more English classes at school*), while the second category has more to do with the regard they have for the English language and the potential they see in it. (e.g. *Learning English is an important goal in my life; Whenever I think of my career, I imagine myself using English*).

4.1.2.2. Functional value of English

In the initial analysis, following the existing procedures in conducting research on motivation, integrative motivation and instrumental motivation were treated separately. However, for the population under investigation, scales for these two constructs were found to have very low reliability. It was necessary to run an exploratory factor analysis to see which items belonged together. It turned out that some of the items from the two constructs were found to belong together, and the reliability of the resulting scale was far higher. This blurred boundary between instrumental and integrative motivation resulted in a multifaceted construct that was labeled as Functional Value of English. This overlap between instrumental and integrative motivation has also been reported in previous studies, especially those that investigated language learning motivation in the EFL context (Ryan, 2009; Yashima, 2000, 2009). This construct brings together items that depict the value of English from different but interrelated perspectives. L2 learners in this study see English as a means to reach their potential. With the knowledge of English, they hope to thrive personally (e.g. *A knowledge of English would make me a better educated person*), culturally (*Studying English will enable me to participate freely in activities of other cultural groups*) and professionally (e.g. *I have to study English to be successful in my future career*).

4.1.2.3. Ideal L2 Self/ Integration into global English-speaking community.

Results from the factor analysis indicated that, for the current population, the Ideal L2 self and integrativeness blended together. Based on the items that constitute this construct, learners express their desire to integrate into what Ryan (2009) termed the *"global English-speaking community."* (p. 124). This supports Dörnyei's (2005) argument that integrative motivation "can be conceived as the L2- specific facet of one's ideal self" (p. 102). According to interview data, students conceived of their Ideal L2 selves as people who envisage interacting and working with

English speakers from various corners of the world, regardless of whether they are native speakers or not (*e.g I can imagine myself speaking English with international friends and colleagues; I study English to communicate with other speakers of English who don't know my native language*). This expanded view of integration is also similar to Yashima's (2009) international posture which, according to the author, "tries to capture a tendency to relate oneself to the international community rather that any specific L2 group, as a construct more pertinent to the EFL context." (p. 145). It also echoes Ryan's (2006) argument that, in an EFL context, L2 learners' selves are more oriented toward the imagined global community, especially during this era of globalization whereby English is gaining ground as a global language. It could be said that this construct brings together items with international perspective, such as travelling internationally, keeping updated on what is going on around the world and meeting people from English speaking countries (see Table 6).

4.1.2.4. Ought-to L2 Self

The Ought-to L2 Self was the only construct whose scale did not show an overlap with other scales. However, not all the items proposed by Dörnyei (2010) were used. Some of them were deleted in order to reach acceptable scale reliability. For the current population, it seems that EFL learners' Ought-to L2 Self has more to do with extrinsic motivation. This fits with Dörnyei's (2005) description of the Ought-to L2 Self and confirms the validity of observations made in previous research studies that point to its extrinsic nature (Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Tagushi et al, 2009). As illustrated by some of the items, students' Ought-to L2 Self is oriented toward learning English in order to meet people's expectations (*e.g. I study English because an educated person is supposed to be able to speak English; I consider learning English important because people I respect think I should do it*). This is somewhat different from what was found in Tagushi et al.'s

(2009) study, in which both Chinese and Iranian students' Ought-to L2 Self was more related to fulfilling social obligations.

4.2. Interview data

As mentioned earlier, two sets of interviews were conducted: one for students and another for teachers. Each set of interviews is reported separately.

4.2.1. Interviews with students

Interviews with students took place at different times depending on the participants' availability. Each interview was recorded and consisted of two parts: the first part of the interview was conducted in English and was meant to provide speech samples for raters to assess the students' oral proficiency. The second part was done in Kinyarwanda (students' first language) and was concerned with students' motivation to learn English. After all participants were interviewed, the first part, which was in English, was saved separately for later analysis in terms of proficiency. The second part on motivation was translated into English and transcribed for further analysis consisting of identifying recurring themes from the transcripts. The following major themes were identified: Attitude toward learning English, motivation as a dynamic and complex construct, Ideal L2 self with an international orientation, motivated learning behavior.

4.2.1.1. Attitude toward learning English

Attitude Toward English is among the recurring themes identified from the participants' comments. All the students interviewed were found to have a favorable attitude toward English; however, it varied widely. Some valued English because it is the medium of instruction, or due to its status as an international language. The following excerpts are illustrative of the different motives that drove participants' positive attitude:

Excerpt 1: I think it is a good language to learn because it is the one we use when we study other subjects, and it is a language which will help us to be good in the future, to know how to communicate with others.

Excerpt 2: In my opinion, English is more interesting than many other languages because I think that, in the world of technology, English is more dominant than other languages. That is why I think it is more interesting to learn English than other languages.

Excerpt 3: English is my favorite language. When I am speaking English, I feel free, with not many challenges in comparison to French.

Excerpt 4: I enjoy speaking English. It sounds good. And when I speak English, I feel like I am someone else who is stronger somehow.

As the above excerpts indicate, the participants' attitude toward English was influenced by a variety of reasons including utilitarian motives such as academic and professional utility, interpersonal relationships as well as the inspiration of confidence and prestige. In excerpt 1, the participant saw English as a valuable tool that would enable him to succeed in his studies. Excerpt 2 was from the student majoring in Engineering. He was interested in English because it is associated with technology. As for excerpt 3, the participant liked English because it is easier than French. Many Rwandan students have this belief, which leads them to focus more on learning this language. Finally, speaker in Excerpt 4 found English to be prestigious, which, in turn, encouraged him to speak it. From the pedagogical point of view, knowing this kind of information about students may be very useful for the teacher. She may use this information to organize activities that nurture learners' interest, by using tasks that are related to her students' interests and allow them to express those interests. Such activities will allow students to use the language for real-word purposes including expressing their ideas, making decisions, and so on. This can result in learners' increased motivation and engagement because they realize that what they are learning is meaningful and serves the language learning purpose, that is, communication (Dörnyei, 2001; Nakata, 2006)

4.2.1.2. Motivation as a dynamic and complex construct.

Most of the students who participated in the survey were conscious of their motivational changes be it over time or in situated contexts. They were able to describe their motivation trajectory and pinpoint situational circumstances that influenced their motivation. They referred back to their learning experiences in primary and secondary school and compared them to their most current experiences. As for the circumstantial factors that influenced their motivation, they mainly raised issues related to the learning environment. While describing their motivation status, they included both motivating and demotivating circumstances as outlined below.

4.2.1.2.1. Change in motivation as a result of positive learning experience

The learning experience is considered as one of the determinants of motivated learning behavior. Nakata (2006, p. 142) pointed out the big influence the teacher has on his/her student, either in terms of motivation or demotivation. The role of learning experience in boosting motivation was also apparent in Nikolov's (1999) longitudinal study on Hungarian school children. The participants said that they were interested in learning English because of class tasks and the classroom atmosphere including their relationship with the teacher and classmates. In his study on Indonesian junior high school students' motivation to learn English as a foreign language, Lamb (2012) found that learners' positive attitude toward the learning experience led to more investment in learning. This observation is corroborated by several students' comments when asked how their learning experience influenced their motivation to learn English.

Excerpt 5:

> In our class, we are very happy when our English teacher comes in. We like English class. Our English class is relaxing. It is not like chemistry when you concentrate and sometimes do not get much out of it right away. When we are learning English we are all active.

Excerpt 6

> The first source of motivation is our teachers. We have good teachers who teach us well. We just have good teachers. They try their best to teach us. And if you are a brilliant student, if you follow how they teach us, you can know English. I am motivated because of that.

This positive experience may be explained by their teacher's approach to teaching. The interviews above were from students who studied in the class where the teacher used an integrated skills approach. The teacher reported that he strived to teach different language areas within the same lesson and took students' interests into consideration when choosing topics and materials. This suggests that teachers need to adopt teaching practices that maintain their students' interest in learning, which will ultimately increase their motivation. To do so, there is a need for some changes in teaching approach, such as Nakata's (2006) shift from a "teacher oriented" to "student oriented" mode, whereby students are sometimes given the opportunity take the floor and do collaborative work. Nakata (2006) also argues that when language learners have a share of responsibility in their learning process, they shift from a negative to a positive learning experience, as they realize that their learning has practical uses. This will, in turn, change their attitudes and boost their confidence as they study the language in meaningful ways where they see it "as a means of communication and self-expression" (p. 20). With this change in attitudes, learners will be self-motivated to learn the language and teachers can take advantage of this self-motivation to help their students be autonomous learners (Dörnyei, 2001; Guilloteaux & Dörnyei), which can be one of the best ways to compensate for the biggest challenge that all EFL learners face, namely insufficient language use and exposure. Some other students attributed their increase in motivation to the competence of their teachers at university as opposed to their previous classes in both primary and secondary school.

While some students appreciated their teacher and his teaching methods, others expressed their dissatisfaction with some language areas and the way they were taught. Most of the students said that they were not motivated to learn English when they were in primary and secondary school because they were only taught grammar rules. Some of them added that they saw English as a maze of rules that were difficult to understand. If learners have this kind of attitude towards the language, and live in an environment where the language is hardly ever used, it is likely that learners will be less motivated because they do not see why they should learn that language.

Although the participants appreciated the improvement made in their learning of English at university, most of the students interviewed pointed out that grammar still takes the biggest amount of time in their English classes, which, as one student reported in Excerpt 7, decreases their motivation to learn English. They suggested that English classes should focus on practical language skills that they need to cope with their academic activities and enable them to be competent language users when they step out of the classroom in the future.

Excerpt 7

> My motivation is very low when we are studying grammar. The teacher keeps repeating the same things we have been studying since primary school. I wish there was more time for listening and speaking.

In Excerpt 7, the participant is clearly demotivated to learn grammar. He is rather interested in learning listening and speaking. Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2007), pointed out that demotivation is a common problem in today's educational settings, and argued that teachers have the responsibility to create a motivation-friendly environment in their classrooms by using instructional interventions. Building on this recommendation, the participant in excerpt 7 could be

motivated by combining grammar instructions with listening and speaking tasks that he reported to be lacking in his class.

4.2.1.2.2. Change in motivation as a result of maturation

A shift and increase in motivation to learn English as a result of maturing were reported by the majority of students. Some of them had no clear purpose for learning English apart from the fact that it was required by the school, or learned it just to pass the course. As they moved up in their education and had a clear vision of what they would like to do or become in the future, they realized that learning English had more benefits beyond passing or fulfilling the institutional requirements. This issue of motivation development due to levels of schooling and life experience is not new in L2 motivation research.

In their study that investigated language learning motivation among elementary, middle and high school Chinese students, Xu and Case (2015) found that Chinese students' motivation to study English changed according to their level of schooling. The study revealed that integrative motivation was more pronounced among elementary school pupils, and instrumental motivation started to develop at the middle school level. Students at this level were found to have both features of motivation. High school students were more instrumentally motivated and the authors speculatively argued that this might be due to the experience that high school students have accumulated, including language use experience and the awareness of the role of English in their future life. A similar trend was found in the results of the study by Csizér and Kormos's (2009) on Hungarian students. Secondary school students' Ideal L2 Self had less influence on their motivated learning behavior compared to their learning experiences, while the two factors were of equal importance for university students. Excerpts 8 and 9 reflect students' new goals in learning English after they got to university:

Excerpt 8

> I am more motivated now. Back in secondary school, I put a lot of effort in studying English, not because I liked it, but because I wanted to pass. But here at university, I study English knowing that it is useful. I am not studying English simply because I need to answer the teacher's question such as changing a sentence from direct speech to indirect speech. I am studying to be able to use it in a practical way. I now know why I am studying English, which is different from when I was in secondary school.

Excerpt 9

> My motivation to learn English increased for a number of reasons: when you are at the secondary school level, you do not think big. You cannot for example envision going abroad. You feel limited. But when you get here (i.e., university), you feel in you the ability to go anywhere and accomplish many things. I can work in the UN, go to America, and so on. Those are among the things that motivate me to invest in learning English so as to know it at a higher level.

The above two excerpts indicate that the participants are operating in a different time scale, university as opposed to primary and secondary school, which involves a new perspective.

As university students who are getting intellectually mature, they see their reasons to learn English from a bigger picture and adjust their motivation to that picture. More particularly Excerpt 8, illustrates the shift from short-term to long-term goals in learning English, which corroborated de Bot's (2011) argument that language learning motivation fluctuates following time scales that learners go through. It is worth mentioning that the participants' long-term goals are more related to their Ideal L2 Self, which includes the desire to integrate into the global community of English language speakers, and academic and professional achievement, which is discussed in the next section. As Unemori et al. (2004, as cited in Macintyre et al. 2009, p. 55), point out, such aspects of Ideal L2 Self are common to EFL learners who see foreign language learning as a means to achieve their life goals.

4.2.1.3. Ideal L2 Self

The ideal L2 self was among frequently recurring themes in the interviews the researcher had with the students. Most of the interviewees had a clear vision of what they would like to be and believed that the knowledge of English is one of the means that will help them get there. A comment such as *"My aim is to be an important person in the future, and knowing English will be one of my attributes. I know where I came from and where I want to be in the future, and I think English will help me to reach there"* is an expression of what Higgins (1987) refers to as the desire to reduce the discrepancy between who we are and who we want to be in the future. According to Higgin's (1987) self-discrepancy theory, this desire, or "aspiration" (to use his exact term) is a highly motivating factor for us as human beings because we need to "reach a condition where our self-concept matches our personally relevant self-guides" (p. 321). When you look closely at the students' motivation to learn English, their motivational L2 Self, or self-guides to borrow Higgins term, is more oriented toward integration into the global community where English is the major medium of communication.

Many of the participants believe that, with their level of education, they are not limited to living or working in Rwanda. They see the doors of the global world open to them, as evidenced in Excerpts 10, 11 and 12:

Excerpt 10

> English is a language that will enable me to cope with life after I finish my studies. If you see the vision of our country, we are being prepared to operate globally, and English is one of the means that will enable us to reach that vision. Nowadays, it is difficult to do business at the international level if you do not know English. The knowledge of English is now taken into consideration when hiring employees.

Excerpt 11

> My dream is to reach a higher level of social status, where I will be in contact with various people, including foreigners. To do so, I need to be able to communicate with them, and

> English is one of the media that will make it possible. That is enough motivation for me to learn English.

Excerpt 12

> I need English for different purposes: I may need to go abroad in countries that use English such as Uganda or America. You cannot do anything there if you speak Kinyarwanda only. I am thinking of being self-employed, which will require me to get in touch with various people including those who use English for communication.

In excerpts 10, 11, and 12, the participants express the benefits they hope to get from the English language. They have a common belief that English will enable them to be in touch with people from around the world. Excerpts 10 and 12 reflect the participants' belief that knowing English will improve their career prospects, while Excerpt 11 indicates that the participant considers the knowledge of English as a means to achieve upward social mobility. The participants who made comments in the above three excerpts align with Kauffman and Husman's (2004) argument that, when learners are aware that what they are learning is beneficial for their future, they put in a lot of effort to avoid jeopardizing their chances. On the whole, the three excerpts echo what De Costa (2010) called a *strategic capital accumulation agenda* to refer to how Jenny, a participant in his study, perceived English as a means of achieving her life goal of an international business person. Participants in the present study also see the knowledge of English as an asset that will enable them to be successful internationally.

The international orientation that characterizes the participants must be related to the fact that their country is joining different international communities that use English as a lingua franca, and is surrounded by countries from the outer circle. As already pointed out in the introduction, Rwanda has joined those countries in a regional community known as the East African Community (EAC), where the common language is English. Member countries of the EAC have a regional parliament, common market, and if everything goes according to plan, they will soon use the same currency and passport. The country has also joined the Commonwealth, a community that brings

together countries that were formerly colonized by Great Britain, and English is a common thread among those countries. This global perspective of EFL learners in the present study is consistent with the existing literature on language learning motivation in the EFL context. In her study on the Japanese EFL learners, Yashima (2009) found that the participants' motivation to learn English was oriented toward the international community of L2 users. In his conceptual work, Ryan (2006) argued that, with the rise of English as a global language and with no specific L2 community to relate to, EFL learners' motivation is internationally-oriented.

It sounds logical that these participants envision their future selves in a context that extends beyond the confines of their country, where English is the main means of communication. The fact that the students mentioned Uganda and America is evidence that they imagined integration in the global sense, not just in an L2 community such as North America or Great Britain. They have a clear self-image that they want to see materialize, which could explain their strong commitment to learn English, an issue that is discussed in the next section dealing with motivated learning behavior.

4.2.1.4. Motivated learning behavior.

All the students who participated in the interview reported to have adopted strategies so as to keep their English language learning motivation high, which is referred to in the present study as *motivated learning behavior*. Csizér and Kormos (2009) defined motivated learning behavior as an "effort expended to achieve a goal, desire to learn the language and the importance attached to the task of learning the language" (p. 101). As most interviewees reported, their motivation to learn English went beyond getting a passing grade. It had more to do with their future selves and achievements, which explains why they were invested in knowing more about the English language, even beyond class time. Although there was a variety of motivated behaviors in students'

narratives, a few of them stood out: those are *Seeking opportunities for language use in real life situations (also known as willingness to communicate)*, *setting specific goals, emulating role models*, *creating a zone of proximal development*, *hypothesis testing, and investing time and money to learn English.*

4.2.1.4.1. Seeking out opportunities for language use in real life-situations

Some of the students said that they tried to initiate conversation in English with others, either fellow students or any other people. They were eager to use English even though such opportunities were very limited. The following excerpt illustrates the participant's willingness to communicate.

Excerpt 13

> I initiate conversations with people who like to use English. I dare to speak English because I have confidence in myself and I know how important English is. […] I wish I could have native speakers of English around me so that I could speak with them. I used to approach foreigners that I saw on the street to see if they could speak English, although it was often hard for me to hear what they said.

Cleary, the participant in excerpt 13 was invested in practicing English. Thanks to her commitment, she managed to create opportunities for language use despite her perceived difficulty in understanding native speakers' utterances. Her self-confidence and risk-taking attitude allowed her to engage in communication with a variety of interlocutors. This motivated behavior is commonly referred to as willingness to communicate, and is known to promote language learning because it creates a conducive environment for practice, which eventually leads to learning (MacIntyre et al., 1998; Yashima, 2002).

Several participants reported that investing effort and time practicing English outside the classroom was beneficial to them in that they gained some linguistic knowledge from their interlocutors, and developed linguistic self-confidence. It should be noted, however, that language use outside the classroom is not frequent. They have to create such opportunities themselves. Excerpts 14 and 15 represent the interrelationship between language use, language learning, linguistic self-confidence and motivation.

Excerpt 14

> I participate in debates where I learn to speak in public. I learn many terms from such occasions. In addition, when I practice speaking in public, it creates confidence in me: being given the chance to speak in public shows that people recognize my competence and that they have confidence in me. That keeps my motivation high.

Excerpt 15:

> I like to surround myself with friends that like to use English and who encourage me to converse in English. In this way, I learn some words and expressions from them and get corrected when I make mistakes. I take advantage of every opportunity to speak English with them.

From excerpts 14 and 15, it could be said that language use offers learning opportunity and positive self-perception. The participants were satisfied with the interaction with other people and appreciated the assistance they got from their interlocutors. This is indicative of the fact that language learning is a social process; although the participants talked about various self-imposed and individual goals as discussed in the next section, the above excerpts reiterate the importance of reaching out to other interlocutors for assistance, especially concerning speaking skills and corrective feedback. They were happy to be part of what could be compared to Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development, where they expected to improve their level of proficiency through the support from more proficient interlocutors.

4.2.1.4.2. Setting specific goals and emulating role models

In their commitment to learn English, some students set goals that they would like to achieve. Most of the time, they set those goals as a means to realize clear visions they have in their future. Excerpt 16 is a typical example of the student's effort in learning English in order to be a competent communicator:

Excerpt 16

> When you like something, you invest in it. I read books, go to internet, and read various things in English. I read the bible in English. When I come across a new word, I look it up in the dictionary. Even if my major is not English and my faculty does not give enough time for English, I have the goal to learn English and attain a high level of proficiency in order to be able to understand all people who speak English regardless of accents. Sometimes it is hard to understand British and American speakers due to their pronunciation. Among the goals I have in learning English is the ability to know both American and British English so that, when I meet them, I will be able to interact with them. I strive to learn more about English.

In Excerpt 16, the participant's effort to learn English was multi-faceted. He used as many sources as he could to acquire English. As an intrinsically-motivated student, his learning goals went beyond the language class. He initiated learning routines and set standards that he intended to reach. According to evidence in the literature, such a high level of motivation is an antecedent to successful language learning (Dörnyei, 2001, 2005). Dörnyei (2001) referred to this motivated learning behavior as *self-regulation,* whereby the learner sets goals and self-motivating strategies. He argued that learners with this kind of motivation are likely to succeed because "they are able to maintain their motivation and keep themselves on-task in the face of competing demands and attractions" (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 91).

Some students' motivated behavior was also driven by the desire to overcome weaknesses in certain language areas. During the interviews, there were students who admitted having gaps in their linguistic knowledge due to their educational background. When they came to university,

they realized that they needed more than what the classroom offered. For this reason, they decided to devote some of their time in supplemental language-related activities such as listening, reading, keeping vocabulary logs, watching the TV and movies to learn the language, attending church services where English is used in preaching, participating in debate clubs, and so on. Excerpt 17 is another example of motivated behavior:

Excerpt 17

> I strive to learn more about the language through personal research, even though it is not easy to do it, given the number of courses we have in our faculty. I set some goals that would enable me to improve my level of proficiency. Even though I can listen to radio stations and get the message, there are still things I need to improve, especially listening skills due to the variety of accents. I still have challenges when it comes to pronunciation, and I am working on it to reach a higher level of proficiency I have always aimed for. As a specific goal, by the end of my second year at university, I want to be able to listen to a variety of accents, especially the foreigners whose pronunciation is difficult to understand.

As illustrated in Excerpt 17, the participant was aware of his linguistic weaknesses and was trying to overcome them. To do so, he committed himself to improving his listening and speaking skills within a specific time frame. It seems that he had developed metacognitive strategies that would enable him to make up for the perceived proficiency gap. Purpura (2014) argued that, when committed learners are conscious of their linguistic needs, they tend to use specific strategies that address those needs. This participant's goal is to improve listening and speaking skills, and this goal governed his behavior in the way described by Dörnyei (2001, as cited in Dörnyei, 2013, p. 366), which is "directing effort toward goal-relevant activities".

Clearly, participants in Excerpts 16 and 17 seem to have a common goal: getting more input that would increase competence, and they are all looking for input opportunities that would complement what they get from regular English classes. If they hold on to their vision and expend enough effort in those goal-relevant activities and exercise persistence, there is no doubt that they

will reap the fruits of their motivation because, as Muir and Dörnyei (2013) rightly point out, they have practical sub-goals (e.g. learning English expressions, working on listening skills, learning a new word everyday, etc.) that will progressively lead them to their ultimate goals (higher level of proficiency).

4.1.2.4.3. Financial investment in learning English.

Some of the students took their motivation to another level. They invested or were planning to invest financially in learning English. Those students said that the time allotted to English class was not enough for them to know the language at the level that would enable them to perform well academically. Excerpts 18 and 19 are examples of students' motivated behavior that led them to pay for extra English classes.

Excerpt 18

> My motivation increases day by day. I remember that we used to study in the French system where courses were offered in French. Suddenly, when we started advanced level, we shifted to the English system. This was a very challenging experience for me, but because I had to know English in order to perform well in class, I joined a private language school. This was very helpful because, after some time, I could see that my level of proficiency was higher than the majority of my classmates.

Excerpt 19

> Another strategy that I think will increase my proficiency in the English language knowledge is extra classes. I am planning to attend private classes during holidays.

Both students in excerpts 18 and 19 had a common goal, improving their proficiency whatever the cost. In the extended interview with these participants, it was clear that they needed English to be able to successfully fulfill their academic duties. They both had been studying in the French system and were now learning everything in English. In Excerpt 18, the participant was referring back to his learning experience in high school when an abrupt change from French to English as a medium of instruction occurred. As he wanted to study Medicine, he decided to pay

for extra English classes to ensure that the language was not a barrier to his dreams. He eventually managed to go to medical school, and as he mentioned it in the interview, he was convinced that linguistic competence played a big part. As for the participant in excerpt 19, he was a student in Law school and thought that a good lawyer needs linguistic competence. He considered himself as one of the proficient students in his class thanks to the effort he put into learning English. From this account, it is clear that motivated behavior is the culmination of motivation. Based on Dörnyei's (2005) argument that motivated behavior leads to successful learning, these two students are likely to improve their proficiency if they maintain their motivation intensity.

4.2.1.4.4. Hypothesis testing

Some students expressed a particular kind of investment in learning English: they a made conscious effort to apply things they learned in class to every opportunity for language exposure and tried to monitor everything they did. They believed that it helped them keep track of their learning progress. Excerpt 20 is representative of students' trying out newly learned language content:

Excerpt 20

> I carefully read the modules of English to make sure that I do not miss anything that I am supposed to know. After that, I try to practice what I have learned to see how it works. I seek out opportunities to speak English with other people to test if what I have learned is actually useful. I also listen to the radio for news or other programs in English and compare the language used there and what I learned.

It is clear that the participant who made this comment liked to experiment with newly learned material. He compared what he had learned with language use in real-life context in terms of both input and output, both of which are essential for L2 development. It was for him an opportunity to test hypotheses about his linguistic knowledge. This information can be useful for

both teachers and material designers. Knowing that students try to relate what they learn in class to the world outside the classroom can encourage educators to tailor their instruction to include real language use, which makes learning interesting. As discussed earlier, instruction and instructional materials that are of interest to learners are one way of increasing their motivation (Dörnyei, 2001). Given that these extra efforts are really difficult to make because English is not readily available outside the classroom for the current participants, teachers should ensure that students who make such efforts are motivated to keep on doing so by providing learning opportunities that make a link between the classroom and the outside world. This can be done by organizing tasks that students carry out both in and out of the classroom.

4.2.2. Interviews with three teachers

4.2.2.1. Level of students' motivation to learn English from teachers' perspective.

Two out of the three teachers who participated in the interview reported that their students were very motivated, based on their regular attendance and active participation in class. When asked about the level of their students' motivation over an academic year, they replied that the motivation increased progressively. They pointed out that most of the students started out with very low motivation, partly due to the low consideration given to English by students themselves or their department leaders. In the following excerpts, Teachers 1 and 2 describe how they perceive their students' motivation to learn English:

Researcher: How would you describe your students' motivation over this academic year?

Teacher 1: I think the motivation increases across the year. When they start studying English, they are not motivated and do not see the importance of learning modules of English, maybe because they have many other courses in their respective areas. As time goes on, they see what they are studying and how important it is and become more and more motivated.

Teacher 2: Well, I think their motivation increases somehow. At the very beginning, they were reluctant, maybe because the department had not given enough time for the language module. They were supposed to have language modules in the first and second semesters, but it did not appear on the timetable in the first semester. The English language module only appeared on the timetable of the second semester. They may have noticed that the department did not give much importance to the language module. At the beginning, they were reluctant to participate. It is like they were exploring the area to know what is happening. As the course went on, I realized they were becoming really active and at the end of the day they were happy to learn what they were learning.

When asked what might be the reason for increased motivation to learn English, one of the teachers pointed to the students' realization of the need to learn English and his approach to teaching English. His comment in the excerpt below demonstrates how he organized his teaching in order to keep his students motivated.

Researcher: Do you think there is any particular reason for that increase in motivation?

Teacher 2: Yes. Because they realized they can get something important that was needed, and also because of maybe the materials I was using. As I told you before, I used audio-visual materials and some recorded audio materials, and they enjoyed them so much. The approach also motivated them. You avoid being boring when you integrate different skills in your teaching. The students do not get too bored. Imagine, for example, if you stick to grammar, or reading, they end up getting bored somehow. I tried to make sure students were not getting too bored.

Teacher 2 is the only one who reported that he used specific motivational strategies in his class. He used a variety of materials and tried to include different language areas to cater to his students' needs, which was liked by the students. In fact, positive learning experiences expressed in excerpts 5 and 6 are comments from his students. This aligns with Dörnyei's (2001) argument that "the best motivational intervention is simply to improve the quality of our teaching." (p. 26). Among the qualities of good and motivating teaching practices, Dörnyei (2001) talked about the variety of tasks, materials and topics, which Teacher two was trying to do.

Concerning language areas that boost students' motivation to learn English, two out of three teachers said that it is speaking, an observation on which they agree with their students. Unfortunately, according to students' and teachers' responses regarding language areas taught and the approximate frequency they are taught, speaking skills were found to be the least taught language area. This raises some concerns from the proficiency development and motivational standpoint: the only way L2 learners can improve their oral proficiency in simply by participating in speaking activities (Lazaraton, 2014). In addition, when learners are engaged in interactive activities, their motivation increases when they cooperate with their peers and contributes to the achievement of their groups' goals (Dörnyei, 2001). Having students engage in speaking activities would both motivate them and ameliorate their oral skills which were found to be lacking.

4.2.2.2. Teaching and assessing oral skills

From teachers' comments, teaching speaking skills seemed to be up to the teacher. The teachers who participated in the interview had different perceptions about teaching and assessing oral skills. The approximate time allotted to oral skills varied from teacher to teacher. Two of the three teachers reported that they incorporate speaking skills in their lessons, but none of them specifically taught those skills as a separate lesson. As for the third teacher, he rarely taught speaking skills. He preferred to teach mainly grammar and, to some extent, reading:

Teacher3: Here it is difficult to teach speaking. I cannot say that I put emphasis on speaking. I usually give them grammar, sometimes reading. But for speaking, we have some sessions of oral presentations. But it does not happen very often.

Teacher 3 avoided teaching English on the grounds that it was difficult. Elsewhere in the interview, he mentioned that the difficulty resided in the number of students in one class. He said that his classes ranged between 60 and 80 students, which made it hard for him to organize speaking activities. While this teacher's concern is understandable, leaving out speaking activities

altogether is detrimental to students' language development because speaking activities can provide opportunities for interaction. The latter is known to promote language development especially when it involves negotiation for meaning where, through comprehensible input and output (Gass & Mackey, 2007; Pica, 1996; Swain, 1995), learners use the language to solve communication breakdown, and eventually correct errors in their interlanguage. The teacher might try out speaking activities that allow several students to participate, such as interactive group oral tasks, which have an additional advantage of making the tasks resemble real-life communication.

As far as assessing oral skills is concerned, the first two teachers said they only assessed them as part of Continuous Assessment Tests (CATs) which are given to the students throughout the semester before final exams. However, most of the students interviewed revealed that their speaking skills were assessed toward the end of the semester. This could raise some pedagogical concerns in that, even those who try to teach and assess speaking skills do not do it in a consistent and regular way in order to track their students' progress. As evidenced in the following excerpts, the assessment of speaking skills is not required:

Researcher: How do you assess speaking skills?

Teacher 3: I give speaking activities for the sake of practice, not for assessment. I do not give marks to students because of speaking activities, especially because we have many students and various teachers, and for that reason, we cannot coordinate speaking activities for all of them. We assess them through written examinations.

Researcher: Are teachers required to give oral skills assessment?

Teacher 3: It is often written exams, but nothing prevents them [teachers] from giving them [i.e., students] other types of assessments. They can give oral presentations, or essay writing. It is up to the teacher to give what he or she likes. For me, I do not give them any speaking assessment. I rather give them essay writing.

Based on comments by Teacher 3, there was no mechanism that governed the assessment of oral skills, which gave teachers some latitude to do what they deemed necessary. This means

that some students carried out oral tasks while others did not, which constitutes a disadvantage for the latter. According to the literature on language learning and assessment, oral tests, or tasks in general, are taken as learning opportunities for language learners. Swain (2001) argued that there are a lot of benefits for learners who participate in oral tasks, especially those that involve interaction. She said that when learners interact, they co-construct meaning through negotiation. They support each other and sometimes use the language to solve communication breakdown. She added that, in interactive oral tasks, learners use cognitive and strategic processes that involve matching form and meaning. And when they notice the gap in their interlanguage, they use resources at their disposal, such as their teacher, peers, or reference materials to improve their L2 knowledge. In addition, not only do interactive oral tasks elicit real communication, they are also less face threatening, which allows learners to freely engage in communicative tasks. Testing oral skills can also result in positive washback: if learners know that they will be assessed orally, they will prepare accordingly through practice, which will, in turn, improve their oral proficiency.

Overall, two out of the three teachers who were interviewed were found to have more commonalities than differences regarding their experience in teaching speaking skills as opposed to the third teacher. Table 8 summarizes the results of the interviews with the three teachers.

Table 8: Teachers' experiences and perceptions of students' speaking skills

Themes	**Teacher #1**	**Teacher #2**	**Teacher #3**
Approximate percentage of speaking activities	10% of the time allotted to English	30% of class time	Rarely teaches speaking.
Speaking skills taught	Public speaking	Oral presentation	Oral presentation
Assessment criteria	Fluency and comprehensibility	Accuracy. "Fluency will come by itself."	No assessment, just for practice
Most common errors	Lexical, morphological and syntactic.	Linguistic interference	Grammatical; pronunciation.
Perception of students' errors in speaking tasks	Normal; does not penalize student for grammatical errors	Something a teacher should expect; corrects students in a friendly way	Welcomes students' errors!
Possible reasons for students' errors	Educational background, learning context	Multilingualism: Kinyarwanda, French, and then English.	Limited opportunities for practice
Biggest challenges for students in a speaking class	Producing accurate, fluent and comprehensible speech	Language interference; lack of self-confidence	Few role models, even teachers use L1 outside the classroom.
Challenges in teaching speaking	Insufficient time, large classes and mixed-abilities.	Insufficient time and large classes; language policy	Large classes with mixed abilities
How the teacher handles challenges	Group work, tasks with varying degree of challenge	Group work (class size)	
Formal assessment of oral skills	Only Continuous Assessment Tests	Only Continuous Assessment Tests	No assessment, just for practice
Teacher's perception of students' oral proficiency	Most of the students are below average.	Most of the students are below average	Average
Possible reasons for the low level of students' proficiency	Educational background, learning context	Educational background	Educational background

4.3. EFL learners' Oral proficiency status

4.3.1. Results from rating scales

To answer the second part of the research question (*What is the status of oral proficiency in university EFL learners in Rwanda*), L2 speech samples were rated by 5 native speakers of North-American English to assess students' accentedness, comprehensibility and fluency. Reliability analyses (both inter-rater and intra-rater reliability) were run in SPSS version 23.0 to insure the internal consistency of the ratings. Initial analysis revealed that one of the raters' data substantially affected the reliability of the ratings. Thus, her ratings were excluded from further analyses. Data from the post-rating survey revealed that the rater in question was less familiar with ESL learners' speech than the rest of the raters, which led her to rate speech samples more harshly than anyone else. In fact, she admitted that she might have been a little harsh in her rating: "I started out rating them very harshly (in my opinion) but some of the interviews were just so heavily accented or incomprehensible that it would be difficult for an average English speaker". Both the intra- and inter-rater reliability analyses showed that the remaining four raters were consistent in their ratings, except for rater 1 who appeared to be somewhat inconsistent in the assessment of accentedness. As he pointed out in the follow-up interview, he tended to give less attention to accented speech as long as it was smooth and comprehensible:

> "If the speech is fluent, the accent is negated mostly in terms of comprehension. While after a while it became evident to me that they each possessed very similar accent, those that were more fluent were by far the easiest to comprehend. Fluency and comprehensibility tend to mitigate the effects of accentedness (if it is not undecipherable), while those who are not fluent are the most difficult to follow, and their accent more readily apparent and noticeable."

Intraclass correlation analysis was used to assess intra- and inter-rater reliability. When average measure reliability for a two-way mixed model is used, the result is the same as

Cronbach's alpha. The intra-rater reliability was calculated and varied from .71 to .96 with accentedness; from .86 to .95 with comprehensibility; and from .88 to .95 with fluency. The results on the inter-rater reliability are presented in Table 9.

Table 9: Inter-rater reliability with 4 raters

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha
Accentedness	**.643**
Comprehensibility	**.764**
Fluency	**.812**

As can be seen in Table 9, the inter-rater reliability for the three components of oral proficiency was more satisfactory for fluency, which had the highest reliability (.81), followed by comprehensibility (.76), compared to accentedness (.64), which means that accentedness was the component of oral proficiency that raters disagreed on the most. These results lend support to findings in previous studies that investigated the construct of accentedness (Derwing & Munro, 1997; Munro & Derwing, 1995). They also found that the judgment of L2 speech accentedness varied from rater to rater. The data from the above four raters were then used to measure L2 learners' oral proficiency. Table 10 provides descriptive statistics for accentedness, comprehensibility, and fluency.

Table 10: Descriptive statistics for accentedness, comprehensibility and fluency

Component	Mean	Standard deviation
Accentedness	5.63	.92
Comprehensibility	4.24	1.39
Fluency	4.59	1.46

Note that each component was measured on a 9-point scale where 9 represented highly accented, most difficult to comprehend, and most dysfluent speech. The results from Table 10 place L2 learners in the present study at a medium level of proficiency on these three factors. This finding corroborates their teachers' estimation. When asked about their students' proficiency, all three teachers who participated in the interviews said that most of them were below average, as indicated in Table 8.

Looking closely at Table 10, it appears that learners' level of proficiency in terms of accent-free speech was lower (M = 5.63, SD = .92) compared to both comprehensibility (M = 4.24, SD = 1.39) and fluency (M = 4.59, SD = 1.46) which have almost the same mean score. This suggests the potential for fluency to affect comprehensibility more than accentedness does. To investigate the relationship between the three components of oral proficiency, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted involving the raters' mean scores for accentedness, comprehensibility, and fluency for the 33 interviewees. Table 11 provides the results.

Table 11: Correlations between accentedness, comprehensibility and fluency.

	Accentedness	Comprehensibility	Fluency
Accentedness	1	.694**	.386*
Comprehensibility		1	.726**
Fluency			1

*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$

Note that the coefficient for accentedness and fluency (r = .39, p = .03) is considerably smaller than for the other pairs. Partial correlations were conducted and revealed that the coefficients representing the relationship between accentedness and comprehensibility with fluency controlled (r = .65, p = .000), and fluency and comprehensibility with accentedness controlled (r = .69, p = .000) had not declined very much. This indicated a considerable amount of

variance overlap between accentedness and comprehensibility (43%), and between fluency and comprehensibility (48%). In contrast, the partial correlation of accentedness and fluency, with comprehensibility controlled, resulted in a nonsignificant coefficient (p = .19). This finding indicates that of the relatively small amount of variance overlap (about 15%) that initially appeared in the correlation between accentedness and fluency, the bulk of it reflected the fact that both of these variables were relatively strongly correlated with comprehensibility. When that influence was removed, the relationship between accentedness and fluency was no longer significant.

Therefore, it appears that accentedness and fluency each contributed to the raters' judgments of comprehensibility, but were not substantially related to one another. The next section discusses the features of accentedness, comprehensibility and fluency, and relationships among them from raters' perspectives.

4.3.2. EFL learners' oral proficiency status from raters' perspective

4.3.2.1. Comprehensibility

From raters' comments, the factors that affected comprehensibility can be classified into four main categories: fluency, strong accent, grammatical errors and lexical issues. To begin with, fluency issues were more related with utterance fluency, and all three aspects of utterance fluency were identified in participants' speech samples, namely, speed fluency, breakdown fluency and repair fluency. The most common aspects of dysfluency were false starts, self-corrections, repetitions, hesitations, long unfilled pauses, unnatural pauses (which some raters described as choppy speech), repetitions, and slow speech rate.

It is worth noting that, according to raters' comments, fluency was the main criterion they considered when they assessed the comprehensibility of speech samples. Accentedness was related to comprehensibility to a lesser degree in comparison to fluency. Only extremely strong accent was reported to affect comprehensibility. Both quantitative and qualitative results in the present study corroborate previous empirical evidence that accentedness is not necessarily a barrier to comprehensibility (Derwing & Munro, 2009; Munro, 2008; Munro & Derwing, 1995, 1999)**.** To explain how related fluency and comprehensibility were, four raters unanimously pointed out that when the speech was very slow or contained a lot of pauses, it was difficult for them to follow the flow of speakers' utterances, which resulted in listeners' inability to keep track of the idea(s) being expressed. The influence of speech rate on comprehensibility was also noted by Munro and Derwing (2001, p. 466) in their study on ESL students from different L1 backgrounds. They concluded that slow speech is difficult to understand because "listeners are required to keep information in short memory for a longer period of time". However, they treated slow speech rate as an aspect of accentedness rather that fluency. Below are some of the raters' comments that illustrate the impact of slow speech rate and other dysfluencies on the comprehensibility of L2 speech:

Rater 1: [There were] numerous repetitions that make the listener lose track of the flow of thoughts. […] Very slow speech rate makes it hard to follow the flow of ideas. […]. A lot of false starts that make it hard to keep track of ideas.

Rater 3: dysfluency impedes the ability to comprehend because it results in the lack of the flow of ideas.

Rater 4: It seemed to be that comprehensibility takes both fluency and accentedness into account. However, it appeared to me that fluency played a bigger role in overall comprehensibility than accentedness for the most part, unless the accent was really strong. If the speech was too choppy or hesitant, it was hard to slow my brain down enough to understand and pay attention to the overall point, unlike with smoother speech patterns."

Rater 5: The speech that flows much smoother makes listening easier. Repetition, unfilled pauses break up the flow of speech more than anything.

This relationship between comprehensibility and fluency is confirmed by the comparison between the mean scores of the three components, whereby accentedness has a mean score of 5.63, whereas comprehensibility and fluency have the mean scores of 4.25 and 4.59 respectively. The same relationship is also indicated by the high correlation between fluency and comprehensibility as opposed to accentedness and comprehensibility, or accentedness and fluency, as presented in Table 11. These results lend support to Derwing et al.'s (2004) findings in a study on beginning learners of English whole L1 was Mandarin. Fluency highly correlated with comprehensibility across speaking tasks, and there was a higher correlation between comprehensibility and raters' judgement of fluency across tasks than between accentedness and fluency.

In addition to fluency and accentedness, grammatical errors and lexical issues were also found to affect comprehensibility, and all the raters stressed that word choice affected comprehensibility in a greater way. Three of the raters reported that inappropriate word choice made it hard to follow the train of thought. Even though her rating scores were eliminated from analysis, rater five made comments that vividly describes the effect word choice had on L2 speech comprehensibility.

Rater 5: Word choice seems to be a big issue, makes the listener stop and try to figure out what the speaker means. Word choice makes comprehension a little challenging.

These findings are in agreement with others that found comprehensibility to be a complex construct which is influenced by various linguistic factors (Gass & Varonis, 1984; Isaacs & Trofimovich, 2012; Munro & Derwing, 1995). This information can be useful for teachers in many ways. As Isaacs and Trofimovich (2012) rightly point out "knowledge of aspects that contribute to comprehensibility could help teachers set instructional targets and integrate pronunciation with other linguistic skills such as grammar and vocabulary […]" (p. 480)

4.3.2.2. Accentedness

Although raters said that accentedness was not the main factor that influenced the comprehensibility of the current L2 speakers' speech production, they acknowledged that it sometimes made the speech less comprehensible. From their comments, it appears that they examined accentedness mainly at the segmental level, the only suprasegmental feature being stress placement.

4.3.2.2.1. Difficulties with segmental features.

The participants' L1 (Kinyarwanda) has an alveolar tap in its basic phonological inventory (Myers, 2005), which was perceived by some of the raters as a sound close to American English /r/. There are no interdental fricatives ([θ] or [ð]) in their L1. Speakers who have difficulty producing these sounds often replace them with either alveolar stops [t, d], alveolar fricatives [s, z] or labiodental fricatives [f, v] all of which occur in Kinyarwanda. The production of the r-colored vowels in American English words (e.g., in *f<u>ir</u>st* /fɝst/) tended to be perceived by the raters as a vowel close to [ʌ:] or [ɑ:] (i.e., no r-coloring). This is reported as common in Rwandan and East African communities (Kayigema, 2010). Kinyarwanda has consonant clusters of the following types: NC (nasal-consonant), CC (consonant-consonant), or NCC (nasal-consonant-consonant); CC clusters are either palatalized or velarized (Uffman, 2007). Learners have developed strategies to deal with English clusters such as *str-, -bd, -zd,* consonant + *l*, which generally involve vowel epenthesis. The most frequently epenthesized vowels by speakers of Kinyarwanda are /i/ and /e/ (Uffman, 2007).

In sum, the accentedness of the participants' speech at the segmental level is characterized by the omission, deletion, insertion or substitution of some segments, which corroborate what has been pointed out in speech production research (Munro, 2008; Major, 2008). It is worth noting that most of the instances of accentedness are the result of transfer from L1 to L2, an issue also mentioned in studies on second language speech (Major, 2008; Ioup, 2008).

4.3.2.2.2. Problems with suprasegmentals.

At the suprasegmental level, all the raters pointed out that misplaced stress was common in speakers' utterances (e.g. econoMY, foCUs). Some of the stress misplacement instances were consistently produced, especially in words ending in *-ate* and *-ize*, where the stress was shifted to the right. This is also another feature of the regional accent that learners are exposed to. However, whether misplaced stress resulted in the lack of comprehensibility varied from rater to rater. Raters who have extensive exposure to foreign accented speech were less sensitive to issues related to incorrect stress placement.

4.3.2.3. Fluency

As mentioned earlier, based on raters' scores and comments, it seems that, for the current population, fluency is associated with oral proficiency, an observation that was also made by Baker-Smemoe et al. (2014) in their study of the relationship between fluency and overall L2 proficiency among native speakers of English who were L2 speakers of French, German, Japanese, and Russian. Utterance fluency was the main criterion for raters' assessment of fluency: all cases of dysfluency that were identified by raters are related to utterance fluency, namely speed fluency (mostly very slow speech rate); *breakdown fluency* (long unfilled pauses, unnatural pauses, also referred to as *choppy speech* by some raters, self-repetitions and hesitations), *and repair fluency*

(self-corrections and false starts). Among the factors that contributed to speaker's dysfluencies, all the raters reported that repair fluency (false starts, repetitions and self-corrections) was the most common for the population studied, followed by breakdown fluency, and speed fluency.

In their comments, raters reported that these types of dysfluencies made it hard for them to follow the train of thought. They also pointed out that this could be attributed to learners' limited vocabulary knowledge, which led them to pause at inappropriate places, or stumble in "*search for words"* (term specifically used by most of the raters). This observation echoes Beglar and Nation's (2015) argument that "the majority of oral dysfluencies can be attributed to lexical errors and lexical searches" (p. 5). It could also be explained by the fact that learners relied heavily on explicit knowledge of the language, which, according to the second language acquisition literature, takes a lot of effort and time to retrieve and is thus not readily available for spontaneous production (Ellis, 2004) such as responding to interview questions, as the participants did in the present study. This explanation seems plausible, given that, as pointed out by both students and their teachers during interviews, most of the class time is devoted to grammar lessons, a method that will more likely result in explicit knowledge. This means that, in addition to explicit instruction, learners need to practice using the language in meaningful ways, which would enable them to develop the implicit knowledge of the language which is needed for spontaneous production, one of the features of linguistic competence.

As noted earlier, from raters' comments, it appears that fluency and lexical issues were found to influence the comprehensibility of L2 learners' speech more than accentedness and grammar. The latter was the least concern for comprehensibility, which would suggest that learners may have acquired enough grammatical knowledge that would enable them to communicate in a meaningful way, and thus should be given less attention in the classroom. On the contrary, as

evidenced in interviews with both teachers and students, grammar was the most taught language area in their classes. Teachers might consider shifting their focus from pure grammar instruction to communicative activities and vocabulary, which would help their students bridge the proficiency gap that was identified in the present study.

4.3.3. The influence of raters' experience with L2 speech on the rating process

All five raters reported to have some experience with L2 speech, but to varying degrees. Four out of five raters were found to have been exposed to the accented speech of a variety of L2 speakers for a long time. They pointed out that, to some extent, this experience helped them understand L2 speakers in the present study, although they had never been exposed to their speech before. It is these raters with more extensive exposure to foreign accent that were found to be consistent as indicated by the inter-rater reliability in Table 9. These results are partly similar to the ones in Thompson's (1991) study in which raters who had more experience with foreign accented speech were found to be more reliable than less experienced raters in the assessment of Russian ESL speakers. Gass and Varonis (1984) also found that familiarity with non-native speech was among the factors that influenced the intelligibility of L2 speech. The following two excerpts illustrate how raters' experience with L2 speech played a role in rating.

Question: *How would you describe the rating process in terms of ease or difficulty? Do you think the experience you have in teaching English as a second or foreign language and / or linguistic knowledge contributed to your rating?*

Rater 3: I find that my experiences as a previous rater for speech samples and my training in linguistics and phonology, along with my experiences with world English speakers probably contributed to my ratings

Rater 4: Overall, it was fairly straightforward to do the ratings. As an ESL/EFL instructor, I am probably more lenient in how I assess because I am both a sympathetic listener and am accustomed to interpreting L2 speech from learners.

The above comments are an indication that the choice of raters is very important because a lot of variance in raters' characteristics can skew the results as was the case in the present study. Raters 3 and 4 said that the rating process was easy for them, while the rater who was less exposed to L2 speakers had difficulty understanding L2 speakers in the current study as illustrated in the following comment from the follow-up interview:

Rater 5: I think it was mostly the accentedness that affected comprehensibility. There were some parts of the interview or even phrases that were just incomprehensible because of mumbling or heavy accent/pronunciation problems. I started out rating them very harshly (in my opinion) but some of the interviews were just so heavily accented or incomprehensible that it would be difficult for an average English speaker. […] I feel like the fluency was the most difficult to rate because comprehensibility and accentedness affected my ratings […]. I probably rated the first group of interviews I listened to very harshly and I may have heard speech that is more dysfluent but the comprehensibility of speech really affected how I rated.

Although ratings from Rater 5 were not used in the analysis, her comment is relevant in that it illustrates how experience with L2 speech can influence the ratings. As can be seen in this comment, Rater 5 expended a lot of effort rating the speech samples of the participants in this study. While other raters said that accentedness was not a big problem as pointed out in previous comments, it was the opposite for her. This difficulty in rating L2 speech samples was reflected in her ratings which, most of the time were at the higher end of the scales, which in this case means that speech samples were mostly strongly accented, dysfluent and less comprehensible.

4.4. Correlation between motivation and oral proficiency

To answer the second and last research question (*Is there a relationship between EFL learners' oral proficiency and motivation? To what extent*?), Spearman rank-order correlations were conducted to examine the relationship between motivation and oral proficiency. Spearman's correlation was chosen over Pearson's because scores of the motivation constructs were not normally distributed. The mean scores of accentedness, comprehensibility and fluency as factors

of oral proficiency were compared to those of motivation constructs. Overall, a two-tailed test of significance indicated a non-significant but positive relationship between the aforementioned variables. Table 13 summarizes the correlations between EFL learners' oral proficiency and their motivation to learn English.

Table 12: Correlations between motivation scales and oral proficiency

	Attitude Toward Learning English	Functional Value of English	Ideal L2 Self	Ought-to L2 Self
Accentedness	.122	-.080	.384*	-.056
Comprehensibility	.094	.095	.158	.078
Fluency	.130	.123	.141	.074

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

As can be seen from Table 12, except for two correlation coefficients, namely accentedness and *Functional Value of English,* r_s (33) = *-.08, p* = .66*,* and accentedness and *Ought-to L2 Self*, r_s (33) = -.06, *p* = .76, all the others show a positive correlation between L2 learners' motivation and their oral proficiency, which suggests that, the more motivated, the more proficient learners were. However, only one correlation coefficient reached statistical significance, that is, between accentedness and the Ideal L2 Self, r_s (33) = .38, *p* =.03. This means that the participants whose speech was rated as less accented tended to report stronger feelings with regard to the Ideal L2 Self construct. Although these results corroborate the existing empirical evidence that language learning motivation and achievement are closely related (Dörnyei & Chan, 2013; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003; Soozandehfar, 2010; Samad et al., 2012), EFL learners' motivation in the current study positively correlates with achievement to a lesser degree. The weak correlation between motivation and proficiency can be explained by various factors. It could be that, for the current EFL learners, motivation to learn the language would play a small role, given the limited

opportunities for language use outside the classroom. In other words, effort takes the learners to a point in the development of speaking skills but going beyond requires more input and interaction opportunities. From the complex dynamic system theory perspective, this low correlation could also be evidence of the non-linearity between language learning motivation and achievement (Dörnyei, 2014), whereby different interrelated factors are at work.

Based on the correlation coefficients and the patterns between motivation and oral proficiency, it could be concluded that, for the current population, Attitude Toward Learning English and the Ideal L2 Self are associated with oral proficiency more than the other motivation constructs because they showed the highest and most consistent positive correlations with oral proficiency components across the board. Starting with attitude toward learning English and accentedness, the mean score for attitude toward learning English was 6.41 (SD = .45), while the mean score for accentedness was 6.53 (SD = .92). Spearman's correlation revealed a positive correlation between the above scores, r_s (33) =. 12, p = .50. As for the relationship between Attitude Toward Learning English and comprehensibility, Attitude Toward Learning English had a mean score of 6.41 (SD = .45), and the mean score for comprehensibility was 4.25 (SD = 1.4). Spearman's correlation showed a positive correlation, r_s (33) = .09, p = .60. There was also a positive correlation between attitude toward learning English and fluency. The latter had a mean score of 4.59 (SD = 1.4), with the correlation of r_s (33) = .13, p = .47. The second and last motivation construct to have consistent correlation with oral proficiency factors was Ideal L2 Self. The mean score for the Ideal L2 Self was 6.13 (SD = .67), compared to 6.53 (SD = .92) for accentedness. The correlation between these two was the highest, with r_s (33) = .38, p = .03, compared to both comprehensibility, r_s (33) = .16, p = .38, and fluency, with r_s (33) = .14, p = .43.

Though lower than Attitude Toward Learning English and Ideal L2 Self in terms of correlation with oral proficiency components, the Functional Value of English also displayed some positive correlation with both comprehensibility (r_s (33) = .10, p = .60) and fluency (r_s (33) = 12, p = .49), the last being accentedness with the highest negative correlation, with r_s (33) = -.80, p = .66. However, The Functional Value of English is less consistent in that it displayed the highest negative correlation with accentedness (r_s (33) = -.08)

Of all the four motivation constructs, the Ought-to L2 Self was found to be the least correlated with oral proficiency across the board, that is accentedness, with r_s (33) = -.06, p = .76, comprehensibility (r_s (33) = .08, p = .67) and fluency respectively, r_s (33) = .07, p = .68. These results are in line with Dörnyei and Chan’s (2013) study that investigated the relationship between the Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to Self on the one hand, and students’ grades on the other. They found that there was more correlation between the Ideal L2 Self and students’ grades (z = .86) than between the Ought-to Self and grades (z = .47). This could be due to the inconsistency of the Ought-to Self as a construct, and what Dörnyei and Chan (2013) termed “limited motivation capacity of the Ought-to L2 Self” (p. 454). In several studies that investigated language learning motivation using Dörnyei’s (2005) framework, the *L2 Motivational Self-System,* the Ought-to L2 Self has been found to have a weak correlation with other motivation constructs (Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Csizér & Lukács, 2010; Tagushi et al., 2009), or learning achievement (Dörnyei & Chan, 2013).

On the whole, the results in Table 12 suggest that students with a higher level of positive attitude toward learning and who see English as an important element in their future selves produced less accented, more comprehensible and more fluent speech. Among the three components of oral proficiency, accentedness appears to have the highest variation across the four

motivation constructs, ranging from the highest correlation with Ideal L2 self with r_s (33) = .38 to the highest negative correlation with the Ought-to L2 self, with r_s (33) = -.08. This may partly be explained by the fact that accentedness was attended to differently depending on the raters' experience and familiarity with foreign accent.

To summarize this chapter on the results and discussion, it could be said that these participants' comments find support in quantitative results, and illustrate the positive relationships between language learning motivation and performance. If you look at the results for the students who made the above comments, the mean scores for motivation constructs are around 6 on a 7-point scale, which suggests a high level of motivation. As for oral proficiency, on the whole, all the scores are above average. Average accentedness scores are around 4 on a 9-point scale where 9 is heavily accented, comprehensibility scores are around 3 on a 9-point scale where 9 stands for very difficult to understand, and fluency scores are around 3 on a 9-point scale, with 9 being extremely dysfluent.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter highlights the main findings from an exploratory study on the relationship between language learning motivation and oral proficiency among first-year university students who were studying English as a foreign language and as a required subject. Several researchers agree that motivation is a complex, and dynamic concept which cannot be investigated by using a single approach (Järvelä & Volet, 2004; Dörnyei, 2015). It was deemed necessary to investigate language learning motivation from a mixed-methods perspective in an attempt to capture various factors that characterize and contribute to motivation. It is for this very reason that different data collection tools such as survey, semi-structured interviews and language achievement measures were used. After the summary of the findings, some recommendations / pedagogical implications based on the findings as well as avenues for future research are proposed.

5.1. Conclusions

5.1.1. Language learning motivation among college-level EFL learners.

Based on the results presented and discussed in chapter 4, it seems logical to draw the following conclusion:

EFL learners in the present study are highly motivated to learn English, and their motivation is context-specific.

As indicated by the results from the survey, EFL students manifested a high level of motivation. On 7-point scales used in the present study, mean scores of all motivation constructs were above average with relatively small standard deviations. Attitude Toward Learning English (M = 6.41, SD = 0.45), Functional Value of English (*M* = 6.29, *SD* = 0.62); Ideal L2 Self (*M* = 6.13, *SD* = 0.67); Ought-to L2 Self (*M* = 4.69, *SD* = 1.22). Based on items that constitute the above

motivation constructs, it follows that the current population of EFL learners demonstrated a high level of positive attitude toward learning English, and see English as a valuable asset for personal, professional and cultural development. This is confirmed by their comments from interviews, where they articulate their feelings about the English language and pinpoint pragmatic uses of English and benefits it offers, such as opportunities to study abroad, access to the international job market, acquiring the status of global citizens, to name but a few.

It is probably this language ideology that explains why some of the constructs and items from established motivation frameworks were not applicable to the current population. Quantitative data on language learning motivation were collected using items from well-established instruments in the literature: *The Attitude-Motivation Test Battery*- English version, prepared by Gardner (2004), and Dörnyei's (2010) questionnaire. These two sources of questionnaire items belong to two different research frameworks. Gardner's questionnaire was designed to investigate L2 motivation from the Socio-Educational Theory perspective, while Dörnyei's taps into L2 motivation from the *L2 Motivational Self-System* perspective.

Given that the current population had never been investigated from any of the above two frameworks, we hoped to explore both of them to avoid missing any relevant information regarding their motivation to learn English. Analyses revealed that some items from both frameworks were not applicable to the population under study, while others blended together to constitute new constructs. This corroborates findings from previous research studies which point to the overlap between and within some constructs of the above-mentioned motivation frameworks (Kormos & Csizér, 2008; Lamb, 2012). For the current population, there seems to be a blurred boundary between integrative motivation and the L2 Motivational Self-system, especially when it comes to relating to their constructs, particularly integrativeness, instrumentality and Ideal L2 self. This

issue recurs in L2 motivation research and some researchers argue that integrative motivation and possible selves are closely related and complementary in some ways (Dörnyei, 2005, Macintyre et al., 2009). There is a need for studies that focus on these two constructs and possibly use qualitative approach to find out what could be the cause of this overlap.

The current population's motivation to learn English can be described in the following ways: the first construct, Attitude Toward Learning English, reflects L2 learners' eagerness to learn English and the potential they see in this language as a communication tool. The second construct was labeled "Functional value of English" due to its multifaceted nature that cannot be accounted for by instrumentality alone. Items under this construct suggest that L2 learners' reasons to learn English are related to personal and professional fulfillment as well as multicultural competence. L2 learners in the present study were also found to have an Ideal L2 self that is oriented toward integration into the global L2 community. Both quantitative and qualitative data demonstrate that these L2 learners' envisioned selves include being part of the imagined global community where English is the medium of communication. These L2 learners are well aware of the expansion of English as a global language and would like to take advantage of affordances that go with communicative competence in English. A statement like "*I realized that English is used almost everywhere. Nowadays, it is hard to get a job if you do not know English. In addition, a university graduate is expected to be able to work anywhere, and English will be his ticket. That is why my motivation to learn English has considerably increased"* is illustrative of L2 learners' awareness of the current status of English on the international scene. In addition, these students feel the presence of English around them because of what is going on in the East African region. As mentioned in the introduction, Rwanda is a member of several regional communities that use English as a lingua franca. One of them is the East African Community bringing together five

countries. The goal of these countries is to form an East African economic block, with a common border, common currency, and common passport. They already have a common parliament, and people can live and work wherever they get an opportunity. Out of the five countries, three of them are from the *Expanded Circle* and have been using English as a second language for a long time. Rwanda, a former French-speaking country, needs to enhance the teaching of English in order to enable its citizens to operate in those communities. Some parents are taking their children to neighboring countries where English is used to ensure that they grow up using English fluently. The students in the present study are future professionals that will soon be out on the job market to compete internationally. It seems logical to find that their motivation to learn English is this high.

However, there is one aspect of motivation which seems to be less pronounced, the Ought-to L2 Self. Of the four motivation constructs investigated in the study, the Ought-to L2 Self had the lowest mean (M= 4.69). This was also the case for the 41 students who participated in the interview. Only two of them explicitly stated that one of the reasons they learned English was to be able to live up to people's expectations concerning educated people. Not only was this construct under-rated, but it also showed the lowest correlations with proficiency. The Ought-to L2 Self has been identified as a less powerful motivator because it is external to the individual and, as Dörnyei and Chan (2013) argue, "may therefore bear little resemblance to the individual's desires and wishes" (p. 438). It could be that the Ought-to L2 Self does represent L2 learners' most prominent aspirations.

5.1.2. Oral proficiency status

Based on the results from raters' scores and comments, three major conclusions can be drawn. First, rating scores suggest that, overall, the oral proficiency level of L2 learners in the present study is average. The mean score of all three components of oral proficiency was found to be around the middle of the 9-point scale: Accentedness (M = 5.63), comprehensibility (M = 4.25), and fluency (M = 4.59). Second, taking comprehensibility as the ultimate goal of communication, both correlation analysis results and raters' comments point to fluency as more closely related to comprehensibility in comparison to accentedness. Raters' comments also suggest that comprehensibility is also influenced by other linguistic areas, namely grammar and the lexicon. The latter was actually reported by all the raters as one of the most important factors that affected the comprehensibility of L2 speech. Third and last, raters' experience and familiarity with L2 speech play a big role in the assessment of oral proficiency. The four raters who reported exposure to a variety of ESL learners' accents said that they did not have a lot of difficulty rating the speech samples. They also had a higher inter-rater reliability. Conversely, the rater who had dealt with only one type of ESL learners found it hard to listen to L2 speech with a different accent, and her ratings lowered the initial inter-rater reliability.

5.1.3. Relationship between language learning motivation and oral proficiency.

In this study, there were two independent variables: language learning motivation and oral proficiency. Motivation consisted of four constructs, while oral proficiency had three. Relationships were examined among the constructs of the two variables. Two observations arise from these results: the first observation is that, on the whole, correlation analyses revealed very low but positive relationships between L2 learners' motivation to learn English and their oral proficiency, with only one statistically significant positive correlation, that is between

Accentedness and the Ideal L2 Self (r_s (33) = .38, p = .05). Second, although Spearman's correlation coefficients showed a weak relationship between the two independent variables, there are some patterns that are noteworthy. Attitude Toward Learning English and Ideal L2 Self consistently correlated positively with oral proficiency more than the rest of the motivation constructs. It could be said, for the current L2 learners, high positive attitude toward English and Ideal L2 Self are linked to achievement.

5.2. Recommendations/ Pedagogical implications

The current population exhibits a strong positive attitude toward learning English, see some value in learning English, and see English as playing an important role in their future, both academically and professionally. Their overall motivation to learn English is high, but as shown in the analysis, their motivation can only transfer to speaking ability to a limited extent. It could be argued that the low speaking ability is attributable to factors beyond the learners' control, namely the type of instruction that is conducive to the development of speaking proficiency, the lack of models and interactional opportunities outside the classroom. There is evidence of willingness to learn English on the part of learners, such as their eagerness to interact in English and their investment in learning English even outside the classroom. They contribute to their learning as much as they can, but lack opportunities for input, interaction and feedback which they need in order to improve their proficiency. There is a need for change in the teaching methods so that this high level of motivation can be put to good use.

Of the four language skills, speaking was found to be the area in which learners feel most motivated, but the one that is least taught as reported by both teachers and students. The lack of a speaking skills component in English classes has repercussions in learner's oral proficiency, particularly in terms of fluency as indicated by the native speakers who rated their speech samples.

All the four raters reported that the current EFL learners have limited vocabulary knowledge, which greatly affected the comprehensibility of their speech.

The following pedagogical practices could help fill the above gaps and thus improve L2 learners' proficiency:

Finding more time for speaking skills can be one of the solutions. Since learners expressed their interest in learning speaking skills, it would be easy for teachers to organize speaking activities both in and outside the classroom. This would improve students' fluency, which was found to influence the rating of the comprehensibility of their speech more than any other factors. Lazaraton (2014) suggested that planning real-word speaking tasks that are at the learners' level of proficiency and holding learners accountable are very important practices in developing their oral skills. She also recommends combining speaking with other language skills such as reading and listening, which can serve as a source of input for students.

Related to the above recommendation is organizing specific fluency development activities. In what he termed fluency-oriented communication activities, Nation (1989) proposed some speaking tasks that learners can do to develop their fluency, namely 4/3/2/ techniques. The latter involves conveying the same message to three different people reducing the talking time from four to three and then to two minutes. He also proposed other activities such as Marketplace and Messenger which are expected to involve interaction and negotiation of meaning. In order for these activities to be fruitful, Nation says that teachers can keep a record of learners' productions, and analyze them to see which one contributes to learning. Teachers can also organize other communicative tasks such as information-gap, problem solving, or decision-making activities which require learners to use the language creatively and spontaneously. When such interaction-oriented tasks are well organized, they can help learners in many ways. They facilitate not only

fluency, but also proficiency in general because they are an opportunity for learners to get input and feedback (Pica, 1994), test their linguistic knowledge, negotiate for meaning (Pica, 1996), notice the gaps in their interlanguage and produce modified output (Swain, 1995, 2005), which all contribute to second language development (Gass &Mackey, 2007). The teachers might consider varying oral tasks, from impromptu (unplanned) speaking tasks that train students to "think on their feet" (Lazaraton, 2014), to planned activities such as the presentation of class projects and debates.

Although accentedness was not a big problem for comprehensibility, some instances of heavy accent were reported by raters to make L2 speech difficult to understand, especially misplaced stress and some of the segmental issues. Some focus on pronunciation would help L2 learners overcome these problems. Munro (2008) recommends that, given the limited classroom time, teachers should choose which pronunciation instruction to prioritize:

> "it is important to set priorities for teaching. If one aspect of pronunciation is more likely to promote intelligibility more than some other aspect, it deserves more immediate attention. [I]t is important to know what aspect of intelligibility is teachable and what ways of teaching are likely to be successful" (p. 197).

Since the present population constitutes a homogeneous population in terms of L1, addressing pronunciation issues using the contrastive approach would make the job easier for teachers.

As pointed out by all the raters, L2 learners in the current study have vocabulary-related problems, namely word choice and lexical access. There are various things teachers can do to improve learners' vocabulary knowledge: organizing specific vocabulary lessons, creating opportunities for incidental vocabulary learning (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001), helping learners adopt vocabulary learning strategies (Nation, 2011) would all contribute to filling this lexical gap.

Among the factors that had less influence on the comprehensibility of L2 speech are grammatical errors, and yet dry grammar takes up the bulk of the time allotted to English classes. Reducing grammar instruction and integrating it into communicative activities would be more beneficial for current L2 learners who have been learning grammar for at least 10 years.

5.3. Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, there are 6 colleges under the University of Rwanda, and the present study only looked at a small portion of one of them. The sample size of the students who were interviewed does not permit generalization. An expansive study that includes students from all the colleges would reflect these L2 learners' motivation much better. Second, given that motivation is a complex and dynamic phenomenon that varies across time and space, the results of a study based on cross-sectional data should be interpreted with caution. A longitudinal study would better account for this complexity. Another limitation is that the present study was concerned with only one aspect of proficiency at one specific time. It would be interesting to investigate the overall proficiency and its relationship with language learning motivation from a dynamic perspective. Lastly, following Gardner's (1985, 2005) argument that language achievement is influenced by both motivation and ability, the present study is limited in that linguistic ability was not controlled. The oral proficiency of the participants might have been the result of different linguistic abilities rather than motivation, or a combination of both.

5.4. Avenues for future research

Given that both teachers and their students reported an increase in motivation over time, a longitudinal study that spans more an academic year would give a clearer picture of university students' motivation from a dynamic perspective. Since motivation is a complex and dynamic phenomenon which not only fluctuates over time, but also within and between tasks depending on

different circumstances including but not limited to the learning context (Dörnyei, 2009; Dörnyei et al. 2015, MacIntyre & Serroul, 2015), a longitudinal study would be more suitable to address all these subtleties.

Learners' performance in terms of oral proficiency might have simply been related more to their aptitude than their motivation. It might also be influenced by the kind of instruction that learners received in the past. A longitudinal and experimental study that takes into account the learners' aptitude and tracks the instruction they get would yield more reliable and thorough results.

Concerning one aspect of oral proficiency, fluency, the present study focused on perceptual and utterance fluency. Including cognitive fluency would provide more information regarding learners' speech production processes and the difficulties they encounter. As one rater mentioned, it was not possible to pinpoint the source of dysfluencies because it was not possible to access what was going on in their minds. This concern is warranted in that, as Fulcher (1996) argues, there are different factors that affect fluency, such as "content planning hesitation, grammatical planning hesitations, lexical uncertainty, grammatical and / or lexical repair, and so on" (p. 216). Future research might include stimulated recall to have an idea of what learners were experiencing during speaking tasks. Teachers can use this information to organize instruction or tasks in ways that facilitate language learning.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Survey on language learning motivation and oral proficiency.

PART I

1. How old are you? ---------------- years
2. Sex: male ------------ female ----------------
3. What is your field of study? ---
4. How old were you when you started learning English? ---------------- years.
5. How long have you been studying English? ----------- years
6. How many hours were you studying English in primary school? ------------- hours per week
7. How many hours were you studying English in high school? --------------- hours per week
8. How many hours are you currently studying English? -------------------- hours per week.
9. What areas of English language do you study the most in class? (1= the most frequently taught; 7= the least frequently taught)
    - grammar -------------
    - vocabulary -----------
    - pronunciation ------------
    - reading -------------
    - writing ---------------
    - listening ------------
    - speaking ---------------
10. In which level did you start taking all courses in English? **(Tick the level that applies to you)**
    - nursery school -----------------------
    - beginning of primary school ----------------------
    - middle of primary school ----------------------------
    - end of primary school ------------------------------
    - secondary school – ordinary level -----------------
    - secondary school – advanced level ----------------
    - university ----------------------------

11. What variety of English are you exposed to the most?
    - American English
    - British English
    - other: (Please specify) --------------------------------
12. In an average week, how much time do you use English **outside of the class**?

    ---------------- hours
13. What language skill do you use the most **outside of the class**? (**1**= *the skill you use the most*; **4=** *the skill you use least*)
    - speaking -------------
    - listening --------------
    - reading --------------
    - writing --------------
14. In an average day, how much do you speak, listen to, read and write English **outside of the class**?
    - listen to English: ------------------- hours
    - speak English: ------------------ hours
    - read English: ------------------ hours
    - write English: ------------------ hours
15. In what context do you use English **outside of the class**? **(Select all that apply**)
    - reading newspapers
    - reading books
    - watching movies in English
    - listening to music in English
    - working on assignments
    - on internet
    - other: please specify --

16. Who do you speak English with outside of the classroom?
    - teachers
    - classmates
    - other (Please specify) --
--

17. How challenging are the following language areas for you. (Please rank the areas below: **1=** *the most challenging*; **7=** *the least challenging)*
    - grammar -----------
    - vocabulary -----------
    - pronunciation ------------
    - reading -----------
    - writing -----------
    - listening ------------
    - speaking ------------

18. How would you rate your speaking ability in English?
On the following 8- point scale, circle the number that best represents your overall speaking ability in English.

-------------------------- ------------------------- ---------------------- ------------------------

1-----------poor-------2 3--------- fair-------- 4 5 ----- good ----- 6 7--- very good ----8

19. In front of each statement below, circle the number (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6) that best represents how true that statement is for you when you speak English. **N.B: There are no right or wrong answers**. **We are interested in your personal opinion**.

When I speak English	**Never true of me 1**	**Usually not true of me 2**	**Sometimes true of me 3**	**Usually true of me 4**	**Always true of me 5**	**Insufficient experience 6**
I pay attention to the way I pronounce words.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I try to use the grammar that I learned.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I think of the words before I pronounce them.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I try to speak like native speakers.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I focus on speaking correctly more than fluently.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I use fillers (e.g, um, ah, etc.) instead of being silent when ideas do not come smoothly.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I think about what I want to say in Kinyarwanda and then translate it into English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I stop and think when I have trouble expressing my ideas.	1	2	3	4	5	6

PART II

1. In front of each statement below, write the number (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, or 8) that best represents how true the statement is for you. **N.B:** ***There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your personal opinion***.

The reasons why I study English	**Strongly disagree 1**	**Moderately disagree 2**	**Slightly disagree 3**	**Neutral 4**	**Slightly agree 5**	**Moderately agree 6**	**Strongly agree 7**
To pass and get a degree.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To understand other courses.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To satisfy myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
English broadens my view.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To communicate with other speakers of English who do not speak my first language.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It is a bridge to other cultures and peoples.	1	2	3	4		6	7
Knowing a foreign language makes me feel proud.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The things I want to do in the future require me to use English.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I like the atmosphere of my English classes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Speaking English will help me to understand people from all over the world, not just those from English speaking countries.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. For each statement below, circle the number **(1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, or 8)** that best represents your belief about the English language.

N.B: ***There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your personal opinion***.

Situation	**Strongly disagree 1**	**Moderately disagree 2**	**Slightly disagree 3**	**Neutral 4**	**Slightly agree 5**	**Moderately agree 6**	**Strongly agree 7**
Sounding like a native or near-native speaker of English is important to me.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Studying English is important to me because it will make me a more knowledgeable person.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Making myself understood is more important than sounding like a native speaker of English.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Studying English is important to me because, with English, I can work outside Rwanda.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**

Developing good pronunciation in English is important to me.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
I study English because an educated person is supposed to be able to speak English.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Learning English is important to me because people who can speak a foreign language are admired.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**

3. In front of each statement circle the number which best represents your attitude towards English language.

   N.B: ***There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your personal opinion.***

Situation	**Strongly disagree 1**	**Moderately disagree 2**	**Slightly disagree 3**	**Neutral 4**	**Slightly agree 5**	**Moderately agree 6**	**Strongly agree 7**
I wish I could speak the English language fluently.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I wish there were more reading materials available in English (books, newspaper, magazines).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
If I make a mistake speaking English I am willing to try again.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I would not study English in school if it were not required.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I enjoy meeting and listening to people who speak English.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Studying English is an enjoyable experience.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Learning English is important to me because it will enable me to learn about the culture and media of its speakers (British or Americans).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would really like to learn a lot about the English language.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I study English to keep updated and informed of what is going on around the world.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Whenever I think of my career, I imagine myself using English.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A knowledge of English would make me a better educated person.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. For each statement below, circle the number **(1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, or 8)** that best represents your view about the English language.

N.B: ***There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your personal opinion.***

Situation	Strongly disagree 1	Moderately disagree 2	Slightly disagree 3	Neutral 4	Slightly agree 5	Moderately agree 6	Strongly agree 7
Learning English is an important goal in my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would rather spend my time on other subjects than English.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Learning English is a waste of time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I leave school, I will give up the study of English because I am not interested in it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would like to know more about people from English-speaking countries.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I think learning English is more difficult for me than for the average learner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I get nervous and when I speak in my English class.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Studying English is important to me because I would like to travel internationally.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would like to have more English classes at school.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I have to study English to be successful in my future career.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Time passes faster when I am studying English.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**

5. For each statement below**,** circle the number **(1, 2, 3, 4, 5 [, 6, or 7: (1= strongly disagree-strongly agree])** that best represents your belief about the English language. **N.B:** ***There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your personal opinion***.

Situation	**Strongly disagree 1**	**Moderately disagree 2**	**Slightly disagree 3**	**Neutral 4**	**Slightly agree 5**	**Moderately agree 6**	**Strongly agree 7**
Studying English can be important for me because it will allow me to speak comfortably with other people who speak English.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
If I make much more effort, I am sure I will be able to master English.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Studying English can be important for me because it will enable me to participate more freely in the activities of other cultural groups.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**

I would continue to study English even if it were optional.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
I study English because close friends of mine think it is important.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**

6. For each statement below**,** circle the number **(1, 2, 3, 4, 5 [, 6, or 7: [1= strongly disagree-strongly agree])** that best represents your belief about the English language. **N.B:** ***There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your personal opinion***.

Situation	**Strongly disagree 1**	**Moderately disagree 2**	**Slightly disagree 3**	**Neutral 4**	**Slightly agree 5**	**Moderately agree 6**	**Strongly agree 7**
Studying English is important to me because it offers a new challenge in my life.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
I consider learning English important because people I respect think I should do it.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Studying English can be important for me because I think it will someday be useful in getting a good job.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**

Studying English can be important for me because other people will respect me because I have a knowledge of a foreign language.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
I would feel uncomfortable if a foreigner asked me for directions in English.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**

7. For each statement below**,** circle the number **(1, 2, 3, 4, 5 [, 6, or 7: [1= strongly disagree-strongly agree])** that best represents you as a language learner. **N.B:** ***There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your personal opinion.***

Situation	**Strongly disagree 1**	**Moderately disagree 2**	**Slightly disagree 3**	**Neutral 4**	**Slightly agree 5**	**Moderately agree 6**	**Strongly agree 7**
I am afraid to speak English because other people would laugh at me.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
I can imagine myself living abroad and using English effectively for communicating with the locals.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in our English class.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in our English class.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**

I always feel that other students speak English better than I do.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in our English class.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
I like to think of myself as someone who will be able to speak English.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
I will be more successful in my career if I learn English.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
I am sure I have a good ability to learn English.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
I like meeting people from English speaking countries.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
I can imagine myself speaking English with international friends or colleagues.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
I want to improve my pronunciation in English.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
I am willing to work hard at learning English.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**

PART III

Please answer the following questions by circling the letter of the alternative which appears most applicable to you. Please be as accurate as possible. **N.B:** ***There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your personal opinion***.

1. I actively think about what I have learned in my English class
   a. very frequently
   b. hardly ever
   c. once in a while
2. If English were not taught in school, I would
   a. pick up English in everyday situations
   b. not bother learning English at all
   c. try to obtain English lessons from anywhere else.
3. When I have problems understanding something we are learning in English class, I:
   a. immediately ask the teacher about it
   b. only seek help just before the exam
   c. just forget about it.
4. When it comes to English homework, I:
   a. put some effort into it, but not as much as I could.
   b. work very carefully, making sure I understand everything.
   c. just look over quickly.
5. Considering how I study English, I can honestly say that, I:
   a. do just enough work to pass.
   b. will pass on the basis of luck or intelligence because I do very little work.
   c. really try to learn English.
6. After I get my English assignments back, I:
   a. always rewrite them, correcting my mistakes.
   b. just throw them in my desk and forget them.
   c. look them over, but do not bother correcting mistakes.
7. When I am in an English class, I:
   a. volunteer answers as much as possible.

b. answer only the easiest questions.
c. never say anything.

8. If there were a local English T. V. station, I would:
    a. never watch it.
    b. turn it on occasionally.
    c. try to watch it often.
9. When I hear an English song on the radio, I:
    a. listen to the music, paying attention only to easy words
    b. listen carefully, and try to understand all the words.
    c. change the station.
10. If I had the opportunity to speak English outside of school, I would:
    a. never speak it.
    b. speak English most of the time, using Kinyarwanda only if really necessary
    c. speak it occasionally, using Kinyarwanda whenever possible.
11. Compared to other courses, I like English:
    a. the most.
    b. the same as all the others.
    c. least of all.
12. If there were an English club in my school, I would:
    a. attend meetings once in a while.
    b. be most interested in joining.
    c. definitely not join.
13. If I had a choice, I
    a. would definitely take it
    b. would drop it
    c. don't know whether I would take it or not.
14. I find studying English
    a. not interesting at all.
    b. as interesting as other subjects
    c. very interesting

15. If had the opportunity to speak English outside of school, I would:
    a. never do it
    b. do it sometimes
    c. do it as much as possible

Appendix B: Interview questions for students

Questions on language

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. How many languages do you speak?
3. Can you rank them in the order of speaking proficiency?
4. Can you rank them in order of frequency of use?
5. What is your impression of the English language?
6. Why do you study English?
7. Can you describe the way in which you learn English?
8. What is your opinion of the way in which you are learning English?
9. Do you use English outside the classroom? In what circumstances? Who are your interlocutors?
10. Do you think the way you are studying English should change? Why?
11. What would you like to study more in English if you had a choice?
12. How do you feel about your learning environment?

Questions on motivation

1. Are you motivated to learn English?
2. How would you describe your current state of motivation in comparison to the past?
3. Has anything happened in your life that influenced your motivation to learn English?
4. Are there any language areas that make you feel motivated or demotivated? Why?
5. Do you have any particular strategies you use to stay motivated?

Appendix C: Interview questions for teachers

1. How long have you been teaching English?
2. How do you like teaching English as a foreign language?
3. What language areas do you teach the most?
4. What do you use as instructional materials?
5. Are those materials authentic?
6. Do you think you need more instructional materials?
7. How would they contribute to the success of your teaching?
8. How often do you specifically teach speaking?
9. What types of speaking skills do you give to your students?
10. How do you assess speaking skills?
11. How do you react to students' errors?
12. What are the most common errors that you find in your students' utterances?
13. Why do you think they occur?
14. What do you see as the biggest challenge for your students as far as spoken language is concerned?
15. Do you give speaking tests in your exams?
16. What challenges do you encounter in teaching English? Speaking in particular? How do you go about them?
17. Is there any particular emphasis that your school puts on the teaching of English?
18. Who designs the curriculum you are currently using? To what extent do you follow it? Why?
19. How can you qualify your students' level of oral proficiency? To what do you attribute it?
20. How would do you describe your students' motivation in learning English? Does it increase or decrease? What do you think is the reason? What do you do to keep your students motivated?
21. Are there any classroom tasks/activities or conditions that raise or lower students' motivation? If so, why do you think this might be the case?

Appendix D: Follow-up survey for raters

1. Describe your linguistic background (***Languages you speak and educational background in linguistics***).

2. Describe your teaching experience: context (ESL, EFL, etc.), population you taught (***level of proficiency, age***), how long you have been teaching.

3. Do you have a training in speech production: phonetics and phonology? Please specify courses you have taken that are related to the above field ***(e.g. second language speech)***

4. Give your overall impression of the speech samples you have rated: you might include the following: what aspect of speech (comprehensibility, accentedness and fluency) is more advanced in the population you assessed, what speakers need to work on more than the others, what components are more related to each other: e.g. accentedness and comprehensibility; fluency and comprehensibility; accentedness and fluency.

5. Taking comprehensibility as the main goal of communication, which aspect of oral proficiency (between fluency and accentedness) affected the comprehensibility of the speakers you assessed?

6. How would you describe the rating process in terms of ease or difficulty? Do you think the experience you have in teaching English as a second or foreign language and/or linguistic knowledge contributed to your rating?

7. How old are you?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION

Appendix E: Rating rubric for comprehensibility, accentedness and fluency

First of all, I would like to thank you for your offer to help me in this task of assessing my participants' oral proficiency in terms of comprehensibility, accentedness and fluency. I know it is a demanding task that requires sacrificing time and energy. I will always be indebted to you. There are 40 speech samples. Below are the guidelines concerning the rating process. There is also some background information on the participants.

1. **Background of the participants**
   a. The participants are university students.
   b. They have been studying English since primary, that is at least 12 years
      - **Primary**: about 4 hours/ week;
      - **Junior high school**: 6 hours a week;
      - **Advanced level**: 2 to 4 hours a week + use of English as a medium of instruction;
      - **University**: 4 to 6 hours a week + use of English as a medium of instruction.

   c. Some of them are in their last year of studying English, others have just one year to go.

2. Assessment**: *Please follow this order in assessing proficiency.***
   a. Comprehensibility.

The assessment is based **on how easy or difficult it is to understand** it (degree of comprehension). In other words, **the more effort you use to understand the speech, the less comprehensible it is**. Please specify the source of the lack of comprehensibility as accurately/much as you can: it may be due to **pronunciation (sounds), intonation (word stress) grammar, word choice, speech rate, speech clarity,** etc.? Below is the template for the rating of comprehensibility.

Rating scale for comprehensibility

Please rate the following samples for their comprehensibility on a 9-point scale *(1= extremely easy to understand; (9= extremely difficult or impossible to understand).* While you are rating, think about the factors that guided your rating and provide comments on what you noticed about each speaker's oral production.

Speech samples	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Comments
1										
2										

b. Accentedness

The assessment of accentedness consists in judging how closely the pronunciation of an utterance approaches that of a native speaker (or how different it is). In other words, the pronunciation that is close to the native-speaker's is said to be less accented, while the pronunciation that is different from the native speaker's is "heavily accented". You will give a score corresponding to your

impression of the speaker's accent on a nine-point scale. Elements to attend to include but are not limited to: pronunciation of sounds (vowels and consonants), syllable duration, stress, intonation, rhythm, and so on. Below is the rating scale for accentedness.

Rating scale for accentedness

Please rate the following speech samples for their accentedness. *(1= no accent; 9= extremely strong accent)*. While you are rating, think about the factors that guided your rating and provide comments on what you noticed about each speaker's oral production.

Speech samples	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Comments
1										
2										

Fluency

Fluency refers to language which is "produced fluidly and smoothly as one combines words and sentences in speech." (Baker-Smemoe et al., 2014, p. 708). Things to consider when rating fluency include but are not limited to: long pauses, misplaced pauses and unfilled pauses, false starts, numerous self-corrections, hesitations, repetitions, speech rate, etc. See if the speaker combines words and sentences as the native speaker would.

Rating scale for fluency

Please rate the following samples for their fluency on a 9-point scale *(1= extremely fluent; (9= extremely dysfluent)*. While you are rating, think about the factors that guided your rating and provide comments on what you noticed about each speaker's oral production.

Speech samples	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Comments
1										
2										

N.B: YOUR THOROUGH COMMENTS ARE A GREAT CONTRIBUTION TO THIS RESEARCH PROJECT.

THANK YOU AGAIN!

JEAN

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