

**MAKERERE**



**UNIVERSITY**

**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND EXTERNAL STUDIES**

**OUT OF CLASS ACTIVITIES AND WRITING PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE OF 'O' LEVEL STUDENTS IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN  
SOROTI DISTRICT**

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KAMPALA**

**DECEMBER, 2021**

## Declaration

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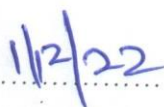
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## Approval

I hereby declare that this Dissertation has been submitted with my knowledge and approval as the supervisor.

Sign:   
.....  
**Prof. Connie Ssebbunga Masembe**

Date:   
.....

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this book to my parents. Thank you for always believing in me.

## **Acknowledgment**

I thank God for giving me the opportunity to successfully complete my course. Special thanks to my Supervisor Prof. Connie Ssebbunga Masembe for his guidance and encouragement towards the completion of this research. I also thank BTC, Uganda and Embassy of Belgium for granting me the Master's Degree Scholarship.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

UNEB	:	Uganda National Examinations Board
UCE	:	Uganda Certificate of Education
NAPE	:	National Assessment of Progress in Education
L1	:	First Language (Mother Tongue)
L2	:	Second Language
R2	:	Regression Analysis
e.t.c	:	et cetera
e.g.	:	For Example
DVD	:	Digital Versatile Disc
CD	:	Compact Disc
NCDC	:	National Curriculum Development Centre
CVI	:	Content Validity Index
SLA	:	Second Language Acquisition
LRE	:	Language Related Episode
EFL	:	English Foreign Learners
SPSS	:	Scientific Package for Social Sciences
SAQ	:	Safety Attitude Questionnaire
BTC	:	Belgian Technical Cooperation

## **Abstract**

This study was undertaken to investigate the impact of engagement in out-of-class learning on students' language proficiency in the selected secondary schools in Soroti District, Teso Region. It was guided by the following objectives; to investigate whether learners are exposed to out of class activities; to explore teachers and students' perceptions towards out-of-class activities and to examine the impact of out-of-class activities on students' Writing Proficiency.

The researcher designed a study based on descriptive quantitative and qualitative research methods utilizing questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions and documentary analysis to the students and teachers, including school administrators. The statistical analysis of the data was performed using SPSS 20 Data Editor. The study found out that the most frequent activities in which English language is practised out-of-class are entertaining activities like watching movies on television, videos and surfing on the Internet and that the level of students' development in English language activities outside the classroom is positively associated with their language proficiency. The conclusion was that students' language engagement in authentic settings enhances their linguistic competence. Involving learners in language activities out of the classroom promotes learners' language proficiency. It was also observed that students prefer to use English language through mostly entertaining activities such as watching movies, videos or surfing the internet. It was recommended that teachers examine their teaching and learning approaches to meet the demands and interests of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learners by exposing them to authentic English language environments beyond the confines of classroom. This research could be beneficial for language teachers because it will enable them encourage their students to practise English language outside classroom, for students to offer some ways to develop their language proficiency with application of English in authentic environments, and for educational administrators to give some ideas for curriculum design including out-of-class learning.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Introduction**

This study was about learners' Exposure to English language Activities outside the Classroom and the Development of Writing Proficiency with reference to selected Secondary schools in Soroti District. This chapter focuses on the background information highlighting the conceptual, historical and contextual perspectives. It also highlights the statement of the problem, purpose, specific research objectives, research questions, scope, significance of the study and conceptual framework.

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

#### **1.1.1 Historical Background**

English language has had a remarkable history and its influence in the world in terms of formal and informal communication cannot be under-estimated (Arik & Arik, 2014). It is also thought to be a necessity for enhanced career opportunities and better job prospects (Algeo, 2010). The much importance attached to English language traces back to the time when the colonial government took over missionary schools in 1923 and gave it special status. According to Ssekamwa (1995), a number of Education Review Commissions were instituted and they all emphasized the role of English language in both local and global contexts and stressed the need to improve on its proficiency.

There have been various methods of teaching English language: the Direct method, Grammar Translation, the Audio-lingual and Communicative Approach as the most recent. Most of the aforementioned methods are classroom based as students only rely on classroom instructions in EFL contexts (Xiao & Luo, 2009) and yet meaningful language teaching and learning can become inherently spontaneous and Student-centred when moved from the confines of the classroom environment into the real world (Lily Claiborne & John Morell, 2016). The modern history of language teaching started with adoption of the method used for teaching Latin in European countries under the approach known as Grammar Translation Method. In this approach, teachers of second languages made use of the mother tongue of their learners in the teaching and learning process (Ellis, 2008). The purpose to learn a language was primarily to read the literature published in the target language (Nunan, 2013). Reading and Writing were

considered to be the focus of language teaching. The ability to speak a foreign language was regarded as irrelevant (Xutsiag, 2014:11). It is remembered with disgust by thousands of school learners for whom foreign language learning meant boring experience of memorizing grammar rules and vocabulary and attempting to produce perfect translation of literary text (Chaney & Burk, 2014:4). This trend has affected the teaching and learning of foreign languages over the years. Many teachers of English language still use this method much as the purpose of learning a foreign language has become more of a communicative competence.

Until about 1980, language was basically seen to be grammar that eventually came to be regarded as too distant and abstract (Hymes, 2014). That implied that in daily life people did not find the rightful purpose for studying a foreign language. The teaching of English language in Secondary Schools in Uganda dates as far back as 1925 when the missionaries introduced the first schools in Uganda. The Cambridge English language Teaching Syllabus which was the basis of teaching English language also emphasized the learners' proficiency in the writing skill. This has been the guiding teaching instrument used in the teaching of the English language until recently in 1992 when an attempt was made to review the Syllabus. This review saw the coming of the Integrated Approach to the teaching of English language (NCDC, 2008).

In 1989, the then Uganda National Education Policy Review Commission chaired by Prof. W. Senteza Kajubi recommended that English language be taught as a subject in Lower Primary and Primary five on wards as a medium of instruction. The position of out of class activities still remained unclear. However, the Government White Paper, 1992 still re-affirmed the need for proficiency in English language in addition to Indigenous languages for both a national and global perspective. In Uganda, as in many African countries, English, the language of the colonial power, was introduced in government and public life by way of missionary work and educational system. Upon Uganda's independence in 1962, English was maintained as the official language as it was already rooted in administration, media and education. Also Uganda's ethno-linguistic diversity made difficult to choose another language as the official of Uganda (Mpuga, 2013). Ngugi (1986), writing about this time notes that African children were taught to associate their mother tongues with stupidity, humiliation and low status and English language with intelligence and status. Therefore, learners' writing proficiency or ability to communicate effectively through the written word is a key aspect of education.

In spite of such status, the situation in Ugandan Secondary Schools is worrying with little emphasis if any, by the teachers in exposing learners to activities outside the classroom. Most of the learning takes place inside class and yet if students were exposed to interact meaningfully with outside class activities, they would be able to learn a lot more, hence improving their Writing Proficiency. The emergency of modern digital platforms such as television, radios, smart mobile phones, computers and the internet enables the handling of information and facilitating different forms of communication among human actors, between human beings and electronic systems.

Unfortunately, the teachers basically pay attention to teaching and learning within the formal classroom context and this in a way, limits the learners' ability to gain Proficiency in the English language because they have limited exposure. With the glaring competition in the Education Sector for shining results, the teachers are forced to do the same tasks over and over again of making students memorize Grammar in class, compositions, spotting possible areas that they believe UNEB will set especially in English language (112/1) paper one that requires students to have knowledge of Functional writing.

The prevalence of social media and the internet as a whole has tremendously changed the way people learn languages for the better. It is imperative for modern English language teachers to address the needs and interests of today's students since the traditional practices have clearly become out-dated in the modern classroom. The needs/demands of modern language students have outpaced teachers' and book publishers' best strategies and therefore a need for a significant paradigm shift that focuses on both skills and competencies that the learners can gain through exposure. Watching television and smart phones are already part of modern life. Television Programmes broadcast in English language help children improve on their vocabulary, grammar, pronunciations among other benefits. Smart phones provide many useful tools for students such as Dictionary, translated and Grammar Reference Apps all available on the Google play store. Besides translations, word reference has Thesaurus, English Dictionary and a forum where other users can comment on difficult words or expressions. Students only need to be reminded that their phones and computers are not for play, but to be used as learning tools.



According to UNEB (2018) Performance Report, candidates highly showed limited English language proficiency level especially in understanding the meaning of key words used in questions leading to misunderstanding questions. Problems were also reported in the use of correct grammar including spellings, punctuations and paragraph use which considerably affected performance in both arts and science subjects. NAPE report (2013) also revealed that Ugandan school children in senior two were unable to comprehend simple concepts in English language and significantly inadequate in writing meaningful and correctly punctuated sentences.

The above reports among other assessments point to the fact that the classroom based teaching practices predominantly in use may not adequately address the concerns of students' poor writing proficiency levels. In many schools, students hardly have any opportunity to interact with the world beyond classroom. The time tables are usually packed beyond capacity leaving students with no time to meaningfully engage in activities outside the classroom that can play a significant role in improving writing proficiency.

While traditional approaches do provide a solid foundation for effective language teaching and learning, it is important to understand that these techniques do not always address the students' current needs. The teachers of English language and other practitioners might need to rethink and align their strategies and approaches in line with the current trends to help address the prevailing challenges of language deficiency among our learners.

### **1.1.2 Theoretical Background**

This study was based on Piaget's (1896), **Theory of Social Interaction** as stated by Baiju (2010). Piaget emphasized the importance of social interaction to intellectual development. Cognitive constructivism stems from the work of Piaget J., featuring the individual learning process and how a person constructs and develops his own knowledge through experience. He argued that social interaction is part and parcel of the process of learning and that it is important in stimulating the process of development.

Piaget saw interaction as the key to how we overcome the instability of the symbols we individually construct. Piaget tied the role of social interaction to the importance of language. He also tied the role of language in the development of conceptual and logical understandings. He

made language an integral part of his ideas on intellectual development. Piaget linked the role of social interaction in intellectual development to the role of language.

According to Piaget (1896), language is inherently a social factor partly because of the conventional nature of words and this conventional nature of words is crucial for conceptual development. Piaget argued that formation of mental structures underlying feelings of logical necessity requires social interaction using a conventional sign system. Piaget theorized that language was simply one of children's ways of representing their familiar worlds, a reflection of thought, and that language did not contribute to the development of thinking. Cognitive development, he argued, preceded that of language (Baiju, 2010). The **Social Interaction Theory** as advanced by Jean Piaget presents many areas of merit that exposure to language activities outside the classroom offers with regard to the development of writing proficiency, hence rendering it very relevant to this particular study.

### **1.1.3 Conceptual Background**

A language is a system of conventional vocal signs by means of which human beings communicate. It is not just a collection of words, such as we find in a dictionary. It is the rules or patterns that relate our words to one another (Algeo et al, 2010). The area of language teaching and learning is constantly changing due to emerging educational, technological and social trends or innovations or around the world, so there is no universally correct way to learn a language for everyone. That's why it is not possible for a classroom context to address everyone's needs sufficiently during the class hour, so learners must carry on their learning beyond the classroom as well.

Benson (2013) mentions the concept of Out-of-Class learning which is described as any actions related to learning outside the formal classroom setting including self-learning, naturalistic language acquisition, or self-governing naturalistic Language acquisition. Sundqvist (2009) also highlights out-of-class activities using the term Extramural English (EE). The word itself originated from Latin word *extra*, which stands for *outside* and *mural* infers to the wall. So Extramural English is interpreted in the manner of English outside the walls (p.40). Accordingly, EE indicates the English in which students are included or meet out of the classroom during their free time (Not as part of compulsory home work).

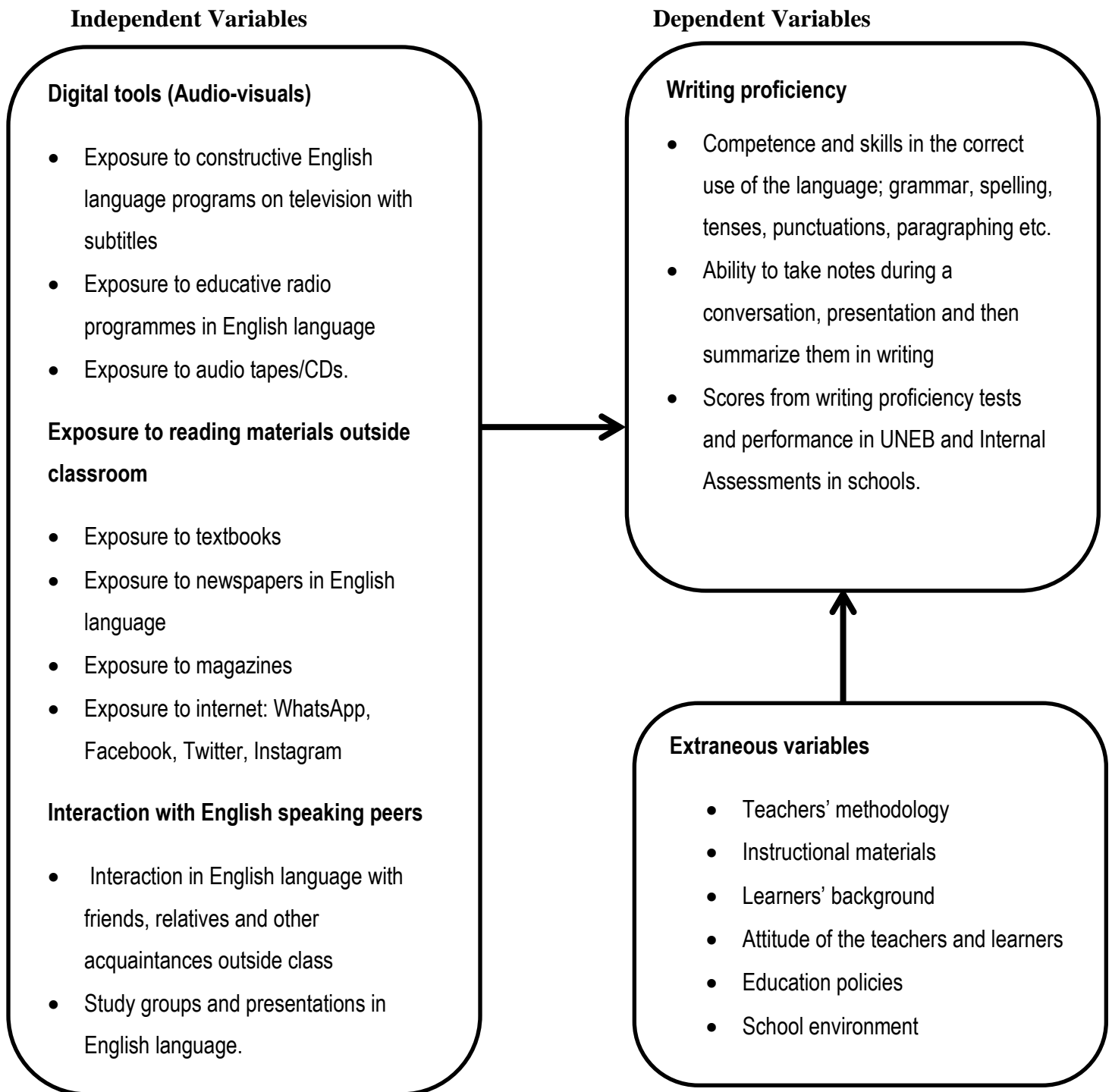
In the present study, out-of-class learning or activities are used as any activities related to English in real settings in which the students engage in outside the formal classroom learning environment such as watching television programmes in English language, listening to radio or reading an English book or new papers, access to internet services, social networking all provide avenues for developing the learners' writing proficiency outside the classroom (Fraser Macleod & Pia Larsson, 2011:8). The term is used as learning not dealing with home assignment, but students' independent choice to develop their language skills.

Writing is the process of using symbols (letters of the alphabet, punctuation and spaces) to communicate thoughts and ideas in a readable form. It is the fourth of the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). To write clearly, it is essential for the learners to understand the basic system of a language and these include; knowledge of grammar, punctuation, vocabulary and sentence structure.

Language proficiency is another concept of this research which is described by Long and Richards (1990) as the sociolinguistic, grammatical and discourse competence in a foreign/second language. In the present study, it refers to the ability to use the foreign language (English) in writing fluently and adequately. It also expresses the quality of having great competence or skill in the written language by the learners deriving from practice and familiarity with the written discourse. Therefore, helping students increase their writing proficiency or ability to communicate through written word is a key aspect of education.

#### **1.1.4 Conceptual Framework**

According to Creswell (2013), Conceptual framework is a basic structure of a research consisting of certain abstract ideas and concepts that a researcher wants to observe or analyze. This study sought to establish the impact of exposure to Out-of-Class Activities on the Development of Writing Proficiency of 'O' Level students in selected schools in Soroti District. The study's Conceptual Framework was based on the model shown in the figure below:



*Source: Researcher*

**Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework above clearly illustrates the Independent variables specifically learners' exposure to the media, reading materials such as; textbooks, newspapers, Magazines, internet and their interactions with the English speaking peers. On the other hand, the Dependent variables will be the learners' ability to utilize the available avenues and resources above and write out correctly constructed sentences: grammar, spellings, tenses, punctuations, paragraphing among others. Scores from Internal and External Assessments in schools can as well indicate students' level of proficiency in the writing skill. It is important to note here that there are some unforeseen variables that could tamper with learners' writing proficiency such as teachers' methods, instructional materials, background of the learners, attitude of both the learners and teachers towards the subject, school environment to mention but a few.

The above figure therefore shows that Exposure to Activities Outside class is the main concept in this study which requires the best practices of teaching and learning in order to realize Proficiency in the Writing skill.

### **1.1.5 Contextual Background**

In the world of globalization, English language has increasingly become the medium in every domain of communication both in local and global contexts. As a result, the demand for speakers using it effectively is necessary in every country. Teaching and learning English, except for the native language is thus crucial for communicative purposes to meet the demands of global economies and to cope with the growing local, national and international demands for English language skills (Attapol Khamkhien, 2010). English language courses are part of the school Curriculum in many non-English speaking countries. On the other hand, today's omnipresence of the English language provides non-English speakers with many opportunities to pick up aspects of language without any form of explicit teaching or assessment. English is used in many authentic contexts and integrated in many people's daily activities such as listening to music, watching subtitled television programs, using the internet or social media, or gaming. These exposures do not come with a fixed curriculum, explicit grammar instruction and formal assessment. People are simply exposed to English through activities where language learning is not the purpose.

In Uganda, English language still maintains its status as the only recognized official language used in government offices, Courts of Law, in Parliament, during State functions and in the keeping of government records (Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995). Even within the family set up, parents prefer to take their children to schools where they are assured of their children learning and becoming proficient writers and speakers of English language with disregard to native language as they consider it local. No wonder even in the furthest of villages, parents struggle to enroll their children in Private Primary and Nursery Schools because they offer quick results in terms of language learning, something they take pride in.

Others contend that English language is still the language of broader communication and academic success and, therefore, a gate pass for economic prosperity (Nsibambi, 2001). In 2007, the Education Ministry introduced Thematic Curriculum in Primary schools which has not gained much prominence to-date with a cross section of society considering it as a curriculum for children from disadvantaged families while other politicians argue it is simply slow poison for children in the countryside. Consequently, the Curriculum has been literary pushed to rural schools and a few Government Aided Primary Schools in urban area against the purpose for which it was introduced. This leaves us with no option but to develop the best practices of teaching and learning English language in order to enhance the writing proficiency.

Despite the importance attached to English language, performance of students in the subject especially in 'O' level school is still upsetting. Reports from UNEB, Internal and External Mock Examinations, continuous assessments from a number of schools consistently show limited English proficiency level among learners. UCE reports for the last five years (2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017) constantly show that the candidates were not proficient in the language. Problems have also been persistently reported in the use of correct grammar including spellings, tenses, tenses, punctuations and paragraphs use which have considerably affected their performance especially in composition writing that requires creativity in language use. In paper two, candidates always fail to draw meaning from passages or make summaries. These inadequacies usually stretch to other subjects as well and the end result is question misinterpretation, an indication that the teachers' approaches and methodologies among other underlying issues may not be adequately addressing the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century learners.

According to UNEB Executive Secretary Bukenya (2015), while English was among the best done subjects in 'O' Level results, with failure rate reducing from 8.8% in 2013 to 6.6% in 2014, there were still many more students whose writing proficiency was wanting. It was also noted that some teachers prepared passages for the candidates to cram instead of preparing them to write compositions imaginatively and creatively. The situation therefore points to the fact that learners probably do not have sufficient time in the classroom to acquire a threshold level of English proficiency. NAPE Report (2013) also revealed that Ugandan School children in senior two could not comprehend simple concepts in English language and significantly inadequate in writing meaningful and correctly punctuated sentences. Even during Internal Assessments in schools, a number of students do not score well in both the spoken and written tests, class exercises, something that has an impact on other subjects as well.

All these reports point to the lack of requisite writing skills. Some scholars such as; Tileston (2003) believe that students poor writing skills is a result of the classroom based teaching practices prevalent in our schools. He says such practices require a great deal of intrinsic motivation to be effective. In Soroti district, where this research was carried out, majority of the teachers also largely conducts lessons in class and pay little attention to what the learners do out of class and yet the students have an opportunity to learn outside class when guided.

This indeed can be a reflection of the Ugandan Secondary Schools where classroom based teaching is now forming a greater part of the teaching. The poor writing skills as reflected in both National and Internal Assessments can be attributed to the now common absence of out-of-class activities (Nsibambi, 2000). The time tables in most schools are structured in such a way that the only time learners get out of class is during break, lunch and supper. Lessons are time tabled for night time as well as early morning, leaving students with virtually no time to learn outside the classroom. This could possibly be the reason why the Ministry of Education and Sports has already reviewed the Curriculum for Lower Secondary in order to allow learners have ample time to expose themselves to out-of-class activities and acquire the necessary competences. According to the current reforms, the lessons shall end at 2.00 p.m. and the rest of the time will be for individual/self-learning. Therefore, the current study sought to establish the bearing that exposure to out of class activities has on the development of learners' Writing Proficiency in selected Secondary Schools in Soroti District.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Teaching language is about equipping learners with competencies of using the skills of Writing, Reading, Listening and Speaking effectively to communicate in real life. Language users are expected to write various documents, make inquiries and seek for favors among others when they adhere to rules of usage. In Uganda, English is the official language and language of instruction in government offices, in Courts of Law, in Parliament, during State functions, and keeping of government records (The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995). According to the Executive Secretary, Uganda National Examinations Board, the ability of a candidate to understand the demands of questions in examination papers and offer adequate and appropriate responses to them depends a lot on their level of proficiency in English language (2017, UCE Performance Report).

However, reports from UNEB, (Uganda Certificate of Education, 2016 & 2017) respectively, Internal and External Mock Examinations indicate that the level of Candidates' Proficiency in English language is still a real challenge. Difficulties are always reported in the use of correct grammar, spellings and punctuation when writing compositions. In comprehension tasks, students cannot adequately place stories in context, a reflection of limited proficiency resulting from inadequate teaching and exposure. Worse still, students cram unusual expressions or passages from English language texts or what they call model compositions and then irrelevantly reproduce them in answers to English composition questions which are supposed to be original and imaginative or based on the candidate's real life experience. Such a practice portrays deficiency in language usage and mastery (New vision 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2018), an indication that the current classroom based teaching practices prevalent in our schools do not adequately address the language concerns of today's learners.

There was, therefore, a need to examine the role that out-of-class activities play in enhancing students' proficiency in the writing skill.

## **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the significance/role of out-of-class activities in improving the writing skill among Secondary school students in Soroti District.



## **1.4 Specific Objectives**

The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

- (i) To investigate whether learners are exposed to out-of-class activities in English language.
- (ii) To explore teachers and students' perceptions towards out-of-class activities in English language.
- (iii) To examine the impact of out of class activities on students' writing proficiency in English language.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- (iv) In what ways are learners in Secondary Schools exposed to out of class activities in English language?
- (v) What are the perceptions of teachers and students towards out of class activities in English language?
- (vi) What is the impact of out of class activities on students' writing proficiency in English language?

## **1.6 Scope of the Study**

This section presents the geographical, content and time scope.

### **1.6.1 Geographical Scope**

The study was carried out in four purposefully selected secondary schools in Soroti District, Eastern Uganda, Teso Sub-region. That district provided quite readily two types of schools the researcher was interested in namely: rural and urban. Two of the schools were rural based and the other two urban.

### **1.6.2 Content Scope**

The researcher was of the view that the English writing skill is important in the Ugandan setting since English is official language of communication. This prompted the researcher to investigate the significance of engaging learners in out-of-class activities and writing proficiency in selected schools in Soroti District. Senior three and four learners were considered appropriate for the study. This is because in the said classes, it is assumed that students have attained relatively

some degree of exposure to out of class activities which might develop their English proficiency. Consequently, the study was restricted to three key types of respondents: the students, the teachers and school administrators.

### **1.6.3 Time Scope**

With regards to the time scope, the researcher limited himself to a period of two school terms, more specifically, term three 2020 after partial lifting of the Covid-19 lockdown and term one 2021. The study also reviewed recent journals and studies in order to capture information related to exposure to out-of-class language activities and development of language proficiency.

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

The study is likely to benefit four categories of people:

- i) The teachers across the curriculum who are implementers will be able to make informed decisions on whether to use out of class activities or not in supplementing what students learn in class. They will therefore be better equipped to teach English language in harmony with the findings of the study.
- ii) Secondly, if indeed out of class activities help in developing Proficiency in Writing, then learners may benefit as they will be able to consciously transfer skills acquired from out of class to formal situations.
- iii) The Policy makers, Examining bodies and Curriculum developers may be able to formulate policies and a curriculum that caters for such learning needs.
- iv) The School Administrators and Board of Governors who are charged with the responsibility of formulating school policies will be able to accommodate such practices if the findings of the study have a positive impact in the development of the writing skills.

### **1.8 Justification of the Study**

In Uganda, most English language classroom instructions and activities adopt textbooks or pre-selected materials. While these materials provide valuable information to learners, students seem to have little interest in them. Students need to develop the ability to acquire information that is available both inside and outside the classroom context (Field, 2007). In a study by Nunan (1989), a majority of students found classroom instruction itself to be insufficient to the

development of English language competence/proficiency. On the other hand, engagement in outside classroom learning enhances their language developments, hence, demonstrating the need for teachers to incorporate activities outside the classroom for greater learning success since it addresses multiple needs and interests of learners and creates a variety of authentic English language inputs (Bas, 2008; Hillyard, Reppen, and Vasquez, 2007).

The emergence of social media today and Internet as a whole has greatly changed the way people learn languages for the better. Watching television programmes in English language and smart phone are already part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learner. There is, therefore, substantial evidence that confining learners to classroom environment alone is not enough to make them proficient in the language. Consequently, classroom teaching must be supplemented with informal learning in every day learning (Bybee & Hopper, 2001; Ellis, 2002; Ellis & Wulff, 2014). However, in Uganda, classroom based teaching and learning is the order of the day and this might be the reason why learners cannot perform satisfactorily at both internal and national examinations since they have limited exposure to activities outside class.

While traditional approaches do provide a solid foundation for effective teaching, it is important to understand that these techniques do not always address the students' current needs. The teachers of English language might need to re-think and align their strategies and approaches in line with the current trends to help address the prevailing challenges of writing deficiency among our learners. It was therefore important to undertake a study exploring the magnitude of learners' exposure to out of class activities and establishing the role such exposure plays in the development of Writing Proficiency in selected Secondary Schools in Soroti District.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a brief Theoretical Review and review of Literature related to exposure to Out-of-Class Activities and the Development of Learners' Writing Proficiency. It discusses findings by other scholars about learners' exposure to activities outside classroom. The work of other researchers has also been reviewed, their findings comparatively analyzed to appreciate the current state of knowledge and to identify research gaps which this study can contribute to.

#### 2.1 Theoretical Review

The study was guided by Piaget's (1896) theory of social interactions as stated by Baiju (2010). Piaget emphasized the importance of social interaction to intellectual development.

He saw interaction as the key to how we overcome the unpredictability of the symbols we individually construct. Piaget therefore tied the role of social interaction to the importance of language. He also tied the role of language in the development of conceptual and logical understandings. He made language an integral part of ideas on intellectual development. Piaget linked the role of social interaction in intellectual development to the role of language.

According to Piaget, language is inherently a social factor partly because of the conventional nature of words and this conventional nature of words is crucial for conceptual development. Piaget argued that formation of mental structures underlying feelings of logical necessity requires social interaction using a conventional sign system. Piaget theorized that language was simply one of children's ways of representing their familiar worlds, a reflection of thought, and that language did not contribute to the development of thinking. Cognitive development, he argued, proceeded that of Language (Baiju, 2010)

The **Social Interaction Theory** as advanced by **Jean Piaget** presents many areas of merit that exposure to language activities outside the classroom offers with regard to the development of Writing Proficiency hence rendering it very relevant to this particular study.

Piaget's theory (1896) which, as stated previously, provides part of the foundation for constructivist learning. Discovering learning and supporting development interests of the learners are primary instructional techniques. It is recommended that parents and teachers

challenge the child's abilities, but not present materials or information that is too far beyond the learners' level. It is also recommended that teachers use a wide variety of concrete experiences to help the students learn.

Piaget's theory states that children act on their own environment to learn. Through these social interactions, they move towards more individualized thinking. The co-constructed process involves people interacting during shared activities, usually to solve a problem (Woolfolk, A., 2004). When a learner receives help through exposure, he/she may be able to utilize better strategies in the future, should a similar problem arise, hence improving his English language proficiency. Piaget therefore encouraged discovery learning with little teacher interaction.

Piaget proposed that children progress through discovery methods and some social transmissions such as assimilations and accommodation (Woolfolk, A, 2004).

In today's diverse classroom, a teacher needs to be sensitive to her students' cultural background and language and be an active participant in knowledge construction. The theory of **Social Interaction**, therefore, as advocated for by Piaget suits this study.

## **2.2 Review of related Literature**

This review was done in relation to the Objectives of the Study to investigate the significance of exposure to out of class activities and development of students' Writing proficiency in selected Secondary schools in Soroti District.

### **2.2.1 Learners' Exposure to Out-of-Class Activities**

As either the student centered education or technology oriented system has taken power in foreign language teaching, the necessity of the students' ability to take responsibility for their learning has increased correspondingly. Similarly, Hsieh and Hsieh (2019) advocate the function of students in language teaching and their ability to control the learning process has gained popularity since the focal point of language teaching has changed from teacher-centered to learner-centered. In this respect, in class English engagement is not considered enough for acquiring the language proficiency, and most of the researchers have emphasized the significance of involvement in practicing English language outside the classroom independently

(Benson, 2013; Benson & Reinders, 2011; Grau, 2009; Nunan, 2012; Ranta, 2010; Sundqvist, 2009; Sundqvist & Sylven, 2016; Olsson, 2016).

According to Nunan (2012), the ones who can use opportunities to apply their language skills are defined as competent learners. Furthermore, he creates out of class activities for his students to engage them in their learning at least three hours a week consistently to either boost the language application or encourage them to manage out of school learning process. There is good evidence that formal class teaching is not enough for one to become proficient in a language and for this, formal teaching must be supplemented with informal learning in everyday setting (Bybee & Hopper, 2001, Ellis & Wulff, 2014). This is true for native speakers (L1 Speakers) as much as for people acquiring English as a second language (L2). For example, an average 18-years-old English L1 speaker knows 42 thousand uninflected words (lemmas) coming from 12 thousand word families (Brysbart, Stevens, Mandera, & Keuleers, 2016), meaning that they must have learned about seven new lemmas per day of their life. This learning rate is next to impossible on the basis of formal education alone. In addition, people who speak more than one language know thousands of words extra (Keuleers, Stevens, Mandera, & Brysbart, 2015; Laufer & Ravenhorst-Kalvoski, 2010). These again are unlikely to come exclusively from formal learning.

To examine informal learning, researchers have looked at how exposure to the language provides learning opportunities. A term often used in this context is *incidental language learning*, defined as ‘the ‘*picking up*’ of words and structures simply by engaging in a variety of communicative activities during which the learners’ attention is focused on the meaning rather than on form of the language (Hulstijn, 2003; p.349). Elgort, Brysbart, Stevens, & Van Assche (2018), however, argued that *Contextual language learning* maybe a better term because incidental learning suggests that it occurs by chance, as a result of an unrelated activity, and is often taken to mean the opposition deliberate verses accidental is not the only distinction between formal and informal learning. For that reason, Elgort et al (2018) proposed to use the intentionally-agnostic term contextual word (or language) learning, which we will do in this article as well.

Contextual vocabulary learning has also widely been examined in the learning of L2. Exposure to reading materials outside class, reading-while-listening and reading and/or listening with visual support on L2 acquisition (Brown Waring & Donkaewbua, 2008; Elgort et al., 20018;

Gullberg, Roberts & Dimroth, 2012; Horst, Cobb & Meara, 1998; Pellicer-Sanchez & Schmitt, 2010; Vidal, 2011, Bisson, Van Heuven, Conklin & Tunney, 2014; Webb, Newton & Chang, 2013). Overall findings show the importance of frequency of occurrence/ exposure with contextual language learning typically taking place after 8 or more occurrences when reading a text and the type of input (where it was found that multimodal input, combining for example Reading and Listening or Listening and visual support, leads to larger learning gains).

According to Little, (1991, p.3), autonomy of learners is considered crucial for language teaching and learning to be successful since it renders capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making and independent action. Learners must be autonomous in order to reach proficiency in a second or foreign language because they have a huge responsibility for Language learning. In a country like Uganda, where language learners do not have practice opportunities outside their classrooms and their learning is mostly limited to classrooms, it is imperative for learners to carry on their learning individually outside the class by conducting different language activities to reach a high level in the language they are learning (Benson 2001, p.62). Therefore, learners must be taught how they can go on their learning when there is no teacher around them. Learners have or schools have a variety of out-of-class language activities such as watching Television programs, videos, DVDs, listening to music, surfing the internet, reading books, Newspapers and magazines, Speaking with Natives or Non-natives on the internet etc.( Hyland, 2004; Lai and Gu, 2011).

Lefever (2010) measured English language proficiency in Icelandic eight-years-olds before the start of English instruction in school. Interviews with the parents of 10 children indicated that about half of the parents regularly used English at home. All parents said their children watched English programs on television, DVDs or films. Most of these materials were neither subtitled nor dubbed in Icelandic. Nearly all children were active users of computer games in English. In contrast, the parents reported that traditional print materials in English were not widely used, although parents of three children said their children read football magazines or cartoons in English. Lastly, all parents said their children listened to songs in English language on the radio, television or via the computer, for example on YouTube. One of the children had also learned English songs in the school choir.

In Uganda, most English language classroom instructions and activities adopt textbooks or pre-selected materials. While these materials provide valuable information to learners, students in secondary schools seem to have little interest in them. Textbooks often fail to achieve a meaningful level of involvement on the part of the learners; I need not to be confined to the classroom with set textbooks and practice (Griffiths & Keohane, 2000). Students need to develop the ability to acquire information that is available both inside and outside the classroom context (Field, 2007). In school, learning tends to be symbol-based, while out-of-school learning is more directly connected to events and objects in the physical worlds (Resnick, 1987).

### **2.2.2 Teachers' and Students' Perceptions towards Out –of-Class Activities**

Teachers and students have diverse views towards out of class activities. Benson (2013) states that numerous teachers agree on the idea that if learners incorporate in class knowledge into out of class practices, they make more progress in in class learning as well. Many studies have been carried out on learners' out of class language learning. Learners' beliefs have been a focal theme in much Research. Hyland (2004) investigated the out of class English language learning activities done by some students and their beliefs regarding these activities in Hong Kong and the results indicated that most of the students spent considerable time studying and practicing English language beyond the classroom, but much of this time was devoted to receptive activities like Listening and Reading. Also, the students preferred to be engaged in more private activities instead of classroom activities involving face to face contact.

Another research conducted on learner beliefs is by Manfred (2012) who aimed at examining learners' beliefs about language learning and out of class Language learning activities of young adult ESL learners in Hong Kong. Manfred (2012) put forward that learners are instrumentally motivated to keep learning outside the class in order to learn English language well, and activities for receptive skills were more popular than the ones for productive skills, which is similar to the findings of Hyland (2004). Maros and Saad (2016) very recently carried out a study in Malaysia in order to investigate their strategies outside the class to maintain their language learning process and concluded that students mostly watched television programmes or movies and made use of technology related tools to develop their proficiency in English language. Hence, students' needs, perceptions and Writing Proficiency levels should be sought first in order to offer them the required assistance.



Research on Students' perceptions and beliefs has revealed that knowing students perceptions and beliefs can play a crucial role in developing the right program to meet their needs, a clear indicator that teachers' approaches and practices should be able to meet the real needs and interests of the learners. Xuemei (2007) believes that students' beliefs might be partially demonstrated by the kinds of strategies teachers employ. Within the context of Saudi Arabia, Al-Hazmi (2006) looked at students' perceptions of the writing process through providing them with opportunities to continuously reflect on what they were doing. His main intention was to promote the writing beyond the classroom setting into a personal learning experience through continuous reflection and critical thinking. Moncrief (2011) conducted a study and found out that autonomy is significant in motivating learners and provides them with flexibility and personalized way of learning.

Besides, Erk et al. (2003 as cited in Waite, 2011) advocate that pleasure and independence in learning promote a better learning and Language use. Therefore, learners will remember those words quicker which they learnt in positive settings rather than the ones learnt in a negative (stressful) atmosphere. This is because when they employ English out of class, on their own not as an assigned task, they have fun and feel independent to make their choices. The necessity of students' ability to take responsibility for their learning has increased correspondingly. Similarly, Hsien and Hsien (2019) advocate that the function of students in language teaching has been changed from teacher centered to student centered and their ability to control the learning process has gained popularity and language learners can obtain the required for language acquisition skills and ultimately language proficiency.

Large exposure to English language materials outside class plays a significant role in English learning and teaching. It helps a lot as in such as learners have great opportunities to practice language outside the classroom. According to Council of Europe (2008, cited in Lilit Tonoian, 2014), it is important to create language-friendly living and learning environment, where different language learners are heard and seen, where speakers of all language feel welcome and language learning is encouraged. It is also stated that there is a clear difference between educational systems in the informal language learning opportunities available to pupils (such as pupils: Perceptions of their parents knowledge of the foreign language tested, individual trips

abroad, the use of dubbing or subtitles in the media and the pupils', exposure to the language through traditional and new media) (Lilit Tonoian, 2014).

Peer interaction and second language learning synthesize the existing body of research in second language learning. The potential of peer interaction to foster second language development cannot be underestimated (Musumeci, 1996; Nassaji & Wells, 2000). Having students interact with each other creates more practice opportunities (Loewen & Sato, 2018; Philip, Adams & Iwashita, 2014; Sato & Ballinger, 2016).

In Second Language Acquisition (SLA), there is growing awareness that the social context of a group is a crucial factor in ways that students engage in language tasks, including age and proficiency (Philip, Adams, & Iwashita, 2013). Although traits related to leadership have been considered (DE Ornyei & Kormos, 2000; Storch, 2002).

The majority of interactions in the language classroom occur between nonnative speakers working in dyads or small groups. Philip et al. (2013) provided a comprehensive review of the literature investigating peer interaction. They highlighted the role of interaction in language learning and discussed individual difference known to influence the process. He found that students' attitudes towards interaction predicted the way in which they engaged in tasks and their subsequent language development. Philip et al. (2013) devoted a chapter of their book to the social dimension of peer interaction, claiming that it was important, but admitted that "*to date, there has been very little L2 (second language) research of pair and group dynamics*" (p.100).

Learners participating in peer-focused learning also perceive it to enhance their knowledge of literacy, along with critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Hurst, Wallace, & Nixon, 2013). Yet peer-focused learning is often not used outside of oral conversational tasks (Philip, Adams, & Iwashita, 2014), and it is rarely implemented in language classrooms. Findings from previous research have suggested that peer interaction is an optimal L2 learning environment when learners engage in interactive feedback (Adams, 2017; Sato & Lyster, 2012), practice their language use (Mackey, 2012; Philip, Adams, & Iwashita, 2014), and co-construct L2 knowledge during interaction at promoting L2 learning have been identified, of which proficiency has

attracted much attention from both L2 instructors and researchers (Philip et al., 2014; Sato & Ballinger, 2016).

Proficiency has been shown to affect learners' discussion of Language from (i.e., Language-related episodes or LREs) and their pair dynamics. It has been found that language learners involved in collaborative writing attended to linguistic forms more cautiously and were therefore more successful in using new and accurate language forms (Philip, Adams, & Iwashita, 2014). This is enhanced by students' opportunity to use individual members' editing skills (Alley, 1996). This data gives a clear indication that students collaborating to reconstruct a dictated text are more likely to increase the level of language used in their writing. This lends credence to previous research findings indicating that collaborating students are more careful with language use (Philip, Adams, & Iwashita, 2014) prompting them to edit and proofread more carefully (Alley, 1996). Collectively, these likely helped students in this study compose more sophisticated texts of a higher proficiency level.

The current Curriculum review/reforms by the Ministry of Education and Sports in aimed at scaffolding the role of peer interaction in learning. According to the current reforms, learners are expected to study up to 2:00 pm and the rest of the time is left for meaningful interaction which is expected to foster competences and skills in them.

### **2.2.3 Impact of Out-of-Class Activities on Students' Writing Proficiency in English language.**

Studies looking into the effects of out-of-school exposure on English language learning have looked at different types of exposure: reading, watching television (with and without subtitles), listening to music, gaming, and use of Social Media. Other studies have looked learning words from films. Two studies by B'ydwalle and Van de Poel (1999) and Koolstra and Bexetjes (1999) showed that children can learn vocabulary through watching a short, subtitled movie. In a more recent study by Peters and Webb (2018) adults were shown a single full-length television program and again contextual learning of vocabulary occurred. These studies prove that new vocabulary can be acquired in a foreign language by watching television in that language (with or without subtitles in the mother tongue). Lai, Zhu, and Gong (2015) and Sundqvist (2011) assert that language proficiency is completely related to the learning outside the classroom, and

Benson, Chik and Lim( 2003) and Borrero and Yeh (2010) (as cited in Lai, Zhu &Gong, 2015) state that proficient Language students normally use all opportunities for out of Class learning.

According to the findings of several studies, Swedish ninth graders vocabulary and oral proficiency level is positively affected by out of class activities such as reading books, reading newspapers/magazines, watching television, watching films, surfing the internet, playing video games, listening to music(Sundqvist, 2009, p.7). In the Finnish case, Ranta (2010) highlights the significance of out of class English in authentic environments based on the research among upper secondary school students and English teachers attitudes. Furthermore, Sargsyan and Kurghinyan (2016) state that the Armenian EFL students employ English outside the classroom mostly via social media, listening to music, watching films, traveling, and surfing on the internet respectively.

Chan (2016) conducted an in depth qualitative research including six competent secondary school learners engaging in out of class activities and found that the in class performance and out of class activities influence each other positively. Bialystok (1981), who first emphasized the significance of language practice in authentic environments beyond the school walls, underlined the phenomenon of functional language which incorporates into communication activities. Also, she expressed the opinion that authentic situations provoke the most effective functional practice occurring out of class. Additionally, Bialystok's functional practice is compared to extramural English in Lancasters (2018) research.

Borrero and Yeh (2010, as cited in Lai, Zhu & Gong, 2015), Lai and Gu (2011), Nunan and Richards(2015), Sylven (2006), as well as Piirainen-Marsh (2009) state that proficient language learners are regularly involved in activities outside the classroom in natural settings. In addition, Victori and Lockhart (1995) and Wenden (2001) claim that the exposure to out of class activities enhances the cognition of foreign language learning and encourages the students to continue learning.

De Wilde, Brysbaert and Eyckmans (2020) conducted a survey with 780 Dutch-speaking children aged 10 to 12 concerning language learning activities in order to investigate the degree of EFL secondary school students' language engagement outside the classroom and factors

affecting involvement in informal learning. According to the results, gaming, social media and chatting were found the most useful forms of input identified as interactive activities.

Maros and Saad (2016) studied a Malaysian out-of-class English case. They discovered that students practice English mostly through watching movies and television programmes, and technological tools such as: Internet, online dictionaries, spelling or grammar checkers. Additionally, language learning strategies training could be utilized to promote students' ability to create their learning setting outside the classroom and to become lifelong learners (Bala & Bala, 2018). These learning activities outside classroom contribute to the increase of language proficiency.

On the other hand, there are some hindering factors that discourage students to use English in real settings. Shvidko, Evans and Hartshorn (2015) conducted a study revealing ESL students' perspectives about hampering factors affecting L2 use outside of the classroom ( poor language ability, habit for translating L2 into L1, etc.), individual( personality types and motivation), and psychological( affective factors) reasons that prevent learners from applying L2 Out-of-Class.

Overall, the application of foreign language in authentic environments promotes the learners' linguistic and communicative skills ( Tavakoli, Shakeri & Granbarzadeh, 2016). Richards (2015) defines in class learning and out of class practice as two significant elements of second language learning. He asserts that what is done as teaching inside the classroom is to help the students use the language in real settings.

Munoz (2011) conducted a study with university students in Spain, which focused on the effect of input in L2 learning. Input was measured in terms of the cumulative amount of hours since the start of instruction but also the time spent in an immersion situation and informal contact with the language (through watching television and films, writing e-mails in English, reading extended texts and other types of exposure) were measured. Correlation analysis revealed that both exposure through immersion ( $r = 3.4$ ) and informal language contact were better predictors for the participants' level of English language proficiency than the starting age of instruction ( $r = 0.4$ ), thus illustrating the importance of linguistically rich contact with native speakers.

Another study by Gonzalez Fernandez & Schmitt (2015), conducted with adult Spanish Learners of English also investigated the relationship between knowledge of certain collocations and learners' engagement with English language through different media (reading, watching films, television, video, listening to music, social networking) and found significant positive correlations between nearly all types of exposure (except for listening) and the results on a collocation test.

A study by Peters (2018) with two groups of Dutch-speaking teenagers (ages 15-16 and age 19) which investigated the effect of out-of-school exposure (through listening to music, watching television and movies with and without subtitles, computer games, books, magazines and the internet) on learners' vocabulary knowledge also showed that a larger amount of the variance was explained by out-of-school exposure (13%) than by length of instruction (7%), again illustrating the impact of out-of-School exposure.

Kuppens (2010) looked into the effects of exposure through different media on children's L2 acquisition. She investigated the effects of different types of media exposure on children's translation skills (English-Dutch, Dutch-English) before the start of formal English instruction. Although the scope of this study is limited because it used a test that only looked at children's knowledge of a few (8 English and 8 Dutch) very common expressions (e.g. I love you, watch out!), it is often cited for being the first to reveal that children benefit from watching subtitled English television programs and movies. The scores on the English-Dutch translation test were also positively related to the time children spent on gaming.

Correlations were found between out-of-class experiences and educational gains among students: These gains included complexity of cognition such as critical thinking and intellectual flexibility, growth in knowledge acquisition and application, humanitarianism, interpersonal and intrapersonal competence and practical competence. (Kuh, Douglas, land, & Ramin-Gyurnek, 1994) out-of-class activities can also foster language acquisition among EFL learners. Hyland (2004) noted significance of-class class learning of English based on a study with 208 student teachers and 20 primary teachers in Hong Kong. Successful language learners were found to engage in various English activities outside the classroom the immense benefit of out-of-class

activities should lead institutions to use available resources to create opportunities inside and out of school to accelerate students' learning.

Out-of-class language learning addresses multiple needs and interests of students and creates a variety of authentic English language inputs (Bas, 2008, Hillyard, Reppen, & Vasques, 2007). The adoption of out-of-class activities encourages students to move out of the classroom into the real world and helps to bridge the gap between language study and language use since it allows teachers and students to move beyond the limitations of a traditional English curriculum (Foss. Carney, McDonald, & Rocks, 2007). Engaging students in out-of-class offers the significant benefit of expanding the students' learning environment. Realizing that their normal surroundings and activities offer meaningful opportunities to learn English language is a key to spark interest and increase motivation to learn. Out-of-class activities are also linked with real life applications and this connection is key to fostering more authentic language usage and autonomy.

#### **2.2.4 Research Gaps**

From the above overview of Literature on the topic of Exposure outside the Classroom and Development of Learners' Language Proficiency, it is clear that a lot of emphasis has been placed on documenting the role it plays in enhancing students' language proficiency in Iceland, Spain, Dutch speaking students among others. In Soroti District, in particular, no literature is documented about the role of exposure to out of class activities in enhancing learners' writing proficiency. This study therefore sought to explore the issue of learners' exposure to activities outside the formal classroom learning in Ugandan context, specifically in selected Secondary schools in Soroti District since there is no written literature about it locally.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

This Chapter focuses on the research design, study population, sample size and selection, sampling techniques and procedure, data collection methods and instruments, data analysis and measurement of variables, data quality control and data analysis that was used in the study.

#### 3.1 Research Design

According to Creswell (2013), research design refers to the overall strategy that one chooses to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby, ensuring it will effectively address the research problem. It constitutes the plan for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data.

The research was carried out using **mixed method research design**. This design collects and analyses data collected from a population, or a representative subset, at a specific point in time. This design was considered appropriate for the study because: it is used to prove and or disapprove assumptions; it is not costly to perform and does not require a lot of time. It also captures phenomena in a specific point in time and contains multiple variables at the time of the data collection. It also uses different method to collect data on the same subject, which makes the results for credible and therefore strengthens the validity of the study conclusions.

The study used both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative approach was based on variables measured with numbers and analyzed with statistical procedures (Creswell, 2013; Sekran, 2011). The quantitative research approach sought to measure the extent of the phenomenon in terms of the quantitative variables, hence determining the relationship between the variables in the study. The use of qualitative research approaches helped to bring in the experience, social, behavioral and cultural aspects of the respondents into the study. The researcher believed that this approach would be appropriate for informing the study with the relevant information.



### **3.2 Area of Study**

The study was carried out in four purposefully selected secondary schools in Soroti District in Eastern Uganda, Teso Sub-region. The rationale for the choice of the four purposefully selected Secondary Schools in Soroti District was because they provided quite readily the two types of schools the researcher was interested in namely; rural and urban. Secondly the researcher has worked for over ten years in the stated district and has observed keenly the practices involved in the teaching and learning of the writing skill.

### **3.3 Study Population**

The target population in the study included teachers of English language, school administrators and learners in the four selected Secondary schools in Soroti District. The respondents were selected from both rural and urban schools; two from rural and 2 urban schools. The 2 urban schools are purely boarding while the rural schools are day.

This choice gave a fair representation of the Secondary schools in Soroti District in finding out how exposure to Out-of-Class activities may impact on learners' writing proficiency.

### **3.4 Sampling Technique**

In order to ensure representation of the samples, a Simple random approach and purposive approach were used. Simple random approach was applied to the senior four and two learners since it gave them an equal chance of participating in the study. Senior two students are assumed to have attained some degree of exposure to activities outside class and it is also a class that provides a foundation in the secondary education cycle, while the purposive design was applied to teachers of English and school administrators. Purposive sampling approach enabled them to participate in the study since they had vital information which was deemed important in the study.

### **3.5 Sample Size**

The Study sample consisted of 15 teachers of English language, 05 Administrators and 206 learners from Senior two and four selected from four secondary schools in Soroti District. The teachers and school Administrators were purposively sampled. The teachers were purposively sampled because they are teachers of English language and therefore have the experience in the

teaching of the Writing skill. The learners were selected through Simple random sampling having determined the sample size using Morgan and Krejcie's table.

**Table 3.1: Sample Size Population and size of the learners and teachers/administrators**

<b>Category of Respondents</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Sample size</b>	<b>Sampling procedures</b>
Teachers of English and Administrators	30	20	Purposive Sampling
Students from 4 schools	271	206	Simple Random Sampling
<b>Total</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>226</b>	

### **3.6 Data Collection Instruments**

The study adopted questionnaire, interview, document analysis, observation guide and English assessment test and Focus Group Discussion. In short, this was a triangulation.

#### **3.6.1 Data Collection using Questionnaires to Students**

The questionnaire was designed in accordance with the Objectives of the Study. Some of the questionnaires were close-ended while others were open-ended. Close-ended questionnaires were used because they are useful in capturing a range of variables and are easy to analyze using SPSS (Dawson, 2009:31). On the other hand, open-ended questionnaires provided room for respondents to generate descriptive answers as they feel proper (Dawson, 2009:31). According to Amin (2005), questionnaires are advantageous because information can be obtained easily and the questionnaires responses are easily coded. However, the major weaknesses of questionnaires are that they do not provide detailed information to the problem and this was why they were substantiated by interviews.

#### **3.6.2 Interview Guide**

The interview guide was structured to comprise a set of issues on which the researcher wished to draw data and this was specifically for the teachers and administrators. The researcher

interviewed the respondents face to face to in order to probe for detailed information regarding exposure to English language activities outside the classroom and the development of learners' proficiency in English language in Soroti District.

The interview guide was also prepared in accordance with the objectives of the study. According to Mugenda & Mugenda (1999), interviews are advantageous in that they provide exhaustive data which is unlikely to be got using questionnaires.

### **3.6.3 English Assessment Test**

The researcher designed and administered a written test to the sampled group of students and the test was marked and the scores given. That helped the researcher determine their level of proficiency in English language, specifically the writing skill.

### **3.6.4 Focus Group Discussion**

The researcher Engaged Focus Group Discussion guides to explore the students and teachers' perceptions towards out of Class Activities in Soroti District. In the four selected Secondary Schools, four discussion groups were selected. Each group had an average number of 10 students whose findings represented the rest of their classmates in the study. The Focus Group information was guided, monitored and recorded. The result captured gave the researcher an opportunity to understand the students' experiences and beliefs towards Out-of-Class.

The group narratives also facilitated the researcher to clarify extent and qualify how exposure to activities outside class impacted their proficiency in the writing skill.

### **3.6.5 Observation Checklist**

An observation checklist is a list of things that the researcher or observer looks at when observing a particular element during the Study (Cres Welman, Kruger & Mitchel, 2011). While Berge (1986) indicates that observation is one of the most common ways to find out about things. The lesson observation checklist included key areas like the practices employed by teachers in class, learners' involvement and facilities that determine a successful lesson. Gall et al, (2007) asserts that observation provides rich data sources that offer an in depth explanation of the study. Therefore, the researcher was of the view that the data sought here was triangulated with data derived from interviews and questionnaires.

### 3.6.6 Documentary Review

Documentary review is a qualitative research method for collecting secondary data. It was used for examining and studying written documents. This method is cost effective and is believed to have data which has strong validity. The documentary analysis made it possible for the researcher to study the approaches teachers use to teach English language writing skill in Selected Secondary schools in Soroti District. The documents that were relevant to this study were schemes of work, lesson plans for the teachers and Uganda National Examinations Board results for the last five years (2016-2019). These documents were intended to provide data about the practices involved in the teaching of the writing skill and the final grades.

### 3.7 Data Quality Control

#### 3.7 .1 Validity

Validity is the degree to which an instrument measures what it purports to measure (Carolel et al, 2008: 278). It ensures that an instrument used in the research is accurate, correct, true, meaningful and right. Validity of instruments was ascertained by first discussing the questionnaire and interview schedule guide and observation guide with the supervisor. The researcher also executed a pilot study before the actual research. The following formula was used to test the Content Validity Index (CVI) as indicated by Denise F. Pout (2006:493).

$$\text{CVI} = \frac{\text{Number of items regarded relevant by researcher}}{\text{Total number of items}}$$

Validity of the instrument was ensured when the validity value computed is 0.5 above (Amin, 2005). According to Creswell (2013), the Content Validity greater than 0.7 means that the research instrument is valid. From the study, the research instrument had 60 items and only 51 were rated relevant to the study. This resulted into a **CVI** of 0.79. Validity of the instrument was therefore ensured since the validity value computed was 0.79 which is greater than 0.7.

**Table 3.2: Degree of Accuracy (Construct Validity Test)**

Mean Range	Interpretation
Below 0.50	Not acceptable
0.50-0.699	Acceptable
0.70-0.7799	Good
0.80-0.899	Great
Above 0.90	Superb

*Source: Denise F. Pout (2006:493).*

### 3.7.2 Reliability

Reliability of the research instrument refers to the degree to which the research instruments are free from error and therefore yield consistent results. If a measurement device or producer constantly gives the same score to individuals or objects with equal values, the instrument is considered reliable. Reliability involves the consistency, or reproducibility, of test scores i.e. the degree to which one can expect relatively constant deviation scores of individuals across testing situations on the same, or parallel, testing instruments (Ganesh, 2014:2). This was done by conducting a Pilot Study.

According to Cohen and Morrison (2013), a Pilot Study is a small scale version or trial run in preparation for the major study. A small Pilot study was conducted using the questionnaire to test for its reliability before carrying out the major study in order to ensure reliability of the research instrument. In this study, 15 respondents were randomly selected and asked to comment on clarity, bias, ambiguity, of which the researcher personally called 5 respondents for interview.

Reliability of the three sets of **SAQs** on all variables was tested using the Cronbach's Alpha Moment Co-efficient provided by **SPSS** (Zikmund et al., 2013).

Cronbach's Alpha is given as  $\alpha = \frac{k}{k-1} \left( 1 - \frac{\sum SD^2 i}{SD^2 t} \right)$

**Where:-**

**K**=the number of items

$\sum SD^2i$  =the variance of the total instrument

$SD^2t$  = the variance of individual items

### **3.8 Research Procedure**

The researcher obtained an introductory letter from College of Education and External Studies, Makerere University which he used to introduce himself to the head teachers seeking permission to carry out the study in their respective schools. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires, interviewed the teachers and conducted Focus Group Discussion in the selected Secondary schools in Soroti District.

### **3.9 Data Analysis**

#### **3.9.1 Analysis of Quantitative Data**

Quantitative data analysis involved use of descriptive analysis in the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS 20). Descriptive statistics entailed determination of measures of central tendency such as mean and percentages; measures of dispersion such as standard deviation, and variance. The investigator searched for patterns of data in form of recurrent events which were interpreted. Data from the interviews was presented in comprehensive tables showing the responses of each category of variables.

The frequency and percentage distribution was used to determine the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the level of agreement and disagreement towards the questionnaires. While the mean and standard deviations was applied for the various levels the relationship between the stated variables was evaluated using Pearson's correlation co-efficient. The correlation co-efficient took a value between -1 and 1, with 1 or -1 demonstrating perfect correlation. A positive correlation expresses a positive association between the variables while a negative correlation signposts a negative association between the variables. A relationship value close to 0 indicates no association between the variables. A multiple correlation co-efficient was used to test. The hypothesis on correlation at 0.05 level of significance using a t-test. The regression analysis R<sup>2</sup> (co-efficient of determination) was computed to determine the influence of the Dependent Variables on the Independent Variables.

The following mean range was used to arrive at the mean of the individual indicators and interpretation

### **Use of descriptive statistics**

The stated variables were analyzed using descriptive statistics of responses categorized as followed.

**Table 3.3: Descriptive Statistics**

<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>
1	2	3	4	5

Using descriptive statistics, the mean values of 3 and beyond signify high levels of agreement with the statement while mean values of less than 3 mean high levels of disagreement with the matching statements as per the questionnaires.

### **3.9.2 Analysis of Qualitative Data**

As pointed out by David R Thomas (2003:1), qualitative data was descriptive and was arranged in accordance with the Objectives of the Study. This type of data was used to back up the quantitative data. Qualitative data analysis entails working with data in form of words, non-numerical, organizing it and discovering what its value is, and deciding what to tell other people edited to ensure accuracy in recording and consistency in information given by respondents, themes were identified and coded. A verbatim transcription of utterances was produced after having carefully listened to the interview recordings. A scheme of analysis was worked out following the coding categories, using questions and most occurring ideas.

### **3.10 Ethical Considerations**

The researcher took into consideration a number of ethical issues including:

- i. Confidentiality of respondents was kept-they were not required to reveal their names nor their contacts on the questionnaires. Identification numbers were used instead of names to avoid information given being traced to a respondent.
- ii. All data gathered was used only for the purpose of this study and nothing else.

- iii. The researcher procedures were explained to all respondents before they took part in the research and their informed consent obtained.
- iv. All the sources of literature were acknowledged all through the whole study through proper citations and referencing.
- v. Personal bias was avoided during the entire study i.e. during interviews, data analysis and reporting.

### **3.11 Limitations of the Study**

- i. In view of the following threats to validity, the researcher claimed an allowable 5% margin of error at 0.05 level of significance.
- ii. The research instrument may not be standardized. Therefore, a validity and reliability test was done to produce a credible measurement of the research variables.
- iii. The use of research assistants can bring about inconsistency in the administration of the questionnaires in terms of administration, understanding of the items in the questionnaire and explanations given to the respondents. To minimize this threat, the research assistants were first oriented and briefed on the procedures to be done in data collection.
- iv. Not all questionnaires may be returned neither completely answered nor even retrieved back due to circumstances on the part of the respondents such as travels, sickness, hospitalization and refusal/ withdrawal to participate. In anticipation to this, the researcher reserved more respondents by exceeding the minimum Sample size. The respondents were also reminded not to leave any item in the questionnaires unanswered and were closely followed up to the date of retrieval.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter consists of the presentation and analysis of the research findings in line with the objectives stated in chapter one;

- (i) To investigate whether learners are exposed to out of class activities.
- (ii) To explore teachers and students' perceptions towards out-of-class activities.
- (iii) To examine the impact of out of class activities on students' Writing Proficiency.

The findings were generated through documentary analysis, interviews, observation, focus group discussions and filling of questionnaires in the schools randomly chosen for the study. The data is presented in easy to understand, descriptive and graphical representations in tables and pie charts. Since both quantitative and qualitative data gathering techniques were used, both approaches to data analysis and presentation were applied. For quantitative data, the computer software SPSS version 20 was used. Qualitative data on the other hand was analyzed using the Denzin qualitative data analysis methods attached in appendix.

#### 4.1 Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

The respondents in this study were drawn from four schools randomly selected from schools found in Soroti District, in Teso region. The following presentation outlines the nature of these schools and the general demographic characteristics of the respondents. The table below shows the types of the schools the respondents in the study belong to.

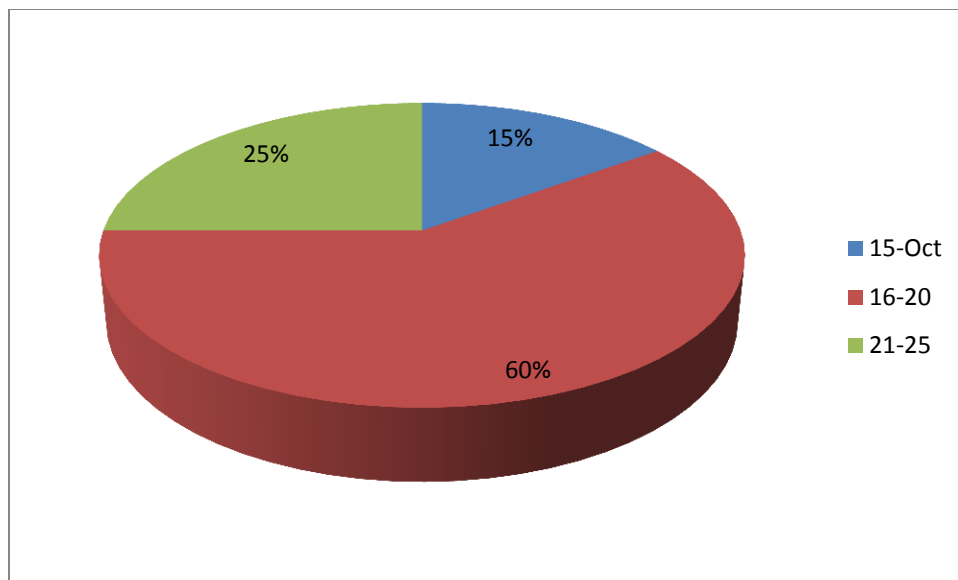
**Table 4.1.1: The nature of the schools**

<b>School</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Location</b>
School A	Boarding	Mixed	Urban
School B	Boarding	Single	Urban
School C	Day	Mixed	Rural
School D	Boarding	Mixed	Rural

*Source: Primary Data (March, 2021)*

Table 4.1.1 shows that four schools were chosen for the study based on their characteristics, that is, boarding or day, mixed or single sex and finally rural or urban. All the 12 schools in Soroti District, Teso region were categorized and then selected randomly ensuring that all the strata are represented in the sample. The age of the respondents was also captured as shown in the figure below.

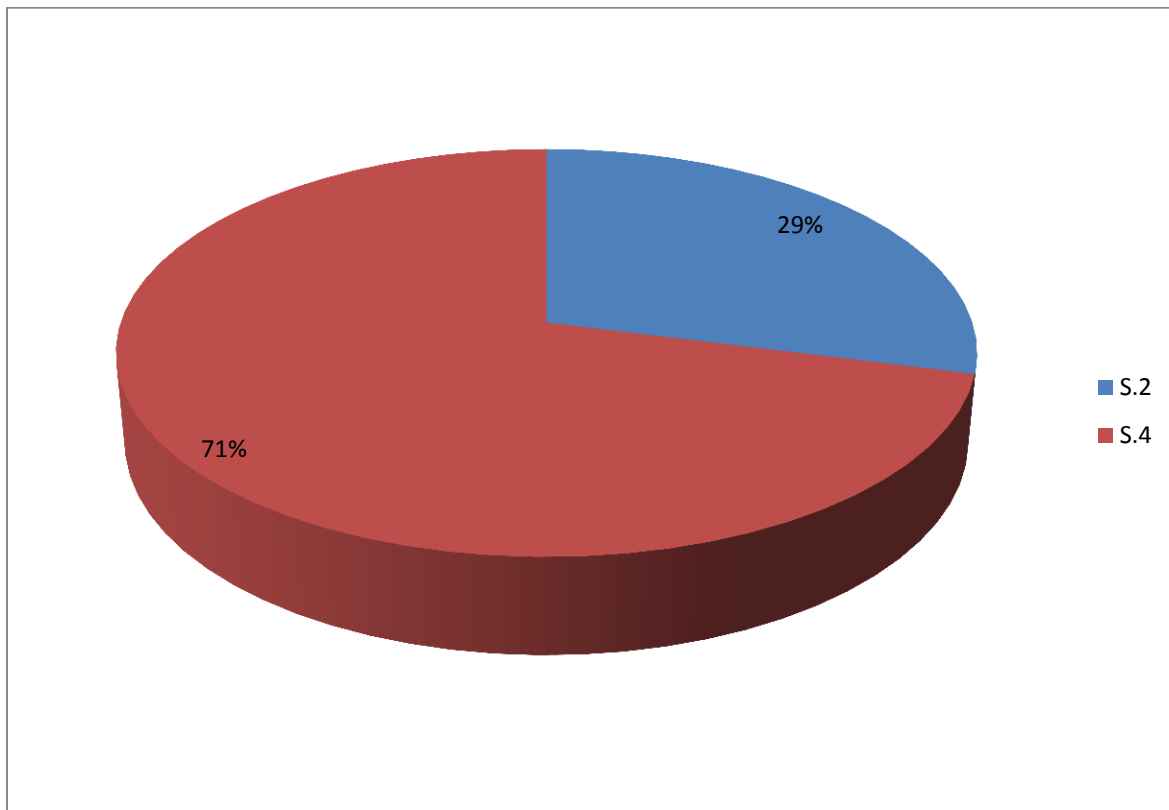
**Figure 4.1.1: The percentage distribution of respondents (students) by age group**



*Source: Primary Data (2021)*

Figure 4.1.1 shows that out of the 226 students who participated in the study 136 (60%) the majority are in the age bracket of 16-20, followed by those in the age bracket of 21-25, who correspond to 25% of the respondents. Only 15% were in the younger bracket of 10 to 15 years. This is a true reflection of the ordinary level students that the study focused on, many of whom are teenagers between 16-20 years.

**Figure 4.1.2: The percentage distribution of respondents (students) by class**



*Source: Primary Data (2021)*

Figure 4.1.2 shows that 71% of the respondents were in senior four and 29% in senior two. This implies that majority of the respondents were senior four student. This study further revealed that senior four students dominate ‘O’ Level schools in Soroti district. This finding means that study respondents were educated and day right target to be able to understand items in the questionnaires and other research instruments that were used in this study and therefore gave well-judged and informed responses about the role of exposure in enhancing language proficiency.

#### **4.2 Profile of the focus groups**

Focus group discussions proved to be the icebreakers during the data collection process. Through these discussions, it became easy to identify individuals with information necessary for the study and they were subsequently followed up with one-on-one interviews. While it was easy to get the

required number of focus group member among students in all the schools sampled for the study, this was not the case with teachers given their busy schedules. Barifajo et al., (2010) recommend a maximum of 8 participants in a focus group discussion citing the disadvantages of groups larger than 8. The following table outlines the profile of the focus groups.

**Table 4.2.1: The Profile of the focus groups**

SCHOOL	STUDENTS		TEACHERS		
	S.2	S.4	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL
SCHOOL A	8	8	2	0	2
SCHOOL B	8	8	3	4	7
SCHOOL C	8	8	4	4	8
SCHOOL D	7	8	3	0	3

*Source: Field Data*

Table 4.2.1 above shows that a total of 11 focus group discussions were held. Four discussions were held with students of senior two. Another four were held with students of senior four. Three focus group discussions were held with teachers in schools A, B and C. No Focus Group Discussion was held with teachers in school D because the school administration turned down the researcher's request citing teachers' commitment/engagement in other equally demanding school activities.

In mixed schools, effort was made to have an equal number of boys and girls forming the groups. There were proportionately more males than females. This therefore implies that majority of the respondents were male. This finding is not surprising because basing on the gender division of education dynamics since pre-colonial days, the education opportunity is given to the male than female. This finding also implies that the study results reflected the views of both categories of gender though there was gender imbalance in the distribution of the respondents.

**Table 4.2.2: The Profile of the Interviewees**

<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>NO. OF STUDENTS</b>	<b>NO. OF TEACHERS</b>
SCHOOL A	3	2
SCHOOL B	3	3
SCHOOL C	3	2
SCHOOL D	3	1

*Source: Researcher, 2021*

Table 4.2.2 above shows the profile of those who were interviewed on a one-on-one basis. In total, 12 students were followed up and interviewed. The teachers interviewed were 8 in number. In order to identify the students and the teachers to be interviewed, the researcher took keen interest in how they participated during Focus Group Discussions. Those who expressed their very personal experiences were scheduled for one-on-one interviews. When the responses being given by each subsequent interviewee became repetitive, the researcher did not interview others, but went ahead to analyze the data collected (Seliger, 1989)

#### **4.3 Presentation of data on how learners in selected Secondary schools are exposed to Out-of-Class Activities**

The first objective of the study was to establish how learners in the selected Secondary schools are exposed to out of class activities. This objective was achieved through questionnaires, interviews, documentary analysis, Focus Group Discussions and observation. The findings obtained from the questionnaires are summarized in table 4.3.1 below;

**Table 4.2.3: Ways learners in selected Secondary schools in Soroti District are exposed to Out-of-Class Activities**

No.	Item	N	S	ST	O	AA	Mean
1.	Reading newspapers and magazines	15	18	27	26	12	3.0094
2.	Reading books and articles in English language	14	12	29	23	22	3.2783
3.	Reading novels comics short stories	11	14	20	28	58	3.4670
4.	Articles and blogs	18	19	20	19	22	3.0900
5.	Papers on line	19	10	22	26	22	3.2075
6.	Watch TV	8	13	32	24	24	3.4233
7.	Watch films	10	10	24	33	24	3.5023
8.	Listen to news	14	11	22	20	34	3.4766
9.	Listen to songs	12	11	21	29	28	3.5023
10.	Speaking to fellow students in English	9	14	29	30	19	3.3738
11.	Speaking on phone in English	15	15	15	30	25	3.3411
12.	Watching videos on YouTube	16	7	21	23	26	3.4010
13.	Internet usage/access at school	17	10	16	26	25	3.3417
14.	Following lyrics of songs in English	16	11	18	25	22	3.2714
15.	Writing emails in English	19	10	19	24	21	3.1980
16.	Social media (whatsapp, facebook, instagram)	13	12	19	26	23	3.3668
17.	Listening to radio programmes in English	7	15	26	32	13	3.3015
18.	Family friends	8	11	31	24	19	3.3668
19.	Playing video games	16	7	19	26	24	3.5909
20.	Interaction with native speakers	15	11	27	22	18	3.1759

*Source: Primary data (December, 2021)*

From Table 4.2.3 above, when respondents were asked whether they read newspapers and magazines in English language, the percentage distribution on the subject was all through below average. This implies they are not exposed to those reading materials at home and school. Deep mean analysis showed that magnitude of the respondents did not read news and magazines in English language (M=3.00). Therefore, there was a considerable low level of exposure to out of

class activities among students in Soroti District and yet Newspapers and magazines are an important form of mass media which plays a vital role in every individual's life. During an interview with one of the school administrators on whether they expose their learners to out-of-class activities, his response was:

*“We try to provide reading materials in our school library but the students are reluctant to read them. Their reading culture is poor.”*

In addition to being a source of pleasure for its readers, newspapers and magazines can be considered as the basic prototype of today's modern socialization tools. Newspapers and magazines connect individuals to their local society and other foreign societies as well. This possibly explains why their performance in English language is not satisfactory because of lack of exposure to out-of-class activities.

According to interview conducted, teachers and administrators too stressed the importance of learners using newspapers and magazines as tool to English language proficiency.

*“We do give them an opportunity to learn outside class by encouraging them to always read a lot, for example Newspapers, literature books in the school library, and when there is time watch television in order to help supplement what teachers give them in class.”*

In most cases, they also enjoy learning when they are alone because they do not have any restrictions. Learning is done in authentic environment and they own the learning/take charge of their learning. Hsieh and Hsieh (2019) advocate for the function of students in language teaching and learning and their ability to control the learning process. Nunan (2012) also believes learners can use opportunities outside class to become proficient language users. This is therefore in agreement with words the teachers and school administrators believe in.

When the respondents were asked to state whether they read academic books and articles in English language. Mean results (M=3.27), revealed that students read academic books and articles in English language during out of class activities. One of the best ways to help students increase their language proficiency is to encourage students to read extensively. Free voluntary reading or sustained independent reading results in better reading comprehension, writing style, vocabulary, spelling, and grammatical development. Students reading more English books

experienced significantly greater improvement in reading ability and vocabulary knowledge than those who read less. Extensive reading program helps them to improve their English.

*“When I read novels and other articles in English language, they help me overcome my mistakes in English and I am able to relate it to my daily life and generally what happens in society.”*

Extensive reading academic books and articles in English language is not only more pleasurable, but also beneficial for language acquisition rather than rely on grammar instructions in classroom alone.

The study showed that reading novels, comic and short stories in English language was good (M=3.46). Furthermore, such items are looked at as vehicles of literacy that deliver knowledge to all individuals matching all differences of education, age, social class and other interests. Some would think of them as a true documentation of nations' history as they offer vivid snapshots of different aspects of a societal life whether economic, social, religious, educational or political.

Study feedback about reading article and blogs in English language indicated positive response (M=3.09). Respondents agreed that they read news online in English language (M=3.20) which indicated that exposure to out of class activities among students in Soroti District was good. A good number of respondents specified that they watched TV programmes with subtitles, videos and movies in English language (M=3.42) Respondents also answered positively that they watched films in English language at cinema (M=3.50).

It is a fact that technology is in every part of our lives affect most aspects of our daily work as they have produced changes in every sphere of society including education. Moreover, they help learners enhance their language abilities. There are many benefits to using communication technologies as an educational tool. This avenue can be categorized into the so-called learning resources, which include educational software, online resources, and video resources. Therefore, extensive listening or extensive viewing represents one of the ways how foreign language learners can develop their language skills. In this respect, one of the administrators said,

*“If we continue teaching students inside class alone, then we are missing a point. If we teach the children of today the same way we taught yesterday, we shall robe them of tomorrow. Teachers need to invent new approaches to facilitate effective teaching and learning of the second language.”*



A big proportion (M=3.47) of the respondents replied that they listened to news in English language. This was realized among respondents largely in day schools. For those in boarding schools, some restrictions are in place.

*“In our school, radios are not allowed. Even television we only watch during weekends and students enjoy watching football and music.”*

(M=3.50%) of the respondents replied that they listened to songs in English language. Further analysis revealed that (M=3.37) of the respondents acknowledged speaking with fellow students in English language. (M=3.34) responded that they talked on phone in English language and (M=3.40) of the respondents replied that they watched YouTube in English language.

A big proportion (M=3.34) of respondents replied that they surf internet in English language, (M=3.34) of the respondents affirmed that they learn lyrics in English language, (M=3.27) responded that they write email in English language and (M=3.36) answered that they comment on social media such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, in English language. Because of the rich visual elements that provide contextual supports, students find it easier to comprehend videos with subtitles than audio recordings. Thus, extensive viewing can be deemed popular with foreign Language learners specifically these respondents.

The table above indicated that respondents listened to radio programmes in English language (M=3.30). (M=3.36) responded that they spoke to family and friends in English language, (M=3.59) answered that they played video games in English language and (M=3.17) responded that they chat with native speakers in English language. The higher rating of items in this category is a pointer towards effective exposure to out of class activities among students in Soroti district.

*“Students are encouraged to speak English language at school but there is no strict rule in place. When you don’t practice the language through a number of platforms, you cannot become proficient.”*

#### **4.4 The Perceptions of Teachers and Students towards Out-of-Class Activities in English language**

Findings about the perceptions of teachers and students towards Out-of-Class activities in the study were considered are evidenced in the table below:

**Table 4.4: Teachers and Students’ Perceptions towards Out-of-Class Activities**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes (positive)	193	92
No ( negative)	21	8

*Source: Primary Data (December 2021)*

From table 4.4, teachers and students’ perceptions towards out-of-class activities were studied. Findings indicated that 193(92%) were positive about out-of-class activities and they made up the biggest percentage whereas 21(8%) were negative. This therefore implies that the biggest percentage of respondents were positive about out of class activities. This aspect is grounded on the fact that in this era, English is the powerful language that is used by all people almost throughout the globe. People need to master English to follow a transition of the world. By mastering English, people can easily communicate with the foreigner, going abroad, and receive up to date information from any other countries. That is why students need to learn and master the English language well to develop their ability in any aspect.

*“When you mobilize teaching in class alone you lose more. Exposure beyond the confines of the classroom is the only way to go in this 21<sup>st</sup> century.”*

According to interview with teachers, most of them emphasized the significance of out-of-class activities. In some schools, teachers do a lot of grammar drills and constant practice. This in a way helps them learn the language.

*“However, the ones who seemed negative hardly have any access to out-of-class activities both at school and home except radios. Our school does not provide newspapers for us. No magazines in place. We only watch TV at the end of the term and while at home we speak the local language (Ateso).”*

This, therefore, means some of them have relatively limited exposure especially those from the rural background. Some of their schools don’t have access to the internet. Teachers are indisputably forced to use traditional methods of teaching which some learners seem uncomfortable with.

*“Teachers should expose us to materials that can make us learn on our own because it is more interesting and we really enjoy it. But in our school, teachers just dictate notes for grammar and give us excises to do even when we are not*

*sure of what to do. We collect the books and they mark and the story is the same the following day.”*

From the above statement, we can ably urge that students find their teachers approach quite boring and outdated and consequently, they do not seem to gain a lot from their teaching. This calls for a paradigm shift from the traditional methods of language teaching and learning to a relatively flexible method beyond the walls of the classroom that allows learners to own the knowledge and makes learning more meaningful and authentic.

Teachers also encourage them to read extensively literature outside class. For example, newspapers, novels, watching television among others especially for students whose parents/schools can afford/have access to the above facilities.

#### **4.5 The Impact of Out-of-Class Activities on Students’ Writing Proficiency in English language**

Findings about the impact of out-of-class activities on students’ writing proficiency in the study were considered as evidenced in the table below:

**Table 4.5: The Impact of Out-of-Class Activities on Students’ Writing Proficiency in English language**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>ST</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>AA</b>	<b>Mean</b>
1	Constructive English programmes on TV with subtitles	2	5	10	34	40	4.1327
2	Educative radio programmes in English language	1	8	13	34	35	4.0255
3	Exposure to articles in English, novels, comics and short stories in English language cultivates interest in learning hence achieving proficiency in language mastery.	5	7	12	16	52	4.1327
4	When I write emails in English language and post comments on social media such as Facebook, Instragram, Whatsapp, I am able to	4	8	11	21	47	4.0816

	check my spellings and write correctly constructed sentences.						
5	Regular reading of newspapers and magazines both at school and home improves my proficiency in both Writing and Speaking skills.	3	6	6	30	47	4.2194
6	Regular use of internet to surf, Google useful literature/information helps me acquire vocabulary spellings and eventually write interesting stories/composition in English language.	7	9	8	24	47	4.0253
7	Reading news online helps me acquire the ability to take notes and write out correctly constructed sentences	4	8	12	22	47	4.0859
8	Speaking with fellow students in English language and family friends, writing articles and blog in English improve my proficiency in English language.	6	8	2	29	48	4.1465
9	When I am exposed to Out-of-Class Activities, I get motivated to learn the language and continue learning. This makes me learn better and improve my language proficiency level.	4	8	3	30	46	4.1574

**Source: Primary Data (December 2021)**

In terms of impact of out-of-class activities on language proficiency, findings of the study as indicated in Table 4.5 shows the big proportion of respondents were aware about watching television programmes in English language with subtitles, videos and movies in English language (M=4.13) was a pointer towards improved vocabulary and oral proficiency.

Watching television improves listening comprehension, which is a good example of a valuable source of authentic materials. The greatest value of television for language learning is its potential to provide large amounts of spoken input, which can contribute to the development of

vocabulary knowledge and listening comprehension, as well as other aspects of learning. A lot of people watch television for enjoyment which ought to be regarded as a major advantage for language learning. If learners can also watch television programs for enjoyment, then they are more likely to use them as a source of meaning-focused input.

According to the table above, (M=4.02) of the respondents revealed that exposure to educative radio programmes in English language improves both spoken and writing skills. (M=4.13), felt that watching YouTube on phone and typing lyrics of English songs improved their vocabulary and proficiency in writing.

Today, learners can choose from a broad range of sources when they want to watch a movie or a television programmes. In relation to YouTube, which also contains numerous movies and television programmes, there are two primary benefits of using YouTube, namely exposure to authentic English and the promotion of a more autonomous and student-centered learning style.

(M=4.08) of the respondents agreed that writing emails in English language and posting comments on social media such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, enabled them check their spellings and write correctly constructive sentences through **Thesaurus**, an application on Google play store.

When it comes to using social media such as YouTube in relation to extensive viewing, it is regarded less than neutral in motivating students to learn English outside their classes. Social media reflects the absence of a teacher and structured activities. Many students are unaware of how to, or perhaps unwilling to, use such for anything other than entertainment. Students find YouTube more beneficial to their English and were more motivated when used in class in comparison to using YouTube outside of the class.

Table 4.5 indicated that regular reading of newspapers and magazines both at school and home improves proficiency in both writing and speaking skills (M=4.24).

According to interview guide, respondents mentioned out-of-class activities such as in support of newspapers and magazines both at school and home improves proficiency in both writing and speaking skills;

In the focus group discussion with students, majority of them believed out of class activities have a bearing in enhancing their Language proficiency but raised concerns about inaccessibility sometimes.

*“In our school, newspapers are usually for the teachers and those who visit the library. The television is only watched during weekends. The magazines are unheard of in our school. Some of us have not seen them since we came to this school. Novels are for literature students. Our students who do literature perform better than us in English language because they read a lot of literature outside class in addition to what the teachers give us in class. We also feel that the school should give us a chance because we also want to be good writers and speakers of English language even after leaving school.”*

The above assertion, points to the direction that in as much as the learners are aware of the significant role exposure to out-of-class activities plays in enhancing their language proficiency, they have limited access. No wonder they also wish to enjoy what their literature counterparts do and excel academically at school and beyond.

In an interview with one of the school administrators, he also seemed to agree with what the learners said during the focus group discussion about exposing them to literature and other reading materials.

*“Since we made literature compulsory in our school, it has encouraged our learners to read extensively. The reading culture has improved greatly and the results for English language at ‘O’ Level has also drastically changed. Our learners are also very confident and generally pick interest in what they do.”*

According to interviews from administrators and teachers, such learning opportunities impact positively on students’ learning proficiency. From newspaper/magazines, they read about other peoples’ opinions and experiences. This assists them in composition writing and makes them write colorful essays. The school encourages them to read articles in newspapers and this has improved their writing skills and performance has greatly improved. It also helps them research on their own and boosts their self-esteem, communication skills, teamwork and interpersonal skills.

Furthermore, this study showed that exposure to articles in English, novels, comics and shorts stories in English language cultivates interest in learning hence achieving proficiency in language mastery (M=4.21). This study indicated that regular use of internet to surf, Google

useful literature information help acquire vocabulary spelling and eventually write interesting stories/composition in English language (M=4.02). Respondents indicated that reading newspapers online helps acquire the ability to take notes and write out correctly constructed sentence (M=4.08).

According to interview guide respondents mentioned;

- Reading newspapers-sometimes when the copies are available at school. This was specifically in school A.

*“Reading novels-in our school, literature is now compulsory for ‘O’ Level students. Parents were talked to and they accepted. Our children no longer have issues especially in English language.”*

Their performance/proficiency has improved greatly compared to what we used to have before literature was made compulsory.

In 2018 for instance, we had 61.2% of the candidates scoring credits and distinctions in English compared to 48.2% in 2014. This could be possibly attributed to the role of exposure to reading materials outside class leading to some degree of mastery of the English language

From the table above, speaking with fellow students in English language and family friends, writing articles and blog in English improve my proficiency in English language (M=4.14) and lastly respondents stated that out of class activities motivates them to learn the language and continue learning which makes learn better and improve language proficiency level (M=4.15).

According to interviews from students, do out-of-class activities such as watching television with subtitles, reading newspapers and magazines etc. help you? Yes, they are very useful to us because;

- We learn vocabulary (new words)
- We learn to speak English well.
- Our confidence is boosted. We enjoy learning on our own.
- (Oral proficiency is enhanced)
- We transfer whatever we have learnt here and be able to write better essays.
- The schools should encourage students to debate. Those who debate are usually proficient speakers and writers.

The high mean scores of the respondents signifies a huge significance of exposure to out-of-class activities plays in the development of English language proficiency among students in Soroti District.

In order to further determine the impact of out of class activities on students' writing proficiency in English language in selected schools in Soroti district, a group of students from **two schools** namely: **A** and **C** were randomly selected using simple random sampling technique.

The group that was selected comprised both rural and urban schools. The researcher was interested in finding out the extent to which exposure to out of class activities impacted on the learners' proficiency in English language. The table below shows the category of the students who participated in the English language assessment test.

**Table 4.6: Students who participated in English Assessment Test**

School	Category	Sex	Location	Participants
A	Boarding	Mixed	Urban	20
C	day	Mixed	Rural	15

*Source: Primary data (March, 2021)*

The above table shows that 35 students participated in the English language assessment test to determine the significance of out of class activities on students writing proficiency. 21(60%) of the participants were male while 14 (4%) were female. This gives us a true picture of the secondary school in Uganda where majority of them are boys especially in rural schools.

Standard set of questions were administered to the learners within a given time frame of one hour and a standardized marking guide was used to determine their level of proficiency.



The test was administered and later assessed out of 20 using the standardized marking guide (The Bible), clearly giving the points of interpretation for each set question. The results were as below

**A: Table 4.7: Results for English language Assessment Test for school A**

<b>Mark range</b>	<b>Proficiency</b>	<b>No. of students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
16-20	Excellent	00	0%
14-15	Very good	03	15%
13-15	Good	07	35%
11-12	Quite good	03	15%
10	Fair	02	10%
8-9	Poor	05	25%
<b>Total</b>		<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

**C: Table 4.8: Results for English Assessment Test for school C**

<b>Mark range</b>	<b>Proficiency</b>	<b>No. of students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
16-20	Excellent	00	0%
14-15	Very good	00	0%
13	Good	01	6.6%
11-12	Quite good	02	13.5%
10	Fair	04	26.6%
8-9	Poor	03	20%
6-7	Weak	05	33.3%
<b>Total</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>

From the above scores, 15 out of 20 students in school A constituting 75% were able to score above the average mark while only 7 out of 15 students in school C were able to score the average mark, constituting 46%. Considering the background of learners in school A, the results

showed they were fairly proficient in English language with a majority of them able to communicate and write with few errors in grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, vocabulary usage and paragraphing links. This is a clear indicator that they are relatively exposed to materials outside class such as magazines, newspapers outside class and other digital tools both at home and at school and this could possibly be the reason why their scores are better than their counterparts in rural areas. Their level of language mastery was generally good compared to their colleagues.

In school C, most of them could hardly communicate in the written form of the language, meaning they are not proficient in English language. Only 46% of the learners who participated in the written test were able to score above average but the rest had very terrible essays. There were glaring errors in their sentences, poor paragraphing links and very limited vocabulary range indicating deficiency in the language usage and mastery. This is therefore typical of the rural schools / settings with limited exposure to out of class activities which play a great role in enhancing their language proficiency.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the findings of the study, gives conclusions and makes action oriented recommendations and suggestions for further research.

#### **5.1 Discussion of the Study Findings**

Lai and Gu (2011) advocate that technological tools and settings take a significant part in learning outside the classroom; so, television, movies and radio have been among the out-of-class activities selections of the EFL students as stated in the previous studies. Similar findings have also been obtained for the language learners in this study.

In some other researches (Chusanachoti, 2009; Maros and Saad, 2016 et al), the scholars obtained more or less similar results, that is, students of various ages in their free time engage in technology-based receptive language activities like watching movies or videos, surfing on the internet, social media among others which are considered as a kind of entertaining activities. In this given study, most of the language learners also prefer to engage in receptive activities (watching movies, videos, surfing on the internet etc.). They tend use more often their language for activities requiring productive skills-communicating with others, posting comments on social media or making phone calls.

The study revealed that majority of the students did not have access to news and magazines in English language in their schools. Mean results revealed that students read academic books and articles in English language during out of class activities. The study showed that reading novels, comic and short stories in English language was significant in enhancing both oral and writing proficiency among learners in secondary schools. Study feedback about reading article and blogs in English language indicated positive response. Respondents agreed that they read news online in English language which indicated that exposure to out-of-class activities among students in Soroti District was good. A good number of respondents specified that they watched TV

programmes with subtitles, videos and movies in English language. Respondents answered positively that they watched films in English language at cinema.

A big proportion of the respondents replied that they listened to news in English language. Respondents replied that they listened to songs in English language. Further analysis revealed that respondents acknowledged speaking with fellow students in English language. Findings from the study showed that respondents spoke on phone in English language. The study indicated that respondents watched YouTube in English language. A big proportion of respondents replied that they surf internet in English Language, respondents affirmed that they learn lyrics in English language.

The study revealed that respondents wrote email in English language and they replied to comments on social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp, in English language. Chapter four indicated that respondents listened to radio programmes in English language. From this study, respondents spoke to family and friends in English language. The study revealed that they played video games in English language and they chatted with native speakers in English language.

Primary findings of the study indicated a big proportion of respondents were aware about watching TV programmes with subtitles, videos and movies in English language and it was a pointer towards improved vocabulary and oral proficiency. According to this study, respondents revealed that exposure to educative radio programmes in English language improves both spoken and writing skills. This study discovered that watching YouTube on phone and typing lyrics of English songs improved vocabulary and proficiency in writing. Respondents exposed that writing emails in English language and posting comments on social media such as Facebook, Instagram and Whatsapp improved their vocabulary and proficiency in writing. Regular reading of newspapers and magazines both at school and home improves proficiency in both writing and speaking skills.

Furthermore, this study showed that exposure to articles in English, novels, comics and shorts stories in English language cultivates interest in learning among students, hence achieving proficiency in language mastery. This study indicated that regular use of internet to surf, Google

useful literature information helps acquire vocabulary spelling and eventually write interesting stories/composition in English language. Respondents indicated that reading newspapers online helps acquire the ability to take notes and write out correctly constructed sentences. From the study, speaking with fellow students in English language and family friends, writing articles and blog in English improves proficiency in English language. Respondents stated that out-of-class activities motivate them to learn the language and continue learning which makes them learn better and improve their language proficiency level. This validates the English language assessment results that the researcher conducted during the study.

From the study, it was very clear that those who had some magnitude of exposure to activities outside the formal classroom setting were more proficient in English language usage than the learners with limited exposure. In School A, the learners had very few grammatical errors in their work. The flow of ideas and thoughts was smooth and that made it easy to comprehend the message presented. That also helped me confirm what one of their administrators said during the interview about making literature compulsory in their school and how the school gives learners a chance to watch constructive television programmes at an appropriate time. As for School C, the learners could hardly communicate in their essays. Their compositions were full of gross errors in grammar, misuse of vocabulary, punctuation and poor paragraphing links. The aforementioned prominently hampered the smooth flow of events and therefore made it practically challenging to understand the subject matter. That gave the researcher a true picture of the deficiency in language usage among the learners in School C resulting from limited exposure to out of class activities.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

### **5.2.1 Investigation on whether learners are exposed to out-of-class Activities**

With regard to research question one, study findings revealed that majority of the students did not have access to newspapers and magazines in their schools. Therefore, there was a considerable low level of exposure of learners to reading materials outside class. Some students confessed that entry to the library and Computer laboratory was restricted to some students studying particular subjects like literature; implying that not all of them were exposed to the reading materials outside class. They instead relied solely on information they obtained in class

from their teachers which may not be sufficient to develop their language proficiency. This could possibly explain why their performance in English language at 'O' Level is not satisfactory.

The findings also revealed that students were actively exposed to entertaining activities like watching television, videos and surfing on the internet. Those with access to smart phones were equally noted to be involved in writing comments on Whatsapp and Facebook and that improved on their grammar and spellings since smart phones have specific applications that help to correct our spellings as we type messages. This can be attributed to the current trend in innovations and technology and considering the age of the learners, they find pleasure in such entertaining activities. The teachers therefore, need to realign their teaching methods to suit the interests of the learners.

Hyland (2004) claims that involving learners in language activities out of the classroom promotes language learners' proficiency. Similarly, the results in this study illustrate that proficient language users are always engaged in out-of-class activities compared to students with low level of English language proficiency. As the language proficiency level increases, the language practice outside class also grows. It is also clear in this study that the students prefer to use English through mostly entertaining activities such as watching movies, videos or surfing the internet. This could be related to the characteristics of young adults (students) who were involved in this study. The teachers therefore need to integrate out-of-class activities in their everyday teaching in order to cultivate learners' interests and consequently proficiency in the language.

### **5.2.2 Teachers' and Students' Perceptions towards out-of-class Activities in English language**

With respect to research question 2, results showed most of the teachers believed that meaningful exposure of the learners to out-of-class activities enhance their proficiency in English language. According to them (teachers), when learners are exposed to authentic learning environments beyond class, they become proficient writers and speakers too. However, majority of the teachers and administrators raised concerns on how learners' engagement outside the formal classroom setting can be ably monitored and controlled. Their perception was that some of the learners

may deviate from the original intention of language learning and start watching videos and other literature that may be not useful to them.

According to the learners, they feel when they are exposed and given a chance to learn on their own with teacher instructions, they learn much better and enjoy learning. This confirms that majority of them do not enjoy what their teachers teach them in class and feel they should be given an opportunity to own the teaching learning process.

According to the findings in this study, it could also be stated that the students' language engagement in authentic settings enhances their linguistic competence. Some other studies obtained similar results. In Brigg's study (2015), the amount of time spent speaking with foreign language natives was proved to positively relate to the level of students' foreign accent and vocabulary gain. Other studies showed evidence for the positive association between out-of-class activities and language oral proficiency (Hernandez, 2010) cited in Brigg (2015). What is more, the findings show that the students in this study do not keep any written record about the language activities they are engaged in outside class.

### **5.2.3 Impact of out-of-class activities on Writing Proficiency in English language**

With regard to research question three, results showed that engaging learners in out-of-class activities enhance both their oral and writing proficiency in English language. Learners are able to transfer whatever they read or watch on television to help them become proficient speakers and writers. According to the findings, the learners who regularly read novels, newspapers and other literature performed better than their counterparts who are not exposed to such materials. The students too confessed that their confidence is boosted and they enjoy learning on their own.

Therefore, the higher rating of items in category of teachers and students' perceptions is a pointer that effective exposure of the learners to out-of-class activities plays a significant role in developing their language proficiency. The high Mean scores of the respondents on the impact of out-of-class activities on students signify a huge significance of out-of-class activities to English language proficiency among students in Soroti District. Therefore, out-of-class activities among students is a skill of crucial importance, which deserves serious attention by the teachers to help

learners develop English language proficiency and one sure way learners can enhance this skill is by practising it extensively.

From the English language assessment test conducted, most of the learners from the urban and boarding school setting scored highly in the test. To be exact, 75% realized above average. These results back up responses from interviews where majority confessed that their scores greatly improved as they read alone Literature texts and closely followed some programmes on television and other digital platforms outside class. Most of these boarding schools and homes were they come from expose them to such facilities.

Exposure to reading materials outside class and other digital media platforms therefore significantly improve learners' oral and writing proficiency in English language.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The following are some of the recommendations that the researcher came up with in regard to the gaps identified during the discussion:

In the study, the application of out-of-class activities is positively related to students' language proficiency. Therefore, teachers of English language can investigate the student' practice environment outside classroom to identify which students need help to be motivated to use English language beyond the classroom. In this regard, teachers should teach them how to meaningfully engage in individual activities such as watching movies, listening to music, reading newspapers, books, playing video games and so on.

The teachers of English language, the school administrator's parents and all the stakeholders need to provide an enabling environment for the children/ learners to learn beyond class. Children discover a lot on their own and this helps them supplement on what is learnt in class.

With all the merits that out-of-class activities present, teachers should find modalities of monitoring learners' language learning activities beyond class. The internet usage among learners, for instance, should be closely monitored and restricted because some of them might be tempted to watch what may not benefit them.



Curriculum developers and Ministry of Education and Sports also need to look into the issue of integrating teaching and learning activities beyond the confines of the classroom to make learning more authentic. This will help boost interest to learn the language and confidence among our learners leading to improvement in language proficiency level.

Teachers of English language need to embrace better methods of teaching the writing skill in order to meet the demands and interests of our today's learners who seem to have a lot of interest in technology. They can use those learning avenues to reinforce what their teachers teach them in class and therefore becoming proficient in the writing skill.

#### **5.4 Area for Further Research**

This study was carried out in four Secondary schools found in Soroti District in Teso Region. Similar research can be carried out in other regions of Uganda.

Further studies on factors affecting the students' out-of-class practice (socio-economic status, parents' background or teacher impact) can be investigated.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: Questionnaire for Students

#### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR A STUDY ON EXPOSURE TO OUT OF CLASS ACTIVITIES AND WRITING PROFICIENCY OF 'O' LEVEL STUDENTS IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN SOROTI DISTRICT

Dear respondent,

I am **OKELLO LAMECK**, a student of Makerere University, pursuing Master of Education in Language and Literature Education. I am carrying out a research on *“Exposure to Out-of-Class activities and Development of writing proficiency in selected Secondary schools in Soroti District.”*

The purpose of this questionnaire is to help me gather available and relevant information on the topic of the study and will only be used for academic purpose. Your contribution will be treated with high level of confidentiality.

Thank you in advance!

## SECTION I

Please, tick the appropriate option.

1. Gender

Male  Female

2. Tick your age group

a) 10 – 15

b) 16 – 20

c) 21 – 25

d) 25 and above

3. Class

a) S.2

b) S.3

c) S.4

4. Status of the school

(i) Day  Boarding

(ii) Government Aided  Private

## SECTION II

To what extent are you exposed to out-of-class activities?

No.	Outside of the classroom	Never (1)	Seldom (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Almost always (5)
1.	I read newspapers and magazines in English language.					
2.	I read academic books and articles in English language.					
3.	I read novels, comics and short stories in English language					
4.	I write articles and blog in English language.					
5.	I read news online in English language.					
6.	I watch TV programmes with subtitles, videos and movies in English language.					
7.	I watch films in English language at the cinema.					
8.	I listen to news in English language.					
9.	I listen to songs in English language.					
10.	I speak with fellow students in English language.					
11.	I talk on phone in English language.					
12.	I watch You Tube Videos in English language.					
13.	I surf on the internet in English language.					
14.	I try to learn the lyrics of English songs.					
15.	I write emails in English language.					



16.	I post comments on social media such as facebook, instgram, whatsApp in English language.					
17.	I listen to radio programmes in English language.					
18.	I speak to family friends in English language.					
19.	I play video games in English language.					
20.	I chat with native speakers of English language.					

21. In your opinion, do you think students should be exposed to out-of-class activities?

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*Thank for your time and cooperation.*

### SECTION III

To what extent do Out-of-Class Activities impact on your English language proficiency?

No.	Statement	Strongly Disagree  1	Disagree  2	Not Sure  3	Agree  4	Strongly Agree  5
1.	Watching constructive English language Programmes on television with sub-titles enables me to improve on my vocabulary and oral proficiency.					
2.	Exposure to educative radio programmes in English improves both my speaking and writing skills.					
3.	Watching You Tube videos on phone and trying to learn the lyrics of English songs makes me become a proficient writer and speaker of English language.					
4.	When I write emails in English language and post comments on social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp, I am able to check my spellings and write correctly constructed sentences.					
5.	Regular reading of newspapers and magazines both at school and home improves my proficiency in both Writing and Speaking skills.					

6.	Exposure to articles in English, novels, comics and short stories in English language cultivates interest in learning hence achieving proficiency in language mastery.					
7.	Regular use of internet to surf, Google useful literature/information helps me acquire vocabulary spellings and eventually write interesting stories/composition in English language.					
8.	Reading news online helps me acquire the ability to take notes and write out correctly constructed sentences.					
9.	Speaking with fellow students in English language and family friends, writing articles and blog in English improve my proficiency in English language.					
10.	When I am exposed to Out-of-Class Activities, I get motivated to learn the language and continue learning. This makes me learn better and improve my language proficiency level.					

*Thank you for your time and cooperation*

## Appendix II: Questionnaire for Teachers

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR A STUDY ON EXPOSURE TO OUT OF CLASS ACTIVITIES AND WRITING PROFICIENCY OF 'O' LEVEL STUDENTS IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN SOROTI DISTRICT

Dear respondent,

I am **OKELLO LAMECK**, a student of Makerere University, pursuing Master of Education in Language and Literature Education. I am carrying out a research on *“Exposure to Out-of-Class activities and Development of writing proficiency in selected Secondary schools in Soroti District.”*

The purpose of this questionnaire is to help me gather available and relevant information on the topic of the study and will only be used for academic purpose. Your contribution will be treated with high level of confidentiality.

Thank you in advance for your response!

## Questionnaire for Teachers

### SECTION I

#### Demographic

- a) Gender .....
- b) Designation .....
- c) Institution Name .....
- d) Number of year (s) at your institution .....
- e) Educational Qualifications .....

### SECTION II

What is your perception towards Out-of-Class Activities?

No.	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
		1	2	3	4	5
1.	Learners' low proficiency in English language is as a result of lack of exposure to activities outside class.					
2.	Learners' develop interests in the learning the language when they are left to meaningfully interrupt with out-of-class activities.					
3.	Teaching learners in class alone may not be enough to make them become proficient English language writers.					
4.	Students gain vocabulary and better writing skills when exposed to activities outside class.					

5.	Children exposed to activities such as watching television, reading newspapers are usually proficient in English language.					
6.	The modern digital platforms such as facebook, whatsApp, instragram enhance the teaching and learning of English language.					
7.	The background of some learners makes it difficult to employ Out-of-Class Activities because of inaccessibility.					
8.	Teachers neglect use of Out-of-Class Activities in the teaching of the writing skill because it is difficult to monitor what learners do outside class.					
9.	Some teachers find it difficult to use modern technology because they are still comfortable using the traditional method.					
10.	Some learners take Out-of-Class Activities just for fun not as a learning avenue.					
11.	Teachers need to embrace the practice of Out-of-Class Activities in order to help learners become proficient in English language.					

12. In your opinion, do you think out-of-class activities can be the best remedy to address learners' deficiency in English language?

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*Thank for your time and cooperation.*

### Appendix III: Teachers' Interview Guide

#### Demographic

- f) Gender .....
- g) Designation .....
- h) Institution Name .....
- i) Number of year (s) at your institution .....
- j) Educational Qualifications .....

1. Is the English Language writing skill necessary for Ugandan students? Why?
2. How does the Uganda education system help the student to learn the writing skill?
3. How is the teaching of the writing skill done in your school? Do you give them an opportunity to learn English language out-of-class?
4. If Yes, does that exposure to out-of-class activities improve their proficiency in the language?
5. What out-of-class activities do you expose your learners to?
6. What strategies do you have for monitoring the out-of-class activities they are engaged in?
7. Does your school support out-of-class learning by providing the necessary instructional materials such as newspapers, magazines, television e.t.c? Are they readily available for the learners?
8. Many people think that learners may not spend their time productively and learn when out-of-class. What do you think?
9. What do you think are the reasons why students usually don't perform well in English language at 'O' Level?
10. Briefly suggest some of the possible remedies that we can use to address such concerns.

*Thank you for your time.*

## **Appendix IV: English language Assessment Test**

**School.....**

Dear participant, kindly participate in this exercise to enable the researcher find out the role of out of class activities in the development of writing proficiency in English language among O Level students in selected schools in Soroti district. Your work will be treated with confidentiality.

### **Question:**

Choose one of the following topics and write a composition of 500 to 600 words.

1. Describe a memorable event that you attended recently.
2. “Women should be given exactly the same opportunities as men.” Do you agree or not? Give reasons for your answer.

Thank you very much for participating.



**Marking guide (The Bible)/ Points of Interpretation:**

1.

- It must be a story. If not MI (Minor Irrelevancy)
- Candidate must be involved if not MI
- The event must be memorable if not MI
- No memorable event, no attendance BI ( Blatant Irrelevancy)

2.

- It must be an argumentative essay
- Candidate must take a stand point

**Award of marks (0/20)**

16-20-Excellent

14-15 –Very good

13 – Good (satisfactory)

11-12-Quite Good

10-Average

8-9-Fair

6-7- Quite fair

## **Appendix V: Interview Guide for Administrators**

1. Does your school expose students to learn beyond classroom?
2. In your considered opinion, do such learning opportunities/avenues impact on students' language proficiency? Briefly, explain why you think so.
3. Should out-of-class activities be encouraged in schools?
4. What do you think should be done by the teachers to produce proficient writers and generally improve language proficiency of the learners in secondary schools?
5. How do you engage the parents and ensure that children continue to learn beyond the confines of the classroom?
6. Does your school provide supportive role to facilitate learning beyond class by ensuring that students have access to the internet, newspapers etc.?
7. Suggest any possible policy interventions that government can have in place to support this modern teaching/learning strategy in order to meet the demands and interests of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century learners.

*Thank you for your time.*

## Appendix VI: Focus Group Discussion Guide for Students

1. How does your school usually perform in English language at UCE?
2. What challenges do you usually face while learning English language both at home and school?
3. What out-of-class activities does your school expose you to? How often?
4. Do your teachers monitor such learning to ensure you are doing the right thing and encourage you to learn beyond the classroom environment?
5. Are those out-of-class activities such as watching television with sub-titles, reading newspapers and magazines etc. of any help to you as second language learners? If so, how?
6. What is your attitude/perception as students towards the use of out-of-class activities in second language teaching and learning?
7. What is the attitude of your parents towards them? Do they support you to learn beyond the confines of the classroom environment?
8. As learners, what do you do in order to improve your writing skill and proficiency in the English language?
9. Do you have access to the internet while at school and home? Do the learners use it to enhance learning (productivity) or simply for fun/entertainment?
10. In your view, should out-of-class activities be emphasized/reinforced as a teaching/learning platform in schools? Why do you think so?

*Thank you in advance.*

## **Appendix VII: Lesson Observation Checklist for Teachers of English Language**

1. Evidence of planning for English language lessons (Scheme of Work and Lesson Plan) (/15)
2. Use of instructional materials to facilitate teaching and learning. (/10)
3. Involvement of learners in lesson activities. (/15)
4. Appropriateness of lesson activities. (/10)
5. Appropriateness of teaching and learning methods used. (/15)
6. Presence of television at school, newspapers, students' access to the Computer Laboratory etc. (/15)
7. Language of common use at school. (/10)
8. UNEB results with key interest in students' performance in English language and also Internal Assessment Results. (/10)