

Relationship between Learners' German Language Communicative Abilities and Their Prior Performance in a National Ugandan Certificate Examination

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Abstract—This article presents research draws on the Communicative Approach to understand the connection between learners' German language communicative abilities (GLCA) and their prior performance in German examinations. The purpose of the research was to establish whether a relationship existed between learners' prior performance in Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE) German examinations and their performance on a GLCA testing tool. A correlational research design was used in this study. Findings indicated a significant relationship between learners' prior performance on the UCE examination and their performance on the GLCA. Indeed, learners that performed better in the UCE examinations were also more likely to perform equally well on GLCA. It was concluded that during the process of preparing learners for UCE German examination, they acquired some basic competencies required to modestly communicate in real-life situations. However, students lacked several other vital competencies that they needed to perform better in more challenging higher level communicative situations outside the classroom. Therefore, it was recommended that teachers of German be provided with a variety of authentic resources that could be used to enhance the teaching and assessing of German in real-life-related communicative contexts.

Index Terms—assessment, communicative approach, German language, language proficiency, language-in-action, authentic resources

I. INTRODUCTION

Current developments in utilizing alternative language teaching and testing approaches to enhance the teaching of languages as well as learning outcomes is a common practice. Therefore, the use of the communicative approach in language teaching and testing, as one of the approaches, has also gained great importance and popularity in recent years due to its emphasis on the ability of learners to communicate in the target language in real-life situations. The theoretical basis of this article is the interactive view of language, which considers language as a communicative tool, whose main use is to build up and maintain social relations between people. Therefore, learners not only need to know the grammar and vocabulary of the language but most importantly they need to know the rules for using them in a wide range of communicative contexts. In this regard, the **Communicative Approach (CA)** to testing is based on the works of several scholars like Hymes (1972), Chomsky (1965), Madsen (1983), Brown (1987), and Canale and Swain (1980) among others. Canale and Swain (1980) categorized communicative competence into three key components namely; grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence. It is worth noting that Canale's (1983) model was so well refined to include discourse competence, among other competencies, which gives a complete representation of communicative competence. Therefore, this study of German language teaching and testing in Uganda draws on the Canale (1983) model of communicative competence to identify the constructs of learners' German language communicative abilities (GLCA), upon which the testing of language competence was based. However, although it is presumed that the essence of learning a language is to be able to use the acquired language abilities effectively for purposes of communication, this may not be the case for learners of German in secondary schools in Uganda. This is understandable given that German penetration as a language is virtually minimal in Uganda, with very few people who can fluently speak German. In fact, it is a widely accepted fact by the teachers of German in Uganda that most of their learners are unable to engage in meaningful real-life communications and interactions, even though they may have performed well in both classroom tests and national public examinations. Therefore, it is not uncommon for learners of German in Uganda, who score very good grades in both classroom tests and national public examinations at ordinary level certificate (UCE) to fail to demonstrate reasonable real-life German language communicative competences, especially in situations where they are required to draw on and apply holistic language communicative competences of listening, reading, writing and oral communicative abilities. This is consistent with the Communicative Approach.

Communicative Approach Model

Communicative approach assumes two purposes of learning a language namely; (1) learning the language to learn it and (2) learning the language to use it. Thus, our conceptualization of communicative language abilities is embedded within the works of different scholars who emphasize various ways of determining the language competence of a learner. According to Stevick (1982, p. 12) “We cannot observe competence completely. We can only make guesses about it on the basis of samples of performance.” This implies that the examiner simply observes a small part of the learner’s total competence and leaves most of the latent competence unobserved. Therefore, assessment of learners’ communicative ability is an issue that requires careful, well guided preparation, and consideration. Bachman (1990, p. 9) contends that “One of the most important and persistent problems in language testing is that of defining language ability in such a way that we can be sure that the test methods we use will elicit language test performance that is characteristic of language performance in non-test situations.” This implies that whenever a test of communicative language ability is being designed, the teacher should start by defining the context in which the learner is required to use the language. The teacher, therefore, works on the assumption that the learner will be able to produce the kind of language required in the specified context. However, given that the German language is not commonly used in Uganda, defining the context of its use is quite problematic and therefore the indicators of German language proficiency is likely to be a very complex process. It is also important to note that knowing enough grammar and vocabulary does not necessarily mean that one can use such tools effectively in real-life situation. Furthermore, Fahrhady (1982, p. 44) contends that “Language proficiency is one of the most poorly defined concepts in the field of language testing”.

Defining Language Proficiency

Nevertheless, in spite of differing theoretical views as to its definition, a general issue on which many scholars seem to agree is that the focus of proficiency tests is on the learners’ ability to use language. Fahrhady (1982) defines language proficiency as being the learners’ ability to use the language for real-life. Consequently, several definitions of communicative language testing have been advanced by several scholars: Albers and Bolton (1995, p. 48) note that:

Im kommunikativen Deutschunterricht sollen die Schülerinnen und Schüler lernen, das Gelernte (Lexik, Syntax usw.) möglichst rasch auf Kommunikationssituationen des Alltags anzuwenden. Dieses Ziel müssen also auch die Tests bzw. die Prüfungen widerspiegeln. Wenn dies nicht der Fall ist, dann sind die Tests nicht valide und erlauben keine Aussagen über den Lernerfolg in Bezug auf die Lernziele.

What we learn from Albers et al is that learners must quickly transfer whatever they have learnt into real-life communication situations. They advocate that if tests are to be deemed valid measures of a learning process, they must reflect the objective of using that language in real-life situations.

Assessment of Language-in-action

Therefore, there is need for German tests and examinations to reflect this communicative language objective. In a related instance, according to Miyata-Boddy and Langham (2000, p. 75) “Communicative language testing is intended to provide the tester with information about the testee’s ability to perform in the target language in certain context-specific tasks”. Context-specific tasks are those tasks that require completion given to a specified situation or condition. Kitao and Kitao (1996, p. 1) also assert that:

Communicative language tests are intended to be a measure how the testees are able to use language in real-life situations. In testing productive abilities, emphasis is placed on appropriateness rather than on ability to form grammatically correct sentences. In testing receptive abilities, emphasis is placed on understanding the communicative intent of the speaker or writer rather than on picking out specific details.

Kitao and Kitao (1996, p. 2) concluded that “Tests intended to test communicative language are judged, then, on the extent to which they simulate real-life communicative situations rather than on how reliable the results are.” In this case, the relative importance of validity as opposed to reliability in the case of tests of communicative language competence is stressed. Because communicative language tests are used with the goal of measuring language learners’ ability to take part in acts of communication or to use language in real-life situations, they achieve this at the expense of reliability. Nonetheless, it is necessary, prior to the assessment of learners’ communicative abilities, to clearly define the tasks of communication required for the success of language use in real-life situations. In this regard, Spolsky (1989 p. 140), also noted that,

Language tests involve measuring a subject’s knowledge of, and proficiency in the use of a language. A theory of communicative competence is a theory of the nature of such knowledge and proficiency. One cannot develop sound language tests without a method of defining what it means to know a language, for until you have decided what you are measuring, you cannot claim to have measured it.

Regarding Spolsky’s argument, it is evident that there is no common definition of language proficiency, on the contrary, different language learning environments have different definitions of what it means to know a language. Therefore, the belief that knowledge of grammar was tantamount to being proficient in the language was out of question as far as communicative language testing was concerned. Fahrhady (1982) argued that,

‘Teaching and testing linguistic forms without paying attention to how these forms are actually used was not sufficient... [in fact] functional or pragmatic competence tests should be concerned with degrees of linguistic, socio-cultural, and communicative ability (strategic competence) of the examinees in order to diagnose a learner’s difficulties in particular language areas.’

Fahrhady (1982), further demonstrated that functional proficiency tests were superior to existing discrete-point and integrative tests. Similarly, Gumperz (1982, p. 209) argued that, “learners must not only be linguistically competent but also communicatively competent, by having appropriate linguistic knowledge and related communicative conventions that speakers must have to create and sustain conversational cooperation.” Indeed, Gumperz (1982) is of a similar view that language testing must involve, in addition to linguistic forms, also the testing of real-life communicative use of the language. However, in order to be able to design relevant tests of learners’ communicative abilities, teachers inevitably need to involve authentic tasks which portray a real-life situation.

Communicative language testing

Weir (1990) also points out that, inauthentic tasks may interfere with the measurement of constructs which we seek. “Tests of communicative language ability should be as direct as possible (with an attempt to reflect the ‘real-life’ situation) and tasks candidates have to perform should involve realistic discourse processing”. Weir (1990, p. 12) further advocates for the use of genuine texts and that care should be taken regarding the determination of the task, task length and its processing in real time. According to Weir (1990, p. 86), test tasks in a communicative language testing should reflect real-life language use in terms of the number of interlocutors, their status and familiarity, a realistic purpose for the task, and appropriate setting, and operation under normal time constraints.

According to Weir (1990), if tests fulfilled the above mentioned qualities, they would be taken to be tests of communicative language competence. However, Neuner, Kruger, & Grever (1990 p. 15) pointed out that:

Es gibt keine “kommunikativen Übungen” als solche; entscheidend ist die Zwecksetzung von Übungen im Hinblick auf die Entwicklung von Kommunikationsfähigkeit.

Neuner, et.al. (Neuner et al., 1990) argued that tests can only be taken to be communicative based on the purpose of the exercises with regard to the development of communicative abilities. This implies that though most test tasks may be those that require the language learners to exhibit their ability to use the language in the way it is used in a natural setting; as such, the whole test will not necessarily be termed as being a test of communicative language ability.

In fact, this is in line with Coombe & Hubley (2007, p. 7) who pointed out that language learners are motivated to perform when they are faced with tasks that reflect real world situations and contexts. Therefore, good testing or assessment should strive to use formats and tasks that mirror the types of situations in which learners would authentically use the target language. Hence, in order to motivate learners to master the language, teachers ought to, whenever possible, attempt to use authentic materials in testing language abilities. Nunan (1989) also indicates that teachers, while designing activities, should consider holistically all language abilities, co-jointly as they interact with each other in natural behaviour, for in real-life as in the classroom, given that most tasks of any complexity involve more than one macro language ability.

Similarly, Olaofe (1994) quotes Davis (1990) who summarised a good language communicative test as,

One that tests communicative abilities and not only grammatical competence, it tests the ability to meet target language needs; it tests performance in a range of situations; it tests for particular objectives; and it controls as all tests must, the necessary requirements of reliability and feasibility... a communicative test must at the same time be broad-based and narrowly focussed... communicative testing like communicative teaching, must be context-based and cannot be generalised from one of the idealised situations.

What we learn from Davis’ (1990) submission is that, a balanced approach to designing communicative language tests is vital, and care must be taken to take into consideration such aspects like language needs of the learner and the context under which the testing is to take place. The test should also not neglect the cardinal principles of good testing which include validity and reliability among others. The validity of a test is considered to be the degree to which the test measures what it claims to measure. Reliability, on the other hand refers to the extent to which a test gives results that are consistent.

Importance of Authenticity of Resources

Apparently, many other scholars also emphasize the importance of authenticity of resources and tasks while designing communicative language tests (Buck, 1998; Oller, 1983; Richards & Rodgers, 1987; VanPatten, 1998; Wesche & Skehan, 2005). They further agree that grammar should be contextualised so as to reflect the fact that grammar should be acquired through communication and not that communication is as a result of knowing grammar.

In fact, Salmani-Nodoushan (2002) also noted that the assessment of learners’ progress has generally continued to focus almost exclusively on control of vocabulary and grammatical structures, thus representing only linguistic competence. To compound this challenge, even further, many classroom activities, and most testing procedures, tend to focus on manipulation of foreign language forms, while minimising attention to social function and meaning.

Salmani-Nodoushan (2002) also contends that communication cannot take place in the absence of structure, or grammar, a set of shared assumptions about how language works, along with a willingness of participants to cooperate in the negotiation of meaning. Sauvignon further quotes research findings of Lightbown and Spada (1990); Ellis (1997) as overwhelmingly supporting the integration of form-focussed exercises and meaning focussed experience. That grammar is important; and learners seem to focus better on grammar when it relates to their communicative needs and experiences.

An important observation is that in testing communicative performance, test items should measure how well learners are able to engage in meaningful, purposeful, and authentic communicative tasks. Learners must have a good

performance linguistically and communicatively. That is, they must have a good command of the key components of language involved in communication. The best exams in this communicative era, according to Madsen (1983) are those that combine the various sub abilities necessary for the exchange of oral and written ideas. He asserts that communicative tests need to measure more than isolated language abilities, to comprehensively indicate how well a person can function in another language.

Similarly Harrison (1983, pp. 77-85) argues that “A test type does not become communicative by simply mixing in a dash of reality: it is communicative because of the use made of it, and if it cannot be used to represent communicative purpose, it cannot be a communicative test”. However, Phan (2008) observed that “It is not certain if test makers can guarantee that learners who perform well in a test in class are also able to do well outside the classroom in a real-life situation. One reason for this is that real-life is characterized by unpredictability.” Designing language tests that reflect unpredictability in language use poses a great challenge that is not well understood.

In the same vein, Hughes (2003) wrote that, “current theories no longer assume that language is primarily about structures (e.g. at the levels of syntax), requiring different types of isolated language components; on the contrary language tends to be viewed as a way of carrying out functions or communicating meanings, therefore relevant test measurements show what learners can do with language.” Similarly, Brown (2005, p. 21) suggests five requirements for setting up a communicative test; meaningful communication, authentic situation, unpredictable language input, creative language output, and integrated language skill that should be observed.

II. RESEARCH QUESTION

This study explored the relationship between learners’ prior performance on German UCE and their GLCA competences. The following question guided this research “To what extent *was there any relationship between prior performance on German UCE examinations and learners’ GLCA?*”

III. METHODOLOGY

The data referred to in this article was collected based on a correlational research design which sought to explore the relationship between learners’ German communicative language abilities, and their prior performance in a standard national examination (UCE). The study was undertaken in seven secondary schools in Uganda, where German language is taught as one of the subjects on the curriculum. The sample of participants was composed of 52 students, who had studied German for four years.

Concerning sex distribution, there were more female respondents (33) than male respondents (19). The reason as to why there were more female learners than male was because of the categorization of schools as “mixed”, “girls only” and “boys only”. This sample was taken from 7 schools, 3 of which were categorized as “mixed”, another 3 as “girls only” and only 1 as a “boys only” school. Therefore, the chances of having more girls than boys in the study were higher.

Furthermore, the age distribution of the learners fell between the ages of 17 and 19 with the majority of them (71.2%) being at the age of 18. The fact that learners belonged to the same age group implied that they had similar language experience and therefore the differences in their language output was not necessarily due to their experiences caused by age.

In order to carry out the investigations, two sets of test results were required namely; results from a National Ugandan Certificate examination (UCE) and results from a test of German language communicative abilities (GLCA). The National Examinations Board is responsible for examining learners of German language, who have completed a 4 year-course at the Ordinary level (O-Level) that leads to the award of the “Uganda Certificate of Education” (UCE). The UCE German examination tested for candidates’ abilities in German grammar, reading comprehension, listening comprehension, composition writing and speaking.

On the other hand, the GLCA was a testing tool based on the principles of communicative language competence. The GLCA was administered to determine learners’ performance on communicative abilities of German language and enable its comparison with prior performance on the UCE. The justification for the choice of the “Modelltest Start Deutsch 2” was based on the fact that it was a follow-up test on the lessons presented in the course book by Funk, Kuhn, and Demme (Funk, Kuhn, & Demme, 2006) which was designed with the aim of developing learners’ communicative competence in German. For this reason and the fact that “Modelltest Start Deutsch 2” tests all the four abilities of language, it can be deduced that it could be an effective test of learners’ communicative competence in German.

Additionally, in order to ensure reliability of the GLCA testing tool, instructions were clearly formulated and an example was provided prior to the beginning of every new task, which helped to make the tasks clearer to all examinees. However, examiner’s variability, especially in the oral test and the writing of the test which required largely subjective responses, posed the biggest threat to test reliability. In order to reduce examiner’s variability, meticulous instructions were given to examiners on how to administer the testing tool and a detailed marking guide was provided. Besides, all examiners were experienced graduate teachers of German language.

IV. RESULTS & ANALYSIS

Data obtained from the two sets of assessment tools (GLCA and UCE) were analyzed using SPSS computer software program to perform correlational procedures to generate descriptive and inferential statistics. This was done by computing the correlation coefficient using the Pearson product moment formula. The correlation coefficients were used to determine the significance of the correlation by a T- test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

The data presented in this section addresses the hypothesis that “There is no significant relationship between the prior performance on German UCE examination and learners’ German language communicative ability”. The salient results generated from the correlation and ANOVA between performance in GLCA and UCE are summarized in Table 1 through Table 9.

TABLE 1:
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERFORMANCE ON GLCA AND UCE

Results		GLCA	UCE
GLCA	Pearson Correlation	1	0.417(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.003
	N	48	48
UCE	Pearson Correlation	0.417(*)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.003	
	N	48	52

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

Results in Table 1 showed that at 5% level of significance, there is a significant relationship ($r = 0.417$, $p - \text{value} = 0.003$) between the performance on GLCA and prior performance on UCE. Therefore, results clearly indicate that a student who performed better at UCE was also more likely to perform better on the GLCA. This result also implied that in the process of preparing learners to successfully take the final UCE examinations, many important basic abilities and aspects of German language needed for purposes of communication are also acquired. However, this could not fully explain why some learners seemed to lack the ability to freely communicate in all the four language abilities i.e. speaking, listening, reading and writing. Therefore, it was found necessary to investigate the relative contribution of each of the four language abilities to the learners’ performance on the GLCA and UCE.

As such, the GLCA testing tool was used to measure the four language abilities (i.e. speaking, listening, reading, and writing). The correlation between the score in each of the four language abilities and UCE was computed using Pearson Product Moment technique. The correlation coefficient was taken to be significant when the $p - \text{value}$ was less than 0.05 of significance level. The results are summarized in Table 2:

TABLE 2:
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCORES IN UCE AND SCORES IN THE DIFFERENT LANGUAGE ABILITIES OF GLCA

GLCA abilities	No. of learners	UCE/GLCA	
		Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Speaking ability	52	0.385(*)	0.005
Listening ability	49	0.363(*)	0.010
Reading ability	50	0.301(*)	0.034
Writing ability	50	0.250	0.080

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

Looking at the correlation coefficients, the results showed that there was a significant positive correlation between *Grade obtained at UCE* and *Total mark obtained for the GLCA in speaking ability* ($r = 0.385$, $p - \text{value} = 0.005$), *listening ability* ($r = 0.363$, $p - \text{value} = 0.010$), and *reading abilities* ($r = 0.301$, $p - \text{value} = 0.034$). The results revealed that the higher the grade at UCE, the higher the likelihood (chance) of obtaining a higher total mark in the speaking ability, listening ability and reading ability. However, the relationship between performance in both UCE and *GLCA on writing ability* was not significant ($r = 0.250$, $p - \text{value} = 0.080$). The results indicated that in the case of the writing abilities, high performance at UCE did not necessarily mean a high performance on the writing ability on the GLCA testing tool. This finding seems to suggest that much as the learners performed well at UCE and also at GLCA, their ability to communicate in the real-life situation using the writing ability may not have been ably tackled during the process of instruction. In order to further explain the relative contribution of the indicators of the writing ability and the other abilities, a further analysis of learners’ performance was carried out. Table 3 shows scores in the different language abilities and their contribution on the GLCA.

TABLE 3:
SCORES IN THE DIFFERENT LANGUAGE ABILITIES AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE GLCA ABILITY

Abilities	No. of learners	Mean score	Std. Deviation	F- value	P - values
Speaking	52	5.10	0.16	9.515	<0.001
Listening	49	3.77	1.24	8.602	<.001
Reading	50	3.84	0.9	6.383	0.002
Writing	52	6.56	0.25	20.285	<.001

To find out if there were any differences in the scores on individual indicators of Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing abilities respectively, an Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was carried out at 5% level of significance. The result

was interpreted to be statistically significant if the p – value computed was less than the 0.05 level of significance, implying a varying contribution of the individual indicators to performance in the language abilities. The results are summarized in Table 4:

TABLE 4:
ANOVA RESULTS

Abilities	F – value	P – values
Speaking	9.515	<0.001
Listening	8.602	<.001
Reading	6.383	0.002
Writing	20.285	<.001

Results in table 4 show that all the p– values were less than the 5% level of significance. This result implied that there were variations in the contribution of the different indicators of each language ability to performance on GLCA. Consequently, there was need to find out which indicators contributed more than the others. The difference in the contribution of each indicator to GLCA performance in the respective language ability was accomplished using the paired sample t-test at 5 percent significance level and the narration of the analysis are presented in sections that follow.

Speaking ability

Speaking ability was measured based on four indicators namely; “ability to introduce oneself and respond to personal questions” , “ability to ask questions and respond to questions concerning daily routine” , “ability to get involved in a free conversation”, and “ability to control the use of speech acts, grammar and vocabulary in a conversation”.

Results showed that learners performed differently in the different indicators of the speaking ability. In particular, on the average, the indicator “ability to introduce oneself and respond to personal questions” was the best performed while the “ability to control the use of speech acts, grammar and vocabulary in a conversation” was the least performed.

To determine whether the differences were due to chance or otherwise, a paired T test was carried out. Table 5 shows the paired sample T test of the scores in speaking ability.

TABLE 5:
PAIRED SAMPLE T TEST OF THE SCORES IN SPEAKING ABILITY

Indicators of speaking abilities	Paired Speaking abilities	T	Sig. (2- tailed)
1. Ability to introduce oneself and respond to personal questions	1 and 2	1.518	0.135
2. Ability to ask questions and respond to questions concerning daily routine	1 and 3 1 and 4	0.814 4.374	0.420 <.001
3. Ability to get involved in a free conversation	2 and 3	0.227	0.822
4. Ability to control the use of speech acts, grammar and vocabulary in a conversation	2 and 4 3 and 4	- 3.813 3.713	<.001 0.001

The result is interpreted to be statistically significant if the p–value is less than 0.05 the level of significance, implying varying contributions of the different indicators to performance in the speaking ability. Results in Table 5 show that all the p–values were less than the 5% level of significance. This implies that even though there was a difference in the performance in the different indicators of speaking especially in “ability to control the use of speech acts, grammar and vocabulary in a conversation” where learners performed worst compared to the other indicators, this difference in the mean performance were simply due to chance and therefore performance in speaking ability can be equally attributed to all of them.

Listening ability

Three indicators of listening ability namely; *the ability to listen to and understand a telephone exchange, the ability to listen to and understand radio announcements, and the ability to listen for detail from an extended text*, were scored each out of 5. Then the mean and standard deviations of each was computed.

Results showed that learners performed differently in the different indicators of listening. Scores indicate that the indicator “ability to listen for detail from an extended text” was best performed, followed by “ability to listen to and understand radio announcements” while the sub ability “ability to listen to and understand a telephone exchange” was least performed.

To determine whether the differences were due to chance or otherwise, a paired T test was carried out. The results are summarized in Table 6.

TABLE 6:
PAIRED SAMPLE T TEST OF THE SCORES IN LISTENING ABILITY

Indicators of listening ability	Paired listening abilities	T	Sig. (2 - tailed)
1. Ability to listen to and understand a telephone exchange	1 and 2	- 2.496	0.016
2. Ability to listen to & understand radio announcements	1 and 3	- 5.296	<.001
3. Ability to listen for detail from an extended text	2 and 3	- 3.087	0.003

The result is interpreted to be statistically significant if the p-value is less than 0.05 the level of significance, implying varying contribution of different indicators of listening ability to performance. The results showed that all the p-values were less than 5% level of significance indicating that they were not statistically significant. This implies that the differences in the mean performance between the different indicators of the listening ability were simply due to chance and therefore performance in the listening ability can be equally attributed to all of them.

Reading ability

Three indicators of reading ability, namely; “the ability to read for details and understand an authentic newspaper advertisement”, “the ability to read selectively from a prose text from the internet”, and “the ability to read for gist by matching advertisements to situations”, were each scored out of 5. Then, the mean and standard deviation of each was computed.

Results show that learners performed differently in the different indicators of reading. The mean scores show that the indicator “ability to read for gist by matching advertisements to situations” was best performed, followed by “ability to read selectively from a prose text from the internet”, while the indicator “ability to read for details and understand an authentic newspaper advertisement” was least performed.

To determine whether the differences were by chance or otherwise, a paired T test was carried out. The results are summarized in Table 7:

TABLE 7:
PAIRED SAMPLE T TEST OF THE SCORES IN READING ABILITY

Indicators of reading ability	Paired reading abilities	T	Sig. (2 - tailed)
1. Ability to read for details and understand an authentic newspaper advertisement	1 and 2	-0.935	0.354
2. Ability to read selectively from a prose text from the internet	1 and 3	-4.177	<.001
3. Ability to read for gist by matching advertisements to situations	2 and 3	-2.493	0.016

The result is interpreted to be statistically significant if the p-value is less than 0.05 the level of significance, implying that the contribution of the various indicators of Reading ability were unequal. Results showed that all the p-values were less than 5 percent level of significance indicating that they were not statistically significant. This implies that, although learners performed better in Reading 3 than in Reading 1 and 2 which were performed “equally” well, the differences in the mean performance between the different indicators of the reading ability were simply due to chance and therefore it can be equally attributed to all of them.

Writing ability

Three indicators of writing ability were tested and, each was scored out of 9 and the mean and standard deviation of each was computed. Results showed that learners performed differently in the different indicators of writing. In particular, on the average, the indicator *ability to fill a form* was the best performed, followed by *ability to select a suitable communicative structure of the written text*, and then the *ability to intelligibly carry out a writing task* was the least performed. To determine whether the differences were due to chance or otherwise, a paired T test was carried out. The results are summarized in Table 8.

TABLE 8:
PAIRED SAMPLE T TEST OF THE SCORES IN WRITING ABILITY

Indicators of writing ability	Paired writing abilities	T	Sig. (2 - tailed)
1. Ability to fill a form	1 and 2	-7.447	<.001
2. Ability to intelligibly carry out a writing task	1 and 3	3.605	0.001
3. Ability to select a suitable communicative structure of the written text	2 and 3	-3.030	0.004

The result is interpreted to be statistically significant if the p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, implying varying contribution of the various indicators of writing ability. Results showed that all the p-values were less than the 5% level of significance indicating that they were not statistically significant. The results implied that, although learners performed differently in the various indicators of writing ability, the differences in the mean performance between the different indicators of the reading ability were simply due to chance and therefore it can be equally attributed to all of them.

The contribution of language abilities to the total performance on GLCA

An Analysis of the Variance model was computed to determine whether the different language abilities contribute differently to GLCA.

Results in Table 9 showed that learners performed differently in the different abilities of language. There was no significant difference between the performances in “listening ability” and “reading ability”. However, the scores in these language abilities were lower than the scores in “speaking ability” but better than the scores in “writing ability”.

In order to identify which language abilities contribute more or less to the performance in GLCA, a paired sample T test of the scores in the language abilities was carried out. The results are summarized in Table 9.

TABLE 9:
 PAIRED SAMPLE T TEST OF THE SCORES IN LANGUAGE ABILITIES

Language abilities	Paired language abilities	T	Sig. (2 - tailed)
1. Speaking ability	1 and 2	3.903	<.001
2. Listening ability	1 and 3	4.535	<.001
3. Reading ability	1 and 4	8.881	<.001
4. Writing ability	2 and 3	- 0.356	0.723
	2 and 4	2.572	0.013
	3 and 4	3.323	0.002

The result is interpreted to be statistically significant if the p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, implying differences in contribution by the language abilities. Results in Table 9 show that there is a significant relationship between performances in the different language abilities, i.e. there is a significant relationship between performance in speaking and listening, speaking and reading, speaking and writing, listening and reading, listening and writing, as well as speaking and writing respectively. This implies that in the cases given above, a good performance in one ability implied that the learner was able to perform similarly well in the other ability. However, results indicate that the performance between the listening and the reading abilities was not significant. This implies that the good performance in listening did not necessarily mean that one would perform well in the reading ability.

V. DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to establish whether there was any relationship between prior performance on UCE and performance GLCA assessment tool. Overall, the findings indicate a significant linear relationship between the total mark obtained in the GLCA and mark obtained at UCE implying that performance on UCE significantly predicted performance on GLCA. This finding contradicts the earlier assertion that learners who happen to be good performers in UCE may not necessarily be able to communicate well in real-life German communicative situations.

A further investigation of the relationship between scores in UCE and scores in the different language abilities of GLCA revealed a statistically significant relationship between the UCE marks and the total mark in the speaking ability, listening ability and reading ability respectively, indicating that the higher the performance at UCE the better the performance on the three language abilities on the GLCA testing tool.

On the contrary however, the results indicated that the relationship between UCE marks and the writing abilities was no statistically significant, indicating that a high performance at UCE did not necessarily mean a high performance on the writing ability on the GLCA assessment tool. This finding is in line with Kitao's (1996) argument that, "If you decide to test writing in a controlled way and in a way that can be graded objectively, you must do so in a way that does not necessarily reflect how the writing is used in the real world."

After the ANOVA results had revealed that there were variations in the contribution of the different indicators of language ability to performance in that particular language ability, there was need to find out which indicators contributed more than the others. A paired sample t-test at 5% significance level revealed the differences in the contribution of each indicator to performance in the respective language abilities. The paired sample t-test results indicate that, for all the four language abilities, the differences in the mean performance between the different indicators and the respective language ability were not statistically significant; implying that performance in that particular language ability can be equally attributed to all of its indicators.

The aim of this study was to establish whether there was any relationship between performance on UCE and GLCA testing tool. Overall, the findings suggest that performance on UCE significantly predicted performance on GLCA. This contradicts the earlier assertion that learners who may appear to be good performers in Ugandan tests may not necessarily be able to communicate well in real-life German communicative situations.

Testing of learners' German language abilities, therefore, if it has to involve the use of language in the real world must involve such forms of exercises that reflect the way language is put to use in the real world situation. The implication of this is that the teacher has to be aware of the ways in which the language s/he is assessing can be put to use (communicative competence), and accordingly develop a testing model which is suitable to the existing situation.

VI. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study revealed a positive relationship between learners' prior performance on UCE and GLCA in particular on the abilities of listening, reading and speaking. This implies that a learner performing better on UCE was also more likely to perform well on GLCA aforementioned language abilities. On the other hand, there was a negative relationship between learners' prior performance on UCE and GLCA on the writing abilities. A further analysis of the contribution of each of the four language abilities to learners' performance in the GLCA revealed a significant relationship between performance in the speaking and the listening ability, speaking and the reading ability, speaking and the writing ability, listening and the reading ability, listening and the writing ability, and speaking and the writing ability. This implies that a good performance in each one ability meant that the learner was able to perform similarly well in the other ability. This *research* makes its *contribution* by exposing gaps in the way testing of learners' GLCA is carried out in a Ugandan situation where German is not widely spoken and where there are very few opportunities, if

any, for learners to practice the use of German outside the classroom environment, and where the environment is characterized by factors that do not favor communicative language teaching and testing.

Finally results suggest that much as the teachers of German in Uganda have to take into consideration the needs and expectations of the final examination, they have to ensure that testing serves the communicative needs of their learners. This implies that teachers need to constantly make analysis of the communicative needs of their learners, and that all testing must be contextualized in terms of why, where, and for what purpose they are being undertaken. Consequently, teacher training institutions need to emphasize the requirements for communicative language testing and train teachers in the design and administration of communicative language tests.

Similarly, Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) must reform its German language examinations so as to measure for candidates' communicative language abilities needed in the real life situation. In case of tests of reading and listening comprehension, texts need to be got from authentic sources that reflect the use of the German language in real-life situation. These may include sources like television, e.g. talk shows, news programs, advertisements etc. or from radio e.g. news, weather reports, etc. Listening texts should be recorded by native speakers of the German language with a clearly well-articulated speech and a moderate speed. Similarly, tasks for the writing ability tests should be formulated in such a way that they provide more information about the context of writing, i.e. the recipient and the purpose of the text. Appropriate text types are: letters, applications, and post cards among others. Instead of testing learners to write a picture story, learners should be introduced to writing tasks that reflect a purpose as it is in real-life communication such as letter writing, and filling forms.

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