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## TABLE OF THE CONTENTS

### Papers Published Under Volume VI, 2022 (Open Access)

Issue-31, May 2022

1. **EFL Value in Scientific and Commercial Stream Students in Morocco: The Case of Preparatory Classes (CPGE)**

**Youssef Laaraj**

**Crossref/DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.54850/jrspelt.6.31.001>

\*\*\*\*\*

2. **The Impact of the Genre-based Approach in the Comprehension of Literature-in-English Lessons**

**Solomon E. Mangywat & Victor J. Meshak**

**Crossref/DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.54850/jrspelt.6.31.002>

\*\*\*\*\*

3. **The Impacts of EFL Teachers' Behaviour on Their Learners' Performance: Case of Secondary Schools in Beninese Context**

**Pedro Marius Egounleti**

**Crossref/DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.54850/jrspelt.6.31.003>

\*\*\*\*\*

4. **The Symbolic Representation of the African Community 'Tree' and the Expression of Nostalgia for Culture Restoration in Six African Poems**

**Andrew and Douglas**

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\*\*\*\*\*

5. **The Theory of Ecofeminism vis-a-vis Margaret Atwood's Surfacing**

**Dr. Jasleen Kaur Nanda**

**Crossref/DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.54850/jrspelt.6.31.005>

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6. **Using Technologies to Improve Students' Performance in EFL Classrooms: Teachers' and Learners' Opinions in Some Secondary Schools in Benin**

**Dr. Hindeme Ulrich Orlando Sèna**

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## The Impacts of EFL Teachers' Behaviour on Their Learners' Performance: Case of Secondary Schools in Beninese Context

Pedro Marius Egounleti ([pedmareg@yahoo.fr](mailto:pedmareg@yahoo.fr))

Lecturer, Department of English, University of Abomey Calavi, Republic of Bénin



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**Abstract:** *This study aims at attempting to examine the impacts of EFL teachers' behaviour on their learners' achievements in order to suggest some strategies conducive to effective EFL teaching and learning. To reach this goal, quantitative and descriptive research methods have been used; questionnaire sheets have been designed and sent to 90 EFL teachers and to 600 students. Moreover, class observations have been conducted in 10 secondary schools. The data collected reveal a positive correlation between teachers' behaviour and students' academic achievement. These data also indicate an array of teacher behaviour which impacts students' performance such as teachers' level of expectation on their learners' achievement, teacher's constant positive mood, teacher's positive attitude towards teaching and students, avoiding using punishment in EFL classes, teacher's compassion and care for their students, use of congratulating and motivating words in EFL classes, developing friendly interactions with students and maintaining discipline in classroom. In order to create an effective teaching and learning environment, this study recommends re-structuring the learning environment by establishing an intellectual, psychological and physical environment that enables all students to act and react productively. Teachers should also regularly provide positive feedback and make suggestions which are helpful for students' character building.*

**Keywords:** EFL, Learners' Performance, Teachers' Behaviour

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1-Statement of Problem

The first and most important role of teaching capability is to favor the learners to put forward their positive anticipation in order to encourage themselves to learn (Sprinthall, 2007). Effectiveness of teaching depends on some behaviors of teachers like appreciating and encouraging students, respect for student personality, social equality and interaction, professional enthusiasm and motivation, professional occupational or attitudes and reflective interaction (Strong, 2007). Improvement in competencies of teacher is either possible when a teacher properly planned for teaching, maintain classroom environment and maintain personality (Wilson, 2011&Alexander, 1998).

Due to the behaviors of some teachers, learners are affected either positively or negatively. According to Thorndike (1963), students over achievements and under achievements are indirectly affected by their teacher's code of conduct and behaviour. These factors included motivation, attitude, teaching methodologies and teachers themselves. Teachers' positive and negative behavior plays a crucial role in the academic achievement of student (Alexander, 1998 &Herson, 2003). The meaning of behavior is to administer oneself or behave in what we do especially in response to outside motivation (UNESCO, 1986). Behavior is apparent and distinguishable phenomenon. Teaching is a strategy and manipulation of a situation in which there are obstacles where individual tries to control the problem from where he learns (Iwbal, 1996).

In Beninese educational system, the impacts of EFL teachers' behaviour on English proficiency skills have not yet been investigated. Besides, it is observed from educational statistics and official reports that EFL students are not encouraged and appreciated by their teachers (Kottin, 2001). Moreover, in secondary schools, an ever-increasing number of EFL learners drop English language classes in the detrimental of science classes such as mathematics, physics and biology (Hindémé,2020&Hylant,1993).

Teachers and administrators should be conscious of the role played by them in the present context of education. Their role and behavior are not fixed but rotate around the changes taking place in a society and the educational system itself. Students at beginning age of their education can well be taught and trained by giving them trust, confidence and positive behavior (Watson, 2003&Boardman, 2007). This is what leads to work on this topic entitled, "Exploring the impacts of EFL teachers' behaviour on their learners' performance: Case of secondary schools in Beninese context".

It tries to discuss the relationship between teacher's behaviour and language learners' achievements in order to pen down some suitable suggestions likely to help improve their behaviour and attitude towards English language learners in the educational system in Benin.

### 1.2-Significance of the Study

The main aim of this study is to investigate the impacts of teachers' behaviors on English proficiency of EFL learners. It is also to provide relevant data about the difficulties faced by EFL teachers during teaching at school. And it is also to make recommendations and suggestions that possibly could help teachers adopt positive behaviour conducive to an effective EFL classroom.

### 1.3. Research Questions

A research question is an answerable inquiry into a specific concern. It is the initial step in a research project. So, the following research questions will help as the first step in the research project.

1. What are the impacts of EFL teachers' behaviour on their learners?
2. What are EFL teachers' behaviour conducive to effective teaching and learning?

### 1.4. Purpose of Study

The general objective of this research work is to find out the impact of teachers' behaviors on their learners' English performance. And the specific objectives are:

- analyze the attitude and interests of EFL teachers and learners towards teaching and learning process
- discover what are the factors responsible that can conduct to an effective behaviour of an EFL teacher

## 2. Literature Review

Literature review is a written summary of journal, books, and others documents that describes the past and current state of information on the topic of a research study.

### 2.1. Definition of Behaviour

Behaviour is a response, which an individual shows to his environment at different times. Various authors have defined it in different words:

Taneja (1989) stated that the meaning of behaviour is what we do especially in response to outside stimuli.

### 2.2. Categories of Behaviour

Das (1993) has suggested seven categories of behavior, which are as under:

1. Response Behaviour, it means the response which students display in reaction to some action or motivation. Some EFL students are highly motivated and learn language more quickly than others.

2. Association Behaviour is observed when behaviour change occurs due to some kind of association.
3. Multiple discrimination, it is the change in behaviour due to change into different stimuli. When the learner dislikes the teacher ultimately, he/she starts disliking every subject being taught by the teacher. It means that person's behaviour is the combination of discriminations based on sex, racial or ethnic origin.
4. Behaviour Chains is mentioned when, during language learning and teaching process, different behaviors are linked together and result in success or failure of language learning.
5. Class Concept Behavior is observed when behaviour moves from parents to child and is modified or changed by the teacher in class according to the needs of the learners.
6. Principle is observed when learners show better response to positive attitude rather than negative.
7. Strategies are used by teachers for teaching a second language to students and by learners to learn.

He further highlighted the school characteristics that positively affect the students, behaviour and their academic achievements. Both good standards set by the institution and good behaviour models provided by the teachers had positive effects.

### 2.3. Criteria for Effective Behaviour

Sybouts & Wendel (1994) gave criteria for an effective behaviour of the teacher after reviewing of more than seventy-four research studies, which are as under:

1. Demonstrating a commitment to academic goals.
2. Creating a climate of high expectation.
3. Functioning as an instructional leader.
4. Being a forceful and dynamic leader.
5. Consulting effectively with others.
6. Creating order and discipline.
7. Marshalling resources.
8. Using time well.
9. Evaluating results.

Professional attitude of a teacher during teaching in the classroom can be judged from his/her personality, knowledge, communication and management skills (Chek, & Pandey 2016). Throughout the history of social psychology: attitude is usually defined as a disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to an object, person, institution or event. Attitude is a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a direct influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related (Collier and Slater 1987; Brown, 2004; Watson, 2003). Attitude towards study has a great contribution in academic achievement and good study pattern.

### 2.4. Role of Teachers in English Classrooms.

In a classroom a teacher has to perform many roles. While teaching in language class, the teacher has to perform the role of manager, guide or counselor. Classroom management is based on the teacher's behaviour and the achievement of teaching aims. The effective and successful conducted classrooms

contribute to students' success. Many research studies conducted in order to find out the influence of teachers' behaviour on students' achievements because teachers not only influence students inside the classroom but also outside the class as well. According to Mouly (1978) the totality of teachers' role and functions can be categorized in three parts:

- Academic Functions
- Professional Function
- Social Function

**Guide:** Teachers can better guide their students because they are well aware of their academic background and abilities. According to their abilities and skills, they can suggest suitable methods and materials for learning.

**Counselor:** Due to the close observation of students in educational settings, a teacher can develop different programs according to the aptitude, interest and abilities of the students.

**Disciplinarian:** Teacher has to maintain the discipline of the class but also of the institute as well. According to Kirly (2007), effective teachers' behaviors are reflected through the following qualities:

**Custodian:** It is the responsibility of the teacher to take good care of the students during the classroom and after the class during their stay in the campus or school.

**Evaluation:** An ideal teacher uses different techniques of evaluation and a teacher is fully aware of the objectivity, reliability, validity and usability of the test items.

**Curriculum Developer:** Teacher works as a member of the board of studies and takes part in the development of the course for the EFL classroom.

**Lifelong Learner:** An effective teacher continuously updates his/her knowledge and skills because a teacher never gets stratified with his/her extent of knowledge.

**Extension Worker:** Teacher has to perform many roles while staying a t classroom in community.

**Researcher/Innovator:** Teachers are aware of the fact that the modern world is being changed rapidly and the educational needs of learners are also being changed with time to time. Teacher tries to match his teaching styles with the learning styles of the students.

**Organizer of Co-Curricular Activities:** In order to build students' character; teachers effectively manage and organize co-curricular activities to help in developing friendly relationships between teacher and student not only in class but outside as well because of their interaction.

**Administrator:** Teacher has to have the ability to control the class because he has to take attendance of his class and perform all administrative duties like lecturers, supervision and manage the record of the students.

### 3. Research Methodology

This research work took place in mid-January 2021 in the Atlantic region of Bénin republic. The participating subjects are EFL teachers and students of state-owned and private secondary schools. The research instruments used in this study are: Questionnaire addressed to both teachers and students; and Class observation process of the present study

#### 3.1. Questionnaire

According to Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary of Hornby, Q.S.2015, questionnaire is a written list of questions that are answered by a number of people so that information can be collected from the

answers. It is the most important instrument that I was used so as to ease the data collection to both teachers and learners. Robson (2002:249) recommends that we use simple English in questionnaires to keep our language short and concise. The questionnaire should also look simple to fill in. It has played a significant role in the collection of data in the frame of this research work.

### 3.2. Questionnaire to EFL Teachers

It was used to assess EFL teachers' perspective about their behavioral influence on students' language achievements. The participating teachers were asked about their teaching experience and qualification, their perspective about language teaching, their general attitude towards teaching and their behavior towards learners. 100 questionnaire sheets were distributed but 90 teachers filled them in and sent them back to the research team.

### 3.3. Questionnaire to Students

The students were asked questions that will help to know about their own performance in English classes as well as their appreciation of their teachers' behaviour and their teaching strategies and practices. In this perspective, 650 questionnaire sheets were distributed to EFL students and 600 answered.

### 3.4. Classroom Observation

Classroom observation is one the instruments used. According to Google (2020), it is defined as “a process by which the observer sits in on one or more classroom sessions, records the instructor's teaching practices and student actions, and then meets the instructor to discuss the observations”. The importance of this instrument is to permit researchers to study the processes of education in naturalistic settings (Rivers, 1981). It provides more detail and precise evidence than other data sources. And it also stimulates changes and verifies how these changes occurred. Herb and Walberg (1991; 1995), *have consistently found that a number of classroom observations significantly relate to students' academic achievement*. In the process of this research, ten (10) classes were visited during the surveys.

### 3.5. Data Analysis

The study is carried out through both quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Quantitative data were tabulated and analyzed and qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis and quits by gathering the answers provided by respondent into various themes according to the aims of the research work. Thus, descriptive statistical techniques such as frequencies, percentage were used to analyze the quantitative data. Finally, data was presented by the use of tables.

## 4. Presentation and Analysis of the Results

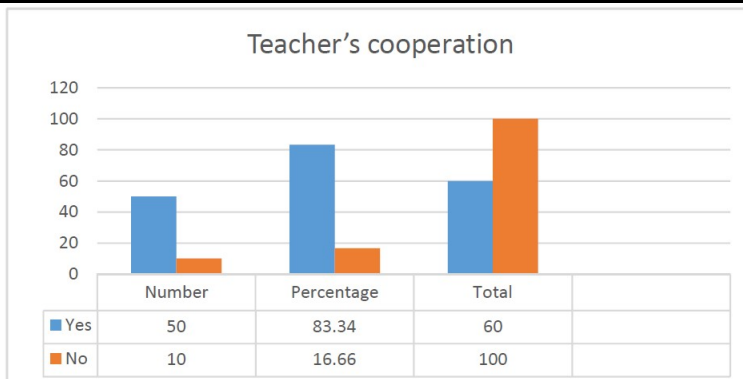
### 4.1. Findings Obtained from Students Questionnaires

The findings obtained from students' questionnaire are presented through tables and graphs.

Question	Frequency	Number	Percentage %
Is your teacher punctual?	Always	560	93.33
	Often	30	5
	Rarely	10	1.67
TOTAL		600	100

**Table 1: Teacher's punctuality according to their students**

The table shows that 93.33% of the respondents' students asserted that their teacher is always punctual whereas 5% asserted often and 1.67% said rarely. Obviously, the majority of the respondents believe that teachers take their classes regularly.



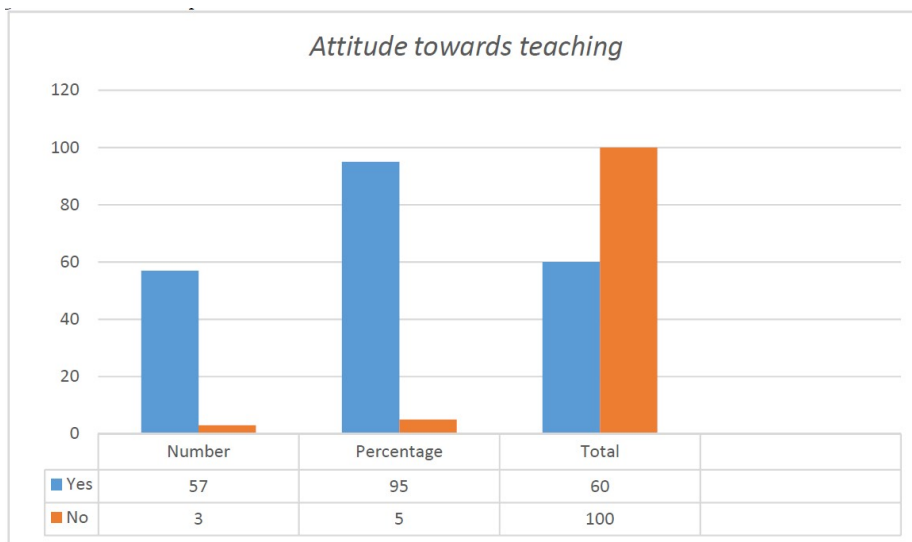
**Figure1: Teacher's cooperation**

This figure shows that 83.34 %of the respondent' students asserted Yes that their teacher tries to understand their problems whereas 16.66% said No. To sum up, most respondents believe that teachers cooperate with their students.

Question	Frequency	Number	Percentage%
Is your teacher always in good mood?	Yes	450	76.27
	No	140	23.73
Total		590	100

**Table2: Teacher's mood in classroom**

The table shows that 76.27% of students' respondents claimed that their teachers are always in a good mood whereas 23.73% said the contrary. So, that is to say teachers are most of the time in a good mood.



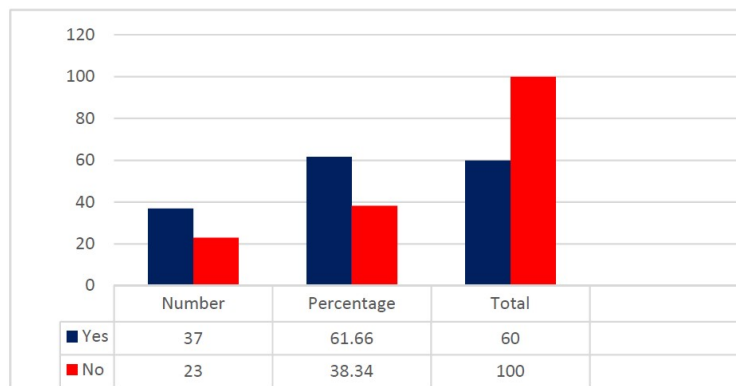
**Figure 2: Teacher's attitude towards teaching**

The figure shows that 95% asserted Yes and 5% No. Obviously, the majority of the, according to this figure, respondents believe that their teachers encourage their learners to make a mistake.

Question	Frequency	Number	Percentage%
Does your teacher punish you when you come late?	Always	70	11.66
	Often	170	28.34
	Rarely	360	60
Total		600	100

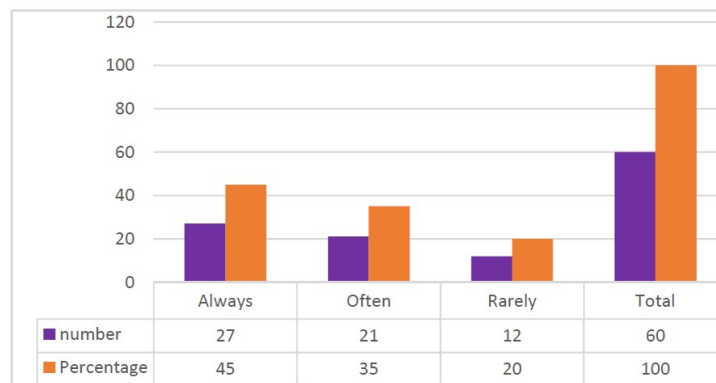
**Table3: Use of punishment in classrooms**

The table above shows that 11.66% of students asserted always, while 28.34% often and 60% rarely. Through this table one can notice that teachers rarely punish learners for coming late in class.



**Figure3: Discriminative attitude of teachers towards students**

The figure shows that 61.66% of students' say that their teachers treat them the same way contrary to the remaining (38.34%) who declare that their instructors do not give them an equal opportunity to participate in classroom activities. Obviously, the majority of the respondents believe that their teachers treat them the same way.



**Figure4: Teachers compassion and care for their students**

Figure 4 indicates that 45% of students asserted that teachers always treat them with affection, whereas 35% asserted often and 20% asserted rarely. It is noticed that the majority of students support that their teachers treat them with affection and care.

Question	Frequency	Number	Percentage %
Does your teacher	Always	100	16.66

abuse you for not doing homework or other activities?	Often	160	26.67
	Rarely	300	50
Total		600	100

**Table4: Use of abusing words by teachers in classes**

This table shows that 16.66% of students' respondents asserted that teachers always abuse them for not doing homework and other activities, while 26.67% asserted often and 50% say rarely. Obviously, the majority of the respondents show that teachers rarely abuse their learners for not doing homework and other activities.



**Figure 5: Motivation by teachers according to students**

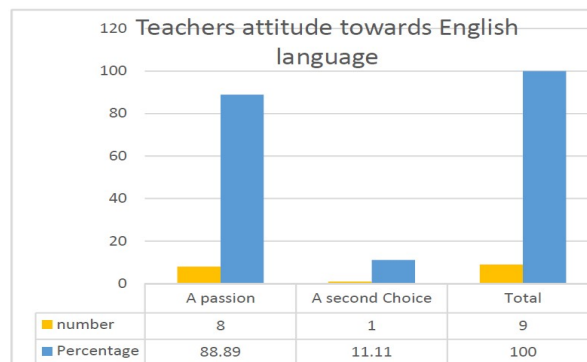
In this figure, it is noticed that 100% of the students say that their teachers always motivate them during the activities performed in classrooms.

#### 4.2. Findings Obtained from Teachers' Questionnaire

Question	Frequency	Number	Percentage%
Do you like your teaching work?	Yes	90	100
	No	00	00
Total		90	100

**Table5: Teaching Professionalism**

This table shows that all the participating (100%) EFL teachers like teaching. This indicates these teachers' determination to share their knowledge with learners.



**Figure6: Teachers' attitudes towards English language teaching**

This figure shows that language teaching is a passion for 88.89% of teachers, whereas it is a second choice for the remaining 11.11%. Obviously, the majority of the respondents believe that language

teaching is a passion for teachers. This may be considered as the major cause of their love for teaching as shown in table 5. The table below presents techniques used by teachers to maintain students' attention in their classes.

Question	Frequency	Number	Percentage%
How do you maintain student attention during lesson class?	By using gesture	40	44.44
	By using some key words	10	11.11
	By being flexible	30	33.34
	All	10	11.11
Total		90	100

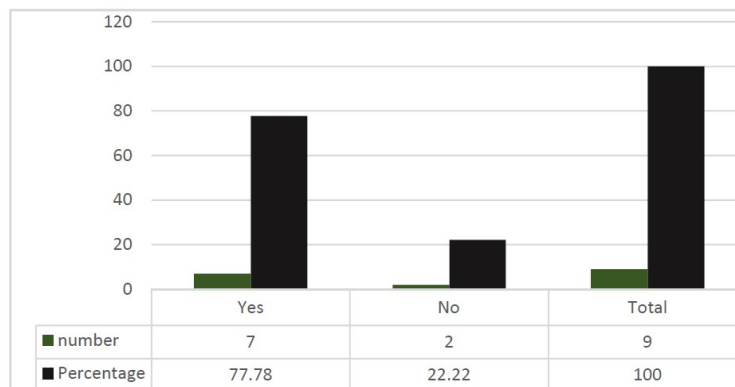
**Table 1: Maintaining learners' attention**

Table 6 indicates that 44.44% of the teachers asserted that they use gesture to maintain learners' attention while 11.11% use keywords; 33.34% say they show flexibility and 11.11% use all. Obviously, majority of the respondent teachers use gesture to maintain learners' attention during lessons.

Question	Frequency	Number	Percentage%
Do you notice that some of your learners are not used to following your course?	Yes	70	77.78
	No	20	22.22
Total		90	100

**Table 7: Students' disruptive attention**

Table 7 indicates that 77.78% of the teachers asserted that some learners are not used to following their course, whereas 22.22% said 'No'. Thus, the survey reveals that the majority of teachers notice that some learners don't follow their course. EFL students' lack of attention is a reality in EFL classes as confirmed by the majority of the teachers. The figure 7 below displays the relationship between teachers and their students in EFL classes.



**Figure 7: Relationship between students and teachers**

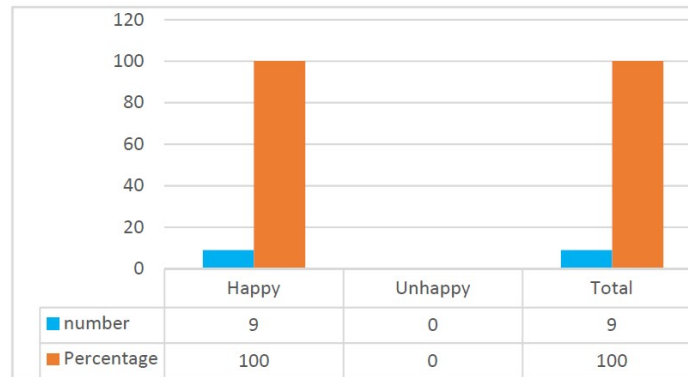
As stated in figure 7, 77.78% of the teachers have a professional and friendly relationship with students, whereas 22.22% of the teachers affirm having a totally professional relation with students. The table below tries to investigate how often EFL teachers motivate their learners during EFL classes.

Question	Frequency	Number	Percentage %
Do you try to motivate your learners when you notice that they are	Always	80	88.89
	Often	10	11.11
	Rarely	0	0

demotivated?			
Total		90	100

**Table 8: Frequency of motivating students according to EFL teachers**

Table 8 shows that 88.89% out of 90 teachers ‘always’ motivate their learners, while 11.11% of them stated ‘often’. Obviously, the majority of teachers always motivate learners when they notice that they are demotivated.



**Figure 8: Student’s emotion**

In this figure, it is noticed that 100% of the teachers say that their students feel happy once they attend EFL classes. Through this table, students’ determination to learn English language is noticeable.

Question	Frequency	Number	Percentage%
Is there a total discipline in your EFL class?	Yes	10	11.1
	No	50	55.56
	Always	30	33.34
Total		90	100

**Table 9: Discipline in EFL classes**

This table shows that only 11.1% of the respondent teachers affirm that there is a constant discipline during their classes, while 55.56% say “No” and 33.34% answer ‘Always’. Obviously, majority of the respondents believe that there is not total discipline in EFL classes.

### 4.3 Data Collected during Class Observation

In the course of the study ten (10) EFL classes are visited within three (3) weeks. During the visits, in each class, five (5) students are identified as the ‘low achievers’ and (5) other students as ‘high achievers’. The class observation aims at examining teachers’ behaviour with their learners, the kinds of student-teacher interactions by focusing on the interactions between teachers and the 5 students considered as ‘high achievers’ and those described as the ‘low achievers’.

#### Negative Interactions

- The teacher does not give the same response opportunities to students.
- The teacher does not say a word or make a gesture after the student’s response.
- Teachers sometimes do not take into account the ones that are not following.

#### Positive Interactions

- Equal response opportunities are offered to all the students.
- The teacher corrects or agrees with the student's answer through gestures or words.
- The teacher is attentive and helpful to students individually and goes near them.
- The teacher praises the satisfactory answer or work.
- The teacher is courteous.
- The teacher allows enough time for the learner's answer.
- The teacher gives compliments or shows interest toward all the students.
- The teacher gives clues or rephrases the students in difficulties.
- The teacher asks questions that students are able to answer and ask for their opinions.
- The teacher encourages the students.
- The teacher is patient, tolerant.

#### Impacts of Teachers' Behaviour on their Students' Attitudes

- After observation, it can be noticed that teachers don't generally have negative interactions with their students, positive are more than negative ones.
- Teachers' behaviour is determined by factors such as the student's physical appearance, dress, gender and previous academic results.
- Students' achievement depends on external factors that are not under their controls or their own abilities.
- Teacher places or classifies students as either 'low, middle or high' achievers.
- Teachers behaviour influences students 'performance in class .
- Teachers' behaviour affects relationships with their students, what they learn and students' perceptions of their own ability.
- Teachers contribute to students' achievement, and students behave according to their teachers' behaviour.

#### 4.4. Discussion of the Results

This section attempts to answer the two research questions

##### 4.4.1. The impacts of EFL teachers' behaviour on their learners 'performance

According to data collected through questionnaire addressed to students and teachers and class observation, EFL teachers' behaviour significantly impact their learners 'performance. Through table 9, the majority of the participating teachers declare that there is no total discipline in their EFL classes. This is obviously justified by their incapacity to maintain discipline as it has been observed during the class observation where "teachers sometimes do not take into account students who are not following or those who are chatting". This finding is in line with Mohanty &Pani (1979) who find out that "healthy *teacher-pupil interaction has a positive impact on the learners' discipline and achievement*". Another effect of teacher behaviour on students' attitude is through figure 8 which indicates that the large majority of learners become 'happy' after English class. This finding is in accordance with the study by Brophy (1989) who sets approximately 10 teachers' behaviour conducive to promising relationships to desirable

student performance. Five of these behaviors have been consistently supported by research studies over the past two decades (Strevens, 1982 & Brophy 1989). Other five have had solid support and appeared logically related to effective teaching.

There are many factors which influence students' performance in the classroom and the most influential factor is teachers' behaviour towards learners. Effective teaching need a lot of time, good professional skills and personal skills to be gained inside and outside the classroom. While teaching in a class, teachers perform a role of manager, guide and counselor. Successful classroom management is based on teacher's behaviour and the achievement of teaching aims. The effectively and successfully conducted classrooms contribute to students' success.

#### 4.4.2. Teachers behaviour conducive to effective EFL teaching and learning

This study provides a battery of attitudes, roles of teacher behaviour, which results in an effective teaching and learning in EFL classes. These qualities are shown in table1, table2, table3, table4, table 5, table 6 and table 8. These potentials are concerned with punctuality in EFL classes (table1), teacher 'constant positive mood (table2), teacher positive attitude towards teaching and students (figure2), avoiding using punishment in EFL classes (table3), teacher's compassion and care for their students (figure4), use of congratulating and motivating words by teachers (table 4 and figure 5), developing friendly interactions with students (figure7) and maintaining discipline in classroom (table9). These findings are in conformity with (Slavin, 1995;

Smith (1991) and Nugent (2009) suggest that by creating healthy relationships, teachers can motivate students during the learning process, which is one of the main objectives in a teacher's practice. Nugent also proposes that in order to do this, teachers have to be aware of the students' emotional and academic needs. By these means, the creation of positive relationships between teacher and students would be easier. In the same vein, (Lenz, 2007 & Larson, 2011) suggests that instructors create a friendly teacher-student relationship which has an important impact on students' attitudes and achievements, as well as the relationships that students create inside the school. According to Giles (2008), it is during the first lesson of a course when both students and teacher establish the bases for this relationship. The greetings, the rules and what is expected from each other are discussed.

Furthermore, according to a study performed by Marzano and Marzano (2003), it is where they can establish the procedures and rules related to the interaction and behavior inside the classroom which comprise the basis for a positive relationship.

## 5. Recommendations and Suggestions

### 5.1- Recommendations

The data collected help to make the following some recommendations. They mainly go towards teachers and educational authorities and government.

#### 5.1.2. Some Recommendations to Educational Authorities and Government

Beninese educational system should permit and even encourage the learner and teacher to reach their highest rates of achievement in their own roles. This can be achieved through a generalization of the student-centered methods and "teachers' behaviour" principles.

Beninese educational authorities should improve the learning and teaching of the English language by providing opportunities to the teachers so that they can attend seminars, refreshing courses, in-service training, professional workshops oriented to "Teachers' behaviour and students achievement" in order to enable these teachers to meet their professional requirements.

To enable teachers to have the pedagogical control of their classes, it is reduce the size of EFLclasses to the rage of 20 to 25 students per class. EFL teachers must be sent to English speaking countries for immersion courses. Moreover, school and families must be linked together through the association of student's parents and school administrators.

## 6. Conclusion

This study addresses the impacts of EFL teachers' behaviour on their learners' performance in the secondary schools of Atlantic area. It attempts to examine the effects of EFL teachers' behaviour on their learners' performance so as to suggest some strategies likely to create effective EFL teaching and learning. To achieve this goal, to types of questionnaire have been designed and sent to 90 EFL teachers and to 600 students. Furthermore, class observations have been conducted in 10 secondary schools. The data collected indicate a range of teacher behaviour influencing students' performance such as teachers' level of expectation on their learners' achievement, teacher' constant positive mood, teacher positive attitude towards teaching and students, avoiding using punishment in EFL classes, teacher's compassion and care for their students, use of congratulating and motivating words in EFL classes, developing friendly interactions with students and maintaining discipline in classroom.

In addition, the collected data help to establish that the more teachers are academically and professionally qualified, the more positive behaviour they develop in themselves and in their classes. To sum it up the whole study shows a positive correlation between teachers' behaviour and students' academic achievement. In order to create an effective teaching and learning environment, this study recommends structuring the learning environment by establishing an intellectual, psychological and physical environment that enables all students to act and react productively .As such, teachers should regularly provide positive feedback and make suggestions which are helpful for students 'character building.

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