

ReSciLac

Revue Pluridisciplinaire
ISSN : 1840-8001

1^{er} semestre 2022
(Juin 2022, vol.1)

Université d'Abomey-Calavi
Laboratoire des Sciences du Langage et de la Communication (LaSciLCom)
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Preuve de l'indexation

- <http://www.worldcat.org/title/rescilac-revue-des-sciences-du-langage-et-da-la-communication/oclc/957341200>

- <https://searchworks.stanford.edu/view/11844535>

Université d'Abomey-Calavi
Faculté des Lettres, Langues, Arts et Communication
Laboratoire des Sciences du Langage et de la Communication
UR-02-SODYLARY / UAC – 2022

ReSciLaC N°15, vol.I
Revue pluridisciplinaire

I^{er} semestre 2022 (juin), vol.I

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Présentation

ReSciLaC (Revue des Sciences du Langage et de la Communication) est une revue du Laboratoire des Sciences du Langage et de la Communication (LaSciLCom), coordonnée par l'Unité de Recherches en Sociolinguistique, Dynamique des Langues et Recherches en Yoruba (UR-02-SODYLARY) de l'Université d'Abomey-Calavi (UAC). ReSciLaC est une revue pluridisciplinaire qui accueille des contributions abordant un grand nombre de champs d'études des sciences humaines et sociales.

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MOTIVATING EFL TEACHERS FOR LEARNERS' OPERATIVE ACHIEVEMENT IN BENIN

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Abstract

The process of language teaching and learning poses several problems nowadays in general due to the unpleasant living conditions in Benin and especially the francophone context of this country. The global objective of this study is to examine the role of EFL teachers inside and outside their classes in connection with their interest in the teaching profession. The instrumentation comprises the questionnaire to EFL teachers by SMS, phone calls, Facebook and WhatsApp messages, in addition to the interviews. The data collected have been transcribed and scrutinized in view of that, revealing most EFL instructors do not humanize their teaching so as to motivate and captivate their learners' attention for true involvement in learning. As suggestion, teachers are mainly invited to encourage their trainees by regularly providing them with necessary tools and materials for language operational mastery.

Keywords : Benin, English, learning, motivation, teaching.

Résumé

Le processus d'enseignement et apprentissage des langues pose plusieurs problèmes de nos jours en général, à cause des conditions de vie désagréables au Bénin et particulièrement le contexte francophone de ce pays. L'objectif global de cette étude est d'examiner le rôle des enseignants d'Anglais, langue étrangère à l'intérieur et en dehors des salles de cours, en connexion avec leur intérêt à la profession enseignante. L'instrumentation comporte le questionnaire aux enseignants d'Anglais par des SMS, des appels téléphoniques, des messages par Facebook et WhatsApp, en plus des interviews. Les données collectées ont été transcrites et scrutées en conséquence et révèlent que la plupart des instructeurs n'humanisent guère leur enseignement en vue de motiver et captiver l'attention des apprenants pour leur vrai dévouement à l'apprentissage. Comme suggestion, les enseignants sont principalement invités à encourager leurs formés en leur fournissant régulièrement les outils et matériels nécessaires à la maîtrise effective de la langue.

Mots clés : Bénin, Anglais, apprentissage, motivation, enseignement.

Introduction

Doing a job successfully depends on the ways the employee is motivated, and due to the fact that the teaching profession is not always encouraged in African countries. Consequently, EFL teachers need to love their teaching more because of so many barriers they come across in EFL classes. Singh (2020, p. 3) has said : “*All of us want to become something in our future and we serve our nation in different ways.*” Teachers are used to sharing their love about their profession. In order to share all that they love, they need to humanise their teaching job by making it more pleasant and suitable or more humane. This humanisation is particularly required in Beninese secondary schools so as to be perpetuated in the national universities of Benin for the adequate target language teaching and learning.

The global objective of the current study is consequently to put an emphasis on the role teachers play in their students’ learning process, which role depends on the educator’s humanising his/ her profession. The research questions are presented as follows : - How can the English language teaching be improved in a country’s educational system? - What is the place of the humanised EFL teaching profession in the life of learners? These research questions have been discussed after deep comments of the citations and the findings of the study.

I. Literature Review

Teaching is difficult in under developing countries in general and in sub-Saharan African countries in particular. It is also undeniable that a job should be motivating and yield enough profit to workers. And this demonstration seems to be the fundamental reason why Singh, (2020, p. 3) has said : “Similarly, I want to become a teacher and want to make studies easier for students. I want to make a school where I can educate the poor free of cost. I have seen some children on the street; they beg and do dirty jobs. Children are the future of any nation, so we should handle them with care.”

In most African countries, the teaching profession just pays the bills and this category of workers have to organise themselves else way so as to do their job conveniently. They need to show their love for their teaching no matter the treatment they undergo from their governments. However, harsh living conditions cannot easily be borne by any workers worldwide. These harsh living conditions do not favour the peace of mind required for teaching languages and especially a foreign language like English. No matter the passion one has for something, lack of real motivation is worth fading it easily.

The demotivation teachers have, can affect their language teaching process. According to Teacher Network/the Guardian (2011, p. 1), “*Teaching is the best job. I enjoy every bit of my job. It has its ups and downs but on the whole it’s fulfilling when you help youngsters to leave school with decent grades and know they have a future.*” Teaching is passionate and must be rated more, especially EFL teaching in Beninese educational system for the real development of this country.

In addition, Zammit (2018, p. 1) declares “*I fell in love with teaching as a foreign language in the summer of 2002, when I used to teach during my university holidays. Little did I know then that, sixteen years later, I would still be as passionate about teaching English as I was that first summer.*” These behaviours show that when EFL teachers really humanise their teaching profession, they will fall in love with it and still dwell passionate during the retirement period. These lovely behaviours and pleasant atmosphere they are accustomed to during their career will even follow them until their retirement period.

This is to say that when they really love their work and do it well, it has a positive impact on their lives, their learners’ ones and establishes everlasting and favourably strong relationships. Teaching English effectively presents several advantages for teachers, who show this love to their learners adequately. When learners are really loved, they are taught conveniently and are interested in their learning process. This interest while strengthened can enable these learners to grasp their teachers’ explanations for their learning sake.

Furthermore, Yanitski (2019, p. 4), focusing on working passionately, states : “*I love my job. I have the privilege of working in a profession that makes a difference in the life of children of all ages. It is a rare day that I don’t go into work excited about new initiatives we are pursuing or the amazing work that is being done in the field of education.*”

This statement explains that teaching makes a difference in the life of children because these workers are doing an amazing job in the field of education. Teaching dwells an amazing and interesting job because of the celebrity teachers get through their profession exercise. This author is all the more convincing in his argumentation since what is said is right and can be justified in many ways. Teachers make a lot of changes in the life of their learners and when these changes are positive, this raises learners’ amazing attitudes everywhere they meet their teachers.

They are the ones to train all civil servants and part time workers without enough rewards in whatever domain. All they can benefit from is the continual fame they are given. Learners who recognise this successful teaching from their teachers do express their gratefulness. Consequently, they welcome their teachers joyfully anywhere and at any time and this joyful behaviour can create a pleasant atmosphere for language learning. This atmosphere can encourage the process of language learning and teaching, especially the English language teaching.

Corroborating the same line of ideas related to the humanisation of one’s profession, Yanitski (2019, p. 4) through the following argumentation, has clearly demonstrated by adding :

During my years of teaching, I had the opportunity to organise and lead several overseas tours in Europe with students. Travelling in a different country, experiencing life without their parents, taking in the culture and the history first hand-all truly expand students’ understanding of the world. On the Europe trip they tend to grow into young adults, and their parents are often impressed with this new-found maturity. How amazing to be a part of that growth journey.

This author has shown that EFL teaching offers so many opportunities to teachers and learners because on the one hand, they can travel all over the world and experience other people's realities through their different countries' tradition and culture and on the other hand, the growth and expansion of their understanding of the world without forgetting parents' joy and pride, and the teachers' amazement to contribute to such fruitful growth are not to be denied or doubted. Teachers in the absence of learners' parents during their stay overseas are compelled to play many other roles apart from their teaching role.

They will be the ones to care for these children far from their parents, by bringing them to hospitals when they fall sick by caring for their food hygiene, and several other needs they have in their new places. Teaching is very sensitive and teachers need to continuously undergo training and respect teaching rules and principles so as to succeed in their occupation. Taking into account ethical principles which are fundamental in the teaching process, it is up and down stated that

The core of teaching consists of four basic values : dignity, truthfulness, fairness and responsibility & freedom. All teaching is founded on ethics- whether it is the teacher-student relationship, pluralism or a teacher's relationship with their work. Dignity means respect for humanity. Truthfulness is one of the core values in teachers' basic task, which involves steering learners in navigating life and their environment. Honesty with oneself and others and mutual respect in all communication is a basic aspect of teachers' work. Fairness is important both when encountering individual learners and groups but also in the work community. Fairness involves in particular promoting equality and non-discrimination and avoiding favouritism. Teachers are entitled with their own values, but in their work, teachers' responsibility is tied to their basic task and its standards such as legislation and the curriculum.

(<https://www.oaj.fr/en/en>)

These four values are necessary for EFL teaching profession because when dignity is actually considered, EFL teachers respect their learners, their colleagues and the authorities. The true occurrence of dignity can establish mutual respect and whenever there is mutual respect in language classes, adequate learning takes place. In addition, truthfulness strengthen honesty with EFL teachers themselves and mutual respect in all communication. Whenever truthfulness is absent, the effective language teaching and learning rarely in classes and it is a waste of time.

Fairness allows teachers to promote equality and non-discrimination, and to avoid favouritism, so such teachers are responsible and should also promote freedom to some extent. Equality and non-discrimination are essential for the process of teaching and learning because learners are given equal chance and opportunity to learn. No hatred occurs in these classes no matter the behaviour, the ethnic group, the region, the religion, and the sex of the learner. The contrary can create some learners' frustration which impacts negatively their learning process. Louden et al.(2005, p. 25) give some opinion about the importance of classroom climate :

- *Classroom climate*
- *positive, safe, and warm*
- *high level of participation*
- *motivation and engagement in learning*
- *established classroom routines*

- *structured, safe and orderly*
- *sense of purpose*
- *active citizenship*
- *studentself regulation, leading to independence in learning*
- *pleasure.*”

Louden et al, (2005, p. 25) making a difference is caring about classroom climate and many other aspects, to influence positively children’s way of thinking and doing things in life. “Teachers help learners settle positive, safe, and warm” climate in their classrooms. They seek “high level of participation, motivation and engagement in learning.” Teachers need to mentor learners and maintain “established classroom routines,structured, safe and orderly, sense of purpose, active citizenship.”

The authors have added “active citizenship, student self-regulation, leading to independence in learning, pleasure.” They mean that teachers are not only to care for children’s education but also for several other parameters. Unfed and poor children’s health and well-being, for example, need to be cared about by educators. Teachers are life-long learners since they have to take professional development courses so as to renew their training periodically, keep on learning, and grow in knowledge continuously.

Teachers live with a deep sense of purpose that is to say that they have a reason for doing what they are intended to do, which helps bring value and meaning to their life. They want to ignite the spark of learning by demonstrating teachers are able to raise learners’ motivation to learners even though they hate school and are bored from the beginning of their studies. For a teacher to prove that he/she can make a difference is to impact learners positively throughout their years of schooling and beyond.

2. Methodology

Sheets of questionnaire have been administered to 20 EFL professionally trained teachers, and interviews conducted with 4 EFL teachers and with 2 inspectors and 4 university lecturers through phone calls, written and vocal WhatsApp messages. The different results and findings obtained have been presented and analysed in the following section.

The questionnaire addressed to EFL teachers enquires first about the impact of teachers’ motivation on their teaching job. Second, they are asked whether they can willingly exercise their profession without their employers’ improving their living conditions. The next questions are to know the different characteristics of humanising a profession. The diverse results are presentedbelow.

Through these interviews, the interviewees are expected on the one hand to give advantages of profession humanization, and on the other hand, they are asked to predict learners’ true performance and success in EFL learning whenever their EFL teachers love their job and treat their students humanely.

3. Results' Presentation and Analysis

The results of the study have been presented separately in the two tables below : table I for the questionnaire results and table 2 for the interview results, which are respectively analysed beneath each table.

Table I : Results of the questionnaire (Total : 20/100%)

Statements	Positive Answer/ Frequency (%)	Negative Answer/ Frequency (%)	Total (%)
Motivation and the teaching job	20/100	00/00	20/100
Working without improved living conditions	07/35	13/65	20/100
Love of work	20/100	00/00	20/100
Respect for oneself	20/100	00/00	20/100
Respect for authorities	20/100	00/00	20/100
Equal learners' consideration	20/100	00/00	20/100
Personal investment	20/100	00/00	20/100

Source : Field Research

All respondents recognise that the teaching occupation requires motivation. Only 07 (35 %) have accepted to do the job without the living conditions' improvement against 13 (65 %) who have refused. All of them have identified the characteristics enumerated in the questionnaire such love of work, respect for oneself, respect for authorities, equal learners' consideration, and personal investment.

Table 2 : Results of the Interviews (Total : 10/100%)

Advantages of profession humanisation	Positive Answer/ Frequency (%)	Negative Answer/ Frequency (%)	Total (%)
Learners' motivation and involvement	10/100	00/00	10/100
Learners' respect for their teachers	10/100	00/00	10/100
Learners' respect for their mates	10/100	00/00	10/100
Teachers' fame and respect in society	10/100	00/00	10/100
Learners' success in schooling	10/100	00/00	10/100
Learners' success in their life situation	10/100	00/00	10/100
Learners' celebrity	10/100	00/00	10/100

Source : Field Research

All of these respondents (10/100 %) have succeeded in identifying the different advantages of profession humanisation mentioned in table 2, above : Learners' motivation and involvement, learners' respect for their teachers, learners' respect for their mates, teachers' fame and respect in society, learners' success in schooling, learners' success in their life situation, learners' celebrity.

4. Discussion

The research questions have been framed to inquire about the way the English language teaching can be improved in a country's educational system without forgetting to emphasise the place of the humanised EFL teaching profession in the life of learners. In addition to the results discussion, these research questions have also been discussed accordingly. The results obtained from the questionnaire have shown that all respondents do rate the importance of motivation or financial reward in the teaching profession.

Only 35 % of them have accepted all kinds of sacrifices against 65 % who have rejected any spirit of sacrifices. They may be right since agreeing to exercise such a job is already a deep sacrifice. A hundred percent of them have distinguished the characteristics of job humanisation enumerated in the questionnaire. These results have built an existing evidence of the importance of the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language as Baugh et al. (2002, p.26) have explained the idea that today's English language is resulted from centuries of political development and social events which affected the English history and as a result they had an impact on the English language.

The underlying meaning of the research is chiefly the positive change of workers' behaviours in general as well as the ones of teachers and EFL teachers in particular towards their profession by increasing their love in the exercise of their job. The implications of this positive attitude can be high involvement, motivation, and interest of learners in learning activities. Learners will acquire abilities to defend themselves in all fields in their real life situations. The current study is important in such a way that it can contribute to the improvement of teaching and learning process in addition to the government's treatment of teachers. Learners will be accustomed to adequate learning strategies for the success of their EFL learning. Liu, (2010, p. 101) has said : "... language learning strategies are differentiated into the three primary categories cognitive, meta-cognitive and affective or social strategies..."

This study is prominent because when EFL teachers exercise their occupation in the most convenient ways, learners will employ these actions, plans, tactics, thoughts or behaviours regularly so that their comprehension, storage, retrieval, and use of information will become a reality for the profit of their EFL learning. For further explanations of what has just been said, learners who are well-treated, considered, paid careful attention to, students who are treated with dignity, truthfulness, fairness, and responsibility are likely to develop pleasant attitudes that are worth favouring their EFL learning and acquisition.

Truthfulness will strengthen honesty with EFL teachers themselves and mutual respect in all communication and fairness allows teachers to promote equality and non-discrimination, and to avoid favouritism, these ethical principles will create freedom at the level of students and they will be self-confident in their classroom settings and elsewhere. This self-confidence will certainly help their learning process.

The results from the interviews show that 100 % of the respondents have distinguished the different advantages of profession humanisation mentioned in table 2. Consequently, whenever learners are really motivated and involved in the learning process, their EFL learning process. Learners who respect their teachers as well as their mates, gain a lot things in their favour. Teachers who do their job adequately are famous and respected in society and they get a lot of advantages. To name some, we can pinpoint learners' success in schooling, learners' success in their life situation, and learners' celebrity are obvious.

The first research question attempts to find relevant answers to the way the English language teaching can be improved in a country's educational system. The first response is probably that language teaching cannot be effective if it does not take into account learners' interests. When language teachers focus their learners' attention on the teaching process, this learning and acquisition come true.

The second research question emphasises the place of the humanised EFL teaching profession in the life of learners. This humanisation brings positive changes in learners' schooling and real life situations. These changes trigger their successful language learning and especially EFL learning and acquisition. From these results, it has been drawn the lessons that teachers' attitudes do influence learners' behaviours in language learning which affect them all their life.

5. Suggestions

Beninese EFL teachers are invited to rate effectively their teaching profession and work more seriously for students' sake. Learners should receive encouragements and advice from their educators for successful EFL learning and acquisition. Teachers are to know their learners' names. They need to establish authority from the beginning of the school year by defining a code of conduct with them. They should plan their lessons adequately by always considering the learners' needs related each lesson. Teachers ought to identify learners' initial representations and take this background knowledge into account. Teachers should be fond of grammar, vocabulary, and students' culture so as to mind these appropriately during their teaching process. They should think continuously to the enrichment of textbooks. In Beninese secondary schools for example, there two types of textbooks for the time being : "Accompaniment documents" for the first cycle learners and "Go for English" for the second level learners.

These textbooks are not like Christians' Bible or Muslims' Coran but educators should constantly improve and adapt them to learners' interests. Teachers need not only to make their learners do activities of practice but they should also encourage activities of production. All language skills should be really taught so as to foster EFL learning. Games and competition should be delicately used in classes in order to eradicate learners'

frustration. Teachers should truly love their profession. They should be interested in their learners individually and distinctly. Direct communication needs to be favoured so as to raise their self-confidence. Teachers ought to be interested in their learners' problems and listen to them carefully for eventual helps. Teacher talking time should be considerably reduced, contrary to student talking time which should highly increase.

Conclusion

EFL teaching humanisation is of high prominence because it paths the right way to effective teaching justified by the revelation of learners' adequate language learning and acquisition through its successful use in classes and even outside classroom settings. It is fundamental for workers in general and the EFL teachers in particular to do their jobs with devotion and total enthusiasm in order to encourage learners' true success in the English language.

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