

Article 1

Investigating The Impact of Social Distancing and Mask Wearing In Covid-19 Context on Effective Classroom Management In Beninese Intermediate Efl Classes: Case Study Of Some Public and Private Secondary Schools in Avrankou Area



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Premières Journées d'Etudes Scientifiques
(en visioconférence)

26 - 27 Mai 2021



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Thème :

**L'ENSEIGNEMENT ET LA RECHERCHE DANS LE CONTEXTE DE LA COVID-19 :
NÉCESSITÉ D'UNE REDÉFINITION DE STRATÉGIES**

ACTES DU COLLOQUE

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(en visioconférence)

26 – 27 mai 2021

Thème : L'enseignement et la Recherche dans le contexte de la
COVID-19 : Nécessité d'une redéfinition de stratégies

SOUS LE PARRAINAGE DE

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1. Contexte et justification

La pandémie de la COVID-19 a indubitablement induit des changements radicaux et profonds dans nos habitudes de vie et dans nos relations interpersonnelles. Pour contenir cette pandémie, la plupart des pays ont adopté des stratégies de confinement total ou partiel, de couvre-feu ou de restrictions dans les déplacements de personnes. Les regards sont désormais tournés vers les écoles et universités en raison de leur forte implication dans la recherche et l'éducation, la formation et la socialisation de la personne humaine. Plusieurs écoles et centres de formation ont été fermés, des congés et vacances scolaires/universitaires ont été anticipés et la reprise n'a eu lieu que timidement.

En raison de cette pandémie, le monde de l'éducation en général et celui de l'enseignement supérieur en particulier connaissent actuellement de grands bouleversements en termes de comment trouver les meilleures méthodologies et stratégies d'enseignement-apprentissage qui conviennent aux directives d'endigement du virus qui a déjà, faut-il le rappeler, contaminé ou tué de

millions de personnes dans le monde. La massification des effectifs dans les formations universitaires classiques telles que les lettres, les langues, les sciences juridiques, les sciences économiques et de gestion, les sciences physiques, les sciences mathématiques et biologiques font craindre une contamination accrue si le virus venait à s'introduire dans nos amphithéâtres.

Heureusement, la vie continue malgré tout et l'enseignement et la recherche dans nos universités et centres de formation le doivent aussi pour assumer la postérité et la prospérité intellectuelles et économique aussi bien que le développement de nos pays. Il s'établit alors une crainte objective par rapport au respect des gestes barrières établis dans nos universités et centres de formations au regard des grands rassemblements en raison du manque d'infrastructures dans certains de nos lieux de formation. Un changement de paradigme dans la formation et la recherche s'avère donc nécessaire.

Plusieurs méthodes de recherche et stratégies pédagogiques aux moyens des Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication (TIC) ont été innovées. Il s'agit désormais de l'introduction et de la formation au E- teaching/learning, des cours à distance, de la redynamisation des Massive Online Open Courses (MOOC), de l'utilisation des réseaux sociaux comme canal de transmission du savoir, etc. En matière de recherche, les rencontres scientifiques, autrefois organisées en présentiel sont de plus en plus virtuelles avec l'utilisation des outils tels que Zoom, Google meet, Microsoft team, etc. comme moyens d'interaction.

Les difficultés rencontrées dans la mise en œuvre des stratégies et méthodes d'enseignement en période de la COVID-19 amènent les enseignants- chercheurs et chercheurs à repenser la recherche et la pédagogie universitaires pour ne pas briser la chaîne de la transmission du savoir dans l'espoir que la vie redevienne normale dans les jours à venir. Les *Journées d'Etudes Scientifiques* sont donc l'occasion d'explorer les synergies actuelles en termes de pratiques d'enseignement et de recherche pour une meilleure adaptabilité.

2. Objectifs

2.1. Objectif général

Ces Journées d'Etudes visent à susciter des réflexions et partage d'expériences chez les enseignants-chercheurs et chercheurs sur les meilleures approches et stratégies à adopter ou à expérimenter pour un enseignement supérieur inclusif

et respectueux du droit des étudiants à un enseignement de qualité d'une part, aussi bien que la réorientation de la recherche en cette période critique de la pandémie de la COVID-19, d'autre part.

2.2.Objectifs spécifiques

Il s'agit pour les participants de :

- mener des réflexions dans le sens des conduites à tenir pour des cours en ligne réussis dans leurs matières respectives ;
- partager les expériences et expertises de l'utilisation des Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication comme support de transmission du savoir ;
- analyser de façon critique la problématique de recherche et de l'enseignement/apprentissage des langues dans un système de cours à distance.
- Conduire des activités de recherche en ligne, seul(e) ou en équipe.

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☞ Livres

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Halliday, M. A. K., & Hasan, R. (1985). *Language, Context, and Text: Aspects of Language in a Social-semiotic Perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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Sahgui, N.P. (2017). Représentation socioculturelle de la dot chez les Fulbés de la commune de Matéri. *RESILAC : Revue des Sciences du Langage et de la Communication*, 4(1), 392-412.

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INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL DISTANCING AND MASK WEARING IN COVID-19 CONTEXT ON EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT IN BENINESE INTERMEDIATE EFL CLASSES: CASE STUDY OF SOME PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AVRANKOU AREA

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Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Benin

ABSTRACT

Effective classroom management has always been a great challenge for EFL teachers regardless of their teaching experience. Unfortunately, covid-19 pandemic requiring protective measures such as social distancing and mask wearing makes it more challenging. Those measures create a tensed classroom environment where face-to-face communication has been restricted to minimal input breaking chance to promote a conducive learning environment. The main objective of this study is to make classroom management effective and safe despite the practice of protective measures. A mixed-method including questionnaire, classroom observation and interview is used in this study. ten (10) EFL teachers and fifty (50) EFL learners are sampled purposively in the district of Avrankou in Benin. The results reveal that the social distancing and the mask wearing in the context of covid-19 have many negative impacts on EFL communication and classroom management. Some strategies such as optimal individual work and home work and the development of digital literacy in both EFL teachers and learners are suggested for effective EFL classroom management in this pandemic.

Key-words: Classroom management, Covid-19, social distancing, face mask, communication

RESUME

La bonne gestion des classes a été toujours un grand défi pour les enseignants de l'Anglais, langue étrangère malgré leur expérience dans l'enseignement. Malheureusement, l'apparition du covid-19 réclamant la distanciation sociale et le port de masque a rendu la gestion des classes plus difficile avec les mesures préventives. L'objectif principal de cette article est de rendre la gestion des classes efficace et saine malgré le respect des mesures préventives. L'approche mixte comprenant les questionnaires, la visite de classe et l'interview est utilisée dans cette étude. Dix (10) enseignants de l'Anglais, langue étrangère et cinquante (50) apprenants ont servi d'échantillon dans la commune d'Avrankou au Bénin. Les résultats révèlent que la distanciation sociale et le port des masques ont beaucoup d'effets négatifs sur la communication et la bonne gestion des classes dans le contexte du covid-19. Quelques stratégies comme l'exécution optimale du travail individuel, le renforcement du travail à la maison en ce qui concerne les activités importantes de la classe et le développement de la culture numérique et technologique des enseignants et des élèves sont suggérées pour la bonne gestion des classes durant cette pandémie.

Mots clés : La gestion des classes, Covid-19, distanciation sociale, le masque, communication

INTRODUCTION

Covid-19 pandemic has negatively impacted teacher-learners and learner-learners interaction, teaching strategies and the class communication resulting in an ineffective EFL classroom management. Essentially, in EFL classes, both teachers and learners, afraid of interacting, express their reluctance to work together due to the permanent threat of death and suffering! Most students confessed that they do not want to set foot at school where they feel unsafe. This creates a tense atmosphere with no real collaboration and communication where effective learning can hardly take place. Siddiqi & Wuori (2020) stated that the environment where both teachers and learners do not feel safe, presents an unusually vexing challenge, as they take risks and make themselves vulnerable to new challenging situations like wearing masks and maintain a safe distance to avoid the infection.

The collaboration and communication aspect are vital for implementation of the constructivist and socio constructivists approach, the core principle of the Competency-Based Approach (CBA) implemented by Beninese educational system. The CBA strategies promote learners skill development in environment reflecting real life situation. The protective rules have restricted learners' collaboration and teachers' proximity, especially in large classes like in most Beninese public secondary schools, where teachers relying exclusively on individual work at the expense of group and pair work strategies, would stay in front and avoid moving freely and barely participate into class activities. Save the children (2008:7) claims that *"children sitting farthest away from the teacher have the fewest interactions with them, are the least involved in classroom activities, and have the lowest achievement scores."* Harmer (2000) said that appropriate teachers' movements, is one of the characteristics of effective classroom management as they maintain students' attention and their interest.

Besides, in the cases where teachers wear a mask, it prevents learners from perceiving their teacher facial expressions and lips movement. Facial expressions and gestures play a major role in facilitating interpersonal communication, comprehension, and the delivery of intended messages. In EFL context nonverbal communication is a vital support of understanding for learners with limited input and poor decoding capabilities. This breaks even more the challenging communication of Beninese EFL classes leaving teachers in their *'one-man show'*,

struggling with their mask, while trying to draw and keep learners' attention. In such a context, the role of the teacher as a facilitator in the Competency-Based Approach (CBA) implemented in Benin is negatively impacted.

Those sudden changes occurring in the classroom disengage both learners and teachers which affect the whole teaching-learning process and the achievement expected. Unfortunately, no real actions are taken by the Beninese educational stakeholders to help teachers cope with the current situation they were not trained for, which is understandable since no one was prepared for the pandemic. Still, EFL teachers cannot just wait for specific training before seeking effective ways out. This paper helps make classroom management effective despite the practice of the protective measures by showing the effects of the existence of covid-19 on the learning environment, drawing out the challenges EFL teachers encountered to manage classes during this covid-19 time and suggesting some activities that improve EFL learners' oral communication in the context of covid-19. Taking into account the goal of this study, the current research tries to answer the following questions:

- What are the difficulties EFL teachers face in managing classroom during covid-19?
- How does the pandemic impact learners' oral communication and interaction in classrooms and out of the classroom settings?
- What activities can EFL teachers design and implement in class to improve students' oral communication in the context of covid-19?

This research in hand cannot solve all the problems related to English Teaching and Learning process but it mainly focuses on effective EFL classroom management during the pandemic and technological literacy development both in teachers and learners.

This paper is organised into five (05) sections. After the above presented introductory section, the second section is about the theoretical keystones, the report of scholars who have dealt with the current issue. The third section describes the methodology including population and sampling, research instruments, data collection procedures and methods of data analysis. The fourth section covers the presentation and discussion of the results, the fifth and last section is concerned with suggestions and the conclusion.

1. Theoretical Keystones

1.1. Definition of Classroom Management

According to Brophy (1996:5) classroom management can be defined as “*the actions taken to create and maintain a learning environment conducive to successful instruction.*” This means that teachers are responsible for setting and implementing some rules and procedures to create positive learning environment. But, in Benin some EFL teachers struggle to manage classes well and the appearance of covid-19 has worsen it. May be the training Beninese EFL teachers receive is ineffective, or because they have large classes.

1.2. The Coronavirus (covid-19)

World Health Organisation (WHO) & Health government.au (2020) state that coronavirus disease of 2019 (Covid-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus and it was first reported in December 2019 in Wuhan City in China. It can be caught in different ways. Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP) (2020) sheds light on those ways to be infected: It spreads mainly among people who are in close contact for a prolonged period. Spread also happens when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks and droplets from their mouth or nose are launched into the air and land in the mouths or noses of people nearby.

1.3. Social Distancing

According to Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP) (2020) social distancing also called “physical distancing” means keeping a safe space between yourself and other people who are not from your household. To practise social or physical distancing stay at least six feet (about two arms’ length) from other people who are not from your household in both indoor and outdoor spaces.

1.4. Covid-19 and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow (1943) found his pyramid-shaped model and organised basic physiological needs (like food, water, and shelter) followed by a sense of safety and security. He argued that these two basics needs are prerequisites for advancement to higher learning and self-actualisation. Fellow psychologist Benjamin Bloom (1956) developed a similarly well-known pyramid model that orders the complexity of learning outcomes, from the most basic needs. Therefore, what is meant by Maslow before Bloom is that before complex

learning can happen in classrooms, children must have their most fundamental needs met especially in this covid-19 time. Hence, the safety of the learning environment.

Safety is one of the basic needs that motivate a human being to take actions and reach a goal. When the learning environment is safe students feel free, safe and get involved in the learning. Teachers, feel safe and free to work with their learners and give their best. This is why Maslow (1943) & Bloom (1956) argued that for a person to effectively participate in the educational process, he or she must first have their basic needs met. But, it is observed in some Beninese secondary schools that both teachers and learners do not feel safe in the classroom because they are afraid of catching the virus, they do not want to work together and they are anxious. This impacts their psychology and their emotions. So, psychologically, emotionally and physically they do not feel safe. As a result, they have low self-esteem.

1.5. Covid-19 pandemic and EFL Classroom Management

EFL Classroom management entails all the actions EFL teachers take in the classroom to make the classroom environment ready and attractive to learners. It includes teachers' voice, seating arrangement, teachers' movement, giving instructions, teachers' behaviour, teachers' relationship with learners, teachers talking time as well as students talking time. Before covid-19 in Benin, students had the opportunity to form small groups and close to one another to perform a given task in classes. Harmer (2001:19) stated that *in groups, students are more equal, and they are also more able to experiment and use the language than they are in whole class arrangement. It also makes students work independently.* Therefore, group seating helps have a democratic class where the students talking time is maximized, they have free speech, thus, they express themselves better is an authoritative classroom management style.

Besides, when students perform cooperative activities, teachers can move to groups to monitors help and guide them. Harmer (2001:21) argued that *moving around the classroom to some extent is regarded as the most successful way to teach. It can retain students' interest and make teachers closer to a smaller group.* Not only do teachers' movements help maintain students' attention but their participation in group activities also help students to have an equal understanding of a given topic. They feel their teachers' closeness and better engaged in the learning process.

The occurrence of covid-19 has made it more difficult and many changes are experienced in classrooms. The protective measures compel every student to wear a mask. In some Beninese public schools, all students are sitting in a row but the one-metre distance is not respected as it is large classes, the group and pair work are forbidden and only individual work is performed and teachers have difficulties to move freely in the classroom. All these changes affect students' learning process because they assume that they are not in a safe environment. Then, their basic need is not met, which demotivates them. So effective learning hardly takes place in that kind of environment.

Fortunately, in some private schools, the classes are small and the protective measures are mostly respected, still, teachers hardly get fully involved in activities to monitor appropriately leaving learners on their own. Sometimes they do not work and they seize the opportunity to chat. This implies that not only their participation in the class activity is impacted but their achievement scores are also affected negatively.

1.6. Nonverbal communication

Nonverbal communication, such as facial gestures and expressions, constitutes 55% of our overall communication (Mohammadi, 2020). Faces provide information about people identity, mood and mental state, being accessible windows into the mechanisms governing our emotions. In EFL Classes, facial expressions during teacher-student student-students interaction plays a vital role (Mohamed Sathik & Sofia 2011). Studies reveal that the most expressive way humans display emotions is through facial expressions. Facial expressions are the primary source of information, next to words, in determining an individual's internal feelings. Thus, both teachers and students use facial expressions to form impressions of another. Toby et al. (2008) revealed that the facial expressions of the teachers kept the students interested and motivated during classes. Similarly, student's facial expressions are valuable feedback for teachers since it helps to determine how they must adapt to learners' level of understanding.

The facial expressions that signal emotions include movements such as raising the eyebrows, rolling the eyes or curling the lip, wrinkling the forehead, (Resmana Lim & Reinders 2000). When students are feeling uncomfortable, they hardly maintaining eye contact, may have lowered brow, drawn together brow, horizontal or vertical forehead wrinkles. Then, to create a conducive classroom, EFL teachers must be good at observing student's facial expression and teachers

to decode students' feelings and student's minds changing. In case where the mask prevents teachers from identifying the significance in the facial expressions, students understanding is undermined. This, thereby, negatively impact the whole learning process as noticed during the classroom observations. EFL class had turned into mechanical scenario of implementing class activities whit almost no communication in a teacher-centered process where learners impatiently wait till the end to leave the classroom and find a better place for safety needs.

1.6.1. Role of Facial Expressions in Communication

The face, as an anatomical figure, can be separated into upper, middle, and lower portions. Each portion plays an important role in expressing moods and feelings. For example, smiling and grimacing involve lower facial structures, like the mouth, the cheeks and lips. Facial expressions of different emotions involve changes in facial appearance produced by a set of facial muscles. The middle and lower face are noted to be very influential with regards to emotional recognition. Kestenbaum (1992) explored the modes of processing of emotional expression in children and showed that the mouth can be used to recognize a neutral expression and is best for recognizing the emotion of happiness. (Gagnon, M., Gosselin, P., and Maassarani, R, 2014) investigated children's ability to recognize fear, surprise, disgust, and anger based on information from the upper, middle, or lower face, and found that children can recognize fear, surprise, and anger using expressions involving the lower face, and disgust using expressions involving the middle face (Gagnon et al, 2014). While the upper face is also pivotal for the development of emotional expressions, the roles of the middle and lower face cannot be understated.

1.6.2. Masking Facial Communication

Despite its crucial protective role, the face mask poses challenges on daily face-to-face communications. Proper application of the protective mask involves covering the mouth and the nose, which muffles sound and makes it challenging to understand speech and some higher pitched voices. A focus is made here on the speaker's articulation of sounds. Masks interfere with the notions of the wearer's mouth: lip movements needed for the "labial" consonants – *p, b, w, f, v, m* – and the "rounded" vowels that people find in words like *sue* or *saw* could be restricted. Freedom to lower the jaw when producing "open" vowels like those in *cat* or *calm* might also be more limited.

The mask material might impede the stream of air emanating from the speaker's mouth during speech. Thicker, less porous fabrics can significantly block the airstream, diminishing the acoustic energy – which includes the loudness of a sound that is transmitted through the air to the listener's ear. Clearly, the mask's influence on how learners perceive speech. Masks affect articulation, impede the airstream, and absorption the sound. Masks take away the ability to read lips and see facial expressions, which help better understand what is being heard. Furthermore, face masks eliminate the roles of the middle and lower face in emotional expression, rendering its action units invisible to the receiving individual.

1.7. Activities that foster Students' Oral Communication

1.7.1. Listener and Talker Activity

Ackerman (2020) stated that it is a good activity for showing the importance of active listening and giving participants a chance to practise their skills. It consists in dividing a group into pairs, with one partner assigned to the talker role and the other to listener role. The talker job is to describe what he or she wants from a vacation without specifying a destination. The listener's job is to listen attentively to what is said and not said and demonstrate their listening through their behaviour. After a few minutes of active listening, the listener should summarize the three or main criteria the talker is considering when it comes to enjoy vacation. Finally, the listener should try to sell the talker on destination for their vacation. After a quick debrief on how well the listener listened, talker and listener should switch roles and try the exercise again.

1.7.2. Reinforce active listening

Wabisabi Learning (2010) said that communication is not just about speaking; it is also about listening. Teachers can help students develop listening skills by reading a selection of text aloud, and then having the class discuss and reflect on the content. Active listening also means listening to understand rather than reply. Reinforce building good listening skills by encouraging students to practice asking questions to fully understand the speaker's intended message.

1.7.3. Offer Reflexive Learning Opportunities

Wabisabi Learning (2010) stated that recording students reading selected text or videotaping group presentations is an excellent method for assessing their communication strengths and weaknesses. Students can reflect on their oral

performance in small groups. Then, ask each student to evaluate the others so that they can get used to receiving constructive criticism.

1.7.4. Find Teachable Moments

Wabisabi Learning (2010) argued that everything happening in the classroom environment should be recorded. For example, if a student answers a question in a complicated way, you might ask that they rephrase what he said, or challenge the class to ask clarifying questions. If an unfamiliar word pops up in a text or on a film, pause for the class to search for the word in the dictionary.

2. Methodology

A mixed-method including both qualitative and quantitative method has been used to carry out the investigation.

2.1. Population and Sampling

EFL teachers and EFL learners from Beninese public schools: CEG Avrankou, CEG Atchoukpa and Beninese private schools: CSP Bambino village and CSP Les Oliviers have been taken into account. Twenty (10) EFL teachers are selected while one hundred and seventy (50) students are sampled purposively. These sampled learners are from *quatrième* and *troisième*. This choice is justified by the fact that they have been studying English for three years and they can provide accurate information. The table below shows the number of selected EFL teachers and learners.

Table 1. Selected EFL Teachers and Learners

| Secondary schools' names | Status | Teachers' number | Students' number |
|--------------------------|---------|------------------|------------------|
| CEG Avrankou | Public | 04 | 20 |
| CEG Atchoukpa | Public | 03 | 11 |
| CSP Bambino Village | Private | 01 | 10 |
| CSP Les Oliviers | Private | 02 | 9 |
| Total | | 10 | 50 |

2.2. Research Instruments

To carry out the investigation, quantitative and qualitative methods are used through the administration of a series of questionnaires to both EFL learners and EFL teachers, interviews were addressed to EFL teachers and finally classroom observation was carried out.

2.2.1. Questionnaires

Questionnaires were addressed to EFL teachers and learners to get information on the topic. For teachers' questions, their feeling once in the classroom is intended to be known, the difficulties they face in managing classes during covid-19 and what can be done to make the classroom effective during covid-19.

2.2.2. Classroom Observations

Classroom Observations enable to observe teachers at work in both public and private schools. The important points checked were:

- The respect of the protective measures
- Overall classroom atmosphere
- The teaching strategies and activities
- The challenges teachers face in managing classes during covid-19

2.2.3. Data Collection Procedure and Method of Data Analysis

For the data collection, the questionnaires were administered to both EFL teachers and learners as they are the principal target. In the selected classes, with the contribution of the teacher, students filled the French version of the questionnaires. The teachers filled their questionnaire after students. This strategy used helped me get back all the distributed questionnaire papers on the spot. The data collected have been analysed using Microsoft excel 2019 and the results, are presented through tables, pie charts and figures.

3. Presentation and Discussion of the Results

This section shows the analysis of data obtained from the questionnaires

3.1. Data Collected From Questionnaires

3.1.1. Witness of Covid-19 Death Case by Teachers

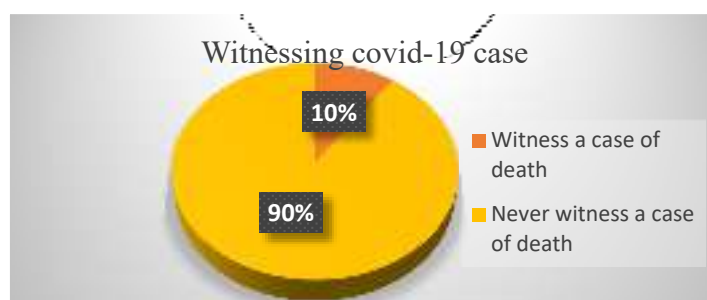


Figure 1. The witness of Covid-19 Death case by Teachers

Figure 1 displays that ten 10% of the selected teachers have witnessed a case death while seventy (90%) did not.

3.1.2. Respect of Social Distancing by teachers

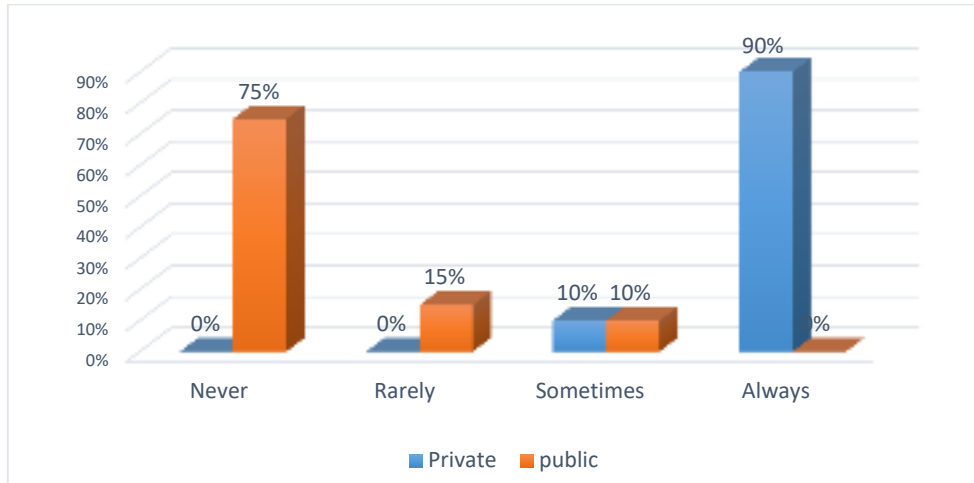


Figure 2. Respect of Social Distancing

Figure 2 shows the results of public and private schools: In public schools, 75% of the selected teachers never respects social distancing and only 10% sometimes respect it. However, in private schools, 90% of the selected teachers always respect social distancing.

3.1.3. Feeling Generated in Teachers by Covid-19

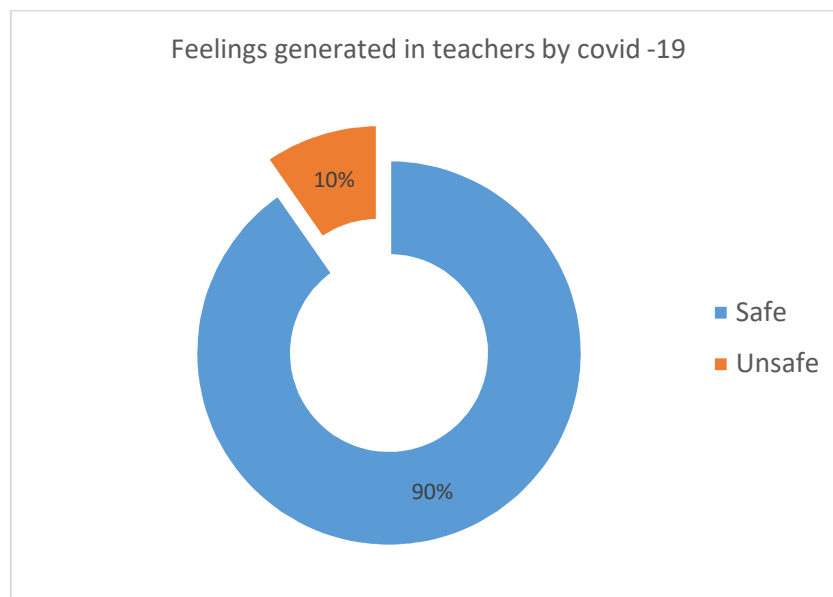


Figure 3. Feelings Generated in Teachers by Covid-19

Predictably, Figure 3 reveals that only 13% of the teachers feel safe in class while 87% feel unsafe.

3.1.4. Teaching Strategies in Classroom during Covid-19



Figure 4: Teaching Strategies in Classroom during Covid-19

Figure 5. shows that 56% of the selected teacher performs individual work in classroom while 25% does pair work and others that is nineteen 19% performs group work.

3.1.5. Impact of social distancing

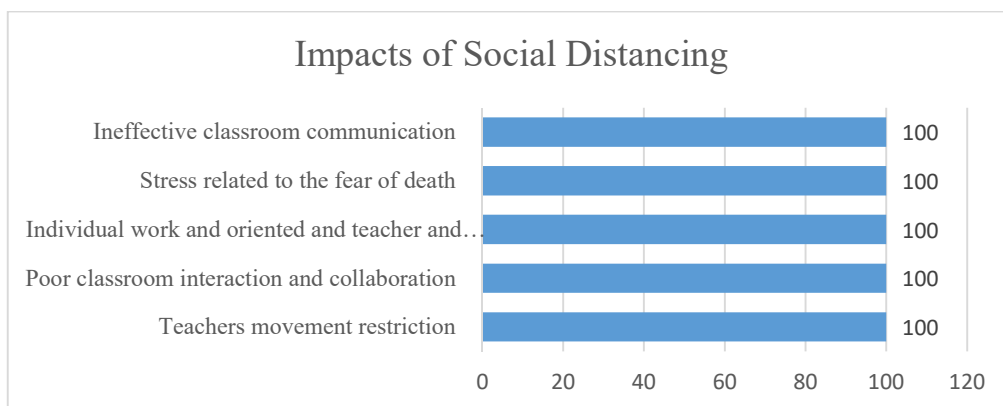


Figure 5. Impact of Social Distancing

All the teachers point out their movement restrictions and the fact that they mostly stayed in the front of the class, the poor classroom interaction and collaboration, Individual work and oriented and teacher-centred teaching and the Stress related to the fear of death leading to an ineffective classroom communication.

3.1.6. Impact of Mask wearing

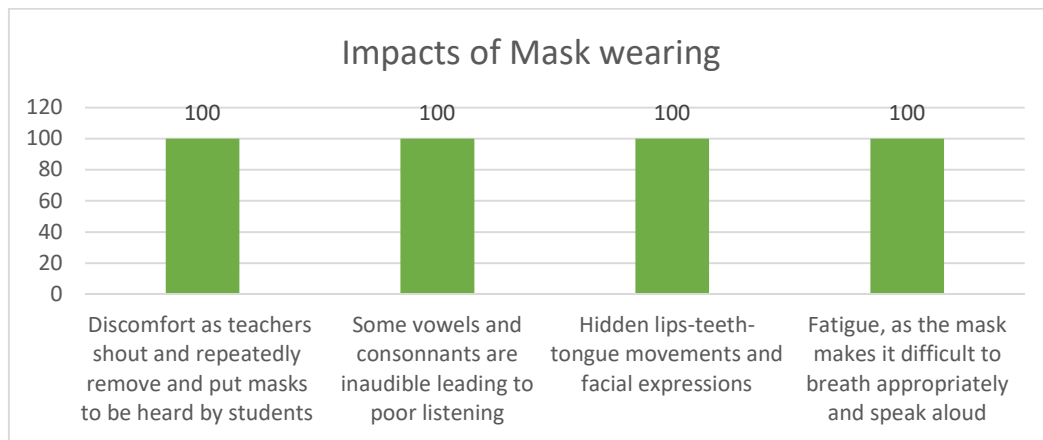


Figure 6. Impact of Teachers' Movement Restriction in Class inaudible

Unanimously, Teachers complain about the Discomfort they feel because they have to shout or repeatedly remove and put masks to be heard by students, the fact that some vowels and consonants are inaudible leading to poor listening, the hidden *lips-teeth-tongue* movements and facial expressions and the fatigue of difficulty to breath appropriately and speak aloud simultaneously.

3.1.7. Covid-19 Related Challenges in EFL lasses

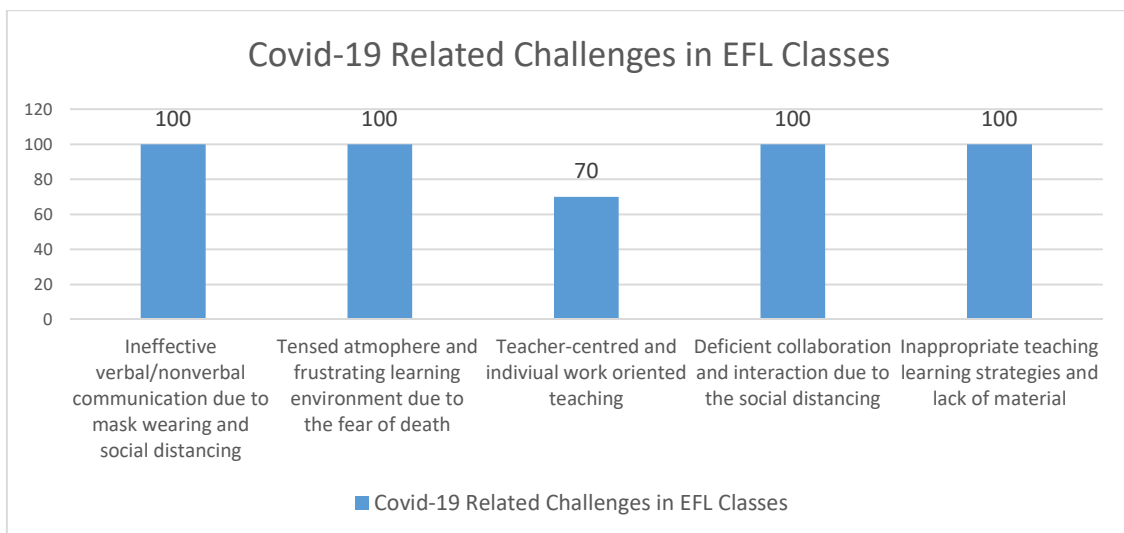


Figure 7. Covid-19 Related Challenges in EFL Classes

Figure 7. exhibits that all the selected teachers complain about the tensed environment whit no real interaction and the ineffective the protective measures

because students still exchange materials. 90% draw attention to the lack of protective materials and restriction of teachers movement due to social distancing. 80% point out the inadequate teaching facilities the inappropriate teaching-learning strategies and the large classes.

3.2. Results from the Classroom Observations

The classes visited in public schools are large because there are sixty (60) to seventy (70) students per classes, they seat in rows, the social distancing is not respected; still, they mostly use individual work. However, students work in pair chat and share classroom objects for they are so close to their classmate that they seem to forget the potential threat of the pandemic. The visited teachers have difficulties to move in the class and some just stay in front to deliver the whole lesson. unlike the public school in the visited private schools, the classes are much smaller with fifteen (15) to twenty (20) students. However, the protective measures are stricter in those schools which lead to the tensed ambiance that inhibits effective communication and learning.

During activities, the discomfort of mask wearing and it negative impact on oral communication confessed by EFL teachers were confirmed. The mask muffled both teachers and learners voice and blurred their facial expressions so that not real communication could be established. Communicative Activities such as listen and repeats routines are complicated because learners could not see teachers' lips, teeth and tongues movement that should be imitated to accurately reproduce words pronunciations. Likewise, teachers could not get appropriate feedback from learners to correct them accordingly. The only solution when teacher did not shout the instruction, was to repeatedly remove and put back the mask. This lead to the demotivation, the annoyance and fatigue their experienced.

3.3. Discussion

3.3.1. Difficulties EFL Teachers Encountered in Managing Classes during covid-19

3.3.1.1. Classroom environment

Covid-19 has made the learning environment risky for both teachers and learners, the majority of the selected teachers feel unsafe in class the respondents alleged they have witnessed some cases of death from covid-19. The phobia created in classrooms breaks the teaching-learning process. Students disinclined

cooperative activities as observed in some classes and confirmed by some teachers during the interviews. The need for safety, basic necessity of any human being generally determines its motivation and some resources mobilised in the achievement of sustainable goals For Applebury (2020) keeping schools safe allows children to look forward to being in an encouraging environment that promotes social and creative learning. When their basic safety needs are not met, children are at risk for not feeling comfortable at school and may stop showing up, or they may remain on edge throughout the day. Promoting school safety creates an open space for kids to explore, learn and grow.

The only effective solution to the pandemic is social distancing and stricter hygiene rules. The problem with this measure is that they reinforce the perception of the threat. Applying those measures in EFL classes leads to a maximum restriction of teachers' movement particularly in large classes of public schools where students sit very close to one another leaving narrow space between rows for teachers. The classroom observation revealed that the protective rules are almost exclusively respected in private schools with smaller classes. The restriction of teachers' proximity impacts the learning experience. Save the children (2008:7) justifiably argue that "*children sitting farthest away from the teacher have the fewest interactions with them, are the least involved in classroom activities, and have the lowest achievement scores*". Most teachers asserted that their students lose interest when they stay away from one another, feel insecure isolated and get bored.

3.3.1.2. Teaching Strategies and Classroom communication

Social distancing in the CBA context restricts the teaching strategies to *the individual work* at the expense of *pair work* and *group work*, leaving little chance to collaboration, communication and social integration (figure 5). In other words, students do not have the opportunity to learn from their mates, build up their knowledge together nor express themselves freely to reinforce their oral proficiency. Harmer (2001:33) stated that *in groups, students are more equal, and they are also more able to experiment and use the language than they are in whole class-class arrangement. It also makes students work independently. The students feel free to do the work. It makes teachers able to give more focus on a group that needs more attention.* This corroborates the result of this study. In the visited classes most teachers rely on trying to communicate directly with each student, shouting the instructions and explanation, getting upset, because their voice, muffled by the masks, convey almost no consistent message (figure 4).

Effective Classroom communication depend on both verbal and nonverbal cues and a mask interferes with both of those things. For instance, masks often cover a large portion of a person's face, which makes it difficult for people to read lips or process nonverbal cues. Meanwhile, because the mouth is covered, it also can result in muffled speech. Both of these factors make communication in EFL classes with a mask even more difficult. Additionally, under normal circumstances, lips and mouth will give away your state of mind. But, with the mouth covered with a mask, learners are left to determine feeling with very limited visual cues. This is especially difficult in EFL classes with limited knowledge, where learners often rely on lip-reading and facial expression to understand what teacher said or make them repeat. When lips are covered by a mask, they struggle to understand what is being said to them. Teachers, then, are obliged to remove and put their masks repeatedly which make them talk too much and repeat themselves in a teacher-centred management style where learners simply disconnect (figure 5). The respondent teacher confessed that such a situation results in frustrating exhausting experience affecting the whole teaching learning experience.

3.3.2. Students' Oral Communication Improvement Activities

Many activities can be designed and implemented in EFL classes to improve students' oral communication such as Role play, which has almost the same advantages as group work but less known to teachers because none of the selected teachers' practices it although it has many advantages on the development of students' oral proficiency and social skill. This is also proven by the research of Sadeghi & Sharifi (2013) when they investigate four after-teaching activities and their effects, namely narrative writing, games, role-play, and tasks on speaking and vocabulary gain of one hundred and eleven Iranian elementary EFL learners across gender. Apart from role play, there is listener and talker activity and oral presentations, reinforce active listening.

Most of the problem faced by teachers is attributable to the fact that they have never been trained to teach in such a situation. Therefore, it is an urgent educational need that teachers should receive adequate educational and professional training to possess adequate knowledge and new teaching skills to adapt and be able to dedicate themselves to teaching during the pandemic.

4. Suggestions

This paper draws attention to the challenges of Covid-19 context classroom management and its negative impact on EFL learners' oral communication and social skills development. To overcome sustainably these challenges some suggestions have been made to educational authorities, teachers and EFL learners.

Educational authorities should build more facilities or divide large classes into two to have small classes, recruit new teachers, increase teachers' salary to motivate them, provide students school materials like pens, pencils, slates, books, textbooks to avoid classroom object exchange between students. To make classroom management effective at this covid-19 time, teachers should organize their classes in such a way that the maximum of the class activities will be done individually at home. EFL teachers should grab any occasion to get trained in digital literacy and take advantage of online training. Furthermore, the teacher should prioritize some activities that improve students' autonomy and oral communication. Learners should respect all the instructions given by their teacher, use ITC to develop autonomy and most importantly, respect the hygiene rules and stop exchanging classroom objects. If the above-mentioned suggestions are taken into account EFL teaching-learning stand great chances for sustainable achievement despite the pandemic challenges

CONCLUSION

This study has viewed to make classroom management effective despite the existing protective measures. The results of this survey indicate that the respect of coronavirus' protective rules has many impacts on classroom management and EFL learners' knowledge progress. Nevertheless, there are some strategies EFL teachers can use to make the classroom effective during this covid-19 time.

To reach the goal assigned to this work, I have gone through the works of some scholars who have already dealt with a similar topic, which helped me to understand more the impacts of social distance in the Covid-19 context on EFL effective classroom management. Secondly, I have used a mixed-method which includes quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data incorporates questionnaires that are addressed to both EFL teachers and learners. For qualitative data, it includes interview and classroom observation, which helped me to eye witness the teaching and learning process during the covid-19 time.

Also, enlarging classes or building facilities or dividing large classes into two and recruiting new teachers is an alternative, which paves the way to small classes that will enable both teachers and learners to respect the protective rules and the rate of transmission of the virus will be below. Therefore, classroom management will be easy, safe and effective. Besides, it is found that distance learning cannot be effective especially in the Beninese intermediate level as some lack the appropriate means allowing the online lessons to take place and technological literacy.

Finally, I have made some suggestions to educational authorities to train teachers in computing, to recruit new teachers, to build facilities and increase teachers' salary especially the aspirant to motivate them, to provide all schools with furniture like buckets, water, soap, to sensitize parents and students about the danger of covid-19, to make available a record of punishment for those who will not respect the protective measures, and finally to be a role model to everyone in respecting the protective rules.

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