DEVELOPING SELF-CONFIDENCE IN EFL BEGINNER LEARNERS THROUGH EFFECTIVE ERROR CORRECTION - A CASE STUDY OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LITTORAL, BENIN

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Abstract:
This research work aims at highlighting the inadequacies associated with the teaching of the English language in Beninese secondary schools. In order to find out some approaches of solutions likely to help teachers better correct students' errors and mistakes during English speaking activities in EFL classes, so as to develop confidence in them, this research uses a methodology focused on a questionnaire addressed to 30 teachers, 5 class visits and interviews with 10 teachers. The data collected show that an increasing number of Beninese EFL teachers ignore the appropriate methods for correcting students' errors during speaking activities and fail in motivating their learners to speak English effectively. As an attempt to redress this situation related to English teaching and learning processes in our secondary schools, the research suggests the organization of adequate training for secondary school teachers who must complete at least a bachelor's degree before being recruited as EFL teachers. In the same perspective, teaching inspectors must intensify their class visits so as to make the EFL teachers aware of their roles as informants, motivators and correctors.

Keywords: developing, self-confidence, errors correction, EFL beginner learners, speaking activities

Résume :
Cet article vise à faire ressortir les insuffisances liées à l'enseignement de la langue anglaise dans les cours secondaires publics au Bénin. Dans l'optique de formuler des approches de solutions susceptibles d'aider les enseignants à corriger les erreurs et fautes commises par leurs apprenants d'une part et d'autre part à développer en ces derniers la confiance en soi pendant les activités orales, la méthodologie de recherche utilisée s'appuie sur un questionnaire adressé à 10 enseignants d'Anglais Langue Etrangère. Aussi des interviews ont été réalisées avec 10 enseignants d'Anglais et des visites de

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classe ont permis d'observer des 5 enseignants en situation de classe. Les résultats des enquêtes montrent qu'un nombre important d'enseignants d'Anglais ignorent les méthodes pédagogiques appropriées susceptibles de les aider à corriger les erreurs et les fautes commises par leurs apprenants au cours des activités orales afin de les encourager à s'exprimer couramment en anglais. Afin de palier à cette insuffisance de l'enseignement dans les cours secondaires publics au Bénin, cette étude suggère l'organisation de formations pédagogiques adéquates à l'intention de tous les enseignants du secondaire avec l'exigence de la licence comme diplôme minimum au recrutement d'enseignants d'Anglais langue étrangère. Cette recherche recommande aussi l'intensification des visites de classe par les inspecteurs aux fins de mieux faire connaître aux enseignants leurs rôles d'informateur, de motivateur, de correcteur.

Keywords: correction des erreurs, stratégies, communication orale, classes des apprenants débutants

1. Introduction

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Communicating fluently in English as a Foreign Language is one of the major problems faced by learners in Beninese secondary schools, despite the introduction of the Competency-Based Approach in the educational system to promote oral and written communication. This manifests itself in the EFL learners' achievement in the examinations; their performances are very poor in almost all English language skills, especially in speaking. As a result an important number of these students are reluctant to speak the English language because they experience anxiety in EFL classes and have difficulties to use accurate, fluent and complex language (Cater and Nunan, 2001.According to Iwikotan (2019) "*the decrease in motivation is possibly due to teachers' attitude towards their learners. Most of the time, they do not handle error correction in an appropriate way.*" In order to reduce learner's anxiety and enhance speaking skills of Beninese Secondary school EFL learners, I propose to investigate the pedagogical strategies likely to help EFL teachers develop self-confidence in their beginner learners through effective error correction in the Littoral secondary schools**.**

2. Research Questions

To stay focused on goals of this research work, some research questions have been found attach to the topic.
- What are the errors made by the EFL beginner learners during speaking activities according to the teachers?
- How do EFL teachers correct their beginner learners' errors during speaking activities?

- How can EFL teachers use error correction as a means to develop confidence in their EFL beginner learners during speaking activities?

3. Significance of the Problem

My study is significant in the sense that it enables EFL teachers aware of the correlation between their feedback and learners' oral performance. This research will also help beginner learners to learn how to take a maximum advantages of teacher's feedback as a means of building confidence and developing an effective speaking ability.

4. The Purpose of the Study

This study aims at enhancing EFL learners' self-confidence and developing their oral production by the means of their teacher's feedback.

More specifically, this article attempts to evaluate EFL teachers 'perception of the kinds of errors made by their learners as well as these students 'reactions to their teachers' feedback during speaking activities. This study tries to investigate some effective solutions to how EFL teachers can motivate their students and create more confidence in them through the way they correct their errors.

5. Scope of the Study

This study relies on a questionnaire and class visits to measure the different problems related to the EFL teachers' errors correction strategies and their students' reactions to the way feedbacks are given during speaking activities.

The scope of the study is also limited because it has to do with EFL beginner students. Thus, the results of this study cannot be actually applied to students of other levels such as students of third or fourth years.

Further researches could be carried out to investigate other aspects of the oral performance of students of other levels.

6. Review of the Literature

From Merriam – Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 2003 (Eleventh Edition) an error is defined as *an act involving an unintentional deviation from truth or accuracy."*

There are a lot of definitions developed for the concept of "error". According to Lennon (cited in Brown, 2000), an error is *"a linguistic form or combination of forms which, in the same context and under the same context and under similar conditions of production, would, in all likelihood, not be produced by the speakers' native speaker counter-parts."* (p.213)

Errors are systematic and may give valuable insight into language acquisition because they are obvious in the learner's underlying competence. *"When native speakers make mistakes, they can identify and correct them immediately because they have almost full*

knowledge of the linguistic structure of their mother tongue" (Scovel, 2001, p230). Non-native speakers, especially EFL pupils commit errors and as they have an incomplete knowledge of the target language, they are not always able to correct the errors that they make. Thus, the pupils' errors reflect a lack of underlying competence in the language that they are acquiring.

6.1 Roles of Errors in the Learning Process

Teaching process cannot be effective without teachers having a clear idea of what an error is and its importance is. The teaching process allows teachers to know what their pupils know and what remains to be done.

It has been accepted that errors play an important role in the learning process. "*To language pupils, language learning is not so much a matter of acquiring a set of automatic habits, but rather a process of discovering the underlying rules, categories and systems of choice in the language by some sort of processing by the learner of the data of the language presented to him by the teacher*" (Corder, 1973, p.23).In line with this assertion, pupils have to go through several stages and processes. One of the most important factors included in almost all the stages and processes of language learning is error making. Dulay and Burt (1974, p34) stated that "*error making is inevitable and that it would appear necessary and crucial to language learning. In fact, it is a clear sign to show language learner actually how to develop and internalize the rules of the language*" (p.53).

While the errors a learner makes provide no direct measure of his knowledge of the language, it is probably the most important source of information about the nature of his knowledge. From the analysis of the learner's errors, teachers are able to infer the nature of his knowledge at that point in his learning and discover what he still has to learn. By describing and classifying his errors, teachers may build up a picture of the language features which seems to be a learning problem to the pupil. "*A learner's errors, therefore, are significant to the teacher, in that way that they tell him if he undertakes a systematic analysis, how far towards the goal the learner has progressed and, consequently, what remains for him to learn*" (Corder, 1981, p78). On the other hand, learner's errors provide to researchers' evidence of how language is acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner employ in his discovery of the language. In fact, errors are essential to the learner himself and it is a method the learner uses to test his hypotheses about the nature of the language he is learning. Thus, teachers can gain much benefit from error analysis and description because errors provide them with feedback on the effectiveness of their teaching materials and their teaching techniques.

6.2 Different Types of Errors Made by EFL Learners

Errors are indispensable to the learning process but why pupils make errors and why they find it so difficult to correct their errors. According to Hounzangbé (2016:187), there are four types of errors made by non-native pupils in Beninese secondary schools while speaking.

a. Verb errors

This type of error occurs when a pupil use the wrong verb tense in a certain sentence.

E.g.: she play the guitar

Correct form: she **plays** the guitar

b. Predicate errors

A predicate is a word used with a noun to indicate the type of reference being made by the noun. For instance, "the" which is used to specific noun and "a/an" which is used to non-specific noun.

E.g. 1: when we were at meeting **the** last week, we saw **an** very big elephant

Correct form: When we were at t**he** campaign last week, we saw **a** very big elephant

E.g. 2: I have to see doctor tomorrow

Correct form: I have to see the doctor tomorrow

c. Phonetic errors

This error occurs when a pupil, while speaking, put the stress of a word at the wrong place.

E.g.: In the word "a record", instead of putting the stress on the first syllable "re", he/she puts it on the second one "cord".

According to those types of errors and their sources, teachers and pupils' attitudes towards errors correction vary.

6.3 Teachers' Attitudes towards Errors Correction.

Teachers and pupils have different attitudes toward errors and error correction. Teachers, as Pit Corder put it, are more concerned with how to deal with errors than with what causes them. Some of them think:

> *"if we were to achieve a perfect teaching method the errors would never be committed in the first place, and that therefore the occurrence of errors is merely a sign of the present inadequacy of our teaching techniques"* (Corder, 1967, p102).

Therefore, such teachers try by all means to prevent their pupils from making errors by constant correction which would help pupils recognize their errors and not repeat them. On the other hand, some other teachers think that the acquisition of the foreign language may be discouraged by the teacher who insists upon correction and grammatical accuracy. They also pretend that continuous correction can raise pupils' level of anxiety, and that this impedes learning (Krashen, 1982, p65). Error must be corrected at any time since it is an important point in the learning process. In this vein, Corder (1968:95) pointed out that "*it is not surprising to see that some pupils like to be corrected by their teachers while speaking because they think that frequent correction would improve the language they are acquiring*".

As a matter of fact, most teachers are not aware of how they should deal with their pupils' errors in order to provide them effective feedback so that pupils could keep it in their mind once for all. Those teachers are most of the time untrained. Moreover, demotivation of the trained teachers can bring them not to give more importance to the correction of their pupils' errors despite the principles of the Competency Based Approach which recommend teachers to use pupils' errors to know what they have to teach pupils or what they need to remind them.

6.3 Ways of Correcting Errors that Teachers Should Use to Motivate Pupils

To make effective English language teaching, we need our pupils to be motivated and confident. Thus, the ways teachers use to correct those pupils' errors are very important. Errors analysis is the first step in EFL teachers 'process of correcting their pupils' errors during speaking activities in order to develop their confidence and their motivation.

6.4 Errors Analysis

According to James (1998, p.122), errors analysis refers to "*the study of linguistic ignorance, the investigation of what people do not know and how they attempt to cope with their ignorance*". Another definition of error analysis is given by Brown (2000, p14). He defined error analysis as "*the process to observe, analyze, and classify the deviations of the rules of the second languages and then to reveal the systems operated by learner*".

Errors are seen as a systematic deviation made by pupils who have not yet mastered the rules of EFL.

This first step of errors corrections included the following implication: take the pupils' preferences into consideration. It is very clear that individual pupils differ from each other in their attitudes towards errors and error correction. Before starting the process of correction and ensure that pupils are receptive to error correction, it is necessary to find out their preferences and attitudes towards correction and feedback. Being aware of these preferences and attitudes will help teachers to choose the appropriate way of correction and will help them serve their pupils' needs by distributing a questionnaire or a survey on their pupils (Fantozzi, 1998, p125). These questionnaires should include statements and questions that are carefully prepared to get the pupils' attitudes towards correction and feedback. Based on the findings of the questionnaires, teachers can then choose the appropriate correcting strategy, or they may even decide to use more than one strategy at a time according to their pupils' demands. These kinds of questionnaires could be used at later stages as well to plan remedial work and to modify the teaching techniques (Macerating, 1981, p29).

6.5 Type of Errors Corrections

There are three main type of corrections. And every trained teacher has to know them. We have *self – correction; Peer Correction and teacher correction.*

6.7 Self-Correction

Error correction should not always be the responsibility of teachers. Teachers should train their pupils to correct their own errors and give them the chance to do so. Actually, there are so many ways to help pupils correct by themselves. For instance, while correcting errors in writing, teachers can use some correction codes to indicate to pupils that there is an error instead of giving them the correction directly (e.g. writing the letter 'T' to indicate that the tense being used is wrong). Of course, these correction codes should be explained to pupils in advance so that they will be familiar with them. An example of this coding system is given in Hedge (2000, p319). Teachers can also encourage pupils to use discovery techniques. For example, if a student makes an error while speaking, the teacher could say: "Sorry!", "Sorry! Could you say that again?" or he could repeat the student's sentence and stress the error to indicate that it is not correct. By doing so, the student will try to correct himself and as a result, would be more confident when dealing with errors and less dependent on the teacher. Actually, there is much evidence that a self-discovery approach reduces the likelihood of pupils' dependence on external assistance. Self-correction is the best technique, because the student will remember it better.

6.8 Peer-correction

If the student cannot correct him/herself the teacher can encourage other pupils to supply correction. This technique is to be applied tactfully, so that the student who originally made the mistake will not feel humiliated. In the case of errors, it is useful if after peer correction the teacher goes back to the student who made the error and gets him/her to say it correctly. Edge (1990, p30) mentions the following advantages of peer correction:

- It encourages cooperation, pupils get used to the idea that they can learn from each other.
- Both pupils (who made the error and who corrects) are involved in listening to and thinking about the language.
- The teacher gets a lot of important information about the pupils' ability.

If pupils learn to practice peer correction without hurting each other's feelings, they will do the same in pair-work activities. However, it may happen that whenever the teacher asks for peer correction from the whole class, it is always the same pupils who answer. In this case the teacher has to make sure that other pupils are involved as well.

One of the disadvantages of peer correction is that it deprives the student of the opportunity to correct the error himself. Moreover, some pupils do not like to be corrected by their peers although they do not mind being corrected by the teacher. In spite of this, there is evidence that error correction by peers may be more likely to lead pupils to learning. Block (1996, p170) suggests that "*…it would appear that teacher-generated discourse is less memorable than learner-generated discourse*". However, if teachers intend to use this technique, they should bear in mind that it should be carefully planned in advance in order for it to be successful.

6.9 Teacher's Correction

If no one can correct, the teacher must realize that the point has not yet been learnt properly. In that case the teacher can re-explain the problematic item of language, especially if the teacher sees that the majority of the class has the same problem. There might be more repetition and practice necessary. We must not forget that the main aim of correction is to facilitate the pupils to learn the new language item correctly. That is why it is important that after correction the teacher has to ask the pupil who originally made the error or mistake to give the correct response.

Teachers can create the need in pupils to accept and appreciate the feedback to show that their performance is flawed. However, the repetitive use of the same type of feedback could be boring and may cause pupils lose interest in finding out the causes for their errors. In fact, there are several alternatives of feedback that can be adopted by teachers in correcting errors. Diane and Barbara (1998, p126) put forward the following types of feedback:

1) Explicit correction: it indicates clearly that the pupils answer is incorrect and provide the answer.
2) Recast: it indicates directly that the student's answer was incorrect; the teacher implicitly reformulates the student's error or provides the answer.
3) Repetition: The teacher repeats the student's mistake and adjusts intonation to draw pupils' attention.

The use of those methods of correction make pupils' interest more attracted in finding out the causes for their errors and then, they are more motivated to participate to the class.

A teacher in his function of evaluator, has to check the level of his pupils. He has to know what his pupils learn and master and what to be done. Then, errors are the adequate tools to be aware of the situation. And when those errors occur, there are ways to correct them to show pupils that making errors while speaking is not terrible. Gentle correction is there to give the appropriate solution.

7. Methodology of the Study

7.1 Research Population

This research work involves 30 EFL teachers of second and third form of the secondary schools of the Littoral region in the republic of Benin.

7.2 The Method of Investigation

The main instruments that I have used to carry out my research work are:
- Questionnaires to EFL teachers;
- Class observation;
- Interviews with both teachers.

7.3 Description of the Instruments of Investigation

The investigation instruments include: questionnaire addressed to 30 EFL teachers, interview with 10 teachers and 5 class visits.

7.4 Questionnaires Addressed to EFL Teachers

The questionnaire addressed to EFL Teachers attempts to collect data related to the following issues:

- the different types of speaking errors;
- the EFL beginner learners' environment according to their teachers;
- the conditions in which speaking errors occur and the different ways teachers are used to correcting their pupils' errors;
- the kind of activities teachers use to give pupils chance to express themselves;
- the way teachers appreciate their pupils' attitudes after correcting their errors;
- the cases of students' demotivation after teachers correct their errors.

7.5 Class Observation

For the investigation, five (5) English language classes have been visited.

The classes visited are the second and the third forms of the secondary schools in the Littoral region.

To have a balanced view of the whole class and all the events taking place in it, I was given a seat at its bottom. From that position, I could observe all that was going on in the classroom. The purpose of the class observation is to find the right answers to these concerns:

- check if all of the pupils participate actively to the class;
- check if the English language teaching is learner-centered;
- verify if the teachers respect the "teachers' talking time" as well as the "pupils' talking time";
- make sure that the teachers use the adequate methods to correct pupils' errors;
- check EFL learners 'reactions to their teachers' correction during speaking activities;
- check if the teachers speak only English language during the whole class.

7.6 Interviews with the EFL Teachers

In order to cross-check the results of the questionnaires, I have conducted interviews. Interviews are known to be instruments which consist in having direct contact with the interviewees and asking questions related to the topic. I have elaborated a set of questions related to my topic. Then, I went to interview five (5) teachers. The teachers were asked about how they deal with feedback incorporated in speaking skill lessons and their learners' reactions during the teaching of this skill. Furthermore, through interview they were asked what is the best way of achieving a successful teaching of speaking skill so as to make learners perform effectively. The main interview was performed with the teacher whose classroom was visited.

8. Presentation and Discussion of the Results

The data collected are presented according the research instruments used.

8.1 Presentation of the Results
8.1.1 Results Related to the Questionnaire Addressed to Teachers

Question 1: How long have you been teaching English course?

Table 1: EFL Teachers' Experience

The answer	Frequency	Percentage
One year	3	10
Two years	6	20
Three years	9	30
Four years	6	20
Five years	3	10
More than five years	3	10
Total	30	100

From the teachers' replies in this table, it can be deduced that the scope of teacher's experience in teaching English course ranges from one year to five years and more. This means our respondents have different experiences in the teaching job. It is positive in the sense that they will have different viewpoints and perspectives towards the subject under investigation.

Question 2: Is there any kind of interaction between you and your students during speaking activities?

Table 2: Interaction between teacher and students

The answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	30	100
No	00	00
Rarely	00	00
Total	30	100

All the teachers argue that their students interact with them. This indicates that their students are motivated to speak English and express themselves freely their ideas without caring about their limited knowledge of the English language. It is due to their teachers' encouragement and motivation added to their way of teaching, or their high rate of self-confidence and self-esteem.

Question 3: Do you think that the time for teaching oral expression course is enough to improve speaking skill?

Table 3: EFL Teachers 'appreciation of the Time allotted for teaching oral expression course

The answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	00	00
No	30	100
Total	30	100

The above answers mention that all teachers indicated that three hours per week are not enough for teaching oral expression course to fully develop the EFL learners' oral proficiency; furthermore, they agreed on the importance of this module to help learners enhancing their communicative abilities.

Question 4: What are the errors that the students commit in their speech?

Table 4: Types of Errors Made by the EFL Students according to their Teachers

Errors made by Students	Frequency	Percentage
Common grammatical errors	15	50%
Mispronunciation	25	83.33%
Misuse of tenses	28	93.33%
Misuse of vocabulary	23	76.66
EFL students 'poor vocabulary	29	96.66%
Difficulties in language production	18	60%
Misuse of English expressions	26	86.66%
Stylistic errors	11	36.66%
Interference with first or second language	27	90%
The place of the adjective and the adverb	16	53.33%
Subject and verb agreement	19	63.33%
Other errors	10	33.33%

The replies show that EFL learners make a number of errors when speaking among themselves: mispronunciation (83.33%) , interference with first or second language (90%), problems related to the misuse of tenses (93.33%), of difficulties in language production (60%), the place of the adjective and the adverb (53.33%), subject and verb agreement (63.33%), and the EFL students' poor vocabulary (96.66%), misuse of English expressions (86.66%), misuse of vocabulary(96.66%), misuse of English expressions (86.66%), stylistic errors (36.66%) and other errors (33.33%). Moreover, they state that their students know how to speak, but they cannot speak English fluently during classroom speaking activities and in real life situation.

Question 5: What is your role when your students make errors? Do you undertake error correction as a tool to enhance self-confidence and developing speaking abilities?

Table 5: Teachers' roles when students make errors and mistakes

The answer	Frequency	Percentage
Encouraging students to continue their oral performance so as to reduce their anxiety,	16	53.33%
Resorting to a peer correction as soon as the error is made	23	76.66%
Trying to stop the students in order to correct the errors	24	80%
Guiding them to correct errors and mistakes by themselves	18	60%
Trying to solve the problem for them.	14	46.66%
Giving advice to them to watch TV, to listen music and to the native speakers.	22	73.33%

According to the answers given by the teachers investigated it appears that they have diverse understanding of the roles assigned to them their learners make errors. That is the reason why they intervene in different ways when they notice their students are facing some obstacles during speaking activities. So, some of them (13.33%) try to guide them to solve the problem by asking them to think again of the rules they are to apply in such situations. Other teachers (33.33%) prefer not to interrupt the students so as to reduce their level of anxiety and encourage them to continue their speaking performance. Furthermore, all the above teachers undertake the feedback as a tool for learning to correct and to overcome their students' errors and obstacles especially in the oral expression course. In addition, an important number of these teachers (26.66%) advise their EFL learners to watch TV, to listen to music and the radio and to the native speakers. In the same vein, 26.66% of the teachers try to solve the problem for them by providing the right answer in their place.

Question 6: Which kind of feedback do you provide to your students?

Table 6: The kind of feedback provided by teachers

The answer	Frequency	Percentage
Oral feedbacks during classroom activities	30	100%
Written	9	30%
Face to face correction in private	10	33.33%
All of them	12	40%

The result in the table below show that teachers use different types of feedback in their speaking classes .The type of feedback used by them are oral feedback, written feedback, or personal feedback. Oral feedbacks are given by teachers by providing the correct pronunciation of words, by giving more explanations to students, by asking them to think again or to use their dictionaries to find out meanings of words, by asking them to repeat what they said to identify the mistakes by themselves, or by repeating their utterances through stressing students 'errors. In addition, teachers' written feedbacks are provided to students through writing the incorrect words or utterances on the board and showing to them their errors so as to permit them to correct their own mistakes. EFL teachers can be also be personal that is between the teacher and the student through writing mistakes

on a piece of paper in order not to make frustrate students or make them feel shy in front of their classmates.

Question 7: When do you think that the correction of errors is helpful and effective to improve students' oral performance?

Table 7: Feedback effectiveness and the oral Performance Improvement

Feedback effectiveness and the oral Performance improvement	Frequency	Percentage
When students trust their teacher and teacher does not offend students' pride and self-esteem in the public	25	83.33%
By the end of the students' oral performance	24	80%
When teachers correct errors without mentioning the name of students who make them	16	53.33%
When teachers personalize their feedbacks	12	40%
Always, simply because learning a foreign language needs feedback.	10	33.33%
When EFL students are talking.	2	6.66%

The effectiveness of teacher feedback depends mainly on the time when the teacher provides it. So, the teachers mentioned that in most cases they always provide the feedback when their students finish the presentation of their own oral activity (100%).It is done through gentle correction not criticism. In some cases, as in monologue, the teacher should provide the feedback during their production in smooth way when their learners repeat the same mistake. According to 83.33% of the EFL teachers involved in the present study, for a feedback to be effectively helpful to the learners, it should be given by a teacher who trusts his/her students and avoids offending their pride and self -esteem.

Question 8: How do your students respond to your feedback?

Table 8: Students Response to EFL Teachers' Feedbacks

Students' response to feedback	Frequency	Percentage
Positively	5	16.66%
Negatively	6	20%
Sometimes positively sometimes negatively	19	63.33%
Total	30	100%

According to this table a number of EFL teachers (16.66%) argued that all their students respond positively to their feedback during speaking activities whereas 20% of them declare that their learners negatively react to their feedbacks. These responses are apparent through the changes in students' attitudes when they repeat and undertake to implement their teachers' corrective feedbacks. Thus, teachers can measure their feedback's effectiveness from their students' responses. Sometimes, some students seem not to be affected by their teacher's feedback and they repeat the same mistakes as a

challenge to their teacher because of the teacher's way of presenting the feedbacks. Those students may consider their teachers' feedbacks as a criticism. The data in this table also reveal students' reactions vary according to teachers' attitude and the conditions in which errors are corrected. This is probably the reason why an important number of the teachers (63.33%) say that their students react sometimes positively sometimes negatively their feedbacks.

Question 9: In your opinion, along your experience in teaching speaking course, do you think that the feedback is an important technique to correct mistakes EFL learners face, and to improve their speaking production?

Table 9: Teachers' feedback and the improvement of their students' oral performance

Feedback and Mistake correction	Frequency	Percentage
Yes of course	27	90%
No	3	10%
Total	30	100%

The above answers show that almost all the teachers (90%) consider their feedback as an important teaching technique in their teaching process. According to them, it helps them to correct their learners' mistakes, and to improve their oral performance in terms of the use grammar, structure, semantics, and pronunciation. As it is mentioned, feedback is helpful in both written and spoken expressions.

8.3 Classroom Observation Analysis

In order to collect more data to address effectively the issue about how to enhance EFL student self-confidence so as to develop their speaking abilities, I negotiated with some English teachers who willingly accepted to be visited in their teaching process. The objectives of these classroom observations were to check how they teach speaking skills to their EFL beginner learners as well as the way they provide feedback to them in the process of communicative activities teaching. When I entered the classroom, learners warmly welcomed me with a song. When they were singing, I noticed that they were so motivated and enthusiastic. Then, the teacher gave me a sit at the bottom of the classroom where I could see clearly what went on in the room. Before starting the lesson, teacher asked learners to remind him of the lesson, they had learnt the section before. Few of them raised their hand and teacher pointed to some who tried to answer.

Indeed, the teachers and their students tackled the activity on which they agreed in advance for the day. All in all, I noticed that the teachers try their best to play their roles in teaching speaking. But they still have problems about how to motivate their students. Indeed, during the speaking activities, I witnessed EFL teachers mocking at their students who make mistakes instead of using gentle correction so as to encourage them to speak English.

Teachers need to motivate their students more in order to give their learners the desire to speak English language. As far as the feedbacks they provided to their learners

are concerned, most teachers are still not aware of the effective way of providing feedback to their EFL learners during communicative activities. Indeed, some of the teachers visited did not wait till the end of students' talking time before engaging any kind of correction; they interrupt their students, which may frustrate them. As a matter of fact, the teachers I visited need to learn more about how to provide effective feedback to students while correcting their errors.

8.4 Results Related to the Analysis of the Interview with Teachers

During my interview with 10 teachers on the issue related to the importance of the teacher's feedback in the process of teaching and learning English as a foreign language. The following are the answers provided by the respondents:

According to the teachers interviewed, their feedback is very useful to EFL learners for it helps them to improve pronunciation and the way they speak English when learners practice the corrections given by their instructors. They strongly support that feedback is very essential for learning because:

- it helps learners not to repeat the same error and to speak correctly;
- it improves students' speaking skills;
- it is the source of the correct input in the class;
- it provides leadership, motivation, guidance and genuine assistance for improving speaking performance;
- it informs the learner about his learning's results, whether it is correct or not, which decreases the learners' stress when he wants to know his performance results;
- it encourages the learner to continue his learning especially when he knows that his production's results are correct;
- it provides students insights for improving future oral performance.

9. Discussion of the Results

The discussion of the results is organized around the study research questions. It attempts to provide answers to the three research questions.

9.1 Errors Committed by the EFL Students during Speaking Activities

The analysis of the results of the EFL teachers' questionnaire reveal that EFL learners commit a variety of errors when speaking among themselves and these are summarized as followed: mispronunciation, interference, problems in grammar as in misuse of tenses, of utterance structure, of the place of the adjective and the adverb, or verb and the subject agreement, as well as EFL learners' poor vocabulary (table 4). Moreover, the respondent teachers state that their students know how to speak, but they cannot produce the effective oral language.

According to the results shown in the Table 4, students make all kinds of errors in their learning process. These errors may vary from one student to another since they do

not have the same level of understanding, the same background or even the same motivation for learning the language. This situation may be accounted for the fact that most teachers involved in the study are not trained in teacher training schools before being recruited. Sometimes they fail in making their learners aware of all the mistakes they commit when they are speaking. This finding is in line with the conclusion reached by Doff (2014:321) when he investigates the types of errors made by high school students in Dustening School. After having recorded the types of errors committed by 120 high school learners in this school, he concludes that *"students in language classes make a great deal of errors during speaking activities and which are caused by factors dependent on teaching and learning process."* That is the reason why he proposes that *"teacher should be flexible and attentive of the correction's effect on each learner before engaging any error correction in language classes"* Doff (2017).

In addition, the EFL teachers (87%) interviewed said the learners do not repeat the same mistakes after they are corrected. This is an evidence of the fact that EFL learners are attentive of their teacher's feedbacks and take them into account especially when dealing with speaking activities in the schools investigated.

9.2 Teachers' Error Correction as a Means for Enhancing EFL Students' Self-Confidence and Developing Oral Skills

In teaching English as a Foreign Language, teachers have many roles to play in order to develop his learners speaking performance. According to Hindémé and Egounléti (2018) *"since the EFL learners commit a lot of mistakes, their teacher should act as controller, helper, corrector, recorder and feedback provider in order to help them correct these mistakes. He/she must also takes more time for examining his/her students' oral production in order to identify and detect the errors"*. For a speaking activity to be effective and profitable for EFL learners, providing appropriate feedback is one of the teacher's important tasks and it constitutes an important step in correcting errors made during students' speaking activities.

For James (2019), *"this feedback can be in forms of giving advice, suggestion, clarification, teaching a general rule, or criticism"*. Furthermore, after providing students the feedbacks they need, teachers should also look for their students' reactions to the given feedbacks in order to evaluate the usefulness of the feedback. Similarly, teachers should encourage them to consider the feedback as a natural corrective action and not as an excessive criticism.

In actual fact, FL Teachers should learn to give the appropriate feedback in particular situations. They have also to avoid frustrating their learners through repetitive error corrections. That is the reason why Harmer (2015) stated that *"over correction may inhibit them and take the communicativeness out of the activity"*.

According to Harmer, *the teacher's feedback is helpful during the oral tasks, in which the teachers should react to their learners' performance in different ways"*.

According to 88.66% of the EFL teachers investigated, students prefer to receive their teachers' feedback at the end of their production in forms of advising, explaining, and suggesting but not through criticism. An important number of the students (89%)

state that teachers' repetitive feedback make them lose their self-confidence especially when they are completing an oral task, they added (67%) that their teacher's feedback is needed for their speaking performance when it occurs as a friendly remarks to help them better their oral production. In addition, the teacher's questionnaire demonstrates that interactions among students and students increases when students positively welcome their teacher's corrections. In spite of the insufficient time allotted for teaching and learning oral skills, the teacher involved in the present study vary the learning activities in order to develop their students' communicative strategies and fluency. They also (64%) claimed that their learners encounter several difficulties, and it is up to them to help them overcome those obstacles to EFL learning by providing the necessary feedback by help them to be aware of all their weaknesses and strengths, In actual fact, almost all the teachers interviewed (95%) are mindful of the roles they are to play as EFL instructors as far the students' speaking error correction is concerned ; that may be the reasons why 100% of the them emphasized that the EFL teacher's feedback is meant to correct learners' mistakes and improve their self-confidence and speaking performance.

9.3 Strategies Used by the EFL Teachers to Correct their Learners' Errors in the Littoral Region

The results of questionnaires, class observations and interviews have shown the importance of teachers' feedback in EFL classes in general and during speaking activities in particular. One of the major findings of the present research is concerned with the positive effect of teachers' correction on students' speaking skills development. Appropriate feedbacks result in EFL students' good performance in communicative activities for 87.75% of the students interviewed stated that they did not repeat the same mistake later if they received a kind feedback from their teacher during speaking activities. This means that when feedbacks are appropriately provided learners show a certain appreciation to the teachers and endeavor to correct their mistakes. They have positive attitude towards that and at the same time aware about its importance. In addition to the students' answers, 100% the teachers involved in the current investigation claimed that the feedback is an important technique in their teaching process to correct their learners' mistakes, and to improve their oral performance in terms of grammar, structure, semantics, and pronunciation. As such, the result of this study shares the view of Harmer when he said*" The teacher's feedback is helpful during the oral tasks, in which the teachers should react to their learners' performance in different way".*

As a result, only 12.25% of students repeated the same corrected mistakes. This is due to the ambiguity of the feedback's statement, or due to the teacher's way of presenting it. Thus, when planning their lessons, teachers should take into account their students' interest and motivation.

10. Recommendations

Based on the data collected a number of recommendations are made to both teachers and school authorities.

10.1 The Importance of Teacher Training

As result, we notice that it is essential for the educational authorities and the other actors of education to recruit well trained English teachers. The absence of adequate training in English involves de-motivation with EFL pupils since it is the source of blockage, the government has to initiate for teachers an appropriate training which can enable them to become qualified and competent teachers in the schools. Indeed, nowadays, many people become teachers because they do not have the job that they have been trained for. As our schools lack teachers, the headmasters hastily recruit them, and they let our pupils' destiny in their hands because they want to earn their life.

Considering the finding of this study, it is self-evident that teachers need psychological knowledge to achieve successfully the objective of their work. In terms of psychological knowledge, teachers must have some background which enables them to use appropriate techniques likely to create lively and comfortable classroom atmosphere. In addition, such knowledge can help them teach with regard to individual learning styles in order to increase pupils' participation.

Furthermore, a great deal of teachers is not aware of the different and various teaching methods that English as a foreign language requires. This ignorance explains the teaching deficiency in Benin schools. How can pupils be motivated and confident to express themselves without being afraid of making errors when teachers cannot reassure them about the normality of making errors and the greatness to correct them through methods? Thus, it is urgent to provide teachers with training which can enable them to acquire EFL teaching approach.

Besides, the educational authorities should favor English teachers' attendance to professional seminars, refresher courses, English teachers' forums and conferences with native or near-native speakers of English, since refresher courses enable teachers to know about another methodologies and appropriate materials that can be used in language classes in order to make English more interesting. As far as professional seminars and conference are concerned, they are real means to get great deal of advantages through which most of the English teachers have the opportunity to discuss with native or near-native speakers about academic and psychological issues. Moreover, it is up to the authorities to organize a summer workshop during long vacation for a month in each department under the control of inspectors, dedicated lecturers and experts. Such come together yearly will give inestimate results. It is an alternative to boost the young generation.

Another aspect of the problem is that most of the teachers are not well paid and they do not give full importance at teaching. We notice that when he has been recruited for a job and he is not well paid, he will never act with devotion. So, educational

authorities should review the financial situation of the teachers in order to encourage them, to give the best through auto-training through life.

10.2 Intensifying Inspections and EFL Class Observations

For better performances in English language, the educational authorities should intensify the class visits by inspectors and school advisers. So, with the different remarks made, those inspectors will assist teachers to improve their teaching methods through the application of those remarks.

10.3 Making EFL Teachers Aware of their Roles

We have emphasized that teachers have three main functions. First, they are expert. That is to say that they know that they have to give knowledge to pupils. Secondly, they are coach; they have to train pupils to the knowledge and to the practice. And thirdly, they are evaluator. That is to say that they have to access or evaluate their pupils' level on the basis of what they taught them in order to know what they mastered and what remains to be done based on the specific objectives.

After analyzing different findings of the present research work, some more issues can be raised. So, it is urgent to find solutions to those situations. But it is not easy to find an indisputable solution to a national problem. Nevertheless, FL teachers can be supplied with some tips to motivate their learners to communicate fluently in English language.

To facilitate the teaching and the learning process, teachers have to be a model to the pupils. And to achieve this, they have many roles to play in order to motivate pupils and help them to be confident in themselves.

a. The EFL Teacher as an Informant

The teachers need to bear in mind what and how much information to give. As far as correction of errors is concerned, he/she has to inform pupils about the reflex of making errors. That will pacify pupils' fear of making error and confer them confidence and motivation.

b. The Teacher as a Motivator

The teacher as a motivator is the person who plays an important role because whatever technical qualities a teacher possesses, without motivation the pupils will never learn.

Here are some motivating factors:
- Personality of the teacher: he has to appropriate sensitivity, sympathy, encouragement, flexibility, avoidance of sarcasm and ridicule to the pupils. He/She must attentive to every situation in the classrooms especially during activities which requires learners to speak in front of their classmates.
- Teacher's ability to interest pupils: if pupils are bored, they will pay no attention, they will not participate, they will not learn, they will be easily distracted and prevent others from learning.

c. The Teacher as a Need Assessor

Teachers must be able to diagnose what should be taught by:

- Showing the need to learn an item (because of lack of knowledge);
- Evaluating the pupils' errors in terms of the need for remedial work: the teacher must not forget to praise what the pupils do know.

d. The Teacher as Corrector

The teacher may decide what to correct, when and how to correct it. For example, a teacher can make a note of the pupils' errors and let the pupils know about it, and then correct them to allow the other pupils to appreciate the correct answers. The teacher must not stop the pupils during conversation to correct something because they would lose what they want to say. It is also useful to let the pupils correct their own mistakes before giving the correct version.

It is also important for teachers to reassure pupils about their fear of making errors. Pupils need to know that it is not a problem to make errors especially when they are acquiring a new language. They are to be aware of the fact that they are not native speakers of English language and it is quite normal, and they need correction.

Another point is that, teachers should preserve pupils from mockery when one of them made errors, which is also a real means of demotivation. Teachers are the most indicated to create motivation in pupils. But it is important to point out that nobody can do well an activity when he/she is not satisfied of the work's condition. Administrative authorities should improve teachers' working and living conditions. Teachers should speak English language during classes. They should use appropriate games to train their pupils and correct their errors too. Moreover, they should encourage the use of face to face communication so that the pupils can use English Language in their daily life.

11. Conclusion

The purpose of this research work consists in highlighting the different difficulties faced by Beninese EFL teachers in teaching EFL students to speak English. One of these problems is concerned with students' lack of confidence during speaking activities in EFL classrooms. To overcome that situation, this research work recommends English learning be more attractive in order to insure self-confidence and motivation in EFL pupils' .In addition, school's authorities have to find solutions to increase significantly the poor revenue of teachers and improve their difficult living conditions. Government need to recruit more teachers and train them. This research also recommends EFL teachers to play games with their pupils while correcting errors for the spirit of games will drive them to get involved and participate.

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