



REPUBLIQUE DU BENIN

**MINISTRE DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPERIEUR ET DE LA
RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE (MESRS)**

UNIVERSITE DE PORTO-NOVO (UPN)

ECOLE NORMALE SUPERIEURE (ENS)

DOMAINE: SCIENCES DE L'EDUCATION ET DE LA FORMATION

MENTION: PROFESSORAT DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT SECONDAIRE

SPECIALITE: ANGLAIS

GRADE: LICENCE/BAPES

MEMOIRE DE FIN DE CYCLE

SUJET:

**TEACHING AND ASSESSING
SPEAKING SKILLS IN
INTERMEDIATE CLASSES: A CASE
STUDY OF CEG AGBOKOU**

Présenté par:

Chahid A. T. ARONI

Sous la direction de:

Dr. Innocent KOUTCHADE

**Maître-Assistant des Universités
(CAMES)**

Année Académique: 2015-2016

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research work to:

-My late mother Mouinanth Adjokè Alédji. May her soul rest in peace!

-My dear father Salami Kolawolé Aroni. May God grant him long life!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All thanks are, first, to the Almighty God.

I express my gratitude to:

-Dr. Innocent Koutchadé who has accepted to supervise my research work in spite his tight schedule. May God bless him and his family!

-All my lecturers at Advanced Teachers Training College of Porto-Novo, especially Dr. Ibrahim Yèkini and Dr. Juvénale Agbayahoun. May God bless all of them and their families!

-Mr. Mahougnon Avocèvou, Mr. Vincent Ahouandjinou, and Mr. René Agboton for their pieces of advice and supports. May God bless all of them and their families!

-All my uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters, cousins, nephews, and nieces for their moral and financial supports. May God bless all of them and their families!

-All my friends and classmates, especially Kowiou Tawa, Rachad Akinwandé, Mouhaïssine Baba-Agba and Fahrid Dah for their moral supports. May God bless all of them and their families!

-All those who, in one way or another, have contributed to this research work, but that I forget naming. May God bless all of them and their families!

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Between fluency and accuracy, which one do you emphasise the most while teaching speaking skills in intermediate classes? Say why.

Table 2: Do you raise intermediate classes' students' awareness on whether a specific speaking activity is fluency-focused or accuracy-focused? Say why.

Table 3: What activities do you use to teach speaking skills in intermediate classes? Say why.

Table 4: How do you assess intermediate classes' students' speaking skills? By checking their... Say why.

Table 5: Are intermediate classes' students aware of the criterion or criteria based on which their speaking skills are being assessed? Say why.

Table 6: What type (s) of speaking mistakes do you correct the most in intermediate classes? Say why.

Table 7: Between fluency and accuracy, which one would you like your teacher to emphasise the most while teaching you speaking skills?

Table 8: What activities does your teacher use to teach you speaking skills?

Table 9: Do those activities allow you to really speak?

Table 10: Does your teacher correct your speaking mistakes?

Table 11: Does your teacher's corrective feedback help you improve your speaking skills?

Table 12: What type (s) of speaking mistakes would you like your teacher to correct the most?

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION.....	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
LIST OF TABLES.....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iv
GENERAL INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY.....	3
1.1-Statement of the problem.....	3
1.2-Purpose of the study.....	4
1.3-Significance of the study.....	4
1.4-Scope and limitations of the study.....	5
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....	6
2.1- Fluency and Accuracy.....	6
2.1.1-Fluency.....	6
2.1.2-Accuracy.....	7
2.1.3-Fluency-focused versus Accuracy-focused Activities.....	8
2.2-Activities for Teaching Speaking Skills.....	9
2.2.1-Acting from Script.....	9
2.2.2-Communication Games.....	10
2.2.3-Discussion.....	10
2.2.4-Prepared Talks.....	11

2.2.5-Questionnaires.....	11
2.2.6-Simulation and Role Play.....	11
2.2.7-Cooperative Activities.....	12
2.2.8-Storytelling.....	12
2.2.9-Retelling.....	13
2.2.10-Picture Description.....	14
2.3-Criteria for Assessing Speaking Skills.....	14
2.3.1-Pronunciation.....	14
2.3.2-Vocabulary.....	15
2.3.3-Grammatical Accuracy.....	16
2.3.4-Use of ‘small words’.....	16
2.3.5-Turn-taking.....	16
2.4-Mistake Correction.....	17
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY.....	20
3.1-Research Method.....	20
3.2-Target Population.....	20
3.3-Research Instruments.....	20
CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA.....	22
4.1-Presentation and analysis of teachers’ responses to the questionnaire.....	22
4.2-Presentation and analysis of students’ responses to the questionnaire...	26
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS.....	31

5.1-Discussion of the findings.....	31
5.2-Suggestions to the teachers.....	35
5.3-Suggestions to the students.....	35
GENERAL CONCLUSION.....	36
REFERENCE LIST.....	38
ANNEX	

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

According to Burkart and Sheppard (2004), the success in learning a language is measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation in that language. Thus, developing speaking skills is of vital importance in the teaching/learning process of English as a Foreign Language. But, it is a pity that most Beninese students are not able to hold conversations in English despite years of learning the language at secondary school. As a matter of fact, during my observational and practical attachments in intermediate classes as a prospective English teacher, it has been observed that the problem to which most students are confronted is that of speaking. Many of them can read, write, but, very few can speak the language fluently. Another remark is that the students' speaking skills are not assessed; only reading and writing skills are assessed.

These are the main reasons why I have decided to inquire into the ways speaking skills are being taught and assessed in intermediate classes in Benin through the topic: "Teaching and Assessing Speaking in Intermediate Classes: A case study of CEG Agbokou". I have chosen this subject because it can help to determine the reasons why intermediate classes' students are not able to speak English in real life situations despite years of learning the language. Thus, it will be easier to find solutions so as to correct the situation.

To carry out this research work, it has been divided into five chapters: The first chapter introduces the study stating the problem, the purpose, the significance, the scope and limitations of the study. The second chapter reviews the literature related to the topic of the study, namely fluency and accuracy, activities for teaching speaking skills, criteria for assessing speaking skills, and mistake correction. The third chapter deals with the methodology of the study stating the research method, the target population, and the research instruments. The fourth chapter presents and analyses the data. The last chapter is concerned with the discussion of the findings and the suggestions.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1-Statement of the problem

The research problem can be identified in the fact that intermediate classes' students are not able to hold conversations in English in spite of the two or three years that they have already spent learning the language. This situation might be due to the ways in which speaking skills are being taught and assessed in intermediate classes by most teachers. Therefore, the current study attempts to find out how teachers go about teaching and assessing speaking skills in intermediate classes. In other words, the study attempts to address the following main question:

- How do teachers teach and assess speaking skills in intermediate classes?

Six sub-questions can be derived from this question:

1-Between fluency and accuracy, which one do teachers emphasise the most while teaching speaking skills in intermediate classes?

2-Do teachers raise intermediate classes' students' awareness about whether a specific speaking activity is fluency-focused or accuracy-focused?

3-What activities do teachers use to teach speaking skills in intermediate classes?

4-How do teachers assess intermediate classes' students' speaking skills?

5-Are intermediate classes' students aware of the criterion or criteria based on which their speaking skills are being assessed?

6-What type (s) of speaking mistakes do teachers correct the most in intermediate classes?

1.2-Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to find out useful strategies that can improve the teaching and assessment of speaking skills in intermediate classes. Thus, it aims at: identifying which one between fluency and accuracy teachers should emphasise the most while teaching speaking skills in intermediate classes; showing the importance of raising intermediate classes' students' awareness on whether a specific speaking activity is fluency-focused or accuracy-focused; identifying the appropriate activities for teaching speaking skills in intermediate classes; identifying the criteria for a good assessment of speaking skills in intermediate classes; showing the importance of raising intermediate classes' students' awareness on the way their speaking skills are being assessed; and showing the type (s) of speaking mistakes that teachers should correct the most in intermediate classes.

1.3-Significance of the study

This study is important in that it deals with both the teaching and assessment processes. It is, hence, an attempt to overcome the shortcomings in teaching and assessing speaking skills in intermediate classes in Benin. Besides, it provides teachers with knowledge about which one between fluency and accuracy they should emphasise the most while teaching speaking skills in intermediate classes. It also shows the importance of raising intermediate classes' students' awareness on whether a specific speaking activity is fluency-focused or accuracy-focused. It provides teachers with explanations about some activities for teaching speaking skills in intermediate classes. The current study also deals with the criteria for assessing speaking skills in intermediate classes and the importance of raising intermediate classes' students' awareness on the criteria based on which their speaking skills are being assessed. It finally explains the type (s) of speaking mistakes that teachers should correct the most in intermediate classes.

1.4-Scope and limitations of the study

The current study does not attempt to propose models of lesson planning for teaching speaking skills in intermediate classes, nor does it deal with the different class groupings to be used while teaching speaking skills in intermediate classes. As well, this study does not attempt to propose models of exercises for assessing speaking skills in intermediate classes, nor is it concerned with different types of assessment that can be done while assessing speaking skills in intermediate classes.

The present study likewise does not take into account all the secondary school classes, but it is restricted to intermediate ones. This is because, with what they have already learned in English for two or three years, they are expected to speak the language in real life situations. But, they often fail doing that. This study, therefore, aims to investigate the causes of this situation and, thus, find solutions to it.

In addition, the research is limited to teachers and students of CEG Agbokou. This is because it is the school in which I have done my practical attachments and the remarks that have made me choose this topic have been made in this school.

Another limitation of the study is that the samples considered for the study are convenience samples. Therefore, the findings of the study can be generalised only to the category of the individuals considered for the study.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the literature related to the topic of the study, namely fluency and accuracy, activities for teaching speaking skills, criteria for assessing speaking skills, and mistake correction.

2.1-Fluency and Accuracy

This section focuses on the two ultimate objectives of speaking lessons: fluency and accuracy. It also explains the importance of raising intermediate classes' students' awareness on whether a specific speaking activity is fluency-focused or accuracy-focused.

2.1.1-Fluency

It seems not to be consensus among scholars as to how to define fluency. In fact, Koponen and Riggensbach (2000:5) state that it is impossible to define fluency as a unitary concept, given the various definitions of the phenomenon in prior researches. Conversely, Carrol (2004:202) notes that in discussions on second language talk, it is not well established what exactly causes the perceived "non-fluency".

As an example of how fluency is often understood, Koponen and Riggensbach (2000:6) illustrate how in some languages, for example in Finnish, the tendency is to perceive fluency as a flow of speech, as if speech were a current of sorts. Consequently, Koponen and Riggensbach (2000:8) continue to discuss that within language assessment discussions, fluency is, therefore, often understood as "a lack of excessive breaks" in speech.

Lennon (2000:25) develops the notion that fluency parallels proficiency by distinguishing between a "broad sense of fluency" and a "narrow sense of fluency", with the prior term referring to no less than the overall oral proficiency. The latter term for its part refers to the speed and smoothness of oral delivery. Lennon (2000:26) himself defines fluency as "the rapid, smooth,

accurate, lucid, and efficient translation of thought or communicative intention into language under the temporal constraints of on-line processing.” Furthermore, in reference to Lennon’s definition of fluency, Koponen and Riegenbach (2000:10) treat “smoothness” as a linguistically unspecific term, and estimate that it would be difficult to determine what is a halting or fragmentary speech, in contrast to a so-called smooth speech.

Segalowitz (2000:200) takes the discussion on fluency to a rather interesting dimension illustrating the extremes the lack of a unitary definition for the term allows. According to Segalowitz (2000:200), if a speaker has an extensive vocabulary in a language, that is, if they know many words, the speaker is considered fluent in the language. Yet, given how varying fluency may be defined, this sounds a rather plausible definition as well.

With regards to all that have been said above, it is clear that there is no unanimous definition of fluency. Nevertheless, some key linguistic features evoked by some scholars can help determine whether a speech is fluent or not. When somebody is speaking without excessive breaks, hesitations, repeats, pauses, it can be said that that person is fluent. So, we can judge somebody to be fluent or not basing on those criteria for the time being, hoping that scholars will end up agreeing on an unambiguous definition of fluency that Koponen and Riegenbach (2000: 21) called for. It is important to note that there is a part of accuracy in fluency because for a person to speak without breaks, hesitations, repeats, pauses, this person needs to be precise in what he or she is saying, using the right words where they should be used.

2.1.2-Accuracy

Recognizably, accuracy is one of the most important criteria to measure one’s linguistic ability and to shelter language users from communication breakdowns. According to Richards (1992:31), accuracy concerns “the ability to

produce grammatically correct sentence.” In other words, accuracy in language means grammatical accuracy only.

Nevertheless, in Thornbury (2005), the terms “accuracy” seems to cover more than that. Specifically, speaking English accurately means doing without or with few errors on not only grammar but vocabulary and pronunciation, as well. He also sets the clear scale for assessment of accuracy:

a)Grammar: Students use correct words order, tenses, tense agreement, etc. Students do not leave out articles, prepositions or difficult tenses.

b)Vocabulary: Students have a range of vocabulary that corresponds to the syllabus year list and use words you have taught.

c)Pronunciation: Students speak and most people understand.

In order words, to judge whether a person is accurate or not, we have to assess his/her grammatical accuracy, vocabulary and pronunciation. If a person has all those sub-skills, he/she can then be said to be accurate.

2.1.3-Fluency-focused versus Accuracy-focused Activities

For the purposes of Language Teaching, activities to practise speaking are sometimes identified as fluency or accuracy focused. This is not to exclude one of the two concepts from teaching but, rather, to point out what the main purpose of the activity is, i.e. to concentrate mainly on using language accurately or the ability to ‘get the message across’. Accuracy-focused activities are usually used to practise a particular linguistic phenomenon or language whereas fluency-focused activities usually entail using a broader range of skills.

Fluency-focused activities should be the ultimate goal in a classroom setting because they help learners prepare for ‘what is out there’. Nevertheless, accuracy-focused activities are not less important. In effect, in the beninese context of A level and O level exams, the students must first succeed in the written exam which is accuracy-focused before being able to sit for the oral exam which is fluency-focused.

Another fact is that when conducting accuracy-focused or fluency-focused tasks, it is important that learners understand (and are instructed upon if necessary) that a particular activity is accuracy-focused or fluency-focused. Otherwise a task can easily miss its aim. If learners treat accuracy-focused tasks as a fluency practice or vice-versa, their language skills will hardly develop further. Therefore, it is crucial for teachers to make sure that learners understand the real objective of an activity, albeit not stated explicitly at all times.

McMillan (2001:53) states the importance of teachers having clear learning targets in order to succeed in assessing students' competences. He further states that clear and adequate aims for diverse tasks and assignments can be a motivating factor for the students to performing well.

To conclude, this section showed that it is necessary to utilise both accuracy and fluency focused tasks in the classroom and to raise learners' awareness on whether a specific speaking activity is fluency-focused or accuracy-focused. Accuracy-focused activities are likely to help learners use language correctly, while fluency-focused activities will help them produce fluent stretches of language.

2.2-Activities for Teaching Speaking Skills

Speaking skills should be taught through attractive and communicative activities. There are many types of classroom speaking activities. Harmer (2001) states six classroom speaking activities. They are acting from script, communication games, discussion, prepared talks, questionnaires, simulation, and role play. Those activities and others such as information gap activities, cooperative activities, storytelling, retelling, and picture description are explained in this section.

2.2.1-Acting From Script

Acting from script is a kind of activity that can be used by the teacher to teach speaking. The role of the teacher in this activity is like that of theatre

directors, that is, drawing attention to the appropriate stress, intonation, and speed. Giving the students enough time to rehearse or practice their dialogues before they give their final performances will help them very much. And by so doing, the teacher ensures that acting out is both a learning and language producing activity. The students will gain much more from the whole experience in the process.

2.2.2-Communication Games

Games are designed to provoke communication between students. The games are made based on the principle of the information gap so that one student has to talk to a partner in order to solve a puzzle, draw a picture, put a thing in the right order, or find similarities and differences between pictures. Television and radio games, imported into the classroom, often provide good fluency activities.

2.2.3-Discussion

Discussion is probably the most commonly used activity in speaking classes. Here, the students are allowed to express their real opinions. According to Harmer (2001), discussion range is divided into several stages.

The first is buzz groups. It can be used for a whole range of discussion. For example, students are expected to predict the content of a reading text, or talk about their reactions after reading the text. (Harmer, 2001:272-273)

The second is instant comments. A way to train students to respond fluently and immediately is to insert ‘instant comment’ mini activities into lessons. This involves showing them photographs or introducing topics at any stage of a lesson and nominating students to say the first thing that comes into their head. (Harmer, 2001:273)

The last is formal debates. Students prepare arguments in favour or against various propositions. The debate will be started when those who are appointed as ‘panel speakers’ produce well-rehearsed ‘writing like’ arguments

whereas others, the audience, pitch in as the debate progresses with their own thoughts on the subject. (Harmer, 2001:273)

2.2.4-Prepared Talks

Students make a presentation on a topic of their own choice. Such talks are not designed for informal spontaneous conversations because they are prepared and more 'writing like'. However, if possible students should speak from notes rather than from a script.

2.2.5-Questionnaires

Questionnaires are very useful because they ensure that both questioner and respondent have something to say to each other. Students can design questionnaires on any topic that is appropriate. As they do so, the teacher can act as a resource, helping them in the design process. The results obtained from questionnaires can then form the basis for written work, discussions, or prepared talks.

2.2.6-Simulation and Role Play

Role plays are another way of promoting speaking. Learners pretend to be in various social contexts and have various social roles. Role plays are often designed for pairs but can also involve more people. For example, in a role play designed to be acted out in a group of four, two learners can be asked to play a couple of holiday makers who have complaints about a hotel, and another two learners to play the owners of the hotel who feel that the complaints are unjustified or misguided. First, both couples prepare themselves either to complain about the poor services or to defend themselves. After that, learners act out their roles trying to reach some kind of understanding in the end.

Simulations are a kind of role play with the only difference that learners use realia, that is, real objects which teachers and/or learners bring into the class to make the situation more realistic. A typical simulation activity can be 'ordering food in a restaurant' where learners are divided into two groups:

waiters and customers. The items which can be used are menus, knives, spoons, forks, etc. Learners are given prompts describing their roles (e.g. you are a difficult customer who complains about random things all the time) and act out the situation of ordering and having a meal in a restaurant. Even though simulations are unlikely to be practised in classroom on a regular basis, they are a great spur for learners because they help them to see a direct link between classroom English and real-life situations.

2.2.7-Cooperative Activities

Cooperative activities are such in which all learners have the same information and work together to complete a task.

An example of this can be ranking tasks. In a ranking task, learners are given a list of items and are asked to rank the items according to a certain criterion. For instance, learners can be asked to rank some occupations in order of how stressful learners think they are. After that, learners compare their lists in pairs or groups providing explanations for their choices. They can also be asked to negotiate their choices and end up with a ranking their pair or group has agreed on.

Training learners in the ability to negotiate their ideas and reach a compromise quickly is desirable. Not only is this skill very useful for all kinds of professions but it is also enriching for one's personal development.

2.2.8-Storytelling

Storytelling is one of the techniques that can be used with learners at any level to increase their fluency. This is because stories are a good opportunity for learners to practise longer stretches of discourse. Furthermore, research by Givón (1997:162) suggests that sharing experience and stories can be motivating

for tellers if met with prompts and collaboration from their audience. Such circumstances are likely to turn one's speech into a performance.

There is a variety of techniques that involve storytelling. Learners can tell stories based on their own experience, childhood memories, classical tales, jokes or anecdotes. For instance, learners can choose a classical tale they know and discuss the story in their pairs or groups taking turns in their narrating. In a different storytelling activity, which is likely to foster their creative thinking, learners are given a set of words to create their own stories. This is a good way of recycling vocabulary from the previous lessons.

2.2.9-Retelling

A technique which is slightly different from storytelling is retelling. In reference to other authors, Rachmawaty and Hermagustiana (2010:3) inform that “retelling is a process of re-memorizing what we listened to and read”. They also mention the positive influence that a retelling technique has saying that it promotes learners' ability to rearrange information from the texts, develops their language knowledge through the internalisation of the texts' features and overcomes difficulty using target language. According to Nation and Newton (2009:70), “the input to retelling is reading”. In other words, learners are given texts that they read and then retell.

Another retelling technique involving information transfer is based on a recorded input. Learners listen to a recording and note down key words to retell the content of the recording in pairs or groups. The advantage of this retelling technique is that it also helps students to develop their listening skills.

Retelling techniques should be implemented more often than usual in order to develop students' speaking fluency. Also, learners should collect short stories to tell each other in or outside their classes.

2.2.10-Picture description

Describing pictures is an activity which can be recommended especially for lower proficiency levels because it does not require as complex organisation of thoughts and as fast information-processing as more interactive tasks do. On the other hand, the language that learners can produce on the basis of pictures is rather limited and on the whole, the technique does not provide much of training in other dimensions of communicative competence than the linguistic one. Therefore, picture description can be used as one of the techniques to practice accuracy rather than fluency. It can also be recommended at beginning stages for giving learners opportunities to put together whole stretches of spoken language and experience the feeling of expressing oneself fluently when learners cannot process language as fast as to interact in more complex situations.

To conclude, it is important to note that the variety of activities presented in this section is by no means exhaustive. There are many more activities promoting fluency and/or accuracy which could be discussed here, such as creative tasks, jigsaw activities, process description, brainstorming, and so on.

2.3-Criteria for Assessing Speaking Skills

This section presents the assessment criteria such as pronunciation, vocabulary, grammatical accuracy, use of ‘small words’, and turn-taking. It also explains the importance of raising intermediate classes’ students’ awareness on the criteria based on which their speaking skills are being assessed.

2.3.1-Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the ability to produce individual sounds and to link words together, as well as using stress and intonation to communicate meaning (Thornbury, 2005:128-129). Since people tend to judge the status of both native and non-native speakers based on their pronunciation, the sound of speech is difficult to assess. However, languages which are used worldwide have

developed a number of regional varieties and standards. It is thus difficult to favour one particular pronunciation as standard in oral assessment and to expect everyone to imitate this one standard. Also, if a native-like speech is a criterion for assessing oral production most learners will ‘fail’ even though they communicate well in the target language.

Therefore, it is of great importance to include other features than ‘the sound of speech’ in the category ‘pronunciation’, in accordance with Thornbury’s definition. Features such as intelligibility, pitch, rhythm, pausing, stress and intonation are also relevant to the assessment of speech.

2.3.2-Vocabulary

To be participants in oral communication, lexical competence is required; an important feature is thus knowledge of vocabulary and the meaning of the words. To succeed in communicating, it is important to have knowledge of more than merely vocabulary; one has to apply lexical phrases, i.e. chunks of words occurring together. Discourse markers such as ‘‘if you ask me’’, ‘‘by the way’’ and ‘‘I take your point’’. Idioms and sayings such as ‘‘part and parcel’’, ‘‘make ends meet’’ and ‘‘speak of the devil’’, are examples of lexical phrases that extend the repertoire of a language user (Thornbury, 2005:23).

In test situations where vocabulary is a criterion for oral assessment both knowledge of and the use of vocabulary is assessed (Bachman and Palmer, 1996:276). Thus, the range of the student’s vocabulary is assessed; whether the vocabulary is broad enough to adequately cover the actual topic. Also, the accuracy of the vocabulary is assessed; whether the student employs the vocabulary with precision and can demonstrate understanding of the applied vocabulary.

2.3.3-Grammatical Accuracy

In addition to vocabulary, grammar is the building blocks in a language; the basis one can construct a language from. All languages have patterns and rules one must apply in order to produce language.

For assessing grammatical accuracy in oral communication, it is relevant to establish to what degree the student manages to apply, for example, the correct form of verbs, adjectives and adverbs and the plural of nouns.

2.3.4-Use of ‘small words’

Hasselgren (1998:155) suggests that the use of ‘small words’ such as ‘really’, ‘I mean’ and ‘oh’ makes the speech more smooth. Moreover, House (1996:232) states that expressions like ‘yeah’, ‘ok’, ‘listen’ and ‘I mean’ help connecting the interactions in a conversation to make it coherent and smooth.

I believe that making the students aware of ‘small words’ or filler words will help them avoiding awkward pausing while planning the next utterance. Additionally, discourse markers such as ‘anyway’, ‘right’, ‘okay’, ‘as I say’, ‘to begin with’, are words teachers can suggest for the students to use in order to connect, organise and plan the next phrase in oral production.

2.3.5-Turn-taking

In all natural speech, more than one partaker is required; and to keep a conversation going, it is important to manage turn-taking. Turn-taking is referred to as taking the floor and to keeping it by applying various conversational gambits. Conversational gambits such as ‘first’, ‘then’, ‘besides’ are used mainly to retain the floor and avoid interruptions, while gambits such as ‘well’, ‘now’, ‘oh’, ‘yes’, ‘but’ are used to gesture that one wants to speak (Simensen, 1998:64).

The speaker who has the floor, possesses quite some power, and it might be considered rude to interrupt before he/she has finished his/her oral contribution, and if there are more than two interlocutors in the conversation it is not evident who gets to speak next, and if the current speaker ends his/her contribution by posing a question, he/she is then in power of deciding who is allowed to speak next (Fulcher, 2003:34-35).

To demonstrate turn-taking in a classroom situation, the students must listen carefully and pay attention to what the other interlocutors say, identify the right moment to respond and signalise when they want to speak (Thornbury, 2005:8-9). When turn-taking is a criterion for assessment, the teacher must assess the students' manner of introducing a topic, manner of maintaining their arguments, manner of elaborating their arguments, manner of asking appropriate questions and manner of following up on questions by adding new input.

Another fact is that when assessing learners' speaking skills, it is important that learners know the criteria of the assessment. McMillan (2001:53) stresses the importance of the students being familiar with the criteria for assessing their performance so they know what is expected of them. In other words, if learners are not aware of the criteria based on which they are assessed in speaking, they will hardly perform well in speaking.

To conclude, this section explained some criteria based on which intermediate classes' students' speaking skills can be assessed. Furthermore, it showed that it is important of raising intermediate classes' students' awareness on those criteria in order to take all of them into account while performing orally.

2.4-Mistake Correction

Research shows that mistakes which do not interfere with meaning are usually overlooked both in real life. Parents typically respond to their children's

mistakes in meaning rather than to those that violate grammatical rules. Similarly, mistakes made by second-language speakers are usually also left unnoticed if they do not impede with meaning (Lightbown and Spada, 2006:32). It is therefore unnatural if teachers concentrate their corrective focus mainly on structures and grammar rather than on meaning.

Even though corrective feedback can be helpful, over-correction or frequent correction of mistakes is neither effective nor encouraging for further spoken production. This is especially so if learners are trying to formulate their ideas and their flow of thoughts is interrupted by a teacher's mistake correction. In fluency activities, it is therefore undesirable for teachers to correct learners on mistakes which do not substantially impede meaning. In general, it is recommended that corrective feedback in such instances is provided after an activity.

Besides, as Dulay (1982:263) concludes: "Correction of grammatical errors does not help students avoid them". By this, she means that mistakes which are made unconsciously rather than because learners are not aware of the rules underlying the system or the natural usage of an expression, will not be eliminated by a teacher pointing out to what learners already know. Mistakes need to be unlearned through learners' frequently practising language while making an effort to 'score higher' when producing language.

Even though some corrective feedback in language teaching is necessary, it remains unanswered to what extent corrective feedback in classroom is helpful. On one hand, it can be deduced that mistake correction is useful in cases where mistakes are made due to not being aware of a pattern or a more natural way of saying things. On the other hand, it needs to be considered whether learners are ready to digest such information with respect to their proficiency.

My final note on mistake correction and on the decision of whether to treat mistakes is that it depends on the type of mistake (e.g. grammatical or meaning), on the type of activity (e.g. fluency or accuracy focused) and the

learner's perception of mistake correction. This last aspect is very important because some learners feel threatened when corrected and may be discouraged to speak out while others request corrective feedback and may even feel that they are not learning anything if not corrected. This fact makes the issue of mistake correction even more complicated and teachers need to make their own decisions about how to proceed in individual cases. To conclude, this section shows that corrective feedback should mostly focus on meaning mistakes rather than on grammatical mistakes.

All in all, the aim of this chapter was to present which one of fluency and accuracy teachers should emphasise the most, the importance of raising students' awareness on whether a specific speaking activity is fluency-focused or accuracy-focused, activities for teaching speaking skills, the criteria for a good assessment of speaking skills, the importance of raising intermediate classes' students' awareness on the criteria based on which their speaking skills are being assessed, and mistake correction.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This chapter presents the methodology of the study. It provides description of the research method, the target population and the research instruments.

3.1-Research method

Deciding which method to use when carrying out research depends on the research question(s) and the purpose of the research. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative methods are most suited when the research question(s) attempts to investigate a topic, and quantitative methods are most suited when the research question(s) attempts to explain a topic. It is also quite possible to combine quantitative and qualitative methods and use a ‘mixed methods’ approach to the research question(s). Since elements from both qualitative and quantitative methods are employed in this study, the methodology employed mixed methods.

3.2-Target population

In this study, the target population includes five (05) teachers and fifty (50) students of CEG Agbokou. Twenty-five (25) of the students are in third year and twenty-five (25) are in fourth year. The students thus constituted a heterogeneous group in terms of their learning history and English proficiency. The students are between twelve (12) and eighteen (18) years old.

3.3-Research instruments

The data collection for this research work has been made based only on questionnaires. Two questionnaires of six (06) questions each one have been designed at this occasion: one addressed to the teachers and one addressed to the learners.

The questions of the questionnaire addressed to the teachers are of three types namely closed-ended questions (yes/no questions), semi-closed-ended

(questions followed by some suggested answers from which the respondent chooses), and open-ended questions (questions to which the respondent answers freely); whereas those of the questionnaire addressed to the learners are of two types namely closed-ended questions and semi-closed-ended questions. The reason for combining different types of questions is that this blend would allow the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data.

Open-ended questions are used in the questionnaire addressed to the teachers in order to allow them to justify their opinions. The reason for not using this type of question in the questionnaire addressed to the students is that it might be difficult for the students to answer questions without any suggested answers.

The questionnaire has been administered to the students during holiday courses. It has been presented to them in English, but I have been there to explain each question to them so that they understand the questions and provide me with good answers. The reason is that they may not understand the questions if they have been submitted to a French-version of the questionnaire.

It has not been easy at all to have the teachers respond to the questionnaires for it has been almost the end of the school year when the topic of the study has been accepted. Nevertheless, I have managed to have a sufficient number of teachers respond to the questionnaires. I have provided a sample of each questionnaire in the annex.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter presents and analyses the data collected from the questionnaires.

4.1-Presentation and analysis of teachers' responses to the questionnaire

Table 1: Between fluency and accuracy, which one do you emphasise the most while teaching speaking skills in intermediate classes? Say why.

Suggested answers	Respondents	Percentages
Fluency	00	00%
Accuracy	04	80%
Both	01	20%

This table shows that 00 (00%) of the respondents emphasise mostly fluency while teaching speaking skills in intermediate classes whereas 04 (80%) of the respondents emphasise mostly accuracy while teaching speaking skills in intermediate classes. Some argue that it is accuracy that the students must get first, and then get fluency later. Others argue that the learners' minds are not enough developed to speak fluently. Others also argue that they emphasise mostly accuracy because learners need it to be good in speaking.

The remaining 01 (20%) respondents emphasises mostly both fluency and accuracy while teaching speaking skills in intermediate classes. He argues that fluency without accuracy is meaningless and vice-versa. It can thus be concluded that most teachers emphasise mostly accuracy while teaching speaking skills in intermediate classes.

Table 2: Do you raise intermediate classes' students' awareness on whether a specific speaking activity is fluency-focused or accuracy-focused? Say why.

Suggested answers	Respondents	Percentages
Yes	00	00%

No	05	100%
----	----	------

This table shows that when asked if they raise intermediate classes' students' awareness on whether a specific speaking activity is fluency-focused or accuracy-focused, 100% of the respondents answer "No". They argue that the most important is that learners speak, no matter whether an activity is fluency-focused or accuracy-focused. It can thus be concluded that most teachers don't raise intermediate classes' students' awareness on whether a specific speaking activity is fluency-focused or accuracy-focused.

Table 3:What activities do you use to teach speaking skills in intermediate classes? Say why.

Suggested answers	Respondents	Percentages
Acting from script	00	00%
Communication games	02	40%
Discussion	02	40%
Prepared talks	02	40%
Questionnaires	01	20%
Simulation and role play	05	100%
Cooperative activities	00	00%
Storytelling	03	60%
Retelling	01	20%
Picture description	04	80%

This table shows that 00 (00%) of the respondents use "Acting from script" to teach speaking skills in intermediate classes whereas 02 (40%) of the respondents use "Communication games" to teach speaking skills in intermediate classes.

As far as “Discussion” is concerned, 02 (40%) of the respondents use this activity to teach speaking skills in intermediate classes and 02 (40%) of the respondents use “Prepared talks” to teach speaking skills in intermediate classes.

“Questionnaires” are used by 01 (20%) of the respondents to teach speaking skills in intermediate classes whereas “Simulation and role play” are used by 05 (100%) of the respondents to teach speaking skills in intermediate classes.

00 (00%) of the respondents ticks that he uses “Cooperative activities” to teach speaking skills in intermediate classes whereas 03 (60%) of the respondents tick they use “Storytelling” to teach speaking skills in intermediate classes.

“Retelling” is ticked by only 01 (20%) of the respondents as activity used to teach speaking skills in intermediate classes whereas “Picture description” is ticked by 04 (80%) of the respondents as activity used to teach speaking skills in intermediate classes.

Some argue that those activities allow them to teach in an entertaining way. Others argue that the activities make learners speak with their peers. Others also argue that the chosen activities motivate learners and help them understand easily. It can thus be concluded that “Simulation and role play”, “Storytelling”, and “Picture description” are the activities that most teachers use to teach speaking skills in intermediate classes.

Table 4:How do you assess intermediate classes’ students' speaking skills? By checking their... Say why.

Suggested answers	Respondents	Percentages
Pronunciation	04	80%
Vocabulary	02	40%

Grammatical accuracy	03	60%
Use of 'small words'	00	00%
Turn-taking	02	40%

This table shows that 04 (80%) of the respondents assess intermediate classes' students' speaking skills by checking their pronunciation whereas 02 (40%) of the respondents assess intermediate students' speaking skills by checking their vocabulary. 03 (60%) of the respondents tick they assess intermediate classes' students' speaking skills by checking their grammatical accuracy whereas 00 (00%) ticks that he assesses intermediate classes' students' speaking skills by checking their use of 'small words'. 02 (40%) of the respondents tick that they assess intermediate classes' students' speaking skills by checking their turn-taking.

One of those who tick that they assess intermediate classes' students' speaking skills by checking their pronunciation argues that pronunciation is the most important in language learning. One of those who select turn-taking argues that turn-taking allows the teacher to listen to every student. Those who choose more than one criterion argue that since the students have been taught those criteria, they must be assessed based on them. It can thus be concluded that most teachers assess intermediate classes' students' speaking skills by checking their pronunciation and grammatical accuracy.

Table 5: Are intermediate classes' students aware of the criterion or criteria based on which their speaking skills are being assessed? Say why.

Suggested answers	Respondents	Percentages
Yes	00	00%
No	05	100%

This table shows that to the question of knowing if the intermediate classes' students are aware of the criteria based on which their speaking skills

are being assessed, 100% of the respondents answer “No”. Some argue that it is useless for the learners to be aware of the criteria. Others argue that the students have a very low level, so can’t understand the criteria. It can thus be concluded that intermediate classes’ students are not aware of the criteria based on which their speaking skills are being assessed.

Table 6:What type (s) of speaking mistakes do you correct the most in intermediate classes? Say why.

Suggested answers	Respondents	Percentages
Meaning errors	00	00%
Grammatical errors	03	60%
Both	02	40%

This table shows that 00 (00%) of the respondents mostly correct meaning mistakes in intermediate classes whereas 03 (60%) of the respondents mostly correct grammatical mistakes in intermediate classes. They argue that learners have difficulties mainly in grammar.

The remaining 02 (40%) respondents tick that they mostly correct both types of speaking mistake. Some argue that both meaning and grammar are important, so both meaning and grammatical mistakes must be corrected, no mistake must be neglected. Others argue that when speaking, learners must make sentences which are meaningful and grammatically correct. It can thus be concluded that the type of mistake that most teachers mostly correct in intermediate classes are grammatical mistakes.

4.2-Presentation and analysis of students’ responses to the questionnaire

Table 7:Between fluency and accuracy, which one would you like your teacher to emphasise the most while teaching you speaking skills?

Suggested answers	Respondents	Percentages
--------------------------	--------------------	--------------------

Fluency	01	02%
Accuracy	05	10%
Both	44	88%

This table shows that 01 (02%) of the respondents would like his/her teacher to emphasise fluency the most while teaching him/her speaking skills whereas 05 (10%) of the respondents would like their teachers to emphasize accuracy the most while teaching them speaking skills. The remaining 44 (88%) respondents ticked that they would like their teachers emphasise the most both fluency and accuracy while teaching them speaking skills. It can thus be concluded that most intermediate classes' students would like their teachers to emphasise mostly both fluency and accuracy while teaching them speaking skills.

Table 8: What activities does your teacher use to teach you speaking skills?

Suggested answers	Respondents	Percentages
Acting from script	09	18%
Communication games	13	26%
Discussion	47	94%
Prepared talks	07	14%
Questionnaires	32	64%
Simulation and role play	48	96%
Cooperative activities	44	88%
Storytelling	01	02%
Retelling	05	10%
Picture description	49	98%

This table shows that the teachers of 09 (18%) of the respondents use “Acting from script” to teach them speaking skills whereas the teachers of 13 (26%) of the respondents use “Communication games” to teach them speaking skills.

As far as “Discussion” is concerned, the teachers of 47 (94%) of the respondents use this activity to teach them speaking skills whereas the teachers of 07 (14%) of the respondents use “Prepared talks” to teach them speaking skills.

“Questionnaires” are used by the teachers of 32 (64%) of the respondents to teach them speaking skills whereas “Simulation and role play” are used by the teachers of 48 (96%) of the respondents to teach them speaking skills.

44 (88%) of the respondents tick that their teachers use “Cooperative activities” to teach them speaking skills whereas only 01 (02%) of the respondents ticks that his/her teacher uses “Storytelling” to teach him/her speaking skills.

“Retelling” is ticked by 05 (10%) of the respondents as activity used by their teachers to teach them speaking skills whereas “Picture description” is ticked by 49 (98%) of the respondents as activity used by their teachers to teach them speaking skills. It can thus be concluded that “Discussion”, “Questionnaires”, “Simulation and role play”, “Cooperative activities”, and “Picture description” are the activities that most teachers use to teach speaking skills in intermediate classes.

Table 9: Do those activities allow you to really speak?

Suggested answers	Respondents	Percentages
Yes	34	68%
No	16	32%

This table shows that to the question of knowing if the activities used by the teachers to teach speaking skills allow the students to really speak, 34 (68%) of the respondents answer “Yes” whereas 16 (32%) of the respondents answer “No”. It can thus be conclude that the activities used by the teachers to teach speaking skills allow most intermediate classes’ students to really speak.

Table 10: Does your teacher correct your speaking mistakes?

Suggested answers	Respondents	Percentages
Yes	50	100%
No	00	00%

This table shows that when asked if their teachers correct their speaking mistakes, all the respondents (100%) answer “Yes”. It can thus be concluded that most teachers correct their intermediate classes’ students’ speaking mistakes.

Table 11: Does your teacher’s corrective feedback help you improve your speaking skills?

Suggested answers	Respondents	Percentages
Yes	50	100%
No	00	00%

This table shows that 100% of the respondents confess that their teachers’ corrective feedback helps them improve their speaking skills. It can thus be concluded that teachers’ corrective feedback helps intermediate classes’ students improve their speaking skills.

Table 12: What type (s) of speaking mistake would you like your teacher to correct the most?

Suggested answers	Respondents	Percentages
Meaning errors	04	08%
Grammatical errors	04	08%
Both	42	84%

This table shows that 04 (08%) of the respondents would like their teachers to mostly correct meaning mistakes. Another 04 (08%) of the respondents would like their teachers to mostly correct grammatical mistakes whereas 42 (84%) of the respondents would like the teachers to mostly correct

both types of mistake. It can thus be concluded that most intermediate classes' students would like their teachers to mostly correct both meaning and grammatical mistakes.

To conclude, this survey has shown that most teachers emphasise mostly accuracy while teaching speaking skills in intermediate classes while most students would like them to emphasise mostly both fluency and accuracy. This survey has also shown that most teachers don't raise intermediate classes' students' awareness on whether a specific speaking activity is fluency-focused or accuracy-focused. At the end of this survey, "Discussion", "Questionnaires", "Simulation and role play", "Cooperative activities", and "Picture description" have been discovered to be the activities that most teachers use to teach speaking skills in intermediate classes, and most intermediate classes' students confess that those activities allow them to really speak. This survey as well has revealed that most teachers assess intermediate classes' students' speaking skills by checking their pronunciation and grammatical accuracy, but intermediate classes' students are not aware of the criteria based on which their speaking skills are being assessed. To finish, this survey has revealed that most teachers correct their intermediate classes' students' speaking mistakes and teachers' corrective feedback help learners improve their speaking skills, but the corrected mistakes are mainly grammatical whereas most intermediate classes' students would like them to mostly correct both meaning and grammatical mistakes.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This chapter provides discussion of the findings and suggestions.

5.1-Discussion of the findings

The survey has shown that most teachers emphasise mostly accuracy while teaching speaking skills in intermediate classes. Some of them argue that as beginners, it is accuracy that the students must get first, and then get fluency later. This argument is not convincing because there is no specific level for acquiring fluency. What more, both fluency and accuracy go together as it is showed in the definition of Segalowitz (2003). He defines fluency as “an ability in the second language to produce or comprehend utterances smoothly, rapidly, and accurately”. So, we cannot separate fluency from accuracy and say that learners should get accuracy first and fluency later.

Others argue that the learners’ minds are not enough developed to speak fluently. That is not true because nowadays’ boys and girls have very developed minds. And if they are able to speak French and their respective mother-tongues fluently, why can’t they speak English fluently? This assumption should be corrected.

Others also argue that they emphasise accuracy because learners need it to be good at speaking. That is true, but learners also need fluency to be good at speaking. One of the questioned teachers who ticked that he emphasises both fluency and accuracy argued that fluency without accuracy is meaningless and vice-versa. So, learners need both. They even need fluency more than accuracy to be good in speaking because the former helps them prepare for ‘what is out there’, that is, real life conversations. Another proof for the importance of both fluency and accuracy is that the survey has shown that most students would like their teachers to emphasise mostly both fluency and accuracy while teaching

them speaking skills. This is because the learners realise the importance of acquiring both.

The survey has also shown that most teachers don't raise intermediate classes' students' awareness on whether a specific speaking activity is fluency-focused or accuracy-focused. They argue that the most important is that learners speak, no matter whether an activity is fluency-focused or accuracy-focused. Such an attitude is dangerous for the learners' acquisition of speaking skills since fluency-focused and accuracy-focused activities are used for specific purposes. If teachers don't raise learners' awareness on whether a specific activity is fluency-focused or accuracy-focused, learners may treat accuracy-focused tasks as a fluency practice or vice-versa, and thus their language skills will hardly develop further.

At the end of the survey, "Discussion", "Questionnaires", "Simulation and role play", "Cooperative activities", and "Picture description" have been discovered to be the activities that most teachers use to teach speaking skills in intermediate classes. Some argue that those activities allow them to teach in an entertaining way. Others argue that the activities make learners speak with their peers. Others also argue that the chosen activities motivate learners and help to them understand easily. Most students also confessed that those activities allow them to really speak.

Nevertheless, an important number of students say the contrary. This may be due the way these activities are carried out. The effectiveness of an activity depends on many factors such as the appropriateness of the activity, the class grouping used during the activity, the time allotted for the activity, the explanations given by the teacher before the activity, the motivation of the students, etc.

A question arising at this level is: “Why don’t most teachers use speaking activities such as “Acting from script”, “Communication games”, “Prepared talks”, “Storytelling”, and “Retelling” to teach speaking skills in intermediate classes? If the five fore-cited activities prove to be effective for teaching speaking, the five last-cited activities must also be effective since the ten speaking activities are reputed to be effective for developing speaking skills.

The survey as well has revealed that most teachers assess intermediate classes’ students’ speaking skills by checking their pronunciation and grammatical accuracy. One of the teachers who tick that they assess intermediate classes’ students’ speaking skills by checking their pronunciation argues that pronunciation is the ‘most’ important in language learning. It is true that pronunciation is ‘very’ important in language learning, but it is not the ‘most’ important because mere pronunciation without other speaking sub-skills such as vocabulary, grammatical accuracy, use of ‘small words’, and turn-taking is useless.

One of those who support that they assess intermediate classes’ students’ speaking skills by checking their turn-taking argues that turn-taking allows the teacher to listen to every student. It is true. But when the teacher listens to each student, does he listen to him/her just for the sake of listening? Doesn’t he assess what he is listening to? If yes, doesn’t he do it based on some criteria? That is to say that checking mere turn-taking is not sufficient to assess intermediate classes’ students’ speaking skills.

Those who select more than one criterion argue that since the students have been taught those criteria, they must be assessed based on them. That is true because we should assess what we have taught.

The greatest problem concerning assessment that has been revealed by the survey is that all the questioned teachers confess that the intermediate classes’

students are not aware of the criteria based on which their speaking skills are being assessed. Some argue that it is useless for the learners to be aware of the criteria. That is unbearable because McMillan (2001:53) stresses the importance of the students being familiar with the criteria for assessing their performance so they know what is expected of them.

Others argue that the students have a very low level, so can't understand the criteria. That argument is not convincing because despite their 'very low level', the students can understand the criteria if the teachers explain them.

The survey has also revealed that most teachers correct their intermediate classes' students' speaking mistakes. That is very good because all the questioned students confess that their teachers' corrective feedback helps them improve their speaking skills. But the corrected mistakes are mainly grammatical. The teachers argued that learners have difficulties mainly in grammar. This argument is weakened by Dulay (1982:263) who states: "Correction of grammatical errors does not help students avoid them". So, correcting grammatical mistakes is not the most effective way for helping them improve.

When the teachers state that learners have difficulty mainly in grammar, a question arising is: "Don't students have difficulties in meaning?" The answer to this question is surely "Yes". Then, why do most teachers mostly correct grammatical mistakes and not meaning mistakes?

Most of the questioned students state that they would like their teachers to mostly correct both meaning and grammatical mistakes. This may be explained by the arguments evoked by the teachers who tick that they correct both types of mistake. Some of them argued that both meaning and grammar are important, so both meaning and grammatical mistakes must be corrected, no mistake must be neglected. Others argue that when speaking, learners must make sentences which are meaningful and grammatically correct.

5.2-Suggestions to the teachers

For better teaching and assessment of speaking skills in intermediate classes, suggestions are made to the teachers: they should emphasise both fluency and accuracy while teaching speaking skills in intermediate classes, but mainly fluency; they should raise intermediate classes' students' awareness about whether a specific speaking activity is fluency-focused or accuracy-focused; they should use a variety of activities such as "Acting from script", "Communication games", "Prepared talks", "Storytelling", and "Retelling" to teach speaking skills in intermediate classes. They should also make sure that they choose the appropriate activity, they use the appropriate class grouping during the activity, they allot a sufficient time for the activity, they give sufficient explanations before the activity, and they motivate the learners, so that the activity proves to be effective; they should assess intermediate classes' students' speaking skills by checking their pronunciation, their vocabulary, their grammatical accuracy, their use of 'small words' and their turn-taking; they should raise intermediate classes' students' awareness on the criteria based on which their speaking skills are being assessed; they should correct both meaning mistakes and grammatical mistakes, but mainly meaning mistakes.

5.3-Suggestions to the students

For a better learning of speaking, the following suggestions are made to the intermediate classes' students: they should speak English whenever they are with their classmates or teachers or anybody who understands the language. They should care more about being fluent than being accurate; whenever their teachers ask them to perform a speaking activity, they should try their best to perform it in the best way; they should ask their teachers to give them corrective feedback on their oral performance every time they speak.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

This research work aimed at exploring the teaching and assessment processes of speaking skills in intermediate classes, especially in CEG Agbokou. The reason for carrying out this research work is to find the reason why intermediate classes' students can't speak English in real life situations despite the fact that they have spent two or three years of learning the language.

The second chapter has aimed at discussing the concepts of fluency and accuracy, explaining the importance of using both fluency-focused and accuracy-focused activities with more emphasis on fluency than on accuracy. It has shown the importance of raising students' awareness on whether a specific speaking activity is fluency-focused or accuracy-focused. It has also revealed some effective activities for teaching speaking skills. The same chapter has explained some criteria for assessing speaking skills, stressing the necessity of raising students' awareness on the criteria based on which their speaking skills are being assessed. It has also dealt with mistake correction insisting on the importance of correcting meaning mistakes more than grammatical mistakes.

Chapter four focuses on the research which has been carried out among teachers and intermediate classes' students of CEG Agbokou, firstly in order to explore the teaching and assessment processes of speaking skills in the school. The outcomes of the research reveal that most teachers emphasise mostly accuracy while teaching speaking skills in intermediate classes whereas most students would like them to emphasise mostly both fluency and accuracy. The research also revealed that most teachers don't raise intermediate classes' students' awareness on whether a specific speaking activity is fluency-focused or accuracy-focused. They also use a very restricted number of activities to teach speaking skills in intermediate classes. It has been discovered that most teachers assess intermediate classes' students' speaking skills based on a very small number of criteria of which intermediate classes' students are not aware. It has

been also discovered that most teachers mostly correct grammatical mistakes whereas most students would like them to mostly correct both meaning and grammatical mistakes.

The last chapter discusses the findings of the research work before making suggestions to the teachers for better teaching and assessment of speaking skills, and to the students for better learning of speaking skills.

REFERENCE LIST

A-BOOKS

- Bachman, L.F. & Palmer, A.S. (1996). *Language Testing in Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Burkart, G. & Sheppard, K. (2004). *Content ESL across the USA: A Training Packet. A Descriptive Study of Content-ESL Practices*. National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition.
- Creswell, J.W. (2014). *Research Design, Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 4th edition. London: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Dulay, H. C. et al. (1982). *Language Two*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fulcher, G. (2003). *Testing Second Language Speaking*. United Kingdom: Pearson Education Limited.
- Givón, T. (1997). *Conversation: Cognitive, Communicative and Social Perspectives*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Harmer, J. (2001). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. London: Longman.
- Lightbown, P. M. & Spada, N. (2006). *How Languages Are Learned*. 3rd edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McMillan, J. H. (2001). *Classroom Assessment, Principles and Practice for Effective Instruction*. Massachusetts: Allyn & Bacon.
- Nation, I. S. P. and Newton J. (2009). *Teaching ESL/EFL Listening and Speaking*. New York: Routledge.
- Simensen, A.M. (1998). *Teaching a Foreign Language, Principles and Procedures*. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget Vigmostad & Bjørke AS.
- Thornbury, S. (2005). *How to Teach Speaking*. England: Pearson Education Limited.

B-ARTICLES

-Carrol, D. (2004). Restarts in Novice Turn Beginnings: Disfluencies or Interactional Achievements? In R. Gardner & J. Wagner (eds.). *Second Language Conversations*. Chippenham: Continuum. 201-220.

-House, J. (1996): Developing pragmatic fluency in English as a foreign language: Routines and metapragmatic awareness. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*. 18,225-252.

-Koponen, M. & H. Riggenbach. (2000). Overview: Varying Perspectives on Fluency. In H. Riggenbach (ed.). *Perspectives on Fluency*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press. 5-24.

-Lennon, P. (2000). The Lexical Element in Spoken Second Language Fluency. In Riggenbach, H. (ed.). *Perspectives on Fluency*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press. 25-42.

-Rachmawaty, N. & Hermagustiana, I. (2010). *Does Retelling Technique Improve Speaking Fluency?* TEFLIN Journal, 21.

-Segalowitz, N. (2000). Automaticity and Attentional Skill in Fluent Performance. In Riggenbach, H. (ed.). *Perspectives on Fluency*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press. 200-219.

C-OTHER SOURCES

-Hasselgren, A. (1998). *Small words and Valid Testing*. PhD thesis. Department of English, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway.

-Richards, Jack C. (1992). *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*. United Kingdom: Longman.

ANNEX

QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE TEACHERS

The questions below are designed to help me get your ideas and opinions for my study. Please, tick only the appropriate box (es) that express (es) the most your answer (s) and give sincere information. Thank you very much.

1-Between fluency and accuracy, which one do you emphasise the most while teaching speaking skills in intermediate classes?

Fluency Accuracy Both

-Say why.

.....

.....

.....

.....

2-Do you raise intermediate classes' students' awareness on whether a specific speaking activity is fluency-focused or accuracy-focused?

Yes No

-Say why.

.....

.....

.....

.....

3-What activities do you use to teach speaking skills in intermediate classes?

Acting from script

Communication games

Discussion

Prepared talks

Questionnaires

Simulation and role play

Cooperative activities

Storytelling

Retelling

Picture description

-Say why.

.....

.....

.....

.....

4-How do you assess intermediate classes' students' speaking skills?

By checking their...

Pronunciation

Vocabulary

Grammatical accuracy

Use of 'small words'

Turn-taking

-Say why.

.....
.....
.....
.....

5-Are intermediate classes' students aware of the criterion or criteria based on which their speaking skills are being assessed?

Yes

No

-Say why.

.....
.....
.....
.....

6-What type (s) of speaking mistake do you correct the most in intermediate classes?

Meaning mistakes

Grammatical mistakes

Both

-Say why.

.....
.....
.....
.....

QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE STUDENTS

The questions below are designed to help me get your ideas and opinions for my study. Please, tick only the appropriate box (es) that express (es) the most your answer (s) and give sincere information. Thank you very much.

1-Between fluency and accuracy, which one would you like your teacher to emphasise the most while teaching you speaking skills?

Fluency Accuracy Both

2-What activities does your teacher use to teach you speaking skills?

Acting from script

Communication games

Discussion

Prepared talks

Questionnaires

Simulation and role play

Cooperative activities

Storytelling

Retelling

Picture description

3-Do those activities allow you to really speak?

Yes No

4-Does your teacher correct your speaking mistakes?

Yes

No

5-Does your teacher's corrective feedback help you improve your speaking skills?

Yes

No

6- What type (s) of speaking mistake would you like your teacher to correct the most?

Meaning mistakes

Grammatical mistakes

Both