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Thème :

**The Teaching of Grammar in EFL classroom in the first cycle of our  
Secondary Schools in Benin :the case study of LycéeToffa 1<sup>er</sup> et le  
CEG d'Application**

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MINISTERE DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPERIEUR ET DE LA RECHERCHE  
SCIENTIFIQUE

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# DEDICATION

This work is lovingly dedicated to God the Almighty, to my Dear Parents who sent me to school and to my life companion.

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# *INTRODUCTION*

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Language is said to be exclusively the attribute of human being and considered as the medium of communication through which we express emotions, ideas and thoughts with a person in particular or a nation as a whole. The most complete, the richest, the best means of communication, language is furthermore a way of communication with places that our mother tongue cannot reach. This is certainly the reason behind the adoption of foreign languages by many African countries, among which Benin. For political, economic, diplomatic, technological and cultural reasons, English seems to be the most spoken language in the whole world. In this regard, it has become a compulsory subject introduced in the national curriculum of our country Benin. For many years now, the teaching of this foreign language has given rise to many controversial issues due to the teaching of its grammar which normally should promote its use. Grammar, they said, is the lung of every language. In other words, it is the quintessence of language which is to facilitate fluency. Unfortunately; grammatical knowledge has not been helpful for communication as it is expected. This situation leads many pedagogues assert that the ineffectiveness of grammar is due to the systematical method used to teach it. To correct this, some communicative approaches, some new methodologies aiming at oral communication have been discovered, but the problem of inefficiency of grammar is still persisting. So, aware of this crucial and recurrent problem, at the end of my vocational training at the Teacher Training College of Porto-Novo, I have decided to carry out a research work on the topic ‘The teaching of grammar in EFL classes in the first cycle of secondary schools in Benin, the case studies of Lycée Toffa 1er and CEG d’Application’. The key question that makes me choose to investigate this topic is:

Why can't most students neither to decode spoken English nor to achieve oral communication after 4 years of the learning of the English grammar in a real life oral communication or why can't they perform well in their oral and written class tests? To this, I wonder whether:

- Teachers of the English have knowledge of the grammar of English.

-They are aware of the importance of teaching grammar in a language classroom.

- They teach grammar for communicative purposes,
- The students are motivated to use grammar to communicate.

Definitely, the answers to these questions are the main objectives behind my intention of choosing this topic. To reach my goal, I have structured the document into five chapters:

- Chapter one deals with the Identification of the study which includes the statement of the problem, the significance of the study and the purpose of the study and its scope,

- Chapter two is about the literature review which deals the report and Critical analysis of the different books related to my topic.

- Chapter three deals with the methodology adopted to collect the data for my investigation

- Chapter four presents the findings and their analysis
- Chapter five deals with my recommendations, suggestions and

Conclusion.

# Chapter One: The Identification of the study

## **Chapter one**: The Identification of the study

### **1-1 The statement of the problem**

In this section, I report clearly the different problems on which I am based to choose my topic. But it will be interesting to state that those problems are professional one, because they affect dangerously the teaching and the learning of English in our country.

Teachers, of course, are paid to help learners learn efficiently and effectively, and teachers who fail to do so are to be blamed. In our secondary schools today, most students are incapable of uttering a meaningful sentence or writing a very short and coherent paragraph. It is, indeed, this crucial remark that has led me to state the following research questions:

- ❖ Why is the teaching of the grammar of the English ineffective?
- ❖ Why are most EFL learners unable to hold meaningful conversation or at least utter meaningful sentences or write very short and coherent paragraph at the end of their first cycle in Secondary Schools?

To directly answer the above questions, many specialists of the teaching of English heatedly state that if our learners' speaking and writing skills are not developed, it is because we belong to French speaking community. Some argue that the teaching of grammar is outdated, while other are asserting that EFL learners do not need grammar. Are all these statements true? Shall we put an end to the teaching of grammar as it is claimed by some people?

By the way, what are the responsibilities of our authorities at different level in these problems? Do the teachers of the English language teach grammar for communicative purposes? Are the students really motivated to communicate using grammar through realistic examples or authentic situations? All these questions will be answered through this research work.

## **1.2-The significance of the study**

Through this section, I try to point out the different interests my study generates for the government , the designers of the English subject programme , the inspectors, the schools authorities, the teacher advisers, the teachers and the learners.

Today, English is the most used language in scientific domain. It is the dominant language of medicine and technology, of international trade, advertisement, and media (radio, television, movies). Most of the best books especially scientific ones are written in English. New technologies of information and communication force our people to have a good relationship with foreign people through internet or oral communication. Since communication is always central to the learning of any language, this research work is highly important in such a way that it raises awareness on the poor level of the students as far as spoken English and writing are concerned.

Other important aspect of this study is that the teachers will know that it is not by dropping the teaching of grammar that we could be proficient in oral and written communication especially in Benin context where the only one opportunity the students have to communicate is in the classroom context .The great interest of this work and which distinguishes this from the previous thesis is that it will help teachers know how to teach communicative grammar using a variety of strategies, how to use grammar to develop their students' communicative competence ,to help students perform various language functions effectively and encourage the teaching of grammar in our secondary schools.

## **1.3-The purpose of the study**

School administrators, teachers, students and parents must be considered as real partners in teaching/learning process. As a simple observer, I have noticed that most of the teachers and schools or headmasters continue viewing learners as simple and passive participants. Some teachers especially non-trained teachers come in their class like the sole active participants. Schools administrators must care about what is being taught in classes and to whom is being taught. This question is the greatest one at the beginning and during the school year. I have noticed during my class

observation that most of the teachers of English don't understand the importance of the teaching of grammar. Still, some teachers continue teaching grammar in traditional way. This impacts negatively the proficiency of the students as far as their speaking and writing English are concerned; because it is evident that the students cannot use adequately what is taught out of context. Things go as if objectives set by the teachers of the English language are only to help students have good marks, or to have students give mechanical answers to questions. Here my purpose in undertaking this research work is to make English Language Teachers aware of the importance of teaching grammar to students of French speaking country like Benin. Another purpose of my study is to show teachers of the English language in the first cycle in our secondary schools how they can teach grammar for oral and written communication. One more purpose is to make EFL Teachers and learners beware of the importance of grammar in the purpose of developing, listening, reading and writing skills.

*Chapter Two:*  
***LITERATURE REVIEW***

## **Chapter two: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Report of some notes related to the teaching of grammar**

To carry out the topic under investigation, I went through some appropriate scientific materials (*books, article, and theses*).

#### **2.1.1- The teaching of grammar**

To better understand this part of my work, it is necessary to start by saying a few words about the concept of “*grammar*”. Indeed, according to *Murphy (2007)* “*grammar is a systematic study of scientific method which provides us with information and guidance necessary to learn a language*” (P.2). He continues saying that the science of grammar teaches us how a language is spoken and written correctly and effectively. In *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, grammar is defined as “*a person’s knowledge and use of a language*” (P.2). This definition is the same with the one of *Murphy*. From the above definition, I draw the conclusion that grammar is not only concerned with the supply of knowledge of language’s rules, but it actually views the use of those rules in our everyday life communication. The teaching of grammar has undergone a shift through time. Actually, we can range grammar into two categories: the Chomsky- inspired cognitive approach and the communicative approach which emphasizes language use. The former consists in analyzing structures and applying rules. It is viewed as the traditional method where the learners are provided with grammatical rules likely to be committed to memory and to be restituted later on. In this regard, Jespersen (1904) stated:

*“ According to the artificial method, the 1<sup>st</sup> thing done is to hand the boy a grammar and cram it into him piece by piece, for everything is in pieces, he is filled with paradigms which have no connection with each other or with anything else in the world he is filled with words, only half of which occur occasionally” (P.110).*

From the above statement concerning grammar, it is clear that grammar ,when it is taught in this way can never facilitate real communication, for it was taught out of context where the students learn and say things by rote without thinking. Surely, if the

learners do not know why they are learning and what they are learning is good for, they can't really take the subject matter seriously. Still on the issue of the teaching of grammar, *McKay (1987)* developed three ways of teaching grammar. First, the teaching of grammar is to provide the learners with explicit grammatical rules in a formal way. Secondly, it consists in making the students understand a given grammar point through series of sentences, paragraph, or dialogue analysis rather than provide them with formal explanation of rules. The third perspective aims at creating opportunities for the learners to use English in a variety of realistic situations *McKay's* first perspective for the teaching of grammar joins the traditional approach which is not conducive to a real life communication. The second one creates a controlled communication situation but this may have no effective effect in authentic communication context. The last approach seems impossible to be implemented in Benin context, because the students are not so proficient to interact in a real life oral communication and there is a little time allotted to the teaching of the English language. But this will be of a great help if conditions are created. For more precision on the teaching of Grammar, I try to develop two important trends as far as the history of the grammar of the English language is concerned.

### **2.1.2 The teaching of grammar from the traditional approach to contemporaries' techniques**

In the nineties, some researches have been carried out in linguistics in the view of making perfect and promoting the teaching of grammar. In this regard, some methods have been experimented and promoted to equip the teachers in the field of Education.

#### **2.1.2.1- The teaching of grammar through deductive approach**

Deductive approach is an approach whereby the students are given the rules and they apply them to examples. The view of *Richards (1984)* is in the same line, according to which deductive method helps to teach the students new rules and meanwhile give them specific information about the target language. By the way, in teaching a language, any method which emphasizes on the study of grammatical rules

is deductive. In other words, a teacher uses deductive teaching in a classroom situation when he/she gives the students explanation of the structure or the notion at the beginning of the lesson. Then the presentation phase is followed by practices through oral or written exercises to consolidate the rule.

### **2.1.2.2 -The teaching of grammar through inductive approach**

Most of our text books on programme today present grammatical structures under communication oriented activities: that is to teach grammar for communication. In fact, inductive approach is the approach in which the students infer the rule or generalization from a set of examples, paragraph or dialogue. It involves an analytical process where they are let to discover themselves rules from careful analysis. The inductive method puts heavy demand on the students' concentration and skill. To speak true, inductive method can function properly if it does exist an interaction between the students in group in the context in which they may communicate verbally and indeed if the teacher goes round the class to encourage the use of what has been taught to the students. Actually, this method may foster in the learners linguistic behavior that confirms the rules, not knowledge of the rules only. The big question now is if one is to resolve strictly on the use of only one method at the expense of the other. Obviously, there are times when inductive approach in presenting grammar point is desirable. This, because by using such an approach one is muttering within the students a learning process through which they can arrive at their own generalization. In the past, when a student has a particular cognitive style that is not well suited for language analysis, when a particular linguistic rule is rather complex, it may make more sense to present grammar structure deductively, this may be the reason behind the reservation of

*Lenard (1971) for whom "grammar is taught inductively in the target language, with example first and then an explanation of the rules. However, it should not dominate the language class and should be avoided if it is confusing" (P1).*

Also Coder's sensible observations go in the same perspective:

*‘What little we know about the psychological process of second language learning, either from theory or from practical experience, suggests that a combination of induction and deduction produces the best result...*

*Learning is seen as fundamentally an inductive process but one which can be controlled and facilitated by descriptions and explanations given at the appropriate moment and formulated in a way which is appropriate to the maturity, knowledge, and sophistication of providing the learner with the right data the right time and teaching him how to learn, that is, developing in him appropriate learning strategies and means of testing his hypotheses. The old controversy about whether one should provide the rule first and then, the examples, or vice versa, is now seen to be merely a matter of tactics to which no categorical answer can be given. (Corder, 1973, in Patherford & Hardwood Smith 1988) p.133*

### **2.1.2.3- The communicative approaches**

The communicative approaches are the twentieth century approaches emphasizing on communicative aspects of teaching grammar. Such approaches have been launched because of learners' low proficiency in speaking the English language. The communicative approaches are trying to relate grammatical structures to meanings, uses and situations. In this respect, Larsen Freeman (p.1986) said that *‘teaching grammar means enabling language students to use linguistic forms accurately, meaningfully and appropriately’* (p.108). Still, among the advocates of such a noble approach are Celce-maurica 1979, Krashen, Widdowson. They are therefore for language use over rules of language usage. But the question now is if we shall give up the teaching of structures. To this, Larsen-Freeman (1986) wrote *‘communicative competence should be seen to subsume linguistic competence, not to replace it’* (p.155). From this view, it is clear that communicative approach does not exclude the teaching of grammatical structures but the approach goes beyond the presentation and development of linguistic structures as the only one means of developing the communicative skill. Other important element that contributes to the establishment of communicative act is that they are classified as functions (intention or purpose, /notions, place, time, space, dimension etc) as well as the topic, the situation,

the communicative and the introductive aspect. This functions or illocutionary acts, imply a communicative purpose,

*'' What people want to do or what they want to accomplish through speech'' ( ..... , p.13) notions are ''meaningful element which may be expressed through nouns, pronouns verbs, preposition, conjunction, adjectives, adverbs'' (.....p.14) what Wiinks has called ''semantic grammatical categories'' (Johnson, p.35). The conclusion to draw from this is that ''grammatical form is taught not as an end in itself, but as a means of carrying out communicative intent''(salimbene,p.50)*

Still,another important aspect of this approach is that the grammatical rules are to be practiced in context in order to be integrated into communicative competence which involves*''the ability to function in a truly communicative setting, that is in a spontaneous transaction involving two or more otherspeakers'' (Savignon, p.1).*This implies that EFL teachers have to teach grammar points in authentic communicative situations. For a broader understanding of the concept of communicative competence, Savignon (1987) stated

*... the ability to negotiate meaning, to successfully combine a knowledge of linguistic and socio-linguistic rules in communicative interaction, communicative competence... has to do with much more than sentence level grammatical competence, not have to do with social, interaction with real speaker listening who interpret, express, and negotiate meaning in many- different setting...the term applies to both oral and written communication, in academic as well as non-academic settings (p.50).*

Savignon's definition describes the objective of the newly implemented approach in Benin: CBA (**Competency-Based Approach**) where the students are organized to work in pair or in small group. But if the communicative competence aimed by the communicative approach is intricate in our context, EFL teachers should not intend to force the students to express their ideas accurately, neglecting there intention or communication purpose; what should be important or considered is what the students say, not how to say it. This raises the issue of error correction.

For this, Swan (2008) asserted *''teachers who treat learner's mistakes as weeds to be ruthless roosted out, who pick up every error and allow nothing to pass*

*uncorrected, do an immense amount of harm''* (P.7). However, during the practice of any grammatical structures, EFL teachers should be too strict as far as accuracy is concerned. *Corder* considers error correction as a necessary element of pedagogical practice. In contrast to this, error correction should be postponed during oral activities. Perhaps at the end of the speaking activities, a remedial lesson could be prepared to address common error that a teacher notices during the students' oral practice. The teaching of grammar should not only promote fluency in oral and written communication, but it should also foster listening and reading skills.

### **2.1.3 -Implication for teaching grammar as an aid to listening, speaking, reading and writing.**

Language structures according to *Rojas(1992)* *must not be taught in isolation but it must integrate the four skills of language, listening, speaking, reading and writing (P.173).*

For the listening skill, the students have to listen to oral material with a purpose that they have to listen in order to carry out a specific illocutionary act, which makes the listening task communicative. On the other hand, listening activities that do not require that the students listen to accomplish a task are not communicative activities. For example, the students should listen to an excerpt for they can be able to write about it later on, to complete a chart, to answer questions, to discuss and so on.

Likewise, when a reading activity is considered communicative, it must involve a purpose or intention to be carried out. The students have to read with a purpose in mind, so that they can perform some tasks later. Reading activities at times require some discussion, a problem solving, which can also elicit communicative acts.

Similarly, for writing activities to be communicative, the students have to communicate their own ideas coherently and cohesively (*in discourse*). For this, they may be given the topic, but they might be allowed to express their opinions and choose the way they would like to communicate them. Here, the use of grammar and vocabulary should be according to their needs although some suggestions may be given with regard to the topic, the grammar, vocabulary and the task itself. Many

times, the EFL students are asked to write reports, letters, paragraphs or composition, description dialogues as well as to complete forms, to answer questions, to give advice; all these activities are categorized as pure communicative activities that prepare the students for actual spontaneous communication. Furthermore, these activities 'aim to equip the learners with some of the skills required for communication without actually requiring them to perform communicative acts' (Liddiwood, P.8); these activities are also mainly controlled tasks, they help the students manipulate grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation or any aspect that requires detailed practice without accomplishing necessarily an illocutionary act, but they are eventually the bridge to an authentic communicative context. In addition to the above implication, if readings or written texts for introducing specific grammatical patterns are used, some general principles and guidelines must be taken into account in order to respond to the demands of communicative language teaching. In the communicative approach, authentic materials are required for the students to get a clear picture of the target language or culture.

*Chapter Three:*  
**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

## **Chapter three: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter is about the methodology I have used to collect data for my study. The instruments I have used for my research work are the following: questionnaire, class observation, and interview. Apart from these instruments, some techniques have also been used for the successful collection of the data, the libraries and the internet.

### **3-1 The sample population**

For the objective of the research work to be reached, I have chosen the EFL teachers and learners of the first cycle of our secondary schools. I limit my work to the first cycle because I want to investigate how seriously the English language is being taught especially its grammar. So, it is obvious that if the EFL teachers do not care for the students' practical use of grammar since their first year in the secondary school, they will develop difficulties in term of communication later on.

### **3-2 the research instruments**

To deal with the target population of my study, I have designed some questionnaires; I have carried out class observation and interview with EFL teachers.

#### **3.2.1- the questionnaire**

I have chosen questionnaire because it appears as the most reliable research instrument used to collect data. To set up my questionnaires, I phrase clearly my questions so that my respondents can comprehend what I expect them to provide me with. Besides, my questionnaires are as short as possible and direct enough to avoid ambiguous responses. The questions are objectively worded and are presented in good psychological order proceeding from general to more specific responses. This order helps respondents to organize their own thought so that the provided answers are logical and objective. The opening questions create favorable attitude before any progress is made towards the questions. The offending, annoying or embarrassed questions have been avoided. Finally, my questionnaire seeks only data that cannot be obtained from the sources such as books, reports and records.

### 3.2.2- Class observation

Another instrument that I have used is class observation. It is a powerful instrument which has enabled me to collect reliable and trustful information which occurred in the classroom. The choice of such an instrument is that it has helped witness the actual scene as far as the teaching of grammar is concerned in the first cycle of our secondary schools. In this section, I should confess that my class observation is of a great consideration. I have started observing the teacher teaching grammar when we were sent to observe class scene. Such class observations are effective. To be concrete, I judge it good to describe some of the events I have witnessed. During my observation especially of the teaching of grammar, I have realized that the method used is inductive. It consists in having the students analyze series of sentences or short paragraph for the discovery of new language items. The method is ideal, but its effectiveness is still unproved from what I have witnessed. I also realized that the teachers after the presentation of some language items focus too much on practice and neglect pragmatics. Consequently, inductive method which should foster realistic communication fails to be effective. For example, when teaching reported speech, the teacher I have observed would write series of sentences on the board, and would ask the students to analyze them. Then, they draw generalization or rule; this step was always followed by practice exercises but no pragmatics. The same process has been used for the teaching of passive voice. Here, the students analyze sentences, they try to draw the rule, practice the new language but they are not capable to use them in a realistic situation. So, I can say that the students are not provided with realistic situation in which they can use what they have been taught. They are only provided with paradigms; for instance *I* changed into *you*, *you* changed into *me* so on and so forth. Even functions items are taught to be used in very strict controlled exercises which never foster the students' communicative competence.

### **3.2.3- Interview**

Beside the questionnaire and class observation, I have made use of interview. Indeed, interview is in these forms: general interview, formal interview, informal interview and semi-structure-interview. I choose interview because the technique is in fact indispensable in diagnosis. For this interview, I have pre-set questions prior to the interview section. During the interview, I stuck to my pre-set questions and ask them when the interview is in progress. This semi-structured interview has helped me to obtain information I want to get straightforward. It also enabled me to guide the interviewees to where I want them to land. Through the interview, I have acquired information from facial and body expressions that would not be conveyed in any way. It generally ensured a higher percentage of the coverage of the target topic. However, some of the interviewees were more reluctant to give their opinion especially on delicate, intimate and confidential topic.

### **3.2.4 -The literary references**

A research work of this importance requires the use of libraries and literary references. Indeed, the first instrument that had been helpful for me is the use of libraries. On the issue of the teaching of grammar, there are some authors I could not neglect. So, to expand my knowledge about my topic, I visit some libraries where I have consulted some important books. Among these libraries are the libraries of ENS Porto-Novo, the documentation center of INFRE in Porto-Novo. During the analysis of the documents I have consulted, I went through many books and guides which have provided me with theoretical data relevant to the topic under investigation. Truly speaking, this technique has been very useful for the completion of this work, especially the chapter two which is about the literature review. Some dissertations and thesis about my topic have been used.

### **3.3- the procedure of data collection**

In the process of my research work, I have gathered data through some research instruments. To start, I have administrated in total 80 questionnaire sheets to EFL learners of the schools selected for the investigation and 15 questionnaire sheets to

EFL teachers. Indeed, I have succeeded in making the learners fill in the questionnaires on the spot because the questionnaires sheets contain particular words needed to be explained. As a result, I have got back 100% of the questionnaire sheets addressed to the students. As for the EFL teachers, I have distributed 15 questionnaire sheets that I collect them all. I have also conducted interview with EFL teachers through a direct verbal interaction. I made appointment with many at schools and some at home. The information I obtained from the questionnaires, the class observation and the interview have helped me to be aware of how the EFL teachers teach grammar to their students in our secondary schools. The result of my questionnaires, the class observation and the interview will be shown in chapter four of this research work.

*Chapter Four:*  
*The Finding of the study*  
**FINDINGS**

## Chapter four: THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

This chapter is mainly concerned with the presentation and the discussion of the collected data. It is a very important part in this research in the sense that it provides us with concrete data to support my reflection on the topic under study

### 4-1/ Data Analysis

#### 4-1-1 Questionnaire to the students

I have succeeded in having eighty (80) students to participate and answer the questionnaire. The data for this study question explores a specific point of the general topic

#### Question N°1 why do you like English?

| Suggested answers                               | Number of students | Percentage |
|---|--------------------|------------|
| English is an international language            | 40                 | 50         |
| It connects you to English speakers pen friends | 30                 | 37.5       |
| You can go abroad easily                        | 10                 | 12.5       |
| Total   | 80                 | 100        |

As shown in the table, 50% of the students like English because it is an international language; 34.7% of them think it connects people to English speaking friends whereas 12.5% desire English because it is a passport to go abroad. We can conclude from this, that most students are convinced that English is a master key to open door of opportunity. But through question n°2 let us see if, they are interested to the aspect of the language that is likely to help them speak better English.

**Question n°2: In which aspects of English are you better?**

| Suggested answers | Number of students | Percentage |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------|
| In reading        | 20                 | 25         |
| In writing        | 10                 | 12.5       |
| In grammar        | 50                 | 62.5       |
| Total             | 80                 | 100        |

The above table shows that 62.5% of the students are interested in grammar. They think they are better in grammar than other aspects of the English language. 40% represents the majority of the sample student's; therefore we can conclude that most of the students perform well as far as grammar is concerned.

**Question n°3 Does your teacher always encourage you to use grammar in a real life oral communication**

| Suggested answers | Number of students | Percentage |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Yes               | 10                 | 12.5       |
| No                | 70                 | 87.5       |
| Total             | 80                 | 100        |

From this table, we can realize that 87.5% of the students state that they receive no motivation from their teacher as far as the use of grammar in authentic situations are concerned. This third question is very important because the students learn better if they know why they are learning, what their learning is good for. Now, the next question will confirm if the students really like grammar.

**Question n°4: Why do you like grammar lesson?**

| Suggested answers             | Number of students | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| It helps me to get good marks | 65                 | 81.25      |

|  |    |      |
|--|----|------|
| It helps me to express my mind in the classroom              | 10 | 12.5 |
| It helps me to communicate with people outside the classroom | 5  | 6.25 |
| Total  | 80 | 100  |

The statistics of this table reveal that 81.25% of the students like English just because it helps them to obtain good marks in class. But only 12.5% of them like English because they can say something in English. Very few about 6.25% of the sample students can use English outside the class. From this, we draw the conclusion that the majority of the students are interested in grammar because of good marks. This may be the reason why the students fail to use appropriate grammar while communicating.

**Question n°5: Are you aware of your grammatical mistakes when you produce the English language?**

| Suggested answers | Number of students | Percentage |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Yes               | 20                 | 25         |
| No                | 60                 | 75         |
| Total             | 80                 | 100        |

As shown by the table, 75% of the students are not aware of their mistakes when speaking or writing English. This situation may be due to the fact that the teachers do not focus on the pragmatics aspect of the teaching of grammar. It is clear that, if the students are used to speaking or writing English in real situation, they will internalize better the rules, and know more about when and why to use them. It is therefore evident that if the students don't realize their mistakes while they are communicating, they cannot know whether what they are saying or writing makes sense or not.

#### 4.1.2- Questionnaire to teachers

The teachers are the key actor as far as this research work is concerned. I have succeeded in having forty 40 teachers to participate and respond to the questionnaire. These teachers' qualifications range from Licence to CAPES. The data for this study are collected through nine (09) questions and each question explores a specific point of the general topic. The results of each question of the questionnaire are displayed in some tables.

##### **Question n°1: what is your highest qualification?**

| Suggested answers | Numbers of teachers | Percentage |
|-------------------|---------------------|------------|
| BAC               | 00                  | 00%        |
| DUEL              | 00                  | 00%        |
| LICENCE           | 7                   | 46.66      |
| MAITRISE          | 4                   | 26.66      |
| BAPES             | 2                   | 13.33      |
| CAPES             | 2                   | 13.33      |
| Total             | 15                  | 100        |

The first statistical table shows that the majority of the selected teachers have undergone no professional training. Consequently, their pedagogical ability will have definitely a negative impact on the performance of their students. This may be the major responsible factor of the low level of the students' speaking and writing abilities. Assuredly the next questions will reveal some other factors attributed to the weak performance of the students as far as the effectiveness of grammar is concerned.

##### **Question n°2:for how long have you been teaching English now?**

| Suggested answers | Number of the teachers | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------------------|------------|
| Less than 10years | 8                      | 53.3       |
| 10 years          | 3                      | 20         |
| More than 10years | 4                      | 26.66      |
| Total             | 15                     | 100        |

This table is about the teachers experiences as far as the teaching profession is concerned. This is important for my topic, because it helps me to know if the effectiveness of the English grammar is a problem of today. The table shows that about 50% of the sample teachers are certain. Therefore, their answers to my questions are to be considered.

**Question n°3: Are you trained professionally?**

| Suggested answers | Number of students | Percentage |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Yes               | 5                  | 66,66%     |
| No                | 10                 | 33%        |
| Total             | 15                 | 100%       |

The result of this table is related to the one of question n°1 of this part. It shows that there is a serious problem as far as the training of teachers is concerned.

**Question n°4: Have you ever been to any English speaking Country?**

| Suggested answers | Number of students | Percentage |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Yes               | 3                  | 20         |
| No                | 12                 | 80         |
| Total             | 15                 | 100        |

The results of this table show that 80% of the teachers' respondents never travel to any English speaking country. This is really serious. It is quite logical that one can't stay in a French speaking country and claim to be good at English. Even though some teachers undergo training; they have to travel to an English speaking country to consolidate or to better their level. But the responsibility of this problem should be shared between both the government and the teachers.

**Question n°5: Do you like to teach grammar?**

| Suggested answers | Number of students | Percentage |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Yes               | 10                 | 66.66      |
| No                | 5                  | 33.33      |
| Total             | 15                 | 100        |

As we can notice in this table, a great number of teachers enjoy teaching grammar, because they know that it is central to the teaching and the learning of any language especially of English as a Foreign Language.

**Question n°6: which method do you use to teach grammar?**

| Suggested answers | Number of students | Percentage |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Inductive         | 15                 | 100        |
| Deductive         | 00                 | 00         |
| Others            | 00                 | 00         |
| Total             | 15                 | 100        |

As we can notice from this table, 15 out of 15 teachers I address my questionnaire to, tick inductive box. This is not surprising, because the new approach in the field of the teaching demands this. From the same table, we can see that the box of deductive scores zero percent and others too. It means that most teachers have no other ways. They think that inductive method is the best way. But through the next question, I want to know if there is no other effective way to teach grammar.

**Question n°7: Do you teach grammar in context?**

| Suggested answers | Number of the teachers | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------------------|------------|
| Yes               | 6                      | 40         |
| No                | 9                      | 60         |
| Total             | 15                     | 100        |

About question n°7, I get a high score of 60% of my respondents. This happens because, the teachers think that it is difficult to find authentic context to teach grammar, since the allotted credit to their teaching is very limited.

**Questionnaire n°8: Is it necessary to master grammar before we could produce some tasks in the English language?**

| Suggested answers | Number of students | Percentage |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Yes               | 10                 | 66.66      |
| No                | 05                 | 33.33      |
| Total             | 15                 | 100        |

The percentage shown by this table informs us that, the teachers are convinced that grammar is a master key that can help the students to perform well in English. Now, the question n°9 of this part investigates other ways to make the students speak and write English

**Questionnaire n°9:How can you make your students speak and write English fluently?**

| Suggested answers                                  | Number of students | Percentage |
|--|--------------------|------------|
| By carrying out a lot of speaking activities       | 6                  | 40         |
| By teaching them grammar                           | 6                  | 40         |
| By making them work in English language Laboratory | 3                  | 20         |
| Total  | 15                 | 100        |

The last table of this part reveals us that the teaching of grammar should pass through communicative activities. Teachers are convinced that for grammar to be effective, it should not be an end in itself, but it should serve for communication. The

last proposal wins a low percentage because there is no chance for the students to work in language laboratory.

## **4.2-Summary of data analysis**

After the analysis of the data I have collected for my research work, I have come to some conclusions. Firstly, most of the teachers see grammar very complex to teach. Secondly, they state that the teaching of grammar is time consuming and troublesome. This is to say that, one can easily get confused when teaching grammar. Nevertheless, most of them like to teach it, and the current approach implemented stipulated that the teaching of grammar should be contextualized, but the paradox is that it doesn't actually favor actual communication. To find a way out of the problem of ineffectiveness, I suggest some techniques in the next chapter that are likely to help both teachers and learners and to save our system.

### **4.1.3-Data from the interview**

The data collected from the interview with EFL teachers confirm that most teachers are convinced that the teaching of grammar is very crucial, and although it is very complex to teach, but it is the surest way to make the learners speak and write in English if it is well conducted.

### **4.1.4- Data from the class observation**

From my class observation, I realize that some teachers teach grammar through inductive or implicit method. But I couldn't distinguish clearly the three phases as far as the teaching of a structure is concerned, such as the presentation, the practice, and finally the pragmatics. Failing to follow this, the teaching of grammar will definitely be ineffective. The teaching of grammar as I witnessed during my observation will never be conducive to a real life speaking context.

## Chapter Five:

# My RECOMMENDATION,SUGGESTIONS and My CONCLUSION

## **Chapter Five: My RECOMMENDATIONS, SUGGESTIONS AND My CONCLUSION**

To successfully reach the objectives I have stated in the first chapter of my research work, some conditions are necessary to be fulfilled. They are to be translated into some perspectives that the government, Educational authorities and teachers should consider and work on.

### **5-1 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT**

#### **5-1-1 PROVIDE SCHOOLS WITH TEACHERS IN QUANTITY AND QUALITY**

Since my main objective of this research work is the promotion of effective use of the English language, it is therefore imperative that the government take seriously the training of teachers in charge of secondary school. Such training can be ranged in the pre-service training which always proves its effectiveness because anyone who undergoes such training feels confident and at ease in his job. He / she will definitely know the demands of his profession. Moreover, in-service training can also contribute to a better quality of EFL teachers. Since I am talking about English, a foreign language, it will be highly appreciated if the government could establish a partnership between foreign educators and the responsible for the English language for Beninese EFL teachers to benefit from the professional rich experiences of the former. It will also be well welcome if our government could subsidize EFL teachers' trip to some English speaking countries such as Ghana, Nigeria, and South Africa for good linguistic immersion. This noble step would alleviate the damage some EFL teachers are responsible for when using English in class. This last recommendation is very crucial, because, the fact that most EFL teachers never step their feet in an English speaking country is surely the cause for the low level of the students. This is true in so far as if the teachers themselves find it difficult and hard to manipulate the target language, consequently they cannot in any way make its teaching interesting nor motivate for the students. Assuredly, the problem of the lack of qualified teachers will be somehow solved when the government engages new professional teachers who

undergo initial and integrated training. This recommendation should not be neglected because these teachers have been trained purposely. Addressing the issue of teachers in quantity, the government should plan or organize a periodical recruitment.

### **5-1-2 BUILD ATTRACTIVE INFRASTRUCTURES WITH ADEQUATE EQUIPMENT AND FURNITURE**

One of the important factors which must be taken into account for the successful use of the English language in EFL classrooms is the availability of well-equipped classrooms. Indeed, a good class management requires from the teacher having in his charge a reduced number of students. To solve the problem of overcrowded classroom in a language class, the government should build many schools and equip them with adequate furniture in quantity. Furthermore, for individual oral practice, the establishment of English language laboratory in our secondary schools will be very helpful. Also it is our government's responsibility to supply secondary schools with audio and video materials and libraries for advanced English language practice / usage. For this the supply of electricity will be an asset.

### **5-1-3 IMPROVE TEACHER'S WORKING AND LIVING STANDARD**

Somesay that the best investment is the one involved in the field of education. Therefore, the government should be more interested in the teacher's working and living conditions. The former implies a better physical environment that affects directly the teaching / learning process. The latter involves a regular paid and remunerated salary. The salary of the teachers should not be delayed; the salary is by the way a source of motivation. The teachers who are well and regularly paid are more attached to their job.

### **5-2-2 SUGGESTIONN TO EFL TEACHERS**

The classroom is where interactions take place. The success in learning process is primarily the responsibility of teachers. This section will be about general suggestions to teachers. First of all, teaching is the most wonderful, noble, exciting and rewarding work to be in the world, although it takes time and dedication to do it in the

right way. The teachers should plan their lessons carefully. This, by starting with what they want the students to learn, not what they want them to do. Their lesson should always have a central learning objective, and any activities the teachers plan should be focused on achieving this aim. For instance, the teaching of simple present should help the students to talk about their everyday actions. The teachers should also plan for a variety of learning styles, regarding the visual learners, auditory and kinesthetic learners. To create an enjoyable classroom, the teachers need to use a starter situation at the very beginning of the class. By sharing the learning objectives with students, the teachers succeed in making clear what they want to learn; they should give clear success criteria for task for this helps the students to know what to do and how they will be assessed. The students are happy if they are praised and they perform better. So, the teachers should praise them for what they do correctly and try his best to minimize their attention to unacceptable or undesired behavior of the students. To foster linguistic behavior or communicative competence, the teachers should teach in contextualized situation. This can be done through some teaching strategies among which are:

- **CREATIVE SKIT**

With the creative skit strategy, students are able to learn the oral language in realistic cultural context with appropriate scenarios. A cooperative group setting reduces performance anxiety and installs confidence and risk taking.

- **BUILDING A SCHEMA**

This strategy generates interest in a reading assignment on the students' curiosity to know what is happening in the world around them. Schema assets that background knowledge facilitates reading comprehension for language learners.

- **COMPUTER PEN PALS**

E-mail writing is used in this foreign language strategy to engage students' authentic writing with native speakers of the target language. Examples of these are: a fortune-telling activity where students practice using future tense and

vocabulary to write about future events in their own country, also about their future projects plans. Teachers should promote their learners' speaking abilities through many activities. Here are some interesting activities:

✓ Discussion

After content based-lesson, a discussion can be held for various reasons. The students may aim to achieve at a conclusion share ideas about an event, or find solutions in their discussion group.

✓ Role play

Another way of getting students to speak is role playing. Students pretend they are in various social contexts and have a variety of social roles. The teachers should use this frequently because it reflects authentic situations.

✓ Simulations

Simulations are very similar to role plays but what makes simulations different from role plays is that they are more elaborated, the teachers can ask the students to bring items to the class to create realistic environment. For instance, if a student is acting as a singer, he brings a microphone to sing and so on. Role plays and simulations should be used frequently by teacher regarding many advantages it offers as far as the use of English is concerned. Harmer (1984) suggests they increase the self-confident on hesitant students, because in role plays and simulation activities, they will have a different role and do not have to speak for themselves, which means they do not have to take the same responsibility.

✓ INFORMATION GAP

In this activity, the teacher should organize students in pairs. One student will have the information that other partner does not have and the partner will share their information. Also each partner plays an important role because the task cannot be completed if the partners do not provide the information others

need. These activities are effective because everybody has the opportunity to talk exclusively in the target language if well planned.

✓ Brainstorming

On a given topic, students are asked to produce ideas in a limited time. Depending on the context either individual or group, brainstorming is effective and learners generate ideas quickly, so students will be open to sharing new ideas which always happen to them in real- life situation.

✓ Storytelling

Students can briefly summarize a tale or story they heard from somebody beforehand or they may create their own stories to tell their classmates. Storytelling fosters creative thinking. Students can tell riddles or jokes; for instance, at the very beginning of each class session, the teacher may call a few students to tell short riddle jokes as an opening. In this way, not only the teacher can address students' speaking ability but also get the attention for the class.

✓ Interview

Students can conduct interviews on selected topics with various people. It is a good way that the teacher provides a rubric to students so that they know what type of questions they can ask or what path to follow, but students should prepare their own interview questions. Conducting interviews with people gives students a chance to practice their speaking ability not only in class but also outside and helps them becoming socialized. After interviews, each student can present his or her study to the class. Moreover, students can interview each other and "introduce" his or her partner to the class.

✓ Story completion

This is a very enjoyable, whole class, free speaking activity for which students sits in a circle. For this activity, a teacher starts to tell a story but after

a few sentences he or she stops narrating. Then, each student starts to narrate from the point where the previous one stopped. Each student is supposed to add from four to ten sentences.

Students can add new characters, events, descriptions and so on.

✓ Reporting

Before coming to class, students are asked to read a newspaper or magazine and, in class, they report to their friends what they find as the most interesting news. Students can also talk about whether they have experienced anything worth telling their friends in their daily lives before class.

✓ Picture description

Another way to make use of pictures in a speaking activity is to give students just one picture and have them describe what is in the picture. For this activity, students can form groups and each group is given a different picture. Students discuss the picture with their groups, and then a spokesperson of a group describes the picture to the whole class. This activity fosters the creativity and imagination of the learners as well as the public speaking skills.

✓ Picture narrating

This activity is based on several sequential pictures. Students are asked to tell the story taking place in the sequential pictures by paying attention to the criteria provided by the teacher as a rubric. Rubrics can include the vocabulary or structures they need to use while narrating.

✓ The difference

For this activity, the teacher organizes students in pairs and each couple is given two different pictures, for example, picture of boys playing football and another one of girls playing tennis. Students in pairs discuss the similarities and / or differences in the pictures.

Added to the above rich and various activities, the following suggestions for English language teachers are also to be taken into account.

Teachers of English language should:

- Provide maximum opportunity to students to speak the target language by providing a rich environment that contains collaborative works, authentic materials and tasks, and share knowledge.
- Try to involve each student in every speaking activity. For this aim, practice different ways of student participation.
- Reduce teacher talking time in class while increasing student time. Step back and observe students.
- Indicate positive signs when commenting a student's response
- Ask eliciting questions such as 'what do you mean', 'how do you reach that conclusion?' in order to prompt students to speak more.
- Provide written feedback like **'your presentation was really great. It was a good job. I really appreciated your effort in preparing the materials and efficient use of your voice...?'**
- Do not correct student's pronunciation mistakes very often while they are speaking. Correction should not distract student from his or her speech.
- Involve speaking activities not only in class but also out of class, contact parents or other people who can help.
- Circulate around classroom to ensure that the students are on the right track and see whether they need your help while work in groups or pairs.
- Provide the vocabulary beforehand that students need in speaking activities.
- Diagnose problems faced by students who have difficulty in expressing themselves in the target language and provide more opportunities to practice the spoken language.

**All these suggestions, if seriously followed make a teacher highly competent.**

## CONCLUSION

The teaching of the English grammar is central to the learning and the teaching of all living languages in the Worldwide. In this respect, grammar should not be considered as a set of rules or forms to be impacted on the students. Grammar, although complex to be taught is a very crucial aspect of every language. It constitutes the raw material needed to manipulate language. Grammar is inclusive in the sense that it serves many purposes as far as the teaching of languages is concerned.

The aim of this research work is to investigate the inefficiency of grammar in the teaching of the English language in the first cycle of our Secondary Schools. In other words, why grammar is not conducive to oral communication of the students although it is supposed to do. But the investigation I have carried out reveals to me that the method that the teachers use as far as the teaching of grammar is concerned is not interesting, and that the students do not see any interest in it because they don't know what grammar is good for. Through my questionnaire and interview, I come to the conclusion that the teachers know the importance of grammar, but the activities through which the teachers are conducting it are not conducive to realistic communication. Besides, from my class observation I deduce that the teachers teach only to develop linguistic competences in their students and neglecting linguistic behaviours. Furthermore, one of the major causes of the ineffectiveness of the teaching of grammar is the reluctance of the teachers themselves to teach grammar. Grammar does not favour communication because the students are not provided with opportunities to use their linguistic knowledge in real situation. All this evoked problems can really hinder the chief function of grammar as far as the teaching of the English language is concerned.

All in all it is clear that grammar, the structural foundation of any language, should help us to express our mind. The more we are aware of how it works, the more we can monitor the meaning and effectiveness of the way we can use it.

Grammar helps to foster precision, detect ambiguity, and exploit the richness of expression available in English. In many cases, written grammatically makes sense than not

This work is the modest step I take to investigate the problem of the ineffectiveness of grammar and some suggestions have been made in chapter four to alleviate it. Definitely, many areas are to be covered and prospective candidates should direct their curiosity in this sense.

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# *ANNEX PAGES*

## QUESTIONNAIRE TO EFL LEARNERS

I'm a student teacher at the Advanced Teacher Training College of Porto-Novo.  
I'm undertaking a research work on the topic "The *Teaching of Grammar in EFL classroom in the first cycle of Secondary Schools on Benin*"

School:

1- Do you like English? a, yes  b, no

If yes, why?

a, English is an international language

b, One is not civilized if one does not know English

c, it connects you to English speakers pen friends

d, you can go abroad easily

2- In what skills or language elements do you feel confident?

a, in reading  b, in writing  c, in grammar

3-does your teacher always encourage you to use grammar in a real life oral communication when teaching it to you?

a, yes  b, no

4-Do you like grammar lesson? (If yes why?)

a, no

-Because:

a, it helps me get good marks in exam

b, it helps me express my mind in the classroom

c, it helps me communicate with people outside the classroom

5- Are you aware of your grammatical mistakes when you are writing or speaking English language?

a, yes  no

*Thanks for your collaboration*

## QUESTIONNAIRE TO EFL TEACHERS

I'm a student teacher at the Advanced Teacher Training College of Porto-Novo.  
I'm undertaking a research work on the topic "The *Teaching of Grammar in EFL classroom in the first cycle of Secondary Schools on Benin*"

School:

1- What is your highest qualification?

- a, BAC  b, DUEL , Licence  d, MAITISE   
e, BAPES  f, CAPES

2- For how long have you been teaching English now?

- a, less than 10 years  b, 10 years  c, more than 10 years

3- Are you a trained teacher?

- a, yes  b, no

4- Have you ever been to an English speaking country?

- a, no  yes

4- Do you like teaching grammar?

5- Which method do you use when teaching grammar?

- a, inductive  b, deductive

Others:

6- Do you teach grammar in context?

7- According to you, is it necessary to master grammar before we could speak or write in the English language in Benin context?

- a, yes  b, no

8- How can you make your students speak and write English fluently?

- a, by carrying out a lot of speaking activities   
b, by teaching them grammar   
c, by making them work in an English language laboratory

*Thanks for your collaboration*

## INTERVIEW WITH EFL TEACHERS

I'm a student teacher at the Advanced Teacher Training College of Porto-Novo. I'm undertaking a research work on the topic "The *Teaching of Grammar in EFL classroom in the first cycle of Secondary Schools on Benin*"

School:

### Questions

1-According to you, what is the place of grammar in the process of teaching English as a foreign language?

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

2-Do your students use grammar rules appropriately in their oral and written communication in class?

.....  
.....

3-How do you justify the fact that after 4 years study of the English language, most EFL students are incapable of holding a real life conversation of lower standard within a very limited time?

.....  
.....

4-Do you really need to know accurately the grammar of English language before we could speak or write it? Why or why not?

.....  
.....

5-How do you think you can teach your students grammar to help them communicate and write effectively in the target language?

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

# Glossary

EFL: ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE.

LICENCE: A THREE-YEARS CERTIFICATE AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL.

MAITRISE: A FOUR -YEARS CERTIFICATE AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL.

BAPES: THREE-YEARS PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMA AT THE TEACHERS TRAINING COLLEGE.

CAPES: FIVE-YEARS PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMA AT THE TEACHERS TRAINING COLLEGE.