

Teaching – learning and evaluating English as foreign language process and the issue of classroom management: Case study of secondary school of Sokponta (Benin)

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Abstract

The present study aimed to point out the teachers' difficulties related to the classroom management in the secondary school of "Sokponta-Gomé" in the municipally of GLAZOUE in "Department of Collines" in the central part of Benin. The target population was composed of students of 6ème (first year in secondary schools) and their English teachers. Through random procedure, a total of fifty (50) teachers, one hundred (100) students and some resource persons were selected and to whom questionnaires and interviews were addressed. Also, class observation technique was used to assess how teachers manage their classrooms. After analysis with R (3.2.3) software, it was revealed that most of the teachers encountered great difficulty to manage very well classes although they knew its importance. In particular the discipline problem and attractive teaching styles were expressed by most of them. Thus, a combination of corporal punishment and chore to discipline students when a discipline problem occurred were also explored. Singing as attractive material of teaching is used by very few teachers. The majority has qualified it like a sort of wasting of time. The present study was a kind of diagnose of the sector which must be taken into account so as to improve students income.

Key words: classroom management, teacher, student, English as a Foreign Language

Introduction

Classroom Management is very important and must be effective before teaching and learning could be successful. Chen and Tang, (2016) consider that classroom management is one of the most important factors for effective teaching. It is the linchpin that makes teaching and learning achievable. In 1981, the U.S. National Educational Association reported that 36% of teachers said that they would probably not go into teaching if they had to decide again (Wolfgang, Charles H;

Glickman, Carl D 1986).The major reason for that statement should be due to the negative students' attitudes and discipline problems they encounter in class situation.

Many researches carried out have identified help with classroom management and instructional skills as teachers' top need to make effective teaching and learning, (Kratowill, 2009). The above statement shows how of vital importance classroom management is. Indeed, classroom management is an overriding key that teachers should perform to be effective in the job of

teaching and learning since researchers show how much teachers in general and new teachers in particular need much more help with this issue. So, teachers are mostly concerned with issues such as: preventing discipline problems (PDP), creating an orderly environment for learning and dealing efficiently with current discipline problems. Classroom discipline, is not limited in the class, but also helps to prepare students to face their daily life in the community because the more you behave well in the class, the more you will behave well in the society. It is in this respect that, Everston and Weinstein (2006) argued that classroom management has two distinctive purposes: "It not only seeks to establish and sustain an orderly environment so students can engage in meaningful academic learning, it also aims to enhance students' social and moral growth".

Regarding the problems teachers encounter in teaching and learning system, owing mostly to students' attitudes, it should be important to think about how to deal with this issue in order to reach the valuable goal assigned to teaching and learning. The current work aims to study the learners' indiscipline impact on teaching-learning process and students' achievement in CEG Sokponta-Gomé (Glazoué).

Frame work

The present research was carried out in Sokponta-Gomé secondary school in the district of "Glazoué", department of "collines". Glazoué district has a border with Northern side of the country by the district of "Savè", in the Southern by "Dassa" district, in the East by the Republic of Nigeria and the West by the district of "Ouèssè" (Afrique conseil, 2006).

The purpose of the study

The main objective of this study was to investigate the competencies and the attitudes of secondary school teachers while dealing with classroom management. Especially, it aimed first, to indicate the strength and the weaknesses in the competencies of secondary school teachers in classroom management and, secondly to show the importance of classroom management and finally to reveal how both teachers and learners should be involved in for its success in order to promote a better quality of secondary education.

Research questions and hypothesis

So as to achieve the study, some questions have been raised:

- Why does classroom management often fail?
- What is the importance of effective classroom management in teaching and learning?
- When do we say that classroom management is effective?
- What are the steps a teacher must take into account for well managing classes?

By responding those questions, the following hypotheses were stated.

- Classroom management often fails because teachers likely do not have the skills to deal efficiently with it;
- The importance of classroom management should be to allow teaching and learning to be effective so as to give students the essential knowledge in order to face their future daily life;
- Classroom management should be effective when classroom activities will be run smoothly and students will be actively engaged in those activities;
- Effective class management should take into account: lesson plan; attractive curriculum implementation to motivate students and reduce discipline problems.

Methodology of research

Target population and sampling procedure

The target population for the present work was composed of both first form (6ème) promotion students and teachers of the secondary school of SOKPONTA-GOMÉ. These students were chosen because of their early age in the studies; characteristic that teachers can manage to catch their focus on the course. Through random procedure, a total of fifty (50) teachers and one hundred (100) students were selected.

Data collection tools and technique

So as to reach the goals assigned, different tools and techniques were set and fulfilled and have combine both qualitative and quantitative procedures. They are as follows: questionnaires, interviews and class observation technique.

Questionnaires

This tool aimed first at collecting quantitative data such as socio-demographic characteristics (age, number of students per classroom and years of experience of teachers), and secondly to access the maximum information related to the current study. Two series of questionnaires were addressed to different categories of school actors. The first one is addressed to teachers and the second one to first form students (6ème). Each questionnaire was designed depending on the category of actors. Globally, fifty (50) questionnaires and one hundred (100) questionnaires were respectively administrated to teachers and students.

Interviews

Apart from the questionnaires, interviews were conducted with some administrative staffs of the school and resource persons in the domain of classroom management so as to get their opinions and point of views as qualitative data. Thus, some English teachers Advisers were interviewed about classroom management issues.

Class observations

During the present research work, to be eyewitness of events that happen in the classroom, the visits in some classes were organized. Mostly, the first form (6ème) classes were visited. Eight (08) classes of the first form (6ème) and four (04) of the other forms were visited. This technique was executed to see how teachers manage their classes in connection with the language process.

Analysis procedure

After carrying out the different data collection tools, the data were spoiled and computerized with Excel 2007 software. The statistical analysis was done with R (3.2.3) software and has consisted in the calculation of descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages).

Presentation of findings

The results reached vary according to the category of people concerned and the data collection method used.

Answers to the questionnaires

Students' answers

The results showed that 81 respondents (81%) have accepted that all their teachers set up expectations to run their class. About teachers' preparation before coming to class, 95.42% of the students have said that teachers come to class well prepared while 04.58% said "NO". So as to conduct fairly the classes, 58% of students answered that teacher's use song to create a warm classroom when they feel tired, confused or bored. However, 13% answered that teacher's use story and 29% answered that teachers use nothing; they just do their course up to the end and leave the class. All of the students respond that they do agree with the use of song in class. To know with which teacher students feel more at ease to follow the lesson, at 100% they answered that they feel more at ease with the one who uses song. Moreover, 100% of the students respond that not all their teachers use song for creating a warm, wonderful classroom. They argued that some teachers say that making student's sing is a way of wasting time. That is why they do not make students sing during learning situation.

Teachers' answers

The questionnaires addressed to the teachers have revealed that 95% of them identified classroom management as the major problem that they are confronted with, whereas 05% answered that it is the problems related to the teaching- learning and evaluation. All of the teachers, that means 100%, have answered that discipline problem is the major problem they face while dealing with classroom management. The question to know whether teachers set up expectations to their class or not, all respondents declare that they do so. Furthermore, 61.23% of the respondents confirm that most of the time those expectations help them to achieve their goal; and the 38.77% answered that even if they set

up expectations, they do not manage to achieve their goal because students always break down rules.

Most of them, that is (93.85%) of respondents, consider that they use chore to discipline students when a discipline problem occurred and 06.15% said that they often use corporal punishment. Nevertheless, teachers at 100% validate that they know the importance of effective classroom management. In that respect, 21% of the respondents said that the importance of effective classroom management is to improve students outcome and takes into consideration the trilogy (Teaching-learning- evaluating); 27% proclaimed that it is to run smoothly class activities; 52% said that effective classroom management fosters an auspicious learning environment for students, enhances their social relationship, ensures that class activities are running smoothly so as to improve students' outcome.

As far as the causes of inefficient classroom management in linkage with wrong execution of the language trilogy, 15% of respondents said that it is due to rules broken down by students; 16.05% of respondents said that it is due to lack of community education or student indiscipline; 22.32% said that it is due to lack of skills and 46.63% said that it is due to lack of skills, lack of preparation, lack of motivation or devotion, lack of consistent in enforcing rules and lack of experiences. As consequence, teachers at 100% said that ineffective classroom management lead to the bad student performance.

To prevent from this situation, 36% of teachers said that they need specific training for classroom management in correlation with the processes of teaching- learning an evaluation of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) and 64% said that they do not need and they argued that, it is up to the teacher to decide which strategies will be suitable for students he/she is facing during classroom activities. They added that there is no specific classroom management techniques that will suit all students' attitudes management.

Class observation

In all the classes visited, it was noticed firstly the discipline problems. Instead of following the ongoing course, some students walked aimlessly in the class, others were shouting and this was mostly in classes of the first form. In the other classes, some students were shouting and other was sleeping at the same time that few were involved in classroom activities. In classes of 6ème, when teachers noticed that students were confused, bored, tired or started sleeping, some made them play the game of "stand up and sit down" and made them sing so as to make them relax and keep them focusing on the lesson. By so doing, students calmed down and became involved again. This is mostly used by literature teachers to keep their students confidence; professional teachers rarely do like that, most often they just make students who are sleeping or shouting kneel down. So it was noticed that children tend to be more engaged into class activities with teachers who used songs to discipline them than those who punish them.

Interviews

Face to face discussions with different school staffs and resource persons in managing the class have revealed significant information. Dealing with the main point one should take care of that in order to achieve successful teaching – learning and evaluating, all of them have told that the first point that leads to effective achievement is effective classroom management. It was demonstrated that because of lack of skills and lack of teachers' training to deal efficiently with classroom management, many new teachers have deserted the teaching job. It was claimed that song is very important in managing a class and mostly in first (6ème) classes since they are secondary school newcomers. It was added that those students are still children and such asset could help to prepare their psychology for learning. Another reasons were that when these students look like tired, bored, confused, teacher should use songs to warm the class by relaxing them so as to regain their attention to what is ongoing in the class.

Discussions

The analysis of results has showed how of vital importance classroom management is and its effect on students' achievement if efficiently dealt with.

Through the analysis of the questionnaires, it was noticed that, classroom management is the major problem teachers encounter in teaching (Chen and Tang, 2016); because 95% of them have identified it as their major concern. This percentage showed that classroom management was a point to care about if one wanted to achieve success in teaching as stated by Macías, (2018). This may be related to the fact that "the ideals that the new teachers trained during teacher training program are replaced by the reality of school life where much of their energy is often transferred to learning how to survive in a new school culture" (Farrell, 2006).

Talking about effective class management in itself, all the teachers have pointed discipline issues as a component which created its failure because it was noticed that students did not follow regularly expectations settings. Sariçoban, (2010) and Veenman, (1984) have gone beyond that to say that apart from discipline concern, individual differences and mixed-ability classes, organization of class work, relationships with parents, insufficient and/or inadequate teaching/learning materials, overcrowded classrooms, sitting arrangement, noise, social and cultural activities are such problems that a teacher is confronted with.

Furthermore, teachers also caused the failure of classroom management for instance as shown in the present study. When they do not dress well, do not prepare classes before coming to school, students will be talking about his or her dressing style or his improvisation till the end of the lesson. This has raised the problem of teacher's responsibilities that must be a model for his learners. Also, the employers (State Government) must provide teachers financial means to improve their appearance and other priority elements conducting to effective trilogy in EFL programs.

Another issue raised by the study was the courses implementation by teachers. Indeed, the majority of learners attested that when teachers did not implement

attractive curriculum in the class, students were bored and they were not engaged in class activities. Instead of following what was happening in the class they spent their time for shouting. This raised the problem of teachers' weak experience and skill in conducting motivating and attractive class activities. So, to decrease such situation, teachers should be consistent in enforcing rules but by avoiding corporal punishment and they should also implement attractive curriculum so as to keep the students to be actively engaged in class activities. These remarks have corroborated those of Chen and Tang, (2016) who claim that the teacher-learner interactions have great influence on the teaching. So, needs are required to establish good atmosphere so as to make learning situations interesting (Macías, 2018).

As far as the use of song was concerned, students at 100% agreed with its use. So, this progress was very significant to show that teachers should not neglect the role of song while dealing with classroom management; because, not only it helps to discipline students, but also prepares students psychology by making them relaxing and motivating. This observation was very important since the students of first form are young enough and are in their first year of English language learning (Benin official context). For this, songs and others tools like posters, flashcards, pictures, videos, technology materials, picture books, or picture dictionaries for children are attractive means which can be used in class (Blanka, 2013).

Through this study, it was obvious that by taking into account classroom practices, teachers could make better students' outcome, behaviors and their social relationships in the community.

Conclusion

Overall, the study has emerged indispensable, not only for the improvement of students' achievement and performance in academic subjects learning, but also to foster students with good behaviors so as to accommodate these with community uses and make good relationship with one another and banish bad attitudes. Moreover, there is no standardized technique for classroom management that will utterly overcome students' attitudes or good manners problems if the teacher does not provide an interesting, engaging program that allows each student to become actively involved. Beyond, the government should also provide schools with the maximum of classroom infrastructures and organize some classroom management trainings to teachers during the holidays. Government should make available all materials that are crucial to face the students' needs, instructors' difficulties and successful teaching-learning and evaluating processes to English as a Foreign Language.

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