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EFL Teachers' Awareness of Language Theories In Benin. Implications For Effective Classroom Practices: Case-Studies of Some Secondary Schools

Hilarion Vegba¹, Faihoun China Oussou Yovo²

Ministry of Secondary Education, Benin

Abstract

The research aims at finding out not only how far the permanent EFL teachers are aware of language learning theories and their application in EFL classes in some secondary schools in the Republic of Benin, but also, to what extent it affects the effectiveness of their classroom practices. For that purpose, we have used both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The study covered sixteen (16) government secondary schools in: Borgou, Collines, Mono and Ouémé Departments. It involved forty-six (46) permanent EFL Teachers and one hundred and eighty-seven (187) students from form1 to upper sixth. This enabled us to find out that only 15% of the targeted teachers can remember exactly what learning theories are, and gave some examples of things they used them for in their classes. Moreover, the teachers' inspections and interviews reveal that some teachers applied unconsciously some teaching techniques deriving from language learning theories. Yet, they were still challenges to face as regards students motivation, students effective involvement in classroom activities, discipline management etc. Therefore, as a result of the implementation of the suggested professional action plan, the EFL teachers are expected to apply consciously the appropriate language learning theories in due time to overcome any impediment to effective classroom teaching and learning. Furthermore, it would induce a positive change in the teaching of language learning theories at the Teacher Training Colleges in Benin. In the future, it would be advisable that further research be extended to aspirant teachers as well.

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In addition, it should be carried out at a period when pedagogic activities are fully on so that teachers and students could be more available.

As for the relevance of the study, it could be said that though language learning theories have been taught for so long time at the Teacher Training College in Benin, so far, in the literature review we have not read any national research work on their application by the trained EFL teachers in their classrooms. For that reason, this research seems to be a pioneer study in that field and will contribute to the improvement of EFL teachers' performances.

Keywords: Language learning theories, behaviourism, cognitivism, constructivism, socio-constructivism.