THE IMPACT OF TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL TRAINING ON STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: A BENIN CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This research work explores the impact of teacher professional development on the academic performance of EFL students. It examines the importance of the teacher education program and how it influences their teaching proficiency and the performance of their EFL learners. A qualitative research methodology was adopted for this study. Twenty (20) EFL teachers were the participants in this study, including five (05) teachers who have received professional training and fifteen (15) teachers who have not received professional training. The participants were purposively selected from three (3) public schools in two regions of Benin. Classroom observation and interviews were the instruments of data collection and the data gathered were analysed using a content analysis. The main findings of this study indicated that teacher training is important in influencing the quality of teaching and learning. Many Beninese EFL teachers do not have professional training, which contributes to the poor academic performance of students. This is because untrained teachers are inexperienced, while trained teachers use appropriate techniques to teach and understand the psychology of their learners. The availability of qualified teachers will result in better learning outcomes. In short, it was recommended that government and educational authorities organize in-service training programs for teachers to improve the quality of their teaching.

Keywords: teachers' professional training, teaching competence, students' academic achievements, EFL

INTRODUCTION

It is commonly said that the development of any nation depends on its educational system. To improve the educational system, promoting teacher quality is a key element. According to Harry and Sass (2006), one of the primary goals of the 'No Child Left behind Law' in the United States is to have "a highly qualified teacher in every classroom" (p.2). However, how can quality education be achieved if the teachers are not properly trained?

In Benin today, students' academic performance in secondary schools is dangerously decreasing in virtually every subject. More disturbing, is students' academic achievement in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Students cannot read, write or

speak English correctly despite years of EFL learning. It makes Benin lose its former famous esteem at the international level in terms of quality education hence, the quality of education is directly related to the quality of instruction in the classrooms. Suppose the teaching and learning of English language is integrated in schools' program in many countries, including the non-English speaking countries. In that case, one cannot deny the great importance of this target language in our world today. It is true that various factors affect learners' academic achievements but this study focuses on teacher-related factors, such as teachers' professional training. Farroq and Shahzadi (2006, p.48) explain that professional training is to educate a person so as to "be fitted, qualified and proficient in doing some job." The purpose of teacher training is to increase teachers' competency towards teaching learning process in education. Given the increased rate of students' poor mastery of EFL in Benin, a deeper analysis of the situation shows that the new set of teachers in schools are professionally untrained or unqualified.

This article explores the significance of teachers' professional training on students' academic achievement in EFL at the secondary school level. It intends to examine to what extent teachers' professional training impacts the academic performance of EFL students. It also explores the impact of professional training on teachers' pedagogical performance in the EFL classroom. A purely qualitative approach was adopted for this study. Data were collected through classroom observation and interviews conducted with EFL teachers.

1. Background of the study

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Nowadays, there are obvious shortcomings in students' EFL academic performance in secondary schools in Benin. A closer look at the problem revealed that university graduates in Benin enter the teaching profession without any exposure to professional training in education. As Mupa and Chinoneka (2015) put, many EFL teachers have low training to influence effective teaching and learning. Having great knowledge on the subject one is teaching is often regarded as the utmost key to being an effective teacher neglecting that having high pedagogic knowledge is key. Teaching as an art, does not boil down to standing in front of students to pour out one's knowledge regarding a subject. It is more about the way the way "teachers make this knowledge easily accessible to their students" (Mendoza, 2017, p.32). How knowledgeable are Beninese EFL teachers of various teaching and learning methods, techniques and theories? Besides, how familiar are teachers with their learners' physical and psychological characteristics, bearing in mind that each learner is different and unique. Many teachers are unaware of the right behaviours and attitudes they adopt with each particular group of students. According to (Mayes & Hutchinson, 2004), three main factors within teachers' control that significantly

influence students' performance are professional characteristics, teaching skills and classroom climate. That is why undergoing a professional training in the art of teaching is needed.

Furthermore, in the past, students, after getting their Baccalaureate degree attend teacher training school for three years to acquire a professional certificate called "BAPES" (Brevet d'Aptitude au Professorat de l'Enseignement Secondaire). Others who attend university followed by a post-graduate program, undergo a professional training program and obtain their CAPES (Certificat d'Aptitude au Professorat de l'Enseignement Secondaire) which makes him or hear a fully certified teacher. Unfortunately, teachers are recruited based on academic degrees today. Many private schools recruit untrained teachers because of their inability to afford a trained teacher. On the contrary, public schools (government-owned schools) that are capable of affording trained and qualified teachers are obliged to recruit untrained teachers due to shortage of professional teachers and are obliged to accept such category of teachers otherwise, many classes will be crippled for a whole academic session.

All these irregularities greatly affect the quality of teaching in secondary schools in Benin. These consequences include teachers' inability to understand individual learners which often creates a toxic atmosphere in the EFL classroom. Also, as stated earlier, although some teachers have good knowledge of their subject, they cannot share it or transmit it to their learners in the right way. There is the problem of the evaluation as un-trained teachers are not clear enough while evaluating students which causes students to give answers which are not those expected by the teachers. Such are consequences of absence of teachers' professional training which this study intends to shed light on and emphasize the impact of teachers' professional training on students' academic achievement in English as a Foreign Language in Benin.

1.2. Research Questions

Two main questions form the basis of this study:
-   What is the impact of teachers' professional training on students' academic performance in EFL classroom?
-   How does professional training influence teachers' pedagogical performance?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:
-   to examine the impact of teachers' professional training on students' academic performance in EFL
-   to find out whether teachers' professional training influences teachers' pedagogical performance

2. Literature Review

This section reviews previous studies on the need of teachers' professional training.

2.1. Importance Teachers' Professional Training

Training is defined as the learning of discrete teaching items. In a training program, the tutor is in charge of teaching these discrete items or strategies to teachers so they are competent and improve their teaching skills (Freeman, 1989 as cited in Mendoza, 2017). The importance of teacher training cannot be underlined enough as it gives teacher a theoretical and practical education on the nuances of teaching students how to accomplish their greatest potential. Without this training, teachers will not be able to provide guidance, affecting the foundation of the education built (Mondal, 2020). Following Moore (2004 as cited in Farooq & Shazadi, 2006, p.48), teachers are "trained in the acquisition of certain competencies related to aspects of classroom management, long-term medium-term and short-term planning, recording and reporting students' work leading to the achievement of prescribed, assessable and (presumably) acquired-for-life 'standards'". EFL teachers need to be trained to be effective in knowing how language is acquired, holding specific beliefs about learning EFL and improving attitudes towards teaching-learning. Tess Global (2019) adds that "to obtain qualified teacher status, all trainees must show they are competent in a range of teaching standards, including having knowledge and understanding of various teaching and learning strategies (para.4.). The lack of teachers' professional training may act "as a constraint in the process of effective teaching and learning process" (Sequiera, 2012, p.6).

Orchard and Winch (2015) argues that teacher need educational theory because they must understand what they are doing, why they are doing it and consequently, make an effort to do better. Theories provide a basis to understand how people learn and a way to explain, describe, analyse and predict learning. That is why the knowledge of these theories helps teachers make more informed decisions around the design, development, and delivery of learning (Goel, 2017). On this note, it is worth mentioning prominent educational learning theories

2.1.1. Educational Learning Theories

Primary educational learning theories include:

- **Behaviourist Theory**: This theory is a popular concept that is based on the idea that all learning is a reaction to stimuli. It is a theory of learning that states all behaviours are learned through interaction with the environment through conditioning (McLeod, 2020). Students work at their own pace but receive reinforcement for behaviours that move them towards achieving the task. (Information Literacy, n.d.). Positive reinforcement is key in the behaviourism

theory, for example, rewarding students for "working well with commendations or praise points is a behaviourist approach. This conditions students to strive to work better and also learn that the more they practise, the more praise they will receive for doing well and achieving higher grades (Greenwood, 2020).

- **Cognitivist Theory**: In contrast to the behaviourist theory, the cognitivist theory is based on the idea that "students process information they receive rather than just responding to a stimulus, as with behaviourism" (Loveless, 2022, para. 4). Learning occurs when the student reorganises information, either by finding new explanations or adapting old ones. Western Governors University (WGU) mentioned that at the most basic level, this theory suggests that internal and external forces are important parts of the cognitive process, and as students understand how their thinking impacts their learning and behaviour, they are able to have more control over it (WGU, 2020a).

- **Constructivist Theory**: It is based on the premise that students create their own learning based on their prior knowledge or experience. This theory focuses "on learning as an active process, which is personal and individual for each student" (WGA, 2020a, para. 5). In other words, students will learn best by trying to make sense of something on their own with the teacher as the guide to help them along the way (Filipatali, 2013). Examples of constructivism in the classroom include problem-based learning, creative projects, and group collaborations (Loveless, 2022).

- **Socio-Constructivist Theory**: Social constructivist theory is based on the idea that learning happens through group interaction. Loham and Hurst (2021) stated that in contrast to constructivist theory, which, emphasises individuals' personal experiences in constructing knowledge, social constructivism emphasises how social interactions impact learners' construction of knowledge. In addition, social constructivism focuses on the collaborative nature of learning. Students rely on others to help "create their building blocks, and learning from others to help them construct their own knowledge and reality" (WGU (2020b, para.6).

- **Humanism**: This is a theory developed to contrast cognitivism and behaviourism. This theory states that students should be in control of their learning and that it should be achieved through observing and exploring. Therefore, teachers' role is motivator, guide, facilitator and encouraging role model (Loveless, 2022). A humanistic theory of teaching and learning is an educational theory that believes in teaching the "whole" child. A humanist approach will have a strong focus on students' emotional wellbeing (Drew, 2021).

Unfortunately, many teachers, especially those untrained teachers, are ignorant of these important learning theories to influence positive learning outcomes. Therefore, if teachers are ignorant of educational learning theories, methods and techniques of teaching and learning, how will they know their specific roles as instructors and

educators? According to Harmer (2007), there are eight roles of an EFL teachers: teacher as facilitator, teacher as resource, teacher as controller, teacher as motivator, teacher as participant, teacher as tutor, teacher as organiser and teacher as assessor. Many teachers do not know their roles and have yet to fully understand the change in their roles. This situation is where another importance teachers' professional training comes to play. By undergoing professional training, teachers are aware of the various roles they are to play for an effective teaching and learning.

2.2. *Qualities of an Effective Teacher*

Educational researchers have developed lists of characteristics describing a good teacher, which in research is also referred to as an ideal teacher. In support of these lists, Arnon and Reichel (2007) assert that an "ideal teacher" can be defined by qualities that create a general prototype that can be applied to any teacher and to which any teacher can aspire. These lists relate to teacher personalities, behaviours, abilities, and relational skills and are often times extensive and complex (Aksoy, 1998; Devine, Fahie & McGillicuddy, 2013). Previous studies have highlighted major themes which characterise an effective teacher. Beishuizen, Hof, Putten, Bouwmeester and Asscher (2001) identify the personality and ability views, while Arnon and Reichel (2007) study identifies personal characteristics and knowledge of the subject matter as well as didactic knowledge. Alternately, Sahin and Cokadar (2009) identify themes of general personal, affective roles towards students and professional roles. Good teaching characteristics relate to a teacher's knowledge base, personality and relationship with students.

2.2.1. *Teachers' Knowledge Base*

A good teacher is defined by his skills, knowledge, and experience (Beishuizen et al., 2001). This statement aligns with content and pedagogical knowledge, which according to Shulman (1987) is a teacher's understanding of the concepts being taught and skills needed to communicate and assess students. According to Mendoza (2017), "the formulation of a knowledge base was seen as the command and knowledge of basic skills such as direct instruction, time on task, and classroom management, among others" (p.31). She adds that teachers' competency "in their subject matter area and the use of pedagogical skills were also important aspects for this interpretation of teacher's knowledge base" (ibid). Aksoy (1998) classifies concepts under the theme of instruction and identified good teachers as those able to clearly explain tasks and information. A good teacher must present material in an organized and engaging way and use creative teaching approaches (White, 2009; Duarte, 2013; Samples & Copeland, 2013). Besides, experience, skill and understanding of what methods work are characteristics of good teachers under the ability perspective. Based on this view, a good teacher is described as able to keep

order and give clear instructions (Beishuizen et al., 2001; Murphy et al., 2004). In addition, Rahimi (2007) suggests that EFL teachers have to get three kids of knowledge, which are (1) knowledge of the language content knowledge and knowledge of the subject matter, (2) knowledge of teaching pedagogical knowledge, teaching strategies, beliefs and practices, (3) knowledge/competency of teaching, in reality, pedagogical content knowledge and knowledge of how students understand a subject matter in the context of real teaching (as cited in Mendoza, 2017).

2.2.2. Teachers' Personality

The personality view emphasizes a good teacher's balanced and mature personality with characteristics such as kindness and enthusiasm (Beizhuizen et al., 2001). Good teachers are identified as kind, friendly, helpful, and patient under this view. (Aksoy, 1998; Arnon & Reichel, 2007). Similarly, good teaching was defined by characteristics such as caring, patient, not boring and polite (Murphy et al., 2004). The personality perspective defines a good teacher based on characteristics and traits rather than knowledge or ability. This view implies, to some degree that good teachers are born, not made.

2.2.3. Teacher-Student Relationship

The teacher-student relationship is related to the teacher's ability to function in a social group and take on the social responsibility of a teacher (Ciascai & Vlad, 2014). A good teacher treats all students equally, listens to and addresses students' problems and gets to know each student as an individual (Aksoy, 1998; Arnon & Reichel, 2007). This view could be associated with "Teacher Student Relationship Quality' or TSRQ, which, when strong, can influence student motivation, engagement and performance. All these qualities which characterise a trained and qualified teacher are mostly emphasised during teachers' professional training period.

2.3. Related Studies

The problem of this study is supported by the results of some previous related studies. Lanmantchion, et.al. (2021) carried out a study on the quality of English instructors involved in the experimentation of teaching English as a foreign language in some primary schools in Benin. Their investigation revealed that among the teachers, "the proportion who were unqualified reached 83 percent" (ibid., p.17). The study found that many of the teachers had academic degrees but had not gone through pedagogical and professional qualifications.

Kelani (2009) conducted an experimental study on the effectiveness of technology education professional development (TEPD) programs on teachers' efficacy in

teaching technology education in the sciences. Although this has focused on teachers' training in the sciences, it is relevant because it stresses the relevance of teachers' training programming to promote quality teaching. His study revealed that all participants acknowledged the effectiveness of training programs, teachers usually ask what benefit they would get after training in other words, the low salary income of teachers serve as a demotivating factor for teachers. This mirrors the study of Connar (as cited in Mendoza, 2017) who stated that teacher's qualifications and high income were strongly correlated with student's achievement. Among the studies is the one carried out by Alsofi (2009) who pointed out that the main problems of teaching English are that many teachers are not competent to teach a communicative syllabus as a result of inadequate pre-service training programs (as cited in Zuheer, 2013)

3.   Research Methodology

This study examines the impact of teachers' professional training on students' academic achievement in English as a Foreign Language. It also intends to find out how teachers' training influences teachers' pedagogical performance in the EFL classroom. It has adopted a qualitative research method to gather data regarding the topic under study. Twenty (20) EFL teachers were the participants in this study. There are five (5) teachers who have undergone professional training and fifteen (15) who have not undergone any professional training. The participants were purposely selected from (3) public schools in two regions of Benin. Denscombe (2003) states that the reason for employing purposive sampling is because the researcher already knows something about specific people or events and deliberately selects particular ones because they are seen as likely to produce the most valuable data.

Class observation and interviews are the research instruments used to collect data. The class observation was carried out in three (3) public schools with six (6) EFL teachers, three (3) trained teachers and three (3) untrained teachers. For the purpose of this research, the class observation was carried out with three categories of learners, beginners, intermediate and advanced learners. There were two classes of beginners, two classes of intermediate learners and two classes of advanced learners (2) in each of the three schools. The different class observations have helped to discover the performance of two categories of teachers, the trained teacher and the untrained teacher. The interviews with the participants were semi-structured; some of the questions were predetermined and open-ended. The data gathered from the class observation and interviews have been carefully analysed using a content analysis. A content analysis is a data analysis tool that is used to identify patterns in recorded communication, or from a set of texts which can be written, oral, or visual (Luo, 2019). After analysis, the collected data have been interpreted in a list of themes or patterns.

4. Findings

This study attempts to find out the impact of professional training on students' academic performance and on teachers' pedagogic performance. The results of the class observation and interviews are presented below:

4.1. Results of Interview

Regarding how professional training influences teachers' pedagogic performance, the results of the interview revealed that some of the qualified teachers stated that they were recruited with Bachelor or Master in English and had taught for years before being trained. During those years of teaching (before training), they had difficulties managing their EFL classroom. Some stated that it was difficult for them to prepare a coherent lesson plan. The participants disclosed difficulties related to error correction, appropriate feedback, methods of assessment and discipline problems.

Concerning questions related to students' poor academic achievements, the opinion of the trained teachers and the untrained teachers differ. Trained teachers have attributed students' poor academic performances to the teachers themselves. They believe that since it is a well-known fact that many Beninese students shy away from the English language, EFL teachers are the ones to motivate and draw learners' attention and interest to loving the language through appropriate and effective techniques. One of the trained teachers said that many unqualified teachers do not know how to conduct and present an English lesson. Some do not even prepare their lesson, and it is not surprising to see untrained teachers in a class use lesson notes of former students of the class they are currently teaching as their lesson plans. Many untrained teachers believe that the poor performance of students should not be seen as the result of poorly qualified teachers. To them, students themselves and the kind of environment in which they grow constitute a major obstacle to their academic achievements. Others have mentioned the low salary income of teachers as the reason why they do not bother to improve their teaching quality. Nevertheless, a major proportion of the interviewed teachers reveal that it is clear that there is a great difference in the pedagogic performance of trained teachers and untrained teachers. That is why it is important to mention that one of the teachers who started his teaching career before his professional training made some revelations that he regrets today. He said:

> I used to beat students; one day, I was beating a student for not having learnt the different parts of the body when he suddenly fell down lifeless. Despite my effort to make him recovered, we were obliged to go to hospital. Fortunately, he recovered few minutes later at hospital but they sent me at the police station because the learner's parents have lodged a complaint against me. I spent three months in prison. It was in May and because of his hospitalization, he was not able to take part in the last examination of the school year. Yet, he didn't get his average in the first semester; so,

> repeated the year. The following year I paid for training but the learner gave up going to school and started farming with his parents in the village. In the first moments I didn't care about the situation but during my training I have been told my sins. Since the training then, I always feel responsible [for dropping out of that student's school system, and] I deeply regret my deed.

The revelation made by this teacher is just one of the proofs of the importance of teachers' training

4.2. Results of the Class Observation

The class has helped in observing and noting significant differences between a trained and untrained teacher in a real teaching/learning context.

4.2.1. Class Observation A

The observation was carried out in the intermediate class. The lesson for the day was also on a vocabulary activity regarding classroom objects. To teach vocabulary on the classroom object, the teacher had asked students to draw and colour the different classroom objects in their copy-book before coming to class. So during the lesson, all the learners had the pictures in their copy-book, and it was very easy for them to write the correct word related to each object under them as the teacher did. Then it was very easy for the whole class to deal with the instructions (listen and repeat - match the words in the box with the picture) without speaking French. On the contrary, the untrained teacher contented himself by giving the names of the different objects from French to English or English to French. Also, the teacher was not confident in what he was teaching and seemed to beat around the bush. It is important to state that the large size of learners makes it difficult for successful class management. That situation is unbearable for both the learners and influences the teachers' work and performance.

4.2.2. Class Observation B

This class observation was conducted in two beginner classes. One with a trained teacher and the other with an untrained teacher. The two teachers had a lesson on the same topic, which was "Games and Sports". The untrained teacher followed the students' book instructions below

a- Listen and repeat

b- Match the pictures below with the words from the box

Through these instructions, the teacher asks to teach vocabulary words related to games with pictures at hand. The teacher should go beyond these pictures and teach more game words related to the learners' interests. These pictures should also be coloured to motivate the learners better. The observation is that learners confused the

pictures because they did not master the game or could not identify them correctly in the pictures. The unqualified teacher tried to explain these pictures in French to go faster while the qualified teacher was well prepared with colourful and visible pictures.

4.2.3. *Class Observation C*

This class observation was carried out in two advanced classes. The first teacher (trained) had a good mastery of the various techniques to employ in teaching. This teacher has made use of visual aids to present a topic on "Lifestyles and Health". Afterwards he conducted a brainstorming activity by asking a series of questions about students' understanding of the word lifestyle and health. Students attempted to answer these questions in English, and the teacher used the indirect error correction to repair wrong pronunciation and vocabulary. It is important to state that the teacher here was well dressed and seemed to have a healthy relationship with individual students, making the lesson more lively and fun. However, with the second teacher (untrained), the students were not quite interested in the lesson and many did not have the required documents. In brief, the teacher presented the topic of the day and asked students to answer questions on a text without any proper warming up or brainstorming activity. The lesson was mostly in the student's second language (French). In this particular class, there is one student who writes the date on the board all the time, another who recalls the last lesson, and yet another who answers questions because these students work well in English.

5. Discussion

This part of the research is organised around the research questions and the results of the study.

5.1. *Impact of Professional Training on Students' Academic and Teachers' Pedagogic Performance in English as a Foreign Language*

The findings of this study have proved that qualified and trained teachers positively influence EFL students' performance. Qualified teacher master the teaching job, which is shown through the way they conduct their lessons. Their answers to practical questions also confirmed this assumption: qualified teachers have good performance. On the contrary, almost all the untrained teachers, who are mostly part-time teachers, have no experience with the teaching requirements. Some of them come to school without preparation; once in the classrooms, they do not know what to do, invent activities, tell stories, and sing all the time. In addition, it is observed that during group work activities, some teachers sit at their desk reading or checking their mobile phones. Others sit down somewhere in the classroom till the end of their lesson period allowing students to speak their native languages. Consequently, the

weakest students do not do anything and leave the brilliant ones to work for them since the answers are for the whole group. In addition, some teachers do not create a good working atmosphere in the class and terrorize students all the time. Besides, punishing students by giving very difficult exercises has never been a good way of ensuring discipline. Good teachers congratulate and encourage good answers. Humiliating students who give incomplete or wrong answers and letting them be laughed at by their classmates is quite common among untrained teachers. From the teachers' interviews and also the class observation, it is clear that there is a great difference between a trained and an untrained teacher. Trained teachers have a good command of their course content and learners, and this helps improve their performance and confidence. Also, a teacher who ensures a conducive environment for students to learn will obviously produce better results than the one who is hostile and, in a hurry, to finish the curriculum. In addition, EFL students lack motivation to learn the target language because their individual needs and interests are not considered. An EFL learner could not be interested in the learning if it does not consider her interest and need. So EFL teachers should know their students and their environment to be helpful. During the teaching session, EFL teachers must avoid being harsh. They must create a pleasant climate to arouse learners' creativity and participation besides, little humour is preferable to harshness. Trained teachers employ various teaching techniques and materials to impact their learners. Findings have shown that many untrained teachers are much more interested in finishing school programs. As mentioned by the interviewees, poor teaching quality have been attributed to the low salary income of teachers, which makes them not to put in extra effort to improve their quality of teaching. This relates to findings of Hanushek and Rivkin (2007) who concludes that salary and working condition affect the quality of instruction in the classroom. Teachers do not benefit from some advantages and large bonuses that workers are given in many other domains. Jobs requiring much lesser qualification than theirs offer a better salary than teaching. Besides, the teaching profession is not given respect, recognition, and compensation. No other profession demands so much and receives so little in financial compensation, which causes frustration and negatively affects students' academic achievements. With this fact, an effort to save education in general and EFL teachers' personalities should be undertaken.

6. Pedagogical Implications

Teaching is an art and can be refined by training and practice. Teachers' professional training is important because during the initial training period, teachers are taught not only the psychology of learners but also basic teaching theories. The first implication of this research work is that secondary school education is suffering from qualified staff. There are very few qualified teachers of English in Beninese

secondary schools. The present study suggests a significant difference between the competences of trained teachers and untrained ones regarding teaching English language at secondary level. The study implies that teachers' knowledge about the subject to be taught certainly affects their teaching attitude and the students' performance. Teachers are vital in determining the students' achievement. Achievement tests can be used to evaluate teaching programs. Another pedagogical implication is that all the non-trained teachers (most the part time teachers) express their desire to be trained because they have mastered the difference between how they deal with students and how qualified teachers do but are sometimes discouraged due to the poor salary income of teachers.

7. Recommendations and Conclusion

There is a need for government and educational authorities to organize in-service and periodical training sessions for EFL teachers. This training sessions will firstly, enable them get updated with current trends in the field of language teaching and secondly, enable them have a better idea about the basic factors involved in language teaching like the role of student's motivation, age and aptitude. The government should also recruit more pedagogical advisers. It will enable them to visit more frequently our secondary schools to get information about teachers' difficulties. They should also make effective the pedagogical meetings inside each school and those which gather teachers from various schools directed by the educational advisers. In addition, at the beginning of each school year in Benin, there is a one-day retreat that brings together all the country's teachers. This is a meeting during which teachers from the same department meet and share views on a theme for reflection given by the authorities. The authorities can base these themes on knowledge of adolescent and child psycho-pedagogy to refresh the training in the minds of the teachers. Finally, Teachers need to be equipped with suitable strategies and techniques to succeed in their different activities. Among this equipment, the government is recommended to set up English language laboratories and libraries with updated books, especially the student's books and teacher guides. That will help teachers and students improve their knowledge in EFL and in the teaching and learning of the English language in general.

This research work has studied the impact of teachers' professional training on students' academic achievement in EFL. It explores the importance of teachers' training program and how it influences their teaching competence and their learner's performances in EFL. Adopting a qualitative research method and research instruments, which are class observation and interviews, the main findings of this study have indicated that teachers' training is important to influence quality teaching and learning. Many Beninese EFL teachers are professionally untrained, contributing to students' poor academic performance. This is because untrained teachers are

inexperienced, whereas trained teachers use the appropriate techniques to teach and understand their learners' psychology. The availability of qualified teachers will result in better learning outcomes. In short, government and educational authorities have been recommended to organise in-service training programs for teachers to improve their quality of teaching. Further research could be carried out on pre-service teacher's view on the quality of the training programs they receive.

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