

# Effect of Students' Feedback on Teachers' Instructional Practices of EFL Student Teachers

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**Abstract** Pupils are real critics of their teachers. They can critically differentiate between the desirable and undesirable behaviours of their teachers in the classroom situation. It is also necessary from the psychological point of view, since the teachers are trained to teach students. Thus feedback from students can bring improvement in competence level of teachers. This study is an attempt to evaluate the effects of student feedback in developing teaching skills and reflective practices among EFL student teachers. The study was conducted on 18 EFL student-teachers who were enrolled in the Diploma of English Language teaching in elementary schools At King Abdulaziz University, one of the reputed educational pioneers of the Saudi education, using report cards. The paper explores the feedback on the learners' perception of the teaching-learning environment and methods of EFL/ESL teaching in classrooms. In order to create a high-performance learning environment in EFL/ESL classrooms, the students and the teacher have to be accountable to one another in both cases whether English is taught as a second or a foreign language. The trust created in such an environment will allow us to ask and answer the hard questions -- "How am I doing as your teacher?"

**Keywords** Feedback, Students Teachers, Reflection, EFL

## 1. Introduction

A wondrous feature of life is that we humans differ from one another, and, despite the homogenization of the world, our differences show no sign of declining, indeed, the opposite is the case. Humans evolved to live in small groups, with similar experiences from one day to the next and from one generalization to the next[13]. With this transfer of experiences from one age to the next, a story relevant to such theory documented[12] as the author narrated "One day a young girl was watching her mother cooking a roast of beef. Just before the mother put the roast in the pot, she cut a slice off the end. The ever observant daughter asked her mother why she had done that, and the mother responded that her grandmother had always done it. Later that same afternoon, the mother was curious, so she called her mother and asked her the same question. Her mother, the child's grandmother, said that in her day she had to trim the roasts because they were usually too big for a regular pot!. He claimed that this story is relevant for language teachers in that teaching without any reflection, such as the non-reflecting child's mother when dealing with the routine of cutting the slice off the roast each time before she put it in the pot, shows that experience is not enough for effective teaching, for do we not learn much from

experience alone as much we learn from reflecting on that experience[12]. It is noted that teachers who do not bother to reflect on their work become slaves to routine and their actions are guided mostly by impulse, tradition, and authority rather than by informed decision making. This kind of reflection can take many forms and adopt different procedures and consult a variety of resources[11]. Teaching experience should be combined with the many feedback teachers can collect from these sources as this effort will lead them to grow, develop, and be aware of their professional development needs. One of the most effective ways for teachers to enhance their instructional practices in and outside the classroom is to engage in reflective teaching and learning through the eyes and minds of their students' feedback. This study focuses on the effect of student's feedback on teachers' instructional practices of EFL student teachers during their pre-service teaching.

## 2. Background of the Study

The aim of this study was to conceptualize and identify the main focus of EFL students' feedback in terms of the teaching performance of their teachers and the effect of these feedback releases on teachers' instructional practices. The study presents a description of students' comments and feedback based on a teacher report card that was distributed by pre-service teachers to their students during their internship. Pre-service teachers documented their students' feedback and reflections on many aspects of the classroom

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such as the general atmosphere of the teaching procedure, the best practices performed by the teacher, their knowledge learning preference language-wise, any hoped improvements in terms of teaching, and behavioural traits of the teacher. The data in the report card were driven from EFL primary school students (5 and 6 graders) and analysed by pre-service EFL teachers who still students were obtaining their diploma in teaching EFL to primary students at King ABDULAZIZ University in Jeddah. The report card was thematically organized into simple questions that were translated into Arabic to facilitate an easy and fast comprehension among young learners.

### 3. Importance of the Study

This study invites teachers in general and EFL/ESL teachers to think critically about the craft of teaching. Asian teachers have time to think, but what do they think about?[29], and much of the time they think about the lessons they teach, they plan lessons, share plans with one another, get critiques, attend workshops, and observe other teachers teaching[40]. Adding to these channels of learning, using students' feedback will guarantee teaching enhancement. This study will also try to entrench the attitude which says that we are not copycats: teachers should develop their own teaching performance based on the teaching context they are engaged in. New teachers should rethink their assigned classrooms as environment where they must do their best with support from colleagues and feedback from their students and that's where teacher reflection starts. Data obtained from students helps teachers become more confident in their actions, reflect critically on all aspects of their instructional practices, and develop strategies for improvement and change.

### 4. Theoretical Background

Origins of reflective students' feedback on their teachers' performance Reflective language teaching involves teachers gathering data about their teaching and using this information enhance their instructional practices and improve the dynamic of their classrooms. Many years ago, teachers were called to take reflective action that entails active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further consequences to which it leads[11]. Language education embraced reflective teaching later than other areas within education and it is now considered an essential part of many language teacher education programs worldwide. Pennington first proposed a general reflective/developmental orientation for language teachers as a means for improving classroom processes and outcomes, and developing confident, self-motivated teachers and learners [31]. She described reflections for language teachers generally as deliberating on experience, and that of mirroring experience. It is not what the teacher gets and where s/he gets

it, it is the analysis; feedback and adaptation the teacher carry out as an ongoing cycle in the classroom. Teachers should collect data about their teaching, examine these data and use them as basis for critical reflection about their teaching practices and as sources for future improvements and corrective actions. In addition a language teacher is considered to be reflective when he or she seeks answers to the following questions[12]:

1) What is he/she doing in the classroom (method)?

2) Why is he/she doing this (reason)?

3) What is the result?

4) Will he/she change anything based on the information gathered from answering the first two questions (justification)?

There are a number of procedures teachers can choose to facilitate this reflection over the course of their pre-service teaching period. Each procedure can be used alone or in combination with other procedures depending on the situation. Much of the discussion of reflective teaching thus far assumes a positive relationship between reflective language teaching and teacher enhanced performance, in other words, there is a positive relationship between the feedback received from students and the teacher improved instructional practices in the classroom.

#### 4.1. Levels of Reflection by Teachers

Reflections by teachers have been classified into three types or moments: the first type is called Reflection-in-action[38],[39] and happens during the event such as classroom teaching. The second type is called Reflection-on-action and it involves thinking about the event after it has happened and thinking back on what was done to discover how knowing-in-action may have contributed to an unexpected action[15]. Here teachers reflect on their classes after they have finished. The third type is called Reflection-for-action[21]. This last moment is the desired outcome of both previous types of reflection; it is what guides the teacher for future actions. The feedback students provide about the teacher's teaching can be valuable in helping the teacher improve and refine his/her teaching.

#### 4.2. Approaches to Student Feedback

A huge mass of research put into consideration the student contribution to maintaining and enhancing instructional performance of their teachers and it takes a variety of feedback processes drawing on student perceptions of their teacher's skills in teaching. Such contributions shall be valued as they are considered part of a broader quality assurance of education.

Clearly considerable effort and resources are put into collecting students' views on their educational experiences. The most common methods are questionnaire survey; other methods include focus groups and use of electronic communication. Regardless of the method and resource, the feedback consequences are designed to focus on wide aspects of teaching and peripherally on the supporting

environment for learning. Feedback is more likely, for example, to be asked about the teachers' performance as well as about the kinds of support provided in classroom discussions where students' learning experiences are likely to be addressed. Consequently, students can contribute highly thus guiding their teachers to enhance their performance for the long term.

A study at the University of Glasgow[30] has focused primarily on how student feedback contributes directly to improving the quality of learning and teaching. Emphasis in the feedback collected by the institutions in this study is more on teaching than on students' learning experiences. Their report noted that it is clear that most student feedback focuses on teaching as a service and even that often narrowly defined as capacity to lecture in an interesting (and entertaining) way. Feedback mechanisms less frequently ask students about things to do with learning and academic attainment. The need for student surveys which are intended to improve student learning, to focus on research into student learning itself rather than on teachers' lecturing performance [33]. Students will tend to provide answers only to the questions they are asked and, as these are relatively unsophisticated in both definitions of teaching and in opportunities for students to review their own learning strategies, this constrains the action that might be taken as a consequence. 'Teaching' can be interpreted as making a relatively small contribution to students' learning; other services are important as well as the students' own motivation[33].

Is students' learning enhanced when changes are made as a result of student feedback? This is the nub of teacher development – how student feedback can make a difference not just to course but also to the quality of student's own learning. It has to be said that while there is plenty of student feedback on a range of matters, supporting evidence that students' subsequent learning is enhanced is sparse.

#### 4.3. Why are We Seeking Teacher's Improvements?

In terms of evaluating teaching quality, it is first necessary to define what is meant by "good" teaching. Individuals may hold different conceptions of what good teaching actually is. In the literature relating to student learning, key commentators have, in recent years, defined good teaching as that which actively facilitates student learning (through a focus on conceptual change) as opposed to the (possibly stereotyped) didactic "chalk and talk" transmission of information[2],[32],[34].

There is general agreement that teaching is a multidimensional construct, that is, that it is made up of multiple factors. Seven important factors have been identified[4], namely; subject matter mastery, curriculum development, course design, delivery of instruction, availability to students and administrative requirements. On the other hand, nine dimensions of effective teaching have identified; learning/value, instructor enthusiasm, group interaction, individual rapport, organization/clarity, breadth

of coverage, examinations/grading, assignments/readings, and workload/difficulty[26]. Moreover, effective teachers [37]:

- treat students with respect and caring
- provide the relevance of information to be learned
- use active, hands-on student learning
- vary their instructional modes
- provide frequent feedback to students on their performance
- offer real-world, practical examples
- draw inferences from models and use analogies
- provide clear expectations for assignments
- create a class environment which is comfortable for students
- communicate to the level of their students
- present themselves in class as "real people"
- use feedback from students and others to assess and improve their teaching
- reflect on their own classroom performance in order to improve it

#### 4.4. Why are We Seeking Students' Feedback?

Student's evaluation of teaching (SET) is a very common source used in the evaluation of teaching. However, students are not the only sources from which feedback may be obtained on teaching and course quality. Colleagues (through peer observation, review of curricula, etc), department heads, self-reflection, assessment performance, attendance, comparison with other courses or other institutions, etc., are all valuable and an integrated approach is necessary for a complete and detailed picture. Importantly, it should be remembered that students are indeed not competent to evaluate teaching roles such as those involving course design (objectives, content, methods and assessment), delivery methods or grading practice in assessment.

However, in terms of the quality of the delivery of instruction, it is generally agreed in the literature that only students are in a position to provide feedback[8],[6],[16].

Where questionnaires are used, items may be open-ended in nature and thus gather more qualitative data or may be closed-ended and thus aim at collecting more quantitative-type data focused on specific, pre-determined issues. In terms of the report card used in this study, it is meant to be an informal tool away from the district authorities and controlled systematic data collection.

## 5. Methodology

The study involved a descriptive analysis of students feedback obtained from a report card distributed to students in each 17 classrooms where pre-service teachers teach students' individual interpretations with teachers have had an effective role in analysing students' feedback. As the English language in Saudi Arabia is considered to be a foreign language, the present study, aiming to explore, understand, and analyse EFL learners' feedback to provide in-depth

portraits of possible improvements performed by their teachers. Data for the descriptive analysis were collected through a report card that includes the following interview questions:

- Teacher Behaviour

1). What do I do that you appreciate most? Or what do I do that helps you most?

2). What in my behaviour makes you feel valued and welcome in this class?

3). What in my behaviour makes you feel safe in this class?

- Prospective

4). What can I do to make your experience in this class better?

5). What do you wish we would study in here?

6). What do you wish you could do in here to make your learning even better? How would that help?

7). If there were one thing you could change about the way I teach, what would it be?

- Milieu:

8). If there were one thing you could change about this class, what would it be?

9). If there were one thing you could change about this room, what would it be?

10). What do you like most about being in this class?

17 student teachers were given the above questions to distribute among their primary students by the end their internship which lasts for one month as a requirement of obtaining a Diploma of TEFL in Elementary Schools from King ABDULAZIZ University. Questions were emailed to student teachers who made all necessary copies for their young learners. All questions were communicated in the students' mother tongue and the feedback gathered were translated later into English to be presented in a form of a descriptive report of students' feedback on their instructional practices.

### 5.1. The Administration of Students Feedback Procedure

Timing: It may seem logical to ask students for their feedback after they have had the opportunity to experience the complete internship period with their pre-service teachers. As students were not familiar with the pre-service teacher from the beginning of the semester, it was assumed that they would be able to form enough feedback and sufficient ideas about the teacher. It was possible to delay the report card till the end of the semester, but the pre-service teachers would have to leave schools a month ahead of the final exams and it was possible that young learners simply forget their experience with their pre-service teachers once they go are taught again by their original teachers.

### 5.2. Interpretative Analysis of Students' Feedback

Since questions were given during the class time, If question are issued during class time, high return rate of feedback was achieved. Some issues may arise in terms of attendance rate during the day of distributing the report card. Another issue which arises here is whether students may feel

pressured into providing feedback in a class-type situation. There is an ethical issue as to whether students should be required to contribute feedback in this manner[35]. In a class situation, students might feel under pressure to participate in the process, but the guidelines of many professional bodies stipulate that participants should be able to withdraw at any time. It will be important for institutions to clarify whether the collection of feedback is a formal part of the teaching-learning process or whether it is simply tantamount to institutional research.

Based on the pupils' responses gathered in this study, several issues relating to teacher performance and learning improvement strategies were exposed. As mentioned in earlier sections of this study, pupils were asked different questions regarding their learning experiences, teacher input and their learning environments. These issues were answered by asking different questions regarding the ways to improve the learning sessions, things to include in the study curriculum, teacher's valued behaviours, teachers behaviours that made the pupils feel safe (among other issues). However, the responses gathered from the different classes sampled reinforced a few common characteristics of the student learning experience (which will be highlighted in subsequent sections of this study section). Moreover, most of the pupils emphasized the same observations, though others failed to comprehend the nature of the research question.

When the pupils were asked to highlight strategies that can be adopted to improve their learning sessions, emphasis was given to the pupils learning environment and the role of the teacher in facilitating the realization of a conducive environment for learning. Focusing on the role of the teacher in facilitating the realization of a conducive learning environment, pupils observed that the teacher could play a huge role in silencing other pupils who make noise in class. Noise was identified as a major distracter to the pupils learning environment and since pupils had little power to silence one another, they proposed that the teacher should do the job.

Many scholars have researched the issue of noisemaking on student performance and their findings generally show that noisemaking has a negative effect on student performance[28]. The negative effects of noise on children fall into three categories[10]: motivational, cognitive, and physiological. Then there is the physiological effect of noise on student performance which has a lot to do with their blood pressure because pupils who are not exposed to noise have a lower blood pressure than pupils who are exposed to noise[10]. A more stretched implication of noisemaking on student performance describes that children who are continually exposed to noise run a higher risk of developing cardiovascular problems in the future[5].

Poor motivation among pupils is noted as another effect of noise in the classroom[24]. Pupils who find noisemaking irritable often feel help less at the situation and they therefore suffer low morale when learning. Research findings suggest that exposure to uncontrollable noise may make children more vulnerable to learned helplessness. Learned

helplessness means that the individual learns that the outcomes of its behaviour are independent of the actions of the individual [19]. From those findings, pupils from class A and B who were sampled in this study expressed the researcher's observation. From their responses, clearly, the pupils were frustrated by the high levels of noise in the classroom. More so, pupils who tried to put more effort at learning registered this frustration. Often, pupils who experience such challenges are demoralized by the noisy learning environment and almost like wildfire; the negative attitude associated with noisemaking can quickly spread to pupils who did not wish to make noise in the first place. Comprehensively, a demoralizing environment is created [14].

Finally, National Research Council[27] explains that noisemaking has a negative effect on student cognitive development because issues such as memory, attention, perception, and academic achievement are limited by increased levels of noise. The effect of noise on student performance has been researched using young populations and old populations alike but the researches show a paralleled outcome. Comprehensively, noise does not pose a significant problem to the performance of the short-term memory but if the pupils are supposed to undertake tasks that need special attention, noise becomes a big challenge[20]. Considering most of the pupils sampled in the study were first-time English learners, the task of learning English required careful attention and noise was a major deterrent. Many found it difficult to concentrate.

Noise was the only environmental issue identified by the pupils that touched on the teacher's role of controlling the learning environment. However, controlling noise levels is just one aspect of the teacher's role of controlling the learning environment. Nonetheless, the pupils were not wrong to petition the teacher to help in reducing noise in the classroom because teachers have the necessary tools for doing so. For instance, a teacher could punish noisemaking pupils or formulate new rules and policies that were against noisemaking. These actions would act as a deterrent to noisemaking.

Still under the strategies that could be adopted to improve learning sessions, the pupils identified that if the teacher checked up on the pupils more often, the learning process would be more productive. The pupils seemed concerned about the probability of being left behind while other pupils went on with studies. Here, there would be a lack of homogeneity in the classroom if some pupils lagged behind while others continued with their studies. Often, weak pupils would manifest this frustration because learners have different levels of understandability[28]. Therefore, it is normal for some pupils to lag behind while others continue with their studies.

For teachers, it is important for teachers to acknowledge the existence of weak pupils and assist them to catch up with the rest of the class and that most of the time, student motivation is the first causality of learning if the teachers fail to check up on weak students[33]. Students are often

motivated if they feel they are keeping up with the rest of the class. However, pupils who feel like they are not at par with other classmates feel frustrated, thereby decreasing their motivation for learning. Regarding high levels of school dropouts among pupils, some may give up the learning process altogether if they feel they are not getting anything out of it[36]. Poor performance in schoolwork is also associated with increased frustration in learning especially if the teachers do not pay attention to pupils. It is the desire of most teachers and learning institutions to realize good results from their pupils and it is therefore important for teachers to check up on their pupils. However, there are other times when the failure to check up on the pupils may not yield grave effects. For instance, when the pupils turn to their fellow pupils to help them in their academic work, the effects of teachers failing to check up on weak pupils may be minimized because strong pupils will help weak pupils to catch up with the rest of the class[28]. Often, this is not a good precedent because it is the sole responsibility of the teachers to ensure all pupils understand the learning tasks. Though other pupils may substitute the teacher's efforts, they cannot do it as well as the teacher would. In addition, it is observed that few pupils would approach other pupils to help them with their class tasks[28]. Here, many pupils become passive and lose concentration in the learning process.

Another attribute that was identified by the pupils as crucial to improving learning sessions was the need to repeat important areas of learning (which the pupils did not understand). However, it is crucial to point out that though it is the teacher's responsibility to highlight important areas of learning (which are not understood); it is the pupils' responsibility to tell the teacher that they have not understood a specific section of the learning task. However, several researchers have classified repetition and memorization as redundant learning techniques which have traditionally not yielded good results in learning[28]. This is an interesting observation because this observation contradicts the pupils' suggestion to repeat important areas of learning. Nonetheless, other scholars observe that repetition is a good study practice. They identify different learning tasks such as touch typing, piano playing and similar tasks as key areas of learning which depend on repetition as their main basis for success[36]. Repetition to be like a path in the forest where a person experiences so many hurdles trying to create it and if he does not pass through the same path repeatedly, it quickly disappears[17]. This example can be equated to the learning experience and more so, in the learning of a new language. Pupils normally experience many challenges trying to learn a new language and though they may understand the new language at first, it is important for the teacher to repeat the learned knowledge so that it is properly grasped. To reinforce this observation, "There must be enough repetition for a beginner learner (A beginner learner must start by repeating a limited amount of material many times repeatedly) and gradually, less and less repetitions will be necessary to master new skills and new

knowledge”[22]. This observation is especially useful in the context of this study because the sample population was comprised of beginner learners who need to grasp new knowledge through repetition.

The role of the teacher in facilitating repetition is considered as a critical function of learning[1]. More so, teachers are advised to be wary of the fact that as the learning process progresses the learning content becomes more complex and somewhere along the learning path of learning; pupils will start battling with the learning process. Pupils are said to experience a difficult learning experience if the teachers do not repeat important aspects of the learning process[28].

The case of a Greek wrestler in the sixth century who carried a calf around the stadium repetitively, even when the calf grew to be a cow is always emphasized[22]. Though the calf grew heavier, it was surprising that the wrestler was still able to carry it around the stadium. Essentially, repetitively carrying the calf had a permanent effect on the wrestler because he was able to cope with the growing task of carrying the calf around the stadium every day. Similarly, this example can be used to understand the student learning process. The transition of the calf to a cow represents the transition from easy learning tasks to complex learning tasks. Equally, the wrestler’s ability to cope with the task of carrying the cow around the stadium can be equated to the ability of pupils to cope with complex learning tasks. However, the common attribute in the two scenarios is the presence of repetition. Repetition is therefore seen as the key to coping with difficult learning tasks. From the above examples, it is important for teachers to realize that repetition is an important aspect of learning especially for beginners. More so, this teaching tool is important for teachers who are teaching English as a second language because the student composition is characterized by raw studies of English.

In the study, pupils also identified that the teacher should use English more often during class sessions so that the learning experience is more fruitful. This request was identified probably because the pupils wanted more practical use of English as opposed to theoretical and book-based learning. Using English in the practical learning setup facilitates the easy learning of important aspects of English such as pronunciation (which pupils would have otherwise not learned if they did not hear someone speak the language). More so, language learning involves many practical teaching tools, which could easily be mastered through emulation. The teacher would therefore easily guide the pupils to learn how English is spoken and the pupils would emulate the teacher.

Audibility was also identified as an important inclusion to the improvement of the learning session because most of the pupils felt that they would understand what was taught more clearly if the teacher was audible. This observation is also highlighted in other sections of the questionnaire, and it was a common observation for most of the pupils sampled. Audibility studies among learners have mainly been undertaken on adult learners and children with special needs

because these learner groups are known to have hearing problems[25]. Few studies show the effect of audibility on student performance among young learners. Nonetheless, several researchers have observed that audible teachers are likely to have a more profound impact on their student’s learning process as opposed to inaudible teachers[23]. Audibility helps pupils to understand the learning tasks more clearly. If the teacher mumbles words or is not audible enough, there is bound to be some miscommunication in the learning process. Here, the desired learning outcomes will not be realized.

The pupils sampled had an important point to voice when they mentioned the issue of audibility because of the nature of their learning activities. Learning another language requires a lot of attention among the learners and the teachers but most importantly, there needs to be clear communication between the two groups because the foundation for future learning processes is laid here. This observation is very sensitive to the context of this study because the teacher and the pupils do not have a common language. An interpreter is used to translate what the pupils learn into their second language because the teacher cannot speak the student’s first language. This situation proves to be a problematic issue in learning a second language because it would be easier if the teacher and the pupils had another common language, which would be easily referenced if there were any miscommunication between the pupils and the teacher.

A new language is a tricky affair to master if pupils do not grasp the foundation of the new language. More so, unlike other learning courses, language bears a lot of importance to pronunciation so that instances of miscommunication do not occur. For instance, there are certain English words, which sound the same but do not have the same meanings. For instance, “hymn” and “him” sound alike but they do not have the same meaning. If the teacher is not audible, pupils may fail to grasp the necessary knowledge to deepen their linguistic prowess. Teachers therefore have to be audible to make the communication process more effective.

Increasing class activities was also identified as an important strategy to the improvement of learning sessions. Most of the classes sampled identified that this aspect of learning was vital to increasing student participation in the class because it made the learning process to be livelier. Including student activities in the learning process has been an age-old learning methodology used by many teachers to increase student participation. There are different forms of learning that can be designed into activities that encompass student participation. Different teachers also adopt different activities depending on their learning curriculums.

Several researchers have identified that the inclusion of learning activities is a break from the monotony of conventional classroom learning[28]. Including learning activities in the learning curriculum has also been equated to play-based learning. The importance of this analysis in learning English as a second language is crucial because it identifies how pupils explore and make sense of the English language. Pupils who undergo some form of learning

activities have a better prowess at using different parts of their brains. Similarly, they have a better ability to solve linguistic problems[18]. It is also understood that the inclusion of more learning activities in the curriculum improves the social and physical conditions that characterize the learning process, but most importantly, it improves the understanding of language and symbols used in the English language[28].

Unlike conventional learning activities, which use only a few senses, physical learning activities are known to use more senses. This observation makes practical learning superior to other learning methodologies (but it does not mean that it can stand by itself). This analogy can be used to represent the real world, which we understand through our conceptualization of the sounds, sights, smell and the taste of the things that make up our world. It would be impossible to make sense of the world if we do not use all of our senses. For instance, if we knew nothing of our world and lost the ability to see or hear, but we had the ability to touch, our experiences would not be holistic. More so, this analogy would be factual if we never had a feeling of how the real world is at first (if our experiences of the world were raw). Emphasis should therefore be given to the fact that our experiences of the world are untested.

Similar to the above analysis, the pupils' experiences when they are learning the English language could be termed as a raw experience. The English language is therefore an unexplored and untested world, which they have to know and understand. Therefore, pupils should be empowered with the ability to explore this world using all their senses. Theoretical learning only engages a few of the senses used in learning and teachers should realize that this form of learning is limited. Explicitly, this form of learning is limited in perception and it does not conceptualize the holistic perspective of learning[28]. However, including learning activities in the curriculum engages other senses of learning and pupils are able to get a holistic understanding of the English language. Interestingly, this form of learning is more engaging and interesting when compared to conventional forms of learning. Nonetheless, Learning activities should be implemented together with other forms of learning to make the entire experience holistic[7].

When the pupils were asked to identify things that they would wish to study, they strongly felt that the teacher should focus on teaching things that were important to the learning experience. Perhaps this view was informed by the fact that the pupils sought relevance in the information taught. Since the learning curriculum was wide, the pupils felt that the teacher should emphasize on important issues to cover in the curriculum. For instance, some pupils identified social conversations in social places like restaurants, hospitals and airports as important areas of language study. The pupils wished for the teacher to teach them how to converse in such type of environments, perhaps because they felt that such environments related to their daily lives.

The quest for relevancy in the learning process is not a new phenomenon in language studies. This characteristic has

been reported among adult learners because adult learners are known to seek information, which relate to their personal and professional lives. Teaching relevant information to the learners is a strategy for improving their motivation because pupils who are taught irrelevant information tend to register a strong sense of demoralization in learning[41]. It is therefore vital for teachers to identify specific areas of the learning curriculum, which are highly relevant to the pupils' environment and reinforce such topics. This action will improve the learning process.

Regarding the important things to study, pupils also identified important language rules such as grammar and diction, to be some of the important areas of study that they wished the teacher would focus on. The pupils also wished to learn new words as an important filed of language learning. These responses act as guidance to the perception of pupils regarding the important areas of language learning. Therefore, it is crucial to build on these language areas as important areas of relevance to the student's learning experience. It is also equally important for teachers to include other important areas of study that maybe relevant to their students' lives.

When the pupils were asked to identify areas that would improve their learning environment, most of them felt that it was important to establish a specialized library for English learning. The pupils also said that these labs should have computers to facilitate the learning process.

This was an interesting observation because it highlighted the importance of using information technology tools in improving the learning process. It is also important to say that different scholars have highlighted the use of IT tools in the learning process by showing its use in making the learning process more efficient[9]. In addition, the use of computers in the learning environment is set to introduce new learning tools, which may be of importance to the English learners. Here, pupils will have access to unlimited learning tools such as online dictionaries (and the likes) that they may use to improve the learning process. It is also crucial to highlight the advantages of the internet in improving the learner's educational experience because of the virtual advantage computers bring to the learning environment. For instance, since language learning is mainly a practical venture, the pupils can build an online community where they can practice their newly acquired language skills. For instance, pupils can chat with one another and improve their learning experience. Furthermore, computers can correct any language mistake that the pupils make through existing computer software like Microsoft word. It is therefore important for teachers to realize the potential of virtual learning in improving the learning experience because information technology tools can significantly improve the efficiency of the learning process.

Still on the question of improving the learning environment, the pupils identified that occasionally learning outside the classroom would improve the learning process. Perhaps this observation was informed by the fact that in-house studies were often monotonous and it was

important to break such monotony (occasionally). The pupils also identified that the existing wall painting should be changed because it made some pupils sleepy. Others suggested that the classroom walls should have posters relating to the English language. These observations introduced the use of visual aids in the learning process. Visual aids have been suggested by many educationists as an effective way of improving the learning process because they have a stronger impact on the pupils' understanding. For instance, visual aids improve the student's memory. Teachers are therefore advised to use more visual aids in learning to improve the pupils' learning experience[3].

When the pupils were asked to comment on the teachers' behaviours, which made them feel safe and valued, most of the pupils identified courteous and kind behaviours to be the most valued. For instance, the pupils identified that the teacher's equal treatment of all the pupils made them feel valued. They also noted that warm remarks made by the teacher and the frequent flash of smiles made them feel safe. Other pupils identified speaking in low voices as important characteristics that made them feel safe in the classroom. These recommendations showed that the pupils liked learning in the most non-threatening environment. Implicitly, this observation shows that learning can best occur when the student-teacher relationship is fruitful.

When the pupils were asked to comment on any of the issues they would want to voice in the study, some pupils said that they hoped to use books to improve their handwriting and citation exercises. Others reiterated the establishment of a specialized library for language studies while more wished to get explanations through power point presentations and other forms of visual aids. About 90% of the pupils wished to speak English through the learning process while other pupils identified group work as an important learning tool that should be included in the learning process. The identification of group work was especially an interesting observation, which would obviously improve the student's learning experience. These intrigues defined the pupils' responses.

## 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

This paper shows that pupils are very good critics of their teachers. Similarly, from the responses given in this study we can see that pupils are also very attentive to the underpinnings of their learning experience. Nonetheless, the responses given by the pupils identify specific areas of improvement, which can be analysed to improve the learning experience. These areas concentrate on the teacher's behaviour, the learning environment and learning tools. The pupils have identified important courteous traits among teachers as vital to ensuring the pupils feel safe and confident in the classroom. We can also establish that learning occurs best in the most non-threatening environment possible. Teachers should therefore strive to ensure such an environment prevails. Information technology has also been

identified as an important learning tool that can be used to improve the learning experience. Teachers should therefore strive to include useful learning aids in their teaching process. More so, the use of computers should be encouraged so that pupils benefit from the advantages of virtual learning. Comprehensively, this paper establishes that it is important for the teachers and students to work in an environment that is characterized by trust among all the parties. This trust is essential in building a high-performance learning environment.

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