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REVUE INTERNATIONALE DE LINGUISTIQUE APPLIQUÉE, DE  
LITTÉRATURE et D'ÉDUCATION

(Revue en ligne, imprimée, abstractée, indexée, et à comité de lecture)

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LITTÉRATURE et D'ÉDUCATION

(Revue en ligne, imprimée, abstractée, indexée, et à comité de lecture)

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Enfin, la rubrique des notes critiques fournit aux lecteurs des informations et des réflexions sur les principaux ouvrages récemment parus. Bref, la RILALE, votre nouveau-né, se propose de vous amener sur les océans des débats de haut niveau aux sons et rythmes endiablés de l'éditeur, mais agrémentés par vos diverses contributions. A présent, que la RILALE nous batte son tam-tam !!!

Professeur Léonard A. KOUSSOUHON

## Sommaire

1. EDUCATION AND FREEDOM IN FREDERICK DOUGLASS'S *THE NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS, AN AMERICAN SLAVE*, **Raoul S. AHOUANGANSI** -----1
2. ANALYSE DE QUELQUES NÉOGRAPHISMES PUBLICITAIRES AU BURKINA FASO, Youssof **OUÉDRAOGO** & Béli Mathieu **DAÏLA** ----- 13
3. LANDESKUNDE UND EINHEIMISCHE KULTURELLE ERBEN ALS BEITRAG ZUM ERWERB EINER FREMDSPRACHE: STUDIE ZU DEN LEHRWERKEN *IHR UND WIR PLUS*, **Von Yaovi Antoine HOUNHOUE** ----- 22
4. AUTOFORMATION COGNITIVE COMME DISPOSITIF DE PROFESSIONNALISATION DES ENSEIGNANTS AU BENIN, **Fatahou DJIMA** et **Jean-Claude HOUNMENO** ----- 36
5. AFRICAN AMERICANS' RESPONSIBILITY IN THE USA DEFERRED DREAM OF FULL INTEGRATION A CENTURY AFTER EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION: A DISCURSIVE REVISITATION OF JAMES BALDWIN'S *THE FIRE NEXT TIME* (1963), **Didier KOMBIENI** et **Nassourou IMOROU** ----- 50
6. SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT AND EMPOWERMENT IN CHIMAMANDA N. ADICHIE'S *PURPLE HIBISCUS*, **Laure Clémence CAPO-CHICHI ZANOU**, **Célestin GBAGUIDI** et **M. P. Judith AKOGBETO** ----- 65
7. ACCES A LA TERRE ET AUX INTRANTS AGRICOLES : UNE ETUDE DE CAS AUTOUR DES PETITS EXPLOITANTS DE L'OFFICE DU NIGER AU MALI, **Touré BOUREIMA** et **Fabien AFFO** ----- 79
8. SUPERSTITION AS SEEN THROUGH MARK TWAIN'S *THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER* (1876), **Ferdinand KPOHOUE** ----- 98
9. PROMOTING CITIZEN RESPONSIBILITY AND FLUENCY IN BENINESE EFL CLASSES USING SERVICE LEARNING, **Estelle BANKOLE MINAFLINO**, **Juvenale PATINVOH AGBAYAHOUN** et **Dossou Flavien LANMANTCHION** ----- 110
10. READING OF GHOSTLY APPEARANCES WITH A REVELATION VIEW IN SHAKESPEARE'S *HAMLET* AND *MACBETH*, **Casimir Comlan SOÉDÉ** et **Ibrahim YEKINI** ----- 121
11. ANALYSING IDEOLOGICAL POINT OF VIEW IN BEN AKPONINE-SAMUEL'S *A HOLIDAY TO REMEMBER: A SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL APPROACH*, **Sévérin M. MEHOUE** et **Innocent Sourou KOUTCHADE** ----- 133
12. SPUTTERING DEMOCRACY IN SELECTED ANGLOPHONE AFRICAN FICTION: A THEME ACROSS GENERATIONS, **Théophile HOUNDJO** et **Yélian Constant AGUESSI**----- 148
13. HABITUDES ALIMENTAIRES AU PETIT DEJEUNER DES ECOLIERS ET ELEVES DANS LA MUNICIPALITE DE PARAKOU, **Julien Chambi ATCHADE**, **Alabi AWE** et **Jules SOSSA** - 173

14. VON DER ARMUTSÖKONOMIE IN DEUTSCHLAND: DAS VERBORGENE GESICHT EINER WELTWEIT BLÜHENDEN WIRTSCHAFT IN *SCHAMLAND* VON STEFAN SELKE, **Kouadio Denis SOUANGA** ----- 186
15. LE CORPS-RHETEUR : DE *TERRE D'ÉBENE* A *MISERE DE LA KABYLIE*, **Hyacinthe OUINGNON** ----- 197
16. REFORMES CURRICULAIRES AU BURKINA FASO: PLAIDOYER POUR UN CHANGEMENT DE PARADIGME VERS L'APPROCHE PAR COMPETENCES, **Paulin SOME** ----- 208
17. « DIEU » CHEZ DESCARTES ET KANT : IDEE PURE OU ATTITUDE INTELLECTUELLE COHERENTE ?,**Euloge Franck AKODJETIN** et **Roland TECHOU** ----- 218
18. ANALYSIS OF SPEECH ACTS IN DONALD TRUMP'S ACCEPTANCE SPEECH,**Crépin D. LOKO** ----- 233
19. ANALYZING DISCOURSES OF MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY IN DANIEL MENGARA'S *MEMA* (2003) FROM HALLIDAYAN AND BUTLERIAN PERSPECTIVE,**Ayodele Adebayo ALLAGBÉ** et **Célestin AMOUSSOU** ----- 249
20. THE ROLES OF SONGS IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO EFL BEGINNER LEARNERS: THE CASE OF SOME SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BENIN REPUBLIC, **Ulrich O. Sena HINDÉMÈ**, **Pédro Marius EGOUNLÉTI**, et **Evariste KOTTIN** ----- 281
21. EFFET DES FORMATIONS ECOLE ENTREPRENEURIAT AGRICOLE SUR L'ESPRIT ENTREPRENEURIAL DES PRODUCTEURS: ETUDE DE CAS DES PRODUCTEURS DE SOJA DANS LA COMMUNE DE TCHAOUROU, NORD-EST DU BENIN, **Soulé EL-HADJ IMOROU** et **Martial AFOUDA** ----- 302
22. SOCIAL INTERACTIONS AND INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES AMONG ENGLISH AS FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS: LESSONS FROM TRENDS IN BENIN REPUBLIC, **Arlette J. Viviane HOUNHANOU** et **Codjo Charlemagne FANOU** ----- 319



## THE ROLES OF SONGS IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO EFL BEGINNER LEARNERS: THE CASE OF SOME SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BENIN REPUBLIC

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### Abstract

As an attempt to search for some effective and sustainable solutions to address the issue of English as a Foreign Language beginners' increasing demotivation to learn English, the present research has been designed to examine the roles of songs in teaching English to EFL beginner learners. Literary research on songs has helped to highlight the importance of songs in teaching EFL beginners to develop communicative skills. Data were collected by the means of questionnaire administered to 65 EFL teachers selected randomly. The analysis of the results show that songs are rarely used to develop learners' language skills but for entertaining students. Training EFL teachers on the effective ways to use songs in English classes and providing secondary schools with songs teaching materials has therefore been suggested as two of the vital measures to motivate students to learn English and develop communicative abilities.

**Keywords:** Roles, songs, teaching, EFL beginners

### Résumé

Afin de résoudre durablement les problèmes liés à la démotivation grandissante des apprenants de l'Anglais langue étrangère, la présente étude a été conduite pour examiner le rôle des chansons dans l'enseignement et l'apprentissage de l'anglais, langue étrangère. La revue de littérature relative à l'utilisation des chansons aux cours d'anglais a permis de mettre en exergue leur importance dans développement et la maîtrise des capacités des apprenants à communiquer en anglais. Des données ont été collectées grâce aux questionnaires adressés à 65 enseignants de l'anglais choisis au hasard. L'analyse des résultats indique que les enseignants d'anglais utilisent rarement les chansons pour développer les capacités des élèves à parler l'anglais mais plutôt à des fins ludiques. Il a été donc recommandé que les enseignants d'anglais soient formés à l'utilisation effective des chansons pour motiver les apprenants et leur enseigner les compétences nécessaires pour communiquer.

**Mots-clés:** Rôles, chansons, enseignement, anglais, débutants.

## Introduction

Nowadays, possessing Basic English proficiency has become one of the essential requirements for many students and faculty members worldwide. In the Republic of Benin, there is obviously a positive correlation that the better a person's English ability is, the greater that person's chances for professional employment and promotion prospects are (Gnonlonfoun, 2017). However, despite years of English instruction at schools, it is noticed that many Beninese EFL students fail in communicating in the target language. One of the major reasons is that despite the introduction of the learner-centered approach in the educational system since 1990, a great stress has been put on written assessments rather than communication ability. There seems to be no real communication in English classes and acquiring linguistic knowledge becomes the end instead of the ability to appropriately use the English language. Therefore, with such teaching and learning methods, most Beninese students have fundamental understanding of formulaic phrases, but they are unable or too shy to use them accurately in real life situations.

In these conditions, language learning becomes a hard task, which can sometimes be frustrating and demotivating for EFL learners. According to Grobber (2018:56), teaching English to beginner learners in Benin is sometimes a hard job to perform because of the numerous impediments that the teacher may encounter. For Grobber (2018: 56) "One of the difficulties that teachers face in Beninese secondary schools most of the time the lack of motivation for both EFL teachers and students to teach and learn English language since they are not exposed to hearing and practicing English everywhere and all the time".

To take up this challenge, teachers must constantly have resort to diverse strategies among which songs to foster the learners' motivation to speak English language. "Through songs, EFL teachers can make their students use the target language to carry out creative tasks such as games, debates, dramas, role plays in order to attain the communicative goal of the curriculum" (Larry, 2018:28). Students learn better, when they have the feeling that they are making progress in a classroom atmosphere which facilitates EFL learning.

### 1. Statement of the Problem

A great number of EFL teachers in the Republic of Benin ignore the virtues of songs despite their high potential in boosting teaching and learning languages. They prefer to focus all their teaching on skills-based activities in a less stressful atmosphere. As a result, an increasing number of students are not motivated to learn the English language. Students end their first cycle of secondary school studies without being able to utter a few words of conversation inside the

classrooms or with English speaking people. According to Lanmantchion (2018), "Beninese EFL, instructors teach songs only in December and at the end of the academic year and almost the same songs are taught and sung in almost all schools" (p12). Lo and Fai Li (1998:18), state

Learning English through songs also provides a non-threatening atmosphere for students, who usually are tense when speaking English in a formal classroom setting. There are many advantages in using songs in a classroom through using contemporary popular songs, which are already familiar to teenagers.

It is then important to examine the roles of songs in EFL teaching and learning processes as well as exploring the means to make songs an efficient teaching tool in Beninese secondary education setting.

## **2. Purpose of the Study**

As such, the present study aims at investigating the potentials of songs in motivating EFL learners to speak English in Benin context. This research will explore the Beninese EFL teachers' perceptions of the potentials of songs in EFL classes as well as how they can help EFL teachers to develop their learners' speaking skills and foster more interactions among them.

## **3. Research Questions**

To reach its goal, the present study will answer the following three (3) research questions.

- What factors influence the use of songs in EFL teaching and learning in Benin Republic?
- What are the EFL teachers and learners' perceptions of the impacts of songs on EFL teaching and learning in Beninese secondary schools?
- What are the effective strategies for motivating Beninese EFL beginner students to learn English through songs?

## **4. Significance of the Study**

This study is significant for it reinforces the integration of songs in EFL classes or curriculum. It is also important because it shows EFL teachers that by using songs they can expect to draw obvious benefits from them. For instance, they save them, largely, from some of the time waste related to classroom organization.

This research is worth investigating as far as it makes the government and school authorities aware of the benefits of songs in EFL teaching/learning process in order for them to provide the appropriate materials needed to teach songs.

## 5. Literature Review

This review of literature highlights the theoretical basis for teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language through songs. In this vein, I have also examined the impacts of songs on language skill development in EFL classes.

### 5.1. Enhancing Motivation through the Use of Songs

Language teachers can and should use songs as part of their classroom-teaching repertoire. Songs contain authentic language, are easily obtainable, provide vocabulary, grammar and cultural aspects and are fun for the students. Li Shui Ching and Yu Suet Ping (2000:11), in their article, showed that since they have introduced songs in their teaching, they have found that students are quite interested in singing and listening to songs, which drives them to engage in a more in-depth study about the topic under consideration. According to them:

to evaluate the effectiveness of songs, one should observe the performance of the students while singing. Most students showed interest in singing and they sing and act together. Even the weaker students really enjoy the activities. Students feel a sense of achievement when they are able to learn a song like structure drills; songs give students intensive practice in selected patterns without boredom (p.12)

The lyrics very often are rhymes that make English easier to learn and memorize. When songs are carefully selected and accompanied with suitable activities, they can be very effective tools to enhance students' motivation in learning English as a Foreign Language. According to Grobler (1990:13).

"Learners develop in total through songs because of their sensual awareness through experimentation, selection and interpretation of sound. With active singing, the learner discovers language structures and vocabulary incidentally and spontaneously which carry over to conversation situations".

This means that the value of songs in motivating EFL students to learn English and enhance their 'involvement is widely acknowledged by EFL practitioners. Songs can be used to develop or enhance any aspects of language classes. Songs can be incorporated into many of the teaching techniques used to expose EFL learners to new grammatical forms as well as to reinforce grammatical structures previously learnt.

As for Gugliemino (1986:42), he stated, "*adults sing at religious services, bars, in the shower, and listening to the car radio. Songs have become an integral part of our language experience, and if used in coordination with a language lesson they can be of great value*". People of different professions use Songs in a variety of situations and EFL learners are no exceptions. In fact, to enhance learners' commitment, it is beneficial to allow learners to take part in the selection of songs. Fortunately, with the expanding prevalence of the Internet and specifically the World Wide Web into both the classrooms and lives of students, access to music and lyrics has been made easier.

## 5.2. Theoretical Rationale for Teaching Songs in EFL Classes

Patterns emerge from the literature as to why teachers and researchers find using songs valuable. These patterns include affective reasons, cognitive reasons, and linguistic reasons.

### 5.2.1. Affective Reasons

The Affective Filter Hypothesis is one of five proposed hypotheses developed by Steven Krashen. It is an explanation of how the affective factors relate to language learning. It is particularly appealing to teachers because it provides an explanation to why some learners learn and others do not. Teachers have long recognized the need for students to have a positive attitude about learning. Krashen (1982:75) explained that:

For optimal learning to occur the affective filter must be weak. A weak affective filter means that a positive attitude towards learning is present. If the affective filter is strong the learner will not seek language input, and in turn, not be open for language acquisition. The practical application of the Affective Filter Hypothesis is that teachers must provide a positive atmosphere conducive to language learning. Songs are one method for achieving a weak affective filter and promoting language learning.

With the affective filter Weak, Saricoban and Metin (2000: 72) have found that “songs can develop the four skill areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking”. Eken (1996:46) stated that songs can be used:

- *To present a topic, a language point, lexis, etc.*
- *To practice a language point, lexis, etc.*
- *To focus on common learner errors in a more direct way*
- *To encourage extensive and intensive listening*
- *To stimulate discussion of attitudes and feelings*
- *To encourage creativity and use of imagination*
- *To provide a relaxed classroom atmosphere*
- *To bring variety and fun to learning*

The enjoyment aspect of learning language through songs is directly related to affective factors.

### 5.2.2. Cognitive Reasons

Songs also present opportunities for developing automaticity, which is the main cognitive reason for using them in the classroom. Gatbonton and Segalowitz (1988:473) defined automaticity as “A component of language fluency which involves both knowing what to say and producing language rapidly without pauses”. Using songs can help automatize the language development process. Traditionally, it was believed that automatization would occur through repetitive exercises in a non-

communicative environment. However, the major shift towards the communicative teaching methodology requires that automatization occurs in a different manner. Gatbonton and Segalowitz (1988:476) stated that we must “*place students in an environment in which it is appropriate to use target utterances in a genuinely communicative fashion*”. The nature of songs is fairly repetitive and consistent.

### 5.2.3. Linguistic Reasons

Besides automatization, there is also a linguistic reason for using songs in the classroom. Some songs are excellent examples of colloquial English, that is, the language of informal conversation. A song such as "My Best Was Never Good Enough" by Bruce Springsteen is a prime example of a song that demonstrates colloquial language use. This song is full of phrases like "Every cloud has a silver lining." and "Every dog has his day". Using songs can prepare students for the genuine language they will be faced with.

Finally, two studies, Domoney and Harris (1993: 201) and Little (1993: 87) investigated the prevalence of pop music in the lives of EFL students. Both studies found that:

Music is often the major source of English outside of the classroom. The exposure to authentic English is an important factor in promoting language learning. It relates directly to both the affective filter and automaticity. If students are exposed to songs, which they enjoy, more learning is likely to occur since they may seek out the music outside of the classroom. The repetitive style of songs then helps to promote automatization of colloquial language.

In other words, songs provide good opportunities to both EFL teachers and students to practice English language in different situations. Songs touch the lives of learners, and they are connected to their various interests, needs and everyday experiences. For instance, almost all popular songs are related to the same topic of friendship, love, dream, sorrow, and the rest that is related to common feelings of people. Music can be an efficient motivating and important teaching and learning tool in EFL classes.

### 5.2.4. Use of Songs in Reading, Listening and Speaking

Speaking skills are probably the skills most desired by international adult ESL students. However, they are also the most challenging and frustrating to attain to a high level of fluency and accuracy. Byrnes and Joyce (1997) conducted a survey with colleagues who taught students who displayed a reluctance to speak, this being viewed as their biggest challenge. Factors contributing to this problem were prior learning experiences where learners perhaps never had to speak or were embarrassed or scared to make mistakes.

According to Byrnes and Joyce, the linguistic facts such as difficulties in transferring from the learners' first language to sounds, rhythms and stress patterns of English, also added to the problem.

How can songs help bring out the reluctant speaker into speaking? We do not break out into song when we want to converse with someone. However, there are features of speech that are often required in order to be able to communicate effectively: pronunciation, intonation in addition to rhythm, stress and fluency. Rhythm, stress and intonation are essential elements that belong to the classroom at all levels. For Graham (1992:56), it is impossible to convey meaning successfully in their absence.

According to Laroy (1996:35), much of the teaching and improvement of pronunciation, should be indirect in order to reduce self-consciousness. He argues that learners are also encouraged to experiment with their voices as "the gate to the no analytic learning skills is opened" (p. 11). Researchers and second language educators may argue with Laroy's advocating a more explicit approach to teaching pronunciation, but his main thesis is that students are often very sensitive towards their pronunciation and it sometimes interferes with communication. It can be very distressing to have to repeat something three or four times because the interlocutor cannot understand the pronunciation.

The prosody of languages includes intonation, rhythm and stress of a stretch of sounds together rather than the individual phonemes. These aspects of language in many contemporary views are considered to be of utmost priority in communication, according to Wong (1987). She argues that rhythm and intonation of English sounds are two major organizing structures that native speakers rely on to process speech.

Having explored aspects of pronunciation related to songs, the focus of my review turns to the ways in which songs can be effectively exploited to help students improve these speaking skills. Laroy (1996) believes that the pleasure within music allows learners to overcome self-consciousness that can, in turn, help to activate linguistic capacity.

On becoming more confident in their pronunciation and the other prosodic abilities, students also need to be aware of the rhythmic nature of language. With the teacher's help, students can focus on the rhythm of songs and thus the rhythm of language. The "song stuck in my head" phenomenon (Murphey, 1990) can be an instigating unconscious factor in students' abilities to repeat phrases and expressions within the song long after it has been taught. As these phrases are repeated either orally or within the students' heads, they are automatically assuming command of these prosodic features of English (Cross, 1991). One aspect that should be stressed is that songs are meant to be sung and that just passively

listening to a song is not nearly as effective as actually singing along. Thus, students should be strongly encouraged to sing along and not worry about their singing ability but rather to focus on the flow of the words and try and imitate the same pronunciation, intonation, rhythm and stress.

### **5.2.5. Songs and Vocabulary Acquisition**

Vocabulary acquisition is one of the highest priorities of students learning a foreign language. A good range of vocabulary greatly enhances effective communication. This raises the question: How do songs fit into lexical input? Research on how vocabulary is acquired has heavily focused on learning words in context versus learning individual word-forms as well as what aids in long-term retention of words. Learning vocabulary through context has been widely praised as an effective method in vocabulary acquisition. Guessing from context is very important, increasing success at developing this skill is affected by varying factors including the number of times the word is encountered, and the variety of contexts where it is embedded (Brown, 1994; Mikulecky, 1990; Nation & Coady, 1988). Carrell (1984) further emphasizes that students need to be exposed to words in multiple contexts to learn new vocabulary items. Thus, reading is claimed to be the major source of vocabulary growth in first language learning.

### **5.2.6. Songs and Motivation**

The value of songs in motivating students to learn English and enhance learner involvement is widely acknowledged by ESL practitioners (Reeve & Williamson, 1987; Guidice, 1986). Listening to music is often listed as one of most students' hobbies, thus providing relevance to their lives. Murphey (1992) identifies that songs occur whenever and wherever one hears them and they are, consciously or subconsciously, about the people in one's own life. This relevance to one's life is necessary in motivating students as it provides a connection from English in song to their daily lives as music listeners (Chambers, 1999). Chambers emphasizes that if learners cannot see the relationship between the activity and the world in which they live, then the point of the activity is likely lost on them. Using the familiarity of the genre of song for emphasizing reductions of speech in creating more fluent speech, for example, creates this connection between the real world and learning English even though the students' focus is not in understanding the lyrics of the song. The song itself is the vehicle encouraging the students to sing along and practice using reductions of speech in a familiar format that students can all relate to.

### **5.2.7. Songs and Functional Acquisition of Grammar**

Although the significance of comprehensible input (Krashen, 1981, 1982, 1983; Terrell, 1983) is recognized by educators in the field of SLA, many researchers are very interested in identifying the conditions under which a learner will intake grammatical information (Terrell, 1991; Van Patten, 1993). Songs provide a unique context in which to find grammatical structures, yet it is often claimed that they provide poor examples of grammar. Some assert that songs may not be useful for teaching functions although they may be useful in reinforcing what has been taught (Terhune, 1997).

## **6. Methodology of the Study**

For this research work, qualitative and quantitative methods have been used to collect data to answer the research questions. A questionnaire has been designed and administered to seventy five (75) EFL teachers randomly selected in 10 private and state-owned secondary schools in Cotonou, the economic capital city of Benin. The questionnaire consisted of three parts. One with five open-ended questions investigating factors influencing the use of songs in EFL teaching and learning in Benin Republic. The second part is made up of five questions to evaluate EFL teacher's perceptions of the impacts of songs on EFL teaching and learning in Benin. The third part with five questions focuses on effective strategies for motivating Beninese EFL beginner students to learn English through songs.

In order to crosscheck the EFL teachers' answers, a questionnaire has been designed and distributed to EFL beginners who are taught by these teachers in the secondary schools mentioned above. 650 students randomly received the questionnaire in April 2018 and 608 questionnaire sheets were filled up and returned. The return rate is 92.31% this questionnaire aims at evaluating the perceptions of these students about the impacts of songs on their English learning. The analysis of data was carried out following Creswell (1988)'s spiral approach.

## **7. Results**

### **7.1. Answers to Questionnaire Administered to EFL Teachers**

Many EFL teachers from different schools received questionnaire sheets in mid-May. Sixty-five (65) teachers filled their questionnaires. As a result, the analysis of data takes into account these (65) EFL teachers' answers

**Table 1: EFL Teachers' Qualification and Experience**

|               |                            | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------|----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Qualification | Academic qualification     | 40        | 61.54 %    |
|               | Professional qualification | 3         | 4.61%      |
| Experience    | Five years or more         | 7         | 10.77 %    |
|               | Less than five years       | 15        | 23.08%     |

According to table1, 4.61% of the EFL teachers have professional qualification and 61.54 % of them have academic qualification, which means that the majority of the EFL teachers involved in the study are not qualified for the teaching job. In addition, 10.77% of them have been teaching English for more than five years whereas 23.08 % have a teaching experience of less than five years. Therefore, the fact that the majority of EFL learners involved in the present study is professionally qualified for the teaching job can be a major obstacle for an effective use of songs-based activities to teach EFL in Beninese secondary schools.

**Table 2: Using Songs in TEFL**

| Do you use songs in TEFL? | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------|-----------|------------|
| a- Yes                    | 65        | 100 %      |
| b- No                     | 00        | 00 %       |
| Total                     | 65        | 100 %      |

Through table2, it is noticed that all the respondents use songs to teach EFL beginner's classes, which means that all the teachers investigated are aware of the importance of songs in TEFL. Unfortunately, they lack the appropriate techniques and strategies likely to help them use songs and song-based activities in their EFL teaching.

**Table 3: Frequency of Using Songs in EFL classes**

| If yes, how often do you use songs in EFL classes? | Number of answers | Percentage |
|--|-------------------|------------|
| a- Usually   | 15                | 23.08%     |
| b- Occasionally                                    | 30                | 46.15%     |
| C- Rarely  | 20                | 30.77%     |
| Total  | 65                | 100 %      |

Table 3 shows that 46.15 % of the teachers use songs occasionally and 23.08 % use them usually whereas the remaining 30.77% of them rarely use songs in EFL classes. Given that most teachers investigated are not professionally qualified (table1), the incapacity of these EFL teachers to introduce songs in their daily teaching can partly be explained by the fact that these teachers are not professionally prepared or equipped to efficiently face the different challenges related to EFL teaching and learning.

**Table 4: Source of songs**

| Where do you find the songs you use in EFL classes? | Number of answers | Percentage |
|---|-------------------|------------|
| a- English books                                    | 11                | 16.92%     |
| b- Discotheques                                     | 18                | 27.69%     |
| c- Personal resources                               | 15                | 23.08%     |
| d- Other  | 21                | 32.31%     |
| Total   | 65                | 100 %      |

Table 4 informs that Beninese EFL teachers use songs of different sources. 16.92% of teachers use songs they find in English books; 27.69% of teachers resort to discotheques for songs; personal resources and other sources are rated 55.39% by EFL teachers as sources of the songs they use to teach English to their beginner learners. This table shows that although EFL teachers find it difficult to teach songs to their EFL learners, they nevertheless make a tremendous effort to find songs from different sources. Moreover, some EFL teachers also recognise that they resort other sources to find out songs they use to their EFL learners. These sources include TV, the Internet, and radio.

**Table 5: The purpose of teaching songs to EFL students**

| What do you use songs for? | Number of answers | Percentage |
|----------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Entertainment              | 22                | 33.84%     |
| Language teaching          | 04                | 6.15%      |
| Warming up                 | 31                | 47.70%     |
| Other                      | 08                | 12.31%     |
| Total                      | 65                | 100 %      |

Through table 5, the teachers involved in the present study use songs for a variety of purposes. For example, 33.84% of these teachers make their learners sing for

entertainment whereas 6.15% of them use songs to teach English language skills. In addition, 47.70 % of the EFL instructors are used to warming-up their beginner learners with songs before starting a new lesson and 12.31 % of the EFL teachers declare that their students sing for other purposes. In the Republic of Benin, the purpose of using songs to teach and learn EFL seems to vary from one EFL teacher to another. This situation can also be attributed a lack of training as they have pointed out.

**Table 6: Relationship between Songs and lesson plan**

| Are the songs related to your Lesson plan? | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|-----------|------------|
| a- Yes                                     | 06        | 9.23%      |
| b- No                                      | 59        | 90.77%     |
| Total                                      | 65        | 100 %      |

According to table 6, 9.23% of the teachers recognise that they plan their lessons by including songs closely related to the lessons they intend to teach whereas 90.77% of them do not include songs in their lessons plan. In Beninese secondary schools, the ever-increasing number of EFL teachers who do not plan their lesson before coming to EFL class is an additional indication of their lack of training and the consequence of teachers' lack of effort to develop themselves professionally.

**Table 7: Learning of Songs after Classes**

| Do you think your students learn songs? outside EFL classrooms? | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|-----------|------------|
| a- Yes  | 60        | 92.30%     |
| b- No   | 5         | 07.70%     |
| Total   | 65        | 100 %      |

Table 7 reveals that 92.30 % of teachers ascertain that their students learn songs after EFL classes whereas 07.70 % of them are not sure that their learners learn songs after classes. Almost all students love songs although a small number of them seem to dislike it. The reasons of such a situation can be seen not only in the teaching strategy but also in the materials they use in their EFL classes.

**Table 8: Kinds of Songs used in EFL classes**

| What kinds of songs your students are interested in? | Number of answers | Percentage |
|--|-------------------|------------|
| a- Folk  | 13                | 20%        |
| b- Gospels   | 25                | 38.46%     |
| c- Modern songs                                      | 16                | 24.62%     |
| d- Any   | 11                | 16.92%     |
| Total  | 65                | 100 %      |

Through table 8, Beninese EFL teachers state that their beginner learners are interested in different kinds of songs such as folk songs, gospels, modern songs and any other songs. 20% of teachers say that their students like folk songs. 38.46 % of the EFL instructors assert that their students love gospels and 24.62% of them say that they like modern songs whereas 16.92% of them declare their learners are fond of any kind of songs they are presented with in their learning process.

**Table 9: EFL students' love for Songs**

| Do your students like singing? | Number of answers | Percentage |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| a- Yes                         | 55                | 84.61%     |
| b- No                          | 10                | 15.38%     |
| Total                          | 65                | 100 %      |

Table 9 shows that 84.61% of EFL teachers put forward that their learners love singing whereas 15.38% of them say they don't. Although EFL students love singing and their teachers acknowledge its importance in EFL teaching and learning process, just 9.23% (table7) of the EFL teachers involved in the study integrate songs in their lesson plan. This situation may be due to the fact that these EFL teachers lack training about how to use songs to teach language skills since 58.77% are not professionally trained (table2) and 40% of them have less than 5years of experience in the teaching job (table2).

**Table 10: Qualities Needed to Teach Songs in EFL Classes**

| What qualities do EFL teacher need to teach English songs to beginner students? | Number of answers | Percentage |
|---|-------------------|------------|
| a-Knowledgeable person in music   | 18                | 27.69%     |
| b- Well trained teacher   | 35                | 53.84%     |
| c- Other  | 12                | 18.47%     |
| Total   | 65                | 100%       |

According to the EFL teachers who participated in this study, the teaching of songs in EFL classes requires some important qualities teachers should have. 53.84% of the teachers argue that they need to be well trained and 27.69 % of them consider they need to be knowledgeable persons in music before teaching songs in EFL classes whereas 18.47% think they need other qualities in order to appropriately integrate songs in EFL teaching process.

**Table 11: Impacts of songs on vocabulary acquisition, functional grammar acquisition, listening and speaking skills acquisition**

| How do Songs impact your Learners' EFL Skills development? |               | Number of answers | Percentage |
|--|---------------|-------------------|------------|
| Vocabulary acquisition                                     | a-Very useful | 550               | 90.46%     |
|  | b- Useful     | 58                | 9.54%      |
|  | c-Not useful  | 00                | 00%        |
| Functional grammar acquisition                             | a-Very useful | 595               | 97.86%     |
|  | b- Useful     | 13                | 2.14%      |
|  | c- Not useful | 00                | 00%        |
| Listening skills acquisition                               | a-Very useful | 450               | 74.01%     |
|  | b- Useful     | 158               | 25.99%     |
|  | c- Not useful | 00                | 00%        |
| Speaking skills acquisition                                | a-Very useful | 525               | 86.35%     |
|  | b- Useful     | 83                | 16.65%     |
|  | c- Not useful | 00                | 00%        |

Table 11 above presents the EFL teachers' perceptions about the impacts of songs on four language skills: vocabulary acquisition, functional grammar acquisition, listening and speaking skills acquisition. In effect, 90.46% of EFL teachers agree that songs have improved their teaching of vocabulary to students whereas 9.54% of the teachers find that songs are a useful tool in helping students learn new words. In addition, an important number of EFL teachers 97.86% support that songs have a very useful impact in functional grammar acquisition, which means songs offer tremendous opportunities to both EFL teachers and learners to contextualize grammar teaching and learning. Moreover, 74.01% EFL teachers strongly believe that their learners' listening skills are reinforced when language teaching is associated with songs whereas 2.14% of the teachers think that songs are useful in developing EFL learners' listening abilities. This research also tries to investigate the impacts between speaking skills acquisition and songs. On that issue, 86.35% of the EFL teachers consider that songs positively influence EFL learners' skills development and can serve as a powerful tool in helping EFL learners acquire speaking skills.

## 7.2. Feedback on the Questionnaire Administered to EFL Students

**Table 12: English Songs Concerns**

| What are the songs you taught related to? | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|-----------|------------|
| a- The planned lesson                     | 00        | 00%        |
| b- The youth issues                       | 58        | 09.53%     |
| c- No specific concerns                   | 550       | 90.46%     |
| Total                                     | 608       | 100 %      |

Through table12, 550 of the respondent students 90.46% out of 608 declared that the songs they sing in EFL classes have no specific concerns. Moreover, 58 students, that is 09.53% think that the songs are related to youth concerns. Amazingly enough, songs taught in EFL classes are not related to the planned lessons.

**Table 13: Impacts of songs on EFL language skills development**

| How do Songs influence EFL Learners Skills? |               | Number of answers | Percentage |
|---|---------------|-------------------|------------|
| Listening                                   | a-Very useful | 450               | 74.11%     |
|   | b- Useful     | 158               | 25.97%     |
|   | c-Not useful  | 00                | 00%        |
| Speaking                                    | a-Very useful | 295               | 48.60%     |
|   | b- Useful     | 285               | 46.87%     |
|   | c- Not useful | 28                | 4.60%      |
| Reading                                     | a-Very useful | 150               | 24.67%     |
|   | b- Useful     | 155               | 25.58%     |
|   | c- Not useful | 303               | 49.83%     |
| Writing                                     | a-Very useful | 105               | 17.35%     |
|   | b- Useful     | 190               | 31.25%     |
|   | c- Not useful | 313               | 51.48%     |

The results in table 13 show that 74.11 % of the respondent students think that songs are very useful for developing their listening abilities needed to communicate in English. In addition, 48.60 % of the students consider songs to be a very useful tool likely to help them develop speaking abilities whereas 46.87% find them useful. In the same vein, 4.60% of these students think that songs have no impacts on their speaking skills learning. Moreover, students have different and yet contradictory opinions about the impacts of songs on their reading skills. 24.67% of the students think they are very useful whereas 25.58% consider they

are useful and 49.83% say that songs are not useful to help them develop reading abilities. These data show that songs positively affect language skills learning in EFL classes. According to these EFL students, they enjoyed song-based activities because of the different opportunities offered by them to both EFL teachers and learners. As a result, EFL teachers should endeavour to devise ways and means to integrate songs in their lesson plans.

**Table 14: Integration of Songs in EFL Teaching**

| Do you want your EFL Teachers to integrate songs in their teachings? | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|-----------|------------|
| a- Yes   | 555       | 91.30%     |
| b- No  | 53        | 8.70%      |
| Total  | 608       | 100 %      |

According to this table, an important percentage of EFL students, 91.30% agree for the integration of songs in EFL teaching. Surprisingly, 8.70% of the students who filled the questionnaire sheets seem not to be sensitive to the incorporation of songs in EFL teachings.

### 7.3. Discussion of the Results

The discussion of the data collected in the course of this investigation address the three main research questions. The answers to these questions are to be analysed in the light of the data collected during the investigation.

#### 7.3.1. Difficulties Related to an Effective Use of Songs in EFL Classes

According to the data obtained during the present research work, it is noticed that the majority of students love English language and English songs. Table 10 shows that 84.61% of EFL teachers support that their learners love singing whereas 15.38% of them say they do not. Although EFL students love singing and their teachers acknowledge its importance in EFL teaching and learning process, just 9.23% (Table7) of the EFL teachers involved in the study integrate songs in their lesson plans. This situation may be due to the fact that these EFL teachers lack training and ignore how to songs to teach language skills since 58.77% of them are not professionally trained (Table\_2) and 40% of them have less than 5\_years of experience in the teaching profession (Table 2). Amazingly enough,550 respondent students out of 608 declared that the English songs they use in classes have no specific concerns, and 09.53 % say some of them deal with youth concerns. Unfortunately, all the respondent students stated that their EFL teachers do not relate songs to the lessons taught. Moreover, there are other difficulties students

declared that they meet when learning song. In addition, the majority of those beginner students think they sing rarely in classroom activities, which is confirmed by EFL respondent teachers: 46.15% of the teachers use songs occasionally, 23.08 % usually use them whereas 30.77% rarely use songs in their EFL classes. This means that almost all the respondent EFL students (91.30%) would like their teachers to integrate songs in their teaching.

### **7.3.2. Problems Related to Lack of Teacher's Training.**

The investigation has revealed that an important number of the EFL teachers are untrained. Results show that 27 teachers out of 65 have professional qualification and 38 of them have academic qualification. Moreover, 60% of them have less than five years of experience in the teaching job. This shows that the majority of these teachers are very young and less experienced in the profession and many of them recognised that it is difficult to teach in beginner classes. They just try their best when they are in these classes because they are not qualified enough to know the different strategies they can use to teach songs to EFL beginners.

As the problem of unemployment becomes very crucial, inexperienced young teachers run to the field of teaching without being training. As Kochhar (2006:55) said, "*teaching is an art and the teacher is an artist.*" In other words, teaching is a profession that requires a full carefulness and constant practice.

### **7.3.3. Songs and Motivation**

According to data collected during the present research work, the value of songs in motivating students to learn English and enhance learner involvement is widely acknowledged by EFL practitioners. For example, through table 6, teachers involved in the present study use songs for a variety of purposes. For example, 33.84% of the respondent teachers make their learners sing for entertainment whereas 6.15% of them use songs to teach English language skills; 47.70 % of the EFL instructors are used to warming-up their beginner learners with songs before starting a new lesson. This finding is in line with Gardner and Lambert's idea of instrumental motivation (1972. According to these authors, motivation "*involves the arousal and maintenance of curiosity and can ebb and flow as a result of such factors as learners' particular interests and the extent to which they feel personally involved in the learning activities*". In fact, songs are effective motivating tool used in EFL classes to arouse learners 'interests in the target language. Songs deal with the whole realm of human emotions and students are often willing to sing a song in a foreign language even if they do not fully understand the meaning of the words. Songs also motivate the timid learners for they them to hide behind the music behind and take the pressure off.

### 7.3.4. Songs in Relation with Listening and Speaking Skills

The results of this research work reveal that there is a strong tie between listening and speaking skills and songs. Interestingly, 74.11% of the respondent students think that songs are very useful for developing their listening abilities needed to communicate in English language. In addition, 48.60% of the students consider songs to be a very useful tool likely to help them develop speaking abilities whereas 46.87% find them useful. In the same vein, 74.01% of the respondent EFL teachers strongly believe that their learners' listening skills are reinforced when language teaching is associated with songs. Moreover, 86.35% of these teachers consider that songs serve as a powerful tool in helping EFL learners acquire speaking skills necessary to communicate. These findings confirm the conclusions by Graham (1992:56) who postulates that

We do not break out into song when we want to converse with someone. However, there are features of speech, which are often required in order to be able to communicate effectively: pronunciation, intonation in addition to rhythm, stress and fluency. Rhythm, stress and intonation are essential elements that belong to the classroom at all levels.

For Graham (1992), it is impossible to convey meaning successfully in the absence of these features. There are two processes involved in listening, and both can be utilized when songs are used in the classroom. The activity, which is selected for a particular song, will determine which of these processes is active. Cullen (1999:30) stated that:

the first is bottom-up processing where the listener builds up the sounds into words, sentences and meaning. The second is top-down processing where the listener uses background knowledge to understand the meaning of a message. Practicing both of these processes is essential for developing listening comprehension.

On becoming more confident in their pronunciation, students also need to be aware of the rhythmic nature of language. With the teacher's help, students can focus on the rhythm of songs and thus the rhythm of language. One aspect that should be stressed is that songs are meant to be sung and that just passively listening to a song is not as effective as actually singing along. Thus, students should be strongly encouraged to sing along and not worry about their singing ability but rather to focus on the flow of the words and try to imitate the same pronunciation, intonation, rhythm and stress.

Songs provide excellent contextualized models from which to imitate fluent speech. The imitated expressions and lines from songs can be implemented directly into real conversations. Good examples of expressions that can immediately be extracted and used in daily language. Students could be asked to change sentences they learn in the songs into its written form. Furthermore, follow-up practices might include students asking one another questions in both forms and discussing when, where or with whom each is appropriate.

## 8. Recommendations

As all the school actors are aware of the learners' great interests in songs, it is up to the high decision makers to put a particular and necessary accent on the new didactic role of songs. Songs as a didactic tool of learning English is not well known yet to all the educators. Thus, singing materials such as CD, DVD, VCD, memory cards, USB keys, should be developed and supplied to schools, to learners and to teachers. Such modern materials should contain songs conceived on purpose, related to teaching and learning according to the contents of the curricula. The government should create some incentives in order to motivate secondary schools' teachers. They can create teaching facilities including teaching materials to encourage teachers in their tasks. Again, the low salary paid to teachers must be increased to enable them face an ever-increasing cost of life.

There is then a need to put more effort into curriculum innovation. Change should take the form of updating materials and help EFL teachers to use them properly. Effective curriculum reform calls for more than considering the academic side of education. Educational Institutions should invest more in fostering the positive psychological growth of both teachers and students. Otherwise, the past and present growing dilemmas in education and society will only intensify with time.

The songs used in EFL classes should be related to the students' daily life such as songs of youth and love, songs of work and play, songs of war and protest, spirituals and gospel songs etc. This way of tackling the matter is likely to help prepare students' ears to decode vocabularies from different fields of their daily life problem solving, while enabling them to hear distinctly what is said and providing them with the authentic pronunciation, in a way that can improve their own pronunciation of the target language.

Pemagbi (1995:62) suggests that teachers should use the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and the Voice of America (VOA) Language Teaching Programs to teach the listening skill in their classrooms. Besides, he stated that *"it's advisable to record the relevant programs and let the class listen to them with a view to correcting what is wrong"*; e.g. in student's daily pronunciation. Moreover, Songs are one of the most enchanting and culturally rich resources that can easily be used in language classrooms. Songs offer a change from routine classroom activities. They are precious resources to develop students' abilities in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

## Conclusion

EFL teachers and students in secondary schools, especially in the Atlantic Region, do not give interest to the teaching and learning of songs. However, teaching songs remains one of the most important components in learning languages. In

order to collect reliable data and important information about the topic, two types of questionnaires were designed and administered to 65 EFL teachers and 608 EFL students. This research work has revealed the difficulties, which impede teaching and learning through songs in EFL classes. Among these difficulties are the lack of EFL teachers' training on the effective use of songs to teach English to EFL beginner learners, the lack of adequate teaching and learning materials. To overcome these difficulties, some practical recommendations are found to help both EFL teachers and students benefit by the high potential offered by songs-based activities in EFL classes. Indeed, while selecting a song, the teacher should take into account the age, the interests of the learners and the languages used in the songs. To enhance learner commitment, it is also beneficial to allow learners to take part in the selection of the songs. When students memorize or learn poems and songs by heart, they gain mastery of the language. In addition, Songs help learners to know more about the culture of English language that becomes part of their daily speech. Songs can also permit EFL teachers to teach a variety of language items such as sentence patterns, vocabulary, pronunciation, rhythm, adjectives and adverbs. As language teachers, we can benefit from songs, since our concern is to motivate the students and draw their utmost attention to the subject.

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