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LIGNE ÉDITORIALE



Ziglôbitha symbolise la quête de la perfection. Le mot, d'origine bété (langue kru de Côte d'Ivoire) est composé de trois (3) monèmes "zi" (grand, meilleur, perfection...), "glô" (village) et "bitha" (relation qui lie des personnes et détermine les rapports qu'elles entretiennent, amitié, camaraderie, solidarité). Ziglôbitha est la déclaration d'un mieux-être et du partage. Dans le cadre scientifique, ziglôbitha est un état d'esprit, un objectif à atteindre : lier des amitiés, s'ouvrir au monde, procurer de meilleures conditions de travail.

Ziglôbitha, revue interdisciplinaire des Arts, Linguistique, Littérature & Civilisations publie des articles inédits, à caractère scientifique. Ils auront été évalués en double aveugle par des membres du comité scientifique. Les langues de publication sont le français et l'anglais. Ziglôbitha est une revue des Lettres - Sciences humaines et s'adresse aux Chercheurs, Enseignants-Chercheurs et Étudiants.

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- **Résumé** ne doit pas dépasser 500 mots. Il doit être succinct de manière à faire ressortir l'essentiel de l'analyse.
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- **Key words** ne doivent pas dépasser cinq mots.
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- **Citation** : Les références de citation sont intégrées au texte citant, selon les cas, des façons suivantes :

En effet, le but poursuivi par M. Ascher (1998, p.223), est : « d'élargir l'histoire des mathématiques de telle sorte qu'elle acquière une perspective multiculturelle et globale (...), »

Le philosophe ivoirien a raison, dans une certaine mesure, de lire, dans ce choc déstabilisateur, le processus du sous-développement. Ainsi qu'il le dit :

Le processus du sous-développement résultant de ce choc est vécu concrètement par les populations concernées comme une crise globale : crise socio-économique (exploitation brutale, chômage permanent, exode accéléré et douloureux), mais aussi crise socio-culturelle et de civilisation traduisant une impréparation socio- historique et une inadaptation des cultures et des comportements humains aux formes de vie imposées par les technologies étrangères.

Diakitité (1985, p.105)

- **Conclusion** ne doit pas faire double emploi avec le résumé et la discussion. Elle doit être un rappel des principaux résultats obtenus et des conséquences les plus importantes que l'on peut en déduire.
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INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF DIGITALISATION ON EFL LEARNERS' SPEAKING SKILLS FOR BENIN'S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract : This study investigates the impact of digitalisation on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' speaking skills in Benin, with an emphasis on its role in supporting sustainable development. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected through online surveys, questionnaires addressed to EFL learners, interviews with EFL teachers, and classroom observations in selected secondary schools in litoral region. The results reveal that digital tools such as language learning applications, virtual exchanges, and multimedia resources significantly improve EFL learners' speaking fluency, pronunciation, and confidence. However, challenges such as unequal access to digital resources and limited digital literacy among educators were identified. It can be suggested to enhance digital infrastructure, offer EFL teachers training in digital pedagogy, and ensure equitable access to technology in order to maximize the benefits of digitalisation.

Keywords : Digitalisation, EFL Speaking, Learning, Sustainable Development.

ETUDE DE L'IMPACT DE LA NUMERISATION SUR LES COMPETENCES ORALES DES APPRENANTS D'ANGLAIS LANGUE ETRANGERE POUR LE DEVELOPPEMENT DURABLE DU BENIN

Résumé : Cette étude examine l'impact de la numérisation sur les compétences orales des apprenants d'anglais langue étrangère (ALE) au Bénin, en mettant l'accent sur son rôle dans le soutien au développement durable. En utilisant une approche méthodologique mixte, les données ont été collectées à travers des enquêtes en ligne, des questionnaires adressés aux apprenants d'ALE, des entretiens avec les enseignants d'ALE et les coordinateurs des TIC, ainsi que des observations de classe dans des écoles secondaires sélectionnées de la région littorale. Les résultats révèlent que les outils numériques tels que les applications d'apprentissage des langues, les échanges virtuels et les ressources multimédias améliorent considérablement la fluidité, la prononciation et la confiance des apprenants d'ALE à l'oral. Cependant, des défis tels que l'accès inégal aux ressources numériques et la littératie numérique limitée chez les éducateurs ont été identifiés. Il peut être suggéré d'améliorer l'infrastructure numérique, d'offrir aux enseignants d'ALE une formation en pédagogie numérique et d'assurer un accès équitable à la technologie afin de maximiser les avantages de la numérisation.

Mots-clés : Numérisation, Parlé en ALE, Apprentissage, Développement Durable.

Introduction

In the 21st century, globalisation has amplified the role of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in fostering communication and collaboration across countries. The ability to effectively communicate in English is increasingly seen as a crucial skill for individuals and societies alike, contributing significantly to national and global development. In a context of globalisation and rapid technological advancements, effective communication in EFL has emerged as a critical tool for nations striving to enhance their socio-economic development. Among the various forms of communication, oral proficiency in EFL plays a vital role in fostering cross-cultural interactions, enabling global business, and facilitating international cooperation in various sectors such as education, science, technology, and diplomacy. Oral communication in EFL plays a pivotal role in empowering individuals to engage in international discourse, negotiate ideas, and contribute to economic, social and cultural advancements (Crystal, 2003 & Graddol, 2006).

The interplay between EFL oral communication and digitalisation holds immense potential for advancing a nation's sustainable development. Proficiency in oral communication enables individuals to contribute meaningfully to knowledge economies, while digital literacy fosters innovation and connectivity. According to the United Nations (2015), sustainable development requires inclusive and quality education that equips individuals with the skills to participate actively in the global economy. EFL education, supported by digital tools, aligns with these goals by empowering EFL learners with the communication skills and technological competence needed for personal growth and societal progress. Thus, in the context of a globalised world, the effective use of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) oral communication and digital technologies are increasingly recognized as essential tools for fostering sustainable development at the national level. However, there remains a significant gap in understanding how these two factors (EFL communication skills and digitalisation) interact and contribute to a nation's long-term development goals.

This research mainly aims to investigate the impact of digitalisation on EFL learners' oral speaking in the context of a nation's sustainable development. It specifically aims to explore how proficiency in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) oral communication enhances access to global knowledge, markets, and professional opportunities, to investigate the role of digital tools and platforms in improving EFL oral communication skills, to explore how digitalisation and EFL oral communication can drive innovation in sustainable practices, including education, healthcare, and environment management. To reach its goal, the current study tends to answer the following research questions:

- 1- To what extent does digitalisation impact EFL learners' speaking skills in Benin?
- 2- How can digital tools be effectively utilised to enhance EFL learners' speaking skills in the Benin context?
- 3- What are the challenges and opportunities associated with integrating digitalisation into EFL teaching for sustainable development in Benin?

In order to find predictable answers, the following research hypotheses have been formulated:

- 1- Digitalisation significantly improves EFL learners' speaking skills in Benin. Digital tools like language learning apps and virtual exchanges enhance fluency, pronunciation, and confidence. Learners who use digital tools show significant improvement in speaking skills.
- 2- Digital tools can enhance EFL learners' speaking skills through interactive activities and authentic materials. Language learning apps, virtual exchanges, and multimedia resources provide opportunities for practice. Online speaking sessions with teachers or peers also support speaking skills development.
- 3- Digitalisation faces challenges like limited access to resources and limited digital literacy. Technical issues can also hinder online speaking sessions. Despite these challenges, digitalisation offers opportunities for personalised learning, increased access to resources, and sustainable development.

Building on this foundation, the following section reviews the relevant literature.

Digital technologies have transformed EFL teaching, particularly in promoting oral communication skills. Digital tools such as online discussion platforms, speech recognition software, and virtual classrooms provide EFL learners with opportunities for interactive and authentic communication (Levy & Stockwell, 2013). Research by Prensky (2001) shows that the digital era has reshaped learning methods, making them more learner-centered and collaborative, which is essential for addressing the complex challenges of sustainability. In addition, digitalisation facilitates the integration of EFL oral communication into other sustainable development goals (SDGs). Warschauer (2000) found that technology bridges the gap between local and global contexts, allowing EFL learners to engage in intercultural dialogue and problem-solving. For example, virtual exchange programs promote linguistic and cultural understanding, which are integral to building peaceful and sustainable societies (Helm, 2014).

Digitalization in education has the potential to revolutionise how people learn and acquire skills, including EFL communication. Cairns et al., (2018)

emphasize the role of e-learning platform, mobile applications, and online resources in making English language learning more accessible and flexible. Joe & Kim (2019) suggest that combining EFL training with digital tools not only improves language skills but also enhances critical thinking, collaboration, and adaptability-skills needed for a sustainable future. The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach emphasizes the importance of authentic communication in language learning (Brown, 2007). Digitalisation can facilitate CLT by providing EFL learners with opportunities to engage in real-life conversations. For example, virtual exchanges can connect learners with native speakers or peers from other countries (O'Dowd, 2018). The Social Constructivist theory suggests that learning is a social process that occurs through interaction and collaboration. Digital tools can facilitate social interaction and collaboration among EFL learners, promoting speaking skills development.

Language learning apps like Duolingo, HelloTalk, and Babbel provide learners with interactive speaking activities and opportunities to practice with native speakers (Liu & Chen, 2015). These apps can be effective in enhancing speaking skills, particularly for EFL learners who lack opportunities to practice speaking in real-life contexts. Virtual exchanges can connect EFL learners with peers from other countries, promoting intercultural communication and speaking skills development (O'Dowd, 2018). Multimedia resources like videos, podcasts, and audio recordings can provide learners with authentic materials to practice listening and speaking (Field, 2008). Research has shown that digitalisation can significantly enhance EFL learners' speaking skills, particularly in terms of fluency, pronunciation, and confidence (Chapelle, 2003). Digital tools can provide learners with opportunities to practice speaking in a supportive and non-threatening environment. A study by Liu and Chen (2015) found that learners who used language learning apps to practice speaking showed significant improvement in their speaking skills compared to those who did not use the apps.

Despite the benefits of digitalisation, there are several challenges and limitations to its implementation. Limited access to digital resources and technical issues can hinder online speaking sessions (Lee, 2016). Another challenge is the need for teachers to develop their digital literacy and pedagogical skills to effectively integrate digital tools into language teaching (Knezek & Christensen, 2016). The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasize the importance of quality education for sustainable development (UN, 2015). Digitalisation can contribute to sustainable development by providing learners with access to quality education and promoting lifelong learning. A study by Warschauer and Matuchniak (2010) found that digitalisation can promote social inclusion and reduce inequalities in access to

education. Benin has made significant progress in promoting education and sustainable development in recent years (World Bank, 2020). However, the country still faces several challenges, including limited access to digital resources and infrastructure. A study by Houngbo (2018) found that digitalisation can promote economic growth and sustainable development in Benin. In light with this literature, the next section outlines the methodology employed in the study.

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. Data were collected through online surveys, questionnaires addressed to 100 randomly selected EFL learners from some secondary schools in the southern region of Benin, interview with 10 EFL teachers, and classroom observations. The study was conducted from February to April, 2025.

1. Questionnaire to EFL Learners

On the sheets of questionnaire addressed to EFL learners, they are firstly invited to say if digital tools and platforms have influenced their ability to practice and improve their English speaking skills. The second question wanted them to share an experience where using a digital tool (e.g., language learning app, video conferencing platform) helped them improve their oral speaking or overcome a communication challenge. In the third question, it was asked the ways they believe digitalisation can contribute to enhancing their fluency and confidence in spoken English, particularly in the context of Benin's development. It was demanded in the fourth question if they think integrating digital technologies into English language instruction can support Benin's sustainable development goals, especially in terms of education and economic growth. The last question wondered the digital resources or tools they currently use to practice their English speaking skills, and how effective they find them in achieving language learning goals.

2. Interview with EFL Teachers

A semi-structured interview composed of 4 questions was conducted with EFL teachers. In the first question, it was asked how they currently integrate digital tools and technologies into their teaching practices to enhance EFL learners' speaking skills. The second question wondered the challenges they have observed. In the third question, the opinion of EFL teachers was required about the role of digitalisation in promoting EFL learners' autonomy and self-directed learning in developing their English speaking skills, particularly in the Beninese context. The last question asked if they think digitalisation can be leveraged to address the unique linguistic and cultural needs of EFL learners in Benin. Having collected the data through these instruments, the study proceeds to analyze the

responses and generate findings. The following section presents the results of the data analysis.

3.1. Answers from questionnaires

Table 1 : The Impact of Digital Tools on EFL Practices.

How can digital tools impact EFL oral communication skills?	Frequence	Percentage
AI tutors	45	45%
Speech analysis tools	20	20%
Virtual language exchange	35	35%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Research, 2025

The results in this table show that forty-five (45) respondents (45%) have confessed that digitalisation can improve EFL oral communication via AI tutors whereas twenty (20) have confessed (20%) that it can improve by virtual language exchange. Only fifteen (15) respondent (15%) said via speech analysis tools.

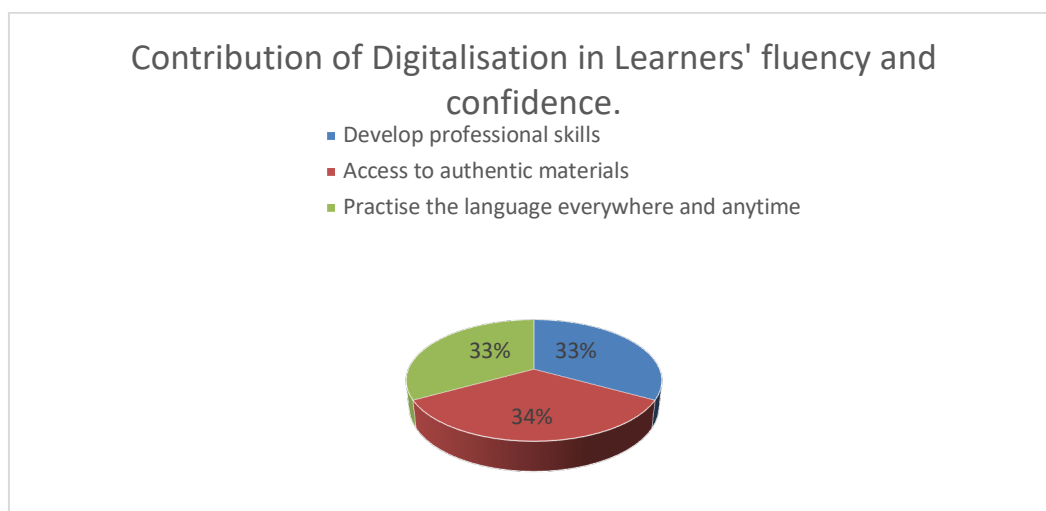


Figure 1: The ways digitalisation can contribute to EFL Learners' fluency and confidence. (Source: Grounded Research, 2025)

Through the analysis of this figure, 33 EFL learners (33%) said that digitalisation can help them develop professional skills, 34 of them (34%)

asserted that it can favour the access to authentic materials and the remaining 33 participants (33%) though that it can help them practise the language everywhere and anytime.

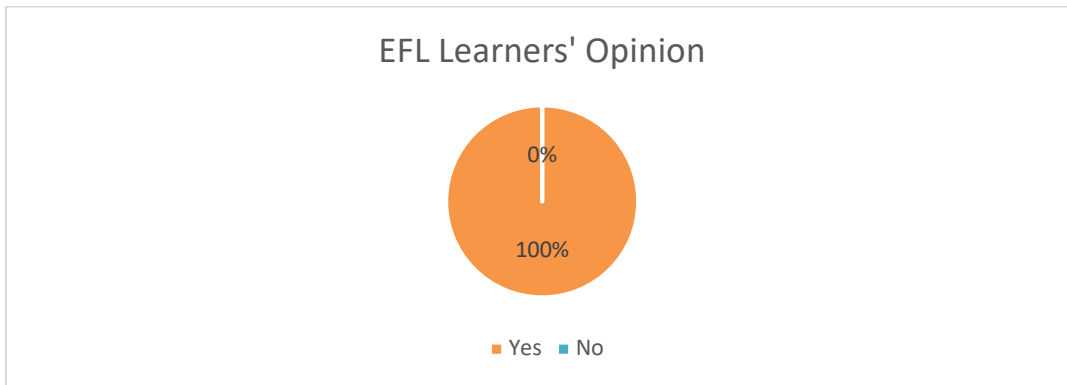


Figure 2: Learners' opinion (Source: Field Research, 2025)

By analysing this figure, all the EFL learners (100%) thought that the integration of digital technologies in EFL instructions can support the sustainable development goals of the country, especially in education and economic growth.

3.2. Answers from Interviews.

Table 2 : The ways EFL teachers integrate digital tools in their practices.

How do you introduce digital materials in your practices	The use of online resources	The use of language learning apps	Multimedia Presentations	Total
Answers	4	3	3	10

Source: Field Study, 2025.

The analysis of this table 2 shows that 4 EFL teachers use online resources, 3 of them use language learning apps and the other 3 proceed by multimedia presentations while introducing digital technologies in their practices.

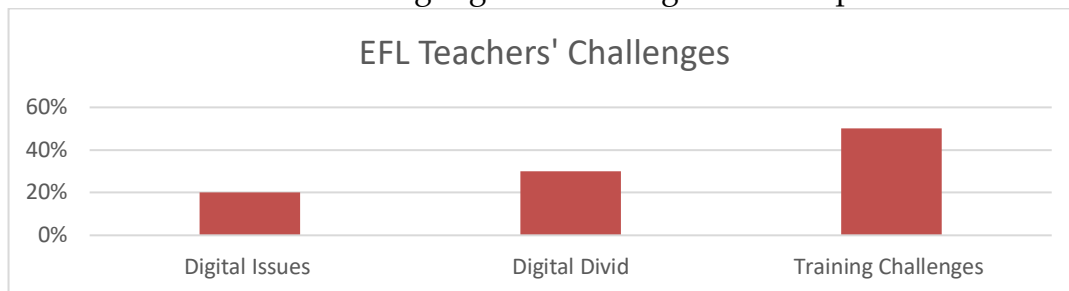


Figure 3: Challenges en countered by EFL teachers.

It can be noticed though this figure that 2 EFL teachers (20%) faced digital issues, 3 of them (30%) faced challenges like digital divid, and 5 participants (50%) faced training challenges.

Table 3 : EFL Teachers' opinion.

Statement	Positive answers	Negative answers	Total
Digitalisation plays a pivotal role in EFL learners' autonomy.	10	00	10=100%
Digitalisation can be leverage to address EFL learners' needs.	10	00	10=100%

Source: Field Study, 2025.

Throughout this table, all the participants (10=100%) give positive answers about the role of digitalisation in EFL learners' autonomy. In addition, all of them (10=100%) confirmed that a leveraged digitalisation can address EFL learners' linguistic and cultural needs.

3.3. Classroom Observation Report.

Three different classrooms have been observed in the litoral region of Benin. The observed EFL class showcased the effective integration of digital tools to improve speaking skills, with 25 intermediate-level students participating. The teacher utilized a learning management system, online resources, and multimedia tools to support language instruction. Students engaged in various speaking activities, including role-plays, group discussions, and presentations, facilitated by digital tools such as online language exchange programs. Notably, EFL learners demonstrated improved engagement and motivation, with their speaking skills, including pronunciation, fluency, and vocabulary, noticeably enhanced. Based on these results, the following step discusses the implications of the findings in the broader context of language learning and sustainable development.

The integration of digital technologies in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction has become increasingly important in recent years. According to a study by Chen et al. (2022), digitalisation can play a significant role in enhancing EFL learners' fluency and confidence. In the table 1, the findings show that 45% of respondents believe that digitalisation can improve EFL oral communication via AI tutors. This is consistent with the findings of Lee (2020), who noted that AI-powered language learning platforms can provide

personalized feedback and support to learners. In addition, 35% of respondents reported that virtual language exchange can improve EFL oral communication. As noted by Wang et al. (2023), virtual language exchange can provide EFL learners with opportunities to engage in authentic communication with native speakers. The remaining 20% of respondents reported that speech analysis tools can improve EFL oral communication. According to a study by Kim (2021), speech analysis tools can provide learners with detailed feedback on their pronunciation and intonation.

Figure 1 shows the ways digitalisation can contribute to EFL learners' fluency and confidence. According to the results of this figure, 33% of EFL learners reported that digitalisation can help them develop professional skills. This is on the same line with the findings of Chen et al. (2022), who noted that digitalisation can provide learners with opportunities to develop skills that are essential for the modern workforce. Furthermore, 34% of EFL learners reported that digitalisation can favour access to authentic materials. As noted by Lee (2020), authentic materials can provide learners with opportunities to engage with real-life language and cultural contexts. The remaining 33% of participants confessed that digitalisation can help them practise the language everywhere and anytime. According to Wang et al. (2023), mobile learning technologies can provide learners with opportunities to learn anywhere and anytime. This flexibility is essential for EFL learners who may have limited time or opportunities to practice the language in traditional classroom settings.

Figure 2 shows learners' opinions on the role of digitalisation in supporting sustainable development goals. According to the research findings, all EFL learners (100%) reported that the integration of digital technologies in EFL instruction can support the sustainable development goals of the country, especially in education and economic growth. This finding aligns with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which emphasize the importance of education and technology in promoting economic growth and development (United Nations, 2020). In terms of EFL teachers' practices, the research findings show that 4 teachers (40%) use online resources, 3 of them (30%) use language learning apps, and 3 (30%) use multimedia presentations. According to Kim (2021), EFL teachers can use a range of digital tools to support student learning and engagement. However, the research findings also show that EFL teachers face challenges when integrating digital technologies into their practices.

Figure 3 shows that 20% of EFL teachers faced digital issues, 30% faced challenges like digital divide, and 50% faced training challenges. According to Chen et al. (2022), teacher training and support are essential for effective integration of digital technologies in EFL instruction. EFL teachers need to be

equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively integrate digital technologies into their practices. Table 3 shows EFL teachers' opinions on the role of digitalisation in EFL learners' autonomy. According to the findings, all participants (100%) gave positive answers about the role of digitalisation in promoting EFL learners' autonomy. This finding is consistent with the findings of Lee (2020), who noted that digitalisation can provide learners with opportunities to take control of their own learning and develop autonomy.

In addition, all EFL teachers (100%) confirmed that leveraged digitalisation can address EFL learners' linguistic and cultural needs. According to Wang et al. (2023), digitalisation can provide learners with opportunities to engage with diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. This is essential for EFL learners who need to develop their language skills in a globalized world. With a view to practical application, recommendations and suggestions have been formulated to EFL learners, EFL teachers as well as the government.

EFL learners should take an active role in utilizing digital technologies to support their language learning. This can include using language learning apps, online resources, and multimedia tools to practice their language skills outside of the classroom. Learners can also benefit from engaging in online language exchange programs, participating in online forums and discussions, and using social media to connect with native speakers. By taking advantage of these digital resources, EFL learners can improve their language skills, increase their motivation, and develop greater autonomy in their learning.

For EFL teachers, they should integrate digital technologies into their teaching practices in a way that promotes EFL learners' engagement, motivation, and autonomy. This can include using learning management systems, online resources, and multimedia tools to support language instruction. Teachers can also benefit from using digital tools to provide EFL learners with feedback, track their progress, and facilitate peer-to-peer interaction. The government also has a role to play in supporting the effective integration of digital technologies in EFL instruction. To this end, it should invest in developing digital infrastructure, including internet connectivity, hardware, and software, to support language learning. The government can also provide ongoing training and support for EFL teachers, develop digital resources, and promote equity and access to digital technologies for all learners. By taking these steps, the government can help ensure that EFL learners have access to the digital tools and resources they need to succeed in a rapidly changing world.

Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the impact of digitalisation on EFL learners' speaking skills in the context of Benin's sustainable development. The

study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods. A classroom observation was conducted, and data were collected through surveys, interviews, and speaking assessments. The study found that digitalisation had a positive impact on EFL learners' speaking skills, improving their fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary. The use of digital tools, such as online language exchange programs and multimedia resources, increased learners' motivation and engagement, providing them with more opportunities to practice their speaking skills. However, the study had some limitations, including a small sample size and a limited duration, which may not be representative of all EFL learners in Benin.

Based on the findings, it is suggested that EFL teachers integrate digital tools into their teaching practices to improve learners' speaking skills. Educational institutions should also provide teachers with training and support to effectively use digital tools. Additionally, policymakers should prioritize the development of digital infrastructure and resources to support language learning. Further research could explore the long-term impact of digitalisation on EFL learners' speaking skills and identify the most effective digital tools and strategies for language learning. By continuing to explore the intersection of technology and language learning, researchers can form policy and practice, ultimately contributing to the achievement of sustainable development goals in Benin.

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