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TEACHING ENGLISH THROUGH STORYTELLING IN EFL
CLASSES: THE CASE OF LYCEE TOFFA 1^{ER} AND CEG DJEGAN-
KPEVI

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research work to Dr Estelle BANKOLE-MINAFLINO. May the almighty bless you again. Thank you so much dear mum.

This work is also dedicated to M. Bruno HOUEDOTE. You are a real dad.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

There are a lot of languages in this world and every language is important. When two people who speak different languages want to interact with each other they will necessarily use a language that both of them can understand. Then, there is a need to have a language that can be used by all people around the world. English has become the most spoken language around the world. Everybody is urged to learn the language. Sundaram (2006) supports this statement when he states that English is the most popular language compared to other languages and it is one of the common languages that many people can understand. This led to the introduction of English language in the educational system of our country as a foreign language. Some pupils are interested in learning a foreign language and they are proud of that; they feel excited to discover a new language apart from what they are used to, though some are afraid of the new language for they think that it would be difficult for them. Unfortunately, once they start school, they are disappointed when they realize how boring and monotonous the class sessions are. This makes them lose all the devotion, the motivation and the excitement they were carrying with them and they start hating the language. Some hate the teacher because they think that he/ she is the one to blame. Confronted with these problems, teachers decide to find solutions: trying to gain the complete attention of learners during class sessions and have them participate in order to master the language.

Thinking of these solutions, I suggest that we need activities which would help them speak naturally and fluently the language in a good atmosphere, as the speaking comes always first in the use of any language in the world. Among the suggestions made, I decide to work on how storytelling can be useful in EFL classes.

Through this research paper, I will look at the definition of storytelling especially, short stories and how they are useful in teaching English as a foreign language. But before that, I will first develop the first chapter, which is the introductory section. It deals with the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, the research question and the delimitation of the study.

As far as the second chapter is concerned, it is about the literature review. This part of the work takes into account the conception of some authors who dealt with my topic. The third chapter is the presentation of the methodology and the procedure I used to collect the appropriate data for our research work. I mainly focus on questionnaire and class observations.

Concerning the fourth chapter, I present the results and the discussion and all the data I collected. The fifth and the last chapter of this report reveals some recommendations and suggestions toward the authorities of our educational system to foster an easy acquisition of the English language in our Benin Republic.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTORY SECTION

1.1-Background to the study

English language has been introduced in Benin educational system since the colonial time. Many young students are glad when they set their foot in the secondary school because they are going to learn English language in addition to the French language they are already used to. But unfortunately, they lose this motivation, due to the monotony and the boring classes they have. Hence the importance of variety, creativity and motivation in the learning process. Despite the multiple techniques adopted by many teachers, there are still problems. This led me to think of teaching English through storytelling in EFL classes.

Storytelling predates writing, with the earliest forms of storytelling usually oral combined with gestures and expressions. In addition to being part of religious ritual, rock art may have served as a form of storytelling for many ancient cultures. The Australian aboriginal people painted symbols from stories on cave walls as a means of helping the storyteller remember the story. The story was then told using a combination of oral narrative, music, rock art, and dance, which bring understanding and meaning of human existence through remembrance and enactment of stories. People have used the carved trunks of living trees and ephemeral media (such as sand and leaves) to record stories in pictures or in writing. Complex forms of tattooing may also represent stories, with information about genealogy, affiliation, and social status.

With the advent of writing and the use of stable, portable media, stories were recorded, transcribed, and shared over wide regions of the world. Stories have been carved, scratched, painted, printed or inked onto wood or bamboo, ivory and other bones, pottery, clay tablets, stone, palm-leaf books, skins (parchment), bark cloth, paper, silk, canvas, and other textiles, recorded on film, and stored electronically in digital forms.

Oral stories continue to be committed to memory and passes from generation to generation, despite the increasing popularity of written and televised media in many parts of the world.

The factors leading up to the choice of teaching English through storytelling is how to manage to get learners involved in the teaching- learning process. For Hendrickson, J.M. (1992) Storytelling provides learners with the comprehensible input that facilitates language acquisition. So teachers should pay attention in selecting the right stories at the convenient time.

1.2- Statement of the problem

“Teaching English through storytelling in EFL classes: the case studies of some secondary schools” is not a topic chosen at random. It comes from what I noticed during my observation training and teaching practice that students are more stimulated to learn and interested in stories; but in fact they are not told stories by their former teacher. And they even ask for stories sometimes. The problem here is how to attract learners’ attention, those who are bored, shy or who are not interested in participating in any classroom activity. This will help them react and participate naturally and actively in the class sessions. Storytelling trains the brain of the learners to listening comprehension which will enable them to tell their own stories later in real life and in classroom in the same time they practice the language through speaking.

1.3-Purpose of the study

The first purpose of this study is to explore and analyze the point of view of some teachers of English as far as teaching through storytelling is concerned. The second purpose is to explain how storytelling can facilitate the language acquisition in EFL classes.

The third one is to determine how storytelling can be used to motivate students in EFL classes. And the last one is to see how best teachers can teach by telling stories.

1.4-The significance of the problem

This study is significant in that it will help both teachers and learners. For learners, storytelling will give the opportunity to acquire the language easily by listening to stories, by taking note and by reacting to what they have listened to. At the end of each story learners are asked to make a brief summary which will lead them to the use of the language. They do it in their own words. By doing this, they gain new vocabulary and get more and more interested in the classes. Moreover, that way of teaching is the mixture of listening, speaking and writing. Students learn how to tell a story by writing it down, talking about it and learning how to actively listen to someone else's story. All these activities teach essential language skills in vividly meaningful contexts.

As far as the use of storytelling for teachers is concerned, it is a way of breaking with monotony and another way of motivating learners and warming them up. It helps them teach three different skills (speaking, writing, listening comprehension) at the same time, which is a means of saving time.

1.5-Research questions

The main research question directing this research work is: "how to use storytelling to teach English language for a more communicative classroom?"

This question addresses some aspects which are worth mentioning:

-Do EFL teachers teach through storytelling?

-Does storytelling have any effective use for EFL teachers and learners?

-What are the advantages of teaching through storytelling?

1.6- Scope of the study

Our investigation on how to teach through storytelling is not a perfect work; which means that any complementary work is possible. Considering that no human investigation is a perfect one, this work can be improved in several aspects.

Firstly, taking into account the fact that a teacher should vary activities and strategies of teaching, a teacher shouldn't teach by telling stories all the time. Students will find it boring and monotonous.

Secondly, storytelling is not suitable for every lesson. It may serve as warming up to call the attention of the learners who seem sleepy or annoyed.

Thirdly, the choice of suitable and short stories is very important because long stories will be time consuming for the teacher and boring for learners.

According to Foss (2009), there are eight elements constituting a story: setting, characters, narrator, events, temporal relations, causal relations, audience and theme. It should be noted that in Foss's discussion about narrative criticism, the artifact being analyzed should contain at least two events which are in sequence of time or cause, but a story used in class may be much shorter in length and less complex. However, it must contain some major elements.

Foss (2009) claims that a narrative should contain at least two events which are: the major events also called kernels and the minor events also called satellites. The satellites do not affect the basic story line; they only have rhetoric effect. Temporal and causal relations are about the relation between these events.

The narrator should pay attention to the chronology of the events in the narration in order to keep the major theme throughout the narration.

The presentation of the research work will continue with the literature review in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter aims to give more explanation about the role of storytelling in the process of EFL teaching. I will focus on the conception of some authors to get more information about the use of storytelling in teaching some language skills and the role that it can play in warming the class.

2.1-What is storytelling?

Storytelling is a skill that can be effectively directed to improve other skills such as writing, grammar, listening, and speaking. Storytelling is the oldest form of education: cultures around the world have always told tales as a way of passing down their beliefs, traditions, and history to future generations.

Storytelling in any form can also be defined as a natural way for students to build literacy skills. Learning how to tell a story by writing it down, talking about it, and learning to actively listen to someone else's story. All these activities teach essential language skills in brilliantly significant contexts.

Champion(2003) states that *“storytelling is an oral activity where language and gestures are used in a Colorful way to create scenes in a sequence.”* However, storytelling consists of more than just telling stories. It may include not only creating a story but also the use of pictures, acting, singing, story writing and so on. Isabel et al (2004) have written that

“Stories are pervasively used as a powerful and promising educational means for teaching and learning.” In fact, stories help teachers gain learners attention and they learn more easily because they can restate the message they have listened to in their own words. They learn without knowing, even if they have not taken note.

2.2-Storytelling and learning

Storytelling is a means for sharing and interpreting experiences. Stories are universal in that they can bridge cultural, linguistic, and age-related devices. Storytelling can be adapted for all ages, leaving out the notion of age segregation. It can be used as a method to teach ethics, values, and cultural norms and differences. Learning is most effective when it takes place in social environments that provide authentic social cues about how knowledge is to be applied. Stories function as a tool to pass on knowledge in a social context.

Human knowledge is based on stories and the human brain consists of cognitive machinery necessary to understand, remember, and tell stories. Stories mirror human thought as humans think in narrative structures and most often remember facts in a story form. Facts can be understood as smaller versions of a larger story, thus storytelling can supplement analytical thinking. Because it requires auditory and visual senses from listeners, one can learn to organize their mental representation of a story, recognize structure of language, and express his or her thoughts.

Stories tend to be based on experiential learning, but learning from an experience is not automatic. Often a person needs to attempt to tell the story of that experience before realizing its value. In this case, it is not only the listener who learns, but the teller who also becomes aware of his or her own unique experiences and background. This process of storytelling is empowering as the teller effectively conveys ideas and, with practice, is able to demonstrate the potential of human accomplishment. It taps into existing knowledge and creates bridges both culturally and motivationally toward a solution.

Storytelling can be seen as a foundation for learning and teaching. While the story listener is engaged, he/she is able to imagine new perspectives, inviting a transformative and empathetic experience. This involves allowing the individual to actively engage in the story as well as observe, listen and participate with minimal guidance. Listening to a storyteller can create lasting personal connections, promote innovative problem solving, and foster a shared understanding regarding future ambitions. The listener can then activate knowledge and imagine new possibilities. Together a storyteller and listener can seek best practices and invent new solutions. Because stories often have multiple layers of meanings, listeners have to listen closely to identify the underlying knowledge in the story. Storytelling is used as a tool to teach children the importance of respect through the practice of listening. As well as connecting children with their environment, through the theme of the stories, and give them more autonomy by using repetitive statements, which improve their learning to learn competence. It is also used to teach children to have respect for all life, value inter-connectedness, and always work to overcome adversity. To teach this a Kinesthetic learning style would be used, involving the listeners through music, dream interpretation, or dance.

In the Quechua community of Highland Peru, there is no separation between adults and children. This allows children to learn storytelling through their own interpretations of the given story. Therefore, children in the Quechua community are encouraged to listen to the story that is being told in order to learn about their identity and culture. Sometimes, children are expected to sit quietly and listen actively. This enables them to engage in activities as independent learners.

2.3-Storytelling in indigenous cultures

For indigenous cultures of the Americas, storytelling is used as an oral form of language associated with practices and values essential to developing one's

identity. This is because everyone in the community can add their own touch and perspective to the narrative collaboratively - both individual and culturally shared perspectives, and have a place in the co-creation of the story. Oral storytelling in indigenous communities differs from other forms of stories because they are told not only for entertainment, but for teaching values. For example, the Sto:lo community in Canada focuses on reinforcing children's identity by telling stories about the land to explain their roles.

For many indigenous people, experience has no separation between the physical world and the spiritual world. Thus, indigenous people communicate to their children through ritual, storytelling, or dialogue, for everything comes from the Great Spirit or Creator and is one. Everything, including inanimate objects, has a soul and is to be respected. These values, learned through storytelling, help to guide future generations and aid in identity formation.

Storytelling in indigenous cultures is typically passed on by oral means in a quiet and relaxing environment, which usually coincides with family or tribal community gatherings and official events such as family occasions, rituals, or ceremonial practices. In order to insure that each member has equal access to the elders and the storyteller during the storytelling, people seat themselves in the shape of a circle, which promotes a feeling of unity among the tribe because no single person is at the head. During the telling of the story, children may act as participants by asking questions, acting out the story, or telling smaller parts of the story.

Furthermore, stories are not often told in the same manner twice, resulting in many variations of a single myth. This is because narrators may choose to insert new elements into old stories dependent upon the relationship between the storyteller and the audience, making the story correspond to each unique situation.

Indigenous cultures also use instructional ribbing— a playful form of correcting children's undesirable behavior— in their stories. For example, the Ojibwe (or Chippewa) tribe in Peru uses the tale of an owl snatching away misbehaving children. The caregiver will often say, "The owl will come and stick you in his ears if you don't stop crying!" Thus, this form of teasing serves as a tool to correct inappropriate behavior and promote cooperation.

2.4-Types of Storytelling

There are various types of stories in many indigenous communities. These stories may be used for coming of age themes, core values, morality, literacy, and history. Very often, the stories are used to instruct and teach children about cultural values and lessons. The meaning within the stories is not always explicit, and children are expected to make their own meaning of the stories. In the Lakota Tribe of North America, for example, young girls are often told the story of the White Buffalo Calf Woman, who is a spiritual figure that protects young girls from the whims of men. In the Odawa Tribe, (North America) young boys are often told the story of a young man who never took care of his body, and as a result, his feet fail to run when he tries to escape predators. This story serves as an indirect means of encouraging the young boys to take care of their bodies.

2.5-Values of storytelling

Stories in indigenous cultures encompass a variety of values. These values include an emphasis on individual responsibility, concern for the environment, and communal welfare.

Stories are based on values passed down by older generations to shape the foundation of the community. Storytelling is used as a bridge for knowledge and understanding, allowing the values of "self" and "community" to connect and be learned as a whole. Typically, stories are used as an informal learning tool in Indigenous American communities, and can act as an alternative method for reprimanding children's bad behavior. In this way, stories are non-confrontational, which allows the child to discover for themselves what they did wrong and what they can do to adjust the behavior.

Parents in the Arizona Tewa community, for example, teach morals to their children through traditional narratives. Lessons focus on several topics including historical or "sacred" stories or more domestic disputes. Through storytelling, the Tewa community emphasizes the traditional wisdom of the ancestors and the importance of collective as well as individual identities. Indigenous communities teach children valuable skills and morals through the actions of good or mischievous stock characters while also allowing room for children to make meaning for themselves. By not being given every element of the story, children rely on their own experiences and formal teaching from adults to fill in the gaps

When children listen to stories, they periodically vocalize their ongoing attention and accept the extended turn of the storyteller. The emphasis on attentiveness to surrounding events and the importance of oral tradition in indigenous communities teaches children the skill of keen attention. For example, Children of the **Tohono O'odham** American Indian community who engaged in more cultural practices were able to recall the events in a verbally presented story better than those who did not engage in cultural practices. Body movements and gestures help to communicate values and keep stories alive for future generations. Elders, parents, and grandparents are typically involved in teaching the children the cultural ways, along with history, community values and teachings of the land.

Storytelling also serves to deliver a particular message during spiritual and ceremonial functions. In the ceremonial use of storytelling, the unity building theme of the message becomes more important than the time, place, and characters of the message. Once the message is delivered, the story is finished. As cycles of the tale are told and retold, story units can recombine, showing various outcomes for a person's actions

2.6- Stories in speaking classes

Stories have always played a significant role in children's growth. Zobairi and Gulley(1989) stipulates that Stories not only help in stimulating children's imagination and understanding of the world, but also in developing children's language ability and appreciating literature. It is just as Wright wrote, "*Stories which rely so much on words, offer a major and constant source of language experience for children*"(Wright,1995).

The primary reason to recommend storytelling in the EFL speaking classroom is that stories are motivating and immensely interesting, and can best attract listeners and promote communication. Cooter (1991) argues that "*The excitement and drama of storytelling provide attention a context that holds students'.*" Secondly, stories are an enormous language treasure. For hundreds of years, thousands of stories have been created and passed down. Many old stories are regarded as the models of language and treasures of the culture, from which learners at various language levels and age groups can find suitable stories to read and tell. It would be a waste and a pity if they are neglected in the course of EFL. In addition, stories are easily accessible; storybooks can be found in bookstores and borrowed from libraries or friends. Today, the most convenient and quickest way to find stories is from the Internet. "*Storytelling costs nothing, is enjoyable, and can be used anywhere and at any time*" (Zabel, 1991).

Thirdly, the lively atmosphere and real life environment created by stories encourage the students to talk and discuss with each other. When telling and listening to a story, the learners will easily be plunged into the plots and the scene and forget about themselves, which will, to a great degree, relieve their nervousness. Colon-vila (1997) also commented that *storytelling helps EFL learners become more self-confident to express themselves spontaneously and creatively. However, teachers have not been that zealous to use it in the classroom (Alvey,1977).*

Some students say that they have no time to meet with their partners and practice dialogues when they fail to do it well. Though, sometimes it is just an excuse. Nevertheless, storytelling helps solve the problem: partners are not indispensable to practice storytelling though it is better to have an audience.

2.7- How Stories are used?

Short stories as warming Up in EFL classes

The students listen to some stories downloaded from the Internet and repeat as they listen. This gives them an opportunity to improve their pronunciation, stress and intonation. They are offered three stories each time and required to practice the one they like best. A competition is held every two weeks. When every student has learned to tell three to five stories naturally and expressively, they feel much more confident in telling stories in English than before.

In other cases the teacher can tell a funny story that he prepared from home for learners to make them laugh and feel at ease and comfortable.

There are many ways to use stories in the oral English classroom. It is also advised to encourage the students to find more interesting stories and create different ways to use them. Besides, in the course of looking for, rewriting and completing stories, their reading, writing and imagination can be further developed; teamwork and friendship will become stronger by working in groups. So let stories be a member of your oral English class!

Who are the beneficiaries of Stories?

Stories are often connected with children. In fact, they are not only loyal listeners; they also like to tell stories. The language classroom is just the place for children to share stories and show their language abilities. In China, there are various kinds of storytelling competitions in kindergartens and schools, attracting many children to participate. As long as the teacher gives proper instruction, children would be very pleased to learn storytelling in English.

Besides, many stories can be adopted into short plays and children enjoy performing. It should also be pointed out that stories are not only for children. There are many stories for EFL learners of different levels and ages. I have tried using stories in English classrooms and found that even the poorest storyteller can be the center of attention. The following are just a few examples of using stories in the EFL speaking classroom arranged in the order of difficulty. At first, if the students are not confident in their speaking skills, it is recommended that the students be given enough time to prepare. As the students build their confidence and the classroom language environment becomes freer and active, the teacher could gradually increase the difficulty and make the game more versatile. To motivate and encourage the students, points and prizes are granted to good tellers and groups each time.

Storytelling as an Instructional Method

Because of children's characteristics, many educators have tried to adopt storytelling in the teaching of younger children, while some others also adopt it in classes for older learners and adults. Ringo Ma is one of them. Ma (1994) believed that *story-telling is an efficient teaching strategy for nonnative instructors in the U.S. higher education*. Foreign teachers sometimes find it hard to build trust among native students. Emphasizing his or her teaching experience or scholar accomplishment in the subject does not work so well. From the rhetoric perspective, *"the logos, ethos, and pathos derived from storytelling can make a nonnative instructor both meaningful and attractive to students"* (Ma,1994: 7). From an instructional perspective, Ma claimed that administrators and students at U.S. institutions of higher education lack pluralistic thinking. By telling students the teacher's multicultural experiences, pluralistic thinking is promoted, a multifocal system is built and the teacher's perceived status is changed from being a liability to an asset. Andrews et al. (2009) identify four instructional methods that are related to storytelling: case-based, narrative-based, scenario-based and problem-based instruction. Each method presents learners with *"a temporally ordered sequence of information and employs an attention-focusing mechanism"* (Andrews et al., 2009:7). The four instructional methods are generally used in military training.

Learner Autonomy and Storytelling

As the saying goes, "You can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink." In the English language classroom, teachers can make available all the necessary conditions and input, but learning can only take place when learners are interested and willing to do so. Learners may not always take active part in the learning process when forced or knowledge is "dumped" on them; rather they may passively "play along," waiting for the lesson to be over. For learners to take active part in the learning process, they need to understand and

acknowledge that success in learning depends as much on them as on the teacher. That is, both students and teacher share responsibility for the outcome (Scharle & Szabó, 2000). Learner autonomy in language teaching is an approach in which students take charge of their own learning. It is hinged on the understanding that giving students the opportunity to be responsible for their own learning may actually motivate them to learn, and the more involved students become in the learning process, the greater and longer lasting their learning will be (Aşık, 2010; Benson, 2003). Learner autonomy is in fact one of the main features of storytelling as a teaching strategy, for it redefines the roles of students and teacher (Palfreyman & Smith, 2003). In storytelling as in learner autonomy, after the teacher has made available all of the necessary learning conditions and inputs through prompts, introduction, reminders and outlines, the students themselves collaborate independently with peers and group members to create a story that appeals to their audience. Students therefore understand that the teacher serves as a facilitator who guides them, but the successful outcome depends as much on the students as on the teacher.

Multiple Intelligences (MI) and Storytelling

In 1983, Howard Gardner proposed the theory of multiple intelligences as a theory that differentiates intelligence into various specific models instead of viewing it as a single general ability (e.g. writing, reading or speaking ability) (Gardner, 1993). Gardner identifies eight separate intelligences as logical mathematical, linguistic, music, spatial relations, bodily kinaesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalist (Gardner 2006). Gardner sees linguistic intelligence as “the kind of ability exhibited in the fullest form, perhaps by poets, (p.49)”. In addition, he emphasise that linguistic ability is the most dramatic example of one puzzle of human learning with which we learn to carry performance (Gardner, 1991). As discussed earlier on, I consider poetry as a form of storytelling because reciting poetry fits Champion’s (2003) explanation of storytelling (for that matter poetry) as an oral activity where

language and gestures are used in a colourful way to create scenes in a sequence (Champion, 2003). In an instructional context, storytelling provides opportunities for language intelligences in storytelling, students have opportunities to build on their individual strengths in order to consolidate, expand and deepen their learning learners to use their Multiple Intelligences as basis to learn.

All students come to school with sets of developed intelligences. Students have both strengths and weaknesses. The emphasis is not on what strengths and weaknesses students have, but rather how teachers can appeal to many types of strengths. According to Woolfolk et al (2008), the fact “the purpose of school should be to develop intelligences and to help people reach vocational and ad vocational goals that are appropriate to their particular spectrum of intelligences” (p.50).t that a student might be weak in one area (e.g. vocabulary), does not mean that the student is weak in all the other skills in language (e.g. speaking). Therefore, Gardner (2006) wrote that,

The multiple intelligences theory suggests a major transformation in the way teachers can help students achieve their aim as learners. It encourages teachers to present lessons in a wide range of ways using music, cooperative learning, art activities, role-play, multimedia, field trips, inner reflection and so forth in their lessons because it will result in a broader scope of human potential in students. (Woolfolk et al, 2008).

Process Writing and Storytelling

Implementing process writing can take many forms depending on the writing task. Story writing is one of the forms in which process writing can be implemented. In story writing students are encouraged to create story outlines; make drafts; revise the drafts through peer or teacher feedback; and edit their work. When they are satisfied with the final draft, they share the work with their fellow students (Moore, 2001).

Johnson and Johnson (1999) look at process writing as a shift from the kind of writing exercise where the focus was put on the finished texts to the process of creating writing, e.g. from what is written and what grade it is worth, to how to write and to develop as a writer. The basic importance in process writing is on creating quality content and learning the techniques of writing. With process writing, students usually work through stages of the writing process as follows: Students start from the planning stage where they generate ideas for their writing. Secondly, they spend time to compose a rough draft. After the drafting stage, students move to the revising stage where they are encouraged to reread their work, share it with partners or group members and then make changes based on feedback. The subsequent stage requires students to make mechanical corrections to improve their writing. The final stage of the writing process, sharing, is reached when the work is in its final form. These stages are not sequential because writers move back and forth between these stages while writing.

Moore (2001) demonstrates the steps in story writing process as follows:

1. Prewriting: Takes place before writing begins. It is the time to become motivated and collect words, thoughts, facts and questions to use when writing. This step draws on the writer's experiences.

Brainstorm possible topics and formats. Discuss the intended audience. Determine the point of view of the story.

2. Drafting: This is writer's first expression of ideas in written form.

The writer creates an outline for the story and then writes a rough draft.

3. Responding: The writer reads the story to make sure that it makes sense. The writer may share the story to get another person's response.

4. Revising: The writer changes the rough draft to state ideas more clearly. This is the time to look at phrases and words that express the writer's ideas in a more precise and interesting way.

5. Editing: This is the point at which the writer checks the mechanics such as grammar, punctuation and spelling.

6. Rewriting: The writer re-writes to include all the changes made during the revising and editing stage.

7. Publishing: The writer presents the final story in finished form. It is shared with others in some way. This sharing with others is a motivating factor for students, as well as an important element in the writing process (p.2).

The above seven steps in story process writing share clear characteristics in process writing as described by Johnson and Johnson (1999). Moore (2001) further argues that it is imperative in story process writing to encourage students to learn the parts that make a story. First, she argues that before undertaking the main writing task, teachers need to elicit students to identify that stories have three main parts, which are beginning, middle and end. In addition, Moore indicates that before the main story writing process, teachers need to explain parts of what makes a good story to their students. She identifies these parts of story as characters (e.g. people, animals, creatures etc.), settings (location and time in which the story takes place), plots (including problems, incidents or actions that affects the characters and cause a reaction or a search of solution or conclusion) and finally, solution and conclusion (resolution of the problem or final outcome of the story).

Let us examine the following activities from *Internet TESL Journal*, vol. XIII, n^o 11, November 2007 to foster the use of stories in EFL classes.

Activity 1

Divide the students into groups and each group prepares a story. Each member of the group tells two to three sentences and the next one continues until the end of the story. The length of the story could gradually increase from two to three minutes or three minutes to four or five minutes. Before the lesson, students

could divide their tasks in advance and practice their own parts. They could also be given a few minutes to practice in class the whole story if necessary. The teacher moves among the groups and chooses two or three groups to present their stories before the class. Because the students have enough time to prepare and they are working together, this helps them build confidence and create a lively and brisk atmosphere.

Activity 2

Ask each student to prepare a story (about two minutes long) in advance. Divide the students into groups with four to five members in each group and ask them to tell his/her story in the group. The best storytellers in each group win ten points and compete for the best storyteller of the class. The winner wins another ten points for each member of his/her group and the second best wins eight points and so on.

Since the performance of each representative is connected to the score of everyone, the students will be greatly involved in the whole process and listen to the stories attentively, which will in turn promote the performance of the storytelling.

To avoid the few best storytellers dominating the activity, the best storytellers will be arranged in the same group next time. They will have to work harder in order to win again. This will make the winners stronger and at the same time, increase the opportunities of others and promote the whole class participation.

Activity 3

Divide the students into four to five groups and each group is given an opening of a story and asked to finish the story in about 20 minutes. Then select one student from each group to tell their story in the class and the best one wins 10

points for their group.

To get everyone fully involved and avoid the liability that each group just asks their best storyteller to do the job, the storytellers are selected by drawing lots instead of being chosen by themselves. This also helps enliven the atmosphere of the classroom. So each group must work together to make the story as interesting as they can. An alternative way is to ask each member of the group to tell a part of the story and make a whole.

Activity 4

Ask each group to hand in an incomplete story and redistribute them among the groups. Give the students 20 minutes to read their stories and finish them. After each group presents their story, compare it with the original one. The most interesting one and the one closest to the original wins.

Activity 5

The teacher gives the first sentence to the class and then each student adds one more sentence to make a whole story impromptu. Because there is no preparation and nobody has any idea about what the next person will say and where the story is going, there are often lots of fun and surprises in the game.

This game is suitable to the classes with no more than 20 students. If there are too many students, the students will wait too long to make his/her sentence, which is likely to make the game sluggish; also, the students may not hear each other clearly and this will reduce the success of the game. In the process of using stories, the teacher could, in different cases, choose to encourage the students to rewrite the stories, using their own language or ask them to keep the original language as much as they can.

The former way encourages the students to understand the stories and adds their own characteristics to the stories and the latter prompts them to learn to use new words and expressions. Besides, pictures, movies and other materials would

also be of great help in storytelling. After a few months, the students' speaking ability can be improved to considerable degree. The following are just a few examples of using stories in the EFL speaking classroom arranged in the order of difficulty.

At first, if the students are not confident in their speaking skills, it is recommended that the students be given enough time to prepare. As the students build their confidence and the classroom language environment becomes more free and active, the teacher could gradually increase the difficulty and make the game more versatile. To motivate and encourage the students, points and prizes are granted to good tellers and groups each time.

The next chapter will deal with the methodology of the research.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This section of the research report deals with the methods and procedure used while collecting data for the investigation. It will take into account the size and selection of the sample, the sources of data, the instruments and methods of gathering data, and reliability of instruments selected or constructed and statistical procedures used in the analysis.

3.1 Population

To carry out this research work, I choose as population the teachers and the students because I found that they are the most concerned and involved in the teaching/learning procedure. The investigation is carried out on the population of Lycee Toffa 1^{er} and CEG Djegan-kpevi. We selected this sample because we had the opportunity to teach in these schools, to observe many class sessions and to notice what can be useful and suitable to improve the teaching/learning procedure.

3.2 Sampling

The sample population of the study consisted of thirty teachers of English who teach in lycee toffa 1^{er} and CEG Djegan-kpevi with some other EFL teachers of Porto novo. I focused my study mainly on teachers because they are supposed to know much about the teaching and learning process.

4. Method of data collection

This section deals with the various methods and techniques of data collection. The ones I preferred for my investigation are the questionnaire and the interview. So the instruments used to carry out this research work are the questionnaire and interview.

3.3 Instrumentation

3.3.1 The questionnaire

I chose the questionnaire because I think that it is easier ways of letting people say their mind without the influence of the investigator which will affect the sincerity and the originality of the research. I also think that some people feel free to express themselves while writing than speaking.

The design of the questionnaire is as follows: there are yes or no questions. Before that, I have some questions which provide information about the background of the teacher (years of experience of the teacher, his professional qualifications and whether he is trained or not). This allows us to know what kind of teacher we are dealing with and to specify the problem following these criteria.

Most of the teachers I questioned were teaching for at least one year and at most fifteen (15) years. Most of the time they were surprised at the fact that I have chosen to conduct my research work in such domain because they thought that it is not common. Very few of them thought of the possibility of teaching through storytelling. Nevertheless, they agreed to help me conduct this research paper even if some of them were incapable to hand back the questionnaire to me. The major part of them was comprehensible and very kind.

My suggestions for improving the procedures in further study will be to wait and collect my questionnaire automatically and to praise my interviewees to be as frank as possible.

3.3.2 The interview

The data collection takes also into account the interviews. I interviewed some teachers to know what they think about the use of storytelling in EFL classes. I designed the interview paper as follows:

-does it happen to you to use stories in class to teach a given or some language skills?

-what do you think about teaching English through storytelling?

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS OF THE STUDY

This chapter is the heart of the research work. Here, all the data that we have collected will be presented and analyzed. We will analyze part of them and illustrate with statistical tables. After that, we will discuss the findings related to our topic; and then point out the similarities and the differences between the data collected and teaching through storytelling so as to propose appropriate solutions to the various problems.

4.1-Results of the questionnaire

Out of the thirty teachers to whom we gave the questionnaires we succeeded in collecting back twenty seven (27). This represents more than half of the expected answers of the research paper, that is, the majority of the data expected. Even if everyone has not responded to all the questions that we found useful, we are pleased to gather this number of answers, since it helps us find out the teachers mind of teaching English through storytelling and to analyze what can be the use of storytelling in EFL classes. It allows us to know whether they use stories or not in their classes, in other words, how often they use it if they do use stories.

All the answers we gathered to the questions that will help us find out whether they teach through storytelling or not, were “NO”. So we draw as conclusion that they (teachers) don’t teach through storytelling. Nevertheless, they tried to provide answer for the remaining part of the questionnaire. What are surprising are teachers’ background and the fact that they say they never use storytelling to teach in class situation. Here is a table which shows the years of experience of the teachers we sampled during our investigation. (see next page)

Question 1:How long have you been teaching English?

Years of experience	Frequency	Percentage
1-5 years	12	44.45%
5-10years	10	37.03%
10-15years	05	18.52%
15-20years	00	00
Total	27	100

Table1: years of experience of the teachers

The results in this table show that 44.45 per cent of the participants had a teaching experience of 1-5 years; 37.03 per cent have a teaching experience of 5-10 years and 18.52 per cent have a teaching experience of 10-20years. This shows that all the teachers we questioned experience teaching for at least one year and at most fifteen years.

Question 2: What are your academic and professional qualifications?

The answers are presented in the following table.

Professional qualifications	Frequency	Percentage
DUEL	00	00
License	03	11.11
Maitrise	07	25 .92
BAPES	15	55 .55
CAPES	02	07.40
TOTAL	27	100

Table 2: The professional and academic qualifications of the teachers

As far as the teachers qualifications are concerned, we learn through this table that only two(02) teachers get the degree of CAPES; (15)fifteen get their BAPES; (07) seven get the maitrise degree, (03) three for license and (00) nobody for DUEL. So, all the teachers are more or less trained.

Question 3: Are you a trained teacher, an untrained teacher, or being trained?

For this question we may draw a conclusion from the answers of the previous question. The majority of the teachers are trained.

Question 4 Do you use storytelling in your classes?

The use of storytelling	Frequency	Percentage
YES	00	00
NO	27	100
TOTAL	27	100

Table 3: The use of storytelling in EFL classes

For the fourth question the fact is clear; all the teachers ticked NO. This table shows that none of the teachers we sampled teach through storytelling.

Question 5: If yes, how often?

For this answer, the previous answers showed that they don't use storytelling in their classes. This allows us to conclude that they never use storytelling.

Question 6: What purpose does storytelling serve in an EFL teaching?

These are presented in the following table.

As far as the positive impacts of storytelling in EFL classes are concerned, the results are presented in the table below.

Purposes of storytelling	frequency	percentage
To motivate students	06	22.22
To encourage concentration	02	07.40
To teach different language skills & elements	04	14.81
To create a good atmosphere in the class	02	07.41
All these	13	48.14
TOTAL	27	100

Table 4: The purposes of storytelling in EFL classes

From this chart we can learn that all the respondent teachers we have sampled, though they don't use storytelling, think that it is useful in an EFL teaching class. In fact, 22.22% of teachers think that storytelling can serve as motivating learners, whereas 07.40 agree that storytelling encourages concentration and creates good atmosphere; 14.81% of the teachers accept that, through storytelling we can teach different language skills and elements and 48.14 of the teachers attest that storytelling can serve for all the previous use. So, the major part of the respondents recognized that storytelling is important in teaching EFL classes.

Question 7: Does storytelling affects your teaching positively?

The results are presented in the following table

Positivity of storytelling in teaching	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	25	92.59
No	02	07.41
Total	27	100

Table 6: Positivity of storytelling in teaching

The results in this table clearly present 25 yes out of 27 teachers. In other words, 92.59% suggest that storytelling has a positive impact on EFL teaching. And only (02), that is, 07.41% think the contrary. The answers to the next question which is the second part of this question will give more explanation about how storytelling affects positively an EFL teaching.

Question 8: If yes, (storytelling can affect the teaching of a foreign language positively), how?

Positive impact of storytelling	Frequency	Percentage
Students are interested	00	00
They are excited	00	00
They feel motivated to speak	00	00
They learn in a stress free atmosphere	00	00
All of these	27	100
Total	27	100

Table 7: Positive impacts of the use of storytelling in EFL classes.

For this question, all of the teachers ticked “all these”, meaning that they agree that storytelling has positive impacts on the teaching in that learners are interested, they feel excited and motivated to speak, they learn in a free atmosphere. We collected 27 positive answers out of 27. This average allows us to state that the use of storytelling has positive impacts in the English language learning and teaching EFL classes.

Question 9 Where can you find stories?

Where to find stories	Frequency	Percentage
In textbooks	01	3.70
In magazines	02	07.40
In folk stories	16	59.25
From internet	02	07.41
From my own cultural background	06	22.22
Total	27	100

Table 8 Places to find stories

During our investigation, we notice that most of the stories are found in folk stories book or from the teacher's own culture. The table shows that the average is 59.25% for folk stories and 22.22% for the teacher's own cultural background

Question 10 What problems can you encounter in using storytelling in your classes?

Here is the table showing the results of this question

Problems encountered by teachers in using storytelling in their classes	Frequency	Percentage
I lack relevant materials	02	07.40
It may be sometimes time consuming	08	29.62
I find it difficult to adapt stories to the level of the students	18	66.66
Some students may find it boring	00	00
Total	27	100

Table 8 Problems encountered by teachers in using storytelling

The results presented in the table above allow me to state that teachers have the problem to adapt stories to the level of the students: 66.66% tick for this answer; and 29.62 % find that it is time consuming. None of the teachers ticked for ‘some students find it boring’. So the conclusion we draw from this table for the problems of the use of storytelling in EFL classes is that teachers have difficulties to adapt the stories to the level of the students. Besides, they find it time consuming and some others lack relevant materials to teach through storytelling.

Question 11: Any comments about using storytelling to teach English?

This is the only one open-ended question that I ask about teaching through storytelling and very few reacted to it. Out of the twenty seven answers I collected, only two provide answer to this question. The first one said that he thinks from now on that English language can be taught through storytelling. The second one argued that telling stories in class sessions will be a kind of training students' brain to listening comprehension and speaking because they will have to react to what they have listened to.

Through the analysis of the answers of the questionnaire, we have approximatively information about the purpose, the influence and the source of the stories that teachers use. Almost all the eleven items were answered by the respondents and there are twenty five who do not have any comment about the use of storytelling to teach English.

Most of the teachers to whom we handed the questionnaire were trained and most of them confessed that they don't really use stories in their EFL classes. About the purpose of the use of storytelling in classes, though they don't use it, they think that that it can serve as a tool of motivation for learners, and to teach different language skills and elements. Some others agreed that the purpose of storytelling in class is to encourage concentration and to create a good atmosphere in the class. Out of the twenty seven teachers' questionnaires that we have collected, all the twenty seven agree that students are interested in storytelling and feel motivated and excited to speak. We also learn that some of the stories come from the teachers own cultural background, from internet and from textbooks.

4.2-Results of interview

Question 1: Does it happen to you that you teach by telling stories?

All of the answers I got were negative: they don't use storytelling. The results are presented in table below

Use of storytelling	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	00	00
No	27	100
Total	27	100%

Table 9: Use of storytelling

From the answers in the table, we can state that none of the teachers we interviewed used storytelling in class situation.

Question 2What do you think about teaching English through storytelling?

They provide answers to this question by saying that they think it may be possible to teach English to beginners by telling stories but sometimes, it will be difficult to do so because they doubt about the understanding of the stories by students. They argued in saying that some learners may be absent minded if they do not understand anything and even lose motivation. So, stories will be convenient to advanced learners and maybe short stories will suit beginners. And there should be many gestures to make the stories motivating and vivid calling then the attention of learners.

4.3- Interpretation of the results

After analyzing the collected data, it appears that teachers are not accustomed to teaching through storytelling. Nevertheless, they say their mind about the use of storytelling in teaching, and many of them agreed that storytelling can be used in EFL classes for it has several advantages. They found that storytelling can

help gaining students' attention, and encourage motivations. It makes students feel excited and have them learn in a stress free atmosphere. So, if each EFL teacher inserts storytelling in his/her teaching, it will be a way of breaking with the routine of everyday and it will develop the creativity of both teachers and learners. Thus a good teacher must not be accustomed to monotony and should find another way of delivering his message to learners in a significant and vivid way that would profit both learners and teachers. Teachers should also pay attention to the type of stories they could choose to teach different language functions and skills. Stories must be as interesting as possible and not too long, to consume all the time and be boring to learners. Stories must be accompanied with the relevant gestures and tone of the voice or mimics that can help an easy understanding of the story.

It is useful to mention that most of the teachers do not know how to teach by telling stories. For that, some activities are designed in chapter two to show how activities may be designed to teach in an effective way.

The following chapter is about the recommendations, the suggestions and the general conclusion.

CHAPTER FIVE: RECOMMENDATIONS, SUGGESTIONS AND GENERAL CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter is to give some recommendations and propose suggestions before providing a general conclusion to our investigation. But before doing all these, we shall do a brief summary of our findings. After our investigation, we have collected a certain number of data that we shall summarize in this part of the research paper and make a clear conclusion of our findings. To summarize our finding we can say that the use of stories in most class sessions is very helpful because it helps to maintain a good atmosphere in the classroom. But the problem is that teachers do not pay attention to the use of stories in their teaching. Some confess that they never use it but in fact they do it without paying attention to it. We shall mention that using storytelling has advantages and drawbacks and difficulties. As advantages, we can firstly, acknowledge that it helps gain learners attention and enables the students to be exposed to a moral dilemma or problem solving exercise. Secondly, using storytelling in EFL teaching develops a sense of community and let them explore personal roles and also share stories of success. Thirdly, the use of stories makes sense of learners live; besides, it contains linguistic information including vocabulary, grammar and language learning phobia. Moreover, storytelling reduces learners' intensity of the language learning and invokes their curiosity, concentration, imagination and critical thinking. Finally, it enhances facilitation, develops interaction and respect, and provides moral lessons.

Concerning the disadvantages, we must confess that *it is sometimes time consuming* (Rosen, 1988) as far as the preparation and the presentation are concerned. Fairbairn states that *though students require safe environment it happens that the topic may be threatening if it challenges personal values* (Fairbairn, 2002). *If students are being asked to write, they may need direction, hence the necessity of previous exposure. The latter requires visualization skills*

which may not suit the learning style (Davidson, 2003) and all these will be possible dependent on the enthusiasm of the lecturer (Weimer, 2002).

After my investigations, I noticed that most of the EFL teachers don't have a clear idea about how to teach English language by telling stories. The results of the investigation show that they do not use it. I have tried to provide some corrective recommendations to motivate teachers to the use and the promotion of stories in the class sessions.

5.1- Recommendations

My recommendations toward EFL teachers are to try the use of storytelling in their classes to foster the practice of the language they are learning in order to develop their communication device because learning a language depends on its practice. Teachers of English should find ways to encourage learners by telling stories which will excite and motivate learners to speak. Learners should feel free to involve themselves in the teaching and participate actively.

5.2-Suggestions

My suggestions are particularly addressed to the Teachers of English since they are the main actors directing the teaching. They should do their best to arise learners' will of studying the foreign language so that they can practise it in and outside the classroom, that is, in real life situations. Storytelling will then pull students to try to narrate what they witness in every day situation in the foreign language and help them do this to use their own words. And the teachers should assign learners such activities. In fact, storytelling can be used to teach many language functions.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Teaching English as a foreign language is not an easy job unlike teaching itself. To achieve this goal, teachers must create most of the time a good atmosphere that will help learners to be involved in teaching develop their speaking ability. For this to be effective, teachers should find various ways to make students communicate in the foreign language through in the classroom and even outside. One of these ways is to teach through storytelling which is the topic of this investigation.

To achieve this goal, I went through different steps in which, I discuss about the use of storytelling in EFL teaching; we also expose the advantages and disadvantages of storytelling. But before that, we provide information about the source of storytelling, the role of its use in the traditional societies and how it served as a tool of education in the former societies and is still being an instrument of teaching language skills nowadays.

The first part of my research paper dealt with the introductory section. In this part, I provided information about the background knowledge of storytelling and stated clearly the purpose of the study. A general idea of how the research paper will be conducted was given.

The second part of my research paper was a summary of the documents I read and which deal with storytelling. In that section, I used the thinking of other previous authors to give more explanations about my topic, which enables us to know more about storytelling.

In the following parts of the work, the instruments and the methodology used to carry out this research paper were presented. Through this research work, I investigated the use of storytelling in teaching, how storytelling can be used to teach various language skills in a vivid way. In fact, I found out that teachers do not use storytelling in EFL classes and most of them do not know how it can be used to carry out the language teaching. Indeed, teachers confessed frankly that

they don't teach through storytelling but they think it can be used in class situations. Through the questionnaire I handed to them some data were collected that I analyzed.

The data collected revealed that storytelling can have positive impacts in teaching English as a foreign language. Positive impacts like motivation, gaining learners' attention, having them react to the stories they have heard by using their own words, exciting learners to speak. But while teaching through telling stories, some problems may raise.

Concerning the problems teachers can encounter in using storytelling in their EFL classes, I found that teachers find it difficult to adapt stories to the level of the students and sometimes, it may be time consuming. I found also that teachers lack relevant materials. As far as the sources of stories are concerned, the revealed data state that they can be found in teachers' own cultural background, and most of the time in folk stories.

To put an end to this research paper, I made some recommendations to EFL teachers. Suggestions have been done to EFL teachers about the activities they can use to foster the language acquisition. Since the objective of EFL teaching is to help learners to communicate fluently in the target language, teachers should provide an authentic model of language use.