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IMPROVING THE ACQUISITION OF SPEAKING  
SKILLS IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE  
THROUGH THE USE OF AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS  
IN BEGINNER CLASSES: THE STUDY CASE OF CEG  
LES COCOTIERS

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# **DEDICATION**

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This research work is dedicated to my family for their moral and material assistance

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# List of acronyms

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BAPES : Brevet d’Aptitudes au Professorat de l’Enseignement Secondaire

CAPES: Certificat d’Aptitudes au Professorat de l’Enseignement Secondaire

CEG: Collège d’Enseignement Général

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

JSS: Junior Secondary School

OGTV: Ogun State Television

ORTB: Office de Radiodiffusion et Télévision du Benin

SSS: Senior Secondary School

TEFL: Teaching English as a Foreign Language

## **INTRODUCTION**

The main purpose of a language acquisition is the ability to use that language accurately in communication. The real communication happens when one uses a language appropriately through the development of the four skills i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Though it is actually true that in Teaching English as a foreign language all these four skills are important, the ultimate skill that all English learners ever want to develop is speaking. Being able to communicate in any real life situation with any users of the English language would be a full achievement for EFL learners.

In this viewpoint, there stands a prominent emphasis on the acquisition of speaking skills in the EFL teaching/learning process from the part of learners. Therefore, teachers in such circumstances should always keep in mind that the success of their English language teaching is to some extent dependent upon the effective strategies they use in ensuring the acquisition of English speaking skill.

It is by focusing on the aspect of EFL in secondary schools that we have found it necessary to choose as topic for this dissertation the use of Visual Aids to ensure the effective acquisition of speaking. The stress on Visual Aids in teaching English especially in this twenty first century technological world constitutes one of the important ways to make the teaching/learning process concrete and effective. Additionally, the integration of these teaching methods can considerably help the teachers arouse the motivation of the learners in the activities and make them become more and more involved in the different speaking activities.

In Benin, a French speaking country where students of English as a foreign language have great difficulty to keep in contact with the use of the language in real life communication, the contribution of Visual Aids to a successful teaching of speaking could be a good strategy in order to expose the learners to authentic English language inputs. The Visual Aids greatly involves beneficial strategies in teaching language and should be deemed important to be constantly explored through a thorough research work. That is why, through this research work, efforts will be made to analyze the ongoing situation of EFL teaching techniques and methods in our schools and to focus on many other varieties of techniques in order to teach speaking effectively with the help of Visual Aids.

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. The first chapter introduces the study; the second chapter focuses on the literature review dealing with the visuals as well as the teaching of speaking. The third chapter goes about the methodology of the research to collect information about the topic; in this chapter, the data collected; in the fourth chapter their analysis will be developed. The fifth chapter deals with the recommendations and suggestions and the conclusion.

# Chapter one

## IDENTIFICATION TO THE STUDY

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This chapter deals with the purpose of the study, the statement of the problem, the significance and the limitation to the study.

### **1-1 Problem statement**

As it has been said in the introduction the main goal of all language learning is to be able to communicate effectively. Teachers of English mostly focus on grammar. In classes, many students can demonstrate the English grammatical rules they have learned in books. They know all about “if clauses”, “preterits”, “passive voices”. And instead, they cannot communicate for at least one minute in English. One can notice that the main goal of teaching a language is missed since students cannot even utter a single sentence in English. What this means is that the methods used to teach the students speaking skills are not effective enough and something more is needed to make learners become good speakers in the English language. Torikai (2000) states that “ grammar is not only useless, but actually is harmful in acquiring speaking ability”. Expertise in language should not only be the ability to recite the rules of its grammar. The point is that they cannot even combine those rules in order to make meaningful sentences .When the teacher is conducting a speaking activity and want them to talk about the topic they would rather him to translate it in French, even some students even consider English classes to be useless and prefer studying mathematics.

The consequence for students in “3ème” who have neglected English classes is that during oral exams they are unable to perform successfully. To this sense, students show a great degree of their inability. The real issue is that we should also think about the effectiveness of our English teaching methods. As part of this study, some

speaking activities in the students' textbook of "3ème" have been under focus. For instance, in the Learning Situation 2 (Food and Health) there is a speaking activity on page 51; students are instructed to read two dialogues and then build their own dialogues in order to read it in pairs for the rest. Speaking is not reading aloud what someone else has written or reading one's writing. It is not natural. In real life communication people do not have time to think and write down their thoughts before speaking. Those analyses show that both students and teachers are responsible of that failure.

## **1-2 Purpose of the study**

In Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), developing the students' four skills is the main target. Indeed, a prominent skill among these aptitudes is speaking. It represents an ability which really shows that EFL students actually master their target language. Therefore, helping students acquire appropriate speaking skills and being able to converse with any fluent speaker or native speaker should constitute the utmost concern of all EFL teachers.

It is the concern of shedding light on the importance of the effective ways to ensure a good teaching of speaking that has led to consider the place of audio-visual materials in English as a Foreign Language in our secondary schools today. As a matter of fact, this study deals with the students and teachers views about the audio-visual materials and how they can contribute to an effective teaching of speaking.

To reach this goal, two research questions have served to conduct the investigation in order to collect relevant information:

- What are the students' views about the audio-visual materials in the acquisition of effective speaking skills?
- How do teachers perceive the teaching of speaking skills in a classroom as far as audio-visual materials?

### **1-3-Significance**

In 1983, Virginia Allen in her book *Techniques in Teaching Vocabulary* stated that ‘*when students can touch something in addition to hearing and seeing the word that names it, there is a stronger chance that the word will be learnt*’. The main objective of this research work is to show that students can better acquire the English language speaking skills through the use of Audio-Visual by their teachers while teaching. Emphasis is too much put on grammar and students do not often have the opportunity to use the language neither in classroom nor outside the classroom. And we have to notice that as everything is evolving language also is going forward and one should take into account and try to use the new techniques in teaching a second language in order to be up to date and not to get students bored with traditional teaching. This work is not criticizing the old methods but the result we can see is that students learn the language for seven years and even more and they are not able to speak correctly the language.

Audio-Visual aids or materials can help the teacher save time and energy and they give motivation to students and they are happy to come to English class because they know they won't be bored and they will have fun. The choice of beginner classes is justified by the fact that it is important for those junior learners to get motivation right at their level before moving forward. This research work is meaningful because it gives the setting for the use of these tools and help to know which material one can use and for what activity.

#### **1-4-Limitation of the study**

In the framework of the end of my training at the Teacher Training School of Porto/Novo, we have to write a memoire and our topic is "*improving the acquisition of speaking skills in English As a Foreign language through the use of Audio-Visual materials in beginner classes the case of CEG Les Cocotiers*". This research work aims to design techniques for teaching effectively speaking and for learners to better acquire speaking skills. Within the four skills in learning English Speaking and listening are linked and complementary. We have chosen only Speaking because it because human being need to communicate orally in life for many purposes. This work does not cover all the national territory. It is rather restricted to We have 6ème and 5ème. I have targeted these beginner classes because they are more sensitive and need more attention in order to get motivation and stimulation for learning English

## **1-5 Clarification of concepts**

### **1-5-1 What is speaking?**

Speaking is the delivery of language through the mouth. To speak we create sounds using many parts of our body, including the lungs, vocal chords, tongue, teeth and lips. Speaking is the second of the four skills. Speaking can be formal or informal.

- Informal speaking is typically used with family and friends, or people you know well.
- Formal speaking occurs in business or academic situations.

Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving information. Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experiences, the physical environment, and the purposes for speaking. It is spontaneous, open-ended and evolving (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997).

According to Suryati (2011), speaking is the process of orally expressing thoughts and feeling or reflecting and shaping information. Speaking determines which logical linguistic, psychological and physical rules that should be applied in a given communicative situation.

Speaking in EFL context involves two main concepts: fluency and accuracy. Speaking English accurately means that one speaks with very few mistakes whereas speaking fluently means that one speaks easily, quickly with few pauses. The point is that students are not native speakers; so we cannot expect them to be fluent and

accurate as well. We can just expect them to find a balance between fluency and accuracy.

### **1-5-2 Definition of Audio-Visual materials**

Also called Audio-Visual aids they can be divided them in two parts: Visual aids are any instructional device that can be seen but not heard and Audio aids are any instructional device that can be heard but not seen. Audio-Visual aids can be defined as materials that have to do with both sight and hearing. According to Burton Audio-Visual aids are those sensory objects or images which initiate, stimulate and reinforce learning.

Kinder S. James says that Audio-Visual materials are any device which can be used to make the learning experience more concrete, more realistic and more dynamic.

## Chapter two

# LITERATURE REVIEW

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In this chapter I am going to deal with literary works concerning teaching speaking in general and the use of audio-visual materials to teach speaking in particular. The importance of teaching speaking has been proved by Human (2001) when he wrote “success is measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation in the target language”. Research over the last decade has confirmed that a variety of affective variables relate to success in a second language acquisition. Most of those studied can be placed into one of these three categories:

(1) Motivation: Performers with high motivation generally do better in second language acquisition.

(2) Self-confidence: Performers with self-confidence and a good self-image tend to do better in second language acquisition.

(3) Anxiety: Low anxiety appears to be conducive to second language acquisition, whether measured as personal or classroom anxiety. (Krashen 1982, p.31)

## **2-1 Theories of a second language acquisition**

The main objective in teaching a language is to make students communicate, understand and interpret the language they are learning and a teacher will say that he/she did his job well only when his students are able to talk effectively in the English language. Second language acquisition is the process by which people learn a second language; it refers to the scientific discipline devoted to studying that process. Yet there is a difference between acquisition and learning. The linguist Krashen(1982) made popular this difference. According to him, acquisition is “ the natural constructive process through which we know and use a language” and learning is a

“formal nonconstructive process”. There are many theories and methods concerning second language acquisition. They are:

### **2-1-1 Grammar-translation**

Most grammar-translation classes are designed for foreign language instruction and are taught in the student's first language. Grammar-translation implicitly assumes that conscious control of grammar is necessary for mastery. In other words, learning needs to precede acquisition. This assumption necessitates that all target structures be introduced and explained.

### **2-1-2 Audio-lingualism**

The lesson typically begins with a dialogue, which contains the structures and vocabulary of the lesson. The student is expected to mimic the dialogue and eventually memorize it.

Theoretically, conscious learning is not an explicit goal of audio-lingualism. The goal, rather, is to have the student over-learn a variety of patterns to be used directly in performance. In practice, however, audio-lingual teaching often results in inductive learning, the student attempting to work out a conscious rule on the basis of the dialogue and pattern practice, with the explanation section serving to confirm or disconfirm his guess.

### **2-1-3 Cognitive-code**

Cognitive-code bears some similarity to grammar-translation, but also differs in some ways. While the goal of grammar-translation is basically to help students read literature in the target language, cognitive code attempts to help the student in all four

skills, speaking and listening in addition to reading and writing. All discussion, all classroom language, is the target language. This includes the language of the exercises and teacher talk used for classroom management. The method focuses on inductive teaching of grammar. The goal of the instruction is for the students to guess, or work out, the rules of the language.

#### **2-1-4 The natural approach**

The Natural Approach was developed by Tracy Terrell at the University of California at Irvine for foreign language instruction at the university and high school levels. The method can be described by the following principles:

- Class time is devoted primarily to providing input for acquisition.
- The teacher speaks only the target language in the classroom.
- Students may use either the first or second language. If they choose to respond in the second language, their errors are not corrected unless communication is seriously impaired.
- Homework may include formal grammar work. Error correction is employed in correcting homework.
- The goals of the course are "semantic"; activities may involve the use of a certain structure, but the goals are to enable students to talk about ideas, perform tasks, and solve problems.

#### **2-2 Classification of audio-visual materials**

There are two main classifications for Audio-Visual materials according to the type of projection. First we have simple Audio-Visual materials and secondly we have sophisticated materials. They can also be called Audio-Visual Aids .These two types are divided into three categories which are:

•***Audio aids***

These are materials that can only be heard. They can be useful to focus on students' pronunciation. There are many techniques to use this material. Examples: radio tape recorder, walkman, headphones.

•***Visual aids***

These materials help visualize things and are what we can also touch. Examples: overhead projector, slides, flip charts, chalk boards and white board, posters and pictures, objects and models, handouts, computer( on the computer screen or projected from computer), video tapes, film. Another kind of visual aid is realia which is the natural way to teach vocabulary. According to Nunan (1999) realia is defined as “ objects and teaching props from the world outside the classroom that are used for teaching and learning.” Richards and Platt regard realia as “actual objects and items which are brought into classroom as examples or as aids to be talked or written about and used in language teaching such as: articles of clothing, kitchen utensils, items of food...”

•***Audio-Visual aids***

Here things can be heard and seen. According to Edger they are devices by the use of which communication of ideas between persons and groups in various teaching and training situations is helped. Example: projector aids, television, video footage.

## **2-6 Advantages of audio-visual materials in teaching speaking**

The students' social environment has great impact on his ability to learn a second language. When they are done with English classes (at most 4 hours per week) they are quickly in contact with the French speaking world. The point is that should have other opportunities to communicate or to be in contact with the language apart from school. The main instruments that can help are television and radio.

Talking about the classroom setting, Audio-Visual materials make the class vivid and concrete. When we take for example the teaching of colors in 6ème instead of making them look in the textbook that often does not have colors, the teacher can bring pictures/images which can illustrate what she/he is talking about. These are called visual aids and they:

- Strengthen the clarity of the speaker's message
- Increase the level of interest in the speaker's message
- Make a speaker's message easier for listeners to retain
- Enhance the teacher's credibility
- Can improve the speaker's persuasiveness

As far as teaching speaking is concerned those materials can help a lot. The teacher is a resource person but native speakers of the English language may be better than him. Making students listen to British or American speeches and making them

view their cultural facts is very useful because language cannot be separate from culture. Watching videos that display the culture and language of native English speakers can stimulate student's interest as they would likely compare cultures.

Another positive aspect is that Audio-Visual materials help save time. Actually when the teacher gives instructions, for instance he told a story and asks students' reaction orally, not only he will spend a lot of energy talking about what they never heard about but he will also waste time. Instead of talking he can make them view a sequence of a story on the screen and they will quickly guess what the instructions mean.

Using Audio-Visual materials can help promote learner centered approach because watching or listening to other speeches will make them aware of their mistakes and performances. They can listen to their own speech on a voice recorder and compare it to the speeches of native speakers. They will not have the feeling that the language is imposed on them. Also the problem of large size classes can be solved by this technique. In fact the textbooks given to the students make them bored and one cannot be sure that the attention of every student is on the textbook. Whereas the Television or the projection of a movie or listening to a song make students focus on the activity. The interesting factor here is that we can vary materials. Besides working in lockstep small groups can be formed and will be provided with sample of materials. Every student will have the opportunity to touch and manipulate the material. Working in collaboration will help them reduce their egocentricity and they will feel useful to their mates.

## 2-4 Grammar focus in teaching English as a second language

Teachers should find the right methodology to give their lessons. Focusing only on grammar does not help and that's why Bloomfield (1993) concludes that: *'the memorizing of rules and grammatical paradigms is not very useful for learning foreign or second language and that teacher should teach the language rather than teaching about it'*

The question which can be put is can students speak good English if they do not master grammatical rules? Torikai is in the same line with Bloomfield and states in 2000, dealing with the way Japanese learn English that "Grammar is not only useless but actually is harmful for language acquisition". So teachers should not put too much emphasis on Grammar. This will make us tackle accuracy and fluency in learner's speech. Dealing with these two fundamental concepts in language teaching Brumfit (1984) suggest that:

...classroom activities may aim either accuracy or fluency and added that fluency is the maximally effective operation of language system so far acquired by the students. (p. 56)

So while assessing students' speaking skill teachers should not focus on pronunciation features and grammatical rules but they will focus on the fact that a native speaker can get what the learner is talking about. Of course learners will be taught phonetics, lexical and syntactic components but it is only to show them how word are arranged to be meaningful, how words are pronounced by native speakers. We should not expect them to be as accurate as native speakers, it is not possible. So teachers should be cautious while designing test in order to evaluate speaking. When learners are aware of what they are expected to produce while speaking it creates a

joyful and atmosphere and learners are less stressed. Instead of taking an official form like the exams for the end of the term or semester the evaluation of speaking skills can take an informal form. Students can be asked to talk about themselves, their family, their hobbies and we do know that teenagers like talking about themselves. If we follow the point of Bloomfield and Torikai teachers will aim only fluency. Thinking deeply about it will be advisable for teachers to find just middle between fluency and accuracy.

To reach this goal (making students communicate in English) there are many approaches, methods and techniques that can be used to teach speaking. This work deals with the use of Audio visual materials to improve student's speaking skills. In this domain a lot of authors wrote about the use of Audio-Visual materials. Among them we can cite Heron (1994). According to this writer '*video helps learners improve comprehension and aid in the retention of information*'. We can retain that a student who has memorization problems can be helped through the use of video. Video here does not necessary mean bringing a CD and playing it. Video means here any material through which we can see images and television is included in it. After him Hemei (1997) demonstrates that:

...students like the use of video because presentations are interesting, challenging and stimulating to watch. Video shows them how people behave in the culture whose language they are learning by bringing into the classroom a wide range of communicative situation. (p. 8)

That's why Cruse (2004) notes that one of the greatest strengths of television and video is the ability to communicate with audience on an emotional and a cognitive level. And she stated that:

...Because of this ability to reach viewers' emotions, video has a strong positive effect on both motivation and affective learning. Not only are these important learning components on their own, but they can also play an important role in creating the conditions through which greater cognitive learning can take place" (Cruse, p. 6).

One of the best to practice conversation activity is role play and after seeing a sequence of a movie or a scene that shows a specific cultural feature it will surely be a good source of inspiration for the learners and they will know exactly the pattern wanted or the behavior the teacher want them to get. We need to focus on motivation saying that students need to be encouraged because it is not easy to learn a second language. Arthur (1999) put an emphasis on it saying that:

“video can give students realistic models to imitate for role play, can increase awareness of other cultures by teaching appropriateness and suitability”. (Cited in çakir, 2006, p. 68)

And apart from the few hours they spend learning English at school they do not have any other occasion to practice or to be in contact with the language that's where TV has an important role to play. When they are motivated they will be autonomous and at home they know that it is very useful to know another language apart their own language. Spontaneously they will try to find occasion to touch the language outside the classroom. And there is a famous quotation about motivation that says: *There are three things to remember about education. The first one is motivation. The second one is motivation. The third one is motivation.* Terrell H. Bell.

Cruse sets the findings of the research that done before and said “according to a summary of current research and educator surveys, educational television and video:

- Reinforces Reading and lecture material
- Aids in the development of a common base of knowledge among students
- Enhances student's comprehension and discussion
- Provides greater accommodation of diverse learning styles
- Increases student motivation and enthusiasm.
- Promotes teacher effectiveness , Wejdan Ghunaim (CPB, 2004)

To this regard Kang (1999) states that:

...it is especially important for a second language learners to be self-directed since it is impossible to give them direct guidance or instruction when they use the language outside the classroom.

This fact is justified by Katchen (2002) who said that “*movies and TV programs are made for native speakers, so in that sense video provides authentic language input*”.

So teachers should teach their students how they can be self directive in order to go deeper in what they have been taught by watching English programs at home.

## **2-5 Usefulness of Audio-Visual materials in the acquisition of English as a Foreign Language**

According to James and Gardner (1995) p.20 learning style is “*The complex manner in which, and conditions under which, learners most efficiently and most effectively perceive, process, store and recall what they are attempting to learn*”.

Learning styles include four main aspects which are: personality dimensions, information-processing, social interaction and multidimensional and instructional preference. Each student has his/her own way of learning and Taking into account that definition the statement of Heron cannot be applied to all students though it can work for some of them. Talking about the differences among students and the materials that

can be suitable for teaching speaking, Wright (1976) said that ‘*all Audio-Visual materials have positive contribution to language learning as long as they are used at the right time in the right place.*’ Cruse (2004) added saying that:

...Learners varied in the way of receiving knowledge, they could be visual, auditory and tactile. In her research indicted about these three types and stated that “these three modalities to how students process information, deriving three basic learning styles: visual-spatial, auditory-sequential and tactile-kinesthetic. Visual-spatial learners take in new information through visualization of the whole concept and think in holistic, often three-dimensional, images. Auditory-sequential learners, by contrast, think in words, processed auditorally, and generally learn in a sequential, step-by-step process. Finally, tactile-kinesthetic learners take in information through physical touch and sensation, and they benefit from demonstration or application more than from verbal explanation” (Cruse, p. 5).

The implication of this statement is that teachers must be trained about using Audio-Visual in accordance with their work, and it will make them know which aid is suitable for the main skills in teaching a second language. In our context in Benin it is not an easy task to get those materials and teachers can even face the problem of light in some areas.

Cruse made a comparison between two approaches (traditional textbooks and television) and she concluded that:

...while traditional textbooks often take a primarily linguistic approach to learning, video’s multiple modes can take a variety of approaches, such as aesthetic, logical or narration, in addition to linguistic, thus addressing the needs of a boarder range of learners.

Here we must talk about the criteria that should be considered in order to design the materials. The same research had made Wilson conclude that ‘*learners prefer actions/ entertainment films to language films or documentaries*’. So teachers will try to know the kind of learners they have. This can be done on the first day of the school

year; the teacher will try to give time to all the students to introduce themselves and tell to everybody what they like and say a little about themselves the teacher will be taking notes. Based on the notes the teacher can try to find the material that will be good for all the learners a kind of standard material. Each type of material has a specific role to play in a classroom and teachers should be aware of that in order to reach their goals. And while dealing with the specific role of Audio-Visual materials, Cruse states that:

...video may be used at the beginning of a unit to pique interest, during a unit or lesson to bring demonstrations into the classroom that might not otherwise be possible or as a means of reviewing or reinforcing content.

So it is important that teachers know the purpose of the lesson before planning to use any Audio-Visual material. When dealing with a new lesson, video can be used to get learners familiarized with the new knowledge. And there are some conditions in which one can use video as justified by Hampe (2006) when he stated:

...Video becomes less effective if the selections shown depend too closely on non-visual elements of video and thus exploit the weaknesses of the medium by presenting abstract and non-visual information, relying too much on a “talking heads” style of conveying information or presenting intellectual arguments not backed up with physical evidence.

This statement of Hampe will lead us to talk about the limitation of television. As any material, it does have disadvantages; in her book *Designing Authenticity into Language Learning Materials* Mishan (2005) said that:

...Learners may associate television strongly with the domestic not the pedagogical. More problematic still, they identify television with passivity and entertainment.

So the teacher should be cautious and careful while managing his classroom unless learners will shift from the class and start talking as if they were at home. And she added saying that:

...Television, however, is probably the medium into which people are used to putting the least 'effort', in cognitive terms... television, with its myriad sensory distractions of fast-moving colorful images, sounds and music, does not force the viewer to concentrate on the spoken language in order to follow what is happening. And at its worst, television can act as virtual wallpaper, not penetrating our consciousness at all. This, then, is the type of behavioral norm that has to be combated in harnessing television as a learning medium. This is why a core principle reiterated time and again in the literature (e.g. Tomalin 1986: 30, Allan 1985: 37, Tomalin and Stempleski 1990:6) is that successful exploitation of television for learning requires the teacher to create scenarios in which learners watch actively, and this means with a purpose" (Mishan, pp.132-133).

Television is a crucial tool in teaching/learning English and especially in teaching speaking. Speaking is not only uttering sentences in order to get oneself understood. It has to do with pronunciation and radio and radio tape recorder is very useful in that sense. Radio can be used to play music and students may be given the lyrics in order to sing a popular song in the second language they are learning and Ludwig Van Beethoven says that "*music is the electrical soil in which the spirit lives, thinks, and invents*". Music makes people happy and joyful and it will raise learners' attention and will make the atmosphere vivid and enjoyable. It helps learners to improve their pronunciation. Brewer (1995) have listed some positive aspects of music in a classroom; according to him music helps students learn because it will:

- establish a positive learning state
  
- create a desired atmosphere

- build a sense of anticipation
- energize learning activities
- change brain waves states
- improve memory
- focus concentration
- enhance imagination
- release tension
- provide inspiration and motivation
- add an element of fun.

He added saying that ‘when information is put to rhythm and rhyme these musical elements will provide a hook for recall’.

As said in the clarification of concepts audio-visual materials are not only radio and television; we also have: pictures, flip charts, graphics etc... they are especially called visual aids. Visual aids are used to increase effectiveness of classroom teaching/learning process (Joshi, 1995) and what have been proven is that what is profitable for a group of students may not be so for another group (Bovey, 1981). But Omaggio said that:

...The profession has virtually no empirical basis for promoting the use of visuals as aids to comprehension in the second language; we know practically nothing about how students benefit from visuals. (1979, p. 107).

Though Canning-Wilson (2000) claims that:

...the use of illustrations, visuals, pictures, perceptions, mental images, figures, impressions, likenesses, cartoons, charts, graphs, colors, replicas, reproductions, or anything else used to help one see an immediate meaning in the language may benefit the learner by helping to clarify the message, provided the visual works in a positive way to enhance or supplement the language point. (Canning, p.3).

To sum up we should not underestimate learners because as Coombe and Kinney stated:

...Learners learn primarily because of what they bring to their classroom experience in terms of their perceived needs, motivations, past experiences, background knowledge, interests and creative skills. (1999, p. 21).

## Chapter three

### METHODOLOGY

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The methodology of this research work deals with the different approaches used to investigate. First of all it is necessary to specify that this study is a qualitative research; that is a method of inquiring employed in academic discipline specifically in social sciences and which aims to gather an in-depth understanding of human behavior in a particular social field and the reason that governs such behaviors. The quantitative approach has to do with the systematic investigation of a fact or phenomenon via statistical techniques. This study will find out the reason of students' difficulties concerning communicating in the English language. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches have been used to in this research work to investigate. The following lines will describe the setting of the study, the research population and the instruments of data collection.

### **3-1 Research design**

#### **3-1-1 Research setting**

This study has been conducted mainly in CEG Les Cocotiers where I attended my practical training. Most of the investigation involves teachers and students of this school. CEG Les Cocotiers is a public secondary school located in the fifth district of Porto/ Novo in Tokpota and this secondary school was created in 1995. This school is led by a headmaster assisted by two vice principals and two prefects. This administration has two secretaries and is in charge of around 100 teachers. CEG Les Cocotiers has a Junior Secondary School (JSS) composed of 22 classes and a Senior Secondary School (SSS) composed of 17 classes. So this school has 39 classes in all.

### **3-1-2 Research population**

The population in focus for this study has taken into account two categories of participants from CEG Les Cocotiers. First the students who have participated to the investigation are in number of 50; 25 from form I and 25 from form II. They have been chosen at random. The questionnaire has been distributed to all of them and answers have been collected from (44) students. Among the (100) teachers (15) are teachers of English. One (01) of them has the CAPES degree, two (02) of them have the BAPES degree and the rest are part time teachers. As the number of teachers of English of CEG Les Cocotiers was not enough to conduct this research work others teachers of English have been chosen. I went to one center in which they were correcting the copies of the BEPC exam to make the questionnaires filled. (40) questionnaires have been distributed and (36) have been filled.

### **3-1-3 research instruments**

The data collection of this study has been possible through two main types of investigation that is the questionnaire and the interview.

#### **• Questionnaire**

The questionnaire has been an essential way of data collection during this study. As a matter of fact two questionnaires have been used in the procedure of investigation. The first one is composed of (08) questions addressed to teachers. The questions focus on their perception of Audio-Visual materials as a tool of teaching, the effective teaching of English as a Foreign Language through the use of these materials and the improvement of students' speaking skills. This question will help us answer

the first research question which is: How do teachers perceive the teaching of speaking skills in a classroom?

The second one consists of (03) questions which are addressed to students of Junior Secondary School particularly those in form I and in form II which focus on students' appreciation of the English language, their experiences concerning the use of Audio-Visual materials in their classes, their perception about the subject and their interest in the use of Audio-Visual materials. This will help us answer the second research question which is: How do teachers perceive the teaching of speaking skills in a classroom as far as audio-visual materials?

- **The interview**

As the second most important tool of data collection for this study, interviews have allowed the gathering of information from qualified and experienced EFL teachers chosen at random. The interview is composed of (05) open ended questions which focus on the contribution of Audio-Visual materials and their effectiveness in teaching English as a Foreign Language particularly the development of students' speaking skills but also the realities that teachers can face. This tool helped me to have in depth elements to answer to the research question 1.

- **Class Observation**

The class observation has been done in CEG Les Cocotiers with a class of form I. This observation covered a period of two months during which I followed the teacher carrying out speaking lessons done with the textbook. What have been noticed was that the students hardly understand the speech of the teachers because of the

strategy which have been adopted. The teacher was sometimes tempted to translate the instructions in French. Concerning the use of Audio-Visual materials the teachers didn't use them during the teaching. The behavior which has been observed during this experience is that the students were not really interested in the classes, thus the goal which was to make students speak the English language was not reached to some extent. The difficulties encountered by the teachers will be described in the analysis of the data collected.

## Chapter four

# ANALYSIS OF DATA AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

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Through questionnaires and interviews we have been able to collect data that allow us to have an idea of what is going on in our schools and the opinions of both teachers and students about the use of Audio-Visual materials in teaching speaking. Under this headline we are going to present the data collected and their analyses. Samples of the questionnaires and interview are provided in the appendices.

**4-1- Data analysis**

**4-1-1 Questionnaire addressed to teachers**

Answers have been received from 36 teachers. The first question addressed to the EFL teachers required them to specify the forms in which they teach in so far as this study is mainly focused on the use of Audio-Visual materials in form I and form II. All the teachers who have been questioned follow this criterion.

**Question 2:** Do your students speak easily English and participate actively during your lessons?

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Students always participate	0	0%
Students often participate	06	16,66%
Students sometimes participate	30	83,33%
Students never participate	0	0%

Table 01: Students’ participation in English class

From this first table, we can notice that the majority of teachers (83, 33%) have stated that their students ‘sometimes’ participate in English classes. The others who

have chosen ‘often’ as the frequency of their students’ participation represent the minority (just 16, 66%). None have chosen ‘always’ or ‘never’.

**Question 3:** Do you use Audio-Visual devices during your English lessons?

<b>Frequency of Audio-Visual use</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
always	0	0%
often	0	0%
sometimes	2	5,55%
never	34	94,44%

Table 2: frequency of Audio-Visual use

The table above shows that most the teachers have never used Audio-Visual materials to teach English to the beginner learners (94, 44%). Just 5, 55% of teachers stated that they ‘sometimes’ use them.

**Question 4:** which kind of Audio-Visual materials do you use?

<b>Kind of Audio-Visual material</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Radio tape	01	2,77%
Video tape	00	00%
Overhead projector	00	00%
Computer	01	2,77%

Table 3: kind of Audio-Visual used

As mentioned in the preceding table, just two of the (36) teachers (5, 55%) stated that they once used the Audio-Visual materials. In the present table, we notice that one has used a radio tape while the other has used a computer, probably a laptop.

**Question 5:** Are Audio-Visual materials useful for effective EFL teaching?

<b>Usefulness of using Audio-visual materials in teaching EFL</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	36	100%
No	00	00%

Table 4: usefulness of using Audio-Visual in teaching EFL

Concerning this fifth question, all the teachers (100%) have considered that Audio-Visual materials are useful for effective EFL teaching.

**Question 6:** why do you think these materials are useful?

<b>Reasons for Audio-Visual usefulness</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
they make the class vivid	10	27,77%
they make lessons interesting	21	58,33%
They make the class concrete	05	13,88%

Table5 : Reasons for Audio-Visual usefulness

As shown by the table, among the reasons given by teachers to sustain the importance of Audio-Visual materials, the teachers at 27, 77% think they make the class vivid. 58, 33% considered that they make the lessons interesting and 13, 88% state that the teaching is more concrete than to Audio-Visuals.

**Question 7:** how do the Audio-Visual materials ensure effective speaking?

<b>Reasons for effective speaking skill through Audio-Visual materials</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Students improve their pronunciation by listening to native speakers or professionals	15	41, 66%
Students rehearse their listening	13	36, 11%
Students have a pattern to follow for role play	08	22, 22%

Table 6: Reasons for effective speaking skill through Audio-Visual materials

Focusing on the teachers' reasons to support their responses to the preceding question, it can be noticed that 41, 66% consider them to help improve students pronunciation, 36, 11% think they help expose students to native language and 22,22% state that these materials can help students have a pattern for role play.

**Question 08:** what problems can teacher face when using Audio-Visual Materials?

<b>Problems about the use of Audio-Visual materials</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Financial problems	11	30, 55%
Lack of knowledge in using these materials	09	25%
Power supply problems	12	33, 33%
Classroom management problems	04	11, 11%

Table 7: Problems about the use of Audio-Visual materials

Taking into account the field problems that teachers can face when using Audio-Visual materials in class, 33, 33% have choose power supply; 30, 55% think about the financial means as real problems; 25% allude to the lack of technical

knowledge in handling these materials while 11, 11% decide to point out the classroom management problems.

#### 4-1-2 questionnaire addressed to students

44 questionnaires out of 50 have been collected from students.

•**question 1:** Do you like the English language?

Students' appreciation of the English language	Respondents	Percentage
I like English	44	100%
I dislike English	00	00%
Reasons	*Because English is one of the most spoken languages *because I would like to speak many languages *because I would like to study abroad	

Table 8: Students' appreciation of the English language

Among the 44 beginner students investigated, all of them affirm that they like English. The reasons they give for this appreciation for English is that English language is the most spoken in the world; they would like to speak many languages.

• **Question 2:** Would you like your English teacher to use those materials regularly?

<b>Students' interests in the use Audio-Visual materials by their teachers.</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
I want my teacher to use Audio-Visual materials	44	100%
I don't want my teacher to use Audio-Visual materials	00	00%
Reasons	*we will easily assimilate *we will have fun *the class is interesting *we won't be bored	

Table 9: Students' interests in the use of Audio-Visual materials by their teachers.

When asked if they would like their teachers to use Audio-visual materials in classes, students in total number answer yes. As for their reason, we have interesting and relaxed class, pleasurable lessons, no boredom and good assimilation.

• **Question 3:** Do you listen to English programs at home?

<b>Students' listening and watching English programs at home</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
I listen and watch English programs at home	05	11, 36%
I do not listen and do not watch English programs at home	39	88,63%
Channels and programs	ORTB: Golfe TV: English hour, OGTV	

Table 10: Students' listening and watching English programs at home

When referring to the fact that they follow English programs at home. It is noticed that the majority of these students are not involved in this practice. 88, 63% of them do not watch any English. Only 11, 36% affirm to watch English programs on the channels available in the town such as ORTB, OGTV, and GOLFE TV.

#### **4-1-3 The interview**

This research instrument is the second I used in this study. It has been addressed to teachers of English and was made of 5 questions which are:

- 1- How do you view the teaching of communication skills in English as a Foreign Language?
- 2- According to you which skill can be effectively improved through the use of Audio-Visual materials and why?
- 3- What can be the contribution of teachers for the effective use of these materials in English as a foreign language teaching?
- 4- How can the teacher foster students' speaking skill through the use of these materials?
- 5- Which realities can teachers face when they decide to use Audio-Visual materials in our schools?

These questions above allowed us to talk openly and directly to teachers in order to have their opinion. I have interviewed 5 teachers and all of them said that it is very important to teach communication skills to students. Three of them said that student's speaking skills through Audio-Visual materials by showing them and making them listen to the right pronunciation and contextualizing their teaching while two of them states that it is not realistic in the context of our country. As far as the problems that can be faced are concerned they sorted out three main difficulties that are: power problems in the context of our country, the problem of the training of teachers concerning the use of these materials and also the mockery of their colleagues who are deep- rooted in the traditional teaching methods.

## **4.2. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

In the light of these data it is first noticed that most of teachers in English as a foreign language consider the use of Audio-Visual as essential for effective English language teaching. Most particularly for the improvement of speaking skills, the investigated teachers assure that Audio-Visual materials are very efficient to reach such a goal in EFL classes. The use of material such as laptop, speakers, flip charts constitutes quite beneficial strategies to develop good pronunciation, ensure interesting English classes, make teaching concrete and vivid. Additionally as these materials arouse students' interest in the activities would become eager to participate and thus increase their speaking habits. Through their frequent participation in speaking activities, students will be developing several skills such as good and appropriate pronunciation since they would be listening to native speakers' speech. And therefore they would be trying to acquire the right language used. This contact with natives' conversations in real life situations is also a good way to arouse their awareness about the culture of the people whose language they are learning. This actually represents one of the essential strategies since these students who are beginners would develop concrete linguistic and cultural background in the target language. The use of these materials is obviously one of the best techniques in teaching English as a foreign language. However their effective use is far from being a reality in the current context of our schools as it is shown at the level of the question 3 of the questionnaire addressed to teachers.

Therefore many problems still remain to be solved. Among these problems are those stated by teachers themselves at the level of question 8. These problems are

financial problems, availability of materials, power supply, teachers to not know how to use the materials and classroom management problems. All these problems need to be taken into account by the actors of education for the effectiveness of the use of Audio-Visual materials.

## Chapter five

# RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

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The use of Audio-Visual materials in our country is far from being a reality. But educational authorities and school administrators can undertake some actions in order to help build on better working conditions of both students and teachers. In this line we have worked out some suggestions and recommendations that can be apply in order to reach our shared goal which is making students speak fluently the English language.

### **5-1 Recommendations to educational authorities**

It is well known that no one can work in bad conditions. We mean in conditions the school environment that is well built classrooms, acceptable class size, each classroom should be supplied with electricity and socket and the latter is necessary for the use of Audio-Visual materials. In the domain of Teaching English as a Foreign Language many things can be done like:

- They have to promote the creation of language lab that is essential for a foreign language acquisition.
- Teachers should be trained as far as the use of Audio-Visual is concerned as it is the case in Ecole Normale Supérieure of Porto/Novo.
- Excursion can be organized in English speaking countries like Ghana and Nigeria in order to make students be really in contact with the language and the people who speak it.

## 5-2 Suggestions to EFL teachers

It is important that teachers know that they cannot always wait for the government in order to be trained they have to learn by themselves and internet is a source of large knowledge that they can apply in order to upgrade their teaching because as I said language is evaluating every day. They also have to include a lot of visual aids in their teaching even if the one provided in the textbooks are not often clear enough to make students be interested. It is a challenge for a teacher to find and prepare his/her own teaching materials in order to be more efficient. Teachers should also:

- Give the opportunity to students to speak English
- Reduce their talking time during speaking activities
- Avoid over corrections
- Provide a safe environment and make sure all the learners are attending lessons by circulating in the classroom to see whether the learners who are seating behind can correctly see the picture in front.
- Provide the necessary glossary so that students do not get lost while seeing or hearing a new word.
- Detect students who have difficulties and find a way to help them be at the same level as the other students.

Specifically speaking they are many techniques that can be used by the teacher using Audio- visual materials. ÇAKIR, (2006) proposed some methods:

### •Active viewing

Before starting the presentation the teacher writes some key questions on the board about the presentation so that the students get an overview of the content of it. After viewing the questions the students answer the questions orally, or the students may take notes while viewing. For more detailed comprehension students are provided a cue sheet or viewing guides and let them watch and listen for specific details or specific features of language. However, it should be kept in mind that the level of the students should be taken into account and adapt the technique according to their levels. Active viewing increases the students' enjoyment and satisfaction and focuses their attention on the main idea of the video presentation.

### • Silent viewing

In silent viewing, the video segment is played with the sound off using only the picture. This activity can also be a prediction technique when students are watching video for the first time. One way of doing this is to play the video segment without the sound and tell students to observe the behavior of the characters and to use their power of deduction. Then press the pause button at intervals to stop the picture on the screen and get students to guess what is happening and what the characters might be saying or ask students what has happened up to that point. Finally, video segment is replayed with the sound on so that learners can compare their impressions with what actually happens in the video.

### •Repetition and role-play

A scene on video is replayed with certain pauses for repetition either individually or in chorus. When students have a clear understanding of the presentation, they are asked to act out the scene using as much of the original version as they can remember. When students become confident with role playing and are sure of vocabulary and language structures, more creative activity can be introduced in which they are asked to improvise the scene to fit their views of the situation and the characters they are playing.

Another technique is recording the speech of students and making them listen to their own speech and find out the mistakes. When students are aware of the mistakes they are doing it is easier for them to correct and to adopt the right feature.

It is important that any activity has a follow up. Doing this teachers can check whether they reach their goal or not and Ismail said that “ It is important that a video presentation should lead to follow-up activity as the basis for further extended oral practice. Discussion stimulates communication among students, and it helps to achieve communicative practice. With this activity students have an opportunity to develop sharing and co-operative skills.”

## CONCLUSION

It is no longer the time to ask whether Audio-Visual materials are helpful or not in the field of Teaching English as a Foreign Language but it is high time we thought about the mechanism in which they can be applied in our classrooms. The effectiveness of Audio-Visual materials has been proved by many authors and those materials are classified in many ranges so that it is up to the teacher to use the one which is suitable for him/her. This research work has shown that almost all of the teachers that have been questioned never use Audio-Visual because of lack of financial means and also due to logistical problems though all of them agreed on the fact that those materials can be profitable for them and also for students. The teacher has a great role to play concerning the use of those materials and it is important that teacher must be trained in order to be able to reach our common goal which is making students speak English for real. It is also important to notice that not only making students listening or viewing sequences will help them acquire the language; grammar is also essential; the point is that teachers should try to mix all the techniques.

The effective use of Audio-Visual materials in education in general and in the field of teaching English in particular, in Benin, depends on many actors who are Educational Authorities, school administrators and teachers. Their contribution is vital for the progress in our field. Above all no one can deny the fact that the best way to acquire a second language is spending a moment in any country in which the language is spoken. So excursions are important for both students and teachers.

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# APPENDICES

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**Appendix 1:** Questionnaire addressed to teachers

Dear colleagues I'm a student at ENS. This is a questionnaire designed to know your perception about teaching communicative skills to students. Please be as truthful as possible. Your identity is not needed so don't disclose it. Your answers will be anonymously exploited. Thanks for your collaboration.

1- Which form do you teach among these forms?

6ème                       5ème                       4ème                       3ème

2- Do your students speak easily English and participate actively during your lessons?

Always                        Often                       Sometimes   
Never

3- Do you use Audio-Visual devices during your English lessons?

Always                        Often                       Sometime   
Never

4- Which one?

Radio tape                       Video tape recorder                       Overhead projector

5- Are Audio-Visual materials useful for effective EFL teaching?

Yes                       No

6- Give the reason

.....

.....

7- How do the Audio-Visual materials ensure effective speaking?

.....

.....

8- What problems can teacher face when using Audio-Visual Materials?

.....

.....



### **Appendix 3:** Interview for teachers

#### Interview

Dear teachers, these questions are designed in the framework of the research work entitled **“improving the acquisition of speaking skills in English As a Foreign language through the use of Audio-Visual materials in beginner classes the case of CEG Les Cocotiers”**.

Your identity is not needed so feel free to give your opinion. Thanks for your participation.

6- How do you view the use of Audio-Visual materials in teaching English as a Second Language?

7- According to you which skill can be effectively improved through the use of Audio-Visual materials and why?

8- What can be the contribution of teachers for the effective use of these materials in English as a foreign language teaching?

9- How can the teacher foster students' speaking skill through the use of these materials?

10- Which realities can teachers face when they decide to use Audio-Visual materials in our schools?

