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Difficulties related to the teaching of
listening comprehension in EFL classes:
A case study of CEG Anavie

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DEDICATION

- ❖ This work is exclusively dedicated to my parents- Marie BOTON & Razak WOUINSOU who made me discover the way to school.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

English as a lingua franca is nowadays spoken, written and used more than any other modern language around the globe. It has spread widely all over the world, first because of the influence of the British Empire and, second due to the pre-eminence of North-American Influence in the world. In Europe, English has advanced as an internal language especially after World War II, leaving behind other preeminent languages such as French. In Africa for instance, its geographical zone has a political and economic power over the other linguistic zones. Thus, the rush of some African countries to join that linguistic arena. No wonder, when Rwanda under the initiative of Paul Kagame in 2008 declared English as their official language. Gabon, a french-speaking country no long ago opted for English in their administration as a whole.

Benin shares a large part of its border with the gigantic Nigeria the current first economy in Africa; a door of opportunity for the Beninese who know English. As a matter of fact, knowing English is no longer a matter of choice but a necessity because of its presence in every domain. As Adekunle (1976) observed, the language policy of every country should make provisions for the following areas of communication: internal communication, international, scientific or technical communication.

English is the number of the international languages most widely used in commerce, scientific and technological research, administration education, literature etc. Benin's geographical, economic and political as well as her educational research, make it imperative for her to give adequate attention to the teaching and learning of the English language. With the knowledge of English, Beninese and English Speaking countries will be able to work together in the areas such as economy, science and technology. From the

accounts so far given, and for Beninese to interact effectively with English speakers both locally and internationally, they should be taught the language efficiently and be given the chance to speak the language fluently. This however cannot be achieved if teachers of English do not teach the language in all its aspects and for its using sake. Being able to use a language for effective communication in real life situations depends much more on how competent a person is in the four linguistic skills such as listening, reading and writing. For our learners to arrive at that proficiency, the four language skills should be taught to them in an integrated way; and by practicing the four skills equally the learners will be efficient in English.

Unfortunately, in our secondary schools, the teaching of listening comprehension turns out to be the missing piece in the puzzle of the EFL classrooms; only reading is mostly taught and practised. There is the feeling that, the theory of communicative language teaching is not known to some Benin EFL teachers hence their reluctance in practising listening comprehension in their classrooms. As a matter of course, all the activities they carry out in the classroom are exam-oriented since in the examinations, only reading and writing skills are tested. consequently, they avoid the two major skills and more especially the listening skill. This avoiding tendency gave us the right to wonder what are the causes of the teachers' reticence in teaching listening comprehension in their classes? What are the factors that hinder the teaching of listening in our EFL classrooms? It is obvious in terms of communication that, listening skill plays a vital role because speaking is interrelated with the listening skill. Listening is the key to all effective communication, without the ability to listen effectively, messages are easily misunderstood- communication breaks down and the sender of the message can easily become frustrated or irritated. Without speaking, reading or

writing, we can at least understand and react bodily to people provided that we can listen to them.

Among the four language skills in a language learning or acquisition, listening plays the most important role in the real life communication: listening accounts for 40-50% of communication, with speaking at 25-30%, reading at 11-16%, and writing at 9% Mendelsonn (1994). In spite of this, listening has been neglected in most of our English classrooms. In other words, listeningcomprehension teaching is thought about and taught poorly by many EFL teachers, despite the fact that it is used at such a high frequency in real life oral communication. Why is it that Benin EFL teachers do not teach listening comprehension as required? They pretend to be teaching a language and at the same time, a great number of their learners have serious problem in communication and more especially in listening comprehension. Efforts have been made by a number of researchers to identify the difficulties experienced by second and foreign language teachers and how they deal with the difficulties.

Nevertheless, a more empirical study is needed at CEG ANAVIE in the field of listening. That is the rationale of our interest in carrying out this research that we entitled: difficulties related to the teaching of listening comprehension in EFL classes: a case study of CEG ANAVIE. Taking into consideration the importance of the listening skill to language students and its difficulty, the study reported here is an attempt to identify the problems as perceived by the Oueme-Plateau EFL teachers in general, and the ones of CEG Anavie in particular. Their perceptions might offer clues to the sources of difficulties- or why listening comprehension is not taught, and the strategies from their view points and EFL related literatures to overcome the challenges. That is what the present research aims to investigate. In order to come up with this, the research is divided into five chapters.

The chapter one deals with the theoretical framework of the research and comprises four different parts: the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significant of the study, and the limitation of the research. The second chapter lends itself to the literature review related to the topic under analysis. The third chapter deals with the methodology used during the resaerch for the data collection. The chapter four is all about the presentation and the analysis of the collected data and the conclusive point from the findings of the study. The last chapter presents some suggestions and recommendations taking into account the findings of the study.

CHAPTER ONE: IDENTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The English language is a key to a wider door of opportunities. Any useful service EFL teachers can render to the learners should be the teaching of the language in all its aspects. One of the aspects this study is concerned with is listening comprehension. This very first chapter includes: the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study and the limitation of the study.

1-1 Statement of the problem

In the context of language learning, a student is considered successful if he or she is able to speak effectively in the language he or she is learning since speech is the basic means of human communication. So the trends in language teaching nowadays are on the communicative approach. What implies that the goal of language classes should much more be on oral communication. In this respect, the supporters of input hypothesis claim that the best way to teach speaking is to focus on listening and spoken fluency will emerge on its own. In reality, listening skill is used far more than any other single language skill in normal daily life. As Rivers (1981) puts it:

We can expect to listen twice as much as we speak, four times more than we read, and five times more than we write. Unless what is said is comprehended by another person, speaking only does not constitute communication.

As a matter of fact, the natural order of any language acquisition puts the primacy on listening. A child for instance spends more than a year listening to the speech sounds its parents and the people in its immediate environment produce before it could start uttering some words of the language it is exposed to. In this regard, Nida (1957) describes the language

learning experience of the people in Africa where multilingualism without formal instruction is common phenomenon as follow:

People simply go to a place to live and work, they listen without attempting to speak, and quite soon they find that they can hear the language. After a period on internalisation of some part of the language, they try to speak it (p 53)

Simply put, in our African context, if EFL learners are really to reach the goal of communication in English, the task of learning to hear and comprehend should be of primary importance in our English as Foreign language classes. Unfortunately during my internship in some secondary schools, it is noticed that most of the EFL learners have difficulties in comprehending the spoken English. Despite the fact that they have spent more than three years learning English, they still find it hard to understand the instructions or the explanation of the teacher when the latter is using only English. On some occasions, they ask the teacher to go in French so that they could get what he is saying. This results very often in a bilingual class in a class that is supposed to be in English. Needless to say, pronunciation, intonation and rhythm, are the easy to make mistakes in the classes.

Moreover, it is observed that very little attention is paid to the activities and method that foster listening comprehension when the teachers are organising their classes. But in the process of teaching and learning of English in our secondary schools, curriculum designers have identified and adopted three disciplinary competences that EFL learners should acquire at the end of their learning. Those competences are: oral communication, listening and reading comprehension and writing. To my understand, EFL teachers are thereby called to carry out a variety of activities related to the above mentioned competences in order to help their learners reach their objectives at the end of the teaching/ learning process. It is observed that very few activities are carried out in the classroom to meet the listening

comprehension objective. We are living in a francophone environment, and the only arena where most of learners can listen to English is the classroom, a role that the classroom itself is denying them.

In addition, it is a secret to nobody today that the information and communication technologies offer a wide range of means to EFL teachers, for them to make their teaching more interesting and more pleasurable for the learners. I became aware that none of the teachers makes use of those devices in their classrooms; devices that are second to no other way of exposing learners to native or near native oral communication. All the above mentioned observations make me wonder if the causes of the learners' inability to understand spoken English and speak the language do not stem from the way English is being taught? Or would there be a relationship between teachers' less emphasis on listening activities and learners' inefficiency in oral comprehension? In other words, are there some difficulties hampering EFL teachers to teach listening in their classes? A light needs to be shed on those questions for an alternative teaching strategy otherwise their effort will never amount to a great result.

1-2 Purpose of the study

The importance of the English language cannot be overemphasized in an era where the world has become a planetary village and English is well lending itself for perfect exchanges among the dwellers of that village. In the future years nobody will be spared of using English in one way or another in whatever profession they want to go into. But at the light of the observations mentioned in the problem statement, it is obvious that no effort should be spared to search for adequate solutions to the problems that are undermining the English teaching and learning in our secondary schools. With respect to this, my research work will first of all aim at seeking out some EFL teachers' attitude toward the teaching of listening skill in their respective classes. This will help in finding out how EFL teachers perceive the teaching of oral comprehension.

Moreover, one of the main goals of this research is to discover the different factors or difficulties EFL teachers encounter in teaching of listening skill in our secondary schools. Then after, I will seek to cast light on the causes or origins of those difficulties for there is no smoke without fire.

Finally, the last but not the least purpose of my study is to find out some approaches of solution not only from EFL teachers perspectives, but also from EFL related literature in order to alleviate the difficulties related to the teaching and learning of oral comprehension in our EFL classes.

1-3- Significance of the study

Investigation in the field of education is chiefly carried out in the quest of solutions to the challenges education stakeholders- teachers, students, education managers- encounter in the process of teaching and learning. This quest is perpetual because nobody knows exactly what a good teaching and learning are. So they are subject to frequent changes and innovations. The changes we observe in our educational system are fruit of research work people have carried out. It is exactly into this slipstream that this research work fits.

This study is significant in so far as it will first of all raise the awareness of EFL teachers about the factors that hinder their learners' oral comprehension skill which in fact is the basic layer that paves the way to the acquisition of the remaining skills and chiefly the oral one. The teachers are in the cast playing the role that they are assigned to, so they might not have a clear insight of what is going on. This reaserch will then help them visualize the recorded flaws that they might not be aware of in the process of their daily oral comprehension teaching practices. After the awareness and self-evaluation, they can then engage a remedial process that will help the EFL learners with oral comprehension difficulties.

Apart from teachers, this research work is also important for the learners because many people have a bitter regret for their inability to speak English though they have spent seven years learning it. So if the EFL teachers take a heed of the findings and the suggestions of this research work, the students will be the first beneficiaries for definitely their performanc will improve; and they will be good EFL listeners and users of the language not only in the classrooms but also in their future professional life.

Moreover this research work is important because it will help me as a prospective teacher to explore and be aware of the difficulties that hamper and undermine the effective teaching and learning of oral comprehension in our secondary schools. By being aware beforehand, I shall know how to cope tactfully with those challenges. All the findings of this research might also be useful to school managers and educational decision-makers to give another direction or more emphasis to the way oral comprehension should be taught in classroom, the way textbooks should be designed with little more importance to listening activities and finally about, as far as possible, the provision of EFL teachers with adequate aural-oral materials. This research is significant because it might also serve as a starting point or a source of inspiration to any prospective researcher interested in the field related to this topic.

1-4- Limitation of the Study

The field of this research work is limited firstly in shedding light on the causes of the difficulties EFL teachers encounter in the process of teaching of oral comprehension. And secondly, identify some strategies to remedy them.

It is obvious that the problem of oral communication with EFL learners is a nationwide issue, but due to time and resources constraints to reach all the schools, the area of investigation of this study is limited to CEG ANAVIE where I did my internship and some Ouémé EFL teachers randomly chosen. The EFL teachers of this school will be my target population thus the respondents to the questionnaire of this research. Also, it is worth mentioning that the grade levels my study is concerned with here is the third and fourth forms- the students who have been learning English for at least three and four years.

CHAPTER TWO: THE LITERATURE REVIEW.

As an old saying goes:” it is at the end of the existing thread that a new one is woven.” As a matter of course, the research cannot be carried out without an exploration of the existing literature related to the topic under analysis. Therefore, throughout this chapter, we shall bring out to some extent what has been done so far and then relate it to the content of this research work.

2-1 Definition of listening comprehension

Listening is a receptive skill and receptive skills give way to productive skills. Listening can be defined as a decoding process whereby a listener makes sense of an oral message. As defined by (Thompson and Rubin, 1996),

... listening is an active process in which listeners select and interpret information that comes from auditory and visual clues in order to define what is going on and what the speakers are trying to say.

Language skills are often categorized as receptive or productive. Speaking and writing are the productive skills. Listening, along with reading, is a receptive skill. That is, it requires a person to receive and understand incoming information (input). (Helegesen, 2013:24)

According to Howatt and Dakin, listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. This involves understanding a speaker's accent or pronunciation, his grammar, and his vocabulary, and grasping his meaning. This implies that an able listener is capable of doing these four things simultaneously.

Bulletin (1952) observe that

Listening is a medium through which children, young people, and adults gain a large portion of their education their information their understanding of the world and of human affairs, their ideals, sense of values, and their appreciation. In the days of mass communication (much of it oral), it is of vital importance that our language students be taught to listen effectively and critically. (P.30)

2-2 Components of Listening

Willis (1981) observes that there are a series of micro-skills of listening that he lists as follow:

- Predicting what people are going to talk about,
- Guessing at unknown words or phrases without panic,
- Using one's own knowledge of the subject to help one understand,
- Identifying relevant points and rejecting irrelevant information,]
- Recognizing discourse makers,
- Understanding different intonation patterns and uses of stress,
- Understanding inferred information (speaker's attitude or intuition).

Listening comprehension is regarded as a complex, interactive process in which listeners are involved in a dynamic construction of meaning. Listeners understand the oral input from sound discrimination, prior knowledge of vocabulary, grammatical structures, stress and intonation, as well as other use linguistic, paralinguistic, or even non-linguistic clues in contextual utterance (Rost, 2002).

2-3 Difficulties Related to Listening Comprehension

Listening difficulties are defined as the internal and external characteristics that might interrupt text understanding and real-life processing problems directly related to cognitive procedures that take place at various stage of listening comprehension (Goh, 2000). Listening is made difficult due to at least four characteristics such as the message, the delivery, the listener, and the environment. As Helgesen puts it,

Listening is often compared to read, the other receptive skill. While the two do have some similarities, two major differences should be noted from the start. Firstly, listening usually happens in real time. That is, people listen and have to comprehend what they hear immediately. There is no time to go back and review, look up unknown words, etc. Secondly, although listening is receptive, it very often happens in the midst of a conversation – something which requires productive spoken responses. (Helgesen, 2013:24)

2-4 The importance of listening comprehension teaching in a language class

As SWAEDEN puts it, ‘language is powerful not only because there are competent speakers but because there are competent listeners’

In a context, like ours where English language is learnt quite far from the target language community, students have very limited access or exposure to native-speakers’ speech through personal contact and radio and television. But we cannot develop speaking skills unless we also develop listening skills so these students need to be given as much as possible opportunity to listen to spoken English. In this respect, Morley (1972, p. vii) points out that “*listening comprehension is a prerequisite for oral proficiency as well as an important skill in its own right*”. So to have a successful oral conversation, students must understand what is said to them. Also, River (1996) would go further in observing that :

Speaking does not of itself constitute communication unless what is said is comprehended by another person, therefore teaching the comprehension of the spoken speech is of primary importance if the communication aim is to be reached (p. 196).

The proponents of comprehension approaches recognize the primacy of listening in the process of a second language competence acquisition, but it worth mentioning that this idea contrasts with the audiolingualism of 1960s and 1970 which promoted early intensive oral practice. None the less, in an essay entitled “*why not start speaking later?*” Postovsky (1977) called for an extended period of listening with delayed oral production. Asher’s (1969) total Physical response prone a long preproduction phase in which students listen, follow commands, and demonstrated their comprehension through nonverbal actions.

The Natural Approach (Krashen and Tell 1983) also set a prespeech period for listening only. They claim that comprehension precedes the emergence of speaking as fluency appears only as a result of the provision of sufficient comprehensible input. They also contend that when there is enough comprehensible input language acquisition proceeds successfully. According to Nord (1981), reception should precede production because reception establishes a base for more fluent productive skills. While it is possible to learn to understand without speaking, it is not possible to learn to speak without understanding. Therefore the students need to learn to hear the language used so that they can both imitate the pronunciation and also subconsciously acquire some of its sounds and patterns. It is not common to see a native speaker of whatever the language making pronunciation and grammatical mistakes in oral communication. It is just because they have first learnt to hear it before the all their skills emerge.

It is worth remembering that successful spoken communication depends not just on our ability to speak, but also the effectiveness of the way we

listen. This implies that teachers who want to provide the most effective classroom experience for their EFL learners should mostly focus on listening activities. Listening comprehension lessons are good for students' pronunciation in so far as the more they hear and understand spoken English, the more they absorb appropriate pitch and intonation and stress; and get better not only at understanding speech, but also at speaking themselves. Listening activities are a channel for acquiring grammatical structures and new vocabulary items and can then extend students use of idioms with appropriate diction.

Moreover, the ability to understand spoken English may become very important for a successful academic study which requires a mastery of the listening in formal or one way lectures as well as the interactive exchanges which are common to seminars, conferences, and workshops. Also, in normal daily life, students will want to understand what people are saying to them in English, either face-to-face, on TV or on radio, on tape, CDs or other recorded media, or understanding foreign visitors. Anything teachers can do to make that easier will be useful for them.

2-5 Listening Skill: active not Passive

Language skills are often categorized as receptive or productive. Speaking and writing are the productive skills. Listening, along with reading, is a receptive and understand incoming information (input). Helgesen, 2013 p.24.

Listening as well as reading has been long considered a "passive" skills. Anderson and Lynch (1988) reject a conceptualization of listening as a passive act, calling it a "listener-as-tape recorder" explanation, they argue that such a perspective fails to explain the interpretation listeners make as they hear the spoken text according to their own purposes for listening and

their own store of background knowledge. During one-way exchanges, for example, while listening to lectures, radio, television news, films, we are active. Consider how many times people shout at, laugh at, agree or disagree with a person giving a television commentary on a hot topic or all that happen when people are following a football match for instance. Active listening is even a part of our interpersonal communication, in which we pay attention to our thoughts and ideas.

Listening is very active. As people listen, they process not only what they hear but also connect it to other information they already know. Since listeners combine what they hear with their own ideas, in a very real sense they are ‘creating the meaning’ in their own minds. (Helgesen, 2013:24)

Buck would go further in observing that the assumption that listeners simply decode messages is mistaken. He argued that

Meanings is not in the text (text=whatever is being listened to), but is something that is constructed by listeners based on a number of different knowledge sources. (Buck, 1995 p.89).

2-6 HOW DO WE PROCESS WHAT WE HEAR?

Another aspect of listening is the way we process we hear, and there two distinct processes involved in comprehending spoken English, the internally based **bottom-up** and the externally based **top-down processing**.

Bottom-up processing refers to the process of decoding a spoken message in which the understanding or the meaning of the text is arrived at through the analysis of sounds, words, and grammar. Clark and Clark (1977) describes it as “the internal reproduction a message at the listeners” mind, so that successful listening reproduces the meaning much as the speaker intended”

On the other hand, the **top-down processing** refers to the listener's ability to use his background knowledge – prior knowledge, information and global expectations about language and the world to comprehend the message. Chaudron and Richards (1986) show that, “top-down processing involves predictions and inference on the basis of hierarchies of facts, propositions, and expectations, and it enables the listener to bypass some aspects of bottom-up processing” (p. 114-115). The implication here is that EFL teachers should provide students with practices in both top-down and bottom-up language processing.

2-7 The Functions of Listening

Brown and Yule (1983) suggest dividing language functions into two major divisions: language for transactional purposes and language for interactional purposes. When the language is used to fulfill an interactional communication function, the focus is on creating harmonious interaction among individuals. Its objective is the establishment and maintenance of cordial social relationships. Important features of interactional language are those of identifying with other person's concerns, noncontroversial and neutral topics. It is person oriented more than message oriented.

Unlike interactional use of language, transactional use focuses on content and conveying factual or propositional information. The premium is on message clarity and precision. Speakers often use confirmation checks to make sure what they are saying is clear; they may even contradict the listener if he or she seems to have misunderstood.

An understanding of top-down and bottom-up processes of listening and of the transactional and interactional functions of the language provides and awareness of what listeners do as they listen, and this knowledge is useful for

EFL teachers when designing listening activities they will have students to do in their classes.

2-8 The Different Modes of Listening

If we consider the roles we play in our listening interactions, we can identify three types of communicative listening modes: bidirectional, unidirectional and auto directional.

In the bidirectional or two-way mode, there is a reciprocal speech of speaker/ listener easily observable (Denes and Pinson 1963). Two or more participants take turns exchanging speaker role and listener role as they engage in face-to-face or telephone verbal interaction.

The second mode is unidirectional or one-way communicative listening. In this mode we hear speakers but cannot interact for instance. They may come from overheard conversations, public address, recorded messages, and the media. (e.g Radio, television, films religious services, plays, operas etc.)

The third communicative listening mode is auto directional. Sometime we re-create language internally and listen again as we retell or relive a communication situation. Other times, we simply attend to our own internal language which we produce as we think through alternatives, plan and make decision all by talking to ourselves and listening to ourselves. The implication here for instruction is the EFL learners need to have instruction and practice in both bidirectional and unidirectional listening modes. Also self-dialogue in the auto directional mode should not be neglected.

2-9 **Types of Listening Instruction**

In the everyday teaching practices of EFL teachers, instructions are very important in so far as they allow, on the one hand the teachers to convey to their learners what he expects them to do, and the learners, on the other hand get what is expected from them and keep the learning process going. These instructions EFL teachers use in their classes can generally be categorized in four models.

2-9-1 **Model 1 Listening and Repeating**

This type of instruction enables learners to do pattern drills, to repeat or imitate dialogues and to use memorized prefabricated patterns in conversations. It also helps them to imitate pronunciation patterns. This type of instruction proves to be more useful especially when the teacher is playing the role of controller and is totally in charge of all that is going on in the classroom.

2-9-2 **Model 2 Listening and Answering Comprehension Questions**

The role of the learners in this type of instruction is to process discrete point information; to listen and then answer comprehension questions. The value of this sort of instruction is that it enables learners to manipulate pieces of information and thereby can increase their stock of vocabulary items and grammatical structures. It does not require learners to use the information for any real communication purpose apart from answering the questions.

2-9-3 **Model 3 Task Listening**

What is expected from learners in this one is to listen to an oral text and then use the information they got to carry out real tasks. So the

instructions here are task-oriented. The purpose of this model of instruction is to engage learners in using the content of the spoken text not just in answering questions but to go beyond and perform a real life activity.

2-9-4 Model 4 Interactive Listening

The focus here is instruction that is communicative as well as task oriented. Learners have opportunities to engage in oral conversation and by so doing develop communicative skills into the four competency. The variety of learner's presentation and discussion activities, both individually or in small groups foster the development of aural and oral skills in semiformal interactive academic communication; develop critical listening and speaking.

2-10 Principles for Listening Comprehension in Classroom

For the effectiveness of the listening comprehension learning in a second language classroom, a set of principles need to be observed. This helps get learners' attention, to keep them actively and purposefully engaged in the listening tasks. Among them, we have:

2-10-1 Increase the Amount of Listening Time.

Listening should be used as the primary channel for learning new materials in the classroom. The audio materials should prove to be authentic, and meet the interest and need of the learners in real life situation.

2-10-2 Use Listening before other Activities.

At the beginning and low levels, the learners need to listen to materials before they are required to speak, read or write about it. That is to say, in any kind of language activity the teacher wants to engage the learners in, the listening comprehension should come first.

2-10-3 Include both Global and Selective Listening.

Global listening encourages learners to get the gist, main idea, topic, situation, or setting in other words the content of the aural text. Selective listening points learners' attention to details of form and encourage accuracy.

2-10-4 Activate top-level skills.

Give advance organizers or discussions which call up learners' background knowledge. This needs to be done before learners are allowed to listen. Top-down processing should also be encouraged at every proficiency level.

2-10-5 Develop conscious listening strategies.

Raise students' awareness of text features and of their own comprehension processes. Encourage them to notice how their processing operations interact with the text. Promote flexibility in the different strategies they can use to understand the target language. Practise interactive listening, so that they can use their bottom-up and their top-down processes or check one against the other.

2-10-6 Relevance.

This is essential for getting and holding learning attention. The more lessons focus on things of real-life relevance, the more they appeal to learners and high the chance of having learners' wanting to listen. This is done through the lessons with the topics that are relevant and meet the interests and needs of one's learners.

2-10-7 Transfereability.

Whatever is relevant is also likely to have potential for transfereability. In order to encourage the transferability of the learning, the listening lesson should contain contents that can be used not only in-class activiteis and in upper classes, but also elements that can be used out-school situations. A good lsitening activity should at all cost mirror real-life experience.

2-10-8 Task-oriented

Johnson defines task-orientd teaching as a teaching which provides actual meaning by focusing on tasks to be performed through language, and in which succes is judged in terms of whether the tasks are perfomre. (Burmfit and Johnson 1979, p. 200) here the learnrs use the information in the aural text, rather than asking learnes to prove their understanding of text by ansering quesitons. They listen and do something.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This chapter is all about the presentation of the method used for data collection in order to further the analysis of the topic under investigation. As such, the description is composed of the methodology of the study, the setting, the participants and the instruments used for data collection.

3-1 Method used

The method used to carry out this investigation is the qualitative one. This survey method is chosen because this study is a descriptive research based on the information gathered through questionnaires and class observations. I think that the qualitative method is more appropriate for this research work in so far as it proves to be effective for obtaining information about the opinions, behaviours, and perspectives of a particular population on a given topic. Since this study aims at investigating EFL teachers' behaviours and opinions about their insight of oral comprehension teaching, we see no better choice than the qualitative method. Also, for the presentation and analysis of the collected data, frequency and percentage were used.

3-2 Setting

This research work has taken place in the area of Ouémé. The population sampled was forty (40) EFL teachers from eleven (11) secondary schools which were intentionally selected in Porto-Novo, Dangbo, and Adjohoun local governments. The main reason for targeting this particular population is that it would be easier to get back an important number of administered questionnaires.

N^o	SCHOOL	RESPONDENTS
1	CEG ANAVIE	10
2	CEG DANGBO	05
3	CEG ADJOHOUN	05
4	LYCEE BEHANZIN	04
5	LYCEE TOFFA	04
6	CEG LES COCOTIERS	03
7	CEG AKPASSA	02
8	CEG DJASSIN	02
9	CEG BIO-GUERA	02
10	LYCEE TECHNIQUE	02
11	CEG KOUTONGBE	01

3-3 Target Population

The participants or respondents of this investigation were forty (40) EFL teachers from the aforementioned areas. The following table gives more detail about the participants.

Table 1: The secondary schools involved in this research

It can be noticed from the above table that the Three (03) first schools hold the high scores. Anavie is the highest because it is the school where I did my internship for two academic years. So the EFL teachers in this school are almost colleagues what made it easier to administer and collect back the questionnaires. Adjohoun and Dangbo come next for the respondents' from both schools are my former EFL teachers, what also lessened the challenges.

The remaining questionnaires were administered during the Baccalaureate exam papers marking period. Thus the twenty respondents left were randomly selected. Also, it can be seen that only EFL teachers were selected for this investigation because it is their opinions and the difficulties they encounter while teaching listening that this study aims at investigating on.

3-4 Research Instruments

In order to examine the EFL teachers' understanding and behaviors about the teaching of listening comprehension a questionnaire was designed and administered to the respondents. The questionnaire used for this investigation helped a lot in gathering a great amount of opinions and teaching practice of the respondents in no time and at a low cost. The questionnaire is made of close-ended (yes or no) and open-ended (wh-questions). The latter allowed the respondents to justify their opinion or give ample information about an answer they have given.

The questionnaire was composed of ten items. The items 1 to 4, first section seek the opinion the respondents have about the teaching of listening comprehension and its importance. The second section, items 5-7 were to know how those EFL teachers go about the teaching of listening in their respective classrooms. The third section, items 8-9 were to find out the very difficulties they encounter while teaching listening comprehension and how they deal with those difficulties. The last item on the questionnaire (10) was to investigate from the perspective of the respondents, solutions for the improvement of listening comprehension teaching in Benin secondary schools.

This chapter give information about the procedure of data collection. The next chapter deals with presentation and interpretation of the collected data.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

It is worth mentioning that this research work is carried out in order to investigate the difficulties related to the teaching of listening comprehension in Benin secondary schools from the EFL teachers' perception. The presentation and the analysis are based on the research questionnaire formulated for this study. It followed the order of the different sections of the questionnaire from which data are collected.

The first section is about EFL teachers' insight on the teaching of listening and its importance to them. The second section deals with the EFL teachers' listening teaching practices. The third section concerns the problems they encounter while teaching listening and how they go about it. The fourth and the last, but not the least takes into account the solutions to the difficulties of listening teaching from the perspective of the respondents.

4-1- Teaching Listening and its Importance to EFL Teachers

This first section is composed of the first four (04) items of the questionnaire. The first item is to know the language skill they feel better teaching in their classrooms. The table below recapitulates the results from the respondents.

Table 2: Importance of listening to EFL teachers

Skills	Respondents	Percentage
Listening	0	0%
Speaking	15	37.5%
Reading	25	62.5%
Writing	0	0%

The table shows that 25 (62.5%) of the EFL teachers responded that they feel comfortable while carrying out reading comprehension activities in their classes,

- 15 respondents ticked the box of speaking. What implies that (37.5%) of the target population feel better when teaching speaking in their EFL classes,
- None of the respondents feels easy teaching writing, at least what the data processing revealed,
- None of the respondents likes teaching listening.

The second item on the section asked the language skill that should come first in the teaching/learning process for effective language learning.

- Out of the forty EFL teachers questioned for this survey, thirty-five (35), (87%) indicated that teachers should start teaching speaking before the other language skill,
- Three (03) respondents (7%) were in favour of the teaching of reading in the first position to the students,
- For the listening, only two (5%) asserted that listening is the first language skill students need to learn,
- None of the respondents (0%) supported the teaching of writing in the first position to the EFL students.

The third item is to know whether the respondents teach listening in their classrooms or not. The following table gives more detail about the respondents' positions.

Table 3: practice of listening in EFL classrooms

Answers	Participants	Percentage
Yes	10	25%
No	30	75%

The figures from the above table show that ten of the forty respondents teach listening in their classrooms whereas the great majority does not. Reasons given for their not taking listening much into consideration are of four folds-lack of materials to aid the teaching/learning process, times constraints, electricity supply, and some evoke th fact that listening is assessed neither in classrooms tests nor in national exams. Some of the respondents who claimed to teach listening state that they plan listening activities or their students when they reach the level of a listening task in the prescribed text books. Other observed they observed they only do when they want to teach vocabulary.

The fourth item in this section is to find out if the listening activities in the prescribed textbooks help them in planning and teaching listening in their classrooms. The table below shows the respondents answers.

Table 4: usefulness of textbooks to listening teaching

Answers	Participants	Percentage
Yes	08	20%
No	32	80%

This table reveals that 80% of the respondents find the listening activities in the textbook not helpful to them. Some of those who find them useless stated that not only the listening activities in the textbooks are less understandable and confusing, but they are also not tailored to the level of the students.

From the above analysis it can be inferred that listening comprehension is not included in the lesson plan of a great majority of the respondents. This shows that the EFL teachers are not a priori interested or feel concerned with the teaching of listening in their classes from their responses to the first and second items of the questionnaire, it can be induced that listening is not given consideration among the language skills that exist. The data shows that the teaching of listening is not of importance for those EFL teachers. This is very sad indeed as only a few of the respondents; ten out of forty include listening in their lesson plan.

4-2 Listening Teaching Practices in Benin EFL Classrooms.

This section is made of three (03) items. The first item is to seek the listening activities the respondents carry out in their respective classrooms. Out of the 40 respondents, 29 of them which represent 73% left that question unanswered. Only 27% of these EFL teachers respond to the question and this in four different ways.

-5 of them which make up 45% teach listening through the activities called

“listen and repeat”

-2 (18%) out of eleven do listening tasks through dialogues and role play

- Listening and gap filling is the activity (18) other respondents use in their classes.

- The remaining 2 respondents (18%) teach listening through “Questions and answers” session between the teacher and the students

The second item find out the importance of students background knowledge undesigning a listening task 40 out of the 40 respondents which represent (100%) are in favour of putting primacy on student previous knowledge while designing a listening task

The third item is designed to find out the materials the respondents used in the process of teaching/learning of listening comprehension.

Of the 40 of them, 35 o them which make up 87.5% of the respondents us the activities or tasks in the prescribed textbooks only five (12, 5%) questioned indicated that teachers and students voices are the means whereby they teach listening. None of the respondents use adequate listening comprehension teaching/learning materials. As here are no materials, don't these respondents do teaching listening comprehension hard to do? The next section is to tell us the challenges EFL teachers face while dealing with listening activities.

4-3 Difficulties related to teaching listening comprehension in Benin secondary schools.

This section takes into consideration the items 8 of the questionnaire designed for this study. The item number 8 and 9 of the questionnaire designed for this study. The item number 8 and 9 of the questionnaire designed for this study. The item number 8 is to know the difficulties EFL teachers encounter when teaching listening comprehension in their classrooms. The answers of the respondents to this item are of different kinds. The following table fives precise information about the different problems of listening teaching in our secondary schools.

Tables 5: EFL teachers' difficulties in teaching, listening.

Problems	Respondents	Percentage
Lack of relevant materials	25	62%
Overcrowded classrooms	6	15%
Time constraints	3	7,2%
Learners' lack of listening skills	5	12,5%
Power supply	1	2,5%

The above table shows that all the questioned EFL teachers had their say about this item. Though some previously confessed that they do not teach listening they stated some serious impediments to the teaching of listening in their classes. In a nutshell, the evoked difficulties are much more extrinsic to the teachers than intrinsic. In other words, the problems depend more on outside factors than on EFL teachers themselves. As a matter of course, 62, 5% of the respondents observed that the reluctance on their part to teach listening comprehension is due to the lack of relevant listening.

The amount of time allotted to English language teaching in our curriculum is also mentioned by 7, 5% per cent of the respondents as one of the factors hampering the teaching of listening in their classrooms. 12.5% of the questioned EFL teachers complained about the learners' inability to appropriately listen to audio materials. So the learners lack basic listening skills. Only one respondent of the forty talked about the problem of electricity. Thus it can be said to some extent that lack of power supply in some areas of Ouémé-plateau is one of the causes hindering the teaching of listening comprehension in that area. It is true that much has been said about

the difficulties related to the listening teaching in Benin EFL classes. But aren't there some alleviating solutions to deal with those problems?

The second item in this section is to know how the respondents despite all cope with the above state difficulties. In this regard, a range of answers was provided. The following table gives more detail about the diverse means and ways the questioned EFL teachers use in their classrooms.

Tables 6: attempt of solution

Palliatives	Respondents	Percentage
Teachers' voice	20	50%
Overcrowded dialogue/role-play	5	12,5%
Laptop/phone	3	7,5%
nothing	12	30%

The above table reveals that fifty per cent of the respondents teach listening comprehension with their own voices. Five participants what makes up 12.5% pretend to teach listening through conversations and simulations? Out the forty (400 respondents, only three (30 teach listening with electronic devices; in the twenty first century, an era technologies. Worst of all, thirty per cent (30%) of the respondents did not mention the means or devices they use to carry out listening activities. Given that, we are tempted to draw the conclusion that most of our respondents lack listening teaching techniques. What do they recommend for the improvement or to alleviate those difficulties they are confronted with? The last item of the questionnaire gathered more information.

To school authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -provide video/audio facilities, -assure power supply, -allow students/teachers to use electronic devices at listening classes
To school workshop leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -set listening activity on agenda at workshops, -encourage teachers to teach listening -collect and share article and periodicals related to listening with the participant
To colleagues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -expose their difficulties related to listening at workshop, -use their phones, -teach and assess listening, -give homework on audio file -tape record written text in the textbooks

4-4 Recommendations from the EFL teachers to lessen the difficulties related to listening teaching.

Table 6: EFL teachers (respondents) recommendations

The table above shows that as a whole the EFL teachers' more or less know how to go about the difficulties they encounter while teaching listening comprehension. However, they seem not willing to start putting into application what they know; instead they are expecting a kind of extrinsic motivation. The little theory of listening comprehension they have is not followed by practice; hence the quasi-absence of listening activities in their teaching routine.

4-5 Synthesis of the Findings

To recap, the investigation revealed that the importance of listening comprehension is not well known and thought of in Benin secondary schools in general, in fact, if we consider the teaching listening and its importance to EFL teaches, the listening teaching practice in Benin EFL classrooms, or the difficulties related to teaching listening comprehension in Benin secondary schools, the recommendations of the EFL teachers to lessen the difficulties related to listening teaching; it appeared that the teaching of listening comprehension despite its importance is not considered as a language skill to teach in our English language classes./ far from our personal opinion, it is instead the revelation and by the present investigation. It is with a great surprise and sadness that we noticed that our secondary schools EFL teachers are out tune and are not going with the current trends about foreign or second language teaching., this is really sad in so as the field o second language teaching different from physics or chemistry where profess is more or less steady language teaching is a domain in which fads and heroes come and going in a manner fairly consistent with the kind of changes that occur in society. This is easily noticeable through the changes of luggage teaching methods form grammar translation to comprehensive method. This discovery sends us o the issue of professional development of the EFL teachers’.

Also, keeping one’s knowledge an nd aptitude up to date as an EFL professional is vital to a successful teaching career. It can help the teachers’ not to go stale and keep on using the same method and idea again and again. Knowing new teaching methods lessens teachers’ difficulties and helps them prepare interesting and enjoyable lessons for their learners. For teachers to stay current with their teaching method, EFL teachers’ might engage themselves in travailing to the places where the language is natively spoken, attending special workshops, reading EFL related publications and

networking with educators from around the globe via education platform or the web.

Moreover, the finds of the present research showed us that our EFL teachers' do not show any serious interest to the use of the new technology devices. It is generally observed that the best way to draw the attention of people or to get them really involved in what you are doing is to focus on their own need and interest. We noticed that EFL teachers' fail to take advantage of those new interests of their younger learners, today, very few of the learners do not have an MP3 or 4, if not a phone, it is easy to see them moving from place to place with earphones around their neck or over their head. Those devices second to none in listening represent precious tools for teaching or learning of any language through listening of audio files. Instead of written text, EFL teachers can use oral text as homework what the learners surely will find interesting because the interest of the young generation today is more on listening than reading. The use of social networks such as Facebook, Whatsapp, and video chats through education platform on the web and help the EFL teachers connect their learners to the ones in English speaking countries. By so doing, EFL teachers will speed up the learning of the language of their learners. The search also revealed that the EFL teachers complained about lack of teaching materials, but with the above mentioned opportunities, the problem of material is more or less solved

CHAPTER FIVE: RECOMMENDATIONS, SUGGESTIONS AND GENERAL CONCLUSION

The present chapter lends itself to bringing out attempt of solutions and recommendations to the problems EFL teachers face in the process of listening comprehension teaching in our secondary schools. This will be done, taking into consideration both the findings of this research work and what EFL related literature recommend as far as listening comprehension is concerned, to do this, the first part will deal with recommendations to the government and school authorities, on the other hand, suggestions to EFL learners and eventually follow specific suggestion and activities for effective listening teaching.

5-1 recommendations to the government

The development of any country follows the education and training to her citizens. no progress and be expected form a nation which does not value education the transmission in the better way of that education can only be assured by trained and qualified teachers. As a matter of fact, the government should given more attention to the training of teachers in general and of EFL ones in particular because of the importance of the English language today in the world. The present research revealed that he lack of training or of continuing professional development one of the factors that hamper the teaching of listening comprehension in our secondary schools and consequently affecting the proficiency of EFL learners. To solve this problem, the government despite the effort that has been done so far about the training of teachers shod language teachers in permanent learning of new teaching techniques related to the field of their teaching. Through continuing professional envelopment, teachers can avoid getting stale in their classrooms. It will also help them to hone their teaching craft and thus

provide the learner's with more exciting and more interesting learning experience. In a century where technology is taking over traditional practices, nothing good can be in our school if the power supply is not a reality. So it lies in the power of the central alone with local government to provide schools in their areas with electricity and teaching learning materials that can favor the acquisition of the English language in our country. In addition, a good working and living condition of the teachers is also a motivating factor that might increase the productivity altruism from the part of the teachers. Furthermore, the government along with the school authorities should subscribe their schools to educational o pedagogical nd professional periodicals and journals in order to help the teachers read and use up to date tips and practices related to the subject the teach. The schools authorities should also encourage or subsidize EFL teachers subscribe to TESOL quarterly. Also, they need to provide the language teachers in lieu of language lab, materials such as DVD players, speakers, instructions CDs, camcorder, or tape recorder, earphones and all the stuffs.

5-2 Suggestions to Teachers

Motivation is a great tonic of doing every work. As English s not the learners' mother tongue motivation is needed for learning it. In the same way listening is the most important skill of learning any language. So our students should be motivated to develop their listening skill to learn English. Our secondary English teachers can come forward with positive motivation to drive away the anxiety about the listening skill. In teaching listening, teachers should given maximum importance to the listening process and he/she shouldn't be too much rigid about the evaluation of the learners. Using listening activities for testing only leads to anxiety, which wakens the deployment of Meta cognitive strategies. To become engaged learns, students need to understand that learning a language is not the same as subject like

any other, they may learn a great deal about is vocabulary, grammar, an sentence and discourse structure, but the language will not become a true medium of communicating for them and won't engage them very deeply. Students need to understand that learning a language means becoming able to use it to comprehend, communicate, a think – as they do in their first language.

Students' also need to recognize that language learning takes place in stage. Interpretive skills (listening, reading) develop much more quickly than expressive skills (speaking, writing), and the ability that students involved most- the ability to speak the second language fluently- requires the longest period of growth.

2- According to the respondents of this study, prior knowledge plays an important role and our students shod develop their prior knowledge. Ion this regards, teachers should help students to grow prior knowledge regarding the listening materials, so that learners will be able to connect their background knowledge with the listening activities. Teachers should make easy the context for the learners so that the learners feel interested to learn listening skills.

3- For doing any task successfully any one should know the purposes of doing the work. So teachers should let the students know the purpose of listening skill while listening. The reasons for doing this are as follow:

- Help learns direct their attention reduce anxiety
- Know when they accomplish their goals
- Can increase learner involvement
- Make task more manageable
- Help learners feel in control
- Help learners feel more efficient

4- Using authentic materials and topic related to the culture and interest of the learners are important to develop our students listening skill. Thus, teacher should take into consideration the great events or celebrations in their ear to design their material. Learners from Oueme-plateau will be nice eager it skate ti aydui text abiyt GUELEDE or ORO festival; those of Alantique Littoral Egougou dance; Yam festival in Collines; and northwards Gaani festival. In this regard, teachers should tailor their audio text to the region where they are teaching. Information in the aural text should be congruent with what listeners already know (hearing someone talk about a film you have seen is easier to understand than hearing the same type of conversation about one you haven't seen) while listening will be practices, students should be given more than one chance for hearing the same material. Text difficulty has to do with:

4-1 Speed (but the solution is not to substitute with unnaturally slow, clear recordings; that can actually distort the way language sounds. A more useful technique is to put pauses between phrases or sentences.

4-2 Number of individuals or objects in a text (more voices increase difficulty)

4-3 How clearly the individuals or objects are distinct from one another (a recording with a male voice and a female voice is easier than one with two similar male voices or two similar female voice is easier than one with two similar male voices or two similar female voices).

5- Understanding the difficult words meanings important things. Teachers should try to do co-vocabulary exercises to build up rich vocabulary stock before they can listen to an aural text. Teachers should also motivate them to improve their listening skill.

6- English is not a content based subject it is skill bases subject and any skill can be develop through practice. The more exposure then learners will get the more they will be competent. It is not necessary that students will practice listening is classroom only. For the development of extensive listening they can be amperage to watcemg;os ,pvoes owjt sib-title, listen to English song. Documentary show English news, sports commentary etc.

7- Thought e students of secondary level education are not dull most them are now well equipped with mobile phone and it say common practice of listening FM radio for entertainment. The English teachers should encourage their students to hear BBC (FM broadcast) in their mobile phone. The EFL teachers can encourage their learners to follow education based FM radio and TV channels in English such as Soleil FM, Golf TV and ORTB English session programmes. Teachers should also try to give homework to their learners on audio texts. By so doing, they will avoid the waste of a great amount of time.

8- Expose students to different ways of processing information: bottom-up (based on knowledge o vocabulary, grammar, sounds) and top-down (based on content schema such as general knowledge and lie experience, and textual schema such as knowledge of situational routines).

8-1 exposes students to different types of listening

8-2 Teach through a variety of tasks

8-3 considers text, difficulty and authenticity

8-4 teaches listening strategies (predicting, inferring, monitoring clarifying, responding, evaluating).

9- Aural text difficulty has to do with:

9-1 speed (but the solution is not to substitute with unnaturally slow, clear recordings; that can actually distort the way language sounds. A more useful technique is to put pauses between phrases or sentences.

9-2 number of individuals or objects in a text (more voices increase difficulty)

9-3 how clearly the individuals or objects are distinct from one another (a recording with a male voice and a female voice is easier than one with two similar male voices or two similar female voices).

5-2-1 preparation to listening activities

It is important for teachers to prepare thoroughly for a listening activity if the activity is to be successful and this is especially true with teenagers. As motivation is so important when dealing with young learners, doing some pre-listening activities that are designed to raise interest in the listening task at hand can often make the experience more engaging and enjoyable for everyone. Here are some classroom tips and activities teachers can try to help their learners improve their listening skills.

Before listening

We can help our learners with listening activities by activating their schemata or background knowledge, arousing their interest in the topic or preparing them linguistically before they listen.

1- Mini whiteboard word roses

We can prepare learners linguistically with an activity like this one. Write the topic on the board in a circle. Each group has a mini white board and makes a word rose by writing down words around the circle that are connected to the topic. They can try and group the words according to

meaning. Then they pass their word rose to another group who adds words to it or writes synonyms next to words. It's useful for learners to focus on synonyms as speakers will often use synonyms so as not to repeat the same word. If you don't have mini whiteboards a big piece of paper will work just as well.

2- Pre-teach key words

If there are some unknown key words in the listening text it can be useful to pre-teach them. There are different ways of doing this. You could give a few words to each group for students and they use a dictionary to write definitions and find out the pronunciation before teaching the words to their peers. Or you could put the definitions around the classroom and students have to go and find the definitions for their group's words.

Another way is to put the key words on the board (I also include key words that may be familiar but have tricky pronunciation to prepare students to listen out for them). Write the key words with the part of speech, word stress and any tricky sounds then give definitions of the words in random order. Students listen to the definitions and say the word.

You could also prepare students for familiar words with tricky pronunciation with a game of taboo; write the words on cards and they have to define the word using synonyms or definitions but without using the word itself.

3- Talk. Talk, talk

Before listening, students could carry out a speaking activity (role-play, questionnaire or discussion) based on the topic for the listening test. If there are opinions given in the text, the speaking activity will give them an opportunity to come up with some of the language in the text before they

listen. If you tell them the topic, students could even write their own questions for a questionnaire pictures related to the topic can also be used to generate discussion.

4- Task tips from the teacher

As listening activities can be tricky for students, here are a few tips and pointers we can give our students to help them concentrate all their energy on listening and understanding for example:

- Tell students how many speakers there are and how many times they'll hear the audio.
- If you're creating your own listening tasks, make sure the tasks follow the same order that the information is delivered in the audio. Also, make the completion of the task as simple as possible so that the students concentrate on what they're listening to rather than getting bogged down in the task itself. Tasks such as circling or ticking the correct answer, matching information, putting pictures or statements into order or completing simple tables is easier than making lots of notes or writing long sentences while listening.
- Give students time to read the task before they listen so they know what information to listen for and can start making predictions about the language.
- If there are dates, times or big numbers in the task, encourage students to say them to themselves before they listen to mentally prepare themselves for this type of information.

While listening

- Listening effectively in another language involved using both top-down and bottom-up listening strategies appropriately. We often use top-down

listening strategies the first time we listen to get a general idea of the text. Activating schemata and making predictions about the text prior to listening (see ideas in “before listening” section) will help learners develop their top expectations about the text. Bottom-up listening strategies involve a closer understanding of the text, so activities that encourage our listeners to understand specific details or focus on specific sounds or language will help them develop these strategies.

- 1- Songs are a very motivating way of encouraging students to listen. Make a playlist at the start of term of your students’ favorite songs that you can then use in class over the school year. There are hundreds of activities you can design to use with songs, for example give students a word cloud of the lyrics and get them to predict the content of the song. Then, they listen and circle the words they hear in the word cloud and afterwards you could ask them to join words together that appear in the word cloud to make complete lines from the lyrics. Or how about getting your students to design their own listening tasks for their chosen song?
- 2- Short clips from films or TV series are very motivating for teens and can form the basis for a number of viewing activities for both bottom-up and top-down listening activities. You can use subtitles to help reinforce the sound-spelling relationship or design activities where first the students listen with the screen covered or watch without sound and produce the content. The visual aspect also allows you to focus on body language or paralinguistic features that convey meaning.
- 3- Dictation as well as audio or video recordings, the teacher are a valuable listening source in the classroom. Different types of dictation activity can be used to help learners develop their bottom-up listening skills. It helps them to break down chunks of language into individual words and reinforces the sound-spelling relationship.
- 4-

5- The teacher is an MP3 player

This is a very simple dictation activity that enables the speed of a dictation to go at the students' pace. Choose a short text to dictate (perhaps the introduction to a reading text or even a set of listening comprehension questions) and the students give you instructions; 'play,' 'stop' and 'go back'. When they say 'play' you begin dictating and they write down what you say. Carry on speaking until they say 'stop' and 'go back'. Then you repeat the last part and continue until they say 'stop' again.

6- Telephone

A fun way of encouraging students to listen for specific detail and to listen to listen to each other is through a game of telephone. Prepare some sentences; these could be a series of requests or even a set of discussion questions. Students are divided into groups of about five or six and stand in a long line, one behind the other – there should be the same number of students in each team, so if one team is uneven, rotate a student to stand out of each round. The teacher shows the students at the back of the line a sentence which is written down. They whisper it to the next students who whisper it to the next and so on until it reaches the student at the front. If the sentence is a request, the student at the front could carry out the request and the first one to do so correctly wins a point. Or the first students to write the sentence correctly on the board win a point for their team. Then the student at the front moves to the back and you repeat the process until all students have had a turn being at the front of the line.

7- Growing story chains

Every one has a story to tell about something. Getting students to share their own stories is a great way of personalizing a topic, encouraging them to listen

to each other and developing their speaking skills. In this activity, students work in groups of four or five. Before they begin telling their stories, elicit examples of adjectives, adverbs and time references and write them on the board. These will help students add extra details when retelling the stories. All students jot down a very basic true story with minimal detail which should be no longer than three sentences. Then, one student tells their basic story to the group. The next student retells this story, but adds some extra detail. The third student retells the story including the extra detail, but adds even more detail, and so on until the last student tells the final version of the story with the most detail. They have to listen to each other to make sure none of the details are missed out. At the end they can compare the final version with the first version and see how much the story has changed. Then the whole process is repeated with the next student's basic story.

8- Break it up – How many words?

The nature of speech means that we often use contractions and weak forms when speaking and sometimes it can be difficult for learners to decipher the exact words in these chunks of language. However, sometimes it is important to employ our bottom-up listening skill to identify these details and to be able to break down the continuous flow of speech into individual words. Select some sentences that include contractions or weak forms. Say the sentences at natural speed one by one or play the recording. Students listen and decide how many words are in each sentence and hold up the corresponding number of fingers. This also gives you an idea as to which students are able to hear the exact number of words and which aren't. Follow up by electing their words onto the board. If they can't hear some words, leave a gap on the board, replay or say the sentences again until you elicit the missing word.

- 9- One other possibility is to ask students to bring prepared songs or any other listening material in English to the classroom. When I have done this I have often been very surprised to see how much students put in to prepare the material if asked to do so.
- 10- Students often seem to enjoy bringing a song on tape to school with the words suitably gapped. Apart from anything else, in this situation of students decide themselves what from anything else, in this situation the students decide themselves what they are going to listen to instead of having a listening activity imposed on them by the teacher. I believe that this is a key to motivating our students.
- 11- Another idea that could work well in EFL class is to record a short interview with one of fellow teachers. It might turn out that students will be really interested in hearing about the life of one of the other teachers at school.

After listening

After listening we can focus on specific language or pronunciation or integrate the skills with follow-up activities.

1. Shadow reading

This is a fun activity that helps learners develop their intonation. Choose a short dialogue or a short section from a longer dialogue they have listened to. Once learners understand the content of the dialogue, they can focus on the intonation patterns. If there are two speakers, divide the class into As and Bs. Play the recording – As speak along with speaker 1 and Bs speak along with speaker 2. By speaking at the same time as the speakers on the recording, learners mimic the same intonation patterns stress and rhythm exactly. Then

repeat the process twice more, but turn the volume down each time then repeat the process twice more, but turn the volume down each time. Finally learners say the dialogue without the learning and you should find that they copy the intonation.

2. Content and non-content words

A useful activity to highlight learners' awareness of which words are the important words to listen out for is to give them a copy of the audio transcript. Select a section and learners divide the words into two groups: content and non-content words. To help them do this, elicit the kinds of words that tend to be content words (nouns, adjectives, main verbs, etc.) and those that tend to be non-content or grammatical words, the words that glue the conversation together (articles, prepositions, pronouns, auxiliary verbs, etc.). They could also look at the transcript and identify the words that enabled them to answer the listening task. This will also highlight the fact that sometimes a more "grammatical" word could be a content word, for example a negative construction that informs us that someone doesn't do something or doesn't like something. Follow up by playing the dialogue again and listening for the stressed words, which should largely coincide with the content words.

3. Spoken language features

Give learners a copy of the audio transcript and get them to identify and highlight features of spoken language such as hesitations, e.g. err..., um..., exclamations, e.g. "Really?", "No way!"; and examples of ellipsis or words that are missed out of natural speech, e.g. "You going now?" instead of "Are you going now?".

Extensive listening outside classroom

As well as developing listening strategies in class, we can encourage our learners to develop their extensive listening outside the classroom by listening to songs, watching their favorite TV series or films with the subtitles in English or listening to podcasts that can be downloaded for free on British Council Teaching English. The learner will be called to give account of their listening.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

This study was carried out to investigate the difficulties EFL teachers encounter in the teaching of listening comprehension in the secondary school of ANAVIE specifically and the Area of Ouémé in general. It is also hoped that the study will inform or reiterate EFL teachers the importance of engaging EFL learners fully in learning English through listening comprehension in our secondary schools. We have decided to carry out this research on listening because from our secondary school through our training in college to our internship, we noticed an absolute neglect of the listening comprehension by EFL teachers. This drew our attention and we hope that this research will shed more light on that dark field to which few people pay attention. In order to achieve that goal, a documentary research was carried out and a questionnaire was designed and administered to the EFL teachers this study targeted in order to get a broad understanding of the topic under analysis. This study revealed that lack of knowledge of the importance of listening comprehension by EFL teachers, inadequate teaching/learning materials, and absence of congruent listening activities in the prescribed textbooks. Large classes are the major factors that hinder effective teaching/learning of listening comprehension. This investigation disclosed that our respondents do not have a good understanding and opinion about the teaching English through listening comprehension. For them, listening activities are not worth engaging in for effective language learning.

That opinion of theirs is quite different from the principles of the current language teaching methods such as Natural Approach, Communicative Approach, Total Physical Response, and others. The confrontation of those findings helped us figure out that the difficulties our EFL teachers are faced with reside much more in their lack of knowledge of the techniques and strategies they can use to carry out listening comprehension activities than in

large class or materials which are available already. That challenge itself is not a great deal in so far as continuing professional development can help empower the EFL teachers and consequently alleviate or put an end to what the teachers consider to be their difficulties. Considering the importance of listening and its essential role in academic contexts in general and in language learning contexts in particular; it appears that more attention is expected to the teaching practices, the proportion of the class time, and the teaching materials of listening comprehension. This study clearly demonstrates that the need and the opportunity to teaching listening in the classroom are of great importance. It would then be encouraging for educational managers to organize lectures, symposia and seminars to enable EFL teachers to update their knowledge about the current second language teaching methods and more especially the necessity and techniques for effective listening comprehension teaching. Also, in service training programmes should include more information about the latest pedagogic innovation and change and academic research. Also, professional educational journals should be made available quarterly in schools to help EFL teachers be up to date with their teaching practices. But before the engagement of the EFL teachers in the process of innovative professional development, we have proposed a repertoire of listening comprehension activities that can help the EFL teachers take a deep sigh of relief in face of their classroom difficulties related to the teaching of listening comprehension.

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ANNEX PAGES

A- QUESTIONNAIRE OF EFL TEACHERS

1- What of the four language skills do you feel better teaching in your classes?

Listening

Speaking

Reading

Writing

2- What skill do you think teachers should start teaching learning?

Listening

Speaking

Reading

Writing

3- Do you teach listening in your EFL classes? If yes, how often? If no, why?

4- Do the listening activities in the prescribed textbooks help you meet your oral comprehension teaching objectives?

5- What kind of listening activity do you carry out in your classes?

6- Do you think learners background knowledge should be taken into consideration while designing a listening activity?

7- What listening materials do you use to carry out your listening activities in class?

8- What difficulties do you encounter while teaching listening in your classes?

9- How do you cope with those difficulties?

10- What do you think should be done to improve the oral comprehension teaching in our secondary schools?

B- LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: the secondary schools involved in this research

N°	SCHOOLS	RESPONDENTS
1	CEG ANAVIE	10
2	CEG DANGBO	05
3	CEG ADJOHOUN	05
4	LYCEE BEHANZIN	04
5	LYCEE TOFFA 1 ^{ER}	04
6	CEG LES COCOTIERS	03
7	CEG AKPASSA	02
8	CEG DJASSIN	02
9	CEG BIO-GUERRA	02
10	LYCEE TECHNIQUE	02
11	CEG KOUTONGBE	01

Table 2: Importance of listening to EFL teachers

Skills	Respondents	Percentage
Listening	0	0%
Speaking	15	37.5%
Reading	25	62.5%
writing	0	0%

Table 3: practice of listening in EFL classrooms

Answers	Participants	Percentage
Yes	10	25%
No	30	75%

Table 4: usefulness of textbooks to listening teaching

Answers	Participants	Percentage
Yes	08	20%
No	32	80%

Tables 5: EFL teachers' difficulties in teaching, listening.

Problems	Respondents	Percentage
Lack of relevant materials	25	62%
Overcrowded classrooms	6	15%
Time constraints	3	7,2%
Learners' lack of listening skills	5	12,5%
Power supply	1	2,5%

Tables 6: attempt of solution

Palliatives	Respondents	Percentage
Teachers' voice	20	50%
Overcrowded dialogue/role-play	5	12,5%
Laptop/phone	3	7,5%
nothing	12	30%

Table 6: EFL teachers (respondents) recommendations

To school authority	-provide video/audio facilities, -assure power supply, -allow students/teachers to use electronic devices at listening classes
To school workshop leaders	-set listening activity on agenda at workshops, -encourage teachers to teach listening -collect and share article and periodicals related to listening with the participant
To colleagues	-expose their difficulties related to listening at workshop, -use their phones, -teach and assess listening, -give homework on audio file -tape record written text in the textbooks