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DEDICATION

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INTRODUCTION

Human beings are created and provided with a lot of natural gifts meant to help or serve them in their daily life.

Language, as one of the most important assets of human beings, is of a paramount importance in their daily life. Language helps people communicate, which appears as the commonest function assigned to it. But more still, many other functions exist and lead people's daily life; language helps people to share their joy, their good times and their sorrow, their grievances, to put it short, their thoughts in general. Language is a medium for customs, beliefs, concrete and abstract representations in men's life. It helps to share culture.

In humans' real life, language stands for the cornerstone of most activities or realities that help build daily relationships.

But let's question our theme on what really is addressed as language as the term "language" is a very large one that involves a variety of realities.

"language", in a general sense, refers to all means of communication. It involves sounds, gestures, pictures, and even colours etc...

Oxford Advanced learners' dictionary defines language as : i) "the system of communication in speech and writing that is used by people of a particular country. Eg.: The Japanese language – how many languages do you speak? Italian is my first language – All the children must learn a foreign language - He has a good command of the Spanish language – A qualification in language teaching – they fell in love in spite of language barrier (the difficulty of communicating when people speak different languages)...

ii) the use by humans of a system of sounds and words to communicate e.g : theories about the origins of language-A study of language acquisition in two – year – olds.

iii) A particular style of speaking or writing e.g : bad/foul/strong language (word that people may consider offensive) - literary / poetic language.

The language of the legal profession e.g : Give your instructions in everyday language...

iv) A way of expressing ideas and feelings using movements, symbols and sound : e.g the language of mime – the language of dolphins / bees.

v) A system of symbols and rules that is used to operate a computer : a programming language.

This is then evidence that the word “language” addresses a large variety of definitions. But what is indexed here through the theme of our research is “language” in term of tool for communication.

Under that definition lie also other varieties : language as “mother tongue,” and language as “foreign language” for studies (that is used at school). Here, our theme has to do with language as medium for communication, language for studies at school, therefore, English language as spoken and written at school.

In fact, we are concerned here with the teaching / learning of English using folklore and short stories.

Why really the idea of referring to folklore and short stories as pedagogical tool for the teaching / learning of English in our classes?

First of all, let’s consider the social, cultural and even political system available in African societies before white men took hold of this continent as colonizers. The everyday life in these societies was ruled through a system shaped by tradition with a manifold elements, all meant to contribute, in one way or another, to a balanced social life.

No “writing” or other modern systems of record existed apart from the use of certain symbols to remind events. That is illustrated in *Things Fall apart* of chinua Achebe about Unoka’s method of keeping records of his debts, a method consisting in making lines on walls as a record of quantity. (*Things Fall Apart*, 1958, P.6)

In spite of the absence of modern ‘‘writing or recording’’ system, ways and means were developed that helped keep efficiently the marking events and history of the whole land. By the way, tradition keepers such as griots who were in permanence working on behalf of the kings and other social leaders were expected for example, to sing praises for leaders all the day long. Such songs were made up of a compilation of the daily lives of people as well as the famous deeds in the kingdom. It is also the duty of these griots and praise singers to collect and recall to the kings the whole detail about the past, the present and even the future. They act as the memory of the kingdom. A typical example is the kingdom of DANXOME in the central part of Benin.

To achieve such a duty successfully, those praise singers drew on traditional methods. In fact songs were skillfully arranged putting events side-by-side in such a way that any attempt to raise thoughts about a given situation in the kingdom occurred easily if one referred to singers. It is obvious that the memory of a whole land could not be kept by a few people only on their mind. The most important thing to underline here is the songs which undoubtedly played the role of register, records that worked as perfectly well as written records.

Moreover, by that traditional time, every night, at the moonlight, people usually gathered to recite folktales, proverbs, legends etc.. that were meant to entertain and educate ; most pieces of education were recorded in those folklore items and transferred when needed. Here also, songs, are used as a kind of summary of the contents. With these traditional people, no means for written records existed and keeping record or information was however done with an astonishing easiness. By the way, strict records of information, events, existing pieces of regulation, mode of celebration of different sacrifices and rites, pieces of history, whatever was felt necessary were kept. Obviously, such records were successfully kept through songs, folktales, proverbs legends and many other pieces of literature items.

A cursory examination of all these raised from me the attempt of examining these folklore items, so as to elicit to what extent they could help teach /learn language. First, if in such a traditional Africa with no knowledge of modern means and methods of recording, there has been such a success in handling the realities concerning all the areas of people's life drawing on these materials (folklore, etc), I do remark that from them, there should be a strong force likely to foster the teaching/leaning of English as language since language learning is also a matter of strategies, organization, style or memory etc. Secondly, I suppose that the strong force here lies more in the psychological, social and moral values associated with these folklore items.

It is therefore worth stating here that this research work has nothing to do with the use of folklore in terms of songs, tales, legends written in African traditional language but rather the use of these items as created in English language by writers-mostly Africans-or in context by the teacher himself.

So, in this research work the focus is on how to foster the teaching / learning of English using tales, proverbs, legends, songs, short stories, etc which have largely served, in another context, in traditional Africa because of the values they yield.

In fact, teaching is a complex job and as such, specialists are everyday, cross-checking and proof-reading the available theories, approaches and techniques. They are always looking for new ways of going about it. Old techniques are being revised; new techniques are being invented to pave the way for teachers, students, trainers, trainees and all the protagonists of the teaching / learning system.

This research work therefore, puts a stress on how to work out some new strategies or just handle new materials to up-grade the teaching of English language.

What about the purpose of the study?

Lots of reasons lie under this work. From intellectual to pedagogical one, socio-psychological to political ones, all are combined for the success of learners and teachers and that of the learning / teaching process.

This research work, therefore, will, in one way or another, pave the way on the pedagogical fields, to anyone whose will it is to experiment other research findings. It is not meant to change old strategies but rather to cross- check them to see to what extent one can be a support to the other for the success of the teaching / learning process. Teachers and trainers in general, students and other trainees as well as teachers advisers, or say, all the protagonists of the teaching system could draw a list of experience on pedagogical stage.

Besides, it is an evidence that the subject matter of our research work is fully based on some traditional ways of solving real life problems for the social, cultural, political and even economical up-rising of people. To put it clear, the way songs, folktales, proverbs, legends, etc were used in traditional Africa to find adequate solutions to their daily problems, be it social, cultural, economic and political ones, is an evident proof of the force of our traditional culture. By shedding light on these aspects, this research work could also show to the intellectual community how important some traditional or cultural ways of doing things could be valued and used to clear modern tracks. It could also help political policies and decisions to be taken as to the up-grading of some cultural background knowledge on the behalf of the country's development.

In matter of significance of the study, this work is an attempt to raise in the world of research, new and more willing to work for the betterment of the whole educative system. The struggle for the improvement of the strategies, techniques and methodological tools as a whole could, to some extent, find its way through this research work.

The study also means to students and teachers a modest source wherein they can find possible ways of going about things another way, try other strategies or techniques on their teaching/learning stage; that is important in so far as in matter of teaching/learning, the success lies behind the possibility of taking decisions, making better choices likely to help reach the goal. That is the trend of thinking of neuro-linguists when they argue “if what you are doing isn’t working, try something else, one of the principles important in teaching”.

This work is also an achievement of a great dream, that of enlarging my way of thinking and my knowledge of didactics and pedagogy.

Last but not the least, the work is significant in the sense that it can serve as a source of inspiration to other researchers aiming at carrying out a study in a similar domain.

This research work is divided into three chapters. The first chapter entitled the “review of related literature”, is a check in the different teaching /learning theories developed by scholars in general and applied linguists in particular. This is meant to raise the objectives under each theory so as to see how much the materials, strategies and techniques defined in our work fit in. It also aims at raising the relationship between this work and others that have investigated on the same field.

The second chapter deals with the methodology of the research, the presentation of data and the analysis and interpretation of the results. It is an account of the way the researches were carried out and that involved the context, the aim, the strategies, the findings, the analysis and sense such data can carry. In this chapter, I have also investigated, on the one hand, the relation between folklore and literature in general and, on the other hand, the different functions of folklore as a particular form of literature, functions whose use can foster the teaching / learning process. Some figures of speech and proverbs which are effective communicative devices provided by short stories and folklore items have also been collected.

The third chapter entitled “suggestions and contribution has to do with some strategies and activities based on the use of proverbs, short stories and songs on English language teaching / learning stage.

The last part presents the conclusion.

CHAPTER ONE :
REVIEW OF RELATED
LITERATURE

Language can be viewed as one of the systems which govern communication between living beings in general and human beings in particular. Seen through that angle of communicative tool, language appears as a very complex system. This complexity can be observed on the fields of form or contents, structure or function, concrete linguistic elements and abstract linguistic or literary devices. This complexity can also be accounted for in underlining the manifold roles language is expected to play in human being life as well as in their relationship with their environment and the interactions with their fellow beings. Language does not operate as a passive factor. The mechanism under the process of language use or language handling is no way a static one. Language occurs in a very dynamic process; it is, to put it short, a dynamic system. The dynamic feature characterizing language finds its explanation in the way it adapts to its subject matter, the context, the field, and even to psychological and emotional realities.

The study of such an important and complex element that is language deserves a lot of care. This certainly explains the state of mind of linguists who, through their works, raise different theories or methodological approaches under which language study should be carried out. Each of the theories elaborated integrates a set of dynamic process and linguistic devices all of which respond to a particular philosophy of language teaching or learning.

Five (05) main methodological approaches have been examined: the traditional method, the structural approaches mostly based on behaviorism, the natural approach and the communicative approach ; the competency based approach which appears today as the most up-to-date methodological approach has also been dealt with here.

It is worth stating that the main objectives in this survey are to point out the aim, the general objectives and/or the particular ones behind each methodological approach. Such level of work has helped me to identify the relationship between language teaching/learning theories and the functional

characteristics of folklore items (proverbs, folktales, songs etc), and short stories. Such a descriptive and analytic studies have, no doubt, shed light on this research work as to whether using short stories and folklore in language teaching could enhance the chance of the message reaching home ; in other words, reinforce the teaching process.

As earlier observation, we are concerned here with a descriptive and analytic work on the different methodological approaches cited above. It is worth mentioning that no teaching / learning theory works by itself. Every teaching plan combines a bit of elements related to one or another theory even if there is a particular methodological approach beneath.

1-1 The traditional method

The traditional method also called grammar-translation method looks up on language learning as an intellectual activity whereby the main focus is on reading and writing with little attention given to speaking or listening. Grammar is taught through presentation and study of the rules followed by practice through translation. Vocabulary selection is based on a text selected at random.

The traditional approach finds its origin in the teaching of Latin and Greek with the goal of learning grammar rules for translation purposes as stated above. This was transposed to the second Language acquisition theory, with the learning of grammatical rules which aimed to facilitate translation from the second language to the first language or the mother tongue and the other way round. As clearly seen, very little or quite no stress is put on the communicative aspect of the language.

According to this approach, language was seen as a “system consisting of independent rules”,¹ each of which had to be taught separately, for accuracy reasons. “Another characteristic of the traditional method was the rote memorization of bilingual vocabulary lists, which fosters the predominance of the first language”². According to Joyce, grammatical knowledge taught through long explanations about the second language was “a primary tool to be successful”. Meaning and oral proficiency were secondary and teachers used text mainly to exemplify the grammatical points covered in class. The teaching of the second language laid exclusive focus on forms: formal instructions in isolated linguistic features.

¹ Joyce et al 1999, Theories and approaches, p : 35

² Brown, 1994, Joyce et al, 1999

1-2 The structural approach

The traditional method underwent harsh criticism from theorists of applied linguistics. Their criticism stressed on the overuse of grammar instruction with a cruel lack of oral proficiency. Therefore the structural approaches focus more on the oral ability of learners.

Structural theories such as audiolingualism are based on behaviorism, a psychological theory according to which language learning is seen as a kind of habit formation involving the process of stimulus-response. In addition, a principle of structural linguistics describing phrase structure as a pattern showing 'how some words go together in the sentence' (Cook, 1996), explains the extensive use of substitution tables by structural methods. As a matter of fact, grammar is seen here as a series of structures around which courses are organized; these structures are introduced and illustrated in dialogues and have to be drilled by the students in the process of habit formation. Unlike the traditional approach, the structural methods put very little, if any, emphasis on grammatical explanation. Actually, grammar is taught inductively as students are expected to formulate their own rules according to their experience of the target language, after repeated exposure to language listening and usage. As opposed to the grammar-translation method which works within an explicit framework by giving long explanations and rules about grammar, structural approaches use an implicit language instruction framework based on an inductive process. Although both methods confer a central place to grammar instruction, the main goal of structural approaches is to help students achieve not only accuracy in the target language, but also more native-like proficiency in the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

1-3- The natural approach

The natural approach views language learning as a process which should be close to the way native speakers naturally acquire their languages.

It was developed in the 1980s by Stephen Krashen who based his theory on the Natural Order Hypothesis put forth by Corder in 1967. Krashen and Terrell laid the focus on the communicative proficiency of the learners and emphasized the role of meaning for this purpose. In this connection, great importance was attached to the input provided by the teacher as the only way for the language to be fully acquired. Krashen's theory is based on a number of hypotheses from which it is made clear that grammar teaching stands for a degree zero in his approach. The monitor hypothesis for instance attributes only one function to conscious grammatical knowledge, or learning. Learning comes into play as an editor or monitor to regulate speech before or after it has been produced. The natural order hypothesis has it that language is naturally acquired and that conscious knowledge of the rules is not responsible for fluency. Therefore, abundant exposure to the target language is better for effective acquisition to take place, hence the input hypothesis. It is necessary for the input, not only to be comprehensible but also to contain structures a little beyond the learner's current level of competence in the target language ($I + 1$) to make the natural approach fulfill one of its main goal : a moderate use of conscious knowledge in formal instruction. Language acquisition being also a subconscious process, the affective filter hypothesis suggests that teachers should create the most favorable atmosphere for a large amount of input to become acquisition. This is important to achieve the main goal of the natural approach: communication in the second language with native speakers.

1-4- The communicative approach

The worries and dissatisfaction more and more expressed by people about the grammar-centered methods in the 1970s gave way to the birth and the flourishing of the communicative approach. There seems to be a common point in the communicative approach and the natural approach in so far as both methods call for communication but there is still some difference on pedagogical and procedural fields.

The approach emphasizes a pedagogical ‘shift from the teaching of grammatical structures to the teaching of communicative skills’³. These skills or competencies enable language users to both decode and interpret messages while interacting with other people.

A summarizing view of the aims of second language acquisition in a communicative framework is the teaching of ‘second languages for the ultimate goal of communication with other speakers of the second language’⁴. In other words, the language learnt in a classroom setting will later serve as a tool to communicate with native speakers or other learners. Since the goal of the communicative approach is to prepare students for authentic interactions, teachers are asked to make use of real-life situations in the planning and preparation of their lessons, i.e. adapting their listening, speaking, writing activities to situations that the learners are likely to encounter in real life, and bringing authentic texts into the reading activities as soon as the students’ abilities permit the use of such materials. There is more emphasis on learner autonomy and the activities are no more confined to teaching and practicing grammatical structures. There are two apparently contradictory views on the teaching of grammar in the communicative approach: the first view argued around in the 1970s was developed by theorists like Wilkins. According to them,

³ Joyce and al, 1999, Theories and approaches, P: 41

⁴ Brown, 1994, Language theories, P: 226’.

the ‘meanings and concepts expressed through a language, not the grammatical elements’ are the most important to allow the language user to be understood”⁵.

The second view came around the mid 1980s and the 1990s when teaching specialists claimed that while meaning was truly an important element in social interactions, acquiring grammatical rules was also felt as very important in order to prevent limitation in the way learners communicate meaning. This view is summed up by Nunan as follows: ‘grammar enables us to ‘mean’, and without grammar, it is impossible to communicate beyond a very rudimentary level”⁶.

From this apparent contradiction comes the emerging idea of grammatical consciousness-raising which is actually intended to focus the learner’s attention on aspects of the language that often occur in their input, especially in their reading and listening activities. According to Rutherford, grammatical consciousness-raising is an example of ‘focus on form’ as opposed to ‘focus on forms’ taught in the grammar-centered methods. Ellis assumes that it is a valuable method which can ‘lead to input becoming intake’ and speed up the process of the second language acquisition.

1-5- The competency-based approach to language teaching / learning

Traditional time-based approaches to education have met with varying levels of success over the year; however, it has proved an ineffective system when the goal, is to train individuals to perform specific job-related skills. What is really meant by time-based approaches?

Time-based approaches refer to a system in which the various courses are scheduled to last the duration of the school year in such way that at any given time during the year the teacher is expected to be at a specific point in the text book or course content. While not every student may progress at the same rate,

⁵ Nunan 2000 Grammar, P : 152

⁶ Idem, P : 153

the schedule typically requires everyone to move at the same rate as the teacher. In that system, even though tests are administered periodically to ensure that students understand the concepts and principles and test scores often compared to determine the grades of the students, there often is little time for individual assistance as the teacher must move on in order to adhere to the established time schedule. To put it short, in a traditional educational system, the unit of progression is time and it is teacher – centered. In a competency – based approach or training system, the unit of progression is the mastery of specific knowledge and skills and is learner – or participant – centered. Two key terms used in competency – based training are:

- **Skill:** A task or group of tasks performed to a specific level of competency or proficiency which often use motor functions and typically require the manipulation of instruments and equipment (eg Norplant implants removal). Some skills, however, such as counseling, are knowledge –and attitude – based.
- **Competency:** A skill performed to a specific standard under specific conditions.

Let's go through the following example to exemplify the inefficiency of the time-based approaches on training fields : “An active, certified airline pilot is attending a three-week training course to learn to fly a new type of aircraft. Will attending all sessions during the course ensure the pilot can fly the plane? Of course not! If the pilot is unable to attend two days of the course, does this mean the pilot cannot fly the plane? Probably not. After four days, the pilot does poorly on a written test. Should the pilot immediately fail the course or should he continue with assistance and be given the opportunity to be tested again? If the pilot can pass all written tests, does this indicate that he can fly the play? No! In addition to assessing knowledge, an evaluation of the pilot's skills also is required.

Formerly, Competency – Based Education and Training has emerged from growing demands for vocational training; but nowadays, it can be seen “as a way of bringing together general and vocational education (Barker, 1995), and of reducing the gap between practice and theory in occupational curricula” (Hodgkinson 1992).

A deeper reflection by other scholars has viewed competency as an integration of “capacity” and “ability”. Carr (1993) makes the distinction between competency as conceived of in the sense of it being a “capacity” and in the sense of it being a “disposition”. In the first sense, he is referring to a more holistic view of competence, of a person being for instance a good lawyer. In the second, he refers to particular abilities which are used in particular contexts as, for example, when a named lawyer was able to communicate competently with his client. The capacity sense of competence entails “the use of judgment in the light of rational knowledge and understanding” (Carr, 1993, P. 257). On the other hand, dispositions are inherent abilities which enable a person to perform effectively.

In a nutshell, competency – based approach can be seen as an approach which views education or training as a process leading to the establishment of abilities, dispositions, and capacities likely to help the student or the trainee face successfully real life problems. It involves not only knowledge but also “know – how”. A highly qualified trade agent is not necessarily the one required to deal convincingly with customers. A well – graded administration official may well be unable to promote fair collaboration in the service as staff – manager; the ability or capacity meant by “working in group” is different from having an accurate intellectual knowledge of how to work in group or handle a group.

1-6- Synthetic analysis of the core aim behind the different approaches

As one can notice, each of the five approaches tackled in this study aims at a very particular point, as to the ways and means likely to lead to successful attempts in language teaching/learning. There, obviously, may be common points and/or divergences. Our concern in the present study is less to lay a typical emphasis on this aspect than to raise the general objectives and the specific ones behind such approaches. The term objectives here refers to the ways applied linguists views that language study should be handled to be successful. That involves not only the steps, but also the available techniques, tactics and strategies as well as the psychological, mental and emotional effects such theories / approaches carry altogether along.

Raising these specific points incorporated in these approaches and comparing them to the several functions associated with folklore items has no doubt, helped us realize to what extent using folklore in language teaching could help reach the teaching goals settled in such theories.

As main points addressed by the traditional method, we have the learning of grammar rules for translation purposes. Specific isolated rules are taught for accuracy reason and particular stress is laid on written production. Rote memorization of bilingual vocabulary lists is up-graded. The focus here is put on formal instruction for the teaching of the second language.

In the structural approach, the oral ability of the learners is focused on. Language teaching/learning activities take through permanent exposure of learners to the learning materials that are elaborated such as dialogues or texts involving the grammatical structure likely to foster the acquisition of the oral ability. It is the so – called process of stimulus – response, the habit formation process. So here, language is not learnt through isolated vocabulary words and grammar is not taught for grammar sake; it is phrased into structure incorporated

to the teaching materials and the students are expected to master it inductively, implicitly.

As for the natural approach, the learning process should be close to the way native speakers naturally acquire their languages. Krashen who had a great influence in the settlement of that theory based it on a number of hypotheses from which it is made clear that grammar teaching stands for a degree zero in his approach. The natural order hypothesis advocates that language is naturally acquired and that learning the rules consciously in no way helps for fluency. Great stress is also put on the necessity for the teacher to create the most favorable atmosphere for a large amount of input to become acquisition. The differences with the other approaches (traditional method and structural approach) is that no stress is put on grammar teaching in the process of language teaching / learning and oral ability is stressed on.

The communicative approach, as it can be seen, puts stress on the communicative ability of the learner. It tends to be of the same objective as the natural approach but there is a difference in the way each approach proceeds . Here, the pedagogical process suggests the teaching of communicative skills – not physical items of language – which in real life helps learners to decode and interpret message while interacting with other people; in other words, learners should be able to respond adequately in the context of authentic interactions. This calls the teacher's attention on the necessity to use real – life situations in the planning and preparation of their lessons ; it means the adaptation of teachers' activities to situations that the learners are likely to encounter in real life. There is therefore obvious emphasis on learner autonomy and the activities are no more confined to learning and practicing grammatical structure, learning rote grammatical items for accuracy (as in the structural and traditional methods) or large exposure to extensive input (as in the natural approach).

The competency-based approach stresses the establishment of abilities, dispositions and capacities (apart from the rote knowledge) in the

learners/trainee. On the field of language teaching/learning, it involves not only the mastery of communication abilities but also other behavioral abilities such as: taking turn, living in cooperation, giving successfully a speech to an audience, taking care of the environment. The competency-based approach goes beyond the teaching of language skills as in communicative approach to suggest the development in the learner of abilities and capacities likely to make him a competent person in matter of language use.

This part of the work has taken us through a number of language teaching/learning theories or approaches. That stage is meant to raise in people's mind the different kinds of theories settled out by scholars (especially applied linguists) and which govern the teaching and learning of languages in general and that of second or foreign languages in particular. It is also a kind of review of these theories so as to get the different principles underlying them in order to know if using folklore can up-grade the teaching of languages as settled through the principles related to these methodological approaches.

This has also been done through a brief survey of the functions of folklore as part of literature. It is worth specifying that the functions of folklore items such as short stories, folktales, legends, proverbs, etc are not different from those assigned to literature in general. Before going through these functions, a particular attention should be given to sources of literature. Such a precaution will enlighten our analysis and comment on the functions of folklore. The aim is to see how much these functions fit the principles of language teaching/learning as settled in theories.

But before that level of research, I have dealt with the field researches and experience that have led me to this work.

CHAPTER TWO :
METHODOLOGY OF THE
RESEARCH, ANALYSIS AND
INTERPRETATION OF THE
RESULTS

2-1 Methodology of the research

The research has taken through different steps; first I have drawn inspirations from my observations and studies about some African cultural backgrounds : the roles songs, tales, proverbs, legends etc played in traditional Arica and to some extent continue to play in some African societies nowadays. Secondly, my own experience as English teacher has brought me to experiment how these items can help to teach efficiently. In the same way, I have arranged some field researches involving English teachers expected to use teaching strategies based on these folklore items to see how well they worked. Thirdly, I have collected adequate pieces of information about the close relation between folklore items and modern literature, the various functions associated with them and the important roles such functions can play in matter of language teaching/learning. Last but not the least, some linguistic items–related to what have been defined in this work as folklore items–have also been collected and commented on to show the motivating force they can have on English language teaching/learning.

The different steps of the research, as stated above, have been presented in this chapter. Analyses and interpretations or comments related to the findings have also been presented in each step.

2-2 Research step 1

2-2-1 Description of the strategies

Six teachers A,B,C,D,E,F have been involved. I have negotiated with the vice principal of some schools in the district of Couffo, a deal consisting in using more than one teachers in the same class for the teaching of English during a period of one month.

The teachers A, B, C were expected to handle their classes without any folklore item (songs, short stories folktales etc) ; the remainder – D, E , F are expected to systematically use these items. All levels (first cycle and second cycle) were taken into account as far as the check is concerned.

Teachers A and teacher D are expected to teach in the same class (class 1) four times. Teacher B and teacher E in class 2 and teachers C and F in class 3 four times. Each teacher works on days different from the other’s.

After the number of classes required, a guided questionnaire has been addressed to the different classes (classes 1, 2 and 3)

Here are a sample of the questionnaire and the results.

Table 1:

Kind of teacher Questions	Teacher...	Teacher...
Is good at English teaching		
Handles his classes well		
The lesson are interesting		
Meet students’ needs		

2-2-2 Presentation and analysis of the results

For the results, students’ answers have been collected and summed up – the number of students who have voted for a teacher about a given question is put in the appropriate box.

Class 1: 6^{ème} B (CEG1 Dogbo) - size : 53

N°	Appreciations	Teacher A	Teacher D
		Number of students having voted	Number of students having voted
1	Is good at English teaching	2	51
2	Handles his classes well	2	51
3	The lessons are interesting	1	52
4	Meet students' needs	2	48

Note : There have also been students with no votes

Class 2: 4^{ème} A (CEG1 Dogbo) - size : 56

N°	Appreciations	Teacher B	Teacher E
		Number of students having voted	Number of students having voted
1	Is good at English teaching	0	56
2	Handles his classes well	0	56
3	The lessons are interesting	0	56
4	Meet students' needs	3	53

Class 3 : 1^{ère} AB (CEG1 Dogbo) - Size : 52

N°	Appreciations	Teacher C	Teacher E
		Number of students having voted	Number of students having voted
1	Is good at English teaching	00	51
2	Handles his classes well	02	50
3	The lessons are interesting	02	50
4	Meet students' needs	01	50

In class 1, 51 out of 53 students have revealed that the teacher D is good at English teaching, handles his class well. 52 out of 53 acknowledge that the lessons are interesting and 48 out of 53 say that his work has met their need.

In class 2, out of 46 students, 46 have stated that teacher E is good, that he handles his class well and that the lessons are interesting. 43 out of 46 students say that his teaching meets their need.

In class 3, out of 52 students, 51 remark that teacher F is good. 50 have said that teacher F handles well his class, his lessons are interesting and meet their need.

As we can notice, the pedagogical tool which makes the difference between teachers A,B,C and teachers D, E, F is the use of songs, folktales, proverbs etc... as teaching materials.

To deepen our research we have set the same survey in CEG2 Dogbo with the same teachers.

2-3 Research step 2

2-3-1 Description of the strategies

Here, teachers A, B, C are expected to teach using songs folktales, proverbs etc... teachers D, E, F would not use these items.

2-3-2 Presentation and analysis of the results

Class 1 : 6^{ème} 1 (CEG2 Dogbo) - Size : 61

N°	Appreciations	Teacher A	Teacher D
		Number of students having voted	Number of students having voted
1	Is good at English teaching	58	03
2	Handles his classes well	58	03
3	The lessons are interesting	58	03
4	Meet students' needs	57	04

Class 2: 6^{ème} M2 (CEG2 Dogbo) - size 64

N°	Appreciations	Teacher B	Teacher E
		Number of students having voted	Number of students having voted
1	Is good at English teaching	60	04
2	Handles his classes well	60	04
3	The lessons are interesting	60	04
4	Meet students' needs	60	04

Class 3 : 1^{ère} D3 (CEG2 Dogbo) - size : 59

N°	Appreciations	Teacher C	Teacher F
		Number of students having voted	Number of students having voted
1	Is good at English teaching	59	0
2	Handles his classes well	59	0
3	The lessons are interesting	59	0
4	Meet students' needs	59	0

Analysis of the results

In class 1 (6^{ème} 1), 58 students out of 61 have argued that teacher A is good, handles his class well and that his lessons are interesting with 57 out of 61 satisfied.

In class 2 (6^{ème} M2), out of 64 students, 60 thought that teacher B is good and that his teaching is satisfactory.

In class 3, 59 students out of 59 are satisfied with teacher C.

2-3-3 Interpretation of the results related to the research steps 1 and 2

Before the interpretation proper, let's raise some non – objective criteria involved in the research strategies. As subjective elements, we can say that:

- The two sets of research steps have not been done at the same setting (CEG1 and CEG2)
- The pairs of teachers (teacher A and teacher D, teacher B and teacher E, teacher C and teacher F) have not worked on the same sequence at the two sites (CEG1 and CEG2)
- Each teacher has his own personality which may influence his teaching etc.

- The teacher's previous familiarity with the students. (here I have seen to it through the choice of the classes so that this aspect may have no or almost no influence).

Even though some of the above-mentioned outside effects might influence the results, we can however, notice that the findings as shown through the data in the tables reveal the importance of songs, folktales, short stories, proverbs etc in the success in English language teaching / learning. It is, by all means, difficult to deny the positive influence of these items in language class.

- During the collection of data, students willingly decided to justify their choices and implicitly point a finger to these items as the most motivating aspect. Through their reactions, their questions, their complaints, their grievances and claiming, their interest in folklore elements is noticeable. At the end of the period of the survey, it was even difficult for us to withdraw some of the well-appreciated teachers from their class since students are so enthusiastic with their way of handling the class. Our research tests here have not raised results fully related to students works; however, it is a fact that the motivation brought in students is an essential basis for the message to reach home. Moreover, even though there has been no statistics in this case showing the degree of students' performance, their global reactions in each context have shown the positive influence on their learning.

In the following session, will be the description of other research levels that I have arranged for the same purpose.

2-4 Research step 3

2-4-1 Description of the strategies

During my class experience, I have noticed that students usually showed no interest in listening comprehension. All my effort to draw their attention to how important it could be in their language learning process proved vain. In my

attempts for solution, I have tried the use of songs as listening materials. Astonishing were the results.

First of all, all the students have shown their willings to the activity. Secondly, their performance has been positively remarkable. The same work has been done using as materials short stories and folktales.

Here is the way it preceded.

I set a first test to my students of 5^{ème} C at CEG1 Dogbo. It is a listening skill test based on a text (see the text below). The second test with a song as material is also a listening comprehension test based on the same text and administered to the students of 5^{ème} D. First, I read the text and the students listened. Then I put the questions and read the text a second time and then the students gave answers.

As far as song is concerned, I have followed the same step.

Here are the text, the questions and the results.

Text

God bless someone today
God bless someone today
God bless someone today
God bless someone today
It may be you
It may be I
It may be someone by your side
It may be you
It may be I
It may be someone by your side

Questions : Answer by true or false

- 1- God bless everyone today
- 2- It may be I
- 3- The text is written by a Christian
- 4- The text is about a police station

2-4-2 Presentation of the results

Results (after listening comprehension based on text)

Class	Class size	Average of the students' scores
5e C	54	12,68

Results (after listening comprehension based on song)

Class	Class size	Average of the students scores
5e D	59	15,72

2-4-3 Analysis and interpretation of the results related to the research step 3

In the listening comprehension based on the text, the results of all the students have been summed up. The average is 12.68.

In the listening comprehension based on a song, the average is 15.72

Through that piece of research, I have noticed that students have done better when the material is a song than when it is a text.

After deeper analysis, a question arose in my mind : Does “the song version” have on the text any effects so as to make it so easier to the students?

Through objective analysis, one can realize that the probable effect here could be more the psychological effect of the song on students than an intellectual effect.

Anyway, the concern here is not to elicit the cause of such a phenomenon but to take notice of it, to snatch the opportunity and use it on pedagogical fields.

More other tests have been implicitly or systematically done for the same goal. Even if their results have not undergone any analysis or comment here, they have proved convincing.

The different data put here and mainly those drawn from my own experience have aroused in me some good feelings as to the use of folklore in language teaching and led me to this research work.

At this level, I am convinced that language teaching can draw a lot from folklore. Also, have we decided to look deeper into what makes folklore so favorable to language teaching / learning. In that respect, I have arranged pieces of theories as well as samples of techniques likely to help people involved in the system to cope better with teaching / learning.

2-5 Folklore as some of the sources of literature

When considering the sources from which literature springs, mention must be made of the oral tradition which forms an integral part of the culture of any group of people. That oral tradition, in some way, involves folklore. Many of the stories we know of today were handed down from generation to generation through the words of mouth. In fact, this source, made up of folklore in some way, preceded the period of literacy. It deeply nourished the modern literature.

By the way, each group of human beings, each ethnic group, each region, and on a large scale, each society is rooted in a number of beliefs, practices, events, etc. These elements set the social and cultural bases which guide people's everyday life: the way a group of people dance, sing, the sense they give to this or that event which is probably different from what happens within other groups, etc. Such realities build up the whole life of people living in a given society and lead on their interrelations. All this is an unavoidable source from which literature draw materials.

But, in fact, what is literature?

As an answer to the above question, we can only view an attempt to such a definition since as a discipline, literature appears rather nebulous to define. However, we can boldly try a description as generally done for other writings on

different spheres of human endeavor. For instance, there are available written information on Arts, science, and technology, politics, religions and others. Literature can also be described via the lines of age, regional and linguistic considerations. Hence, we can talk of classical literature, medieval literature, and renaissance, west – Indian literatures etc.

In a narrower view of description, literature can be seen as a writing of plays, poetry and prose. Literature is also said to be a fictional work, an imaginative interpretation of happenings in life. Anyway, it is instructive to point out that even though literature is considered an imaginative work – apart from literary work which have an historical source – it is relevant to say that the core material which gives way to more literary works comes from human society and therefore, from their oral traditions. As pointed out by Stendhal “A novel is nothing but a mirror carried along roads”⁷. This is a pure imagery and metaphor to show that in a novel, one can but see some reflected images from the surrounding things, from people going along these roads, from the passers-by, in short, from the society the literary work originates from, “L’arbre Fétiche de Jean Pliya,” a collection of short stories is, for example, a perfect account of the traditional life as it used to go on and even is still going on in Danhomê – that area of Benin country nowadays known as Abomey – at the period the author wrote it.

To sum-up, literature, could, in some way, be viewed as a product of tradition and therefore folklore. In this work the word “literature”, mostly refers to folklore as a source of modern literature.

2-6 Functions of folklore as pedagogical tools

Seen from the intellectual and artistic angles, literature is directly involved with Man and by extension, human society. Literature crystallizes the society as much as the society crystallizes literature. Therefore, the functions of folklore

⁷ My own translation from French

(as a form of literature) in society cannot be exhaustively developed as the society itself is full of varieties of events and situations that literature uses as materials. All the same, some important aspects are note-worthy.

2-6-1 Folklore as source of entertainment

Entertainment is the act of entertaining somebody, that is to interest and amuse somebody in order to please them.

e-g : - He entertained us for hours with his stories and jokes

- The aim of the series is both to entertain and inform.

Entertainment is the chief function of literature and therefore that of folklore in all human society. Novels, short stories and poems are read or displayed first for pleasure; so are folktales, legends, songs, etc.

The kind of plot arranged by the author, the setting as well as the choice of the characters, the description of the setting as well as the particular language style in which the author conveys messages, in short, the form and the content of a literary work or folklore are on the very first step, made to entail pleasure, relaxation and fancy on the reader. The way events are settled and arranged in the work, a particular piece of event or say, a specific element incorporated in the given part could raise in the reader a deep flow of feelings. A reader may or may not be familiar with the kind of plot he is going through. Whatever the case, every author of literary work finds his peculiar way of entailing emotions on the reader.

The way the author builds up his characters is also an important element of entertainment in a literary work. A mild character, a very hot one; a wicked character, a funny one; a stupid and foolish character, a clever, skilful or cunning one or say a totally controversial character, etc, that is the kind of devices they create to raise emotion from the reader. The author may deliberately choose to arrange some awkward clothing to the characters or make some of them odd or stupid, foolish or clumsy whereas the context is all made to

deal with serious or formal affairs. The contrast created through this highly pertinent situation and the irrelevant characters or clothings adapted to the situation can raise cheerful emotions that amuse the reader.

There may be an unearthly arranged setting, not quite adequate for the plot and irrelevant to the event being dealt with, but still likely to happen in real life, though rarely! Such situations make the reader go beyond the fictitious and dreamlike stage to a real life scene and the odd situation created thereby raises emotions in the reader who, even though concentrated on the content, moves into some cheerful mood.

Other linguistic devices used in literature in general and folklore in particular to entail entertainment are satire, caricature, farce parody, burlesque which generally occur in work close to drama, folktales, etc.

In a nutshell, notice should be made that literary works are to a large extent designed for creating entertainment.

As earlier observation, it is worth keeping in mind that literature in terms of written pieces of literary work, to a large extent, has its source in traditions, and therefore, in folklore.

Let's then make a shift to some elements of folklore to see to what extent they share points close to literature functions in general.

Folklores are, for example, elements of folklore generally displayed by old people to young ones in the moonlight ; proverbs, for example, are particular phrases or sentences used to convey some messages generally through figurative meanings; folktales, proverbs and songs, to list but a few, show a high degree of entertainment. Folktales, for example, are made up of very funny characters who generally go through very odd actions. In folktales times the audience is very excited especially at the characters, the peculiar actions they perform or the songs which usually support each intention or each action.

2-6-2 The educative function of folklore

Folklore elements can be highly educative. Most of them generally view such an objective on a large scale. Since folklore and even literature in general are a crystallization of events and issues of society, the educational step is rarely totally absent from literary work or folklore as education itself is one of the foremost roles or objectives in all human societies.

A straight shift to literature in terms of folklore and short stories could no doubt, enlighten more about such a function.

In the old days and even nowadays, education in traditional human societies takes more through examples, images, than a direct talk on the topic. Such examples or images are generally enshrouded in elements of folklore such as proverbs ,songs, folktales, legends etc. Most folktales end by lessons of moral: there may be some risks unconsciously run by some characters in a given situation. Such situation having ended up by drawbacks jeopardizing in some ways the life of these characters, the audience draws lessons that they should be careful about such behaviors.

A vivid example of the educative and even instructive aspect of folklore and especially folktales is the stories about our sacred forests.

To teach people that cutting too many trees from a forest is not a good thing for the environment, people in traditional areas don't use a written text or written lines of laws. A well-arranged folktales or legend about such forest is largely sufficient to dissuade people from cutting down trees from the forest. Stately-set laws generally don't work perfectly; people easily defy such laws; sometimes, even the actions and threats of soldiers. Suppose through folktales or legends, people learned that "by merely fetching firewood from the so-called sacred forest, a woman underwent a metamorphosis from human being to a tree and that since nobody knows the particular specie of the tree, any person who uses leaves, bark or wood from such a tree would undergo the same fate as the

woman who fell victim of “the gods of the forest’s anger”. It is known from experience that nobody would decide to cut any tree from that forest.

The educative role of folktale is perfectly up-graded in this example in so far as the main objective lying behind such a tale or legend is far less the mysterious aspect than the educational one associated with the protection of the environment.

As for proverbs, they are fully educative items in traditional literature. The educational or instructive aspects are so much convincing as they proceed through very short but overwhelmingly meaningful phrases or sentences. The educative effect is striking and can be instantly perceived. Three words are often sufficient for a proverb to make sense whereas the development of the whole meaning of such a proverb can cover a whole book. The educative objective is therefore easily attained through a short, concise, slight but meaningful material.

No need to put more emphasis on songs. Songs, in our traditional societies even though meant firstly to entertain, stand for a highly pedagogical tool of education. When people decide to listen to a song, two aspects are generally viewed; the form and the content or say the theme. Themes are generally arranged to draw people’s attention to a social issue strictly associated with people’s everyday life. In most cases, moral lessons are shared with people whatever their position in the society. The pedagogical advantages in teaching through songs lie in the smoothing effect of the material. A harsh reality can be served to people and easily welcomed by them only because of the caressing effect songs produce on the listener.

To conclude, it wouldn’t be wrong to say that elements of folklore develop very interesting educative values.

2-6-3 Folklore as a means of escapism

Escapism is an activity or a form of entertainment, etc. that helps you avoid or forget unpleasant or boring things. It is a fact that literature in general and folklore in particular operate as means of escapism from the tedium of labour or from the grip of a strong emotional or psychological breakdown.

This specific role is well emphasized in short stories and folklore. This function goes deeper than the one related to entertainment. Entertainment is limited to the fact of enjoying oneself reading, listening to or dealing with a literature material or folklore item. Escapism, on the other hand, is more therapeutic; it goes beyond helping people to enjoy themselves; it is designed for curing people from kinds of sickness. The sickness here is not a physical one but rather mental and psychological.

Reading short stories for example or reading or listening to folktales for escaping from some boredom entailed by regular concentration on labour is well-known as effective activity for well-informed people. Further still, reading or listening to a piece of literary work to heal some psychological injuries is still a highly common situation : a woman without children, the one who has known a very shocking situation, a man who is going through some psychological trouble due to the divorce with his wife for example, or towards any person going through any kind of troubles likely to disturb them, the first means people refer to traditionally in order to help the victim cool down is a good proverb, a folktale, a legend, a song, etc full of relieving effects. To a woman who has lost a child for example, people could say the following proverb: “Beware! If God blesses your orchard, the quantity of your crop does not depend on the number of fruit trees”. That is just to help the unfortunate woman to keep in mind that the profit she will await from her offspring does not necessarily depend on the number of children. That figurative image shown through that proverb and many others of the same kind, to some extent, act as a therapeutic mechanism to

progressively cool down the woman from her sorrow. Some people would choose some well-arranged songs which adapt perfectly to the situation. Others would find some folktales as the following one : “once upon a time, a woman blessed with nine children – six boys and three girls–lost eight of them: six boys and two girls, and the only girl left grew up into a lady so highly blessed by God that she grew wealthier than the whole community taken together, got eleven children and became the Queen of her home-country’s kingdom.” Undoubtedly, such a tale or say a legend would operate a positive change in the mind of the woman in tears. People could as well suggest her a well-adapted short story to read.

Anyway, written literature–addressed here through short stories–and folklore prove effective in terms of the therapeutic functions assigned to literature.

2-6-4 Folklore as a catalytic element to language learning

Folklore items make it easy for learners to acquire language. This function of folklore even goes well with language teaching/learning theories such as the communicative approach and the competency based approach which view language teaching/learning as a process of acquisition of meaningful units of language; in fact, folklore items present a variety of situations ,each of which giving the opportunity to the learners to go through some particular social contexts that enable them not only to internalize the social realities but also the appropriate linguistic materials in the form. Through literature in general, one become aware of other people’s language system, culture, beliefs and general practices, which no doubt, enlarge and widen the learners’ knowledge and linguistic abilities. Some traditional language theories advocate that language learning should take through a blunt learning of lists of words and their meaning. Such theories in fact, lay emphasis on forms, not meaning. Such a

process of language learning leads to learners ending up devoided of any ability of expressing meaningful ideas based on particular contexts. Teaching/learning through short stories or folktales, for example, gives appropriate, concrete and realistic contexts which call the attention of the learners (who are reading material or performing an activity based on it -) on a real life issue that they are likely to meet again in their everyday life. It is worth pointing out here that our choice of short stories, as previously mentioned, is due to the slight volume of such a literary material; that feature and the truth-like trend of short stories make it easy and attractive for students as learning tool. There is a learning theory which states: “People acquire easily and very well what is meaningful to them...” Language acquisition, therefore, proves easy and effective when it uses materials close to the intellectual scope of learners. Can we imagine how coolly students would acquire and display, when needed, ideas and expressions structured in proverbs? It is a fantastic way to address a situation through proverbs, for they draw in the readers’ mind a clear image of the reality being dealt with. This vivid effect reflected by proverb makes of it an effective teaching tool.

To sum up, I shall say that short stories, songs, folktales proverbs etc, because of their slightness in form and their realistic trend regarding the social realities they grasp, prove very interesting to the students as material to be handled in language learning.

2-6-5 Folklore as a tool for correcting the ills in society

This function of folklore or literature in general often takes through satire. Satire is an aspect of literature meant to use ridiculous presentation of man to expose and correct his inadequacies. It is a way of criticizing a person, an idea, or an institution in which you use humour to show their faults or weaknesses.

The word “satire” is also used to refer to a piece of writing that uses this type of criticism. According to the context, people write political satire, social satire etc.

This function of literature is present in lots of literary works. As far as our work is concerned we just put stress here on short stories, and folklore. People, sometimes, choose deliberately to present events through animals – such piece of literature is called fable; animals are used as characters to raise human beings' ills. Harsh criticism is done through a very funny style, then amusing people and reproaching them with the inadequate deeds or the wicked behaviours. An effective example is the short stories collection entitled “The Animals Farm”

The criticism is generally addressed to people belonging to a certain class in the society. Leader of social groups such as kings, chiefs of traditional convents, political and religious authorities who very often are expected to bring their people to implement principles and laws settled together but who fail to be a good model. Anyway, that is a frequent experience in all human societies. Through satiric items such people are generally depicted in such a way that everybody realizes who the criticism is directed to. As earlier observation, songs stand for a very adequate material in the matter; in all countries and particularly in African countries there are singers of traditional songs who deliberately choose to depict the ills of the society. Such singers very often, pretend not aiming at hurting people's feelings and therefore, through a figurative expression, draw all attention on how authorities are misleading this or that affair in the country. Problems of despotism, nepotism, embezzlement and many other unfair manners of ruling, these are themes singers generally attack and enclose before the population in order to arouse disapproval against the authors of such ills.

It is then instructive to point out that this function of literature that is to depict and correct ills in the society is fully incorporated to materials such as short stories, songs, and folktales etc, which constitute the field of our study.

Then while teaching through such materials, we are raising and trying to enhance such values in the mind of learners.

2-6-6 Folklore reinforces the thinking faculty of Man

The study of a piece of literary work such as a short story or a folklore item such as folktales or songs presupposes critical thinking about characters and events. This particular experience reshapes the mental ability of learners in terms of critical analysis. Through the reading of literary works, learners come across various real-life situations which necessarily imply intense intellectual works. One may tend to support the thesis of a character or the author. There may be an attempt to take the opposite side and try to justify or illustrate. You may partly share the point of view of a character or that of the author, partly because you think there are some inadequacies to raise and comment on. You may come across a plot or an event strictly similar to your own life story or background and that involve you in a flow of analysis and comment. Short stories, for example, are full of themes related to everyday life; whenever students are involved in an activity based on short stories, it is an opportunity for them to stir their intellectual faculty, to try to understand a number of aspects associated with the realities underlined through the themes and therefore, to acquire aspects of language related to those realities. These materials become then a means for increasing the ability of creativity in learners. It is a common knowledge that language is highly a domain of creativity and therefore, when language students are being regularly involved in activities which use elements such as short stories, proverbs, folktales etc. as materials, they are being given the opportunity to refine their sense of criticism and thereby to improve their ability to use language in a variety of contexts that they face in their everyday life.

Another function, similar to the one being discussed in this part is the shaping and the restructuring of the readers' tastes, values and general sense of

judgment. As previously mentioned, a student who is working on a material made up of a piece of literature or element of folklore has to go through different sorts of real-life situations : juridical or political issues, social or economic ones, religious, philosophical or ideological issues, psychological or mental ones; the way such problems have been handled, the typical sense of judgment developed along during the discussion and the resolution of such problems reshape and restructure the general sense of judgment of the learner. Through this experience the learner gains not only the ability to argue adequately but also the appropriate linguistic items needed in every particular context for the communication to be effective.

2-7 Relation between language teaching / learning theories / approaches and functions of literature or folklore.

The development here is focused on the analysis of the kind of relation that exists between literature functions and the teaching / learning theories / approaches; Literature functions here involve the functions of what is formally known as literature in general but also mostly the functions of elements of folklore such as folktales, legends, proverbs, songs, etc. Anyway we have previously shown the close relation between literature and folklore that should be considered as an important part of literature some way.

This functional relation is worth being analyzed since it should shed light on the extent to which literature (meant here as short stories and folklore) can, as teaching materials, help achieve the goals set through the different teaching / learning theories / approaches by applied linguists.

The first theory viewed in our analysis here is the traditional method. As previously stated, this method is characterized by a rote memorization of bilingual vocabulary lists and accurate grammatical rules. The direct implication here is that the learning of proverbs or songs, for example, falls in the same trend as the objectives of this teaching/learning theory. In fact the learning of a

song or a proverb can but proceed by rote memorization. Therefore, whenever a teacher or a lecturer is teaching his students language through proverbs or songs learning, he is implementing one of the language teaching / learning theories, namely the traditional or grammar translation methods. When a theory is set by a researcher, it is up to the people supposed to apply it to find the strategies likely to help them in the implementation. The use of proverbs or songs as arranged here is a kind of strategy for the implementation of such a theory. To go deeper, teachers should know that proverbs can be used, for example to teach grammar : the simple present for example in matter of the expression of general idea, habitual action, and constant state or universal truth. It can also be used to teach non-verbal sentences or phrases, etc.

The second theory, the structural approaches, suggests that language is taught through patterns of structures that learners are expected to study and try to draw rules themselves and be able to build up the same patterns. This operates through a constant or repeated exposure (through language listening or use) to the patterns of the language aspect to be taught. Patterns are generally given through dialogues as previously stated ; still, songs can be used as well to reach the goals set by these approaches.

Here is an example of unpublished song to exemplify this analysis:

Song

*Everyday I go
Now I am going
Yesterday I went
Tomorrow I shall go*

In this song indeed, there is an example of pattern underlining the formation of certain tenses the way verbs are conjugated in a given tense and to which adverbs this or that tense fit.

As it can be seen, there is no explicit framework of grammar teaching there. Instead, through that song, there is an implicit language instruction

framework based on an inductive process. The rule related to the kind of actions expressed by each tense as well as the particular appropriate key-word are implicit here because students will have to learn and use the song and then through this experience, set their own rules. The teacher will afterward, help them, through substitutions, to internalize the notion. Example of substitution, in this case is, for example, “replacing the «to go » in that song by another verb, and so on.

The third point relates to the natural approach. As mentioned above, the natural approach advocates a learning process which is close to the way native speakers naturally acquire their languages. Stress is therefore put on the communicative proficiency and the clear assumption that grammar stands for degree zero. This language teaching / learning approach find a typical exemplification in the use of short stories and folklore. In effect, this theory promotes an abundant exposure of learners to the target language. How can it successfully occur in a country where English is learned as foreign language? Very little or quite no opportunity to meet native speakers or other people likely to communicate in English; so to achieve such a goal, the teacher is expected to arrange meaningful challenging and interesting activities for the learners to be fully involved. The use of short stories and folklore here is relevant. This can be accounted for by the fact that short stories and elements of folklore such as folktales legends, songs, proverbs, etc generally develop interesting and real – life themes. As seen through the literature functions, these materials usually combine and display functions such as entertainment, education, sensitization, correction about the ills of the society, escapism, readers judgment restructuring, etc. Learners can then find it not only amusing but also full of interest to put their Endeavour on such materials. This attractive effect created by the use of short stories, folktales, legends, songs and proverbs can keep learners in constant contact with the learning materials thereby creating the abundant exposure advocated by the natural approach to language learning / teaching .

The communicative approach, like the natural approach puts stress on a pedagogical shift from the teaching of grammatical to the teaching of communicative skills. Both the natural and the communicative approaches put no stress on grammar but the difference between these two approaches lies in the fact that the communicative approach emphasizes the teaching of communicative skills. In the natural approach for example, students may be exposed to the listening of a native speaker – in real – life or through tape recorder and restate the message they have got. In the communicative approach the listening section would be planned so as to make the learner acquire abilities associated with the mastering of listening comprehension.

For example, it may be asked the students to listen the material and give the main idea. They may be asked to precise the mood of one or another character through the ways they are speaking or the particular words they are using, that is helping these learners to know the hints that one can use to be an effective listener”; when such students are placed in another context they can use these abilities to succeed in understanding the communication they are facing: that is what is called “teaching the listening skill” for example. The difference between the natural approach and the communicative approach is the teaching of language skills emphasized by the communicative approach.

After this brief analysis, let’s see to what extent the use of short stories and folklore could help achieve the goal set by that teaching theory.

First of all, we should keep in mind that communicative approach encourages the teaching of language functions such as : expressing happiness or sorrow, expressing politeness or arrogance, showing sadness, excitement, selfishness, humility, etc. As previously shown through the study of the functions of literature, short stories and folklore deal with different themes associated with human beings and especially people’s everyday life. In fact, by using them as teaching materials, the tutor is constantly getting tutees involved

in situations full of language functions and thereby training them for the acquisition of language skills.

The last theory dealt with is the competency-based approach. It combines the knowledge of both intellectual abilities and language skills but also the “know – how” that is the mastery of different social values. Short stories and folklore, save, as teaching materials, a great part to the teaching and the promotion of social values; short stories and folktales, for example, always end up with a lesson of moral. They are therefore adequate materials and could perfectly help achieve the goal set through this teaching theory by linguistic.

In this section, we have tried to see through a critical view how well short stories folktales, songs, legends, proverbs etc. used as teaching materials, could help meet the objectives viewed through the different teaching / learning methodological approaches. As it can be seen, the analysis confirms that these materials, in a large range, combine a lot of intellectual, social and pedagogical values and resources, likely to teach as effectively as to meet the objectives set in the different teaching theories.

2-8 Communicative devices provided by short stories and folklore

The suggestion of short stories and folklore as teaching materials is guided by a series of tremendous factors, some of which have already been dealt with in the previous sections of this research work. The side developed herein is of no less importance as it implies an extremely vital aspect of language teaching and language learning. That important linguistic device we are concerned with in this part is made up of figures of speech and registers of language. These linguistic devices are supposed to help the speaker express successfully himself as they give endless possibilities to the latter to tell with accuracy his mind. Drawing learner’s attention on those devices, particularly the figures of speech, is giving them a highway in matter of the possibilities given to them for the use of language. Figures of speech could help learners not only to

speak fluently, but also to adapt their speech to contexts. As already stated, short stories, folktales, proverbs, legends, songs etc, make a full use of these linguistic devices. So, using them as teaching materials helps the teacher or the lecturer put his learners in a constant contact with these linguistic elements likely to enhance their production ability quantitatively and qualitatively.

In fact, what is really meant by linguistic devices as raised above? Language in general and English in particular has different levels of communicative values. Each level serves the context, the kind of speakers (the one who is speaking and the person he is speaking to) , the setting, the particular realities they are discussing about, the environment – the physical technological, moral, economical, cultural, ideological or religious environment.

The level of language used to address one's students for example, is not the one a teacher would use while talking to the vice principal or the headmaster. The lecturer in a university would certainly not use the same language register in addressing his colleagues, the head of the department or the dean as the one he would use with his students. A student would, no doubt, deliberately change the way he talks to his classmate when they are on a stadium for games and in a classroom or an amphitheatre for lessons or lectures. A student would talk neither to his parents nor to the elderly people in his house the same way as to his fellow students on school yard, in the classroom, in the amphitheatre or at the university in general. No one would dare address a king or a queen as if they were addressing their parents or an ordinary fellow. You don't use the same figure of speech in talking to a religious authority as the one you use in discussing with a teacher or a lecturer.

In fact, these manifold varieties of techniques or say styles in the way people communicate is governed by a number of linguistic devices that should be raised to the students' awareness.

In that set of linguistic devices, we can talk about: register (register of speech, register of writing) and figures of speech.

The development has mostly taken into account details on figures of speech as the elements concerning the notion of register can easily be grasped without long details. All the same, a definition of the term register (register of speech or register of writing) has been given.

A register of speech or a register of writing is the level and style of a piece of speech or writing that is usually appropriate to the situation that it is used in. Examples of register are : the colloquial form, the neutral and the formal ones.

We generally talk about colloquial form when the level of language is very low in matter of spelling or pronunciation or word origin etc. the colloquial form is generally accepted only in spoken language. It occurs in written form when an author deliberately chooses to imitate a character of a low intellectual level.

Examples: - Most contracted form of verbs (I'm, you're, and they've) etc
-I am a student, aren't I? / ain't ?.

The neutral form is the one currently used in spoken and written language. It is used in settings such as school, universities, media etc. This is characterized by the usage of words correctly written or pronounced; in the neutral form, there is a fair choice of the words or expressions.

The formal register is made up of words and expressions of a particularly high intellectual level or meant to address people of a certain degree of nobility or actions or things of a level of nobleness. Such a level of language is used to talk about situations of certain solemnity such as the speech given during the ceremony arranged to welcome a president of republic or an Archbishop for example.

The second type of linguistic devices, the most important ones to be developed are, as mentioned above, figures of speech. In effect, what is meant by figures of speech?

2-9 Folklore as a seed of figures of speech

Folklore items are generally full of figures of speech that give them their vivid aspect.

2-9-1 Figures of speech: attempt of definition

Figures of speech, in the real sense of the word, refer to words used connotatively (outside the ordinary) so as to achieve certain images or pictures. They give language a variety of creative cognitive techniques that speakers can use to communicate as fully as possible and as perfectly as possible. In this research work, I have dealt with the following figures of speech : simile, metaphor, personification, synecdoche, metonymy, hyperbole, litotes, antithesis, apostrophe, paradox, oxymoron, euphemism, symbol.

2-9-2 Simile

This is a figure of speech which is used to show comparison between two apparently different things. Therefore, simile requires the reader to see the explicit similarity found in the two things being compared. The use of “like” or “as” is often the case in simile. The difference between the two things draws attention to the particular aspect being compared and deepens the perception of the one the information is addressed to as far as the point in comparison is concerned.

If for example, we say : “His teeth are as white as snow, the spotless whiteness of his teeth is being compared with the unblemished whiteness of the snow. Ordinarily, a person’s teeth would not be as white as snow. However, we can see or imagine the admirable dentition of the fellow being talked about. Other examples are :

- She looks like an angel
- He walks like a soldier
- The girl is as mild as a moon

- The boy is as cunning as a fox.
- The man is as wise as the holly God.
- As wicked as a wolf, there is no other
- The room was as hot as an oven
- This boy is as strong as a rock
- The crowd moved like the seawater.
- The girl's face glitters like a polished gold.
- The room grew as crowded as a market

2-9-3 Metaphor

Metaphor has to do with comparison, but a particular one. In this figure of speech, the reader is required to establish an implied comparison between two different things. This is done by deliberately omitting “like’ or “as” in the statement.

Example : - The classroom is a battlefield

- Nigeria was hell shortly after June 12, 1993.
- All the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players (shakespeare)

2-9-4 Personification

This is a figure of speech in which strong feelings are expressed toward inanimate things by giving obvious characteristics of human beings to inanimate objects, ideas, or animals. It is the practice of representing objects, qualities, etc, as human beings.

Example

- On my way back... and from my bus, I could see the leaves of the trees waving me goodbye.
- The tree dances caressingly
- The breeze swept off the dirt
- His heart cried out.

2-9-5 Hyperbole

It is a figure of speech that exaggerates or overstates for the sake of emphasis. It should therefore not be considered as it appears. It will be odd to do so. That exaggeration comes to draw people's attention to the particular aspect on which the stress is laid.

Example : - He has the problem of the whole world on his head

- I thank you a million times.

2-9-6 Synecdoche

This is a figure of speech where a part of an object or idea is mentioned to represent the whole.

Example : - Many mouths feed from him daily (mouths represent here "people")

- All eyes are on me. ("eye" represent here "people")
- Give us this day our daily bread. (the "bread" here represents all those things that human beings need for their sustenance daily and in life generally)

2-9-7 Metonymy

This is a figure of speech where a word giving name to an object is substituted for a different word which is closely associated with it.

Example : - The archbishop is at war with the crown (The crown here represents the king)

- Pékin doesn't give a clear agreement : (Pékin here stand for china)

2-9-8 Litotes

This is an understatement. It is generally accepted as the opposite of hyperbole. Here the emphasis is on negation. In other words, litotes is established through what appears to be ironical. It presents facts negatively.

Example :

- The so-called top of the class has only ($\frac{19}{20}$) nineteen out of twenty (nineteen out of twenty should not be qualified as “only”)
- Her husband is but a Minister
- It's no use being proud of just four of your five children being high officers.

2-9-9 Antithesis

This figure of speech is used to balance a statement. It pitches one term or statement against another, the result of which is a contrast of the two.

Example : Man proposes, God disposes

- Fair is foul and foul is fair.

2-9-10 Apostrophe

This is used when someone or an absent object is addressed as if it were present.

- Africa, I have long been away from you.
- Nightfall : Nightfall! You are my mortal enemy.
- Death, be not proud though some have called thee mighty and dreadful,...
(John Donne)

One can realize that the addressed items in the three examples above could not have been present at the scene of the addresses respectively.

2-9-11 Symbol

Symbol refers to an image that implies something apart from what is ordinary represented

Example : The “green” (colour) may be used to symbolize agriculture or regeneration.

- Anywhere the symbol of the cross appears, it quickly reminisces Christianity
- Red colour symbolizes danger

2-9-12 Oxymoron

This figure of speech usually blends two opposite ideas in one statement.

Example : - we had a bitter sweet experience at the get-together.

- Mary's pregnancy is now an open secret.

2-9-13 Euphemism

This is a figure of speech which presents harsh realities in a very mild way.

Example : - He joined his ancestors last month

- The baby passed on a while ago
- She has lost her husband.

In the following part, there will be a collection of some of these teaching materials and the development of strategies likely to help use them adequately.

2-10 Collection of teaching materials related to folklore : proverbs

2-10-1 Collection of proverbs : list n°1

- 1- Absence sharpens love, presence strengthens it.
- 2- Actions speak louder than words.
- 3- Adversity makes a man wise, not rich.
- 4- All men cannot be masters.
- 5- Anger dieth (dies) quickly with a good man.
- 6- Anger punishes itself.
- 7- Art consists in concealing art
- 8- Art has no enemy but ignorance.

- 9- Art is long and life is short.
- 10- Barking dogs seldom bite.
- 11- Beauty is but skin deep.
- 12- Beauty may have fair leaves, yet bitter fruits.
- 13- Bees that have honey in their mouths have stings in their tails.
- 14- Believe not all that you see nor half what you hear.
- 15- Those that make the best use of their time have none to spare.
- 16- Better a bare foot than none.
- 17- Better an open enemy than a false friend.
- 18- Better be alone than in bad company.
- 19- Better late than never.
- 20- A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
- 21- Birds of a feather flock together.
- 22- Blood is thicker than water.
- 23- Borrowed garments never fit well.
- 24- Brevity is the soul of wit.
- 25- A burnt child dreads the fire.
- 26- Candle lights others and consumes itself.
- 27- Charity begins at home.
- 28- The child is the father of the man.
- 29- Choose neither a woman nor linen by candle light.
- 30- Christmas comes but once a year.
- 31- Civility costs nothing.
- 32- Every cloud has a silver lining.
- 33- There is no companion like the penny.
- 34- Confidence is a plant of slow growth.
- 35- Contentment is happiness.
- 36- Contentment is more than a kingdom.
- 37- A contented mind is a continual feast.

- 38- Conversation makes one what he is.
- 39- He is a poor cook that cannot lick his own fingers.
- 40- It costs more to do ill than to do well.
- 41- If the counsel be god, no matter who gave it.
- 42- Counsel must be followed not praised.
- 43- Every couple is not a pair.
- 44- The course of true love never runs smooth.
- 45- Creditors have better memories than debtors.
- 46- It is no use crying over spilt milk
- 47- Danger is next neighbor to security.
- 48- Better pass a danger once than be always in fear.
- 49- To decide oneself is very easy.
- 50- He that desires honour is not worthy of honour.
- 51- The devil can cite the scripture for his purpose.
- 52- Diamond cuts diamond
- 53- Discretion is the better part of valour.
- 54- Dogs that bark at a distance bite not at hand.
- 55- The dogs bark but the caravan goes on.
- 56- A drowning man will catch at a straw.
- 57- Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.
- 58- East or west home is best
- 59- Eat at pleasure, drink by measure.
- 60- Empty vessels make the greatest sound.
- 61- The end of passion is the beginning of repentance.
- 62- He has enough who is contented with little.
- 63- Every man is mad on some point.
- 64- Every man is the architect of his own fortune.
- 65- Every pleasure has a pain.
- 66- Everybody's business is nobody's business.

- 67- Experience is the mother of wisdom.
- 68- The face is the index of the heart
- 69- Fact is stranger than fiction.
- 70- All is fair in love and war.
- 71- Familiarity breeds contempt.
- 72- Fanned fires and forced love never do well.
- 73- Fault confessed is half redressed.
- 74- Faults are thick where love is thin.
- 75- The first breath is the beginning of death.
- 76- First try and then trust.
- 77- The folly of one man is the fortune of another.
- 78- A fool and his money are soon parted.
- 79- What a fool does in the end, the wise man does at the beginning.
- 80- Forbidden fruit is sweet.
- 81- There is great force hidden in a sweet command.
- 82- Forgive and forget.
- 83- Fortune favours the brave.
- 84- Fortune knocks once at least at every man's gate.
- 85- When fortune knocks, open the door.
- 86- A friend is never known till a man has need.
- 87- The frog in the well knows nothing of the great ocean.
- 88- All is not gold that glitters.
- 89- Good beginning makes a good ending.
- 90- Good counsel has no price.
- 91- A good face is a letter of recommendation.
- 92- He is a good orator who convinces himself.
- 93- Good words cool more than cool water.
- 94- The great fish eat up the small.
- 95- Great men's sons seldom do well.

- 96- A guilty conscience needs no accuser.
- 97- The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.
- 98- Handsome is that handsome does.
- 99- Health is better than wealth.
- 100- Every heart hath its own ache.

2-10-2 Collection of proverbs : list n°2

- 1- A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush
- 2- A friend in need is a friend indeed.
- 3- A stitch in time saves nine.
- 4- Absence makes the heart grow fonder.
- 5- As you sow, so you shall reap.
- 6- Beauty is only skin deep.
- 7- Better safe than sorry
- 8- Don't count your chickens before they're hatched.
- 9- Don't cry over spilt milk.
- 10- Don't judge a book by its cover.
- 11- Don't throw the baby out with the bath water.
- 12- God helps those who help themselves.
- 13- Half a loaf is better than no bread.
- 14- He who laughs last laughs longest.
- 15- Make hay while the sun shines
- 16- Necessity is the mother of invention.
- 17- Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today.
- 18- One man's meat is another man's poison.
- 19- Out of sight, out of mind.
- 20- Rome wasn't built in a day.
- 21- The best way to a man's heart is through his stomach.
- 22- The end justifies the means.

- 23- The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.
- 24- Too many cooks spoil the broth.
- 25- Two heads are better than one.
- 26- Waste not, want not.
- 27- When in Rome, do as the Romans do.
- 28- You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make him drink.
- 29- You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.
- 30- Let sleeping dogs lie.
- 31- Hunger is the best sauce.

2-11 Synthetic interpretation of the different findings

As the research methodology has developed it, the research has gone through a number of steps. Specific analyses interpretations and comments have been arranged in each case.

Through these analyses, interpretations and comments, I have noticed that the findings have proved convincing.

Indeed, from the observations related to the African cultural backgrounds to the results of the field work and the different information and theories collected, I have come to the ideas that these folklore items can be efficient tools for the teaching/learning of English as foreign Language

Then some suggestions and contributions especially related to techniques, strategies and activities likely to draw resources and materials form proverbs, short stories and songs have been proposed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE :
SUGGESTIONS AND
CONTRIBUTION

3-1 Teaching English using proverbs : sample of activities

Here are some activities arranged as models to pattern on.

3-1-1 Activity 1 : Read the proverbs in list n°2 (Here, it is just an example. The teacher should not give so long a list of proverbs for his activity)

- 1- Do any of these proverbs exist in your own languages
- 2- What do they mean?
- 3- Why do we use proverb?

3-1-2 Activity 2 : Read the proverbs again (list n°2) and answer the questions.

Which of the proverbs mean the same as these sentences.

1. It is not a good idea to decide if a thing is good or bad just by how it appears at first or by its outward appearance.
2. When a bad thing happens there is always a positive aspect to it.
3. If you don't see someone for a long time you like them better.
4. When you are in a strange place (temporarily) it is better to follow the local customs.
5. You should be happy with what you have got even if it is less than what you want.
6. In many areas in life, if you do not confront a problem when it starts it can deteriorate rapidly; therefore it is much better to act soon.
7. This proverb was probably written by someone who owns his own house and doesn't stay up all night dancing.
8. Don't become very upset by trivialities.
9. Don't take risks.

3-1-3 Activity 3

Explain one of the proverbs to your classmates; See if he can guess which proverb you are referring to. Remember that your partner may have interpreted the proverb in a different way.

3-1-4 Activity 4

Try to decide which proverb could help you express yourself in the following situations.

1. You make an appointment with your chiropodist for 6pm. You arrive at 6.15. He complains that he has been waiting for 15 minutes. What would you say?
2. Your boss calls you into his office to ask you why you haven't finished the task that he asked you to do earlier and he complains that you are slow. What would you say to him? (You are being cheeky)
3. Your best friend gets married to a very ugly fat person who has a very kind, pleasant personality. Your spouse asks you how he could have possibly married her. What would you say?
4. Your friend smokes 60 cigarettes a day. He has a bad cough and he is always whining (complaining) that he would like to give up smoking. You offer to pay for expensive residential anti-smoking therapy. He says that he doesn't want to do it because he will miss his favorite television serial. What do you think to yourself?

3-1-5 Activity 5

Working in groups of two or three, work out a sketch to perform in front of your classmates that encapsulate one of the proverbs in the list above. When you are organizing your sketch remember to keep speaking in English. When you have performed your sketch, see if your classmates can guess which proverb you are referring to.

3-2 Short stories : some theoretical aspects of prose

Before the collection of samples of short stories or folktales, we deem it necessary to develop a number of literary aspects likely to help in the linguistic exploitation or the writing of short stories.

First of all, it is worth recalling some theoretical aspects related to the genre or sub-genre in which short stories fall.

Short stories, like novels, are part of what is called “prose” in literature and as such, are characterized by a number of elements essential for their analysis, their study or their writing. Such characteristics are called elements of prose. Notice should be taken here that the word prose, is used in this work to refer especially to one of its elements that is short story.

Before shifting on the development of elements of prose and their psychopedagogical effects on language teaching/learning, a brief definition of the term “prose” would be of interest.

« Prose, indeed, has to do with continuous writing of some sort. It is usually a narrative of definite length depending on the sub-genre of prose that the writer has in mind. It can be fictional and sometimes non-fictional »⁸

Prose manifests in form of novels such as “the concubine” by Elechi Amadi. It can also be in form of essays and collection of short stories as we have it in “Girl at war” by Chinua Achebe and “The will To Die” by Can Themba (in South Africa)

Fictional prose works are usually viewed as « the figment of a writer’s imagination. That is, they are invented or created in the writer’s mind. The story may involve a man in relation to his environment – his wife, colleagues or even himself. Even if the story is fabricated, the truth which it conveys still strikes us as acceptable in realistic terms »⁹

⁸ SOYEMI OLUSEGUN, 2005, English literature, P: 8

⁹ SOYEMI OLUSEGUN, 2005, English literature, P: 11

3-2-1 Elements of prose/ short story

The elements that are discussed under this sub-heading are so called because they are forever useful and perhaps, inviolable in the discussion and critical analysis of prose works. It does not therefore mean that some of them are not relevant to other genres of literature such as poetry and drama. Our concern here is however to study these elements focusing only on short stories as sub-genre of prose.

These elements are:

Plot, Character and Characterisation, Point of view, Setting, Theme, Suspense, Flashback and Foreshadowing

3-2-1-1 Plot

This refers to the arrangement of the events in a narrative piece. It shows the structure of the actions as arranged to achieve certain emotional and artistic effects. The plot is the bedrock upon which fictional writings rest. It is sacrosanct because anyone that tells a story must have a structural sequence or arrangement. This is the plot of the story. It therefore means that plot is inseparable from characterization. The plot is the action of characters and it is not every action that can be called plot. We can summarize the entire plot of a story in one or two sentences. In doing this, we must only single out the prominent happenings in the story. One is likely to be interested in the changes in the events and the eventual resolution of the issues raised.

Plot has to do with the major change in both the life of the Protagonists and in the line of action that leads to that change.

Having said that plot involves a change, we must concern ourselves with the types of change. It may be a change that concerns the moral character, fortune or knowledge of the central character. This may even include unspoken reflections, revelations, conceits and reactions. The change may involve the

character shifting from one set of ethical values to another or maintaining the status quo which in turn leads to other reactions.

Great caution must however be exercised not to confuse the plot with the story. It is not the story outright. It only serves to show the ordering of the action of the story. Edward Morgan Forster, a British Critic and novelist in his famous book titled : *Aspects of the Novel* (1927) gives a lucid distinction between plot and story. He sees a story as “a narrative of events arranged in their time-sequence.”⁽⁸⁾ And Plot as a “narrative of events, the emphasis falling on casualty” He argues that “The king died and then the queen died” is a story”. The king died and then the queen died of grief is a plot. He explains further:

The time-sequence is preserved but the sense of causality overshadows it. Or again: “The queen died, no one knows why, until it was discovered that it was through grief at the death of the king. “This is a plot with a mystery in it, a form capable of high development... Consider the death of the queen. If it is in a story, we say “and then” If it is in a plot we ask “why?. That is the fundamental difference between these two aspects of a prose work.

A plot begins with a kind of conflict, a point where the Protagonist finds himself in a situation which pushes him into action, and then series of further steps will follow. Therefore, every plot has a beginning, middle and end. Plot is either simple or complex. It is complex when anagnorisis or self-knowledge of the character is accompanied by reversal of fortune. A simple plot does not usually involve this complex process.

Sometimes, a plot begins from the beginning and sometimes it does from the end. *Things Fall Apart* shows a plot from the beginning while *No Longer At Ease* by Chinua Achebe rolls the plot from the end when Obi Okonkwo appears in court to defend himself against the charges of bribery and corruption.

The plot moves to the middle point known as complication by building up a form of heightened tension from the opening conflict. From here, the plot moves

to the highest tensional point called the climax. There is disequilibrium and the protagonist struggles for a way out. The reader's suspense is in top gear. If the plot is tragic, there is peripeteia (reversal of fortune) in the hero.

The Plot's end is known as denouement or as the resolution. It is the point at which all the knotty issues or events leading to the complication are united.

An author of prose work has a range of options available in matters of plot construction but he must bear it in mind that the plot must conform with rules of probability as in one event logically leading to or following another event. This is known as concatenation of events.

But how useful can the knowledge of the realities associated with the plot (in a short story or a folktale) be for a language teacher or a language learner in a teaching / learning process?

In fact, let's recall one of the principles underlining language learning and which is even enshrouded in language theories such as the natural approach, the structural approach, the communicative approach and even the competency-based approach: "language is meaning". Whatever the grammatical structures, the vocabulary clusters taught to a student, no effective use could be made if the student is not able to frame them up into well structured meaningful sequences in real life. That is to say that language is but the expression of one's feelings, emotions, needs etc, in a given context through symbols that we can call "words, phrases, sentences etc. Words constitute but the form and there could not be "language" (in the ordinary term) if these words don't convey meaning; then could there be meaning if there is no events? Could a language learner succeed in speaking efficiently if he concentrates all his time on learning isolate words? Plot, in fact, has been defined as a logical succession of events. Submitting students to activities likely to involve them in a systematic decoding of the plot of a short story is engaging them in critical analysis of the different events and the relation of causality between them. By so doing, such students are unconsciously learning language because, first they are facing real life situations

through the rise of problems and the way they are solved and secondly, these learners are in contact with the specific words to be used to express efficiently such realities.

The literary activity consisting in making a learner analyse the plot of a short story or a folktale could prepare students to face successfully an argument involving talk, lecture or conference in real life because it just occurs a psychological substitution of the event and the appropriate vocabulary needed.

3-2-1-2 Characterization and Character

Characterization is the network of people animating the events in the story. Characters are fictional persons who are made to bring the story to life. Characters must be plausible, convincing and true to life. There must be proper motivation for the actions of a character.

The authors of prose works, among other things, should consider the type of personality he desires in creating a character. Is it a complex or simple personality? Should he be emotionally, intellectually, or psychologically rounded or otherwise?

We can therefore recognise two broad classifications of characters namely: round or dynamic and simple or flat characters.

A round character is that character who changes in the unfolding of the events. He is usually a complex character whose position is determined by desires, values and moral alternatives. These tilt him into different directions. He displays new kinds of attitude when he is caught within the web of tension and so he is unpredictable. Ezeulu in *Arrow of God* is a round character.

A flat character, on the other hand, stands to typify a socioeconomic class. His responses, conceits and behaviour are predictable. He does not grow psychologically or emotionally and so does not change in the events. The tortoise for instance in most folk tales is a flat character. Most satiric heroes are flat to that their follies can be used to expose the follies of the society.

Whether flat or round, questions on characters can be attempted by trying to give answers to a plethora of other questions like : who is the character? What does he say or do? Is he a major or minor character? Is he flat or round? What do other characters feel or say about him? And what does the character represent in the development of the plot in the story?

As it can be seen, characterization and character in a literary work and particularly their study in the process of language teaching / Learning is an important asset for language students.

To take after some psychologists and pedagogues, human beings physically grow up through the food they eat, socially or morally through their life experiences, some model persons or some mentors.

While studying characters in a short story, students, no doubt, discover their models. Each student mentally points out which character he would like to take after. As seen through the details about “characterization”, the study of characters generally shows the social, political, economical class and the ideological or religious trend of characters; it also shows how the actions and event, the thoughts of each character influence the development of the events etc.

Being involved in such activities, language students, therefore, get the opportunity to reshape their personality approving a character and disapproving another one. The social values that a given character embodies may bring a student to adopt it and therefore build a model of his own person on such a character. Therefore, a timid or shy student could work so as to grow into an open up fellow just because he has been influenced by such a character.

Fluency is not only linked to the amount of vocabulary one gets in a language; it is also linked to mental and psychological dispositions. A student could block his ability in language speaking simply because of a lack of self confidence. At the moment such a student finds his way through a character whose lively attitudes impress him, they could be an unconscious decision to

change. This student could realize how good he would have been if his own personality hadn't overshadowed his linguistic talents. Implicitly, the character has played the role of the teacher in terms of motivation. Another linguistic effect is that a student can deliberately choose to learn the vocabulary associated with "courage" just because he has been influenced by a character which has proved so courageous. Not only will he try to internalize the given behaviour but he will also try to develop the linguistic abilities to be so.

It is noteworthy to say that the success in the linguistic handling of the elements of short stories depends largely on the way the teacher handle the material. In this case for instance, the teacher can arouse such an aim in the student through the activities proposed. Examples will be given in another section.

3-2-1-3 Point of View

This is an important element in prose fiction writing. It is an inviolable parameter for analysing a prose work.

In the past, before the advent of the scribal culture the product of which is the modern day novelist, traditional story-tellers would often open their narrations: "Once upon a time" and then would give a description of the characters – what they did or represented. There would be personal comments from the story – teller and the story was told according to how he viewed or understood it. This is the point of view.

The story-teller or the mind through which the material of the story is presented directly relates to the point of view.

Sometimes, we distinguish between the author and the narrator of the story. Here, we are interested in who is narrating the story

A narrative point of view therefore is the angle from which an author presents the action of a story.

Principally, the four basic points of view are : (i) First Person narrative Point of View (ii) Third person omniscient narrative point of view (iii) Third person limited point of view and (iv) Dramatized narrative point of view.

It is pertinent to explain each of them for the purpose of clarity. But before that, let's shed a light on the particular linguistic interests beneath the study of points of view in literature.

The linguistic implication in the study of the “points of view” in short stories could be as follows:

- The empowerment of students as to their capacity to do proper narrative.
- Students learn how “ to create and conduct a story freely according to one's aim and objectives”.
- Learners acquire abilities likely to help them appreciate their own degree of implication in a narrative.
- The teacher can develop some grammar lessons or activities according to the particular “point of view” adopted by the author in the text (the short story or the folktale) ; in a text with the “first person narrative point of view” or the dramatized narrative point of view” for instance there will be a preponderance of sentences in the “direct speech”. In the “Third person omniscient point of view” and the third person limited point of view, the predominance will be with sentences in the “reported speech”. The study of personal pronouns can be done as well as “referencing”. In the first Person narrative and the Dramatized points of view for instance, the text will present a lot of first person pronouns, possessive adjectives etc, whereas in the Third Person Omniscient and the Third person limited points of view there will be the predominance of the third person pronouns (he, she, it, they, him, her, it, them, himself, herself, itself, themselves) etc, and adjectives (his, her, its, their etc).

Now, let's come back on the details about each type of “point of view”.

3-2-1-3-1 First Person Narrative Point of View

This is said to be the case when the narrator of a story is himself a character in the story being told. The narrator here, gives an account of the situation as he views and understands it. Usually, there is an unavoidable use of the first person singular and plural pronouns “I” and ‘We’. It can even be the protagonist himself telling his own story. This is technically known as autobiography. A readily available examples can be found in *The African Child* by Camara Laye, *A man of the people* by Chinua Achebe, (These are novels).

When this is the case, it is assumed that the story must possess some dose of objectivity, immediacy, conviction and natural property. The reader is thus compelled to regard the information as first hand, directly told from the horse’s mouth as it were. In this technique, the first person narrator is said to be ‘disingenuous’ or ‘naïve’ if he fails to understand the exact import of what he is telling.....

3-2-1-3-2 Third Person Omniscient Point of View

A story is said to be told in the third person omniscient narrative point of view when the narrator stands a recognizable distance away from the story being narrated.

In other words, the narrator is an external factor and he uses the third person pronouns ‘It’ ‘He’ ‘She’ or ‘They’. The story is impersonally presented with a limitless knowledge of characters and events.

The omniscient narrator is god-like, all-knowing, not restricted to time or place. He comments freely even on the inner recesses of characters. He can adopt the stream of consciousness technique, exposing the thinking or feeling of a character. He even knows so much about a character including what that character does not know about himself. The character’s past, present and future can be revealed through him if he so desires: this is why the narrator is

omniscient; yes for his knowledge of the unspoken reflections and motivation of the characters.

Many novelists have used this narrative point of view. A few examples include : Ayi Kwei Armah in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, Wole Soyinka in *The Interpreters*, (Both are novels)

3-2-1-3-3 Third Person Limited Point of View

This is also known as the objective point of view. It is closely allied with the third person omniscient but the events here are brought to bear as perceived and understood by a single character. The narrator is outside the world of the story. The third person limited narrator as the name shows does not have as much access to information as does the omniscient narrator. The Limited narrator for instance may concentrate on a single character without prying into the inner recesses. We, readers are to determine the inner thoughts of characters by drawing inferences from what the character says or does.

3-2-1-3-4 Dramatized Narrative Points of View

In this case, the story is not really narrated as it was, each character stands on the stage to speak out his views, inner feelings and responses.

3-2-1-4 Stetting

This is the locale; the physical, geographical location and period in which the action contained in a story is situated. Setting involves the historical time as it affects the plot and characters. The background of a character– environmental, social, economic, religious and moral tendencies may shape or be shaped by the setting. A work may possess a universal setting that is not relevant to a particular clime but the general. Setting can be rural, urban, civilized, uncivilized, ancient, modern, mundane or subliminal. The setting of *The Beautiful One Are Not Yet Born* for example is a temporal, fits into all ages.

Arousing students' awareness about the notion of setting in prose works could be beneficial in the process of language teaching / learning. It could help the students to acquire or improve the ability of relating events to specific contexts. It could also enhance and shape students mental capacity of producing message with accuracy. Moreover, it develops in students the notion of inferences and referencing since the mere statement of the setting of a story is likely to guide about the whole unfolding and even the conclusion.

3-2-1-5 Theme

It is very unlikely that the author of a prose work writes without having any focus. The central idea about situations, personalities and events in a story is the theme. The theme is the sum total of the interpretation of the unifying opinion that is expressed in the story. The theme can be main or there can be sub themes. They are derived by considering : Setting, characterization, structure, style allusions and sometimes 'the complex symbols in the story. By doing all these, we can successfully determine the author's attitude towards man, life, nature, death etc.

The study of that element of prose, anyway teaches the students the dynamic relation between a setting and the events.

Anyway, the study of "themes" in a literary work is a very edifying activity in the process of language teaching / learning. The attempt of definition to the term "theme" illustrates quite perfectly that all the life of a human being is made up of themes. People's debates, their complaints, the expression of delight or sorrow, almost all that human beings raise discussion about present explicitly or implicitly some themes. So the study of themes generally sets students in contexts similar to the situations they usually go through in real life. They therefore get the opportunity to acquire and develop abilities to tackle efficiently and successfully different everyday life problem. Mastering a language is not only being able to usher sound with words put together haphazardly; the real

issue you are discussing about is very important in communicating successfully and even determines the lexical items to be chosen.

While talking about a theme in a literary work, students may have to work so as to deepen the authors point of view about the issue raised. They may also have to diversify points of view by raising aspects overlooked by the author. They may even take the opposite side of the thesis. All that works for the enrichment of the language learners experiences in language acquisition. They are being put in a context which is halfway to learning English through linguistic sojourn in an English speaking country since learners are being confronted to real life situations with characters which stand for the different tendencies, the different opinions or the different sides which could exist did the problem have to be solved in real life.

Anyway, the study of “themes” in literary work in general and in short stories or folktales in particular creates appropriate contexts to students for language acquisition.

In the coming sections are samples of activities likely to shed light on our development.

3-2-1-6 Suspense

This is a device used by a novelist to heighten the expectation of a reader thereby sustaining his interest in the story being told. It involves a kind of delay in revealing information concerning the untangling.

When students get consciousness about such a device it will help them improve for example, the ability to hold up an audience without looking boring. It is also a communicative devise that helps keep your vis-à-vis stuck to and interested in what you are saying..

3-2-1-7 Flashback and Foreshadowing

This is a technique employed by a narrator for exposing the cause of a present state of things which has its root in the past. It is a flashbackwards in time sequence.

It can be achieved through a dream state, character's recollections or narrator's interpolation of past events.

Foreshadowing stands as the opposite of flashback. Rather than turn backwards, the emphasis shifts to the future from the present time.

The study of these element, can prepare students to communicate efficiently using appropriate expressions and devices according to the context. They can learn how, during a communication, one can go back to past events or shift to future without looking confusing, and therefore still make sense.

3-2-2 Samples of activities with short stories

In this section, suggestions are made about kinds of questions or activities to promote while using short stories or folktales as teaching materials.

We have not planned readily-arranged lessons or activities that teachers will administer right away. Doing so would break down teachers creativity and dull the sharpness of their intellectual and pedagogical sense.

General or broadly – arranged activities have been suggested here for the teacher to pattern on and use as “raw-materials” from which they will build up appropriate teaching/learning activities. These questions or activities Will, for instance, bring students to :

- Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details;
- Provide an objective summary of the text

- Cite strong and thorough textual evidences to support analysis of what the text expresses explicitly as well as inferences and conclusions based on author's explicit assumptions and beliefs about a subject.
- Analyse how complex character develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme
- Analyse how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in texts
- Analyse the role of figures of speech in shaping meanings or creating particular effects or results
- Analyse how an author draws on and transform themes, topics, character types and / or other text elements from source material in specific work.
- Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- Describe the basic components of plot of a short story. (what are the basic elements of a short story? what are the basic components of a story's plot?)
- Summarize each element of the short story explaining its importance to the short story.
- Cite evidence from the text to support generalization
- Identify and / or explain stated or implied main ideas and relevant supporting details from text
- Summarize the key details and events of a fictional text as a whole.
- Interpret, compare, describe, analyse and / or evaluate character actions, motives, dialogue, emotions / feelings , traits, and relationships among characters, the setting and elements of the plot within fiction
- Interpret, compare, describe, analize and / or evaluate the relationships between theme, tone, style, and mood, the use of symbolism within fiction.
- Interpret, compare, describe, analyse, and / or evaluate connections between texts

- Identify an appropriate theme from a specific main character described by the teacher
- Build up a main character from a theme proposed by the teacher
- Do referencings : say which word or event or character other functional words (pronoms, adjectives, etc...) relate to.
- Find connecting words likely to show the shift from a Plot component to another; for example (from the lead to the rising action or between the climax and the falling action..)
- Justify the use of a particular verb tense (the simple past or the past perfect for example for background information, the future tenses for forshadowings
- Identify the specific figures of speech used in some passages and explain or justify their use.
- Rewrite sentences turning them from direct to reported speech.
- Rewrite sentences, turning them from indirect to direct speech, from active to passive voice, from passive to active voice
- Identify an appropriate theme from a specific main character described by the teacher
- Build up a main character from a theme proposed by the teacher
- Use the information in a descriptive passage to build up a dialogue between characters.
- Rewrite a dialogue into a narrative passage.
- Do the appropriate punctuation of a passage
- Draw the appropriate moral lessons an author is giving through the actions and the reactions of a particular character.
- Do discussions and debates on particular aspect
- Write an essay basing on the theme raised in the story (supporting the thesis of the author or taking the opposite side).

3-2-3 Some important notions about short stories or short story writing

My concern in this work is first and foremost, to use short stories and folklore to upgrade students language and their learning capacity. However, at an advanced level and with advanced learners, one can teach them the thorough writing of short stories. In that respect, suggestions have been made here of some key notions.

A short story should include

- Setting details woven into the text.
- Development of at least one character through the character's words, thoughts, and actions and through the words of other characters and / or the writer
- A problem / conflict which is developed as the story/plot progresses.
- A resolution of that problem / conflict (climax)
- A conclusion (what happens after climax)
- Snapshots (things for the reader to visualize)
- Thought-shots (characters' thoughts)
- Dialogue (optional)

A short story writer should find ways to reveal one or some characters through which the reader gets easily into the plot.

Dewey Hensley has suggested eight (08) ways to reveal a character.

According to him, a character could be revealed through :

- actions
- dialogue
- physical description
- idiosyncrasies
- objects / possessions
- reactions
- thoughts
- background information

As previously mentioned, a short story is first a literary work based on fiction. The best fiction centers around realistic multi-dimensional characters (traditionally called round or dynamic characters). Writers generally rely upon their own knowledge and observations of people to create real characters for their fiction.

Here are some elements or questions likely to provide writers the raw materials to build a character :

- who is the most peculiar, colorful, or unique person you know ? Describe this person in detail without using a name : try to capture all the little things the person does, says, believes that makes him or her different. Also tell how the person looks, what he or she wears, what is the person's history, what does the person smell like, and even how others think about the person.

- What are the character' "idiosyncracies"? Idiosyncracies are little mannerisms (things we do unconsciously) that make us the way we are.

Example : Mrs. Awa hums softly while walking around the room and runs her fingers through her hair whenever her husband say something stupid.

A short story is made up of a number of almost inviolable component. They are :

- the lead or exposition (that is the starting point / event

The lead should be "hooking")

The rising action (A series of actions that modify the starting point and create more exciting situations or problems).

- the climax / climactic moment : It is a moment in which the conflict raised in the story reaches its highest level, (it comes to a head). It is the moment of truth for the characters.

- The Falling action: An action or a series of actions meant to propose sorts of responses to the problems leading to the conflict.

- The resolution: The resolution is the results of the different actions; it is how everything ends up for all the characters in the book.

A good lead should be hooking; it should arouse the reader's interest as it is the beginning of the story.

You may begin a story:

- with a description
- in the middle of a conversation
- with background information (exposition)
- with a peek into a character's mind
- with a simile, metaphor, hyperbole
- with a question
- with a quote from a song, movie, famous person or book.

There are many strategies through which teachers can help learners for writing a short story.

It is possible for instance, to help students create a short story through a linear approach (i.e.. plot, character, details, then draft) however this method does not leave learners with the independence they need and the "tools" they need to do this over and over again. That is why this "layered approach" is an effective way to teach students how to write fiction.

It operates as follow:

- 1- Reading workshop as models
- 2- Children's literature to illustrate character traits
- 3- Children's literature to illustrate important literary elements
- 4- Using the development of a realistic character as a way to start the story
- 5- Using the writer's notebook to gather ideas (a note book in which ideas are put down as soon as they appear in your mind)
- 6- Reliance upon the active reading skills to practice
- 7- Using the writer's notebook to practice the lesson
- 8- Revisits to lessons involving poetic language
- 9- Grammar lessons
- 10- Adolescent novels to practice active reading skills

11- Adolescent novels to support craft lessons

12- The writing process with conferencing and revision

This is not a step-by-step approach; rather, it is a simultaneous application of all these things to get the students to understand fiction and the things needed to create good fiction. (especially short story as this work as this work is concerned)

To realize how well one has succeeded in writing a short story following the formal instructions, the answers to the following questions are helpful; the easier they are to answer, the better your short story must be.

Questions to Answer or Issues to Consider:

1- Have you created a round / dynamic characters do serve as your protagonist? Explain how your protagonist is “well rounded” how do they “change” in the story?

2- Discuss at least three ways you have revealed your character. Do your characters seem realistic because you are “showing” them or do you “tell” your character to the reader?

3- What kinds of conflicts appear in your short story?

4- What is the point of view of your short story? Pick out three vivid verbs you use to show your story.

5- Draw a story hill and use it to briefly tell the plot of your story. Does your story seem really organized?

6- Do you slow down your climactic moment and describe it with such detail that it comes to life ? Are there more details you could add to your climactic moment?

7- Write out two examples of similes or metaphors you use in your story.

8- Describe one place in your story where you use a snapshot or a thought shot.

9- Does your story start out right in the action? In other words, does the lead hook the reader?

10- Does the ending of your story tie everything together or have some sense of reflection that leaves the reader thinking about your story?

11- What is the title of your short story? Does it hook the reader or is it a very general title that is a cliché?

If you had trouble answering these questions, then your short story could possibly be missing some important ingredients to make it successful. Figure out if there are things you could do to add these things to your story.

3-3 Using songs in English teaching / learning

As previously stated through general considerations, songs can be used as successful teaching materials, or so have we viewed it from lots of considerations.

In real life and precisely in class situations, many teachers deem it unnecessary and even a waste of time as far as the pedagogical aspect is considered. Other teachers tend to think of songs teaching as a frivolous activity suitable only for five minutes on Friday afternoons.

In this section will be developed some valid reasons for teaching songs:

3-3-1 Teaching songs : An authentic activity

In our everyday life and even out of school life, many of us spend a fair amount of our spare time listening' to songs and by experience, we know that many people, especially youngsters, enjoy joining in ; therefore, by using songs in the language class, we are getting the students to do something that they would do in real life.

Songs that teachers propose are generally based on students life experiences or the curriculum the teacher is expected to base on through his teaching. Songs can also be selected regardless the current lesson programme or the students experience; the teacher may therefore choose songs composed by a native speaker.

Whatever the case, it serves students interest to teach song. In the first case, students would be learning language unconsciously. In the second case, students would benefit from the opportunity of beings in contact with “native speakers’ language” (through British or American pop music for example) though they may never get the opportunity to visit an English speaking country. Indeed, most English songs that have come from native speakers have not been produced for EFL learners and have not been recorded by people with Received Pronunciation; So they are a good way of exposing our students to authentic language especially if we make them hear the recorded material straightly.

3-3-2 Teaching songs as a motivation activity

One can stimulate students’ interest by teaching songs. It is an evidence that song, in all conditions, creates emotion in human beings. When there is an unpleasant event (death for example) people sing just to express their inner feelings and when you are near these people you get sad even if you are not concerned by the case.

When, at school, the teacher strikes up a song, students who have left home moody and sad generally join in with cheer and quickly get rid of the troublesome problems. This mental satisfaction makes them come back into the class and fully devoted to all other activities initiated by the teacher.

3-3-3 Repetition, rhythm and stress

In language classes, repetition is regularly used for many purposes. This activity very often becomes boring for students if it is to be done in the very ordinary way. However, when repetition is proposed through songs, they will happily repeat the same structure over and over again. That can be justified by the fact that singing is amusing and creates joyful emotions that make students get rid of any boredom they may feel from a standard activity.

Talking about rhythm and stress, it is a fact that English is a language highly influenced by rhythm and stress ; when a speaker fails in using the appropriate rhythm or placing the stress on the right word or syllables, he fails in communicating properly.

In all languages, songs have a very marked rhythm; by making students sing frequently, we can help them to use the correct rhythm and stress by reciting and singing songs.

3-3-4 Using songs for new vocabulary

Learning vocabulary in context is one of the best ways of learning appropriately and being an efficient speaker. If vocabulary is learned in context, students, in practice, make an adequate use of language. Songs, no doubt, provide a means of learning new vocabulary in context, and as known from experience, words learnt this way are rarely forgotten. Most of us can probably still remember words from songs learnt in our foreign language class when we were at secondary school.

3-3-5 Using songs for group activity or practicing alone

In our language class, we generally make students work individually, in pairs, in groups etc. But when they are to sing a song in class they very often do it together (in group). The Psycho-pedagogical effects that singing in class can have on students are indescribable. Singing a song is, for example, a great way of unifying a group. That can be justified by considering the way songs are used in politics, at football matches, etc. The use of songs in language class can foster co-operation among students and give the shyer ones a chance to join in. In the class, there do exist students less competent than others ; song time is an opportunity for them to make a contribution to the corporate effort without worrying about getting it wrong. Such spontaneous attempt to get involved in

class activities, common though it is, may increase shy students and weaker ones' self – confidence.

What about the practice alone?

English being taught in Benin as a foreign language, little and even almost no opportunity is given to students to speak to other people outside the classroom, but they can always sing a song when they are alone. That helps them to repeat structure, words and expressions and to practice the language. No one will take much notice if you walk down the road singing to yourself, but if they hear you talking to yourself, they may think there is something wrong with you! Students may find it difficult and unnatural to start practicing a dialogue alone along a road for example. Thus, songs are a means of oral reinforcement outside of the class.

Taking into account all the above-mentioned reasons, we can say that relegating songs to a five-minute slot on a Friday afternoon is inadequate as pedagogical choice. Worse even, many teachers do not exploit them at all ! Everything put together, we can say that songs should be part and parcel of any language programme.

Being in the logic of using songs as a tool for teaching English, we are now to see how it can be arranged in our language classes so as to reach the goal. When we wish to use song for a pedagogical purpose, we ought to pay great attention to how our songs are chosen; that will be our concern in the coming part.

3-4 Choosing appropriate songs for activities

Songs should be chosen according to the goal set by the teacher. When choosing a song, we must keep in mind our aims and choose one that will help us achieve them. Here is a list of possible aims and suggestion on how to choose and use songs.

3-4-1 Choosing songs for structural consolidation

Although collections of songs exist that provide practice in certain structures, teachers can also base on their experience to build some, according to the aim.

When choosing a song for “structural consolidation it is better if the song contains plenty of examples of the target structure and focuses mainly on one grammatical point. It is advisable, especially at beginners’ level, to teach the song after the structure has already been presented and practiced in class.

Here is an example of the way songs can be exploited.

Step 1 : Pre-teach the new vocabulary.

Step 2 : recite the chorus line by line, getting the students to repeat each line.

Step 3 : Say the chorus together

Step 4 : Sing the chorus together

Step 5 : follow the procedure of steps 2, 3 and 4 with the verses.

Step 6 : Sing the whole song together.

Pay attention when you have to do with lower level students: with elementary classes and children, for example, it is preferable if they do not see the text, as their reading can hinder their listening and they may not hear the correct stress and rhythm, not to mention pronunciation. But it is advisable to check, perhaps by individual repetition, to make sure the students are saying the words correctly and not merely saying what they think they hear.

Example of song for structural consolidation :

The more we are together, together, together!

The more we are together, the better we shall be

3-4-2 Choosing songs for teaching new vocabulary

While aiming at songs as tool for teaching new vocabulary, teachers should pay attention the way they make the choice.

First, teachers should decide which lexical items they wish to teach and then choose a suitable song or, if possible compose one.

Example

(1) January February march }
April may June } Bis
July August September
October November December oh !
January February march
April may June

(2)
a b c d e f g
h i j k l m n o p
q r s and t u v
w x and y z
happy happy shall I be
when I know my abc
a b c d e f g
h i j k l m n o p
q r s and t u v
w x and y z
happy happy shall I be
when I know my abc } Rap

Obviously the above-mentioned examples are songs meant to teach vocabulary in lower classes. For higher levels, the teacher chooses the song according to the target vocabulary

3-4-3 Choosing songs for listening comprehension activities

A song chosen for listening comprehension can be used in that respect before the students learn to sing it.

Below are three ways in which such a song could be exploited:

- Listening for gist : one or two broad questions could be asked
- Listening for specific information: This could be a true / False exercise
- Listening for the precise wording of songs, (through gap-filling the lyrics of a song while listening).

For reading comprehension the same techniques can be used. Even though this seems less natural – as we are more likely to listen to a song than to read it, it does provide a change from always treating the song as a listening comprehension.

3-4-4 Choosing songs for teaching phonology

Pronunciation is a challenge in language teaching or language learning. Through songs, a lot of pronunciation problems can be solved in language class. To do so, teachers should try to analyze which sounds they are trying to make students master or which ones students have difficulty with and find suitable songs that contain examples of that sound. You must not choose a song that is too complex; otherwise, the whole aim will be lost.

For example, students learning English as a foreign language very often have problem with the pronunciation of the sounds /θ/or/ ð/ from “th”, so a song which contains many words starting from “th” will do.

As for stress and rhythm, it is important, especially at elementary level to choose a song in which the accented beats of the music fall on words which normally carry strong stress, so that the students will learn to associate content words with strong stress and grammatical words with weak stress.

An example of such a song is:

My bonnie lies over the ocean

My bonnie lies over the sea

My bonnie lies over the ocean

Bring back my bonnie to me, to me

Bring back, bring back

Bring back my bonnie to me, to me

Bring back, bring back

Bring back my bonnie to me.

3-4-5 Choosing songs for discussion work

Teachers may set the discussion either before the listening as a warm-up session or afterwards in the light of what the students have heard. For such a work, the discussion may be around the theme. If that comes before the listening session, it arouses the students' interest in hearing the song. The discussion can prepare the students both for "speaking" and "writing" because there would be arguments to and fro as each student would try to defend his points of view.

3-4-6 Choosing songs for raising cultural background

Literature is, to a large extent, the product of an educated elite; songs on the contrary, and especially folk songs and pop songs, are the natural expression of the people who created them and reflect the life and mentality of those people. By introducing our students to songs, and particularly native-created songs, we help them to understand the culture of the people whose language they are learning, consequently, to understand the language itself better. Most folk – songs generally reflect agricultural or sea-faring community or urban community or the university community. Using those songs can get the students into a broad view of the native community cultural background. Songs may be

created by a non-native; However there still serve the same purpose somehow since the one who has created the songs should see to it so that the particular stress, rhythm and intonation required for the English language be observed.

3-4-7 Choosing songs for enjoyment

During class activities, it happens that class becomes boring after students have been subjected to intense mental activity. At these times, most students welcome enjoyment songs. But what kind of song can we classify in enjoyment songs? Any songs likely to lead to a cheerful mood, to raise good feelings, to create excitement in the students. Many songs work well as songs for enjoyment even though students do not know their meaning.

Example : Are you sleeping?

Are you sleeping?

Brother John?

Brother John?

Morning birds are ringing

Morning birds are ringing

Ting ! Deng ! Dong!

Ting ! Deng ! Dong!

CONCLUSION

This research work has set a number of objectives all of which are meant to look in how well folklore and short stories can help on language teaching / learning field.

The hypothesis that language teaching / learning can be fostered by the use of materials drawn from folklore originated from my own experiences as an English teacher. In fact, I have noticed that specific attention was given by students to lesson classes that I tried to model through short stories, songs, folktales, proverbs, legends etc. They raised in students will, interest and broke up their shyness and boredom. So I solved most of my language class problems through the use of these materials.

From the hypotheses that folklore and short stories can do a lot as far as pedagogical, moral, cultural and even psychological domains are concerned in the teaching and learning of English, I have decided to widen my survey in modeling some research strategies as developed in chapter 2 ; target groups of students have been submitted to teachers who have used different strategies. The results showed that the teachers who used songs, folktales, short stories etc. during their teaching were more appreciated by the students. Moreover, the evaluations whose materials were folklore items provided students with better marks.

Through this survey, I have realized that there has been clear and convincing signs that these materials can help indeed.

Besides, I have gone through some theoretical approaches in matter of language teaching / learning to see the link between these theories and the different functions of literature in order to judge if these functions of literature in terms of short stories and folklore items could be of any use to the goals set by linguists through the different theories. There also, the results have been convincing. My findings through literary and pedagogical documents confirmed that literature – seen here through folklore and short stories – implies a lot of functions such as entertainment, education, escapism, social correction or

ensorship, reinforcement of the thinking faculties etc, all of which could well help to meet the goals set by applied linguists through the language theories reviewed and commented on in this work

All these results achieved empowered my view about folklore and short stories in language teaching / learning.

Then, the following step should be how to develop and promote such teaching materials or strategies. That has been my preoccupations in the third chapter. In fact, I have arranged samples of materials with appropriate strategies. These suggestions aim at giving to teachers means for coping with some problems of motivation or inadequacy of strategies in language class.

Therefore this work is meant to be of a help, if any, to any people involved in the teaching system in general and in English language teaching in particular. As mentioned above, teaching materials have been modeled that could serve well in various context; materials based on short stories, proverbs and songs. Broadly elaborated strategies and techniques also have been settled so that teachers may pattern on according to the specific context.

This work is not meant to solve outrightly all pedagogical problems. Less could it dare prove perfect. Though we think it could be of a help to some researchers someday, we are still available to any correction or improvement suggested by any reader.

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