THE USE OF INDIGENOUS TECHNIQUES OF COMMUNICATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING: THE CASE OF CAMEROON

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Chapter I Introduction

The purpose of this study is to determine whether the use of indigenous techniques of communication can have a positive impact on the enthusiasm of the learner of English as a foreign language in Cameroon. By indigenous techniques of communication we mean techniques like role-play, songs, the telling of folktales, riddles and proverbs that are used in most indigenous societies either to help children acquire a first language or for entertainment. The work is intended as a contribution to the search for improvement of student motivation and enthusiasm, whereby they can be responsive as they participate more spontaneously in language learning. It is also intended as a contribution to the search for improvement in the teaching of English as a foreign language in Cameroon. My interest in this research has been substantially influenced by my experience of working for almost a decade with learners of English as a foreign language in Francophone/bilingual secondary/high schools in Cameroon. My work has been teaching English as a Foreign Language to Francophone students of ages 12-18 years. This work led me to the realization that students respond to English language teaching with very little enthusiasm. They make little or no progress in learning the language, much less in communicating in it, despite the diligent use of the structural method teachers are trained in school to use.

The structural approach to language teaching involves the combination of the use of textbooks, tape recordings, filmstrips, slides and classroom presentations. (McArthur 1992: 583). The structural approach of the Cameroonian teacher is even more restricted to the textbook, the chalkboard, and classroom presentations because of the unavailability of other infrastructure like tape recordings, filmstrips and slides which should normally be used with this approach. As a teacher I have observed with some curiosity the reluctance with which some of these students come to English language lessons and take part in class activities, if they bother to do so at all. One of the major questions I have often asked myself is why Francophone students find English language learning boring and what could be done to solve the problem of teaching English to them. It was clear that lack of motivation, enthusiasm, and communication were the problems that have to be tackled to help these learners. What, I have tried to imagine, could be done to raise the students’ motivation and enthusiasm and make them take a keen interest in the learning of English? What, I also thought, could be done to make these learners become more
communicative seeing that they do not bother at all to use the English language either in or out of school.

I have tried on a number of occasions to tell folktales or teach a song in class when I found the students were bored with the lesson and discovered that the students immediately became alert. Their alertness was probably not for the direct purpose of making any linguistic gain but for the sheer entertainment of listening to a story or taking part in the singing, all of which they seemed to enjoy. Also, with the background knowledge I have in theatre, my involvement with some theatre troops in Cameroon and the results their play-acting has on the people, I have found out that it is always easy to make meaning clear if a situation is dramatized. In class the students enjoy this role-play because they see themselves in different roles and can communicate freely with their classmates, thereby fulfilling my hidden motive of making them communicate in the target language. On their own the students do not attempt to communicate or take part in class activities no matter how many years of English language learning they have been exposed to.

Based on the positive change in the students due to the use of these activities, I hypothesized that the introduction of some indigenous techniques of communication like role-play, storytelling, singing, riddles and proverbs in the classroom might help improve the learning of English as a foreign language. The use of these techniques represents an important aspect of language learning and communication in every culture and frequent means of communication in many societies. Linguists like Lado (1964), Gee (1987), Post and Rathet (1996) have proved that it is beneficial for students to learn a foreign language using the material that they are familiar with and that is found in their learning environment. Storytelling, role-play, songs, riddles and proverbs are found in all indigenous societies and all societies use them in teaching in one way or the other. Their abundance in the Cameroonian society means that they could be used for foreign language teaching/learning in combination with current teaching approaches. As some studies have shown, local literatures in English form an excellent basis for foreign language teaching/learning (Kachru 1986, Talib 1998, Elgar 1998) and indigenous techniques constitute an important base for local literature. Based on the idea of the use of indigenous techniques, teachers and students in Cameroonian schools were asked by means of questionnaires what they thought about changing the existing manner of teaching/learning English as a foreign language. This change will entail moving from the
strictly structural approach, which is presently used in schools, to including some indigenous techniques of communication. This change, it is believed, will help motivate the learners of English as a foreign language, improve their enthusiasm and help them become communicative. To carry out a study in the teaching/learning of English as foreign language in Cameroon however, it is necessary to know what the language policy in Cameroon is.

1.1 Language Teaching/Learning Policy in Cameroon

Cameroon is a bilingual country with English and French as the official languages, and very multilingual in its wealth of traditional languages. Education in Cameroon is based on the policy of bilingualism. According to Echu (2004:5),

the policy of official language bilingualism constitutes the main core of Cameroon’s language policy. Article 1 paragraph 3 of the constitution of 18 January 1996 states that the official languages of the Republic of Cameroon shall be English and French, both languages having the same status. The state shall guarantee the promotion of bilingualism throughout the country.

This promotion of bilingualism does not however mean that the students learn both languages simultaneously. It means that in the Cameroonian educational system one of the official languages is the medium of instruction and the other is studied as a subject as part of the curriculum (Chumbow 1980:293). The two official languages do not have an equal official status because the French language is more officially used than the English language and spoken by the majority of Cameroonians (Mbangwana 1989, Schmied 1991, Wolf 2001). According to Schmied (1991:17), “in Cameroon, English is taught in all primary and secondary schools for nation-building purposes, to link Francophone East to Anglophone West Cameroon, but it is not used as a medium in the East”. This, according to Simo Bobda (2001:8), shows why up until the late 1980s, the motivation of Francophones to learn English was quite low. This could be blamed partly on the lack of serious pressure from government to do so. At the beginning of the third millennium, there is still no scramble to learn English as such. For example, the total number of Francophones learning English in the various language centres is far below 10,000, which is insignificant compared to the total population of 12 million Francophone Cameroonians.

We can, therefore, see that the lack of motivation and enthusiasm to learn English as a foreign language existed and still exists among Francophone Cameroonians. As confirmed by Mbangwana (1989:320), “most educated Cameroonians speak one or the other language and some both, but both languages remain official languages of education,
law, diplomacy and politics”. Since these two official language are not learned simultaneously it can be seen that the educational policy in Cameroon does not compel its citizens to become bilingual, a reason why most Francophone learners show a nonchalant attitude towards learning the English language. However, because the English language is a subject in the school curriculum and English is an international language, there are students who take an interest in it and parents who encourage their children to learn it.

Apart from being a subject in the school curriculum, learning a foreign language in Cameroon is an important practical concern since every Cameroonian is always bound to come in contact with the other language especially in official situations. The unenforcement of the government official policy of bilingualism does not however, help in motivating the learners. This is because most students are only compelled to learn the English language as part of the curriculum and in order to pass their examinations and not for the use of the language in practical everyday activities. Even when English is only studied for examination purposes, a failure in the English language test does not necessarily mean a failure in the examination, so most of the students are not forced to and do not show much enthusiasm in learning the language. The fact that in the Teacher Training College emphasis is put on the use of the structural approach to teach the student-teachers also means that not much thought is given to their future teaching of that language for practical everyday use. There is therefore the production of incompetent and less than willing speakers of the English language from the Cameroonian educational system, although learning a language among other reasons is principally learning to communicate in it.

Bilingual education is considered to be an essential part of secondary education for all students in Cameroon, which means that everyone who goes through secondary/high school education in Cameroon is expected to be able to communicate in both English and French. This is, however, not the case. As confirmed by Simo Bobda and Tiomajou (1995:74)

[It] is an exaggeration to talk of bilingual education in Cameroon given that what we call bilingual schools are merely two distinctive, monolingual (one French-speaking and the other English-speaking) educational institutions, which have nothing in common apart from the fact that they are located on the same premises.

For purposes of using the languages in the society after leaving school every Cameroonian student is expected to learn English and French languages respectively in school. Unlike previous the purpose of language teaching worldwide which used to be to
equip learners with the ability to read a foreign literature, the aims are now predominantly to provide them with the competence to speak and otherwise communicate for practical purposes. This holds true for every society. There is, therefore, a call for a change in methodology in the teaching of English as a foreign language in Cameroonian schools from the purely structural, to what will render the learners communicative. This calls for the use of the communicative approach to language teaching. The communicative approach is a teaching approach for the expression of meaning, interaction and communication in the target language (Larsen-Freeman 1986). With this approach learners are taught to model their language on what they will encounter outside the classroom. However, because the adoption of the communicative approach into schools in the developing world has its constraints (Gahin and Myhills: 2001), this approach could be combined with indigenous techniques from the learner’s environment and the structural approach, which the Cameroonian teacher normally uses.

As a state school teacher in Cameroon and a part-time teacher in the British Council Language Teaching Center, I have observed with curiosity the way adult Francophones flock to the British Council Language Teaching Center to learn English when they have a job which entails the use of this language. It was realized that these adults are the same students who showed very little enthusiasm in learning when they were taught English in the secondary/high schools but who now need the language in their jobs. It was assumed, therefore, that there must be a way of improving on the present way of teaching/learning English as a foreign language in secondary/high schools to make the students more enthusiastic and make them take the learning of English language seriously. This improvement will have to introduce innovative techniques that should help to make the students active, participate in lessons, and get communicative. The students should be made to enjoy the learning of English and have fun communicating in it. They should be able to take an active part in their lessons and gain the fluency that is necessary for communicating in their work places and in the Cameroonian society in general. This in turn will lead them to communicating confidently in the English language with people outside the Cameroonian society. The lessons should prepare them for the use of this language after their school life and not just for passing their examinations and fulfilling an academic requirement.
1.2 **Clarification of Basic Concepts**

A number of basic concepts considered below are all central to our understanding of this study. They underlie the various ideas that inform the subsequent chapters of this study and which need to be clarified so that their future use does not create any ambiguity. A method as used in this study is an umbrella term for the specification and interrelation of theory and practice (Richards and Rogers 1982:154), a procedure for teaching and learning a language. Methods are “a generalized set of classroom activities for accomplishing linguistic objectives” (Brown 2001:14). They are concerned primarily with student and teacher roles and behaviors, and secondarily with such features as linguistic and subject matter objectives, sequencing and material. Methods are almost always thought of as being broadly applicable to a variety of audiences in a variety of contexts and they are sometimes used interchangeably with “approach” which is a set of assumptions dealing with the nature of language, learning, and teaching (McArthur 1992:655). Methodology on the other hand “is a system of methods for doing something, for example, for teaching or for carrying out a research” (Sinclair 1993: 911).

Techniques are seen as “any of a wide variety of exercises, activities, or tasks used in the language classroom for realizing lesson objectives” (Brown 2000:16). Methods comprise both principles and techniques, where principles represent the theoretical framework of the method, and techniques the behavioral manifestation of the principles. That is, the classroom activities and procedures derived from an application of the principles (Larsen- Freeman 1986:XI-XII). Sometimes a given technique is associated with more than one method or it maybe compatible with more than one method depending on the way the technique is used. Although certain techniques are associated with particular methods, and are derivable from particular principles, most techniques can be adapted to any teaching style and situation.

Long and Richards (1987:117) define method in terms of three interrelated levels: approach, design, and procedure. Approach, they say, refers to the theory of language learning underlying a method. Design refers to the objectives, syllabus, and the roles of teacher, learners, and materials in a method, while procedure is concerned with the techniques and instructional practices in a method. Methods are seen to differ not only in the solutions they adapt to questions of approach, design and procedure, but also in the degree to which they make explicit their underlying assumptions.
From the definitions above it can be seen that techniques can be introduced in a particular teaching method to make it adaptable to a particular situation or a particular environment. The Cameroonian teacher of English still has to get used to the communicative approach to language teaching, which is only gradually being introduced into the system and where there are difficulties adopting the approach on its own. Firstly because the Cameroonian student learns English not just for purposes of communication but also to be able to write an exam and obtain a certificate. Secondly because of the techniques and the classroom situation that necessitate the use of this approach. Indigenous techniques like role-play or drama, songs, the telling of folktales, riddles and proverbs can therefore be used together with the structural and the communicative approaches. This combination will help the Cameroonian learner not only to obtain a certificate but also to be able to communicate in the language. There is reason to believe that the use of these techniques, which may not be practiced presently in the Cameroonian foreign language teaching/learning situation, could help boost the enthusiasm of the learner.

1.3 **A Brief Review of Methods in Language Teaching/Learning**

Between the 1880s and the 1980s, there was a quest for what was popularly called methods that would be used to successfully teach students a foreign language. A succession of methods came up each one rejected as a new one took its place. The past century therefore, shows an interesting and varied picture of interpretations of the best methods to teach a foreign language. Back in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, foreign language learning was associated with the learning of Latin and Greek, classical languages, which were supposed to promote their speaker’s intellectuality (Brown 2001: 14). The Classical Method was therefore used where there was focus on grammatical rules, syntactic structures and a rote memorization of vocabulary. The use of the language for oral purposes was not provided for because languages were not taught then for oral communication, but for the sake of being “scholarly” or most specifically for having a reading proficiency in a foreign language. Using the classical method students were taught to translate from one language to another and to study grammar deductively. That is, they were given grammar rules and examples, were told to memorize them, and then
were asked to apply the rules to other examples. This method came to be known in the 19th century as the Grammar Translation Method (Larsen-Freeman 1986:11).

After this method came the Series Method propounded by Francois Gouin (Brown 2000). It was a method that taught learners directly without translation, and conceptually without grammatical rules and explanations, a “series” of connected sentences that were easy to perceive. This method later became known as the Direct Method and it received its name from the fact that meaning is to be connected “directly” with the target language, without going through the process of translating into the students’ native language. Its basic premise was that “second language learning should be more like first language learning - with lots of interaction, spontaneous use of the language, no translation between first and second languages, and little or no analysis of grammatical rules” (Brown 2000:21). The Direct Method became popular because the Grammar Translation Method was not very effective in preparing students to use the target language communicatively. The method was, however, not well accepted in public education, where the constraints of budget, classroom size, time and teacher background made such a method difficult to use.

This method was later revised leading to the Audio-Lingual or “Army” Method which emphasized “a great deal of oral activity – pronunciation and pattern drills and conversation practice – with virtually none of the grammar and translation found in traditional classes” (ibid.: 22). This method enjoyed many years of popularity and even to this day, its adaptations are found in contemporary methodologies. It was, however, criticized for falling short of promoting communicative ability as it paid undue attention to memorization and drilling.

In the 1970s a number of innovative methods were conceived and they were called the “Designer Methods” (Nunan 1989a: 97). These methods underwent some scrutiny and some of their elements have been incorporated in the communicative approach to language teaching. Some of these designer methods include methods like suggestopedia, whose founder, George Lazanov, believes that language learning can be made more efficient if the psychological barriers to learning are lowered. He believes that learners raise these barriers and limit themselves because of the fear of failure. He contended that the human brain could process great quantities of material if given the right conditions for learning, among which are a state of relaxation and giving control to the teacher. He therefore developed a process of “desuggestion” which is designed to
promote a relaxed frame of mind and to convert learners’ fears into positive energy and enthusiasm for language learning. However, suggestopedia was criticised on a number of fronts and reports of its astounding results were questionable. Also, the practicality of using this method is an issue that teachers must face in a teaching/learning situation where music and comfortable chairs are not available.

Another of these “designer methods” is the Total Physical Response, proposed in the 1970s by James Asher. He “noted that children do a lot of listening before they speak, and that their listening is accompanied by physical responses like reaching, grabbing and moving” (ibid. 30). Asher proposed a teaching method that was built around the co-ordination of speech and action attempts to teach through physical activity. Language skills are taught in this approach in the natural order of learning: speaking, reading, and writing. With this method learners are said to learn a language through an unconscious process that involves using the language for meaningful communication. Meaning in language learning is made clear by mime, drawing, among other activities, thereby reducing the learner’s anxiety. In fact “one of the main reasons the Total Physical Response Method was developed was to reduce the stress people felt when studying foreign languages” (Larsen-Freeman 1986: 117). Like the previous methods however, this method had its limitations in that “it seemed to be especially effective in the beginning levels of proficiency, but lost its distinctiveness as learners advanced in their competence” and needed spontaneity and unrehearsed language (Brown 2001: 30).

Other methods and techniques have gained increasing prominence in language teaching and they stress the humanistic aspects of learning. In methods like these, what counts is the experience of the students and the development of their personality, hence the encouragement of positive feelings are seen to be as important here as the learning of a language. According to Richards and Rodgers (1988:23),

the methods by which students are taught have some effect on their motivation. If they find it deadly boring they will probably become de-motivated, whereas if they have confidence in the method they will find it motivating.

Some of the methods and approaches mentioned above have been used without success in the past years in language learning especially in a bid to increase the student’s motivation. According to Bowman, Burkart and Robson (1989:21), “there has been a growing realisation that people learn in different ways, and that approaches that suit one person may not suit another.” Some of the methods mentioned above have been used
over and over again but do not seem to help the learner of English as a foreign language. This is reason to feel that research should be made into ways of improving on the old techniques of language teaching or exploiting hitherto unthought of or unused techniques. This research intends to show that indigenous techniques of communication can influence many aspects of foreign language learning and the language learner himself/herself, by making him/her more perceptive and communicative.

Elaborating on methods, Bouchard and Spaventa (1973-78: 20) say,

teachers have found that a close adherence to the listening-speaking-writing order has not always brought the desired results – nor has a lack of such adherence necessarily proved harmful.

This may be the reason why teachers have for sometime now felt the need to move from the rigidly structured pattern prescribed by the early proponents of the audio-lingual method, to the less controlled situation in which the student can take part in class activities and communicate his or her own ideas. This calls for the adoption of an approach that is communicative. The combination of the use of indigenous techniques of communication with the structural and the communicative approaches will, it is believed help the teacher/learner of English as a foreign language not only in Cameroon but in other developing countries. These techniques render the learner more communicative and will eventually help in the use of the language outside the class and in the learner’s future life. It will however, not neglect the learning of the language for purposes of passing an exam and obtaining a certificate. Not only will the teaching of English as a foreign language in Cameroon benefit from innovative techniques but it will be adapted to the Cameroon cultural context and to the benefit of the Cameroonian learner. A close examination of the communicative approach will reveal why it needs to be combined with indigenous techniques to make it applicable in the Cameroonian classroom.

1.4 **Streamlining the Communicative Approach and relating it to a Language Teaching Theory**

The need for the use of language for communication led to the emergence of communicative language teaching or the communicative approach in the 1970s. It is the product of educators and linguists who had grown dissatisfied with the audiolingual and
grammar-translation methods of foreign language instruction. It is a system for the expression of meaning, interaction and communication in language learning. Educational and political institutions in most countries have become more sensitive to the importance of teaching foreign languages for communicative purposes, not just for the purpose of passing an examination and fulfilling a requirement.

Adherents to communicative language teaching acknowledge that structures and vocabulary are important. “However, they feel that preparation for communication will be inadequate if only the structures and vocabulary are taught. Students may know the rules of language usage, but will be unable to use the language” (Larsen-Freeman 1986: 123). The communicative approach makes sure that the interactions that take place in the classroom are replications of, or necessary prerequisites for, a communicative operation. It makes use of real-life situations that necessitate communication. “A speaker will choose a particular way to express his argument not only based upon his intent and his level of emotion, but also on whom he is addressing and what his relationship with that person is” (ibid.123). Language learning requires meaningful interaction in the target language, that is, natural communication in which the speakers are concerned not only with the form of their utterances but with the message they are conveying and understanding. “When we communicate, we use the language to accomplish some function, such as arguing, persuading, or promising. Moreover, we carry out these functions within a social context” (ibid.123). Larsen-Freeman (1986: 123) thinks that since communication is a process, it is insufficient for students to simply have knowledge of target language forms, meanings, and functions. Students must be able to apply this knowledge in negotiating meaning. It is through the interaction between speaker and listener (or reader and writer) that meaning becomes clear. The listener gives the speaker feedback as to whether or not he understands what the speaker has said. In this way, the speaker can revise what he has said and try to communicate his intended meaning again, if necessary.

The communicative approach makes sure of an enhancement of the learner’s own experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning. There is an attempt to link classroom learning with language activation outside the classroom. This is very important because it tries to model the language on what the students will come in contact with outside the school. Students’ motivation to learn comes from their desire to communicate in meaningful ways about meaningful content and to be able to use the language purposefully. True communication to which students are committed can therefore take place if there is an engaging content that involves the participants and in
which the participants have a say. We can provide such content by basing our teaching not only on relevant and meaningful activities in the target language, but also on those which come from the students’ environment and culture.

The communicative approach best illustrates the discourse theory in language learning which emphasises that language development should be viewed within the framework of how the learner discovers meaning capacity of language by taking part in communication (Halliday 1975). The discourse theory dictates that language development should be viewed within the framework of how the learner discovers the meaning capacity of language by taking part in communication. The description of the communicative theory by Del Hymes (Brown 1987, Ellis 1986) falls in line with the principles of the discourse theory. According to discourse theorists, language acquisition will successfully take place when the learner can recognise the various forms of competence, for example grammatical and pragmatic competence. “A language learner needs to know conversational skills to acquire the language because basic language functions arise out of interpersonal uses and social interaction” (Kiymazarslan 2004: 2).

Relating to the respective roles of teachers and students, Richards and Rodgers (1986:78) assert that the communicative approach "often requires teachers to acquire less teacher-centered classroom management skills". Teachers are responsible for responding to and for monitoring and encouraging the language learner's needs. Their role is to organize the classroom as a setting for communication. Their role is not error suppression and correction but that of a teacher-counselor who exemplifies an effective communicator. This role as prescribed by Richards and Rodgers can be compared to the role that the storyteller or riddle teller in the indigenous society assumes during a story or riddle telling session. He/she acts as the moderator, responding to and monitoring the whole story or riddle telling session. Not only does the audience listen to his/her stories and answer to his/her riddles, but also takes part in them, which helps to promote communication. This technique can therefore be transferred to the language classroom and used within the framework of the communicative approach to teach the learner of English. Littlewood (1981:94) describes the role of the teacher in the communicative approach as that of a "facilitator of learning, a consultant, advisor, coordinator of activities, classroom manager, co-communicator, human among humans who steps out of his didactic role". This role is akin to that of the traditional story or riddle teller, or that of
the traditional singer. Indigenous techniques of communication can therefore be helpful in language teaching/learning.

Through the use of drama students have a chance, like in real life communication, to restructure their language use according to the social context. Practice is needed for a conversational exchange with others, and activities like the use of dialogue, gestures and facial expressions that are common in drama, help to involve learners in meaningful interaction. According to Ur (1995: 9),

> the use of role-play has added a tremendous number of possibilities for communication practice. Students are no longer limited to the kind of language used by learners in a classroom: they can be shopkeepers or spies, grandparents or children […] they can be in Buckingham Palace or in a ship […] The language can correspondingly vary along several parameters: according to the profession, status, personality, attitudes or mood of the character being role-played, […] according to the communicative functions or purpose required. At one stroke the limits of language use are enormously widened.

In verbal interaction, speaking is involved and so is listening. But much more than speaking and listening is the communicative process. Gestures, facial expressions and movement are all aspects which enhance verbal interaction and which the learner can use while learning a language through drama. Learning through dramatic activities is fun and this does not demand any great acting ability. Most students will relax during these activities and concentrate on achieving meaningful communication in a given context, thus gaining practice, which will prepare them for the unknown features of communicating outside the classroom.

Many people play different roles in different situations in their everyday activities and most of this “imitating” begins with when the learner is growing up. Role-play could be brought into the language classroom where students can act out everyday activities that they are likely to encounter out of class. There are many role-play situations in Cameroon that can be used in the language classroom. They include for example, activities like organising a conference on the exploitation of timber from Cameroon’s rainforest. What will the students say and how will they act in their different roles of the timber exploiter, the environmentalist, the local farmer, the government policy maker and all those who are involved in this conference? The students maybe presented with a project for a new road from Mamfe to Nigeria. What would the students do in their roles of the grassroots expert, the local subcontractor, the local market trader, the local politician, the local engineer and all the roles that emerge from a situation like this? The students may want to discuss what the problems, hopes and prospects for all these people
are. We suppose in another role-play situation that the students were planning green
tourism for Mount Fako. What will every student do in their role of class leader, the local
chief for the mountain village, the market women around the mountain area, the local
cash crop farmer among many roles that the students themselves are expected to come
out with. We find that there are many such role-play situations from the local community
which the students can benefit from and which situations they may find themselves in
when they leave school. Through this technique they will be re-enacting real life
situations as dictated by the communicative approach.

The use of folktales, songs, riddles and proverbs are all aspects of communication
that can be exploited to help foreign language learners. The Cameroonian indigenous
society abounds with folktales that have been translated into English\(^1\). These folktales can
be used for teaching English instead of if the students were only made to read about
activities from a foreign culture or even those from their environment that do not generate
enough enthusiasm in them. The students are familiar with these stories; they grew up
with them and can now use them to learn a foreign language given the many activities
that are involved in a storytelling lesson. The use of folktales, while helping in
communication will play a greater role of entertaining the learners and making them learn
the rules of grammar and vocabulary useful for writing their exams.

Singing is a common phenomenon in most societies in general and the
Cameroonian society in particular. In the traditional society, most people sing either for
entertainment or to relieve the stress of work. Students of a foreign language class could
be made to use singing as a relief from the stress and drudgery that accompanies their
present learning. Songs can increase the motivation to learn a language as learners feel a
real sense of achievement when they have been able to learn and understand the words of
a new song. These songs could be got from the repertoire of the abundant songs from the
Cameroonian pop culture, which the students enjoy imitating and getting identified with.

The communicative approach to language learning could be related to the
discourse theory of language learning which emphasises that language development

\(^1\) There are many folktales that have been translated into English in Cameroon. Some of these could be
added to the Course Books to help the teacher/learner of English, or the teachers can buy them on their own
from the local bookshops for the benefit of the students if they cannot translate them from their mother
tongues. In any case, no one who grew up in the Cameroonian society lacks a folktale to tell his/her
students. Otherwise if the students are properly coaxed, they can come up with a good number of folktales
from their various homes. This is being said with the assumption that most of the teachers of EFL in
Cameroon are Cameroonians.
should be viewed within the framework of how the learner discovers the meaning capacity of language by taking part in communication. According to discourse theorists, it is believed that language acquisition will successfully take place when learners “know” how and when to use the language in various settings and when they have successfully “cognised” various forms of competence such as grammatical competence (lexis, morphology, syntax and phonology) and pragmatic competence for example speech acts. A language learner needs to know conversational strategies to be able to learn the language. Halliday (1975) asserts that basic language functions arise out of interpersonal uses and social interaction. In the case of foreign language learning learners are encouraged to deal with accomplishing actions, which are thought to help them acquire the target language. The communicative approach to language teaching is the best example of such a theory because learners are expected to learn by doing and expected to acquire the language through the PPP (presentation, practice and production) principle.

The weak spot in the communicative approach, which is the lack of “content”, that is, specific knowledge and rationality in a subject area has inspired some criticism of this approach in language teaching. This criticism is often strengthened by the general impression that teachers do not often fully integrate the literature they use into the language learning process. It would, therefore, be beneficial to the use of the communicative approach in Cameroonian schools if indigenous techniques were to be integrated in the teaching/learning process.

The use of communicative language teaching as mentioned before, has its impediments. Although the approach stands out as improved from previous teaching methods, it is still not seen as a solution to the problems of language teaching especially in developing countries like Cameroon. Stern (1992:14) thinks that in using the communicative approach, the reliance on a single overriding concept, 'communication', is a disadvantage which prevents communicative language teaching from being entirely satisfactory as a theoretical framework. In order to account for all varieties and aspects of language teaching we either stretch the concept of communication so much that it loses any distinctive meaning, or we accept its limitations and then find ourselves in the predicament of the 'method' solution: an excessive emphasis on a single concept.

We could like Stern thinks “stretch the concept of communication” a bit by bringing in the use of indigenous techniques of communication to supplement the use of the communicative approach as a language teaching method in the Cameroonian classroom.

According to Schaetzel and Ho (2003), impediments to communicative language teaching include among others large size classes, poor classroom design and reluctant
students, all of which are common to the Cameroonian school system. The shift from form-focused or structural approach to a meaningful or communicative approach has seldom been easy to accept or implement especially in the public sector education in developing countries (Ray Brown 2000). The impediments include large classes, lack of resources, lack of basic furniture in the classrooms and no other visual aid except the blackboard. Less visible than the assets, is the weight of the local teaching/learning tradition: the role of the teacher as the explainer, the expectations that everyone – the teachers’ peers, the teachers’ administrators, society as a whole – all have of the role of the teacher and his/her learners (Gahin and Myhills 2001). Communicative language teaching is also difficult to adopt in a country like Cameroon because of the constant pressure felt by teachers from colleagues, parents, the administration and the students themselves at the inconsistent expectations placed upon them on whether to lay emphasis on the oral communication or on examination results. There are also the clashing requirements of both the teaching and the examination syllabus, and the lack of a morally supportive work context, which does not give teachers the time or freedom to create, initiate and motivate students towards EFL for communication (Beale: 2000).

The communicative approach is, therefore, not easy to adopt in most developing countries. However, it can be adapted to the Cameroonian situation with the use of indigenous techniques of communication for the teaching/learning of English as a foreign language. Dramatic activities can be used to carry out verbal and non-verbal communicative activities in the teaching/learning of English as a foreign language. Folktales, songs, riddles, and proverbs can be used to practise and teach aspects of language like listening, reading, grammar and vocabulary, while entertaining the learner as well. Culturally focused consciousness-raising activities in the teaching/learning of a foreign language maybe a solution to the lack of interest and enthusiasm that is presently exhibited by most foreign language learners in Cameroon. The use of these indigenous techniques will, it is believed, be suitable for the kind of communicatively based, learner-centred teaching that the Cameroon learner needs. They provide a participatory approach to language learning that will enhance the motivation of the learner, causing him/her to be responsive as he/she participates more spontaneously in class activities.

If improved upon, these techniques could provide an effective communicative approach to language learning where the teacher does not have to go out for any artifices because all is built in the environment. It will also serve the purpose of the use of the
communicative approach in Cameroonian schools without having to deal with the impediments that are naturally encountered when the approach is adopted in educational set-ups in the developing world without any moderation. The communicative approach could therefore be appropriately tailored to fit schools in the developing world by bringing in indigenous techniques of communication from the learners’ environment in combination with the structural approach that has been used before now.

It is important to point out here that the intention of this study is to introduce the use of indigenous techniques to enhance enthusiasm and promote communication and to combine them with the regular structural approach that is used in Cameroonian schools. These techniques, which should improve on the learners’ enthusiasm to learn English as a foreign language do not seem to be available in the textbooks that are presently used in Cameroonian secondary/high schools for the teaching/learning of English as will be confirmed by the analysis of some of textbooks. The lack of use of these communicative techniques creates an inability even for the minority who is motivated to learn to be able to communicate in the language. This work is an attempt to bring out some possible pedagogic procedures in language teaching/learning, which will lead the learner towards taking an interest in learning English and enjoying it. It is also an attempt to find out ways in which English language can be effectively taught in Cameroon despite the lack of even the most basic amenities for teaching/learning.

1.5 **The Scope of this Study**

In the previous paragraphs we have talked about methods of language teaching that have been discovered and discarded, and their merits and demerits. We have also pointed out the fact that the most current method of teaching, the communicative approach, could be used in Cameroonian schools if it is combined with indigenous techniques of communication. This combination will come as a result of the fact that the communicative approach on its own cannot be adopted for use in the Cameroonian language learning classroom. Indigenous techniques of communication could therefore, be used with the structural and the communicative approaches to help the learner of English in Cameroonian schools. Among all the works that have so far been consulted it has been discovered that none has been published in Cameroon on the use of indigenous techniques of communication for the teaching of English as a foreign language. From the
review of literature that has been made, it can be seen that some research has been made in attitudes and motivation in the teaching/learning of English as a second/foreign language in Cameroon. Most of these researches conclude that the learners are not motivated in learning the language and a few of them make some recommendations on how to improve on this motivation. Some recommendations have been made by a number of people (Nsen 1997, Tinku 1989) on the use of individual aspects of these techniques but mostly on the basis of what was observed during teaching, not on empirical research. Simo Bobda (1997) recommends a good balance between the lexical register drawn both on the European and African context for the teaching of English as a foreign language because a lot needs to be adapted to the socio-cultural value of the community in which the foreign language is learned. However none of these previous studies recommends the combined use of indigenous techniques of communication with a current teaching approach to help raise the enthusiasm of these learners.

This research will continue from where the previous researchers left off, by agreeing with them that little motivation and enthusiasm in the learning of English as a foreign language is shown by the Cameroonian learner. It will, however, go ahead to recommend the use of indigenous techniques of communication like role-play, the telling of folktales, songs, riddles and proverbs in combination with the communicative approach to language teaching.

The intention of this study is to prove that learners enjoy English language lessons and are more active and participative in class when these indigenous techniques are used. The study may not bring a complete evolution to the problems of language teaching in Cameroon. It might however, work as a pointer to these problems and propose an innovation to the way in which language lessons are taught presently. This researcher’s argument is that the teaching of English as a foreign language in Cameroonian schools lacks the lustre that produces learners who are capable of communicating even in their own society, much less in a foreign one. From the experience of having taught many of these students, it is believed that this lack of lustre may be due to the little inspiration they get from the techniques used by their teachers.

Having looked at past and present language teaching methods, we find that there is a move away from the strictly structural approach to the communicative approach or a combination of both. However, because the use of the communicative approach on its own faces a lot of challenges in the developing world, its combination with indigenous
techniques and the structural approach will be ideal. This will help raise the enthusiasm of the Cameroonian learner of English as a foreign language and render him/her more active in the language class. It will also render him/her more communicative outside the classroom and eventually in their future jobs. This will also help the learner to be able to pass their examinations. There is a growing interest in the teaching and learning of English both as a second and a foreign language. A proposal on the use of indigenous techniques of communication as an aspect in the communicative approach to language teaching/learning might provide some kind of novelty in the teaching of English in the developing world in general, and Cameroon in particular.

Chapter 2 of this work dwells on the review of the relevant literature to this study. Chapter 3 explains the background to the collection of data, the choice of respondents and the research environment. Chapters 4 and 5 analyse the questions asked to both students and teachers respectively. Their aim is to find out if students and teachers prefer the use of indigenous techniques of communication for the teaching/learning of English as a foreign language in Cameroon, over techniques that are used in purely structural methods. Chapter 6 aims to analyse the textbooks used in the learning of English as a foreign language in Cameroonian schools to find out if there is any recommendation for the use of techniques from the indigenous environment for the teaching/learning of English as a foreign language. This will lead to chapter 7 that provides a summary of the findings of the study. It will also give the significance of this study and the theoretical implications. To conclude, recommendations and suggestions for further or parallel researches in the teaching/learning of English as a foreign language in Cameroon will be made in this chapter.
Chapter 2  

Literature Review

This review will be presented from a three-dimensional viewpoint. What other writers have written on language teaching/learning and the use of cultural material. Writings on the motivation of second/foreign language learners will also be examined. Finally, what other writers have written about foreign language teaching techniques especially in relation to the techniques that render the learner active, enthusiastic and communicative will looked into.

2.1  

Language teaching/learning and cultural material

The relationship between language and culture has been a focus of attention from a variety of disciplinary perspectives for many years. Linguists, anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, and others have sought to understand whether and how cultural aspects influence human behaviour such as perception, cognition, language and communication (Hinkel 1999:1X). The debatable question of whether or not to dwell solely on the culture of the target language in foreign language teaching seems to have been concluded by a good number of writers most of whom think it is a matter of necessity for a foreign language learner to learn the culture of the target language. (Byram 1988; Byram, Esarte-Sarries and Taylor1990; Buttjes and Byram 1990; Brogger 1992; Kramsch 1993; Byram, Morgan and Colleagues 1994, Byram and Flemming 1998; and Byram and Risager 1999). Within language teaching/learning, cultural factors have occasionally attracted the interest of both theoreticians and practitioners. There are linguists who a long time ago thought and still think that using the culture of the learner can be an added advantage to helping the learner of the foreign language. Lado (1964) was the first to suggest that cultural systems in the native culture could be compared with those in the target culture and serve as a source of transfer or interference in much the same way other types of contrasting linguistic systems do. According to Lado (1964: 30), the student learns the target culture not from scratch as he learned his native one, but with the experience, meanings, and habits of his native culture influencing him at every step. The native culture experience will facilitate learning those patterns that are sufficiently similar to function satisfactorily when transferred.
Lado believes an initial over-all view of the target culture can probably be glimpsed more rapidly through the language of the student than through the target language, which for some time will be an imperfect instrument of communication for him. The learner’s native culture could be looked into, to help in the learning of a foreign language but much more than that, those techniques which helped the learner in the acquisition of his/her first language can also be looked out for and developed for foreign language learning. By this we mean techniques such as role-play, singing, storytelling, riddles and proverbs which are means by which most people generally learn their first language in the every society.

Other linguists have examined a range of different aspects of second/foreign language use that are subject to culturally based influences, including classroom interaction, roles of teachers and students, and teaching styles. Gee (1987) thinks that much of what we come by in life after our initial enculturation involves a mixture of acquisition and learning. The value between the two can be different in the different cases and at the different stages in the process. He distinguishes between acquisition and learning and shows that

acquisition is a process of acquiring something subconsciously by exposure to models and a process of trial and error, without a process of formal teaching. It happens in natural settings, which are meaningful and functional in the sense that the acquirer knows that he needs to acquire the thing he is exposed to in order to function and the acquirer in fact wants to so function. This is how most people come to control their first language (ibid: 53).

On the other hand,

learning is a process that involves conscious knowledge gained through teaching, though not necessarily from someone officially designated a teacher. This teaching involves explanation and analysis, that is, breaking down the thing to be learned into its analytic parts. It inherently involves attaining, along with the matter being taught, some degree of meta-knowledge about the matter (ibid: 54).

Gee thinks some cultures highly value acquisition and so tend to expose children to adults modelling some activity and eventually the child picks it up. Settings that focus on acquisition, not learning should be stressed if the goal is to help non-mainstream children attain a mastery of literacy. These have to be natural and functional environments, which may or may not happen to be inside a school. Mainstream children actually use much of the teaching/learning they get not to learn but to acquire, by practising developing skills. We should thus honour this practice effect directly and build on it, rather than leave it surreptitious and an indirect by-product of teaching/learning. Gee concludes that we need to base out techniques of instruction on what has been
acquired to teach a language a reason why we think indigenous techniques could help boost foreign language learning.

Bamgbose (1991) relates the fact that critical linguists and pedagogues say that textbooks ethnocentrically represent a Western lifestyle and values and this alienates the students from their own indigenous culture. He talks about the experiment on the use of African languages as a media of instruction in primary education. He relates that even when positive results have been coming from these experiments, such is the stronghold of the past that changes in the direction of the positive findings have been resisted or slow in coming. “The challenge in language education is not only to ensure a meaningful mother tongue education, but also to evolve a viable programme in which both the mother tongue and other tongue teaching reinforce each other” (ibid: 8). He thinks the various areas in which the language question arises calls for a co-ordinated plan of solutions. This must involve the formulation of policies and the provision of mechanisms for their implementation. Since the teaching/learning of English as a foreign language is an accepted norm in most societies, we can look to the combination of some indigenous techniques of communication as learned in the mother tongue, with structural or communicative methods in the learning of this language. These techniques will be complimentary to each other and will go a long way to improve on the teaching/learning of English as a foreign language.

Byram and Morgan (1994) think a rigorous and consistent methodology for teaching language and culture requires a more comprehensive learning theory than we presently have available. The teaching of culture often represents an aspect of language teaching that is unfamiliar to language teachers whose professional training focuses on the structural facets of language and the culture of the target language. Talking about the learner’s native culture, they think,

learners cannot simply shake off their own culture and step into another […]. Their culture is a part of themselves and creates them as social beings […]. Learners are committed to their culture and to deny any part of it is to deny something within their own being (ibid. 43).

They call for the development of the theory that brings the learning of culture into the research that deals with second and foreign language teaching and learning. Although Byram and Morgan are advocates for the teaching of the target culture together with the target language, they no doubt still provide us with insight into the fact that in learning a foreign language, it is also important to take the culture of the learner into consideration. They think that learners should not expected to put down their own
“cultural baggage” all at once and pick up that of the target language. Combining the culture of the learner and that of the target language appears most ideal in this case since the learners will not be divorced from their culture although they will be learning a new one.

Talking about the culture of the target language Kramsch (1993:257) says “foreign language learners in educational settings have been socialised and schooled to view the acquisition of knowledge in various ways, according to the values prevalent in their society”. She thinks, “foreign language teaching and learning is subservient to the goals of institutions that impose their values and their definition of the educational challenge on all subjects in the curriculum” (ibid.). Language learners, she thinks, use the foreign language for multiple purposes that often challenge the established educational canons of both the native and target cultures. “Foreign language learners around the world have to grapple with the paradox of discovering their own national, ethnic, and personal identity through a language that is not the one they grew up with” (ibid: 256). They necessarily become learners of the second culture because, of course, a language cannot be learned without understanding the cultural context in which it is used. Their teachers have to deal with the dilemma of both representing an institution that imposes its own educational values and initiating learners to the values of foreign culture (which they themselves are hardly familiar with!), while at the same time helping them not to be bound by either one. Kramsch does not however dismiss the culture of the first language when she cautions that even the non-native speakers who have had many years of experience with second culture may find a “third place” at the intersection of their natal and target cultures. It is “finding a third place” in this intersection which should be encouraged in the teaching/learning of English as a second/foreign language in Cameroon. A combination of both the culture of the target language and the use of some indigenous cultural material which the learners are familiar with and which is found in their environment will go help to boost the learner’s enthusiasm. It will help the learner whom in trying to learn a new language and a new culture different from his/her own will not be bound by either of them.

In their analysis on using student native culture as content in an EFL classroom, Post and Rathet (1996), point out that today’s world is integrating due to the end of the cold war, but also showing signs of persistent culturalism and nationalism. These changes, they suggest, should make one examine whether English is more a vehicle for
local and international use - a lingua franca - than a vehicle by which non-native speakers may learn a correspondent Anglo culture for purposes such as immigration. They think a continuum of uses for English such as the eight mentioned for Singapore (Talib 1992) suggests reconsideration of the emphasis placed upon teaching an Anglo culture along with the English language. This implies that more research should be made into the use of indigenous cultural material for the teaching of English instead of relying solely on material from the culture of the target language. Increasingly, fewer and fewer people are learning English for purposes of immigration or using it with a native speaker. It is only proper then to teach English using the learner’s culture and hope that knowing the language will lead the learner to learning the culture of the target language.

With English generally being seen as the main lingua franca for international contact, EFL teachers can expect to see signs of a “global village” in their classes in the sense that the learning and teaching may incorporate diverse cultural concepts, not just the cultural concepts of the target language. Their students will be expecting to use English as a vehicle for their own specific purposes, which may not necessarily include use in a native-speaking country. Post and Rathet therefore support the use of student native culture as content in the English language classroom. They agree with a wide range of studies that have shown that using familiar content to teach students rather than unfamiliar content can influence students’ comprehension of a second/foreign language. Using native culture in the English language classroom, they think, can also enhance student motivation and further allow for greater sensitivity to students’ goals in studying the language. They advice that those teaching in an EFL context must realistically evaluate who among their students will ever visit or spend extended time in an Anglo culture. Only once they have identified this proportion of students can they consider their potential and need to learn and/or assimilate Anglo cultural content.

In their analysis, Post and Rathet (ibid.) discuss some activities, which they have used in their classrooms in Japan and Italy, which incorporate student native culture as content. The examples represent a range of cultural material ranging from entirely student culture to nearly completely Anglo culture. The examples emphasise their intention to promote the inclusion of student native culture as content in the English Language classes, as an integral part of an overall balanced curriculum. This balance should exist because they do not intend for teachers to eliminate all target cultural content. Their sample activities include; collecting “local” English, exploring cultural icons, guessing
games with cultural objects, health remedies, talking about education among others. These activities, Post and Rathet say, illustrate only a few of the ways in which the teacher can incorporate student native culture content into EFL classrooms, thus adding a more culturally sensitive, student-focused flavour to English Language teaching in today’s varied English teaching environment.

Ness (1997) analysing the use of local materials to teach writing, says one of the problems the English teacher in a foreign country frequently encounters is lack of materials in English dealing with local topics of interest to students. For economic reasons, texts, tapes and workbooks are by necessity geared to learners in countries and cultures all over the world. Culturally sensitive materials are therefore often hard to come by. She thinks one way of overcoming these problems is to use local materials written in English for tourists, such as travel brochures or local maps. Relating her teaching experience in South Korea, she says most textbooks had writing assignments that focused on describing places that the students had never been to. The students are therefore limited to parroting the sparse accompanying text or to listening to the teacher’s supplementary lecture. She thinks that language classes are all too often teacher-centred with the instructor doing most of the talking. In this case, she says, the students’ affective filter may be raised because students are dealing with materials that are literally and figuratively foreign to them. In using local English language materials, Ness asserts, students are dealing with familiar subjects, albeit in a foreign language. While helping in the learning of a foreign language, the students’ awareness of local resources, of what is available in their community is rewarding. This implies that there is a necessity to use local material and why not local techniques in the teaching of English especially in a country like Cameroon where there is an acute lack of teaching material.

Simo Bobda (1997) asserts that before the indigenization of ELF staff, teachers were trained in the United Kingdom and “until the mid-1970s, textbooks used in TEFL in Cameroon were characterised by an abundant use of elements of European culture in general and those of British culture in particular” (p.221). It has now been two decades since Cameroon started distancing itself from the monocultural approach to EFL teaching to embrace a gradual indegenization of materials. He points out the sensitivity of the cultural context in language production and comprehension and thinks that effective teaching can be hindered even in a course involving familiar lexical items if they are used in a foreign culture context. He further notes that one of the manifestations of the
Africanisation of EFL cultural context has been the shift from European to African topics. If there is an acceptable shift in topics in ELF teaching, we can expect that a shift in teaching methods from the normal structural approach to the inclusion of some form of indigenous techniques will be useful in the teaching/learning of EFL.

However, Simo Bobda (ibid.) thinks a good balance between the lexical register drawn both on the European and the African context appears to be ideal. This underscores the importance of drawing a good balance between the structural methods of language teaching and the indigenous techniques of communication, which will be ideal for the teaching/learning of English as a foreign language in Cameroon. Simo Bobda concludes his analysis by saying that in Cameroon, there exist many areas where English language teaching needs to be adapted to the socio-cultural value of the community, apart from merely incorporating new terms resulting from the need to designate new concepts and practices. He thinks numerous lexico-semantic and pragmatic adaptations are certainly necessary.

Zamel and Spack (1998), assert that previous knowledge should be valued as an essential source, one that enables the acquisition of unfamiliar terms and concepts. It helps to teach children through what they already know or what they can identify with. Given the opportunity to make connections between what they already know and what they are being asked to learn, students can take ownership of the subject matter. This assertion holds true in the Cameroonian context where the students have to struggle with their varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds in the course of learning a foreign language. An introduction of indigenous material, which the students are familiar with, could help raise their enthusiasm and increase their participation in class.

Le (1999) investigated the role music plays in EFL from a Vietnamese perspective. The study attempted to gain insight from EFL students and teachers about their views on the importance of music in the teaching and learning of English in Vietnam. Le conducted interviews with teachers and students, and observed and participated in social and musical activities. In the end he came out with results like music is international, it enables learners to relax in a learning atmosphere, it bridges the gap between teachers and students and it makes language learning interesting. Le also describes how singing a poem is a very popular musical activity among young and old people in Vietnam. This musical activity was originally the singing of folk poems performed by villagers in rural activities such as harvesting, draining water into rice
fields, and singing babies to sleep by mothers or older sisters. In all these the study supported the researcher’s view that there is a place for music in second language learning, not only because music can be used pedagogically to enhance teaching and learning a second language, but also because there are many insights to be gained from an intercultural perspective. We can draw parallel Le’s study to the Cameroonian situation and confirm the view that much exists in the form of music which can be exploited to teach the Cameroonian learner of English as a foreign language. It could range from translated songs sung by women’s groups working in groundnut or maize fields, men working in coffee or cocoa plantations to the lullabies sung by mothers or babysitters to their children to put them to sleep. All of these when properly translated could be adapted to the classroom situation and used to teach English as a foreign language.

Talking about the use of indigenous methods in language teaching/learning, Wolf and Simo Bobda (2000) assert that the model of teaching English is one of the most hotly debated issues in the field of English as a second/foreign language. They believe it is misguided to think that L1 varieties are inappropriate for a broader international communicative purpose because they are “culturally and geo-politically specific in orientation”. They conclude by saying that conceptual diversity, which is realised lexically, enriches the English language and learners of it profit most if indigenous cultural elements occur alongside native English elements. They do not, however, specify what these cultural elements should be, which gives an opening into more research on what cultural elements could be used to improve on this diversity.

Mallikarjun (2003), writing about the use of folk literature from a pedagogical perspective asserts that folk literature is part and parcel of the language and culture of the modern society. He notes that the three models of education – non-formal, formal, and informal that go from teaching literacy to literature and other subjects can make use of folk literature as a powerful educational tool. These, he notes, maybe used to imbibe values, style of language, and many other important learning items in the minds of learners. Mallikarjun asserts that folk literature is studied for its intrinsic merit and for enjoyment. He, however, notes that using these materials as an integral part of our educational and socialisation process is conspicuously absent. He also notes that the stories that were included in school textbooks years ago continue to be repeated, even with newer discoveries of folklore material. Examining the role of Kannada folk literature in non-formal and formal education in Karnataka, India he notes some
observations made by language teachers and critics of textbooks. They include the fact that (a) the lessons included in various language teaching textbooks fail to attract and retain the attention of the learners till the end, both in their content and presentation, and (b) that the lessons do not use the type of language that is lively, common and has flavour that is easily understood and imitated. Mallikarjun thinks folk literature helps to increase the use of the spoken form of language, the choice of lexicon and the sentence patterns that are more frequently used daily and which contain a natural form of language presentation. He also notes that the curriculum that prepares teachers for the teaching profession does not include a methodology that helps the teachers to exploit folk literature as an important pedagogical tool.

2.2 Motivation in Foreign Language Learning

A lot has been written on motivation, the attitude of foreign language learners and methods used in language teaching. Review on this section will dwell on what other writers think is responsible for students’ motivation or de-motivation in the learning of English as a foreign language and how this can be alleviated. “Motivation is commonly thought of as an inner drive, impulse, emotion, or desire that moves one to a particular action. More specifically, human beings universally have needs or drives that are more or less innate, yet their intensity is environmentally conditioned” (Douglas Brown 1987: 114). Motivation can be divided into two basic types: instrumental and integrative motivation. “Instrumental motivation refers to motivation to acquire a language as a means for attaining instrumental goals: furthering a career, reading technical material, translation, and so forth” (Douglas Brown 1987:115). Integrative motivation on the other hand is “when learners wish to integrate themselves within the culture of the second language group” (ibid.: 116). Integrative motivation, it is thought, is an important requirement for successful language learning. Even within the integrative/instrumental motivation are intrinsic and extrinsic differences. The former being whether the motivation stems from within the learner and the later whether it stems from other people (ibid.). For the goal of this study, which is to try to introduce innovative teaching techniques in foreign language learning, motivation will be looked at as the enthusiasm with which the learners learn the language or the lack of it. We will look at what other writers think is responsible for lack of enthusiasm in most learners and what they think
can be done in terms of teaching techniques to create a positive impact on this enthusiasm.

Cheung (2001) asserts that schools are crucial to students’ language learning. So all English teachers should feel responsible for promoting its effective teaching. Many teachers, however, rely on uninteresting textbooks that focus students’ attention on grammatical structures, on practice in isolation, and too many of their class activities are based on teacher-talk and student-listen routine. He thinks that these practices are unlikely to lead students to develop a genuine interest in learning English. Cheung asserts that most students in Hong Kong are de-motivated by the emphasis placed on difficult and abstract declarative knowledge in schools. As a result they tend to find learning in schools uninteresting or irrelevant to their daily life, and so lack of attention, passivity, “off-task” attitudes and other disruptive forms of behaviour have become common place in Hong Kong.

Cheung thinks “effective teachers are enthusiastic, warm, understanding, stimulating and imaginative” (ibid. 58). Since students who lack intrinsic motivation often desire variety, excitement, and novelty, effective teachers should choose different teaching methods and learning materials that will motivate their students. Using popular culture in class, he thinks, is one way of adding life and variety to lessons. The attitude Cheung describes among Hong Kong learners prevails everywhere and especially among the Cameroonian learner of English as a foreign language. Unlike Cheung’s use of popular culture however, the use of indigenous techniques of communication may help motivate the Cameroonian learner. Indigenously focused activities maybe a solution to the lack of enthusiasm that is shown by most learners in Cameroonian schools. These activities can create new life in learning a language because they are stimulating and lively unlike the everyday structural and abstract teaching that is presently carried out in most Cameroonian schools. They will provide a participatory approach to language learning that will enhance the enthusiasm of the learner, causing him/her to be more responsive as he/she behaves more spontaneously towards the language lesson. Hopefully, like Cheung says, these activities will lead the student to taking a genuine interest in learning the language.

Beale (2002) writing about the success of communicative language teaching says many people argue that a fairly limited use of communicative principles has been evident in the popular treatments of lesson structure, content and syllabus design. He thinks other
content- and task-based models are potentially more communicative in shape. Research has also encouraged a growing emphasis on the teaching of strategies and form-focused exercises, which challenges communicative approaches to address both the experiential and intellectual levels of language learning. Despite the familiarity of communicative approaches therefore, Beale thinks a growing eclecticism in language pedagogy has encouraged a continuing search for the broader guiding principles.

Beale summarises the four components of communicative competence under grammatical, sociocultural, discourse and strategic competence. This, he thinks, is a very useful sociolinguistic model telling us what natural communication involves, but not how it should be taught in classroom settings. He names three key pedagogic principles that developed around communicative language teaching which were the presentation of language forms in context, the importance of genuine communication and the need for learner-centred teaching. Beale thinks these are widely acknowledged but nevertheless open to interpretation.

One example of such an approach to communicative language teaching is the PPP lesson (for presentation, practice, and production). Language forms, he says, are first presented under the teacher’s guidance, then practised in a series of exercises, again under the teacher’s supervision. The chosen forms are then finally produced by the learners themselves in the communicative activities that can be more or less related to their real lives and interests. We agree with Beale that communicative language teaching can be successful depending on the way it is carried out. That is the reason why this research proposes the use of indigenous techniques of communication for teaching English as a foreign language in Cameroonian schools.

Lopez (1999) writing about motivating EFL learners says motivation is one of the most important factors in language learning, which is why teachers of English as a Foreign Language have always tried to find new approaches or strategies that introduce practical uses of EFL in the classroom. Unfortunately, he confirms what most teachers think, that many students dislike learning English, and although they attend lessons, they are not interested in speaking properly or taking part in class activities. They only want to pass the compulsory examinations. Lopez talks about some of the activities developed to motivate students in a school of Nursing in Holguin, Cuba where he teaches. He relates that to enhance the English classroom atmosphere and encourage learning, advertisements, warnings, posters, bulletins, pictures, drawings and photos are posted on
walls. Thus students are surrounded by items that resemble the culture of the target language and that gives the students the feeling of learning the language. However, unlike Lopez’s use of material from the culture of the target language, material found in the students’ immediate environment could be used to create posters, bulletins, pictures and other items to remind them and give them a feel of the language. These can be a constant reminder not only of their learning the language, but also of their own culture.

Sibarah (1999) writing about the use of songs as a “magic tonic” for learners of English as a foreign language says learners need to participate actively throughout the learning process. He thinks that situations in which the learners are inactive while teachers expound on the linguistic theories do not help in effective learning. Rather than being stifled, Sibarah thinks the classroom atmosphere should be sufficiently relaxed so that learners are not frightened of speaking.

Narrating his experiences of teaching English as a foreign language in Cameroon, Sibarah says that a majority of the French-speaking community in Cameroon more often than not adopts a disquieting, nonchalant and uncaring attitude towards learning English. This, he thinks, is because only a minority of the Cameroonian population speaks English. Francophone pupils therefore have a phobia for English. In this kind of situation, narrates Sibarah, ensuring effective learning rests solely on the teacher’s shoulders. He thinks that unless students are sufficiently aroused, teaching English to Francophone students will remain a very difficult task. He relates how he began using songs to help relax the atmosphere in the class for sufficient learning to take place and agrees with Williams (1983) that the textbook will continue to play an important role, but it will not be a tyrant.

Writing about using songs to enhance learner involvement in the classroom Lo and Li (1998) say the value of songs in motivating students to learn English and enhance learner involvement is widely acknowledged by ESL practitioners. They say teachers and students alike find singing songs entertaining and relaxing. Songs, they think, offer a change from routine classroom activities. They are invaluable tools to develop students’ abilities in listening, speaking, reading and writing, and can be used to teach a variety of language items such as sentence patterns, vocabulary, pronunciation, rhythm, adjectives, and adverbs. Learning English through songs, they think, also provides a non-threatening atmosphere for students, who are usually tense when speaking English in a formal
classroom setting. To enhance learner commitment therefore, they think teachers should allow learners to take part in developing materials for themselves.

Their article presents a number of classroom activities which combine the use of songs and materials development by learners to show how learner involvement can be maximised by engaging learners in meaningful task design and the efficient exploitation of songs. These activities include song dictation, song reading, split song and portraits. They conducted these activities with a group of secondary school students in the form of an enrichment programme to boost students’ proficiency in English and found that it worked wonderfully well. Lo and Li discovered that the activities helped create plenty of teaching materials through teacher-student collaboration. Students showed tremendous interest in learning English through songs, particularly those chosen by themselves. They were enthusiastic in designing exercises for peers and felt great pride in chairing their own sessions. The combination of materials development with the use of songs can definitely enhance learner involvement. Lo and Li think that these activities are able to diversify teaching methodologies and transform passive learners to active participants in the learning process.

Djingunovic (1998), reported on the results of an extensive study of Croatian learners’ affects and attitudes towards the English teacher, English classes, and English language learning, as well as of the learners’ motivation and success in learning. He thought that the conflicting results in past studies (Gardner & Lambert: 1972; Lukmani: 1972) were a major motive for their decision to investigate the role of the learners’ motivation for learning, and their affects and attitudes towards their EFL teacher, their classes and EFL learning itself. A further motive he said was their conjecture that since previous studies have been performed in second-language contexts, where a population of speakers was available outside the schools, the findings might not be applicable for learners of English as a foreign language without that advantage. The study indicated that success in learning largely depended on learners’ motivation and on their attitudes towards the teaching situation. It also showed that the conventional teaching situation failed to make full use of the learners’ motivational potential. He concludes that studies in affect, attitude and motivation in EFL learning may be very revealing about what can determine learner achievement.

Motivation, Baloto (1996) says, is what makes us act; it is a desire to work towards a goal or to reach an objective. If motivation is present, learning can be
facilitated, but without it, effective learning becomes difficult. He presents some important principles that can help teachers of English in Congolese schools to have lively classes. He suggests among other things that foreign language teaching should always be linked to the environment of the learner. Baloto thinks a teacher who teaches English without alluding to the immediate environment of the school makes the English lesson detached from the learners’ experience. Teachers can link the environment of the school (and implicitly of the child) to any activity or exercise that they want to carry out in the classroom.

A child, Baloto says, has a natural context in which he/she organises the various activities that make up his/her life. If these activities are “reproduced” in the language classroom, it is possible to motivate him/her to do the tasks at hand. The only new factor is the language itself which the learner can be encouraged to use. Other ways of motivating the learner which Baloto suggests include presenting the language in natural chunks, using appropriate visual aids, including cultural components and adapting materials presented in a foreign language class to be varied and stimulating. Ideally, the material should be adapted to the needs of learners but most importantly they should be stimulating.

What Baloto is insinuating is that there is a need for techniques that demand creativity and spontaneity to new and unexpected experiences which reality demands of the learner of English as a foreign language. This experience constitutes a step towards acquiring the flexibility of mind and the independence of attachment to a single language. By the time foreign language learning begins in the secondary school pupils are so constrained by their first language that they need active help to be able to react spontaneously to foreign language teaching. The student’s experiences in the first language could therefore be transferred to the learning of a foreign language. To provide help of this kind would have consequences for the methods and activities of the present language teaching in schools. There is therefore need for a methodological change because the ability to communicate in the English language is not merely potentially useful but also a unique dimension in a learner’s development and life expectations especially in Cameroon.

Schmied (1991) writing in his introduction to “English in Africa” says that attitudes towards English language learning are attributable to two basic problems: methodology and conceptual difficulty. He indicates that the need for methodological
simplicity and the obvious complexity of the phenomena makes the study of language attitudes a difficult undertaking. Methodological simplicity can actually be achieved through the use of what the student is familiar with and the same indigenous means he used to learn his first language could be improved upon and used in the learning of a foreign language. This study proposes a methodological simplicity that can be got from using indigenous techniques in the foreign language class.

Gardner and Lambert (1972) are known to have carried out one of the best studies of motivation in second language learning. Over a period of 12 years they extensively studied foreign language learners in Canada, several parts of the United States, and the Philippines in an effort to determine how attitudinal and motivational factors affect language learning success. They came out with the result that the home has a great influence on language learners. Among other influences they think that parents with positive attitudes towards the other language community more actively encouraged their children to learn that language than did parents with less favourable attitudes. They conclude that giving major considerations to the social and the psychological implications of language learning could perhaps strengthen methods of language teaching. A close look at the social considerations of learning a foreign language in the Cameroonian society could help the teaching of English as a foreign language. Indigenous techniques of communication could be used to strengthen the methods that are presently used in the teaching of English in Cameroonian schools.

Writing about teaching methods, Lado (1964) thinks “there is little progress from the exclusive use of native speakers of the language, small classes, or a particular technique of pattern practice. Neither is there promise of progress in deciding that linguistics, machines, and techniques have had their day and that we must return to the exclusive study of literature” (p.7). Lado thinks that language is the chief means by which the human personality expresses itself and fulfils its basic need for social interaction with other persons. It is therefore difficult for this and many other reasons for machines to replace human beings. He thinks that more progress should be made in research that deliberately sets out to find ways in which the machine can increase the power of the teacher rather than replace him. Given the kind of teaching situation that is found in schools in developing countries like Cameroon, there is a need to fall back on the use of indigenous techniques. The reason being that even when teaching methods are
technologically developed and meant to increase the power of the teacher, teaching in developing countries is still largely devoid of them.

Writing about motivation, Lado thinks “the need and urge to communicate through language to fulfil the complex needs of a human being are a constant stimulus to use the language. Urges, desires, wants, needs, ideals, and values result in conflicting motivations from which the will selects some to act upon and combats others through inhibition of practice” (p.34). The constant stimulus to communicate in the language can provide a greater stimulus to learn the language. Given that most of the students involved in this research are not motivated to learn English, one will think they have no urge to communicate and yet some of them indicate a willingness to communicate which is probably squashed by the lack of necessary teaching techniques to render them communicative. It is agreed with Lado (1964) that progress should be made into ways in which the power of the teacher can be increased although this research is not concerned with technological advancement like Lado proposes. This research is concerned with helping to stimulate the learner of English as a foreign language by strengthening teaching methods used presently in schools. This will take the learner’s environment into consideration and propose the use of indigenous communicative techniques, which the learner is already familiar with.

### 2.3 Language Teaching Techniques

Stories have been a part of language teaching for a long time. The problem is the kind of stories that are told to what kind of learners. The importance of using stories to teach a second or foreign language lesson cannot be overemphasised. “We need stories for our minds as much as we need food for our bodies. Stories are particularly important in the lives of our children” (Wright 1995:5). According to Bessmertnyi (1994:3)

> every good teacher supplements the textbook materials with a lot of additional items such as songs, poems, games, stories and plays. The big problem is always what to choose.

Children’s hunger for stories is constant. Every time they enter the classroom they enter with a need for stories. This hunger for stories is not particular to children. Adults tell stories every time they meet each other and one always sees a hunger for a new story every time friends come together. The use of stories in language teaching as proposed by
this research has to do with folktales. They abound in the Cameroonian society and they could be developed for the teaching of English as a foreign language. A good number of Cameroonian folktales have been translated into English and could be used conveniently in an English language lesson for learners of English as a foreign language.

Ji (2003) narrates his experience of teaching young Chinese children English as a Foreign Language by using sandwich stories - a story that is written or told with target language items embedded or “sandwiched,” in the students’ mother tongue. He explains that the use of the mother tongue was based partly on the assumption that the unknown can be understood only on the basis of what you already know. Teaching Cameroonian students on the basis of what they already know will be equally motivating although this does not have to be in their first language but in the target language. Most Cameroonian students are familiar with folktales either from their homes or from their immediate communities. The only problem with teaching them is understanding the English language itself in which the story is written or told. Folktales told in English will be motivating in the teaching of English as a foreign language, using the benefits of pre-, while-, and post-storytelling activities.

In (2002), Simpson and Redmond wrote about the use of music in the foreign language class, asserting that music has been a useful tool of communication for thousands of years. “From traditions handed down through song and dance, to popular songs that reflect current culture, music is an integral part of our lives. Music is present in the human experience from birth to death, representing every facet of our emotions” (p.1). Music, they say, has also been a viable teaching tool across the curriculum, including the area of foreign language instruction. They quote the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) (1996:7), which says that in order for students to be “linguistically and culturally equipped to communicate successfully in a pluralistic society and abroad, success must be achieved in five related areas: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities”.

Simpson and Redmond assert that music can set the stage for a language lesson, in addition to playing a role in the lesson itself. They quote Lozanov (1978) who hypothesised that both sides of the brain are activated while music is playing or while students are singing, and this activation leads to greater relaxation, which in turn leads to a mind more open to language acquisition. They carried out a study to determine for what specific instructional purpose and to what extent K-12 foreign language teachers
incorporated music into their curriculum. What type of music teachers choose to implement, and why? How often the music is used and what strategies the teachers use when incorporating music into their foreign language instruction?

The researchers interviewed 15 French and Spanish teachers in a public school district and two private schools in a city in North Carolina. The teachers had from 3 to 32 years’ experience. During the interview, the teachers were asked questions to determine what importance they placed on music in the foreign language classroom, what types of music they use, how often they use music, in what ways they use music in their instruction, and how students respond to the music. They also visited classes to observe how teachers incorporated music into their classes.

The result showed that all the teachers in their study consider music an important part of the foreign language curriculum. They use music to set a mood; integrate with a unit or theme; teach alphabet, numbers, or vocabulary; teach authentic songs representative of the target language culture; enrich the study of holidays; reinforce grammatical concepts; and reinforce listening comprehension. They reported that teachers use both authentic (original language) and adapted music and they incorporate music with varying degrees, from the elementary to the high school levels. Simpson and Redmond conclude that the result of this study indicates that music is being used in varying ways in the foreign language classroom. Teachers, they say, are pressed for time and have large amounts of material to cover, especially in the middle and high school levels. However, when they incorporate music into their lessons, they acknowledge significant benefits: better retention of vocabulary and grammar, opportunities for cultural exposure, and a relaxed classroom atmosphere. Students, they say, welcome music as a break from everyday grind, and teachers use it as a way to provide multiple representations of material and appeal to diverse learning styles. The importance of music in language learning cannot be overemphasised and this research is concerned with its application or non-application in the Cameroon language classroom. The objective being to recommend the use of music in the teaching of English as a foreign language in Cameroonian schools if there is a finding about the absence of its use.

Writing about using music and songs in the foreign language classroom Shtaker (2001) thinks that teachers use them for several reasons. The main reason, however, is the good atmosphere it creates in the classroom. Students relate to songs as part of entertainment rather than work and find learning vocabulary through songs amusing
rather than tedious. She finds this particularly true with the use of pop songs in class. She thinks familiarity with these songs improves students’ status within the peer group and therefore stimulates learning. These songs, she relates, also tend to deal with problems interesting to young people and the students identify with the singers and want to understand the words. Didactically she thinks the songs are useful in teaching the rhythm of the language and informing the students about the culture of that language’s speakers. Even just playing music without words creates a relaxed atmosphere that enhances learning.

Shtaker thinks the major problems that teachers have with using songs in the classroom are the non-standard grammar in many of the songs and the “non-serious” image of the pop songs. She thinks the non-standard grammar will confuse the foreign language learner, but counters this with the fact that not all songs are suitable for foreign language classes. The other problem of the “non-serious” image of pop music is refuted with the fact that research has been done on this issue and the common agreement is that students learn the same amount of material by both methods. The main difference is that the students find learning through songs much more enjoyable. She thinks music considerably enhances the learning potential of the students. She therefore encourages the use of the more enjoyable method in the classroom in order to enhance motivation for learning.

Learning through music can therefore be fun and this music can be that of the target culture or that of the student’s indigenous culture, but in the target language. Music encourages the students to take an active part in the learning process by contributing from their musical knowledge. They become more confident in their learning ability and more motivated to learn the language. The use of songs is potentially very fruitful. The teacher of English as a foreign language in Cameroon should be made aware of this and start its implementation in the secondary/high.

Jones (2001) writes that storytelling plays a significant role in day-to-day human interaction and teachers of second/foreign language conversation might be advised to devote part of their syllabus to the teaching of storytelling skills. In doing so, he thinks, it would be important for teachers to emphasise that conversational storytelling involves much more than just a bald narrating of facts and that it exhibits its own particular generic features. He attempts to describe some of these generic features and goes ahead to propose a consciousness-raising activity designed to help students become aware of
them as a first step towards developing their own storytelling skills. While agreeing with Jones about the necessity to develop storytelling skills, it would be even better to develop all the aspects of storytelling in the teaching/learning of English in schools. These aspects include reading, writing and telling stories including all the activities of pre-, while-, and post storytelling. The effective use of this technique will help raise the students’ motivation and enthusiasm in the learning of English as a Foreign Language.

Gahin and Myhill (2001) writing about the use of the communicative approach in Egypt, talk about Egyptian EFL teachers’ beliefs and attitudes towards the communicative approach in language learning. Their article describes the features and context of EFL and ELT in Egypt and the recent political imperative to encourage fluency in English. They cite support from an empirical study, in which an attitudes scale was designed, piloted and administered to a sample of 120 EFL teachers in Egypt to explore their attitude towards the communicative approach. The study highlights the importance of the social and cultural context upon teachers’ attitudes and practices and draws attention to some of the constraints, which have impeded the successful implementation of the communicative approach.

In their study, Gahin and Myhill came out with some extrinsic constraints that hindered the implementation of the communicative approach in Egyptian schools. These constraints include economic factors like low pay, lack of resources, large-sized unequipped classrooms, and lack of appropriate teacher training provision. They reported that in some cases the limited resources available made it difficult for teachers to prepare and present the teaching materials in line with the communicative principles. The pressure from parents, students, headmasters, and inspectors on teachers related to examination was another factor. This is because examination results are an embodiment of learning for parents and inspectors and an evidence for teachers’ work. They think there is more focus upon examination success than upon linguistic fluency.

Gahin and Myhill see the role of culture as another factor, since it is deeply rooted in the Egyptian cultural traditions that students avoid expressing their views for fear of losing face or offending others. Communicative activities like group work may therefore be less fruitful because of students’ and maybe teachers’ negative attitudes towards them. They also think that the traditional cultural image of the teacher in the Egyptian society matches very poorly with the view of the teacher in the communicative approach. “Teachers, seen as knowledge holders, might consider that if they play games with
students to role-play in class, they might not be seen as doing their job” (p.10). Gahin and Myhill also found that teachers’ academic abilities contributed among the intrinsic constraints. The reason being that 41% of the Egyptian teaching force are non-specialist and lack both proficiency and pedagogy needed for teaching EFL.

They also report on the feelings of frustration and stress expressed by the teachers at the inconsistent expectations placed upon them, in addition to the clashing requirements of both the teaching syllabus and the examination syllabus, and lack of a morally supportive work context. The constraints which Gahin and Myhill’s study uncovered in Egypt are common to most African schools and communities. There is however a chance to increase fluency in language learning if the teachers/learners are given the opportunity to use indigenous techniques of communication. Activities like the telling of folktales, singing, role-play, riddles and proverbs could be used with the communicative approach to make the students more responsive towards English language learning, while at the same time helping them to achieve better examination results.

Ray Brown (2000) asserts that to deny that there is a conflict in contemporary English Language teaching particularly, but not exclusively, in the “importing” of new techniques associated with the communicative language teaching into the state sector educational systems of developing countries, is to deny a reality with which many are familiar. He thinks that there have been many changes in language teaching over the past 20 years and these changes are usually summarised within the framework of a shift from a form-focused or structural approach, to a meaning-focused or communicative approach. These changes, he believes, all have profound implications for teacher training although their far-reaching effects are only gradually becoming apparent. Brown asserts that it is evident to anyone working in the public sector education field in the developing country context throughout these years that these changes have seldom been easy to accept or implement. The problem, he says, includes large classes, lack of basic furniture in the classrooms and no other visual aid except the black board. Less visible than assets, he writes, is the weight of the local teaching/learning tradition. This includes the role of the teacher as explainer, the expectations that everyone – the learner, the learner’s parents, the teacher’s peers, the teacher’s administrators, and society as a whole – all have of the role of the teacher and his/her learners. Brown’s description is common to the Cameroonian teaching situation but with these obstacles in mind the teaching of English could be moderated so that the intended goal is achieved. The communicative approach
could be used in the Cameroonian classroom and made to work if it is adapted to indigenous techniques of communication that the learners are familiar with outside the class.

Wilhelm and Edminston (1998) assert that drama in the educational context is “creating meaning and visible mental models of our understanding together in imaginative contexts and situations. It is not about performance, but exploration.” (p.xx). They think the teacher in drama “becomes a learner among learners, a participant and a guide, who lends expertise to the students” (ibid.). They also think that drama should be made a more integral part of teaching and learning in classrooms. They present their experiences as teachers, their analyses, and their research in an attempt to make drama an attractive and realistic methodology for teachers. Through their experiences they provide compelling evidence that drama, when used as a teaching methodology, can have a powerful impact on student learning. They describe how drama can be used with various subjects but most especially for the teaching of second/foreign languages in which students develop a critical literacy, a way of making meaning of the world by learning “to look inward to define the self. [It is also a means for students] to imagine and enter the selfhood and perspectives of others, and […] to look in other spheres of education” (p.149). They assert that students need to be taught now in such a way that they will make full and effective use of the language they learn in their future educational, occupational and personal endeavours. Wilhelm and Edminston think teachers all over the world are looking for ways in which to expand language learning to encompass life outside the classroom. They therefore need to improve students’ competence and help them become creative and responsive learners of the language through the use of drama. They assert that “action is inherent in drama” (p.126) and they advocate for a teaching and learning process that is action-filled. This research is looking into ways in which this kind of “action-filled” learning could be carried out in the Cameroonian language classroom to help improve students’ competence and make them become creative, responsive and participative.

Mary C. Black (1997), writing about adapting ESL methodology to the EFL environment, observes that the vast majority of students of English are not found in native speaking countries such as England and the United States but spread out in countries all over the globe. Nevertheless, the majority of ESL/EFL methods and approaches are developed in the native-speaker settings, and much in the literature is thus
oriented towards teaching students in the ESL environment. Most EFL students, she thinks, study for two reasons: either to learn how to use English, especially for speaking and to a lesser degree writing; or to obtain a certificate or both. Most need it in their work or for job interviews. She describes how her staff characterises its teaching goals with two key words: communication and rigor; that is, a communicative approach within a rigorous framework, where they stress the interaction of three elements; pacing, content and evaluation to motivate the students and to achieve success.

Writing about the cultural appropriateness of the communicative approach Ellis (1996) questions its universal relevance in view of the cultural conflicts arising from the introduction of a predominantly Western language teaching approach to Far Eastern cultures. The central argument is that for the communicative approach to be made suitable for Asian conditions, it needs to be both culturally attuned and accepted. It is suggested that “mediating” can serve as a useful tool in this process. In this way the nature of what eventually takes place in the classroom involves the teacher’s ability to filter the method to make it appropriate to the local cultural norms, and to re-define the teacher-student relationship in keeping with the cultural norms embedded in the method itself. Communicative language teaching could be made suitable for Cameroonian schools if its use is culturally attuned. This research is concerned with using indigenous techniques of within the communicative approach to make it applicable to the Cameroonian foreign language teaching/learning situation.

Pedersen (1995) says storytelling is the original form of teaching. There are still societies in which it is the only form of teaching. Though attempts have been made to imitate or update it, like the electronic storytelling of television, live storytelling will never go out of fashion. A simple narrative, he says, will always be the cornerstone of the art of teaching. Pedersen thinks “in dealing with stories, learners have an experience with the powerful real language of personal communication, not the usual “teacherese” of the foreign-language-classroom. Colloquial or literary, unaffected or flowery – the full range of language is present in stories” (ibid. 2).

Pedersen asserts that oral stories develop listening skills in a unique way. The listeners benefit from observing non-polished speech created on the spot. While listening to stories, children develop a sense of structure that will later help them to understand the more complex stories of literature. Infact, stories are the oldest form of literature. Through traditional tales, people express their values, fears, hopes and dreams. Oral
stories are a direct expression of literary and cultural heritage; and through them that heritage is appreciated, understood and kept alive. Pedersen continues by saying that through a story, listeners experience a vicarious feeling for the past and oneness with various cultures of the present as they gain insight into the motives and patterns of human behaviour. Stories help children to know themselves and to know others so that they can cope with the psychological problems of growing up.

In relation to teaching a language Pedersen thinks a selection requires an ability to evaluate stories and to discriminate between those that meet your learners’ needs and those that do not. He outlines some learning activities that can be made from storytelling, which include; comprehension – asking and answering questions about the stories that have been told; introduction of new vocabulary in lexical, rhyming or grammatical sets. Listening activities like comparing, discriminating, predicting, sequencing, classifying and transferring information. Discussion topics can be taken from the story themes. Rewriting, summarising or paraphrasing a tale are obvious and worthwhile activities which Pedersen thinks could be used in a foreign language classroom. He thinks like Chambers (1970: 43) that

[storytelling] can take many disciplines from the realm of the often-dreary textbook and raise them to great heights of exciting, fruitful experiences in learning. Storytelling as a pedagogical technique has been used by the world’s greatest teachers. Jesus used it, as did Pluto, Confucius and other great philosophers and teachers […] The modern teacher who employs this technique as a teaching tool is using a technique of teaching that has stood the test of time.

We can draw parallel here with Cameroonian folktales which are appreciated in the same manner and which could be used in the Cameroonian classroom for the teaching of English as a foreign language. In fact, there is a great potential in developing the abundant and varied Cameroonian folktales for use in a foreign language classroom. The Cameroonian educational system can do a lot to motivate the learner of English as a foreign language and raise his/her enthusiasm by using the abundant folktales that are found in the society and translated into English.

Burgess (1994) talking about his experience in teaching says he cannot teach speaking and no one can. He believes that students can learn to speak a language and teachers can help them, but no one can teach students to speak a language. He thinks that students must be given opportunities to develop their own skills. They must be encouraged to help each other and correct each other and they will do so – in spite of
cultural constraints – if they are given the appropriate situation and consistent long-term encouragement. He observes that students need opportunities to practice, but when given an opportunity, many find they have nothing to say. This is an opportunity the teacher must use to be able to introduce what the students know and which they can identify with. There are a lot of Cameroonian students who may readily speak in class if they are allowed to talk about what they already know, for example, the folktales they learned from their homes when they were growing up. They could also be made to carry out role play activities to model many situations in their society that they come in contact with and that they know well enough to be able to talk about.

Burgess advises on what he believes should be done to help students achieve accuracy in oral communication. He says the WSQA - (Word-Sentence-Question-Answer) in all its variations helps intermediate learners to build accuracy and self-confidence. He also recommends the breaking down of a class into smaller groups to maximise individual student talking time, minimise the potential for student loss-of-face, and provide a situation conducive to students correcting each other. He thinks through listening-speaking and collaborating in small groups, students become motivated and their time and energy in class is well spent.

Orton (1990) in her research on educating the reflective practitioner in China’s teacher education, discovered that for her methodology course to be accepted, it required not only a change in behaviour on the part of the Chinese participants, but also a change in their value orientation. Rather than trying to assimilate the Chinese English language teachers to her own Western values, Orton’s solution was to reframe the task in keeping with Chinese values. She asserts that the importance of making new knowledge attuned to the learner’s worldview is especially obvious, since it may produce passive resistance on the part of the students. For example, students from traditional backgrounds may not value unfamiliar activities having a communicative orientation. She also thinks that too large a gap between the level of performance and the intended learning experience results in a breakdown of language production and therefore frustration. It should be agreed with Orton that learning tasks be reframed in accordance with the students’ cultural background and students’ immediate learning environment.

Keith and Keith (1991) assert that the communicative approach to language teaching is necessary because the interactions that take place in the classroom are an imitation of the communicative operation in which students are involved outside the
classroom. Students can therefore relive their experiences outside the classroom while in class. This may make it easier for students to communicate in class because they will be making an effort to talk about what they know already instead of if they were presented with something that is strange or different from their culture and their environment. In this way the introduction of indigenous techniques of communication will go a long way to motivate the learners and help them in the interaction they need for communication.

Richards and Rodgers (1988) give an overview analysis of the major approaches and the methods used in second language learning. They highlight these approaches while placing each of them within its historical context. In their analyses there is a general tendency towards the use of the communicative method in language learning and a bid to make the student more participative in class. Some of these approaches and methods have been used over and over again in the Cameroonian public schools with little success either in examination results or in linguistic fluency. This research will go a bit further by finding out if including indigenous techniques of communication to these methods will help improve the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language.

Wessels (1987) writing about drama notes that it is not, like communicative language teaching, a new theory of language teaching, but rather a technique that can be used to develop certain language skills. He observes that in the language teaching situation, whenever the technique of drama is used, learners will constantly be confronted with the demands to take responsibility, to use their imagination, to offer alternatives, to come up with solutions and even to do some research. The use of creative dramatics in the second/foreign language classroom not only addresses the non-verbal aspects of language, but also provides a satisfactory linguistic base on which to build communicative competence.

Wright, Betteridge and Buckby (1997) think that games provide meaningful and enjoyable language practice at all levels and for all age groups. They can be used to practice any of the language skills - speaking, listening, reading and writing - at any stage of the learning process from controlled repetition through guided practice to free expression. The students find the activities very productive and fun, which makes teaching and learning more enjoyable. The activities allow direct involvement in learning on the part of all the students. Their personal involvement tends to increase their sense of personal commitment to the subject and leads to more student-centered activities. The foreign language becomes the vehicle of communication instead of the main point of
teaching. Students can be successful with other objectives even if they have trouble producing the target language properly. Eventually they overcome their inhibitions and produce good structures in the target language, which help to increase their motivation to produce more. Drama activities also work well to increase the students’ sense of trust in the teacher and in each other because they allow for a very humanistic approach. Other researchers like Leech and Svartik (1975), Littlewood, (1981), Klippel (1984), Allwright (1986), and Alan and Alan (1988) have contributed a lot to the use of the communicative method in language learning and emphasise the use of this method because communicative skills involve more emphasis on the oral skills.

Holliday (1994) argues that many teachers in state English language education around the world are unsure about the appropriateness of the communicative approach to the conditions prevalent in their classrooms. He believes one reason for this may be that they are trying to use a particularly narrow interpretation of this approach produced for very different classroom contexts, by branches of ELT communities in Britain, Australasia, and North America or what he calls the “BANA” countries. He asserts that there exists a broader version of the communicative approach, which has within it the potential to adapt to all types of classroom context provided it is informed by local knowledge. Holliday asserts that the communicative revolution in English language teaching has taken place and cannot be ignored. It acknowledges the undeniable fact that students bring with them to the classroom a great deal of competence which has to be addressed. We agree with Holliday that this competence can be addressed by introducing the use of indigenous techniques of communication. The students will find it easier to deal with what they are familiar and what is found in their environment, that is “informing by local knowledge”. These certainly include part of the competence the students bring to the language class, which competence they got while acquiring their first language.

Widdowson (1978) thinks that if we are seriously interested in an approach to language teaching which will develop the students’ ability to communicate, we must investigate the communicative approach in language teaching and the practical consequences of adopting it as a teaching aim. Communication can be adopted as a teaching aim when we take into consideration the fact that most students learn a language to achieve linguistic fluency. In their attempt to communicate students always use familiar means. This gives us reason to believe that the Cameroonian learners will feel
comfortable using indigenous techniques of communication. They are familiar with these techniques in their first language and will attempt to use them to communicate while learning the foreign language.

In Cameroon, some research has been carried out and results presented, especially in unpublished Masters’ and Education Diploma theses but these researches have been mostly on the attitude of second/foreign language learners. Tinku (1989), talking about the teaching of English to Francophone Technical Secondary school students, points out that they could be motivated to learn English through activities like games. The language should be presented to them through activities like songs, storytelling, gardening, and cooking because the teacher’s role in motivating and sustaining students’ motivation in language learning is primordial. Formunjang (1997) comparing pupils who were taught the English language using “the lecture method” and those taught using games found out that pupils taught using language games performed significantly better than the other pupils did. Nsen (1997) making an appraisal of songs and rhymes as remedial devices to the problems of vocabulary acquisition and oral fluency found out that songs and rhymes could be used in an ESL classroom as instruments for motivation. She recommends the encouragement of the use of songs and rhymes as approaches to the teaching of certain aspects of English in our Teacher Training Colleges. Arrey (1986) researched on the use of literature in English language lessons in the Anglophone Cameroonian schools and recommended that literature be used in the teaching of English to learners of English as a second language. Penn Tamba (1990) and Tenjoh Okwen (1989) writing respectively on motivation and attitude of Francophone learners of English conclude that there is little motivation in the learning of English by Francophone learners and there is a general negative attitude towards it. Most researchers on foreign language learning attitudes in Cameroon are unanimous on the fact that learners are not enthusiastic in learning English as a foreign language. This is because of a number of reasons but most especially because of the uninspiring teaching techniques that are presently used in Cameroonian schools and which this study hopes could be changed. The aim of this study is therefore to find out if the introduction of indigenous techniques to current approaches to language teaching/learning will help raise the enthusiasm of the learner of English as a foreign language in Cameroon. The next chapter presents this study’s preparation and realisation.
Chapter 3  Methodology

The survey method of investigation was used in this study. Traditionally, the survey method is popularly used in research because of its ability to reach many thousands of widely distributed people, statistical analyses can be performed on its data and experimental designs can be used Ackroyd (1992:7), Dooley (1984), Hall & Hall (1996), Babbie (1998), Thomas Black (1999). Historically, the survey method of investigation is linked with the use of a fixed format questionnaire which is designed so that the transformation of the information on it to the computer is reasonably fast and straightforward (Bulmer 1994:96). In the field of language research, a very popular survey technique is the use of various types of questionnaires although there are some difficulties attached to their use. Like interviews, “questionnaires intrude as a foreign element into the social setting they would describe and they elicit atypical roles and responses. Questionnaires are limited to those who are accessible and will co-operate and the responses obtained are produced in part by dimensions of individual differences irrelevant to the topic at hand” (ibid: 105). However, there are those who feel an attachment to questionnaires because they are flexible, easy to apply, relatively inexpensive and can be far reaching.

3.1  Research Background

3.1.1  Empirical Approach

This research is a questionnaire-based project carried out in six secondary/high schools in Cameroon. It uses an empirical approach where “the information, knowledge and understanding are gathered through experience and direct data collection” (Thomas Black 1999:3). This approach is preferred to any other because it is capable of producing relevant results and has an analytical potential to address the theoretical problems. The main hypothesis of this study is that learners enjoy English language lessons with methods that involve the use of indigenous techniques of communication, and that they are motivated and more responsive when these techniques are used in the teaching of English. It may be true that questionnaires may not be enough to test the effectiveness of classroom practice. However, the findings from this questionnaire-based study could be
used to propose activities that may lead to testing the effectiveness of individual techniques in the language classroom.

Bulmer (1994) asserts that when a hypothesis can survive the confrontation of a series of complementary methods of testing, it contains a degree of validity unattained by a hypothesis tested with a more constricted framework. This hypothesis is further going to be tested by analysing the textbooks used in the teaching of English as a Foreign language in Cameroonian public schools to find out if indigenous techniques are recommended in them. A thorough analysis of the textbooks used in schools will be complementary to the use of questionnaires and will act as a source of existing data. Since social surveys involve interaction between the researcher and the subjects of research with all the problems it creates for the validity of the measuring instrument, Bulmer (1994: 105), suggests the use of alternative existing sources of social data which have already been collected for that purpose. The textbooks will therefore provide a source for this alternative data.

### 3.1.2 Research Question

This research has been motivated by the personal experience this researcher has had teaching English as a Foreign Language to Francophone learners in Cameroon and her curiosity with why they do not show enough enthusiasm in learning the language. The primary research question in this investigation was whether indigenous techniques of communication could have a positive impact on the motivation of the learner of English as a Foreign Language in Cameroon. According to Thomas Black (1999: 30), a research question should in general be potentially testable. In other words, the question should be of sufficient scope as to be resolvable with resources available, not involved in proving right or wrong, and stated in such a way as to clearly define the problem that is to be investigated. The questionnaire to students attempted to find out:

1. Students’ attitude towards English language lessons
2. If their teachers use indigenous techniques of communication and if they feel they understand their lessons better when these techniques are used
3. How students assess the textbooks they use in schools for language learning.

The questionnaire to teachers sought to find out:

1. What teachers think are students’ reasons for learning the English language
2. What theirs students’ reactions are to their language lessons
3. If they use indigenous techniques of communication and what their students’ reactions are to them.

The main argument in this research is that students enjoy lessons that involve the use of indigenous techniques of communication, but that the teachers do not use these techniques in their language lessons. This lack of use may either be due to the fact that these techniques may not be prescribed in the textbooks that are used in Cameroonian schools, or due to the teaching/learning situation in which the teachers they find themselves.

3.2 Data Collection and Processing

3.2.1 Students’ Questionnaire

Quantitative research in the social sciences is usually designed with the intention of being operational definitions of concepts, instruments that reflect strength of attitudes, perceptions, views and opinions, Thomas Black (1999:215). This involves trying to measure and quantify how people feel about issues as opposed to what they know or what they can do. A convenience sample of students in six secondary/high schools in Cameroon was used in this research. Three of the secondary/high schools are bilingual schools where Francophone and Anglophone students learn separately in the same school premises but are taught English and French as foreign languages respectively. Two of the bilingual secondary/high schools are found in Douala, a Francophone section of Cameroon, and one is found in Buea, an Anglophone section of the country. The rest of the three schools are purely French speaking secondary/high schools, all found in Douala. The choice of schools was therefore adequately representative of the teaching/learning of English as a foreign language situation in Cameroonian public schools. The schools include: Lycee Bilingue Deido, Lycee Bilingue Bonaberi, Lycee de Bepanda, Lycee d’Akwa, and Lycee de New Bell, all in Douala, and Lycee Bilingue Molyko in Buea. The students who filled out the questionnaires were all students of the secondary/high schools of ages between 12 and 18 but the teachers were from schools all over Douala and Buea.

The exercise of filling out questionnaires was carried out in a group in respective classrooms to avoid having to explain words that were not understood to individual students over and over again. Most of the class teachers were present during the filling
out of questionnaires but the students were told to fill out exactly what they knew to be true. They were asked not to discuss their answers with each other so that they may be able to give personal and objective responses to questions. They were told that they did not have to disclose their identity or if they did, were going to be kept anonymous. This was in a bid to increase honesty from them.

A total of 16 trips were made to the five secondary/high schools, the 6th school being the one in which the researcher teaches, and therefore her workplace. That notwithstanding, dates still had to be made with colleagues of the same school so that they could keep their students in class and in check while the exercise was carried out. It was also because English language lesson periods had to be used to make the students have the feeling of discussing problems concerning the English lesson during the class period. The repeated trips to the other five schools were because the teachers were sometimes not ready to disrupt a lesson to allow for 30 minutes of questionnaire filling. Most of the teachers complained that they had a programme that they were supposed to cover and would not “waste time on other things” that did not concern their lessons directly. At other times it was because they had to conduct a test in the class and the students could not be allowed to carry on any other activity that was not programmed for that day. It was very strange how most of the teachers would not co-operate in a fellow teacher’s research efforts even when the objective was explained to them, showing how frustrating researching in Cameroon can be. Sometimes the class teacher was not available for one reason or the other and the students would not have anything to do with a strange teacher, especially one who asked them questions concerning their English lessons and in English.

The procedure allowed for 30 minutes of completing the questionnaire, which could otherwise have been done in 20 minutes. However, because most of what the researcher asked had to be explained to most students who did not understand, the time allowed for up to 30 minutes for every session. It was clearly stated that students could withdraw when they liked. However, when they found out that there was a chance to say what they thought they did not like about their English language lessons, and that what they said was not going to inculpate them, most of them consented to stay. The questionnaires were distributed to the students in their classrooms, and the questions gone through one after the other for further explanation of the meanings of some of them. At the end of 30 minutes they were collected. Students were always reminded of the need for
objectivity and were advised to ask any questions they had to the researcher and not to their classmates.

This process was carried out in all the 5 schools that were visited and in the 6th school which happens to be where the researcher works the exercise was conducted with the students of her classes in the different levels and those of her colleagues during their class hours. After collecting the filled in questionnaires some of the students indicated that they enjoyed the exercise since they are never given the opportunity to discuss what they like or do not like about their English language lessons. In fact no one ever asks them how they feel about their English lessons. They hoped that they would once in a while be given the opportunity to be able to make their views known concerning their language lessons and even the textbooks they use. A total of 350 student questionnaires were collected from all 6 schools. But for the task of having to explain to the students what some of the questions meant and the unavailability of some of their teachers when their classes needed to be used, the exercise with the students turned out to be much easier than with the teachers. Since there was an on-the-spot filling in and return of questionnaires a maximum number of questionnaires was filled out and returned by the students. In one or two occasions the same number that was given out to the students was not collected back because students withdrew from the exercise and would not hand back the questionnaires they collected. All in all, the response from the students was better than what was experienced trying to give out and collect questionnaires from teachers. It was realised that with a bit of discipline and patience, enough information could be collected from students when one needs to. It was also found out that the idea of doing something else other than their lessons took away the boredom the students feel during their lessons and most of them would rather take part in this exercise than sit in class for a whole lesson listening to their teachers. This exercise also emphasised the boredom seen in students during their language lessons since they were quite eager to do something else that is different from the routine of class work even though it was in English. It brought out the fact that the students will get involved and show an interest in the English language if a new variety of exercises are introduced into their lessons.
3.2.2 Teacher’s Questionnaires

A common problem with research on the teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Cameroon is that most studies are based exclusively on impressions made from observations by teachers. Some of these observations are put together haphazardly and conclusions drawn on them. This study however, tries to substantiate impressions from observations with quantitative questionnaires. It uses an empirical approach, the observations are systematic, and the results got from the study are replicable, worthy and dependable. There are about three situations in which English is taught as a foreign language in Cameroonian public schools. Teaching English as a foreign language to French speaking students in a bilingual secondary/high school in the Francophone part of the country, in a bilingual secondary/high school in the Anglophone part of the country and to a homogeneously Francophone secondary/high school in the Francophone part of the country. This researcher found out that there are no homogeneously Francophone state secondary/high schools in the Anglophone part of the country, which is also the case with homogeneously Anglophone state secondary/high schools in the Francophone part of the country. However, what is referred to as bilingual schools are two separate schools operating in the same campus. In these schools Francophone students study in French and learn English as a foreign language, while Anglophone students study in English and learn French as a foreign language. A maximum effort was made to gather information from teachers teaching in all these various types of schools including the teachers in private schools.

A sample of 120 questionnaires was printed out originally and distributed to teachers in most of the schools in Douala and one in Buea. It took a good number of trips to the various schools, talking over questions with either individual teachers or groups of teachers and assuring them it was a simple exercise of finding out what was thought could help their students and improve their teaching. Sometimes the heads of the English teaching departments had to be met to call their staff together so that they could be talked to as a group. In the first round of visits teachers were asked to fill in questionnaires and return them at their convenience. Out of a total of the first 100 questionnaires distributed, 38 were returned filled out. The rest were either not returned or returned uncompleted because the teachers did not have time to complete them or they feared their teaching was being challenged and therefore would not offer any information on the way their lessons
were carried out. This reaction came as a bit of a shock to the researcher because it was hoped that most teaching colleagues would be quite ready and willing to discuss their teaching problems or what they found interesting, albeit in questionnaires.

It was realised that most teachers thought it was inappropriate for another teacher to ask about their teaching techniques and their students’ reactions to them. They would rather be left alone to carry out their teaching in their own manner after all “most of the students show very little enthusiasm in learning the language” for which they could not be bothered. Some of them thought it would not change anything whether or not they answered the questions, since they have carried out the lessons that way for such a long time. They did not also think anything could change the kind of outlook the students have towards learning the language. A kind of resentment and resignation was observed among teachers and an inability to accept any changes to their usual way of doing things, a great hindrance to research. This researcher also wondered whether the teachers would react any differently if a non-teacher or a foreigner carried out this research.

Like the students’ questionnaires, the teachers were asked not to write their names on the questions to encourage honesty. Sometimes a member of staff who promised to hand the questionnaires to his/her colleagues collected them but some or none at all were ever returned. The handing of questionnaires to colleagues came in as a last resort since all the English teaching staff was hardly in school at the same time, and there was a possibility of one colleague crossing paths with another in the course of the week. It was realised that enough filled-in questionnaires might never be got back if other teachers kept receiving them to hand to their colleagues who were not there when the researcher came around. To make the collection more efficient teachers were contacted directly and in some schools any teachers who were due to have any lessons were waited for the whole day so that the completed questionnaires could be collected afterwards. Some other teachers promised to fill in the questionnaires at their leisure, which was obliged but out of the next 100 questionnaires given out 52 were got back. So a total of 90 questionnaires were returned from the lot that was printed out. The return rate was however encouraging in spite of the inconveniences. Some of the questionnaires were returned uncompleted and some were never returned.

Black (1999) confirms that a major challenge with surveys is to succeed in getting the subjects to return the questionnaires. He notes that all sorts of irrelevant and virtually random reasons that would not affect the validity of a study may contribute to non-
returns. At least it cannot be said that non-returns in this study were due to some annoying aspect of the questionnaire. This feedback confirmed the fact that carrying out a research anywhere, but most especially in the developing world has its problems. Schmied (1991:163) acknowledges that “it is very difficult to reach the high standards that have been set by recent sociolinguistic research in Britain or the USA”. “Unfortunately, in the social sciences the attempts at understanding human actions and interactions are often based on observations and data collection in relatively less well-controlled conditions. Human beings are notoriously uncooperative subjects” (Black 1999:7). This non-co-operation was greatly felt in the course of this research especially in dealing with the teachers and even the researcher’s own colleagues as subjects. Black (ibid.) also asserts that sufficiently rigorous research to support theories tends to be very demanding, requiring great ingenuity, deep insight into the problem, and imaginative ways of controlling the numerous variables that ultimately impinge on the situation being investigated. In the course of this research it was realised that teachers were less willing to give out information than their students were, even when this information was not threatening to them in any way. It also shows how unused to questionnaires or interviews the Cameroonian population is. There is also a general nonchalance among the Cameroonian teachers who think no amount of research can better the teaching life in Cameroon and most of them would rather be left alone than be made to answer questions related to their teaching.

3.2.3 **Textbooks**

Effective teaching requires that instructional material and classroom activities reflect not only the culture of the target language but also the learner’s own culture, the life experiences that students come across everyday at school and in the society in which they live. Textbooks that are used in schools for teaching/learning of English as a foreign language should provide these combined experiences. They are a major, and in most cases, the main resource for the teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Cameroon given the major absence of any other teaching aids and/or a sheer lack of teacher initiative or teacher unwillingness to use any. Textbooks are the most widely used source of instruction and sometimes the main one, and a tool on which most Cameroonian teachers depend. They can therefore have a great influence and dominate the manner in
which teaching is conducted and on the learners. This seems to be the case however, with most African schools. According to Katonyala (1998:1) writing about textbooks in Namibia,

one of the main challenges facing Namibian teachers – especially those from marginalised contexts – is the dependency on textbooks. This is a legacy from our colonial past and the education system of that time. There are still some teachers in Namibia who follow textbooks slavishly. They are unable to reject something in a textbook and find something else to replace it with in order to meet their learners’ needs and interests. They lack skills to interpret the syllabus objectives and adapt material appropriately.

Sadly enough what Kantonyala is describing about the Namibian teacher is common in most schools in the developing world. Since textbooks are the only resource for teaching, they should be designed or revised to improve on the teaching carried out by those teachers who lack the use of their own initiative. Textbooks have the power to influence teaching either negatively or positively and they provide the approach for the interaction between the students and the teachers. They need to be revised therefore, to include a more dynamic approach to teaching and techniques that can help boost the learners’ enthusiasm. Textbooks should be designed or revised so that they not only enrich the learners’ knowledge of the culture of the target language, but can also improve their understanding of the culture of their immediate environment. “The best teachers always take a few calculated risks in the classroom, trying out new activities here and there” (Brown 2000:40). If the teacher lacks the initiative to take the risks however, the teaching will remain static and uninspiring unless it has the basic support and guidance from the textbook he/she uses.

The content of instructional material is very important in language teaching/learning since it is the instructional material that helps shape the students’ attitudes towards the language that they are learning. However, much more than the content of the instructional material is the approach with which this material is dispensed. The approach determines the way the lesson is carried out by the teacher. Some textbooks provide for a convenient teaching approach and a guide to the way the textbooks should be used and therefore help the teacher in carrying out the lessons conveniently. Some other textbooks do not provide for any teaching approach and so the teacher is expected to rely on, and use his own initiative in carrying out the teaching. However, even in textbooks where a particular approach is provided for, we find that this approach may not be suitable for teaching a particular kind of student and in a particular environment. This is the reason why textbooks that are used in Cameroonian schools should be examined to
find out if there is provision for the use of indigenous techniques of communication that can help raise the students’ enthusiasm in learning the language.

In addition to analysing the questionnaires therefore, the textbooks that are used in Cameroonian public schools are going to be analysed. Textbooks for three levels will be analysed to find out if they contain instances of the use of indigenous techniques of communication. According to Doye (1999: 93),

the central didactic issue of all educational planning is the selection of appropriate contents. The concept of appropriateness has two components: the selected contents must be appropriate to the educational purpose and appropriate to the learner. Both conditions are essential for the success of the learning process in question.

In relation to this study, the teaching techniques that are evoked in the textbooks will be brought out to show that there are, or there are no instances of the use of indigenous techniques of communication. This research tries to prove the fact that indigenous techniques of communication if used in the language classroom could help raise the enthusiasm of the learner of English as a foreign language, by making him/her more responsive and participative in the learning process. If these techniques are proved to be absent from the textbooks there will be a recommendation for their institution, especially if the study proves the fact that their use is essential in Cameroonian schools.

3.3 Data Processing and Analysis

Data analysis by computer offers the advantages of being able to construct frequency counts, tables and charts quickly and easily once the mechanics of operating the computer have been learned (Hall & Hall 1996). The data from these questionnaires was processed using the Statistics Programme for Social Sciences (SPSS), which is one of the most widely used in the social sciences and easy to operate. The data entry took a longer than normal time since using the programme had to be learned at the same time. The data files were designed and labelled in the format required by the package and then the package’s statistical routines were applied to them. The first part of the SPSS control file, that is, the command which controls an SPSS analysis gives the number, names, and card/column location of the variables, the location and medium of the data set, number of cases, values to be regarded as missing, and any descriptive labels to be attached to the output. Following the data descriptive cards, are the procedure cards that specify the
actual statistical analysis required by the user (Dooley 1984:363-364). The computation of even the very elaborate statistics then required no more commands than naming the desired analysis. With this research, this was relatively easier to carry out once the data had been properly entered. The inferential statistic for generalising from sample to a wider range in testing hypotheses and for deciding whether the data is consistent with the research prediction was also used. The statistic obtained from this data will be classified and analysed in the next chapter.
Chapter 4  Analysis of Students’ Questionnaires

4.1  Students’ Reactions to English language lessons

Quite a lot has been written on the attitude of the Cameroonian learner of English as a foreign language and most of the writings conclude with the fact that the learner has little or no motivation or enthusiasm to learn. (Tinku 1987, Tenjoh Okwen 1989, Penn Tamba 1990, Sibarah 1999, Simo Bobda 1997, Formunjang 1997, Nsen 1997). A brief look at the behaviour of students towards their language lessons is therefore necessary to confirm or contradict these findings and to find out, as a continuation from where the other researchers stopped, the reasons for this behaviour in relation to the teaching techniques. We are going to check this attitude against the background of the students’ use of the English language both at home and in school, the reasons they advance for learning English and the contributions they think English makes to their official exams. Their opinions about their English language teachers, their relationship with these teachers and their opinions about their English language lessons will also contribute towards analysing this behaviour. We are also going to look at the students’ reactions to the use of indigenous techniques of communication, for those whose teachers practice the use of these techniques or simply their attitude towards these techniques if they were to be introduced in their lessons. These will help us find out if their lack of enthusiasm towards the learning of the English language is due to the techniques that are used in teaching them or due to a general disinterestedness. The results from these analyses will provide grounds for the recommendations of innovative techniques in language teaching/learning in Cameroon.

4.2  Reasons advanced by students for learning English as a foreign language

There are a lot of reasons why Cameroonian students learn English as a foreign language among which is the principal one that Cameroon is a bilingual country and every educated person in Cameroon must try to communicate in both English and French, the two official languages. There is also the most obvious reason that English is a subject in the school curriculum so students are obliged to learn it to pass their examinations. To some this is the only reason why English is, and should be learned. English language
learning is therefore like an obligation to some of these students and defiance for this obligation sometimes manifests itself in their behaviour towards their lessons. Some other students learn English because they think it gives them a good chance of having a good job after leaving school instead of if they knew only the French language in a country where one is officially expected to communicate in two languages. Yet other students in Cameroon learn English because they think it helps them if they have to further their studies abroad, especially in an English speaking country or any other country for that matter, English language being the world’s lingua franca.

In the opinions of 350 students’ questioned, 23 students (6.6%) learn English so that they can further their education in an English speaking country. 84 (24%) students learn English to pass their examinations in school and 241 students (68.9%) learn English to become bilingual and be able to get a good job in future as shown in table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students’ Reasons for learning English</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To further my education</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To pass my exams.</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be bilingual and get a good job.</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>69.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>99.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results in table 3 show that most students prefer to learn English for communicative purposes if they are to use this language in their jobs later in life. We find that the majority of students questioned 241(68.9%), indicate that they are learning English to become bilingual and get a good job in future. Whether this job seeking is in or out of Cameroon, English language teaching/learning in Cameroonian schools could use a more communicative and lifelike approach to prepare these students for life outside the classroom. This should be different from the everyday structural teaching that prepares students for passing exams or just having a certificate in English. Even the students whose purpose for learning English is to further their studies abroad would be able to benefit from this, the goal of learning a language generally being to be able to communicate in it. However, although a majority of the students indicate that they learn English because they want to use it later in life, we find that there is very little practice of
the use of the English language among these students while still in school. A closer look at the use of English in various situations (at home, with friends in and out of school) reveals this.

4.2.1 **Students’ use of the English language at home and in school**

It is said that practice makes perfect and for more motivation to carry on with the practice. The use of the English language by the Francophone learner of English in Cameroon is quite below expectation although this is principally due to the fact that Francophones form a majority of the Cameroonian population and do not therefore need English much for communication. However, even for those who are interested in the language, Cameroon foreign language teaching has a reputation for producing less than willing and less than competent speakers of the English language. This can be seen from the amount of practice in the use of the language that the learners make in or out of their learning environment. Very few of the students questioned practice using the language either in or out of school, which in turn does not help to increase their motivation to learn the language although most of them declare that they are learning English for future use in the society. 51.4% of the students questioned speak French, 33.7% speak their mother tongue, 10.9% speak Pidgin English and only a small number of 14 students (4%)\(^2\) indicate that they speak English in their homes. These 14 students could all come from the bilingual school in the Anglophone part of Cameroon, could be children from mixed families of Anglophone and Francophone parents or could simply come from families that live in the Anglophone part of Cameroon and are obliged to use the English language for regular communication. These results are shown in table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>51.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pidgin</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^2\) Even this percentage is doubtful since it is generally known that not up to 2% of Francophone Cameroonians speak English in their homes. This kind of response does not reflect reality which is characteristic of students whom even when questionnaires are anonymous, tend to present the most positive of themselves.
The results in table 4 are not surprising since most Cameroonian have to contend with the use of more than one mode of communication especially in some homes where priority is always given to the use of the mother tongue. However, we would expect that practice with the use of the English language would be different in schools where English and French are supposed to be the academic languages and are therefore expected to be used more often in the school campus. This is not, however, the case even in bilingual schools where Anglophone and Francophone students study in the same campus. This research, as seen in table 5, shows that in school\(^3\), 79.1% of students questioned speak French with their friends, 3.1% speak Cameroonian languages and 17.7% speak English. We find that a vast majority of students, 288 (79%), communicate in their second language, French, in school which leaves them with very little chance of using the English language. The minority of 11 students (3.1%), among the 350 students questioned, who communicate with their friends in English could be the ones who have Anglophone friends, live among Anglophones, have one Anglophone parent or those who have a very strong impetus to communicate in the language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language spoken by students with friends in school</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>79.1</td>
<td>79.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroonian language</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>03.1</td>
<td>03.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 gives us strong indications that there exists very little practice with the English language even in the school campuses where it is taught. The question is whether this is due to the poor reception of the language in class or just a general nonchalance towards the English language given the fact that only a minority of the Cameroonian population speaks English.

\(^3\) By “in school” we are referring to the school campus, or for those students who live in the boarding house, the period during the school year when they are there.
The situation is even worse when we look at the use of the English language by students out of school. There is a great difference in the language spoken by the students with their friends out of school because of the use of the Pidgin English whose use though banned from all school premises, is a lingua Franca in Cameroon. As seen in table 6 therefore, out of school, 40.9% of the 350 students questioned in this research speak French, 10.6%\(^4\) speaks English, 10.9% speaks the Cameroonian language and 27.7% speak Pidgin English with their friends.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroonian Language</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pidgin</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The use of Pidgin English out of school overshadows the use of the English language which, out of school in Cameroon, is used only in official places and in very official situations. The use of Pidgin English dominates all walks of life in the Cameroonian society and most students would rather use it, especially out of school, than use the English language. It cannot be concluded that all the students speak French out of school especially for those students in the English speaking part of the country like Buea. The statistics show that a good number of students (132) speak pidgin out of school, the majority of who will be in schools in the English speaking part of the country like Buea. Since there is little use of the English language for communication both in and out of school there is the tendency for students to neglect the practice of the use of the language and to communicate less in it. This leads the students to taking very little interest in learning the language, except in cases where the teaching is exceptionally motivating. In trying to find out how enthusiastic and motivating the present teaching is to students we

\(^4\) This percentage also hardly reflects reality as observed among young Francophone Cameroonians and it is this researcher’s observation that some respondents may have confused the use of Pidgin English with the use of the English language despite all the explanations from the researcher.
are going to examine first their opinions about their lessons and their language teachers, and then the contribution they think English makes to their official examinations.

4.2.2 Students’ Opinion about English language lessons

Some researchers report a “disquieting, nonchalant, and uncaring attitude towards learning English” (Sibarah 1999) in Cameroon by Francophone students. Sampled student opinions about English language lessons show that a percentage of 25.1 find their lessons interesting. This percentage comes from 88 students of a total number of 350, which is relatively low. 41 students offered no opinion and they form a percentage of 11.7%. 16.6% think their lessons are difficult to assess and an alarming number of 163 (66.6%) students out of the 350 questioned find their lessons boring as shown in table 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interesting</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>25.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boring</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>46.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult to assess</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Opinion</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This confirms the negative reaction to English language learning observed among learners of English as a foreign language in Cameroon. Language learning should be fun and enjoyable. However, if the majority of students find their lessons boring then there must be something wrong with the way the lessons are conducted to bring about this reaction. The students who find their lessons difficult to assess could be the same ones who do not find anything positive in their lessons but do not want to pronounce them negative. What is suggested here is that a large number of students in Cameroon (as seen from the research) find their lessons uninteresting and therefore their nonchalant attitude towards the lessons. Put together, the number of students who find their lessons difficult to assess and those who do not have any opinion far outnumber the ones who find their lessons interesting. If this number is added to the ones who find their lessons outright boring, the balance weighs on the negative. They form a large percentage of 74.9. We should therefore be concerned with the behaviour of students towards the learning of English as a foreign language in Cameroon and look for means to alleviate the boredom
they find with their language lessons. The question we may like to ask is whether the majority of students find these lessons boring because of their teachers’ teaching methods or because the teaching of English in these schools is geared principally towards the students’ passing exams and obtaining a certificate in English. We would also like to find out what contribution the students think English makes to their official examinations and if they find the lessons boring because the teaching is probably geared principally towards examination success than on linguistic fluency.

4.2.3 The contribution English makes to official Exams

Some of the students questioned in this research indicate that they learn English to pass their examinations in school (see 4.2 above). This may also imply that the students are taught the English language with focus on examination success. The government policy on Education shows that every French-speaking Cameroonian student is obliged to learn English as a foreign language as part of the school curriculum and to write examinations at the end of each course. The question is whether the objectives for teaching the students and the objectives for the students learning the language are the same. A difference in objectives may see the teachers teaching for one reason and the students learning for another reason. This may even promote the use of a particular teaching technique, which may not be able to produce the desired results. It may also produce a clash in requirements of both the teaching and the exam syllabus. As seen in table 8, there are students who find that the contribution English makes to their official examinations is very insignificant. 22.3% of the students questioned think this way while 26.6% think it makes very little significance. Put together 48.9% of the students questioned think the contribution English makes to their exams is insignificant, very little significance and insignificant not having a great difference from the point of view of this research. On the other hand, 16.6% think English makes a significant contribution to the results in their official examinations and 11.1% think the contribution is much. 27.7% of the students therefore think English plays a positive part to their exam results.

5 “Very significant” and “much” do not have a great difference here and the researcher regrets their presentation in this way. However, respondents were advised to consider “very significant” as more intense than “much”
Table 6  The contribution that English makes to Official exams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very significant</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>34.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insignificant</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>76.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the purpose of teaching English in Cameroon is to make the students pass their examinations, then the objective seems to lose its value seeing that only a small number of students think English makes a positive contribution to their examination results.

Table 8 shows the responses from a total of 268 students (70.9%). These responses are probably only from the students who are in the official examination classes, or those who have already had to take official examinations given that this research was carried out in a cross section of classes, from “Sixième” to “Terminale” in the secondary/high schools. 23.4% therefore indicates the percentage number of students who may not have had to do any official examinations and therefore could not offer any opinion on the question. In any case, we find a strong indication that the contribution of English in the official examinations is not very significant and therefore students who learn English for examination purposes could do without it. This also reaffirms the fact that a majority of the students will rather learn English for future use in society instead of just for passing their examinations. This result brings in the contribution that this research wants to make to English language teaching/learning in Cameroon. It has been realised that the teaching of English in Cameroonian schools could be geared to helping learners increase their proficiency in communication instead of just dwelling on their passing examinations in school and obtaining a certificate. English language teaching/learning could be modelled on everyday life experiences around the learner’s environment to make it more interesting and prepare students for its future use. This may even attract more students to learning the language instead of if it was done solely for academic purposes.

To further find out what students’ reaction to the learning of English is, they were asked how they would feel if English language was eliminated from their official exams.
As seen in table 9, 18.6% indicated they would be unhappy and 22.3% that they would be indifferent. 23.4% said that they would be happy to have English eliminated from their official examinations and 125 students (35.7%) said they would be very happy. These number totals up to 207(59.1%) of the students questioned who would not regret if English language was eliminated from their official examinations. If we consider the fact that 241 or 68.9% (see table 1), who were questioned had previously indicated that they learn English to become bilingual and be able to get a good job, then we can understand why these students would not mind if English is not tested in their official examinations. It means that the students would just be happy learning English to be able to communicate in it and not for obtaining a certificate. It also means as previously indicated, that English language teaching should be geared towards more communicative teaching/learning and therefore would also use a communicative rather than only the structural approach. This should have as its principal but not its sole aim, the teaching of students for linguistic fluency and usefulness in society. When students find their lessons interesting they may be motivated to learn the English language more and later feel enthusiastic about acquiring a certificate in it. The teaching of English should therefore take into consideration the use of indigenous techniques. These could be incorporated into the communicative and structural approaches to improve not only on the students’ linguistic fluency but also his/her prospects of fulfilling an academic requirement in the form of obtaining a certificate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Happy</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indifferent</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhappy</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 shows that all the students questioned, including those who are yet to do any official examinations and who did not indicate what contribution English makes to their official exams, think they will like to see English language eliminated from their official examinations. This is not strange if we know that only 24% of the students questioned, (see table 3) indicated that they were studying English to pass their exams.
We can see from this result that most students will like to learn the English language if it is not strictly associated with passing examinations in schools or having an academic qualification. English language teaching could therefore be geared towards making the students more communicative and using situations that the students will eventually face when they have to use the language in their future lives outside the school. Indigenous techniques of communication may be a solution to the kind of solely structural teaching that the students are getting presently which is geared strictly for examination success in English.

4.2.4 Reasons for students’ choice in 4.2.3

In 4.2.3 students were asked how they would feel if English language was eliminated from their official examinations. Students gave different opinions and advanced a good numbers of reasons for choosing or not to have English eliminated from their official examinations. As seen in table 10, 20.3% of the students indicated that they liked English probably because of the positive reasons advanced for learning English in table 3 above. 21.7% (76 students) said it was because English is the official language in Cameroon, 15.7% said it was because English is an international language. This may be part of the number that would not like to have English eliminated from their official exams. However, a large percentage of 42.3 (148 students) said they would like to see English eliminated because it reduces their total grade in the official exams.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 8 Reasons for Students’ Choice in 4.2.3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English is the official language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English is an international language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English reduces my total grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From what is seen in table 10, a good number of students probably cringe from learning English because they think it contributes to their failure in examinations. The question is whether these students will react positively if they were going to be taught
English not just for academic purposes or for passing examinations but for practical everyday use. Of course, examinations cannot be completely ruled out from the school curricular and the students know that. However, suppose these students were made to see English language as a future tool in their working lives instead of a certificate, will their reaction be any different? The answer lies in the way language classes are conducted and the feeling the students have if they find that the teaching is only geared towards examinations success and obtaining a certificate and not for future practical use in the society.

A good number of extra reasons where advanced by students for wanting or not wanting to see English eliminated from the official examinations. Some students were indifferent while others thought that even if English were eliminated from their official examinations they would have to learn it to use it in future. English is spoken all over the world and they will want to learn to speak it. The extra reasons advanced by the students include the following:

“Because English is an international language and a gateway to the world, English is important to me not just for school purposes”. “English is not only the official language of my country, it is the language of world communication and I want to be part of that world communication”.

“Eliminating English from the official examinations will encourage students to get lazy in learning the language which I think every Cameroonian should know”. “English is important in my future life because it is the language of my future career so even if it is eliminated from the exams I will still learn it”.

“Our country is bilingual and we have an added advantage of knowing a second official language. Also because English is the language that will help me in future, I have to learn it now even if I don’t pass it in the exams”.

“Because English is a famous language it is very important to speak it, and to be able to use it in our society”. “I am not learning English only to pass my examinations. I want to know how to speak English and use it in my work in future”.

“Parce que dans le monde d’aujourd’hui, l’anglais est l’une des langues la plus parler et il est important pour moi et pour ma carrière”(Because English is the most spoken language in the world today and it is important for me and for my career). “J’aime l’anglais et je veux connaître causer l’anglais”(I like English and I will like to know how to speak it).
“I am not learning English only to pass my exams. I want to know how to speak English and be able to integrate with the people who speak English. Also my country is bilingual and I may have to work in the Anglophone side of the country. It is very necessary to speak with the people”.

These reasons and more were advanced by students who think they are not learning English only for purposes of passing their examinations. Most of them would love to communicate in the language and to use it in future.

On the other hand the students who thought English should be eliminated from their official exams advanced these extra reasons.

“Because I am not good in English and English reduces my grade in exams”. “English is a difficult subject and I don’t understand it. In fact I don’t like English much, especially the grammar”.

“I like English but I never get a good mark in the subject, because English grammar and vocabulary are difficult to understand”. “English is not my favourite subject and I don’t like it. It is a very uninteresting part of my official examinations”.

“Parce que l’anglais est difficile et ca diminue les points aux examens officiels. J’ai toujours la sous moyenne, car je ne comprendre pas l’anglais mais j’aimerai bien parler”(Because English is difficult and reduces my grade in official exams. My grade is always below average since I don’t understand English but I will like to speak it.)

“I like and I don’t like English because I want to learn to speak it but English “matiere” reduces my “points” in the “examen officiel”.

“Parce qu’on’a pas faire l’anglais a l’ecole primaire, et l’anglais est difficile aux examens officiels”(Because we did not learn English at the primary level and English is difficult in the official exams).

“Because I have always had irregular and wicked English language teachers since I started learning English. They only give us homework and I cannot speak English”.

These extra reasons advanced by the students indicate that the lot of them will like to learn to speak English if the teaching is geared towards it. It also indicates that the lot of them cringe from learning the language because it is geared strictly towards passing examinations and obtaining a certificate which they end up not getting.
4.2.5 **Students’ opinion about and relationship with their teachers**

Students’ behaviour towards their language lessons could also be analysed from the view they hold of their language teachers. If the students consider a teacher kind and friendly there is likelihood that they will take an interest in his/her lessons. The teacher could have won their confidence either from the techniques he uses to teach the lesson or his/her friendliness with the students, the conditions under which all the teachers teach being equal. Students have different ways of viewing a teacher depending on what relationship he has with them. As seen in table 11, out of the 350 students questioned about their opinion and relationship with their language teachers, 4.9% of the students had an intimate relationship with their teachers, 11.7% found their teachers unfriendly and 75.1% (263 students) said their teachers were friendly. The number that has a positive view on their teachers is encouraging and may prove the fact that the students have some confidence in their teachers and may take a likeness to the subject if the teaching is improved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very kind</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kind</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>45.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wicked</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>350</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Along the same lines, 18.9% of the students questioned find their teachers very kind, 25.7% find them kind, 10.3% find them wicked and an encouraging 45% find them patient. Students view their teachers differently and have different opinions about them. The students who find their teachers wicked may be the ones who see nothing positive related to his person, his teaching or the lesson as a whole. On the other hand, the students who think that their teachers are kind and patient may be the ones who have some confidence in the personality of the teachers, a positive view to the lesson they are

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6 Intimacy with teachers is seen in situations where the students have a relationship with the teacher outside the class. The teacher may be a home teacher, a family friend or a parent which variables are considered to influence the student’s likeness for the subject.
teaching and consider them their friend. This kind of outlook enhances the learning of a language and together with good teaching techniques may produce very enriching results. It is, however, left for the teachers to win their students’ confidence and friendship to be able to produce these enriching results. This depends on the kind of techniques they use to teach their lessons and how motivating they are to the students.

4.3. **Students’ assessment of the use of indigenous techniques**

Teaching of English as a foreign language can undergo some indigenization, where like the English language itself, it is adopted for the wider range of functions within the recipient community. Indigenization, localisation, contextualisation, or nativisation is the phenomenon whereby a new variety of English becomes distinct from the current native variety and from all local varieties elsewhere (Chumbow and Bobda 1996). Indigenization could therefore be applied to the teaching/learning of English as a foreign language. If English language is increasingly used among nonnative speakers (Nunan 1987) it goes without saying that its learning could be geared towards its use in a particular learning society. It does not completely wipe out the use of this language in the target language community and does not completely do away with the target language norms. However, it could take into consideration the need for its use in the learner’s immediate society. Indigenous techniques could therefore be introduced into English language teaching/learning to help improve on the enthusiasm of the learner and make him/her more useful in his/her society. English language teaching uses a variety of techniques. As mentioned in 1.3 above, a good number of teaching methods have over the years been founded and discarded for new ones. Over the last few years there has been a strong movement from the highly structured, teacher-centred, grammar-based teaching in favour of task-oriented, communicatively based, learner-centred teaching, often including the use of certain “humanistic” approaches (Brown 2001). According to Byram, E-Sarries and Taylor (1990:X111)

> Whereas the purpose of language teaching used to be to equip pupils with the ability to read a foreign literature and to analyze and write in a foreign language, the aims are now predominantly to provide them with the competence to speak and otherwise communicate for practical purposes with native and nonnative speakers of the language.

> According to David Nunan (1987), it has become harder to draw geographical boundaries around English, and it must be said, even harder to draw boundaries around
teaching methods imported from the strictly English language societies. Still according to Nunan (ibid.), increasing communication in English between non-native speakers calls for the establishment of a third culture in which to “negotiate respectfully their different ways of viewing life and human interaction”. This is particularly important in relation to the teaching of English. Since English language has more second/foreign language speakers than any other language whom far outnumber the native speakers, communication in English is increasingly taking place between non-native speakers (ibid.). English language teaching needs to be adapted to the various societies in which it is used.

Indigenous techniques of communication can therefore be integrated into the communicative teaching method to make language learning more productive and more useful in the society in which it is learned. Due to this conviction, students were questioned in relation to their teachers’ use of some indigenous techniques of communication for the teaching of English. The aim was to find out if their teachers ever use these techniques and their reactions to them. The techniques include role-play, singing, the telling of folktales, riddles and proverbs.

4.3.1. **Teachers’ use of drama or role-play**

The goal of learning a language for most of the students questioned is to become bilingual in English and French and to get a good job in future (see 4.1). This means they should be able to take part in activities in the society as literate members who have the ability to communicate effectively in their workplaces and in other spheres of life. To be able to carry out this communicative function in their society in future, these students need to rehearse life experiences in the classroom in their present learning of English. “It is believed that language teaching structures are made more responsive to the needs, characteristics and expectations of learners if learners are encouraged to play an active role in their learning” (Wenden 1991:7). Playing an active role will mean taking part in their lessons and playing the roles they find themselves in. Role-play (drama) is a means of communication and a natural means of learning that is principally used to teach certain aspects of social life. Dramatising helps in future interaction in society since with drama communication is carried out through different means but most especially through the use of dialogue and gestures like one will do in normal day-to-day life.
Drama can bridge the gap between the classroom and the society out of class. This technique fulfils the desire to explore the practical means by which a qualitatively enhanced involvement of learners in their language learning maybe realised in a day-to-day teaching practice. Because the classroom is an apprenticeship for later authentic communication, dramatisation should ensure that all classroom communication is as genuine as possible. Students must be given the opportunity to react in the target language to situations that they would realistically encounter in the various social settings (George Duquette 1995). The use of the target language and the social settings are important in that the students live the experiences of their environment in the social settings and have the opportunity to practice the language they are learning and which they are bound to use in future. This is potentially fruitful as a teaching technique but we need to find out whether this practice is carried out in the Cameroonian English language classroom.

Students’ opinions were asked about the use of drama or role-play in class. The results got are shown in table 12. 47 students out of the 350 questioned said it makes the class noisy. These form a percentage of 13.4. 39 students (11.1%) think drama or role-play is boring. Drama or role-play in class involves activities which give the student an opportunity to use his/her own personality in creating the material on what the language lesson is based. These activities draw on the natural ability of every person to imitate, mimic and express him/herself through gesture. They draw, too, on his/her imagination and memory, and on his/her natural capacity to bring to life parts of his/her past experience that might never otherwise emerge (Alan and Alan 1979:1).

When students find dramatic activities in class boring, it may either be due to the way the activities are conducted by the teacher, or the inability to, or the unwillingness of the students to express themselves through gesture. However, because most dramatic activities are fun, when students find them boring it maybe generally because of the way the teacher handles them.

As seen in table 12, some students think drama or role-play makes them understand the lesson better. This number forms 29.1% of the students questioned which shows that drama activities are carried out in some lessons and by some teachers in some schools. Some of the students who find drama activities boring and noisy may therefore

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7 Noisy is a situation in class where the students make inorderly noise that is not beneficial to the rest of the class and does not contribute positively to the lesson.
be part of this group whose teachers carry out drama activities in class. Out of the 350 students questioned 162 or 46.3% indicate that their teachers do not carry out any drama or role-play activities in class.

Table 10  Students’ Opinion about Role-play or drama

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Makes the class noisy</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boring</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes me understand the lesson better</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He/She never uses role-play</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>46.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results in table 12 indicate that in spite of the potential benefits of using drama in class there are still a lot of teachers in Cameroonian schools who do not use this technique. We would, therefore, like to find out whether this technique is not used because the teachers do no know about it or whether they just ignore its potential benefits. Could it also be that this activity is not recommended in the textbooks used in schools or because of some other inconvenience from the class itself given the large-size classes and the kind of classrooms that are found in Cameroonian schools. These questions are going to be answered when we look at what the teachers have to say, and what the textbooks recommend. However, we need to find out about the use of some other indigenous techniques like songs, folktales, riddles and proverbs in English language lessons.

4.3.2. The use of songs

Music has been a useful tool of communication for thousands of years. “From traditions handed down through songs and dance, to popular songs that reflect current culture, music is an integral part of our lives. Music is present in the human experience from birth to death, representing every facet of our emotions. Music has also been shown to be a viable tool across the curriculum, including the area of foreign language instruction” (Simpson and Redmond 2002:1). The benefits of learning a language through the use of songs are abundant. Songs create a good atmosphere in class and students look at it as part of entertainment rather than work. Looking at the use of songs from the
indigenous Cameroonian background point of view, songs play many a role in the society. Children learn many new words in their first languages through songs, most of whose meanings they only come to find out later. In the Cameroonian society, people sing during work to relieve the strain and make it enjoyable. This situation could be transferred into the English language classroom where songs could be used not only to teach a language lesson but also to make the lesson enjoyable and like work, help to relieve the strain that accompanies it.

Songs are suitable for all ages and people sing at all ages. They may either be songs translated from the first language to give them an indigenous touch or songs composed for the purpose of using to teach a foreign language in a Cameroonian classroom. “[…] Music connects students to the world beyond the classroom, serving as a cultural enrichment while providing opportunities for comparison and contrast” (Simpson and Redmond 2002: 1). Songs help to build confidence in the learner. They give learners who are afraid to speak in class for fear of making errors the opportunity to do so, since attention is not paid to a single individual during singing. Songs are memorable and like in his “The Song Stuck in my Head Phenomenon” Murphy (1992:6) thinks songs “last long in our short- and long-term memory and sometimes surprise us, popping in our unconsciousness even long after we stopped consciously repeating them.” There are therefore a lot of benefits from using songs in a language class. We are going to find out if this technique is used in the Cameroonian classroom and how the students react to it.

As shown in table 13, out of the 350 students that were questioned, 39 students (11.1%) indicate that their teachers use songs sometimes and 106 students (30.3%) indicate that their teachers use songs occasionally. However, a large proportion of the students, 205 representing 58.6% indicate that their teachers never use songs in teaching them.

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8 “Sometimes” was explained to mean about once in every two weeks. The reason for this timing was because the researcher happens to be a state schoolteacher who uses the same text like the students in which the use of songs is hardly recommended. It was thought that a teacher who practices the use of songs in his lessons could do it at least once in every two weeks when he/she can cover a unit of the prescribed text.

9 Occasionally was explained to mean about once or twice a term for the same reasons explained in 8 above.
Table 11 Frequency in the use of songs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>58.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We find that the majority of English language teachers in Cameroonian schools neglect an ordinary but useful tool in language teaching. Ordinary because songs that could be used for language teaching purposes abound in the Cameroonian society and a teacher can come up with his/her own repertoire even if the use of songs is not recommended in the textbooks. Most of the students who indicate that their teachers sometimes use songs in class come from the junior secondary. It is common knowledge that teachers always reserve singing of songs and storytelling for the junior secondary classes because they consider it a junior secondary or primary school teaching activity although songs are beneficial even to adult learners. Songs could therefore be given the place they deserve in language teaching/learning and seeing the enormous potential they have as a teaching technique, their use could be enforced in Cameroonian secondary/high schools for the teaching/learning of English as a Foreign language.

Students were also asked how they react when their teachers teach a song in class or use a song to teach. The number of reactions outnumbered the number of students who in the first part indicated that their teachers use songs in class (see table 13). This may mean that although all the students do not have teachers who use songs presently to teach, some of them could have had lessons with songs at one time or another in the course of their language learning, which they probably miss. As seen in table 14, 117 students (33.4%) indicate that they are happy and sing along with their teachers. 49 students (14.0%) said singing made the class noisy and made them forget the “real” lesson. Music is one of the teaching/learning activities that can be carried out in class to help build the confidence of the learners who in turn will develop some confidence in the teacher. This has to take place however, in a friendly though strict atmosphere. The students who find singing noisy need to have this confidence built in them. Table 14 shows the learners’ reactions.
### Table 12  Students’ reactions to the use of songs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’m happy and sing along with the teacher</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>70.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They make the class noisy and make me forget the ‘real’ lesson</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not interested in songs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is interesting to note that none of the students indicate that they are not interested in songs in their English lessons. This shows that most of the students will be happy to have songs during their English lessons, including the ones that find singing distracting, if the songs are properly presented. Proper presentation is necessary for the students who think that singing makes the class noisy and makes them forget the “real” lesson. Presenting songs first like a fun activity and then a lesson could help students to see the benefits of learning English language through songs. The singing class could also do with a lot of order and control and this needs the teacher’s strictness without necessarily being high-handed. It goes without saying that the teacher whose class has fun wins the confidence of the students and can therefore control them easily. This data had 184 missing entries that probably come from the students whose teachers never teach with songs. This number forms 52.6% of the students questioned and the majority, which indicates that there exists a lot of teachers out there in Cameroonian schools whose students do not have the benefit of enjoying the learning of English through the use of songs. Little wonder then that some of these students find English language learning boring and adopt a negative attitude in general towards learning it.

### 4.3.3 The Use of Folktales

Folktales are generally short narratives, which come from a group of people and do not have a single author. They are stories handed down from generation to generation so every version comes out differently from what was previously told. African folktales often describe stages in life like birth, initiation, courtship, marriage, and death. They also describe work and entertainment. Folktales convey folk wisdom and help people to
understand human nature and behaviour. They criticise common social attitudes, traditions, or behaviours. They are rich materials for language teaching because they are closer to oral communication, which most students would like to practice (Smith 2003). Some authors, (Kachru 1986 and Talib 1992), suggest that non-western literatures written in English have the potential to form a valuable resource for the language classroom.

Folktales make a good source of local literature for the teaching of a foreign language and the teaching of the culture from which they emanate. They relate to the student’s background and provide a motivational and creative spark in the learner. Folktales could be used to give students listening and speaking practice and why not cultural knowledge while delighting their imaginations. They are filled with cultural wisdom and they reflect the diverse cultural backgrounds of all the students in the classroom. They could help develop language skills through storytelling, and raise a more critical awareness of some of the cultural assumptions embedded in the narratives while increasing the potential for learning a foreign language.

4.3.3.1 Frequency in the use of folktales

To find out about the use of folktales in the teaching of English in Cameroonian schools, students were asked if their teachers ever tell folktales in class and the frequency with which they do so. As shown in table 15, 95 students (27.1%) said their teachers tell folktales sometimes. 8 students (2.3%) said their teachers always tell folktales in class and a large number of 247 students (70.6%) said their teachers never tell any folktales in class. This is surprising given the abundance of folktales in the Cameroonian society. Like for the use of songs mentioned in 4.3.2, teachers could make their own collections of folktales to use in their language lessons, even if their use is not recommended in the course books. The 8 students who indicate that their teachers always tell folktales in class create a bit of a doubt because no Cameroonian class is made up of less than 30 students. Could it be that the teacher of this class tells folktales always and the students fail to indicate or could it just be that the 8 students, even after the explanation from the researcher, fail to make a distinction between ‘always’ and ‘sometimes’?
Table 13  Frequency in the use of folktales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>70.6</td>
<td>70.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Talib S. (1992:51) suggests that the use in English language classes of literary works written in the local variety of English can “help promote the students’ communicative abilities within the community”. He also thinks it gives them “a better sense of the cultural identity and belonging to that variety’s community of speakers and the society at large” (ibid.). With this thought in mind we can see that local folktales from the Cameroonian society can be beneficial to the Cameroon learner of English as a foreign language. A look at the data in table 15 shows that although folktales are abundant in the Cameroonian society and their use in an English language class can be beneficial to the language learner, they are not made use of. Like for the use of songs (4.3.2), the 95 students (27.1%) who indicate that their teachers use folktales sometimes may be from the junior secondary classes where teachers generally assume stories and songs could be used for teaching. If, however, we know that many a grammar or vocabulary lesson can be taught using folktales then we wonder at this neglect. Without insisting on the teaching of English for communicative purposes, we know that even an ordinary structural lesson could make great use of the folktale. It could even be more so for practising speaking when students are made to narrate what they are already familiar with in their society especially for those students who have had an encounter with folktales from their homes. Although according to Elgar (1998:11), “one cannot on the grounds of cultural proximity alone promote local literature as being necessarily more appropriate than other literature for use in English language teaching”, one can at least be sure the learner will not find it completely strange, like foreign literature. “More appropriate” is one thing, but appropriate we would certainly agree with and therefore try to promote the use of this useful tool of language teaching/learning in the Cameroonian English language classroom.
4.3.3.11. Students’ Opinion on the use of folktales

Students’ opinions were further asked on the use of folktales in their lessons and their reactions to them. As seen in table 16, 14 students (4%) of the 350 questioned said folktales are boring. 20 students said they are difficult to understand. 55 students (15.7%) thought that folktales make the class noisy. However, 228 students (71.9%) of 350 said that folktales are interesting. This number is intriguing given that only a small number of 95 students (29.4%) (see table 15) indicated that their teachers use folktales sometimes. We are however, tempted to think that since a lot of people love stories the reactions expressed here may just be what the students feel when they hear a story and may even love to hear these stories in their language classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They are boring</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are interesting</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>71.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are difficult to understand</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They make the class noisy</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>90.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing System</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This may also have reminded them of the stories they had heard before which may not be related to English language learning, given that storytelling is a popular African past time. The lot of them may therefore be affirming their love for folktales.

We also find that 4% of the students indicate that stories are boring. If we consider the fact that teachers have different ways of presenting teaching material in class, then we do not find it surprising that some students think stories are boring. They could be students from a class where a teacher attempts to use folktales but does it so poorly that it does not impress\textsuperscript{10} the students. It also depends on what kinds of stories the

\textsuperscript{10} Even in the traditional African society, there exist cases of poor storytellers who leave their listeners unimpressed because they lack the skill to carry out the performance. The skill, though naturally found in some performers could be learned by others through constant practice. So is the case with the language teacher.
teachers who attempt to use folktales in class tell. We can agree with (Elgar 1998:10), that “one cannot, on the grounds of cultural proximity alone, promote local literature as being more appropriate.” We could be promoting the use of African folktales in schools because of their abundance in the African society. However, the stories presented to these students may be stories from the African culture which may not appeal to them or stories from a foreign culture which they are not familiar with and which may be even less appealing. Their reception may therefore be different in the different situations and probably the reason why some of them find the stories boring. Students can therefore find the telling of folktales boring either because of the way the teacher presents the activity in class or because of the kinds of stories that the students are exposed to. This is the reason why students were asked what kind of folktales they like listening to, that is, for those who enjoy listening to folktales.

4.3.3.111. **Kinds of folktales that students love listening to**

Folktales help in the promotion of oral communication and remind students of their culture. “Through traditional tales, people express their values, fears, hopes, and dreams. Oral stories are a direct expression of literary and cultural heritage; and through them that heritage is appreciated, understood, and kept alive” (Pedersen 1995:2).

However, “one cannot on the grounds of cultural proximity alone, promote local literature as being necessarily more appropriate than other literature for use in English language teaching [except] the students themselves lend support to this conclusion by saying they [are] happy to read local literature” (Elgar 1998:11). Out of 350 students questioned about the kind of stories they enjoy listening to, 31 students (8.9%) said they enjoy listening to stories from the European culture. 71 students said they enjoy listening to any story if it is not related to a lesson and 232 students (66.3%) said they enjoy listening to stories from the African culture. This distribution is seen in table 17.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kinds of stories that students love</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stories from the African culture</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>66.3</td>
<td>69.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stories from the European culture</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>78.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just any story if it is not related to a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the data in table 17 it can be seen that most students in Cameroonian secondary/high schools love listening to stories from the African culture and will certainly like to hear these stories in their English language classes. The question is whether this preference is above any other stories that the students know. It goes without saying that most of the students grew up in the Cameroonian society where the telling of folktales is common and African folktales may therefore be the only tales they have come in contact with especially from their homes. However, our argument is that if these students are interested in these stories and enjoy listening to them, then they could be used to teach them English as a foreign language. With their knowledge of the foreign language they will come to read in the language and eventually read the stories of the foreign language culture. Thus the learning of the foreign language will be done through the culture of the learner although it does not necessarily mean the neglect of the target language culture. It would be considered appropriate to present the students with the new language by teaching them with what they know already and what they can identify with. As confirmed by Lado (1964), Gee (1987), and Post and Rathet (1996) it is appropriate to teach students a foreign language beginning with the culture of their immediate environment. English language teaching/learning in Cameroonian schools might therefore reap better results if the students are taught with what they are familiar, to get them to learn what is foreign to them. This data also shows 16 missing results. These maybe some of the students of the 33 (see table13) whose teachers do not use folktales in class and may not have had the opportunity to listen to stories from their homes or even in their primary education. We also have the 71 students (20.3%) who enjoy just any story if it is not related to any lesson. These students could, with proper presentation, be turned round to not only love stories but also enjoy the language lessons to which they are related. These students already have the benefit of entertainment from stories. They could now be made to see the connection between the stories and the language they are learning and in which these stories are written or told.
4.3.4. The use of riddles and proverbs

It is established that oral literature, including stories, drama, myths, fables songs, riddles and proverbs, is used frequently in the African society for education and entertainment. A proverb according to the McArthur (1992:819) is “a short traditional saying of a didactic or advisory nature, in which a generalisation is given specific, often metaphorical, expression”. It is a short sentence that people often quote and that gives advice or tells you something about human life and problems in general. Proverbs exist in many languages and cultures and are often used in oral communication. “Proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten”, says a popular Igbo (Nigerian) proverb. The art of witty conversation and argument in most indigenous societies depends on the use of proverbs and a man proves his worth in handling a conversation from his use of proverbs. A riddle on the other hand is “a statement or question that is intentionally worded in a puzzling or misleading way” (ibid. 870). Riddles are puzzles in which questions are asked that seem to be nonsense but which have clever amusing answers. Most riddles are difficult and often amusing questions to which one must give an answer. They are generally thought to be an appropriate way to teach young learners and could serve as a useful technique for the teaching of English. Riddles are used in most societies for amusement and as a test for witticism. Riddles and proverbs abound in every society and form a very enriching resource for the teaching/learning of English as a foreign language if they are put together for that purpose.

Often a lot of knowledge and wisdom is gained by listening to riddles and proverbs and by using them. They are generally thought of as appropriate for people who are learning a language and they go a long way to enhance the spoken language. They could therefore be used in an English language class not just as an amusement activity or a brainteaser but also to help the students attain some of the wisdom they will need for oral communication and for the future use of the language in society. The reaction of students to the use of these techniques was asked from the teachers, because students, on their own, cannot define riddles and proverbs and many teachers even when they use them, do not give them the name, and do not make them look like part of a lesson. We shall therefore see how the teachers measure the students’ reactions to these techniques when we analyse the teachers’ questionnaires.
4.4. **Students’ assessment of course books used in Cameroonian schools**

Textbooks provide some kind of interaction between the learner, the teacher and the material in the teaching syllabus. They act as a guide in helping teachers and learners organise their teaching and learning both in and outside the classroom. Textbooks should be able to attract or motivate students to learn the language through the kind of material and activities they provide and students should be able to enjoy learning a language from the prescribed course book. However, it is generally believed that the textbooks used for language teaching/learning in Cameroonian schools typically have very little to offer to help students achieve the competence to use the language for communication. Most of them are designed for structural teaching and provide very little on the part of games and amusement activities and even less in terms of communicative activities. They therefore have very little with which to motivate a learner. To confirm this, students’ opinions were sought about the textbooks they use in schools.

As seen in table 18, out of the 350 students questioned, 84 students (24%) thought the textbooks were interesting. 89 students (25.4%) thought the textbooks were about ok \(^{11}\) and a large number of 177 students (50.6%) thought the textbooks were boring.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interesting</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boring</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>50.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About OK.</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given that most of the students (50.6%) find their textbooks boring, the textbooks used in schools will be analysed to find out if these indigenous techniques of teaching that the students were questioned about and whose use they seem to enjoy, are found in the textbooks. That way we may be able to know exactly why the students find the textbooks boring as mentioned by the greater majority of the students questioned. However, we found out that most of the students questioned found the use of indigenous techniques of
communication interesting (see 4.3). If these techniques are absent in the textbooks that the students use in schools and the techniques are not used in class from the teachers’ initiative, then they have a reason to find these textbooks boring.

There is also reason to believe that the students who find the textbooks about ok may be students who do not have much opinion and would not be able to offer any reasons why they find the textbooks neither boring nor interesting. The subsequent analysis of textbooks may be able to prove to us the need for a change in the design of the textbooks which are used presently in Cameroonian schools and which the majority of students find uninteresting. The newly designed textbooks, (if they are ever done), should take into consideration the teaching of the language for communicative purposes. They should therefore be able to include those aspects that are used in the Cameroonian society to enhance communication. Aspects like role-play activities, folktales, songs, riddles and proverbs should be given enough consideration in the teaching of students who should use this language for future communication in the society and work places and not just for examination success.

4.5. **Summary of results got from students’ questionnaire**

The students’ questionnaire had as its objective finding out from students their behaviour towards learning the English language as manifested towards their lessons, their teachers and their use of the language at home and in school. It also attempted to find out if students enjoy learning the English language with the use of indigenous techniques of communication, if their teachers use these techniques in teaching and what the students’ reactions are to them. They were also asked to assess the textbooks they use in schools for English language learning. Some interesting results were got from the students which, if taken into consideration, may help shape the course of future teaching/learning of English in Cameroonian schools. Of course, these responses provide guidelines rather than fixed indicators of the teaching/learning of English in Cameroon, the focal point of this research being to try to find out if these techniques can have a positive impact on students’ motivation and enthusiasm in the learning of English as a foreign language.

11 OK was explained to mean that the textbooks were suitable to the students or about, and that they contained all what the students thought they needed for the learning of English.
The analysis of students’ questionnaires showed that most of the students learn English to become bilingual and be able to get a good job. This indicates that most of the students will like to learn English for communicative purposes and to be able to use this language in the society when they eventually leave school, Cameroon being a bilingual country with English and French as the official languages. There is however an indication from the results that very few students make any attempt to communicate in the English language either at home or in school. Communication in the English language out of school is particularly hindered by the use of the Pidgin English which is a lingua franca in Cameroon (Anne Schröder: 2003) and which is used unofficially almost everywhere and by almost everyone in the society. Most of the students therefore communicate outside the school using the Pidgin English instead of the English language they learn in school, which is the official language of the country and in which communication can be carried out internationally.

The majority of students questioned think that their language lessons are uninteresting and that English makes an insignificant contribution to their examination results. They would, therefore, not mind the elimination of the English language from their official examinations because English reduces their total grade in these examinations. This shows that English language lessons in Cameroon may probably be geared principally towards the writing of examinations and obtaining a certificate and not for communicative purposes. This may, however, not be through the fault of the teacher. Gahin and Myhill (2001:10) found that

压力施加在父母、学生、校长和检查官对教师的考试相关压力上是巨大的。考试成绩是父母和检查官学习的体现和教师工作的一个证据【……】。这使得更关注于考试成绩而不是流利度。

Since the lessons are geared towards writing examinations, the students therefore see English language learning as a kind of obligation and one that does not help them in their academic qualifications since they scarcely make the required grade in English. Little wonder, therefore, that very few of the students can barely communicate in English in their society even after they have had seven years of learning English in the secondary/high schools. It is common knowledge that learning that is done principally for the purposes of passing an examination abandons one after sometime although it could have a short time benefit of making one obtain a certificate. This also creates a negative
attitude to learning the language since most of the students cannot use the language when they leave school and do not get much benefit from it during their examination, seeing that most of them indicate that English reduces their total grade in these examinations. We see this negative attitude manifested in different ways but most especially when some of these students think their teachers are wicked or unfriendly. This attitude could be corrected if the students are made to feel that the language they are learning will be helpful to them in future and if they see themselves taught in order to be able to have this language as a useful working tool in future.

The reactions of these students may, however, be due to the teaching techniques that are used by the teachers since a teacher’s technique helps him to win the confidence of the students he/she teaches. It is true that the communicative approach to language teaching helps to improve on the students’ communicative competence and this method cannot be imported into the Cameroonian classroom without adjustments to it. It is, however, thought that the inclusion of indigenous techniques of communication would help improve on this communicative purpose of teaching English as a foreign language. These indigenous techniques as used in every indigenous society to learn the first language could be transferred to the foreign language classroom and used within particular teaching methods.

Before this proposal is made however, we had to find out if some teachers teach the English language lessons using these indigenous techniques and the students’ reactions to them. On the use of role-play, some students indicate that this activity is carried out in some classes but it is so poorly done that they find it noisy or boring. However, a large number of students pointed out that this activity is never carried out in their classes. This leaves us wondering if this is because the teachers do not know about them, because their use is not prescribed in the textbooks in the school curriculum or because of some other hindrance which the teachers face in the course of using them. It would therefore be appropriate to introduce these techniques if we find that a lot of teachers do not know about them or propose ways of ameliorating their use in class if the teachers are hindered from carrying them out because of other reasons. The benefits we get from these teaching techniques in the teaching/learning of English as foreign language cannot be neglected.

Most of the students questioned said that their teachers do not use any songs in their language lessons whereas a few who indicate the use of songs are principally
students from the junior secondary. This makes us feel that teachers consider the use of songs and stories in language learning a junior secondary or primary school activity. If however, we consider how enriching songs can be in learning a language, then it would not be out of place to insist that this activity be introduced to all classes and in all levels of language learning in Cameroonian schools. Although a few students who say that their teachers occasionally use songs think these songs make the class noisy and make them forget the “real lesson”, the teachers could moderate the presentation of these activities in class. This will make all the students see the benefit of this activity, and not just as one that makes them forget the “real” lesson.

The use of folktales as a teaching activity seems to be completely absent from the teaching of English in most schools. A large number of students questioned indicate that their teachers never tell any folktales in class in spite of the abundance of folktales in the Cameroonian society and the potential benefits of using them as a technique for the teaching/learning of English. However, most of the students, including the ones whose teachers do not use any folktales to teach, indicate that folktales are interesting. This actually means that students are used to listening to folktales probably from their homes or in the communities in which they grew up. This technique could therefore be transferred to the classroom for the teaching of English as a foreign language and some very enriching results could be got from it. Most of the students also indicate that they enjoy listening to folktales from the African culture, probably as indicated before, because these are the only folktales or the most they have come in contact with. Their use will therefore be beneficial seeing that the students will be learning a foreign language using the material they are already familiar with. (Lado 1964, Gee 1987, Post and Rathet 1996, Simo Bobda 1997, Ness 1997, Wolf and Simo Bobda 2000) think it is appropriate to learn a foreign language beginning with the material from the learner’s culture. A small number of students said that they enjoy listening to just any folktale if it is not related to a language lesson. Since this group enjoys listening to stories already, they could be made to see that they have a greater benefit using them in the learning of the English language.

Riddles and proverbs help in language learning given that a large amount of knowledge and wisdom is gained from using them. The students’ reactions to them could only be got from their teachers because some of the teachers use riddles and proverbs in class without giving them the name and students may not be able to assess them as a
teaching technique. Also, as the textbooks will reveal there is a stark absence of riddles and proverbs in the textbooks used in Cameroonian schools and if they are used in any classes at all, this is done through the teacher’s initiative. Students are therefore in a poor position to assess their use.

On the students’ assessment of the textbooks used in schools, most of the students questioned thought that the textbooks are boring. A small number indicated that they are interesting but the students were not questioned as to why they found them boring or interesting. If, however, we know that most of the students indicate that they enjoy the use of indigenous techniques mentioned above and if these techniques do not exist in the textbooks used in schools, then the students have a right to find the textbooks boring. Some of the teachers who use these techniques in class as indicated by a smaller group of students may be doing so out of their own initiative and so help to complement the textbooks which do not offer the use of these techniques. We are, however, going to analyse what the teachers have to say about their students, the use of indigenous techniques and the textbooks they use in teaching in the next chapter. This will give us a concrete idea of whether the lack of use or the poor use of indigenous techniques in language lessons is actually due to their absence in the prescribed textbooks and how this affects the lessons that are taught in Cameroonian schools.
Chapter 5  Analysis of Teachers’ Questionnaires

Learning English as a Foreign language in Cameroonian schools is done as part of the school curriculum and so all secondary/high school students are engaged in learning English whether they like it or not. Some of the students, however, have their respective ulterior motives why they learn the English language and this may be seen from the way they react to their lessons if their aspirations are not met. Their teachers perceive these motives and should, combined with the teaching syllabus, be able to orientate their teaching accordingly. However, teachers in the developing world in general and Cameroonian schools in particular do not carry out their teaching to suit the respective ulterior motives for which the students are learning the language. Not that any school carries out any teaching to meet the respective and individual motives of the students\textsuperscript{12}. However, the general reasons for which the students want to learn a language and which could make the language beneficial to them in the long run could be taken into consideration.

Most of the teaching of English language in Cameroonian schools is done with the purpose of making the students pass their written exams and obtain a certificate in English. This is opposed to making them competent in oral communication and being able to express themselves in the language when they leave school. If this is to the detriment of the students knowing how to communicate in the foreign language, then the blame should go to more than one party. Like the case of Egypt, “the pressure exerted by parents, students, headmasters, and inspectors on teachers related to examinations is enormous. Examination results are the embodiment of learning for parents and for inspectors and an evidence for their work” (Gahin and Myhill 2001:10). No doubt the teaching of English in most schools in Cameroon neglects the aspect of oral communication, although this is the reason for which every language is learned. It also reveals why English language teaching in Cameroon produces less than competent and less than willing speakers of English. Most of the students shy away from using the English language even when they have the opportunity to do so. The situation is not very different even with the emphasis of teaching for purposes of passing an examination and obtaining a certificate. The students show very little enthusiasm in the language lessons

\textsuperscript{12} This can only happen in a specialized language school where a one-to-one lesson is carried out but which is not applicable to the Cameroonian public or private secondary/high School situation.
since English language does not help their grades in the official exams anyway (see 4.2.3). It should however, be understood that most of these learners have the mother tongue, the French language and the Pidgin English to communicate in, both in and out of school.

We have seen that most of the students learn the English language to be able to communicate in it and use it in future (see 4.2). This means that the teaching that is carried out in Cameroonian schools while dwelling on helping the students to pass their examinations should also be done with the purpose of making the students communicative. This calls for the use of the communicative approach to language teaching (see 1.4). However, because the communicative approach is being faced by myriads of constraints especially in schools in the developing world, (Gahin and Myhil 2000), we are going to propose the introduction of the use of indigenous techniques of communication as part of this approach.

Since most of the teachers carry out their teaching irrespective of the students’ expectations for learning the language, and due to the techniques that most of the teachers use in their teaching, most of the students get bored and therefore adopt a nonchalant behaviour towards their lessons. Even then, teachers have their own reasons to explain why the students get bored with their lessons as we are going to see in their responses. We are going to find out the reasons why teachers think their students learn the English language. Teachers were also asked to comment on their use of indigenous techniques of communication. The purpose was to find out whether or not they use these techniques in their language lessons and how their students react to them. Finally since the teachers direct the use of textbooks in schools and the application of what is found in the textbooks is done by them, we would like to know what the Cameroonian teacher of English thinks about the textbooks that are presently used in Cameroonian schools. This will be looked at in relation to the use of indigenous techniques of communication. The reason for this question is because any proposal on the use of new techniques in language teaching directly affects the teacher. “In the promotion of new techniques and materials, the teacher is the main change agent, not the material or techniques in which these innovations are packaged. Their acceptance and success depends on the teacher […] The implementation of these techniques and the use of new material depend on the creativity of a committed and informed teacher” (Wenden 1991:79).
5.1 Reasons why teachers think students learn the English language

There are several reasons why students learn the English language. Some of them are obvious to the teachers while others are not. When asked why they think students learn the English language, teachers gave various reasons as shown in table 19. Some of the reasons coincide with the reasons the students gave for learning the language (see table 3).

Table 17 Reasons why teachers think students learn the English language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Only to pass their exams</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have a good job</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because it is in the school curriculum</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because it is fashionable to speak English</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>52.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 19 reveals that 47 teachers (52.5%) of the 90 questioned think that their students learn the English language because it is fashionable to speak it. English language speaking in Cameroon becomes fashionable among the students who have a hope of going either to the USA or to Britain. It is also associated with pop stars and most of the students try to imitate their speeches and songs among their friends thereby trying to show themselves as being modern\(^\text{13}\). 20 teachers (22.2%) think that their students learn English only to pass their exams. This assumption by some teachers is correct given the fact that English language receives a wide coefficient\(^\text{14}\) in the exams and most students

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\(^{13}\) This behavior among students prompts one to think that local songs in the English language will help to motivate the learner of English if these songs could be replayed in class and their lyrics learned by the students. It goes without saying that the students will be learning the vocabulary of the language while learning the songs as well and getting entertained.

\(^{14}\) In Cameroonian schools, English language is accorded different coefficients in the different levels and options. The classes from “Sixième” to “Troisième” have a coefficient of 3 in their class exams and the “B.E.P.C.” exam which is written in “Troisième” is also accorded a coefficient of 3. In the second cycle, English language is accorded a coefficient of 3 and 4 for the science and arts options respectively. The “Probatoire” and “Baccalauréat” which are written in the 6\(^\text{th}\) and 7\(^\text{th}\) years are accorded a coefficient of 2 and 3 for the science and arts options respectively.
think it is a duty to make a pass in the subject, whether they can use the language after that or not. However, it would be a great opportunity if the students were encouraged to communicate in the language while at the same time helping them to obtain a certificate. Only then can we be sure that the students can make use of the language after leaving school and not just as a certificate they can present anywhere for employment.

An equivalent number of 20 teachers (22.2%) indicates that their students learn the English language because it is in the school curriculum. This is true and like the previous reason of students learning only to be able to pass their exams, this reason could be given good consideration in English language teaching. Since students are constrained to learn the English language because it is part of the curriculum they could be persuaded while doing so to learn to their advantage. That is, they could be convinced to show more enthusiasm in learning since it is not only going to help them to be able to communicate in the society but will help them obtain a certificate. If a good number of students agree to learning English as part of the curriculum they should be made to reap the benefits by helping them to pass their exams and making them useful in the society by making them communicative in English. This could be done by using the techniques that can help improve their motivation. However, we find that there is very little emphasis on oral communication in the teaching of English carried out in Cameroonian schools. This, in spite of the fact that the majority of teachers indicate that most of the students learn the English language because they think it is fashionable to speak it. If English language speaking is so important to the students, we can assume that if the teaching of the language is orientated towards making them learn how to speak the language it would improve on their enthusiasm to learn.

With the minimum way in which students use the English language for communication (see 4.2.1), one can tell that very little is done in the process of teaching/learning the language to help them become communicative in it. Of course this means that even when the students obtain a certificate in English they may have a hard time communicating in the language when they need to. Something needs to be done therefore to help the learner in this respect, their failure to communicate being due to the kind of teaching techniques that the teachers use in class which dwell solely on the structural approach with emphasis on grammar and vocabulary. The 20 teachers (22.2%) who think that students learn the English language because it is in the school curriculum
also indicate this. If this number is added to the number who think the students learn English only to pass their exams then there is little wonder that the Cameroonian Francophone learner of English has any urge at all to use the English language for oral communication. This may also be a reason for the production of incompetent speakers of English in the Cameroonian society.

A good number of extra reasons were advanced by teachers on why they think their students learn the English language. English is a subject in the school curriculum and all the students are forced to learn it. Every student is expected to attend the language lessons and attendance is taken during class hours. The discipline in most Cameroonian secondary/high schools considers absences from lessons a very serious violation of the schools rules and regulations. Punishment for this offence ranges from suspension from classes with hard work to inviting the students’ parents to school for counselling, depending on the number of absences. Most students do not want to find themselves in this situation and so are forced to attend classes for fear of being counted as absent. This, the teachers think, is the reason why most students bother to attend any lessons at all but most especially the English language lessons, which they consider least important. Class attendance of this kind however, has very passive learners who are not interested in the activities in the lesson if they are not interesting enough.

Some other teachers think that the co-efficient levied on English language at the different levels sometimes motivates and sometimes demoralises students. A higher co-efficient, especially in the higher secondary, is good for those students who perform well and they love it since it helps to spill over the extra marks to the subjects in which they perform less well. However, the same high co-efficient is a deterrent to the majority of students who do not make a pass in the English language. They find that their poor grades are supposed to be covered up by the subjects in which they perform better, thereby reducing their total grade in the exams. Most of them therefore make an effort, in spite of themselves, to attend the language lessons and try to make a pass in the subject. This reason does not, however, help the students to take an interest in the English language enough to be communicative and use it later in life. Teachers were therefore asked to comment on how their students react to their lessons seeing the disinterestedness that prevails among the students.
5.2 Teachers’ evaluation of students’ reactions to English language lessons

The results in table 20 show how teachers assess their students’ reactions to their language lessons. Their evaluations as predicted range from some students being interested in the lessons to others showing disinterest, boredom and being noisy.

Table 18 Students’ reactions to English language lessons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uninterested</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bored</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noisy</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interested</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results are not very surprising given the fact that this researcher is a teacher who is familiar with the attitude of students towards the English language lessons in Cameroon schools. Table 20 shows that a majority of the teachers think their students are uninterested, bored, or noisy during their lessons. All put together, 74% of the teachers questioned have learners who react in this way. Students have different ways of reacting to different teachers. 50% of the teachers questioned think that their students are uninterested or bored, which is different from just being noisy. Could it be that the students who are noisy are also bored with the lessons and therefore manifest this boredom through noise making? Could it also be that the noisy students are some of the ones who find their lessons so interesting that they get uncontrollable in class? Generally, and given the large classes that are common to the Cameroonian school system, one would conclude that the noisy students are those who are bored with the lessons and therefore make their own conversation in class to ward off the boredom. Always, when a class gets interesting enough as to make it noisy, this kind of class can easily be controlled by the teacher. If the students make a noise because they find the lessons interesting, it will also mean that the teacher has won their attention by his/her technique and that kind of teacher can easily call his/her class to order when it gets exceptionally noisy.
23 teachers (25.6%) find that their students show an interest in their lessons. These students could be the ones who have a very strong motive for learning English as shown in their reasons in 4.1 above. They may be paying more attention to the lessons because they need to pass their exams at the end of the year. This may be true since most of the students who are interested in language learning for the purposes of communicating in it do not get much related to their motive. It is also shown in the fact that even the students who learn for purposes of being able to speak the language do not use it in the society which may only go to show that they probably do not get enough teaching towards being able to communicate in the language. The students may also show this interest because these teachers have a special and experienced way of handling the students, which helps to hold their attention to their lessons. All in all, it is encouraging to find that there are some students who find their language lessons interesting as indicated by the teachers. Our concern is with the students who are uninterested, bored or noisy during their lessons and whose attention needs to be focused on their lessons by the teachers. Their attention can, however, only be focused when we know the reasons why some teachers think they are bored with their lessons.

5.3 **Reasons why teachers think some students are bored with their lessons**

There are a good number of reasons why students get bored with their language lessons. The students have their reasons to explain their boredom and disinterestedness, but the teachers are also able to determine these reasons because they have a direct contact with the students and know exactly how these students behave. However, as a teacher and from a general observation of the students, some of them feel bored because they think they have been learning English for too long without much success. Most of the students questioned agreed that the English language makes very little contribution to their exam results. On the contrary, it lowers their grades in these exams (see 4.2.3). They also get frustrated with the fact that they can hardly communicate even after learning the language for so long. Some students feel the frustration of being forced to learn English and see English language lessons as only work and no fun especially because the teaching that is carried out in Cameroonian schools concentrates more on structure (grammar and vocabulary) with very little practice on speaking or communication. Some students do
not understand why they must be forced to learn English if it is only a subject in the school curriculum. Little wonder therefore that the reactions of most of the students to their English language lessons are boredom and a negative show of interest. Among these reasons, teachers have a first hand idea of the reasons why they find that their students are bored with their lessons. These reasons may be the beginning of a solution to part of the problems that present day teaching of the English language in Cameroonian schools faces. With this thought in mind and the personal observation of this researcher, teachers were asked why they think students feel bored with their lessons. The results are as shown in table 21.

Table 19    Reasons why teachers think some students feel bored with language lessons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor teaching techniques</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A general lack of interest</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The classroom conditions</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is not usual to find that teachers admit that their students’ reluctance to learn stems from their poor teaching techniques. Often teachers do not want to put the blame for student’s lack of enthusiasm on the activities they carry out in class, since this will be questioning the teachers’ teaching techniques or style which they do not always want to reveal. Most of the teachers do not want to accept the blame for the use of a poor teaching technique that puts the students off their lessons although from observation, some teachers actually “unteach” the students. However, this researcher was pleasantly surprised that some of the teachers questioned honestly admitted that their students’ lack of interest was due to their teaching techniques. Of course, this certainly means the kind of techniques which the teachers use in their lessons which do not appeal to the students and which do not help to raise the students’ enthusiasm to learn. 26 (28.9%) of the 90 teachers questioned indicate that when their students get bored with their lessons it may be because of the poor teaching techniques they use in their lessons. This maybe true given the fact that English language lessons in Cameroonian schools are always all work and very little fun. Most of the teaching is carried out by the teachers as a duty with little thought given to making it enjoyable. The teachers focus more on vocabulary and
grammar and the students are expected to master the grammar rules and apply them to the language they are learning. The lessons are always carried out in the order of reading, explaining new words (vocabulary), learning grammar rules and doing grammar exercises, and writing. On the whole, very little is done in the form of speaking and this is reflected in the inability for most of the students to communicate in the language. Some of the students explained this in their answers about their reasons for not liking the English language, especially because the teacher only talks in class and later gives them homework. On the contrary if these lessons were carried out with a bit of play and fun the students would not feel so frustrated and would not be completely bored with their lessons. The use of role-play or drama proposed in this study can add the kind of fun that the students need to lighten up the dreary process of learning a language, which is completely foreign to them.

Out of the 90 teachers questioned, 41 (45.6%) think that when students are bored with their lessons, it is because of a general lack of interest from the students. This general lack of interest may be due to many reasons but most especially because some of the students have learned English for so long without any improvement or success. The lot of them, even in the Terminale\textsuperscript{15} classes, can hardly express themselves in English and do not make a pass in their official exams. This leads to frustration, which manifests itself in a show of disinterest in the lessons. General disinterestedness is also shown when the student does not understand why he/she should learn the English language only because it is in the school curriculum. The students feel that they are forced to learn a foreign language even if they are not motivated to do so. All of these contribute to the students being bored and passive and this passive nature is seen in their reactions to the language lessons.

The teachers also attributed students’ lack of interest in the lessons to the classroom conditions that prevail in most Cameroonian schools. 23 (25.5%) of the teachers questioned admit this. Almost all the schools in Cameroon face the problem of large classes, most of them in dilapidated buildings. The classrooms are overcrowded, too hot and uncomfortable both for the learners and the teachers. Of course this is the case where the school has any classrooms at all! There exists the problem of poor lighting or no lighting at all when there is no provision for electric lights, dirty walls and broken
furniture and in some cases, uncemented floors. Most of the teachers teach and the students learn in very uninspiring conditions and shabby environments. There are never enough seats in the classrooms for the students or even a table for the teacher. No doubt some students are put off learning in such conditions and learning a foreign language even more so. Poor classroom acoustics are also a very serious problem that creates a negative learning environment for many students in Cameroon and most of the developing world. Acoustic conditions in the classrooms in many schools are unsuitable for such tasks as learning to read, to listen, or to understand unfamiliar material. Poor classroom acoustics are frustrating for both students and teachers and the students, because of excessive noise can sometimes miss much of what the teacher says. From a personal experience, the students in most of the schools in Douala and most of the towns in Cameroon that are excessively hot, find it very difficult to learn because of the kind of classrooms that are found in the schools. Most of the classrooms do not have any ceilings and the teachers and students get distracted by the noise that comes from neighbouring classes whether or not they have teachers in them. This gets the learner even more frustrated and he/she gets more bored with the lesson and more so if it is an English language lesson. The English language teacher therefore, has to make a double effort to attract and maintain the attention of the students.

For other reasons, most of the teachers think the hour in which English language lessons take place contributes to the students’ boredom. It is a sad fact with most secondary/high schools that most of the lessons that take place after midday are a disaster. No matter how much effort the teacher puts in, he/she ends up frustrated because most of the students do not listen or take part in those lessons. This is especially so with schools in towns like Douala that are very hot at a particular period of the year. It is also the case with some subjects, but most especially the English language which most of the students think they are forced to learn in the first place. For some reason, and the level of the class notwithstanding, most of the students are distracted in the later part of the day and even the most reliable students fail to co-operate. That is why most English language

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15 “Terminale” is the last class in the Francophone secondary/high School where students are expected to do their last official exams before they enter the university or a professional school. In the “Terminale” class, a student should have been learning English language for 7 years in the secondary/high School. Teachers and students of Lycee Bilingue Deido in Douala do not forget the noise that accompanies their lessons from the street near the school where passengers board taxis for different destinations. The taxi drivers in search of passengers shout out their destinations at the top of their voices so that the teacher and his/her students have a constant “Makepe, ‘Moussadi, Logpom” accompanying their lessons. The teacher has to try to outshout them!
teachers “negotiate” for their lessons to be scheduled in the earlier part of the day when
the students are less agitated and still fresh from their homes.

However, these external reasons could be tolerated if the lessons are inspiring
enough to the students. If the students do not have to do with poor teaching techniques
they may be encouraged to learn the language in spite of the negative external forces.
to teach language with Fun and Games”

a language is learned through using it in authentic situations. Disembodied words or sentences
don’t get learners anywhere. Parallel with the danger of monotony and boredom runs the danger of
mechanical drills, the danger of blind parroting and of meaninglessness. A foreign language must
be brought to life in situations by gestures, by handling or touching things, by actions and
incidents, by pictures, by dramatisation, by interesting stories spoken or in print, and not least by
contests and games.

English language lessons could be made interesting and fun through the use of
indigenous techniques of communication like role-play, singing, the telling of folktales,
riddles, jokes and proverbs. The learner of English in Cameroonian schools may be
tempted to overlook the other adverse conditions and concentrate on learning the
language if the learning is made interesting. These indigenous techniques could provide
enough entertainment for the bored student and improve on the enthusiasm of an already
motivated student. However, before the use of these techniques are recommended we
need to find out what teachers think about them. We need to find out if their use is
recommended in the textbooks that the teachers and students use in teaching and learning.
We also need to find out if teachers use these techniques and the reasons why, if they do
not.

5.4 **Teachers’ views on the recommendation of the use of role-play
(drama) in the course books**

Every language teacher wants his/her students to be able to communicate and
eventually get fluent in the language. Fluency comes with being enthusiastic about
learning the language and by practising the use of the language. This enthusiasm may not
only come from within the student, but can also be got from trying to use the language in
authentic situations created through role-play. Role-playing is a natural means of
communication which most people use in society and by which children learn their first
language. This technique can be transferred into the foreign language classroom to help the learner of a foreign language.

Drama or role-play helps to motivate students to be personally involved in class activities, to be bold and to take on roles which help them to represent other people and even their speeches. Because the students come from diverse backgrounds, they bring along diverse activities and experiences that they share with their friends. Every student has something to contribute especially if the activities are centred on what goes on in their society. Thus we find that the Cameroonian teacher/learner of English can find role-play situations in talking about various issues in the society. These may be environmental problems, customs and festivals, shopping, tourism, AIDS and health related issues, gender roles and relationships, culture (fashion, music, sports, Afritude) and family life among a host of other situations in which the students can find role-plays. By integrating drama into the language class the teacher helps to win the attention and interest of the students. It does not need to be a time consuming activity and no theatre knowledge is needed for activities like story dramatisation or role-play to be able to make meaning clear.

Foreign language lessons in the developing world like Cameroon can benefit a great deal from dramatisation if the teachers properly use it. However, a good number of teachers depend on the textbooks to engage in some teaching techniques like role-play. This means that when the activity is not recommended in the textbook, it cannot be carried out in class. Even in cases where the activity is recommended, there are certain constraints that stop the teacher from using a particular technique. It is for this reason that teachers were asked if the use of role-play is recommended in the textbooks that are used for the teaching/learning of English as a foreign language in Cameroon. Their responses are seen in table 22.

As seen in table 22, some teachers find that role-play is recommended in the books used in the teaching of English as a foreign language in Cameroon. 15 teachers (16.7%) indicate this while 9 teachers (10%) indicate that there is no recommendation of the use of role-play in the textbooks they use in schools. However, a large number of 66 teachers (73.3%) indicate that the use of role-play is recommended sparingly.
Table 20. Recommendation of the use of role-play (drama) in textbooks as perceived by teachers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sparingly</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>73.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This certainly indicates that writers of the textbooks\(^{17}\) that are used in the Cameroonian schools are not completely oblivious of the use of role-play or drama as a technique for the teaching/learning of English. It could generally be accepted therefore that role-play is sparsely recommended in the textbooks that are used for the teaching of English as a foreign language in Cameroon as per the results got from the teachers. This is however, going to be confirmed when the textbooks are analysed. The question is whether with this sparse recommendation, teachers bother to use the technique at all and if they find it a useful way of teaching the English language to their students. We are therefore going to find out how often the teachers use role-play in their lessons, that is, if they bother to do so at all.

5.4.1 Frequency with which teachers use role-play or drama in their lessons

Drama or role-play is an excellent way for a teacher to refresh his/her teaching style and a teacher who uses role-play in class finds that some weight is lifted off his/her shoulders of having to do the talking alone. As confirmed by Hanley (2001:1),

some teachers do have similar qualities to good actors and are totally convincing in what they do. Effective teachers seem to know instinctively how to use performance skills to gain and hold students’ interest. They also seem aware of the impact that dramatic techniques can have upon students and are always looking for opportunities to incorporate these into their lessons

The kind of teacher Hanley is talking about is an imaginative one who uses his/her own initiative. There exist cases of teachers who do not make any attempt to carry

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\(^{17}\) As of when this research was carried out all public schools in Cameroon were expected to use “Go For English” edited among others by Kenneth Cripwell, Jan Keane, Micheal D. Nama, Berth K. Tamla, Jody Linsell, James Taylor and Micheal Montgomery. This text is designed for various levels from “Sixième” to “Terminale” and any reference to textbooks for EFL in Cameroon is to them.
out an activity that is not recommended in the textbook. The question is whether we have the kind of teachers in Cameroonian schools who do not have to depend solely on the textbook. If the use of role-play or drama is only sparingly recommended as seen in 5.4 there is no doubt that some of the students with unimaginative teachers may never benefit from the use of this teaching technique. Practice makes perfect and a teacher who always involves his/her learners in drama or role-play activities will find their spoken language improves and the learners may be encouraged to do better. Teachers were therefore asked the frequency with which they use role-play or drama in their lessons. The responses, as seen in table 23, show that some of them never ever attempt to use this technique in their language lessons.

Table 21 Frequency in the use of role-play

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once in about every 6 lessons</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When it is recommended</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>76.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 23 reveals that 5 teachers (5.6%) of the 90 teachers questioned use role-play in their lessons once in about every six lessons. The frequency of once in every six lessons meant that the teacher who has three lessons a week can cover a unit in the textbook within two weeks and therefore has a chance of treating a new topic every two weeks. This also means that he could have the opportunity of organising any role-play activities that he may want to, with every new topic that he is treating in class. In effect the teacher who carries out role-play once in every six lessons in a Cameroonian school should be commended. Firstly because he/she would have been able to dramatise at least one situation in every unit of his lessons which means every new topic he/she discusses with the students. This means that by the end of a particular course this teacher would have succeeded in dramatising almost every new topic that comes up in every unit of the textbook and would have improved on the language learning situation of his/her students from the use of this technique. He/she would also have been adept enough in using this technique that he would have found it a convenient technique to use in class and may not only continue with the practice but sell the trick to his colleagues as a way of helping to
improve on their teaching. This kind of teacher also needs to be commended in that the classroom situation in Cameroonian schools actually poses a great difficulty in using this technique as will be seen in subsequent analyses.

However, from the results in table 23 we find that very few teachers actually use this technique with this frequency. Only a small percentage of 5.6 of the 90 teachers questioned use role-play in their lessons with a frequency of once in about every 6 lessons. From the results we also see that 16 (17.8%) of the teachers questioned never use role-play in their lessons. This gives us a rough idea of the number of students who do not have the benefit of learning the English language using this technique. This, in spite of its enormous potential as a communicative tool in language teaching/learning (Holden 1981, Dougill 1987, Maley and Duff 1988, Senf 1996, Smith 2000, Hanley 2001, Royka 2002). Little wonder then that most of the students hardly have the kind of fun they should have, and are hardly communicative or bold enough to use in public the English language they learn in school.

There is also the large number of 69 teachers (76.7%) who indicate that they use role-play only when it is recommended. From this researcher’s experience as a state schoolteacher, there is a lot of recommendation for the use of role-play, pair or groupwork in the textbooks used in schools. However, because of a lot of other constraints, the teachers hardly carry out this activity in class. This is also confirmed in 4.3.1, where 162 (46.3%) of the students questioned say their teachers never use role-play. Like the case of most researches where the respondents always try to give the best of themselves even when they are supposed to be anonymous, these respondents may not be representing what they do in reality. However, we are going to find out if by using role-play sometimes, the teachers find it easier to teach their lessons which will make the recommendation of this technique in the teaching of English in Cameroonian schools worthwhile.

5.4.2. Teachers’ Reactions to the Use of role-play or drama

Role-play or drama creates a light-hearted mood in class and learning is less stressful when a technique like this is used. As confirmed by Burke and Sullivan (2002:1),
a teacher can affect students’ progress to fluency by being enthusiastic, flexible, making sure that the students speak as much as he/she does, creating an atmosphere where students are not afraid of making mistakes and setting up a goal for the group.

The Cameroonian teacher of English can achieve all of these together by using drama or role-play in his lessons and by showing some enthusiasm and flexibility in his teaching. It should be pointed out, however, that some students do not take an activity like role-play seriously and it is up to the teacher to carry it out with some strictness. Some of the teachers questioned use role-play once in a while and may have seen some advantage in using this technique to teach a language class. They were therefore asked if when they use drama or role-play in class they find it easier to teach a lesson. Their responses are shown in table 24.

Table 22  Teacher’s reactions to the use of role-play

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>65.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never Tried</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results in table 24 reveal that even those teachers who use role-play only sparingly find it easier to teach. 59 (65.6%) of the teachers questioned indicate that it is easier to teach when you use drama or role-play. It should be recalled that only 5 out of the 90 teachers questioned use drama or role-play once in a while and 69 only when it is recommended (see table 23). If 59 (65.6%) of the teachers think that it is easier to teach using drama or role-play, then we can conclude that many teachers know about the use of drama but do not use it. This also means that the use of a good teaching technique like role-play should re-enforced in language teaching/learning in Cameroonian schools. This will oblige even the most reluctant teacher to use it and probably find it as useful as the others who use it regularly.

23 (25.6%) of the teachers questioned indicate that they have never tried using role-play in their lessons. We wonder how these teachers try to make their students rehearse the language or conclude that they never try at all. Having seen the benefits that can be achieved from using role-play as a teaching technique, we can only recommend that the use of this technique be implemented and re-enforced in schools. However, the
teachers who have never tried using role-play in their classes may not have done so not because they do not know about this technique but because of some other constraint, especially given the situation of schools in the developing world in general and Cameroon in particular. We are therefore going to find out the reasons why some teachers, even those who know about the use of role-play as a teaching technique, do not use it in their lessons.

5.4.3. Reasons why some teachers do not use role-play or drama

From the preceding analysis we find that a few teachers use role-play in their lessons, some on their own initiative and others only when it is recommended. Teachers who use their initiative are the creative ones and creativity within the classroom is an inner ability and a natural outcome of a specific teacher’s personal style of teaching (Simplicio 2003). Some teachers have an inner ability to motivate and instruct in a unique and exciting way that inspires the learners, while others, even with the training they got from the Teachers’ Training College and the experience of teaching for years, never acquire this ability. Teachers who do not use the technique of role-play in their lessons were asked the reasons why. Their responses as seen in table 25 range from the large size of their classes to the fear of using drama or role-play or the unwillingness of their students to co-operate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The classes are too large</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know about the use of drama to teach English</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The classrooms are too full – no space to act out a situation</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>43.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The students are unwilling to co-operate</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table we find that most teachers are aware of the use of role-play but do not use it because of a number of reasons that pertain especially to schools in the developing world like Cameroon. Firstly the classes are too large and this is confirmed by
40 (44.4%) of the 90 teachers questioned. Large classes are a very serious problem that affects not only the teaching of English as a foreign language in Cameroonian schools but also the other subjects in the school curriculum. An average class in a secondary/high school should, by Cameroonian standards, have 60 students, which is already a very large number. However, most of the schools have classes of between 80 and 120 students. No doubt teaching methods like the communicative approach which dwell on aspects like group work cannot function properly in schools in the developing world. “Every educator would argue strongly that large classes have an adverse impact on education, learning and society. […] Large classes have, are and continue to wreck many positive advances in education and learning” (Rios 1998:1). Not only do large classes have a negative effect on learning, they do so on the teacher as well. Motivation is low and methods are restricted to what the teacher can humanly and possibly carry out under such conditions (ibid.). With overcrowded classes, new and more dynamic teaching strategies and techniques cannot be implemented and teachers are burdened with increased workload. As confirmed by Royka (2000:4)

loss of control is fear for any teacher in any setting. Using a drama activity with a large class can seem like chaos if all students are not engaged in the lesson. If the relationship between the teacher and students is well established and other communicative “activities” have been used to promote group cohesion the whole class should be involved in the drama activity and explore the language at the same time.

We therefore see why 40 (44.4%) of the teachers questioned find it difficult to carry out an activity like role-play in their language lessons. It takes some extra courage to set an activity like role-play in motion in a class as large as we find in Cameroonian schools, but most teachers will agree with the fact that it is profitable in the long run.

We saw from table 24 that most teachers find it is easier to teach when they demonstrate a point and this is what role-play does, whether the demonstration is done by the teacher or by the students. When the students get used to this activity and enjoy it the teacher can conveniently control the class and help them focus on what they are doing. It goes without saying that since most students have an interest in learning English language for communicative purposes, they will see an advantage in using this technique and co-operate with the teacher. This leads us to examining the reason of some of the teachers who do not use role-play in class because their students, they say, are unwilling to co-operate.
The problem of students not co-operating in class with the teacher sometimes stems from the large size of the class. It is not and has never been easy to cope with large classes. Many teachers who work with overcrowded classes suffer from low self-esteem in that they can hardly control their students let alone implement new teaching techniques. Smaller classes in every school situation are automatically relaxed and focused on enjoying the lesson, an experience that favours both the learners and the teacher. The problem of uncontrollable and unco-operative students stems from overcrowded classes since the teacher cannot control the whole class easily. Most of the teachers questioned encounter this problem and most especially from the students of the senior secondary and the high school classes. In those classes the students always think they are too old to carry out certain activities in class like drama or role-play and singing. Most of the students in the senior secondary who have not had the opportunity in their earlier education to learn with this teaching technique find it hard to be brought to accepting it after so many years of learning the English language. Some of them consider it some kind of joke on the part of the teacher and do not take the lesson seriously. However, a foreign language class without the opportunities for the students to rehearse the language is a very limited one. This rehearsal can possibly take place through drama or role-play. Teachers therefore face the tasks of making their students co-operate by proving the usefulness of this technique. It is positive to find that only a small number of 7 teachers (7.8%) do not carry out role-play because the students are unwilling to co-operate. This indicates that these teachers know about the use of role-play and its effectiveness as a teaching technique and can bring their students round to co-operating and achieving the benefit of the use of this technique.

Another reason why this technique is not used is that the classrooms are too full and there is little or no space to act out a situation\(^\text{18}\). Of course because most Cameroonian classes are overcrowded, the classrooms are always too full and always the teacher does not almost have a place to stand in order to teach, or to place his/her teaching material. The teacher can, however, make use of the most by turning the role-

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\(^{18}\) This researcher is familiar with the desk-to-board arrangement of classrooms in Cameroonian schools. Most often than not the teacher has to squeeze him/herself between the first or last desk as the case maybe and the chalk board. To be able to implement the use of role-play therefore, which needs space in the classroom, the teacher needs a special arrangement of the class once in a while. This can be done given that the teacher does not have to use this technique in every lesson. It may even add to the excitement of the lesson to find that the class changes from its normal arrangement once in a while and the teacher may find that the students are looking forward to the next lesson in which role-play or drama is used.
play activity into an exciting one and making sure he/she and his/her students create space for it. Of course, it needs the ingenuity and devotedness of the teacher to turn a bad situation into a good one. There is also the small number of 4 teachers among those questioned who do not know about the use of role-play or drama in language teaching/learning. This is surprising and a bit unrealistic given the fact that teaching in itself is acting, and every lesson is a performance on its own. We mentioned before that some teachers are unimaginative and unintuitive and it takes the recommendation of an activity in the textbook they are using for it to be implemented. It also looks like some misinterpretation on the part of the respondents given that there is recommendation for pair and group work in the textbooks that they use in schools, even if it is not overtly drama.

However, the fear of using drama or role-play on its own is a problem that needs to be overcome by some teachers. Royka (2002:1) thinks that

just a few drama activities can bring an EFL classroom to life. The trends in English Language teaching lean heavily toward communicative and authentic language use. Drama or role-play provides lots of immediate resources and is fun for teachers and students alike. The fear factor for a new drama user is the hard part to overcome.

Some teachers are reluctant to use drama activities in class for various reasons. “They do not know how to use the activities, limited resources, time constraints, fear of looking and feeling foolish” among others (ibid.). Still according to Royka (ibid.),

many teachers think they cannot approach drama activities without being a trained actor. They feel […] they just wouldn’t know what to do. Even if they have activities in a book, which explains them clearly, some feel they couldn’t do them properly or explain the purpose of the activity.

Apart from feeling inadequate with the use of this technique, some teachers do not want to take the risk.

If teachers have not tried using a drama activity before both students and teachers could be reluctant to take the risk and just try it. Looking and feeling silly is a big barrier for teachers and students which is not easy to overcome” (ibid.).

Some other teachers do not consider role-play as a traditional style of teaching and even when the activity is recommended in the textbook they may not be able to carry it out. They are afraid they will appear unprofessional and even risk losing their job if they focus the lesson on “playing” instead of “serious study”. Yet other teachers who are “willing” to try out some drama or role-play activities are often frustrated with the materials needed for some games and the time it takes to understand a game and be able to lead it well (ibid.).
It can therefore be seen that a lack of the necessary drama resources can create a frustrating situation for a teacher who wants to practice the use of this technique. The use of role-play or drama does not, however, need any special talent as an actor or any theatre knowledge. The teacher who uses this teaching technique gets adept in it through practice. He/She finds that the students enjoy their language lessons better and get fluent in the language as time goes by. He/She is therefore motivated to carry on with the practice. In addition to the use of drama or role-play we are going to find out what the Cameroonian teacher of English as a foreign language thinks about the use of storytelling or folktales. First we would find out the frequency with which they use storytelling in their lessons, if they do so at all.

5.5 Frequency in the use of folktales

Storytelling has been the means by which cultures and societies have preserved and celebrated their memories, passed on their values and belief systems, entertained, and instructed from the beginning of time. Long before there were written records, storytellers taught through the oral tradition (Turner 2000). According to Pedersen (1995:1),

storytelling is the original form of teaching. There are still societies in which it is the only form of teaching. [...] A simple narrative will always be the cornerstone of the art of teaching. [...] The storyteller is always a teacher, and the teacher is always a storyteller

Storytelling is an indigenous technique of teaching that has been transferred to the foreign language class although the practice is not overtly carried out in Cameroonian schools. “Stories educate, illustrate, enlighten and inspire. They give relief from routine and stimulate the mind. They are a great motivator for teachers as well as students” (Pedersen 1995:7). Local literatures in English have been recommended for use in English language teaching (Elgar 1998) and folktales constitute a major part of local literature. They involve interactive learning and they provide lessons that are learned for a long time. They also stimulate the imagination (Smith 2003). Folktales abound in the Cameroonian society and some of them have been translated into the English language, which makes them readily available for use in the language class. Teachers of English as a foreign language can make great use of these folktales in their language classes. We are
thinking in this wise, about common folktales like “Why the Tortoise has a cracked shell” “Wanyeto and Bah”, “The Lion’s Share”, “How fire came to man”, The caged Lion and the Donkey”. There are also common tales like “Elephant of the Land, Elephant of the Sea and Tortoise”, “The Farmer and his Misfortune”, “Why the Lizard nods its Head”, “A girl and her wicked stepmother” “Why the Pig digs the Earth” and many others.

There are many activities that emanate from storytelling. Teachers can carry out activities like comprehension, exercises in phonetics, listening or oral activities, dramatisation and writing (Pedersen 1995). The use of storytelling therefore has enormous potentials as a language teaching technique. Teachers in Cameroonian schools were asked the frequency with which they use storytelling as a teaching technique or tell folktales in their language lessons. The results are shown in table 26.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>71.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know about the use of folktales to teach</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in table 26, there is not much use of the folktale in the English language lessons in Cameroonian schools. 3 teachers indicate that they do not know about the use of folktales to teach a language lesson. This does not just mean telling a folktale for amusement but also their subsequent analysis and accompanying activities for a language lesson. This is surprising since, apart for the Peace Corp19 volunteers, almost every other English language teacher in Cameroon is a Cameroonian or at least an African, part of whose culture is storytelling. The question then is whether these teachers tell any stories in their classes at all even if they are not related to a language lesson. Our guess will be that the teacher who does not know about the use of folktales for language teaching may be the one who hardly tells even an ordinary tale in class. We would agree with the fact that a teacher always has the tendency to ask questions about whatever story he/she tells.

19 The Peace Corp is an American group of youths who live and work in developing countries. They are involved in education, youth outreach, and community development. They introduce innovative teaching methodologies, encourage critical thinking in classrooms, and integrate issues like health education and environmental awareness into English, math, science and other subjects.
which could be related to language learning even if the story is just for the purposes of entertainment. The teacher who tells just ordinary folktales will therefore know about the use of folktales for language teaching even if he/she does not use it as a teaching technique.

The absence of folktales from the textbooks used in Cameroonian schools may be the reason why 64 (71.1%) of the teachers questioned admit that they never use any folktales in their language lessons. This group of teachers is however different from those who do not know about the use of folktales at all and may be much more prone to using this technique. These teachers may never use any folktales because they are not provided for in the textbooks, but may know about the benefits of using folktales in a language class. It goes without saying therefore that these teachers may implement the use of this technique if it is recommended in the textbooks.

Still in table 26, we find that 23 (25.6%) of the teachers questioned sometimes use folktales in their language lessons. Although the use of folktales is not recommended in the textbooks used in schools, as we will confirm when we analyse the textbooks, some teachers try to be creative and improve on their teaching. According to Simplicio (2003:1)

> good teachers, creative teachers are never satisfied with the status quo. They understand that past accomplishments do not guarantee future successes. Creative teachers are perpetually curious. They constantly seek new ways to improve their abilities and they eagerly explore alternative avenues that can lead them to greater insights

The Cameroonian teacher of English needs to be much more than creative to “be able to engage students, reinforce curriculum, meet standards expected and help enhance student performance” (ibid.). There have been little past accomplishments as seen from the numerous incompetent users of the English language in the Cameroonian society and from the performance of the students in their official exams (see table 8). The number of teachers who admit to using folktales in their language lessons are among the creative ones and should be encouraged by recommending the use of this technique in textbooks.

Although there is an abundance of folktales in the Cameroonian society and storytelling is a common indigenous technique of communication and a form of entertainment, we find that the technique of teaching English as a foreign language using folktales is not prominent in Cameroonian schools. This, in spite of the interest that the students show when a folktale is told in class and the linguistic and entertainment benefits the students may derive from it. Most teachers do not also consider the telling of
Cameroonian folktales a serious activity in the English language classroom. Some teachers erroneously consider folktales inferior to teaching a foreign language since they do not emanate from the target language culture. However, since there are a number of teachers who use folktales in their lessons sometimes, we should be able to find out how their students’ react to them. Tales differ from community to community and their presentation is different from teller to teller just like teaching differs from teacher to teacher. Though our expectations are that the students may receive the telling of folktales in their language lessons with some excitement, and the students themselves admit to it (see table 16), we still need to find out what the teachers think about their use, that is, how their students react to them.

5.5.1 Students’ reactions to folktales: the teachers’ perspective

Storytelling creates a lot of excitement among all listeners, be they adults or children and awakens their imagination. It is a form of entertainment that everyone likes to take part in. All storytellers adjust folktales to fit the audience. Teachers of English can adjust the tales to fit curricular and other needs of their students. Of course, this also depends on the skill of the storyteller. A good storyteller will always attract an audience that is ready to listen to him/her and enjoy his/her storytelling. A good teacher should therefore act like a good storyteller. When a teacher tells a story, he is expected to use role-play, imitating gestures and accents. He chips in jokes, and sometimes he adds a song\(^\text{20}\) to enliven, enhance and invigorate the class. The teacher who succeeds in using this technique finds that his classes get more and more lively and interesting and his students get more and more enthusiastic. The students look forward to another lesson when they have had an enjoyable one. Teachers in Cameroonian schools were asked what their students’ reactions are when they tell a story during their language lessons.

\(^\text{20}\) Most Cameroonian folktales have songs accompanying their telling and every storytelling session is a whole performance where the audience is expected to join in singing the chorus or join spontaneously in singing the whole song. That way, storytelling is elevated to the height of performing art. It is time to share feelings and a relaxed and happy relationship is shared by the storyteller and the audience. Singing itself helps to promote this relaxation and rapport is established between the storyteller and the audience. Transfer this situation to the language class, and the teacher may not need another technique with which to win over his students.
A student who enjoys listening to a language and using it has the urge and the incentive to learn that language. 11 (12.2%) of the teachers questioned think that their students enjoy the stories they tell in class if they are not related to a language lesson. Most students consider language learning a tedious exercise especially if it is associated with grammar. Most of these students will rather be entertained than be involved in the tediousness that is associated with language learning. It is therefore up to the language teacher to make his/her language lessons look less like work by making the students enjoy the lessons through storytelling and by gently introducing them to the tedious part of the lessons after that. Of course, no one likes what is considered work especially when it is related to studies and most foreign language learners consider learning a foreign language and particularly the grammar of the language a tedious exercise. However, it is certain that a student who is properly entertained through storytelling will like to continue learning the language even if he/she is doing so under difficult conditions. In fact, the entertainment which storytelling brings softens the tediousness that is involved in language learning. That way, students who enjoy storytelling only when it is not related to a lesson will take an interest in the English language lesson as a whole.

There is also the group of students who though they love listening to stories do not want to listen to anything else after the story. “Anything” is what is related to language learning or class work. 2 (2.2%) of the teachers indicate this. This is a very limited number compared to those students who enjoy the stories only if they are not related to a lesson. We can therefore assume that these students, like those of the 11

Table 25. Students’ reactions to Folktales as perceived by teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reaction to Folktales</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They enjoy the stories if they are not related to a lesson.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They don’t want to listen to anything else after the story</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are excited and want the lesson to continue.</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>64.4</td>
<td>81.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are completely bored</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
teachers who do not like it if the stories are related to a lesson will relax and take part in the language lesson when they are fully entertained. Of course, the only way in which they can enjoy these stories even better is to be able to listen to the stories more and that is if they can understand the language. Their eagerness to listen to stories and enjoy them will prompt them to take an interest in the language lesson. If the students find the language lessons boring like they normally do, stories should help to spice up their lessons, revive an interest in them and ensure that the language is retained. Stories can therefore motivate and entertain these students and help them take an interest in the language they are learning. Since the students are familiar with some of the stories that are told by the teachers, they recognise the sights and sounds in their language classrooms that excite and inspire them in their daily lives. Teaching/learning the language therefore becomes relevant and students’ enthusiasm and performance soars high. By telling their own stories, the students practice using their spoken language skills like they will do outside the class. In that way, even the students who do not want to listen to “anything else” after the storytelling are inclined to pay attention to the rest of the lesson and benefit from it.

We also see from table 27 that a large number of teachers questioned think that their students are excited when they listen to a story and want the lesson to continue. 58 (64.4%) of the teachers questioned think this way which is a good sign. This number is however surprising given the fact that only 23 teachers (see table 26) indicated that they use storytelling in their language lessons. Could it be that some of these teachers tell stories in class sometimes but do not relate them to language learning? Most traditional techniques of teaching English as a foreign language focus almost only on the students’ ability to build vocabulary through repetition and memorisation. These techniques produce mediocre results and frustrate the students. The teachers themselves grow less enthusiastic and demoralised. Storytelling can help uplift this frustration. When students enjoy a story, they are excited and eager to hear more. Without forcing it, their language develops and the morality of the teacher soars. The 58 (64.4%) teachers who find their students responsive to storytelling could therefore take advantage of this technique to improve on their teaching of English as a foreign language whether or not the technique is prescribed in the textbooks they use in schools.

The table shows a missing value of 19 (21.1%). This probably is the number of some of the teachers who either do not know about the use of folktales for language
teaching or never use folktales at all in their language lessons (see table 26). This number is quite small and hopefully the introduction of the use of folktales as a teaching technique in the textbooks used in Cameroonian schools will prompt teachers like these to adopt it. The benefits of teaching using storytelling are manifold and the teacher who succeeds in adopting this technique will find it beneficial.

It is positive to see that none of the teachers indicate that their students are completely bored when they use folktales in their language classes. This means that even the students who are not used to listening to folktales from their own homes take an interest in them at school. This also proves that every student loves storytelling and even those who do not usually find their language lessons interesting should love to listen to stories which will lead to an interest in learning the language. The use of folktales as a technique for the teaching of English as a foreign language can therefore be promoted in Cameroonian schools. From the above results we find that most students are interested in storytelling. There should be various reasons for this. The teachers were therefore asked why they think their students love stories.

5.5.2. **Reasons why some teachers think their students love folktales**

While textbooks and other classroom activities play an important role in language teaching, the language presented is often contrived since its primary purpose is learning the language function or grammar point being presented, not communication. Storytelling is an effective technique to present and elicit natural and less contrived language in the EFL class (Gaffney 2001: 1).

From this researcher’s experience as a teacher, a story told at the beginning of a language lesson is an excellent way of capturing the students’ attention. Because of the style in which folktales are told, that is, through oral communication, children and even adults are drawn to them. They perform a great function in oral communication since language is used but much more than language is the use of gestures, movement, facial expressions and songs that accompany their telling. For this reason they make for great teaching tools especially in learning a foreign language (Manon Schwertfeger). Folktales energise children’s imaginations. “The pleasure and the benefit from storytelling extends beyond mere entertainment. Storytelling humanises children; it makes them think of those things that make us distinctly human: questions of right and wrong, questions of justice” (Mollel 2002:1). Storytelling therefore makes for a great teaching technique in the English as a foreign language class. Teachers of English as a foreign language in
Cameroonian schools were asked why they think some of their students love folktales. Their responses included among others the fact that the students feel entertained, stories help them forget the “real” lesson, they can retell the stories and some think they can learn some language from them.

Table 26. Reasons why teachers think some students love folktales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They can retell the stories</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They feel entertained</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>75.6</td>
<td>76.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stories help them forget the “real” lesson</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They know they can learn some language from the stories</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>98.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing System.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Storytelling at its best is mutual creation. Children or adults listen and, out of the words they hear, create their own mental images; this opening of the minds’ eyes develops the imagination (Baker and Greene 1977). Teachers gave various reasons for why they think students generally love storytelling. One of the teachers thinks students love stories because they can retell them. This number is very low and therefore almost negligible which means that very few teachers share this opinion. All students are taken in by stories but retelling the stories depends on the level. From the intermediate to the upper intermediate and the proficiency levels a student could be expected to love stories because he/she can retell them. Although retelling of stories is encouraged at all levels, this skill needs nurturing especially in the junior secondary where many students feel unfit to retell a story because of their limited vocabulary. They can hardly be expected therefore to love stories for the purpose of being able to retell them and therefore the small number of teachers who thinks this way. It also shows how much talking the students are likely to be doing in class since only one of the teachers thinks students love stories because they can retell them, which is a speaking activity. From experience, very few students participate in language class activities in Cameroonian schools which shows
why very few of them would even love storytelling for the purpose of being able to retell them.

Not only do folktales told in a language class help in the learning of the language but they also entertain. As many as 68 (75.6%) of the teachers questioned think that their students love stories because they feel entertained. The primary goal of every good teacher is to entertain the students in class so that they feel at ease and relaxed enough to be able to learn a new language. If most of the teachers find that their students feel entertained by stories, then they can carry out their lessons with ease by using the storytelling technique in their language classes. Stories also encourage reading and a learner who gets entertained by stories will make an effort to read them and therefore practice the reading of the language in which the stories are written. However, 14 (15.6%) of the teachers think that stories help their students to forget the “real” lesson. The “real” lesson is the “tedious” grammar that the students always associate with their English language lessons. These students could be taught to achieve a double benefit by using the storytelling technique. They could be entertained and at the same time be made to enjoy their language lessons without “forgetting the real lesson”. There are many activities that are associated with storytelling as a teaching technique. They include pre-, while-, and post storytelling activities, dramatising situations and acting out characters in the stories, playing grammar and vocabulary games from the language used in the stories, among a host of other activities. When these activities are added to just listening to a story and getting entertained the students will learn to appreciate their lessons in English as a foreign language and get enthusiastic in learning it.

Storytelling should not just be limited to the planned lesson, especially if the purpose is to entertain the students and put them in a good mood to participate in the ongoing lesson. A teacher can tell a story at the beginning of a lesson, during the lesson to change the pace or change the activity, or at the end of the lesson to send the students to their homes in a lighter mood. Like in the indigenous storytelling setting, the listeners come back the next day asking for more if the previous storytelling session ended happily. The classroom situation could be likened to the indigenous storytelling situation where a student who is properly entertained during his/her language lessons eagerly looks forward to taking part in the next lesson. This way, the students acquire some linguistic gain from the class activity with the use of folktales. It is not quite clear that the students like stories because they think they will make some linguistic gain from it or they know
they can learn some language from it as indicated by 6 (6.7%) of the teachers questioned. It is true however, that every language teacher’s aim is to make the students learn the language and therefore the use of the various activities in language teaching/learning.

Some students actually show the eagerness to learn a language and this may be manifested in their participation in their class activities. The 6 teachers who indicate that their students like stories because they know they can learn some language from them may have these kind of participatory students in their language classes. It is positive to see that some students know they can learn a language from listening and reading folktales. This is an encouragement for the language teachers to continue using this technique or will prompt the less enthusiastic ones who are only trying to adopt the technique in their language lessons to do so. Since the teachers know that their students have something to gain from the use of folktales in their language lessons they will not ignore the technique completely or they will make an effort to adopt it. When this activity is recommended in the textbooks that are used in schools for the teaching of English as a foreign language even the most reluctant teacher will be convinced they need to adopt it as a teaching technique.

The table has one missing value, which could probably be any one of the teachers who never uses folktales or one who does not know anything about using folktales to teach a language and can therefore not tell why students like them. It is also important to note that even the teachers who do not use folktales to teach the English language in their classes are able to testify to the fact that students love stories and even give reasons why. This indicates that no one is oblivious of the existence of folktales in the Cameroonian society and every teacher has the capability of determining their importance in the teaching/learning of English as a foreign language. It also shows that this technique is not a completely strange one and could be adopted from the indigenous society into the language classroom with ease. Our conviction is therefore that students love stories and that their teachers know that. It also means that the teachers could be convinced to use this technique in class if it is recommended. However, it may be worthwhile finding out whether these teachers are all prepared to use folktales in their language lessons if the technique was adopted for the teaching of English as a foreign language. What would teachers rather do if they had a choice, tell folktales in their language classes or not? We are going to examine that from the responses of the teachers questioned.
5.5.3. Teachers’ choice in the use of Folktales

Teaching of English as a foreign language with the use of folktales could be adopted in Cameroonian schools having seen the potential benefits that could be derived from it. However the question is whether the teachers would like to adopt this teaching technique in their language classes. Teachers were therefore asked what they would rather do if they had a choice of whether or not to tell folktales in their language classes. Their responses are seen in table 29.

Table 27. Teacher’s choice in whether or not to tell folktales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If I had a choice I would:</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not tell folktales at all</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never think of telling folktales</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell folktales sometimes</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>95.6</td>
<td>95.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>95.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is interesting to find that if they were given the choice of whether or not to tell folktales in their language classes, no teacher of English as a foreign language in Cameroon will refuse to do so. None of the teachers indicates they will not tell folktales at all if they had a choice. None also indicates that they never think of telling folktales in their language classes. This confirms the fact that most teachers know about folktales and know they could be used in the language classes but either need to be trained to use them or be convinced to use them by making a recommendation in the textbooks they use in schools to teach. 86 (95.6%) of the teachers questioned indicate that they would rather tell folktales sometimes in their language lessons if they were given a choice. This is encouraging even though very few of the teachers use this technique presently. However, the willingness with which they are ready to adopt it shows that they may be able to use it with ease. Teaching English as a foreign language in Cameroonian schools may therefore be made easier if folktales are used as a teaching technique.

Teaching techniques like the use of folktales ease the language teacher’s work when he/she finds that the students are not only willing to listen to him but are willing to take part in class activities by telling their own stories or retelling the ones that have been
told to them. It takes off the weight from the teacher’s shoulders of having to do all the
talking in class and eases the burden of teaching. It creates a lighter atmosphere in the
class when the students are ready to try out their spoken language and even their written
language when they need to write their own stories or rewrite the story the teacher had told
before. It also encourages reading since most of the students are eager to read the stories
from their textbooks and any other ones they may come across in the English language.
Singing that accompanies storytelling spices the language lesson and puts the atmosphere
in the class in a lighter mood. That way learning a foreign language becomes less tedious
and the students are more enthusiastic.

The idea of using folktales as a teaching technique enjoys the popularity of most
of the teachers who were questioned although this activity is still not practised by the
majority of the teachers. The popularity and readiness with which these teachers identify
with this technique may come from the fact that it is a popular entertainment and teaching
activity in the indigenous Cameroonian society, which no one associates with stress.
Most of these teachers would have in one way or the other taken part in a storytelling
session in their homes. Its adoption for the teaching of English as a foreign language may
therefore be welcomed by most of them. There is a possibility that the recommendation
of this activity in the textbooks used for the teaching of English in the Cameroonian
schools will help to make it even more popular and many more teachers will find its use
beneficial.

Table 29 has 4 missing items. These may be the teachers who never use folktales
or who do not know anything at all about the use of folktales for the teaching of English.
They do not therefore have an opinion in the use of this technique for the teaching of
English as a foreign language and will need to learn. This means that if the use of
folktales was adopted as a teaching technique and its preparation started in the Teacher
Training College many teachers will favour it and will like to use it in their language
classes once they start teaching. This will make it much easier for every teacher to use the
technique and its use will not be forced on the teachers who are just coming to the field of
teaching. What about the older teachers, one may ask. The most adequate way of
introducing any innovative teaching techniques to the teachers in the field is through
seminars and refresher courses. The innovation of teaching techniques can therefore be
brought to the older teachers in the field by organising refresher courses and seminars
where the teachers who have not had the opportunity of learning about these techniques
during their teacher training will be able to learn about them. Even though a good number of teachers indicate that they would love to tell folktales in their language lessons if they are given a choice, teachers were asked how they feel about storytelling as a technique of teaching the English language. The purpose was to find out if they feel at ease doing storytelling in class together with the activities that accompany a language lesson or if they find storytelling such a difficult exercise to carry out that its presentation will be a hindrance to adopting it as a teaching technique.

5.5.4. How Teachers feel about telling folktales

Everyone has an inner ability to experience joy from some pleasing entertainment. Storytelling in the language class brings out joy from the teacher and the students in a professional and pedagogically sound way since it enables the students to listen to an exciting tale and learn a language. It also helps the students to learn a moral lesson from the tale and learn about the culture from where the tale emanates. The question demanded a knowledge of how the Cameroonian teacher of English feels about using folktales in his/her language class and whether or not they find it easier to use storytelling in the language class. Teachers indicated that folktales are difficult to tell and that the students are not interested in any story that is not found in the textbook that is used in class. Some teachers indicated that the stories are properly received by the learners if they are properly presented in the language class. The results are shown in table 30.

Table 28. How teachers feel about telling folktales in the language classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequent</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Folktales are difficult to tell</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are not interested in any folktale that is not found in their textbook</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are properly received if they are properly presented</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>75.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>98.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21 Culture, even within the Cameroonian society is hardly homogenous. There are a variety of cultures from which the students and teachers come, though they all are in the same country. Folktales from these different cultures will enable the learners to learn more about the diverse culture of their country, even though the tales are always varieties of the same tale told in every indigenous society.
Although many teachers indicate that they do not tell any stories in their language classes (see table 26), there is the feeling that most of them know what it is to tell a story in classes like they have in Cameroonian schools. Folktales abound in the Cameroonian society and storytelling sessions are a regular activity in the indigenous society. One can, however, imagine that its adoption in the language classroom cannot be as easy as telling a story in a village arena or to a group of indigenous people gathered in a village hut in the evening for the purpose. The telling of folktales in the language classes could be a difficult exercise to some teachers because of the way the language lessons are carried out in Cameroonian schools, the size of the classes, and the limitations of some of the teachers (both in language and self-confidence).

From table 30, we see that two of the teachers questioned reveal that folktales are difficult to tell. The question is whether the folktales are the same ones that these teachers know already or the ones they have to learn to be able to tell them to their students. Could it also be that these two teachers are incapable of bringing their students under control to be able to tell them an entertaining story, which they will find enjoyable? The sizes of Cameroonian classes will exasperate even the most patient teacher who needs to adopt a teaching technique he/she is not used to. Also because of the size of the class, the teacher may not have enough confidence to carry out an activity which looks more like entertainment than the traditional teaching he is used to. This may therefore prove to be a difficult venture to some of the teachers, like the two who have so indicated.

Some teachers, like poor storytellers in the indigenous society, may not be able to make their storytelling convincing enough to hold the students’ attention and therefore the difficulty they find in telling even the folktales that emanate from their own society. The problem could also be one of telling the story from the language they first heard it in, their mother tongue, to the English language given that some English language teachers have a limitation to communicating in the English language, even though they are teachers of that same language. This is the reason why some of the teachers stick to repeating the grammar rules to the students and having the students learn them by heart and apply them to their grammar exercises. Of course, the teachers who teach this way...
will find it difficult to tell even the simplest folktales to the students and find it difficult
to make the students tell their own tales. It would therefore come as useful if these stories
are printed in the textbooks that are used in schools to teach/learn the English language.
These would be tales that would have been translated into the English language already,
and there exists a host of them in the Cameroonian society. This will mean that the
teacher does not have to do the translation from his/her mother tongue.

What, one may ask, about the students who come to the class with the knowledge
of stories only in their mother tongue? The teacher may find it much easier listening to
them and modelling their English in the process of telling the folktales they bring from
their homes. This makes for the practice of their spoken language and helps them to
achieve fluency in it. So a teacher who finds folktales difficult to tell could read the ones
that are recommended in the textbooks to the students and carry out all the recommended
language learning activities from the use of the storytelling technique. The students will
still find this enjoyable and helpful in learning the language and eventually, the teacher
will be able to use his own stories in class. This may lead to collecting, together with the
stories from the students, a pool of stories that will further help the whole class.

Storytelling is basically an oral activity even before reading and writing activities
are brought in. Oral communication and fluency can therefore be learned from it. If
storytelling is properly carried out in a language classroom, every student would love to
listen to the story and would love to participate by telling his or her own stories. Through
storytelling, students develop oral skills and self-confidence in talking to people outside
their language classrooms. This means that the teacher can teach with a folktale that is
not necessarily found in the textbook used in school, everything being equal. It is up to
the teacher therefore to make the students interested in any story and not just the one that
is found in the textbooks they use in class. Storytelling promotes oral language
development, creativity and imagination. It can motivate students to wide-reading and in
the process come in contact with world literatures written in the language they are
learning, and develop an appreciation for other worldviews (Stotts: 1999). A good
number of teachers, 68 (75.6%) indicate that stories are properly received if they are
properly presented. This gives us the idea that the success of storytelling as a teaching
technique depends on the individual teacher. Most children and even adults love stories
and it is up to the teacher to present the stories properly to the students.
Storytelling can provide a lively vehicle for developing the oral and reading skills of the students and also develops their confidence in oral communication. Of course students are always likely to copy the example of their teachers and a good teacher, like a good storyteller, inspires the learners and makes them want to listen to him/her. In language learning, the learners are involved in “comprehending, manipulating, producing, and interacting in the target language, while their attention is principally focused on meaning than form” (Nunan 1989). Learners of the English language can comprehend when they listen to a good and entertaining story, manipulate by retelling the story they have listened to, and produce their own stories in the target language.

Table 30 has one missing value, which could represent any of the teachers who do not tell any folktales in class or who have no idea on how folktales could be used to teach a language lesson and therefore have no opinion about how it feels using them. It is certain that when the use of folktales for the teaching of English as a foreign language is promoted in Cameroonian schools many more teachers will be convinced about the potentials of the use of this technique. People of all ages love to listen to and tell folktales and using folktales in the language classroom engages the interest and intellect of the teacher and the learners, a technique which every language teacher will like to adopt. We have established the fact that language lessons in which the teacher uses stories and songs to teach help raise the enthusiasm of the learner and makes teaching much more effective and fun. We have also seen that some of these teachers never use these techniques unless they are prescribed in the textbooks that are used in schools. Some other teachers indicate that some of the students do not want to listen to any story that is not found in their textbooks. We are therefore going to find out from the teachers if the textbooks they use in schools provide for the use of stories and songs, these being essential for the adoption of this technique and for the enhancement of student enthusiasm to learn the language.

5.6. Teachers’ opinion about textbooks used in schools in relation to folktales and songs

The textbook has a vital and positive part to play in the everyday job of teaching and learning and the importance of the textbook becomes greater in periods of change of teaching techniques. Textbooks can make a great contribution towards achieving success in educational innovation (Hutchinson and Torres 1994). With the help of textbooks
teachers of English as a foreign language can adjust their approaches to teaching to local realities. Indigenous techniques of communication can facilitate this adjustment, because they are interactive techniques that are useful in the English as a foreign language classroom. Recalling songs and stories is usually easier for the learners than remembering other activities that were carried out during a language lesson and they can be used as a means of enlivening English language classes. Teachers in developing countries face many challenges including large size classes, lack of materials and resources and a low level of student interest (Witton-Davies). The use if indigenous techniques of communication like songs and stories therefore helps to make up for this acute lack of resources.

The promotion of any innovative techniques can be effective only if the use of those techniques is prescribed in the textbooks used in schools where the teachers depend solely on textbooks for their teaching. It is for this reason that teachers were asked if the textbooks they use in schools provide for the use of stories and songs. Their responses are shown in table 31.

Table 29. Teachers’ responses about textbooks used in schools in relation to folktales and songs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some songs but no folktales</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few songs but no folktales</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>65.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some songs and folktales</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of them</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Singing songs in the language one is learning is a wonderful way of getting into the mood of learning the language, its culture and rhythms. It is especially helpful for memorizing new words, and for perfecting pronunciation without the mechanical drill that usually accompanies most lessons (Lesley: 2000). Stories and songs are therefore an outstanding way of teaching/learning a foreign language and these should be found in the textbooks that are used in schools to teach this language. As indicated previously, very few teachers in Cameroonian schools use either stories or songs to teach English as a foreign language (See table 26). This is attributable to some reasons but most especially to the fact that these techniques are not recommended in the textbooks that are used in
Cameroonian schools. As shown in table 31, this is confirmed by 11 (12.2%) of the teachers questioned who indicate that some songs are provided but no folktales. 59 (65.6%) of the teachers questioned also confirm that there are a few\textsuperscript{22} songs but no folktales.

It can therefore be seen that the textbooks that are used in Cameroonian schools for the teaching of English as a foreign language provide for no folktales as indicated by 77.8% of the teachers questioned. No doubt most of the teachers never think about the use of folktales for the teaching of English as a foreign language and most of the students never benefit from the use of this technique. It also shows that the spoken aspects from which the students are supposed to benefit by telling their own folktales in class is neglected. This lack of practice in class indicates why most of the students hardly use the language either in or out of their language classes. It also reveals why most of the learners do not have the urge to read their English language textbooks seeing that they do not contain any interesting folktales to encourage their reading. However, 5 (5.6%) of the teachers questioned indicate that the textbooks contain some folktales and songs. The number is quite low in relation to all the teachers questioned. Their results will however be confirmed when the textbooks that are used in Cameroonian schools are examined for the purpose.

It is also surprising that 15 (16.6%) of the teachers questioned indicate that neither folktales nor songs are provided for in the textbooks that they use in the teaching of English in Cameroonian schools. Singing and storytelling are always considered a junior secondary activity in Cameroonian schools seeing the teachers of the senior classes do not either consider it a serious approach to language teaching or are ignorant of how to use it successfully. It goes without saying that those who are in charge of writing books that are used for the teaching of English in Cameroon and who are teachers themselves only provide this activity for the junior secondary. One can therefore deduce that a teacher who teaches English only in the senior secondary classes would think that textbooks used in the secondary schools do not provide for these techniques at all. Of course this also means that the teachers never use this technique in their classes or depend on the textbook for guidance to carry out a lot of their activities in class.

\textsuperscript{22} This researcher regrets the use of “a few” and “some” here which created confusion among respondents. However, respondents who demanded to know the difference where told to consider “some” as a larger amount to “a few”.
The 15 teachers may therefore all be teachers of the senior secondary classes whose textbooks have no traces of folktales or songs. This is also verifiable and would be confirmed when the textbooks are examined for these techniques.

Folktales and songs are therefore not a common phenomenon in the English language classes in Cameroonian schools. A few teachers have, however, indicated that they use them sometimes to teach. Still within the use of indigenous techniques we are going to find out what teachers think about the use of riddles and proverbs for the teaching of English as a foreign language. We are going to find out if they use riddles and proverbs at all in their English language lessons. The purpose is to find out how their students react to the use of these techniques, whether they find it difficult teaching with riddles and proverbs from the African or from the European or western society. We shall also try to find out what the teachers will prefer to do if they had a choice of whether or not to use riddles and proverbs for the teaching of English as a foreign language.

5.7. Teachers’ reactions to the use of riddles and proverbs

Oral literature including stories, dramas, histories, myths, songs, riddles and proverbs among others, is frequently used to educate and entertain both adults and children in most indigenous societies. Riddles and proverbs are a major form of folk literature and an indigenous technique of communication. They are, however, no longer confined to oral expression but have appeared in written literatures for a long time. They can therefore be used in the English as a foreign language classroom to help raise the enthusiasm of the learners. Riddles and proverbs are verbal arts that are used to educate young people in every indigenous society and which could be used to improve on the learners’ communication in a foreign language class. Proverbs are used to make a specific point with brevity. They add colour and spice to language. For adults, they serve “as garnishments to add punch or richness” to their speeches, or writing style. For children, they serve to drive home a moral lesson in an “interesting and pithy manner” (Mahad 2003). By learning proverbs in a particular language learners see common objects, events and people in a new and meaningful light and by learning the proverbs from their immediate society, they get a better and deeper understanding of the culture of their society, albeit in a foreign language. Proverbs are always used to end a folktale and to
bring out the moral in the tale. Thus proverbs can be combined with folktales to teach a foreign language just like it is done in the indigenous society to teach the children their first language and the art of conversation.

Riddles on the other hand are puzzles that demand clever answers and that can be used as brainteasers for language learners. They are an essential component of humour and are a form of guessing game that has been part of folklore of most indigenous cultures. Riddles can be presented in different ways to language learners and can serve as a teaching technique for all levels of language learning. Riddles and proverbs can therefore play a major role for the teaching/learning of English as a foreign language. With all these potentials taken into consideration, teachers in Cameroonian schools were asked how often they use riddles and proverbs in their language lessons.

5.7.1. **Frequency with which teachers use riddles and proverbs in their language lessons**

The use of riddles and proverbs as a foreign language teaching technique is not a frequent activity among the teachers of English in Cameroonian schools. Most of the teachers hardly consider them a proper teaching technique and many do not know about their use. Riddles and proverbs have, however, been proved to be an effective means of teaching learners a language not just in the indigenous society but for the teaching/learning of a foreign language (Collis: 1996). Teachers of English in Cameroonian schools should be able to realise this and try to adopt the teaching technique to improve on their learners’ enthusiasm. They were therefore asked how often they use riddles and proverbs in their language lessons, if they do so at all. The results are shown in table 32.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When they are recommended</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>53.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know about the use of riddles and proverbs to teach a language</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 32 shows that only 3 (3.3%) of the teachers questioned sometimes teach their language lessons using riddles and proverbs. This is a very low number given the frequent use of riddles and proverbs in the traditional African society in general and the Cameroonian society in particular. This number may be low because understanding riddles and proverbs, their meanings and their use in everyday language to describe feelings can be very challenging for both teachers and learners. This may therefore be the reason why as small a number as 3 teachers only, use riddles and proverbs sometimes.

The number of teachers who use this technique may also be extremely low because the use of this technique is not recommended in the textbooks that are used in schools for the teaching of English. Since most teachers rely on the recommendations of the textbook to carry out an activity in class, the absence of recommendation may see them never ever trying out a new technique. This means that the 3 teachers who use this activity sometimes do so from their own initiative. It may also be that these teachers use riddles and proverbs in their everyday speech and so they can relate it to the teaching of English as a foreign language. This is a commendable effort and these teachers may help to encourage other teachers to the use of this technique if it is recommended for use in schools. Without relying on the textbook used in class however, the teacher who finds fun in using riddles and proverbs will come across a wide variety, which he/she can use in the English language class. These maybe riddles with words with more than one meaning, riddles that trick you, riddles that use numbers and logic, riddles that use idioms and many more. They could even be riddles from the traditional society that have been translated into the English language and which have a bearing on the learners’ memory and his/her environment, representing the images and sounds that are familiar to him/her.

12 (13.3%) of the teachers indicate that they use riddles and proverbs when their use is recommended. This is the recommendation in the textbooks used in schools, which act as most teachers’ guide for teaching the students. This, however, is an unfortunate situation if related to the textbooks used in Cameroonian schools for the teaching of English as a foreign language. From the experience of this researcher, these activities are hardly recommended in these textbooks, and this will be proved when the textbooks are examined later in this study. Even if their use is recommended, which is hardly the case, there are very few examples from which the teachers can work. Very few teachers are
consequently ever going to use them in their language classes if they have to depend on the recommendations from the textbooks. However, their recommendation in this study will come as an innovation to the teaching techniques in Cameroonian schools, which hopefully should be applied by the policy makers. When these recommendations are made in the textbooks used in schools all the teachers will be made aware of their use as a teaching technique and most of them will fetch from their personal store of riddles and proverbs that they use in their everyday communication. Just like folktales, there is an abundance of riddles and proverbs in the Cameroonian society. Their use will therefore help to enhance the skill in communication in English of the learner of English as a foreign language.

Although the use of riddles and proverbs is not a very popular technique for the teaching of English as a foreign language in Cameroonian schools, this technique helps create awareness of the use of the language in the learners and contributes to their use of the language in a very skilful way. 48 teachers (53.3%) reveal that they never use riddles and proverbs in their language classes. These may be the teachers who know about riddles and proverbs but probably find them difficult to use because of the complicated language associated with them. This number is different from the 27 (30%) who do not know about the use of this technique at all. It is difficult to tell exactly why these teachers do not know at all about the use of riddles and proverbs to teach the English language, although it could be admitted that some of them do not use them even in their everyday communication. However, because this is probably not in the curriculum in the Teacher Training College, the teachers do not know how to apply them to their language lessons. It may also be that those teachers who know about the use of this technique for language teaching find it difficult to teach the students especially at a level where the students are not very confident and familiar with the use of strange forms. It could also be the case where the vocabulary of the learners is still so low that it does not permit them to produce these forms. Proverbs need a particular level of language understanding for the learners to be able to understand and use them.

Riddles and proverbs are essential for a true understanding of the English language. Once the students understand their use, they will forge ahead to reading in the language and using them in their conversation. There are a good number of activities that can be carried out from the use of riddles and proverbs for the teaching of the English language. Matching proverbs and explaining the meaning of proverbs can start a lively
discussion even in the most dormant language class. Riddles and proverbs can be read out as part of listening activity. Students can be made to compare Cameroonian proverbs with those from other societies and cultures, especially the culture of the target language. Even the junior classes could be made to learn from riddles and proverbs by making them draw pictures from them. Students can create stories from proverbs and make their own proverbs from the stories they listen to in class, all contributing in one way or the other to promote their learning of the language. All these activities help the students to learn the language and promote all the aspects of language learning which include reading, writing, listening and speaking.

The use of riddles and proverbs should help to bring some fresh life into the monotony and boredom that accompanies most language classes in Cameroonian schools. It is the duty of every teacher to make his/her language lessons interesting and enjoyable. The more he/she does this, the more the students are likely to develop an interest and enthusiasm in learning the language. This is reason to believe that when these innovative techniques are introduced into Cameroonian schools, they will go a long way to improve the enthusiasm of the learners of English as a foreign language, which enthusiasm is now lacking among the learners. We should hope that although very few of the teachers questioned use riddles and proverbs in their English language lessons, they may all the same be able to tell us about their students’ reactions when they use them.

5.7.2 Students’ attitude to the use of riddles and proverbs: the teachers’ perspective

Students react in different ways to different situations in class and to different teaching techniques. The use of riddles and proverbs to teach English as a foreign language is not common among Cameroonian teachers of English although their use in everyday speech is prevalent in the society. Since most teachers do not use riddles and proverbs regularly, their students are bound to react to them differently and probably negatively. However, we would like to find out how the students react to the few teachers who attempt to use this technique in their language lessons. The results are shown in table 33.
Table 31. Students’ reactions to the use of riddles and proverbs: teachers’ perspective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They don’t understand anything about riddles and proverbs</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are interested but find them difficult to use</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>73.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They don’t know anything about riddles and proverbs and are not interested</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>93.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing system</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in table 31, 13 (14.4%) of the teachers questioned think that their students do not understand anything about riddles and proverbs. Riddles and proverbs are not like every straightforward language. They need some unravelling for most learners to be able to understand and even enjoy using them. Proverbs need a particular level of understanding and can therefore be used only at certain levels of language learning. However, riddles can be used at all levels and many learners enjoy unravelling the meaning that is hidden in them. The teachers who find that their students do not understand anything about riddles and proverbs may just be using the wrong ones or using them at the wrong levels. It goes without saying that since they are not commonly used in Cameroonian schools, the teacher who tries to use them once and encounters failure just abandons them and may think that the technique is not applicable to his/her class.

Some other teachers think that the students do not know anything about riddles and proverbs and are not interested in them. Riddles and proverbs are an integral part of every indigenous community’s speech and many people use them in everyday language. All the students who learn English as a foreign language in Cameroonian schools are French-speaking students and they should be familiar with riddles and proverbs in this language and in their first languages or their mother tongues. It is therefore surprising that some students do not know anything about riddles and proverbs as reported by (10%) of the teachers questioned. However, their use in the language classroom may come as a strange technique to them, especially if they are not properly presented. That may be the reason why some students are not interested in them. Since riddles and proverbs are
presented in some complicated language that needs unravelling, many students find their use strange.

The use of riddles and proverbs like every other technique demands the special skill of the teacher who him/herself must be convinced of what he/she is doing to be able to impart the knowledge and enthusiasm to the learners. 62 (68.9%) of the teachers think that their students are interested in riddles and proverbs but find them difficult to use. This result is intriguing given the fact that most of the teachers indicated that they do not use riddles and proverbs to teach (see table 31). These could be the teachers who have tried to use riddles and proverbs and found that their students find them difficult and therefore abandoned them. This means that there is some dormant knowledge among the teachers about the use of riddles and proverbs for language teaching that needs to be reawakened. Teachers need to be instructed on how to carry out these activities in their language classes and certainly many of them will come to like the technique, use it with enthusiasm and impart the enthusiasm to their students. Riddles and proverbs can find their proper place in the language teaching techniques that are used in Cameroonian schools. From the results got from the teachers, there is some knowledge among the teachers on the use of this technique. However, they do not use it probably for reasons, which may include the fact that they are not aware of how to use them in their language classes and therefore need to be drilled on how to do so. It may also be because this technique is not recommended in the textbooks and so they are not compelled to use it.

There are a total of 6 missing entries in table 33. This number could represent some of the teachers who never use riddles and proverbs or who do not know about their use at all in the language class. These may therefore not be able to offer any opinion on the reactions of their students. Having established the importance of the use of riddles and proverbs in teaching English as a foreign language, these teachers may come to join in the use of these innovative techniques. The use of riddles and proverbs is therefore a potential technique that could be developed for use in Cameroonian schools. To find out if teachers could be convinced on the use of riddles and proverbs in their language lessons, teachers were asked what their own reactions are to the proposed use of this technique.
5.7.3 **Teachers’ reactions to the use of riddles and proverbs**

There are different techniques that are used for language teaching and teachers react differently them. Some of them are popular among the teachers while others like the use of riddles and proverbs are quite unpopular given the number of teachers who try to use them (see table 31). Some of these techniques are yet unknown and are not considered real teaching techniques as they are removed from the usual technique which the teachers use in their everyday teaching. When questioned on how they feel about riddles and proverbs for language teaching, the teachers gave different reactions. Some of them think riddles and proverbs are difficult to explain and they make teaching a language point more complicated, while others think they are easy to teach as seen in table 34.

Table 32. Teachers’ reactions to the use of riddles and proverbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They are difficult to explain</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They make teaching a language point more complicated</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are easy to teach</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>93.3%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing system</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In table 31 above, only three teachers indicated that they use riddles and proverbs sometimes. However, we find that many more teachers have reactions to the use of this technique in language teaching. The fact that as many as 23 (25.6%) of the teachers find them difficult to explain means that they have tried sometime or the other to use riddles and proverbs in their language classes. This difficulty in using them may be the reason why very few of the teachers use them presently. However, riddles and proverbs could be as easy to use as any language teaching technique if the teachers concentrate in using them. This means that the teachers should be made to see the purpose for which they should be used in their language classes and the benefits they and their students can derive from them. Since many Cameroonian teachers are used to using riddles and
proverbs from their first languages or their mother tongue, they should be able to transfer this knowledge to their language classes.

Some 25 (27.8%) of the teachers questioned think that riddles and proverbs make teaching a language point more complicated. By their very nature riddles and proverbs are complicated and need unravelling to be able to get the meaning from them. However riddles and proverbs as used in the indigenous society are always used to make a specific point with brevity and they add colour and spice to the language. Teachers of English should be able to adopt this brevity to make a language point in class. It is possible to make the use of riddles and proverbs in the English as a foreign language class easier to use by bringing in the conciseness that is common of them in their daily use. They could be made less complicated when learners are trained to use them at an early age and get used to unravelling the meaning that is hidden in them. Students enjoy these challenges and should enjoy the lessons in which such challenges are posed to them. Of course when the enthusiasm catches up with the rest of the class, the teacher him/herself should be able to have a relaxed time in class where the students are all eager to participate in the class activities, a reaction that is now seriously lacking among the learners of English as a foreign language in Cameroon.

A good number of teachers questioned indicate that riddles and proverbs are easy to teach. This is indicated by 36 (40%) of the teachers, yet just 3 of the teachers (see table 31) indicated that they sometimes use riddles and proverbs in their language lessons. Could it be that these teachers know about the use of riddles and proverbs as a teaching activity but are reluctant to use it? What is the reason why most teachers refuse to use a potentially reliable technique of teaching in the language class? These and many more questions we may continue to ask. However, the answer lies in the fact that many of these teachers are not encouraged in the use of this technique from their training schools. They may not have been trained in their training colleges to use them and are therefore sceptical about the outcome if they should begin their use in their language classes. It could also be because these activities like the use of storytelling and folktales are not recommended in the textbooks that are used in schools. Since most teachers rely heavily on the textbook, it becomes complicated for them to carry out a class activity that is not recommended in the textbook they use to teach. Sometimes this is for fear of disappovement from their students, their heads of department and even their colleagues.
They therefore need to be reassured on the use of this kind of technique or its adoption for the teaching of a foreign language.

Table 34 shows 6 missing values. These may all be teachers who do not know about the use of riddles and proverbs as a language teaching technique and so do not have any reaction about them. They may also be teachers who have once tried to use riddles and proverbs, found that the students are not interested in them and abandoned them. Having established the fact that the use of riddles and proverbs is a teaching technique with potential benefits, even the reluctant teachers may find some benefit from them and adopt them in their language classes. Their recommendation in the textbooks used in schools from which they are presently absent, as will be confirmed when the textbooks are examined, will also go a long way to encourage even the reluctant teachers to use them.

Having seen that some teachers are interested in the use of riddles and proverbs, even though very few of them use them presently, we are going to find out from the teachers the kind of riddles they prefer, riddles drawn from the African milieu or those from the European milieu. This will help in making recommendations for the use of more of the riddles that the teachers think they are more comfortable with in their language classes and which they think their students will enjoy learning.

5.7.4 Riddles and proverbs that teachers find difficult to teach

A language teacher should be able to develop awareness in the learners of the value of cultural diversity in language learning. However, the same learners should be assisted by the teacher to maintain and identify with their mother culture. While it is inevitable for an English as a foreign language learner in Cameroon to study the culture of the target language, the learner can do this easier by learning the language through his mother culture. Language can develop some local colour so that its teaching can be motivating and therefore understood by its learners (Saville-Troike: 1989). Riddles and proverbs in English from the Cameroonian society form an aspect of this mother culture and have the local colour that the students can identify with and whose meaning they can grasp quickly. A few teachers have indicated that they use riddles and proverbs to teach and we have accepted the fact that riddles and proverbs have a great potential as a language teaching technique to make the students active and participate in the language
class. Teachers were accordingly asked what riddles and proverbs they find difficult to use in their language classes. The reason being that since teachers are bound to use this technique in teaching and since they should be able to promote both the culture of the learner and that of the target language, they should be able to begin with what they find easier to teach. If they think that they find it easier to teach riddles and proverbs from the African than from the European milieu, they could begin the use of this technique with them. Having started with their mother culture, they can proceed with the more difficult aspect of language learning in the culture of the target language. Their responses are presented in table 35.

Table 33  Riddles and proverbs that teachers find difficult to explain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Riddles and proverbs from the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African milieu</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riddles and proverbs from the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European milieu</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>52.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All riddles and proverbs</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of them.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Riddles and proverbs are used as brainteasers in language classes and they help to involve the learners in a participative activity. It is however noted that they are hardly provided for in the textbooks that are used to teach English in Cameroonian secondary/high schools (and this will be confirmed when the textbooks are examined). It goes without saying therefore, that the teachers who sometimes use them in their classes, use those they have come across in their own learning of the language or those that are found in their first language or mother tongue\textsuperscript{23}. This maybe the reason why many teachers find it difficult to explain riddles from the European milieu as indicated by 47 (52.2\%) of the teachers interviewed.

\textsuperscript{23} Most Cameroonian teachers of English as a foreign language have learned English either as a second or as a foreign language since every Cameroonian acquires a first language or mother tongue before coming to school. Since there are no native speakers of English as language teachers in Cameroonian schools, it is assumed that most teachers should be aware of the riddles and proverbs that are used in the Cameroonian society and which could be used in the language lesson.
The question is why these teachers will find riddles from the European milieu difficult to explain if they are found in the language that they are supposed to be teaching the students.

Riddles and proverbs come with their own meanings and their cultural connotations. The teacher must therefore be familiar with these cultural connotations to be able to explain them to his/her students. The Cameroonian teacher of English may know these connotations in the target language but because he is familiar with the riddles and proverbs of his/her indigenous society better, he is bound to find them easier to explain to his/her learners. Since the teacher uses the riddles and proverbs from his/her indigenous society in his/her everyday speech, he/she should be able to explain them to his/her learners. This may be the reason why only 28 teachers find it difficult to explain riddles and proverbs from the African milieu as against the 47 who find it difficult to explain riddles and proverbs from the European milieu.

11 teachers indicated that they find it difficult to explain all riddles and proverbs. They may be teachers who in normal day-to-day conversation do not use riddles and proverbs. It would be difficult to convince these teachers of the usefulness of riddles and proverbs in language teaching/learning and to get them to use this technique. However, when they get used to using this technique, they should be able to find it easy to explain riddles from any milieu to their students. In recommending riddles and proverbs for use in Cameroonian schools therefore, most of the riddles that are found in the immediate environment could be used to teach the students since many more teachers will be comfortable with using and explaining them to their students. Finding themselves comfortable with using riddles and proverbs from their immediate environment, the teachers and learners may venture with pleasure into the riddles and proverbs of the target language community and be able to explain and understand them. The students will then find pleasure in using them in their everyday communication and feel much more comfortable in using the foreign language.

4 teachers indicated that they find riddles and proverbs from none of the indicated milieus difficult to explain. This means that they are flexible enough to be able to explain to their students the meanings of riddles and proverbs from every society, and could therefore adapt this teaching technique easily into their language classes. The reason they may not be doing so now is probably because of the unavailability of these riddles and
proverbs in the textbooks they use in schools to teach since most of them rely on the recommendations of the textbook to carry out an activity. They may not also have their own collection of riddles and proverbs, which they can use to drive knowledge home to the students. It may also be because of the complete ignorance of using this technique in their language lessons. This also means that the teachers should be able to know whether or not they would feel comfortable using riddles and proverbs as a teaching technique in their English language lessons if the use of the technique is recommended. This is the reason why teachers were asked what they would prefer to do if they had a choice of whether or not to use riddles and proverbs to teach English as a foreign language.

5.7.5 Teachers’ choice in the use of riddles and proverbs

To find out if the implementation of the use of riddles and proverbs as a teaching technique in Cameroonian schools was going to be welcomed, teachers were asked what they would do if they had a choice of whether or not to use them. Some teachers indicated that they would love to use them, others that they would love to use them sometimes, while others said they would not use them at all. The results are shown in table 36.

Table 34. Teachers’ choice in whether or not to use riddles and proverbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To use them</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not to use them at all</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To use them sometimes</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>70.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>98.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing system</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in table 36, a small number of 5 teachers (5.6%) indicates that if they had a choice, they would not use riddles and proverbs at all to teach. These teachers are probably among the number of teachers that finds all riddles and proverbs difficult to explain (see table 34). These teachers could be made to go back to their decision if they are made to begin with the very easier riddles and proverbs as brainteasers in their language classes. When they find that their students enjoy these activities, they will be
able to try their lessons with even those riddles and proverbs that they found difficult in the beginning and which scared them from using the technique. 21 teachers (23.3%) indicate that they would use riddles if they had a choice, while 63 teachers (70.8%) think they could use riddles and proverbs sometimes in their language classes. It shows that a greater number of teachers are ready to adopt this technique in their language classes and even the most reluctant once will join in when they find out what excitement it creates in the students.

The main obstacle to applying this technique in class will be the fact that a lot of teachers do not have collections of their own and if their use is not prescribed in their textbooks their students will not be able to benefit from them. However, the general tendency is for most of the teachers to adopt the technique and so even without their prescription in the textbooks, some creative teachers should be able to come out with collections of riddles and proverbs from the ones translated into English from their immediate environment. This technique could therefore be implemented for use in Cameroonian secondary/high schools for the teaching/learning of English with the hope that the teachers are going to find its use rewarding.

Having examined all the possibilities of the use of indigenous techniques, we have realised that their use can help raise the enthusiasm of the learner of English as a foreign language in Cameroonian schools. These techniques can be used separately or collectively and the same positive results will be achieved in the language class. They are techniques that help generate enthusiasm in the learner and make him/her take an active part in language learning. Within the use of the storytelling technique, activities like drama, songs, riddles and proverbs could be used to enhance the teaching of the language. Teachers were therefore asked what their reactions were to the combined use of folktales, drama, songs, riddles and proverbs in an English language class. Among other reactions the teachers indicated that the classes are noisy, students get excited and do not want any follow up lessons and that these techniques are difficult to use because of the large sizes of most of the classes.
5.8 Teachers’ reactions to the combined use of folktales, drama, songs, riddles and proverbs in an English language class

The purpose for asking this question was to determine whether teachers’ reactions to the combined use of indigenous techniques are positive enough to demand their recommendation. Since those who implement any changes in teaching techniques in schools are the teachers, their opinion needs to be sought as to how comfortable they feel about using the new techniques. The results are as seen in table 37.

Table 35. Teachers’ reactions to the combined use of folktales, role-play and songs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They make the class noisy and uncontrollable</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The students are excited but don’t want any follow up lessons</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>56.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are difficult to use because of the large classes and little space.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>97.8</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing System</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many teachers find that combining the use of folktales, drama and songs in the language class makes teaching more tedious although we know the fact that most students enjoy these techniques. 14 (15.6%) of the teachers questioned indicate that the combined use of folktales, drama, songs, riddles and proverbs makes the classes noisy and uncontrollable. Noisemaking in class stems from two variables. Either the students are happy with the lesson and therefore get excited and noisy or they are bored and make uncontrollable noise during the lesson. The telling of folktales, drama, songs, riddles and proverbs are all activities that excite the students and when the teacher faces the large classes that are found in Cameroonian schools, the students are bound to become uncontrollable. For one thing, most students do not consider singing, dramatising and other game activities in the language class as a proper lesson. This stems from the strict structural way in which the students have had their lessons from when they entered school with very little tendency to involve them in game activities like role-play, singing, storytelling and riddling. It needs a gradual process, therefore, to introduce these
participative activities to them. It is therefore left for the teacher to carry out these activities with some measure of seriousness demanded of a teacher. Certainly when the students recognise the fact that this is part of a lesson and not some ordinary playful activity they will comply with the teacher and become controllable. By all means, every teacher is allowed to impart some discipline in his/her classes without necessarily being scary. That way the students will enjoy the lesson, get entertained and be able to get some linguistic gain from it.

It must be mentioned that some students become noisy and uncontrollable given the way some of these activities are conducted in class by their teachers, that is, for those teachers who attempt to conduct the activities at all. It happens that when students do not react positively to a particular teaching technique, then it is because the teacher is having problems managing that technique in class or because the students are unfamiliar with the technique or approach. Sometimes they may find the activity quite interesting and may get over excited, noisy and disruptive. It therefore requires the special skill of the teacher to call the students to order, which every teacher who has some control over his/her class can do. If for some reason the activities are poorly presented in class the students will get bored and therefore get noisy and uncontrollable. Some of this noise leads to frustration for the teacher who is unable to settle the students down and conduct a proper lesson with them. The 14 teachers who mention in table 37 that their students become noisy and uncontrollable when these communicative techniques are used in their language classes probably have these kind of disruptive students who frustrate the teacher’s efforts. However, if a teacher remains firm, unyielding and authoritative, the students will yield to him/her and learn to enjoy their lessons. Also because very few teachers use these techniques in their lessons as seen in the preceding analyses, it could just be the imagination of the teachers that these combined activities will make the class noisy and uncontrollable.

24 (26.7%) of the teachers indicate that these activities are difficult to use because of the large size of their classes and very little space. Large classes are a frustrating problem to many teachers in Cameroonian schools and in many schools all over the world. In fact, how to effectively teach large classes is a great concern in the Cameroon educational system. Large classes negatively affect the quality of teaching and teacher effectiveness no matter the effort made by the teacher. Having established that folktales, songs, drama, riddles and proverbs are motivating, it is possible for a teacher to apply at
least one of these techniques to his lesson to win the students’ interest and raise their enthusiasm. This could either be the telling of folktales or the use of songs. Having won the student’s attention to his/her lessons, the more complicated activities like unravelling of riddles, proverbs and drama, which need acting space in class and the collaboration of the students could be handled without any disruption from the students. The telling of folktales, riddles, proverbs and singing are activities that can be carried out in even a class that has very little space, since they do not involve any movement from the students. The teacher who is scared of carrying out these activities because of the little space found in most of the classes can therefore conveniently begin with these ones.

The use of drama, which involves movement and therefore needs space in the class, could later on be used when the students are comfortable with the first activities. However, even with the classes with little space (as explained when analysing the use of role-play or drama above), a teacher does not need to use all the students at once. This means that a teacher can conveniently involve a couple of students in acting out a situation while keeping an eye on the rest of the students. In fact, since the students know it could be their turn any time, they are bound to pay attention to what their friends are doing and try to copy their actions when it comes to their turn. The problem with large classes is that some students may never be able to take part in the acting activities if the teacher is not vigilant enough, which is possible. Keeping an eye on all the students while trying to make the others carry out the activities needs some special effort from the teacher. That is the reason why most teachers abandon the activity after a first try.

On the whole, 50 (55.6%) of the teachers think their students get excited with these activities but do not want any follow up lessons after that. This is understandable especially in the case where the teacher does not give the students the feel of the lesson. This means that a teacher who tells an interesting story in class must be able to relate the story to the lesson he/she is teaching. In his/her first attempt the students may think the teacher is out to entertain them. If, however, he/she warns them in advance that the story is part of the day’s lesson, it is our guess that the students will expect another activity after the storytelling and will not react very negatively to the teacher continuing the lesson. In fact, they may actually be looking forward to the follow up activity after the storytelling. This is when the teacher takes advantage of the entertainment the students have had from the storytelling to carry out any grammar, vocabulary or any other language lesson activity he/she planned for the day. Some of these techniques are side
effects of the others. According to Thornbury (2003:1) “one of the tricks of teaching with minimal resources is devising ways of making one activity evolve into another, and even another, so that you have a chain of linked activities, none of which involves the use of materials.” Singing, riddles, proverbs, and role-playing could all come as a result of the use of the storytelling activity, and every student is bound to have an activity to participate in.

We have been looking at teachers’ analyses of language lessons, their students’ reactions to their lessons in general and in relation to the use of indigenous techniques of communication in language teaching/learning. We have also had teachers’ opinions about the use of these indigenous techniques in their language lessons and the recommendation of these techniques in the textbooks that are used in Cameroonian schools. To conclude the analysis of the teachers’ questionnaires, teachers were asked to propose some ways in which they thought English language teaching/learning could be made more interesting than what is going on presently in Cameroonian schools.

5.9. **Proposals by teachers on ways to make English language teaching/learning interesting**

According to the National Centre for Languages, CILT, improving the quality of language learning in schools depends on the support that is given to the learners. This includes improving on the content of the learning programme. That is, making it relevant, conceptually interesting and challenging. The learning activities should be varied to be able to promote interest and real love for the language. There should be a development in the learner of successful learning strategies and an opportunity be made available for real contact with the speakers of the target language and their culture. English language teaching/learning could be made more interesting in Cameroonian schools if the students understand why speaking another language is useful and interesting and if they are given the opportunity to have contact with people who speak the language and who inspire them to learn the language. It helps to motivate the students if they find that they can get any information they need by using another language other than their own, and in the Cameroonian case, one that is used in their immediate community. Apart from using indigenous techniques of communication to help motivate the students and raise their enthusiasm as proposed in this study, teachers were asked to propose what other ways
they thought their language lessons could be made interesting. Teachers came out with the following proposals.

“Teachers should encourage reading for pleasure at every level to help the students familiarise themselves with the language they are learning”. “They should use visual teaching aids and tell stories that the students are familiar with. Most students of a foreign language enjoy cultural material and teachers can only explain the information which they understand well and which they and the students can understand”.

“The number of students per class should be reduced. Teachers should be provided with resource material to facilitate teaching. Schools should create English clubs where students can take part in language activities like debates in English to help practice their spoken English”. “Course material should be adapted to the students’ interest. Textbooks should draw some of the information from the culture of the students’ learning environment”.

“Class sizes should be reduced so that all the students will have an opportunity of taking part in all class activities like role-play. The English language should be treated on an equal basis with the French language in Cameroon. That way, the students will consider both languages important and take an interest in learning the English language”. “Course material should be adapted to the students’ interest. Anyone who is properly motivated can learn a language. Students of a foreign language enjoy cultural information, be it from their immediate environment or outside of it. They understand that learning a language means much more than learning new words”. “Textbooks used in schools for English language teaching should be revised often to kill the monotony associated with using one text for so many years and to keep up to date with not just the activities in the immediate environment but from other societies”.

“Educational administrators should make an effort to provide for the use of modern and appropriate technology in schools. Students will get excited and interested in learning the language if some audio and video lessons, which are completely absent now, are used sometimes in language lessons”. “The number of students per class should be reduced to give teachers the opportunity to have a personal contact with the students. That way, many more students will pay attention to the teacher and take an interest in the lessons”.

“Local examples of role-play should be provided for in the textbooks so that the students can re-enact in class what they encounter in their society”. “Present teaching
methods should be revised so that teaching can incorporate more interesting activities and seminars and refresher courses should be organised for teachers in the field to review their teaching techniques”.

“Students should be made to understand that language learning is not just for passing exams since a lot of them are discouraged from learning it for fear of failing. Activities like singing, stories and games should be provided in the textbooks that are used in schools, and in all the levels, and the teachers should be prompted to use them”.

“Teachers should get the students to do more talking in class. This will help most of the students who want to learn English for purposes of speaking, to practice in class. This will especially help those students who will like to speak the language but find it difficult to express themselves”.

“The whole system of language teaching in Cameroonian schools should be revised and also the purpose for which the language is taught. Since most students think they learn the English language only to pass their exams, it would be better if the teachers gave them another purpose to learn, say for using it in their work places in future”. “Educational administrators and textbook designers should consider how to improve on ways of making language teaching/learning more interesting, since the classroom teachers are never consulted when the decisions are made for them and the students they teach”.

These recommendations on improving the teaching/learning situation in Cameroon were made by Cameroonian teachers of English as a foreign language. Some of them coincide with what this study is all about, an attempt to improve on the enthusiasm of the learner of English in Cameroonian schools. We are going to summarise the findings got from the analysis of the teacher’s questionnaire.

6. Summary of results got from the teachers’ questionnaires

The teachers’ questionnaire had as its objective finding out from the teachers of English as a foreign language in Cameroonian schools why they think their students learn the English language and how their students react to their lessons in general. It also attempted to find out about the use of indigenous techniques of communication in their language lessons, how often they use them, how their students react to them, if they are
recommended in the textbooks that they use to teach, how they feel about using them and what they would do if they had a choice of whether or not to use them. Some interesting results were got from the teachers, most of them showing a positive tendency to the use of indigenous techniques of communication in language teaching. The results strengthen the hypothesis that indigenous techniques of communication if adopted in the teaching of English in Cameroonian schools will help improve on the enthusiasm of the learner of English as a foreign language.

Some teachers thought that their students learn the English language only to pass their exams and because it is a subject in the school curriculum. However, many more teachers thought that their students learn the language because it is fashionable to speak English and therefore many of them would love to learn the spoken language. This is an indication that English language teaching in Cameroon should not concentrate only on grammar, vocabulary and writing. The students should be taught the language in a way that they will find it useful when they leave school. Many teachers revealed that their students are uninterested in their lessons, and they are bored or noisy. Only a small number indicated that their students are interested. This lack of interest they think stems either from their poor teaching techniques, a general lack of interest in the language or the classroom conditions in which the teachers and the students find themselves.

About the use of indigenous techniques of communication like role-play, songs, folktales, riddles and proverbs, a good number of teachers revealed that these techniques are sparingly recommended in the textbooks they use in schools while some other teachers indicated that there is no recommendation at all. Many of the teachers revealed that they use role-play in their lessons only when it is recommended, while a few of them use it once in a while. The majority of teachers indicated that they never use role-play at all. Some of the teachers said that when they used role-play they find it easier to teach. Some of them have never tried using the technique and so did not have any reaction. The teachers who do not use role-play declared that they do not do so because the classes are too large. Some others said the classes are too full and there is no space to act out a situation. Some other teachers indicated that the students are unwilling to co-operate when this activity is carried out.

Asked about the use of folktales, a few teachers indicated that they use them sometimes while the majority of them either never use them or do not know about the use of this technique to teach a language. However, and surprisingly, many more teachers
thought that students react positively to folktales. Many of the teachers indicated that their students are excited and want the lessons to continue. Some indicated that their students enjoy the stories if they are not related to a grammar lesson, while some others said their students do not want to listen to anything else after the story. It is however positive that none of the teachers said that their students are completely bored with folktales. A lot of the teachers did not have any reaction and they must be some of the teachers who said that they never told any folktales in their lessons.

Many teachers revealed that students love folktales because they feel entertained and some thought that it is because stories help the students forget the “real” lesson. A smaller number of teachers thought that their students love stories because they know that they can learn some language from them. However, only one teacher indicated that the students love stories because they can retell the stories. A good number of teachers revealed that they would tell folktales sometimes while none said they would not love to tell stories or that they never think of telling stories in their language lessons. On how the teachers feel about telling folktales, a majority of the teachers thought stories are properly received if they are properly presented. Some felt that their students are not interested in any folktales that are not found in their textbooks and only two teachers indicated that folktales are difficult to tell. Teachers, however, revealed that their textbooks contain no folktales at all, although they have a few songs especially in the textbooks used in the junior secondary.

On the use of riddles and proverbs in their language lessons, many teachers revealed that they never use them. A few teachers said they use them only when they are recommended and just three teachers indicated that they use them sometimes. Many teachers revealed that they do not know about the use of riddles and proverbs to teach English. A good number of teachers thought that their students are interested in riddles and proverbs but find them difficult to use. Some said that their students do not understand anything about riddles and proverbs, while others thought that the students do not know anything at all about riddles and proverbs and are not interested. The teachers felt that riddles and proverbs are difficult to explain and they make teaching a language point complicated. However, some other teachers felt that riddles and proverbs are easy to teach. Many teachers indicated that they find it difficult to explain riddles and proverbs drawn from the European milieu, while a few of them find riddles from the African milieu difficult. A few others find all riddles and proverbs difficult to explain, while a
small number find none of them difficult and are therefore open to the use of all kinds of riddles and proverbs. If they had a choice to use or not to use riddles and proverbs, many teachers will use them sometimes, some others will use them in their lessons anytime, while a few teachers indicated that they will not use them at all if they were given a choice.

Many teachers thought that the combined use of indigenous techniques of communication in the language class makes the students excited although they do not want any follow up lesson. Some other teachers indicated that these techniques are difficult to use because of the large size of classes with little or no space available for some activities, while some other teachers thought that these techniques make the class noisy and uncontrollable. On the whole teachers would support the use of indigenous techniques of communication for language teaching if their use is implemented in schools. There was an indication that some of the teachers used these techniques sometimes and some would love to use them but for the fact that they are not recommended in the textbooks they use in schools. In the next chapter therefore, we are going to examine some of the textbooks that are used for the teaching of English as a foreign language in Cameroonian schools. The intention is to find out what indigenous techniques of communication are recommended in them or to confirm some teachers’ assertion that none are recommended. This way we are going to know if their lack of use in Cameroonian schools is actually due to the fact that they do not exist in the textbooks or because of the teachers’ reluctance to use them due to some other constraints.
Chapter 6  Analysis of Textbooks used in Cameroonian Schools for the Teaching/Learning of English as a Foreign Language

Since teaching English as a Foreign Language in Cameroonian schools and many schools in the developing world does not have an opportunity of using supplementary teaching material, the textbook is heavily relied on. The government is only able to provide funds for prescribed textbooks, if it does so at all, and is unable to buy alternative material or resource books to supplement the textbooks. Teachers and students therefore depend solely on the textbook for their teaching/learning and for their syllabuses. As confirmed by Ansary and Babaii (2002:2), “the textbook is a framework that regulates and times the teaching programme. From the learners’ perspective, no textbook means no purpose, and learners think their learning is not taken seriously”. The textbook serves as a syllabus and it provides ready-made teaching texts and learning tasks. “For a novice teacher, this means security, guidance and support” (ibid). Although no neat formula or system may ever provide a definite way to judge it, a textbook should be able to reflect the aims of the course for which it is used. It is true that textbooks produce some kind of dependency culture among teachers and learners because “the precise instructions which the materials give reduce the teacher’s role to one of managing or overseeing a preplanned classroom event” (Littlejohn 1992:84). However, textbooks provide input into the classroom lessons in the form of texts, activities, and explanations. They act as a guide to help learners organise their learning both inside and outside the classroom, during discussions in lessons, and while carrying out language activities and exercises (ibid).

When they start teaching, most teachers find that managing their lessons is a bigger problem than they thought during their teacher training courses or their teaching practices. Most of their solutions therefore centre around the facilitating role of the textbook since “it saves time, gives direction to lessons, guides discussions, facilitates giving of homework”, [making teaching] “easier, better organised, more convenient”, [and learning] “easier, faster and better” (Hutchinson and Torres 1994:318). There is therefore little wonder that the textbook is heavily relied on and can help raise learner enthusiasm in learning a foreign language and communicating in it. A textbook acts as a
guide to the teacher and learners although “however perfect a textbook [may be], it is just a simple tool in the hands of teachers. We [teachers] should not, therefore, expect to work miracles with it. What is more important than a textbook is what we, as teachers, can do with it” (Ansary and Babaii 2002:8). Although textbooks serve a lot of functions and help facilitate the teacher’s tasks,

the danger with ready-made textbooks is that they can seem to absolve teachers of responsibility. Instead of participating in the day-to-day decisions that have to be made about what to teach and how to teach it, it is easy to just sit back and operate the system, secure in the belief that the wise and virtuous people who produced the textbook knew what was good for us (Swan 1992:33).

Unlike cases where English Language is taught with the help of audio and video players or through the use of the internet and language games from supplementary textbooks, teaching/learning of English as a foreign language in Cameroonian schools depends solely on the prescribed textbook. The textbook, being the only source of teaching/learning the language should, therefore, not only guide the teachers, but also help the learners to develop a greater interest in learning the language. It should help the learners to be able to practice their spoken language through the various activities that are presented in it. The aim of learning the language for most of the students is to be able to use that language in any English speaking situation in which they find themselves but there are very few opportunities presented for them to practice this speaking. The content of instructional material is therefore important in that it should help shape the students’ attitude towards the language that they are learning and should provide enough opportunity for the learners to rehearse the language they will use later on. Much more than instructional material, however, is the approach with which the material is dispensed. The approach determines the way the lessons are carried out, especially because teachers depend solely on the textbook for their teaching inspiration.

English language teaching in Cameroonian schools takes into consideration the four language skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening and the language teaching syllabus is drawn with emphasis placed on them. However, in the actual teaching that is carried out in these schools, emphasis is mostly placed on reading and writing, which most of the students who want to learn the language for purposes of communication find boring. This is the reason that most of the students advanced for not taking an interest in their English language lessons (see 4.2.2). Of course, the teaching of speaking and listening poses a great problem to some of the teachers because of the lack of some of the amenities like audio recorders, which should facilitate the teaching of these skills. The
teacher has to rely on his/her reading out loud for the practice of the listening exercise in class. There is also a great problem in the teaching of listening and speaking because of the ignorance of some of the teachers in the kinds of techniques they can use in the kinds of classes they are expected to teach. This problem is even more acute if these techniques are not provided for in the textbooks that are used in these schools.

The primary concern of this researcher is that Francophone students in Cameroonian schools do not show enough enthusiasm in learning the English language and do not get as communicative as they should, the number of years they have learned the English language notwithstanding. From the results obtained so far in this study (see chapters four and five), it is believed that the use of indigenous techniques of communication can help improve the enthusiasm of the learner of English as a foreign language. These indigenous techniques include the use of folktales, role-play or drama, songs, riddles and proverbs. They can improve the learner’s enthusiasm and render him/her communicative enough to be able to use the language in society. Present teaching/learning of English language in Cameroonian schools lacks the lustre, which the use of these techniques creates. This means that these techniques are either absent from the textbooks that are used in Cameroonian schools or they are not used adequately, if they exist in the textbooks. Textbooks that are presently used to teach/learn English as a Foreign Language will therefore be examined to find out if this lack of lustre is due to the absence of these indigenous techniques of communication. There will be a recommendation for the enforcement of their use if they are found to be present in the textbooks or their inclusion in new or revised textbooks if they are found to be absent.

6.1 Contents of the Textbooks used for the Teaching/Learning of English as a Foreign Language in Cameroon

All Cameroonian public schools are expected to use Go For English for the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language. This textbook constitutes the main source of all the English language that is learned by Francophone students in all secondary/ high schools, from “Sixième”, the first grade, to “Terminale”, the seventh grade. At the beginning of every Go For English textbook, clear and precise activities are

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24 As of when this research was carried out Go For English was the textbook that was used in Cameroon public schools for the teaching/learning of English as a foreign language.
tabled out, which leaves very little doubt in the teachers/learners’ minds as to what activities will be carried out during the course of learning English at that level. The contents or the program of textbooks that are used at three different levels, that is, “Sixième”, “Troisième” and “Terminale”, which are the first, fourth and seventh grades respectively are going to be examined. This choice is made with respect to the fact that the first three grades of the secondary level have a similar programme, the fourth grade is an examination class for the BEPC, the first secondary school certificate and the seventh grade is the last class in the high school. Students leave this grade to move either into the university, professional schools or simply to look for jobs.

6.2. **Contents of Go For English “Sixième”**

The textbook is divided into units, where one unit is studied for a period of at least two weeks depending on the skill of the teacher and what supplementary activities he/she carries out in the class. Each unit has three lessons. *Go For English “Sixième”* is edited by Kenneth Cripwell and Jan Keane. As an introduction to the textbook, the reader is told that *Go For English “Sixième”* combines the best features of traditional methodology with imaginative new techniques of language learning, to develop students’ communicative skills. The British authors, who have international experience, have worked closely with African colleagues to produce this course for the First Cycle in Secondary Schools.

The teacher is also informed at the beginning of the textbook that the themes of this course focus on the experiences of your students both inside and outside school, with links across the curriculum and reference to everyday life. The four skills – listening, reading, speaking and writing – are taught in depth and fully integrated, leading to closer investigation of vocabulary and grammar in *Reviewing the Unit* at the end of the book. Pair work and group work give many opportunities for genuine communicative interactions. Using a rich and fully illustrated variety of activities and exercises, each lesson is treated in a different way to sustain your students’ interest.

This introduction arouses our interest as we are eager to find out what the textbook contains. It also creates an image in the mind of the reader that the learner is going to be fully satisfied with the course. A note in the introduction even tells the parents that this course is an important investment in your child’s future. It has been written and published by people with experience in teaching English in your country as well as in many other countries, who understand and appreciate the importance of your child’s education. We believe it provides a firm foundation for future success.
Go For English “Sixième” has a total of twenty units which are supposed to be treated within the course of the school year. Its contents are as seen in table 38.

Table 36. Contents of Go For English “Sixième”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit 1 Lesson 1. Good Morning, Class</th>
<th>Unit 11 Lesson 1. The Olympic Games</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 2. What’s number one?</td>
<td>Lesson 2. Fast, faster, fastest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewing the unit. (found at the end of every unit)</td>
<td>Reviewing the unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 2 Lesson 1. Buildings</td>
<td>Unit 12 Lesson 1. School subjects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lesson 2. People</td>
<td>Lesson 2. School rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 3 Lesson 1. The family</td>
<td>Unit 13 Lesson 1. Reading about animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 2. Parts of the body</td>
<td>Lesson 2. Talking about animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3. Simon says</td>
<td>Lesson 3. Farm animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 4 Lesson 1. Colours</td>
<td>Unit 14 Lesson 1. Safety on the road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 2. Clothes</td>
<td>Lesson 2. Travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3. What is it?</td>
<td>Lesson 3. Car, train, coach or plane?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 5 Lesson 1. Food</td>
<td>Unit 15 Lesson 1. Talking about houses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 2. Where is it?</td>
<td>Lesson 2. Talking about furniture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3. SSS or ZZZ?</td>
<td>Lesson 3. Dinner-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 6 Lesson 1. Countries of Africa</td>
<td>Unit 16 Lesson 1. One hundred years ago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 2. Flags of Africa</td>
<td>Lesson 2. Twenty-five years ago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3. European languages of Africa</td>
<td>Lesson 3. In nineteen-sixty-nine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 7 Lesson 1. Telling a story</td>
<td>Unit 17 Lesson 1. She killed the snake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 2. Talking about time</td>
<td>Lesson 2. He gets up at 6 o’clock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3. Day of the week</td>
<td>Lesson 3. Writing a story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 8 Lesson 1. Clothes for everyone</td>
<td>Unit 18 Lesson 1. How many people?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 2. Talking about numbers</td>
<td>Lesson 2. Independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3. Where are they?</td>
<td>Lesson 3. I’m from Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 9. Lesson 1. Fish and fishermen</td>
<td>Unit 19 Lesson 1. At the post office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 2. Vegetables</td>
<td>Lesson 2. Mr. Tita’s week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3. Daouda’s story</td>
<td>Lesson 3. Letters and stamps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 10 Lesson 1. Food and drink</td>
<td>Unit 20 Lesson 1. Talking about money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 2. Likes and dislikes</td>
<td>Lesson 2. Using money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3. At the market</td>
<td>Lesson 3. How much?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2.1 Analysis of Go For English “Sixième” in relation to the use of folktales

The contents of this textbook reveal that the students are taught about various aspects of life in the English language by the time they get to the next level. They are taught about greetings, numbers, people, jobs, parts of the body, clothes, food, the family, time, days of the week, animals, means of travelling and many other aspects of life that they should know at their level. In the introduction to the teacher’s textbook we are told that the course as a whole exposes students to the basic language patterns and verb forms of English. It does this through a range of language functions, such as questioning in relation to notions suitable to the age group and circumstances of the learner.

In spite of this we find that the students are not very enthusiastic with their language lessons (4.2). We have established the fact that using indigenous techniques of communication like folktales, songs, riddles and proverbs in language teaching could
help raise the learners’ enthusiasm (chapters 4 and 5). The contents of _Go For English “Sixieme”_ are therefore going to be analysed to find out if there are any recommendations for the use of these techniques in them. The textbook is divided into 20 units, where every unit has three lessons. This gives us a total of 60 lessons within the course of the school year. Looking through the contents of _Go For English “Sixieme”_, we realise that there are no folktales. The whole textbook does not contain even a single folktale, although the learners at “sixieme” level can read and should be able to read a short folktale that should help to entertain them and increase their anxiety to read more stories in the English language. The presence of folktales in a language textbook should be able to guide the teacher in using this technique to teach the language by carrying out certain activities that emanate from it. Their absence in the textbook means that in teaching this level, it is left for the teacher to initiate the use of folktales in his/her lessons or leave the students wanting for their lack. No doubt the entertainment that these students can derive from a language lesson that includes the use of folktales is absent and therefore a source of their boredom with language lessons.

6.2.2 Analysis of _Go for English “Sixieme”_ in relation to the use of songs

When we examine the contents of _Go For English “Sixieme”_, we find that there are no songs in the textbook. Neither the lyrics of a song nor an indication for the teacher to use a song at a particular lesson is seen in the textbook, although this is a beginner class where most of the learners enjoy singing. This means that a teacher who relies solely on the prescribed textbook for his/her class activities could carry out teaching in the “sixieme” class without using a single song, in spite of the potential which songs have as a teaching tool in the language class and most especially in the beginner class. The question is whether this absence of songs from the textbook is because the teachers may not be able to teach the songs if the lyrics are provided or due to the fact that the authors could not come up with any songs to include in the textbook for the teaching/learning of English as a foreign language in “sixieme”. There are, however, common songs in the English language, which the teachers...
themselves may have learned while learning the English language and which they can now use to teach the learners in return. They could use these songs to teach according to the lessons that are prescribed in the textbooks since every new unit describes a new aspect of life. However, it would be better if these songs were included in the prescribed textbooks due to the fact that very few teachers remember the songs they themselves learned in their school's day.

It is true that very few Cameroonian teachers (if any at all) have access to songs from, say, the Internet or supplementary textbooks which teachers in the developing world and many specialised language schools have access to. Even those teachers who may have the idea of using popular songs in class to teach may not be able to do so because of the lack of infrastructure like audiocassette players to use in playing the songs in class. There are a lot of popular songs in the Cameroonian society by Cameroonian musicians that could be used for learning English. Consider songs like “Beautiful Children of Tomorrow’s Generation”, Time will Pass you By”, “Take a Step” by Etub’Anyang, or “Talk Talk”, “You will never give up” by Koko Ateba. These could make for good listening/singing in the language class and generate into an enthusiastic lesson if the teachers have facilities like audiocassette players to play them in class. The lyrics of these songs could be included in the lessons in the textbooks used for language teaching/learning in Cameroonian schools. They will not only help the students to read and understand the words but will provide for a good participatory activity in the language class while helping the less imaginative teacher with his/her lessons.

6.2.3 Analysis of Go for English “Sixieme” in relation to the use of role-play

Incorporating role-play in classroom activities adds variety, a change of pace, opportunities for language production and also a lot of fun in the language lesson.

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25 During the years I taught the “sixieme” class, I always used common songs like, “ABCDEFG…” for the alphabet, “One two three four five…” for numbers, “We come to school on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday…” for days of the week, “Head, shoulders, knees and toes…” for parts of the body and “Old McDonald had a farm…” to teach farm animals. The learners responded positively to these songs and the songs helped improve their vocabulary.

26 Teachers who have had the opportunity to teach the “sixieme” class and capture the students’ attention with songs will remember how the students follow them around the school campus with these songs. Sometimes the only activity they want to take part in during the language lesson is singing, which creates an opportunity for the teacher to be able to help the students to take a greater interest in learning the language.
Role-play is the act of imitating the character and behaviour of a type of person who is very different from yourself, either deliberately, for example as a training exercise, or without knowing it (Collins Cobuild Dictionary 1993).

Role-play is any speaking activity when you either put yourself into somebody else’s shoes, or when you stay in your own shoes but put yourself in an imaginary situation (Budden 2003:1), an exercise which any language learner who is properly motivated can carry out. Role-plays can be a very good way for students to develop fluency by forgetting themselves and concentrating on the activity they are carrying on.

In *Go For English “Sixieme”*, the authors provide many pair and group work activities. Almost every lesson in the textbook has a role-play situation. Learners are given the opportunity to practice their use of language in dialogue in pairs or in groups and many role-play situations. This should be able to excite most of the students and give them the opportunity to practice the speaking of the English language. In spite of this however, we know that the students hardly use the English language outside the classroom the years they have learned the language notwithstanding. Could it be that these activities, though prescribed in the textbook, are not carried out by the teachers? Could it also be that even when these activities are carried out they have very little effect on the students who probably do not take them seriously? In spite of the prescription of the use of this technique in the textbooks it was found out that very few teachers carry out the activity in class (see 4.3.1). The use of this activity should therefore be encouraged among the teachers and the process of carrying out the activity drilled in them either at Teacher Training Colleges, in refresher courses or at seminars. This way, the teachers will be ready to implement in their classes the techniques they find prescribed in the textbooks which they use for their lessons and eventually may be able to create their own role-play situations.

6.2.4 **Analysis of Go for English “Sixieme” in relation to the use of riddles and proverbs**

Riddles and proverbs are indigenous techniques of communication that are used in traditional societies and which could be transferred to and conveniently used in the language class. They abound in the Cameroonian society and those that have been translated into English form a very enriching resource for the teaching of English as a foreign language. Even though riddles, by their very nature, are difficult to unravel they
can be used at every level of language learning including the beginners’ level. That way the learners get used to using riddles when they get to the higher levels and encounter the more difficult ones. Looking through *Go For English “Sixieme”*, we realise that there is no riddle or proverb in any of the lessons in the textbook. Not even mention is made of the possibility of using simple riddles as a guessing game at that level. The teacher who depends solely on the textbook to teach his/her lessons may, therefore, not be able to use any riddles or proverbs in class and his/her students will not be able to benefit from their use.

However, a teacher who has his/her own repertoire of common riddles and proverbs should be able to introduce their use to his/her learners. They are verbal art that is used to educate people in the art of speaking in the traditional society. Once learners get used to unravelling riddles they will like to get more of them and even create their own. The practice once introduced in the beginner class becomes helpful in the later levels. Some of the following are common riddles that are used in the indigenous society and could be used in English as a foreign language lesson.

1. In the morning I move on fours legs, in the afternoon I move on two legs and in the evening I move on three legs. Who am I? *A Human Being*
2. We live in a house with a roof that is sometimes blue and sometimes white. It has no poles to hold it but is never falls. What is this roof? *The Sky*
3. Some nights there is a big lamp on the roof. What is the lamp? *The Moon*
4. I must be fed when I am hungry and when my feeder doesn’t take his/her hand away it turns red. Who am I? *Fire*
5. The person who makes me does not need me, the one who buys me doesn’t use me and the person who uses me does not know he does. Who am I? *A Coffin*
6. He goes to bed on one side of the house and gets up on the other side. Who is he? *The Sun*
7. She is my mother who carries me when I am tired. Who is she? *A Bed*
8. He is a friend who follows me around during the day but when darkness falls he disappears. Who is he? *Your Shadow*
9. He has four legs but he doesn’t have a head. Who is he? *A Table*
10. He is a good teacher, full of words but he doesn’t speak. Who is he? *A Book*

These and many other common riddles could be included in the textbooks used in schools to teach/learn English as a foreign language. If just one of them is used within every unit in the textbook, the learners will get used to the idea of using riddles before they get to the next level and also in communicating in them. Proverbs, like riddles, are commonly used in most indigenous societies and a wide variety exists in the English
language, which could be used in language lessons, even at the beginners’ level. These common proverbs could be included in the textbooks for beginners and they will make interesting lessons for that level.

1. A man’s home is his castle
2. Charity begins at home
3. Don’t put all your eggs in one basket
4. Better late than never
5. A barking dog seldom bites
6. A stitch in time saves nine
7. All that glitters is not gold
8. It is no use crying over spilled milk.
9. Like father like son.
10. Action speaks louder than words.

These proverbs, which are presently absent from the textbooks that are used in schools could make for good learning for any beginner in the English language. They are short and witty and could be picked up easily by any learner. Their explanations will generate a discussion in class, and students will be tempted to bring in some of the proverbs that they hear people using around them or even the once they know in their first or second languages.

6.3 Contents of Go For English “Troisieme”

Like the previous textbook analysed, Go For English “Troisieme” begins with an introduction in which the teacher is told that the textbook combines the best features of traditional methodology with imaginative new techniques of language learning, to develop students’ communicative skills. The teacher is also told that

the themes of this course focus on the experiences of your students both inside and outside school, with links across the curriculum and reference to everyday life
Pair work and group work give many opportunities for genuine communicative interactions
Using a rich and fully illustrated variety of activities and exercises, each lesson is treated in a different way to sustain your students’ interest.

Go For English “Troisieme” has a total of twelve units that are treated in the course of the school year. Its contents are as shown in table 39.
6.3.1 **The use of folktales in Go For English “Troisieme”**

Like *Go for English “Sixieme”*, the “Troisieme” textbook has a variety of topics ranging from food and health to the dangers young people face, through celebrations, the environment, love and romance to different worlds. The textbook has a total of thirty-six lessons to be treated at that level in the course of the year. “Troisieme” is an examination class where the Francophone students write their secondary school certificate examination, the “B.E.P.C.”. In “Troisieme” a student would have been learning English as a foreign language in secondary school for four years, a reason why their number of lessons is less than that of the three previous levels, but more intensive. It is true that “the themes of this course focus on the experiences of students both inside and outside the school, with links across the curriculum and reference to everyday life” (*Go For English “Troisieme”: VI*). However, the contents of the “Troisieme” textbook reveal that although much is treated regarding their everyday experiences, there is very little attempt to link the student with what originates from their indigenous society or from their immediate environment.

The table of contents of *Go For English “Troisieme”* shows that not even a single folktale is included in the lessons. Using folktales in language lessons is suitable for all ages. Folktales can help the learners create their own learning material, indulge in oral

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 37. Contents of <em>Go For English “Troisieme”</em>.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 1. Food and Health</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lesson 1. A Balanced diet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lesson 2. Vitamins and Minerals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3. A debate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewing the Units (found at the end of every unit).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Page (found at the end of every unit).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 2. Leaving Slavery Behind</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 1. From slave to Governor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lesson 2. The interesting life of Olaudah Equiano</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lesson 3. Float like a butterfly…</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 3. Young People in Danger</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lesson 1. Temptations</td>
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<td>Lesson 2. What is AIDS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lesson 3. Making a Poster</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 4. Keeping in Touch.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lesson 1. Our senses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lesson 2. Human language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3. Getting the message across</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 5. Celebrations</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 1. A traditional ceremony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 2. The Sallah Festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3. The Ncwala</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 6. The animal Kingdom</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 1. Some animal facts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 2. The black rhinoceros</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3. Animal migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 7. The environment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 1. Tropical Forests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 2. Pollution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3. Time moves on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 8. Contrasts and Conflicts</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 1. The city or the country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 2. Male v. female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3. The generation gap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 9. Love and Marriage</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 1. A reversal of roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 2. Arranged marriages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3. The perfect partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 10. Trade</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 1. Nana Benz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 2. Taking a decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3. Markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 11. Different Worlds</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 1. Choosing a holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 2. Visiting Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3. Getting around</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 12. That’s Incredible</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 1. Twins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 2. The true story of the Mary Celeste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3. Dreams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
storytelling and therefore practice speaking. Every teaching can be carried out in the form of storytelling and even more so for the teaching of the English language. Storytelling makes the process of learning less strange and less boring. Telling of folktales also provides teachers with authentic tasks through which to negotiate meaning (Smith 2003:1). With all the advantages that the telling of folktales has in language teaching/learning, the question still arises as to whether the authors of *Go For English “Troisieme”* find them so unimportant as not to be able to include even a single one in the textbook for that level. Could it be that the authors do not know about the importance of folktales in language teaching/learning or do they just ignore their usefulness as a teaching technique?

There may probably be good reasons why the use of folktales is not encouraged in the teaching/learning of English as a foreign language in Cameroonian schools. However, having found out the benefits of this technique in language teaching/learning and the fact that it cannot be carried out by some teachers in Cameroonian schools if it is not included in the prescribed textbooks, educational administrators have to try to promote its use in schools. The benefits in language teaching/learning of the use of folktales are enormous and can help change the way the Cameroonian learner behaves towards learning the language. It may help to raise the enthusiasm of most of the learners and challenge the negative attitude which most of the learners now adopt towards learning the language. Generally, most learners look at the learning of English as a tedious and boring exercise (see 4.2.2). The inclusion of folktales in language textbooks is essential if the Cameroon teacher/learner of English as a foreign language has to be able to use it. There is no reason to think that the authors could not get enough folktales from the Cameroonian society to include in the textbooks that are used in Cameroonian schools if they wanted to. The reliability on textbooks in the teaching of English as a foreign language in Cameroonian schools means that the implementation of a new teaching technique could be carried out if this technique is recommended in the textbooks used in schools.

6.3.2 **The use of Songs in *Go For English “Troisieme”***

Songs are an essential part of language teaching/learning. Learners see singing as part of entertainment rather than work and learning the language through songs makes it less tedious (Shtakser 2001). From traditions handed down through song and dance to
popular songs, music plays an integral part in our lives (Simpson and Redmond 2002) and this includes language learning. Songs should therefore be part of language lessons and for the purpose of seeing them used in the language class, they should be included in the textbooks that are used in schools for learning that language.

A close look at *Go For English “Troisieme”* reveals that there are no songs in any of the lessons in the textbook. There is no mention of songs anywhere, so we can conclude that the learners in this level never have the occasion of singing any songs in their classes especially if their teachers depend on the textbook for their use. It is strange that in spite of the many songs in the Cameroonian society and the many songs found in the English language, not even one of them is included in the textbook which is used for language teaching/learning for this level. Without insisting on songs from the immediate environment the abundant songs in the English language could be used for language teaching in Cameroonian schools. Little wonder that the students find their lessons boring (see chapter 4.2.2). It also indicates that the authors of this textbook either do not know or do not see much advantage in the use of songs in the language classroom. They may also think like many teachers do that singing in a language class is an activity reserved only for the primary or junior secondary level. What we find in the textbook that could be closer to songs are two poems. One in unit seven, lesson three “Greetings to all Afric’s Land” and another one in unit ten, lesson 3 “The Market”. These two poems could form the basis for the use of songs in the lessons in that the poems could be transformed into songs. This, however, depends on the teacher’s creativity. Apart from these two poems, there is a complete absence of songs in *Go For English “Troisieme”*. Again the question arises as to whether the authors find songs completely useless in language teaching/learning that they do not make provision for them in the textbooks, or do they, like many people, think that songs are reserved only for certain kinds of learners?

Songs enliven even the most boring language lessons and learners are always motivated to participate in singing that is carried on in the classroom. With the absence of infrastructure in Cameroonian schools for playing popular songs in class, songs could still be used if they are provided for in the textbooks or if their use is encouraged among the teachers. The absence of songs in language lessons creates a disadvantage for the teacher and the learner. They are an essential technique in language teaching/learning and should be included in the textbooks that are used in schools for the benefit of both the teachers and the learners.
6.3.3 The use of role-play in *Go For English “Troisieme”*

Role-play activities have been adopted for years in the foreign language classroom to bring authentic and enjoyable language practice to the learner (Senf 1996). Of course, “one of the tricks to language learning is to act it [since] the spoken word is only part of all communication” (Essberger 2001:1). Role-play promotes language development in that the learners practice the use of the language and develop confidence in using it. The authors of *Go For English “Troisieme”*, just like many language teachers all over the world, understand exactly the importance of role-play in language learning. They therefore provide enough opportunities for role-play in the textbook. Every lesson in *Go For English “Troisieme”* has an exercise on pair work, group work, dialogue or role-play and language use. All these activities create situations for the learners to simulate roles and carry out dialogues either in pairs or groups. However, even with the provision in the textbook of the use of this technique, the students and teachers questioned in Cameroonian schools confirm the fact that the technique is sparingly used, if it is used at all (see 4.3.1 and 5.4.1). The teachers’ reasons for not using the technique include, among others, the constraints of space, time and unco-operative learners. These constraints should not, however, be a deterrent factor. The use of role-play in every situation should be applicable and adaptable to the local and environmental context. Senf (1996:1) confirms that

the constraints of space, time and a wide range of disabilities that are often regarded as barriers to implementing [role-play] activities can be manipulated [because] every learning environment has its limitations and constraints. Unless teachers learn to manipulate and challenge these, they will be enslaved by such constraints, doing no justice to either their professional integrity or the students whom they serve.

Teachers should, in spite of the constraints therefore, be able to adopt this technique in their language lessons since they are provided for in the recommended textbooks. The other major constraint that needs to be manipulated will be the fact that teachers do not know how to use this technique in class and therefore in spite of its provision in the textbook, may still not be able to apply it to their language lessons. However, it could be said that every Cameroonian teacher, especially the teacher in the public school, is a trained teacher in whom the use of role-play or drama in the language class was drilled. The inability to use it because of some major constraints seems to be
the major problem that needs to be overcome, not the ignorance on its usefulness as a teaching technique.

6.3.4 **The use of riddles and proverbs in *Go For English “Troisieme”***

The knowledge of riddles and proverbs forms a good basis for the learner of any language in general and English as a foreign language in particular, since they provide for good communication and could be used to pass across a message with ease. Riddles and proverbs can be used for all levels of language learning and they get progressively more challenging. The contents of *Go For English “Troisieme”* reveal that there is no provision for riddles and proverbs in any lessons in the textbook. This means that the learners hardly practice the use of riddles and proverbs or do not carry out any language activities involved with the use of riddles and proverbs if their teachers do not, on their own, introduce them in their language lessons. However, since most teachers always depend on the prescribed textbook to carry out most activities in class, it goes without saying that because of their absence in the textbooks, most of the learners would not be familiar with their use in the language they are learning. A lot of learners however, bring riddles and proverbs to school in their first or second language and their introduction in class will prompt them to be able to come up with more and be able to take part in the games which centre around their use. Their inclusion in the lessons is therefore imperative. It will help remind teachers of their presence and they will be prompted to use them. Their complete absence from the textbooks now means that this technique is never used in English language lessons in Cameroonian schools and the learner never benefits from them.

6.4 **Contents of “Go For English” “Terminale”**

“Terminale” is the last class in the secondary/high school in Cameroon from where students leave either to enter into the university, go to professional schools or look for jobs. In “Terminale” a student would have been learning English as a foreign language in the secondary/high school for seven years. *Go For English* series runs through to the Terminale class. In the introduction to the textbook, we are told that
Go For English “Terminale” aims to prepare students for the Baccalaureat Examination and equip them with the English skills they will need in academic and adult life. It combines the best features of traditional methodology with imaginative new techniques of language learning to develop students’ communicative skills. Its approach is based on using English to achieve practical objectives which are relevant to students’ future lives.

The textbook contains twelve units and each of the 12 units focuses on a project which requires students to carry out a number of tasks, generally of a kind they may be asked to perform in academic or adult life.

The contents of Go For English “Terminale” are divided into the unit title and text types, projects, activities and language points. For purposes of looking for indications of the use of indigenous techniques of communication like folktales, songs, role-play, riddles and proverbs, only the unit titles, text types and projects will be shown in the table of contents on table 40.

Table 38    Contents of Go For English “Terminale”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Title and text types</th>
<th>Projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Too Many People</td>
<td>To present “A Population Week” in your School:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic theories</td>
<td>1. A poster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population increase</td>
<td>2. A leaflet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population control</td>
<td>3. A debate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and food supplies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 The World’s a Family</td>
<td>To promote tolerance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No biological basis for race</td>
<td>1. A talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples of racist behaviour and conflict</td>
<td>2. A dramatisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Civil Rights Movement</td>
<td>3. A letter to the press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother Teresa of Calcutta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Lifestyles and Health</td>
<td>To investigate alternative lifestyles and links with health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Age Travellers and gypsies</td>
<td>1. An argument essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart disease</td>
<td>2. An interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health risks of smoking</td>
<td>3. An article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Space</td>
<td>To inform fellow students about space exploration and debate its costs and benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First man in space</td>
<td>1. A talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moon launch</td>
<td>2. An essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space flight dates</td>
<td>3. A debate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life on other planets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hubble space telescope</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Helping Each Other</td>
<td>To highlight the roles of different backgrounds in helping each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Nyos Disaster</td>
<td>1. An article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency aid</td>
<td>2. A dramatisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health aid</td>
<td>3. A letter to a newspaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye operations by Orbus Medecins Sans Frontieres</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Whose English?</td>
<td>To prepare and present “An English Experience”: an evening’s entertainment provided by the class for the rest of the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People who use English</td>
<td>1. A poster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of English language</td>
<td>2. Introducing a guest speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poem by Benjamin Zephaniah</td>
<td>3. A recitation of a poem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English as a threat to small languages</td>
<td>4. A report on a survey (based on questionnaire)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech by Nelson Mandela</td>
<td>5. A delivery of a famous speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Justice</td>
<td>To develop one’s idea of what is just</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principles of justice</td>
<td>1. A list of the principles of justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racism and the law in Britain</td>
<td>2. A courtroom scene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laws relating to women who kill</td>
<td>3. An article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The death penalty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Rhythm and Harmony</td>
<td>To start a music club in the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African genius for music</td>
<td>1. A notice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A song</td>
<td>2. A praise song</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 6.4.1 Indications of the Use of Folktales in Go For English “Terminale”

Stories are told at all levels of language teaching/learning and they always form a basis for most language teaching/learning activities. These activities may either be a new grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, writing, discussion or simply playing roles from the story. There is, therefore, always some kind of story in every unit of the textbooks used for language teaching/learning. This research is, however, concerned with the use of folktales, local stories from the indigenous society which the teachers and learners can identify with and from which they can produce many more either orally or in writing. There has been a lot of recommendation on the use of local literatures in English language teaching/learning (Elgar: 1998). However, we find that a lot of textbooks that are used for language teaching/learning in schools hardly contain much of what is found around the learner’s environment in terms of local literature. It cannot be argued that the apparent cultural proximity of a story for the learners renders it particularly suitable for use in language teaching/learning. It could, however, be suggested that “reading a combination of local and non-local stories could probably best serve to enhance the students’ ability in English, and would also enable them to experience English as both a local and a global language” (ibid.). One would expect to find this combination in the textbooks used for English language teaching/learning in Cameroonian schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>9 Sources of Energy</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How energy reaches us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solar power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wind power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geothermal energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biofuels</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>To review sources of energy and make suggestions for your area</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 A talk illustrated by a flow chart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 A compare and contrast essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 A radio discussion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>10 Tourism</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advertisement for a holiday cruise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A week in Sierra Leone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gambia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advantages and disadvantages of tourism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>To produce background information for the community leaders attending a conference entitled “Tourism – do we need more here?”</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 A list of tourist attractions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 An introduction to a travel brochure</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 A letter to a minister</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>11 Success in Business</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A metal-forging business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starting your own business</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>To get to know the business world</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 An oral presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 A diary entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 A business letter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>12 Education</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making a school in Johannesburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education in Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education in Africa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>To draw up a proposal for a new school in your community, in the form of a speech to be made at a public meeting</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 A debate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 A letter to a school magazine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 A role-play</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A look through the contents of *Go For English “Terminale”* shows the complete absence of folktales, either from the Cameroonian society or elsewhere. Like the case of the two previous textbooks analysed, the authors do not probably find the use of folktales for language teaching/learning important enough to be included in the textbooks used in schools. This neglect we find, in spite of the abundance of folktales in the Cameroonian society and their importance in language teaching/learning. It only goes to confirm what Mallikarjun (2003:2) describes in the case of India, where although “folk literature is an integral part of [the] culture, it is not used effectively as a pedagogical tool”. The contents of *Go For English “Terminale”* show a diversity in topics which are probably all right for learners of a language which they are supposed to use in their own society and are even more likely to use out of their own country. However, we find that these topics “fail to attract and retain the attention of the learners till the end, both in their content and presentation” (ibid.) (see chapters 4 and 5). There is therefore reason to believe that including some form of local literature like folktales to language teaching/learning in the textbooks used in Cameroonian schools will make a difference to students’ reactions towards learning the language. It will also make a difference towards the way teachers carry out their lessons, since a lot of them depend on the textbook for guidance and the absence of these folktales means their failure in using them.

### 6.4.2 Indications of the Use of Songs in *Go For English “Terminale”*

Music is an essential part of human existence and though it has been an important aspect of some schools’ curricula for a long time, its role in language learning has not received much attention in educational research (Le 1999). This is the case with education in Cameroonian schools. Although in language teaching/learning songs are a valuable technique for the teaching of speaking, listening, reading and writing, very little is done to promote their use in Cameroonian schools. Of course, the use of songs for language activities demands the use of equipment like CD or audiocassette players that do not exist among the facilities provided for teachers in Cameroonian schools. However, even the ordinary use of songs for singing and to enliven a boring language lesson is absent. This may be for the reason that no songs are provided for in the textbooks and because most teachers work strictly by the textbook, there is little opportunity for the students to learn the language in songs.
Looking at the contents of *Go For English “Terminale”* we find that the use of songs is not prominent even though a whole unit in the textbook has been devoted to music, entitled “Rhythm and Harmony” (p. 117). Passages and even the lyrics of a popular song have been provided for the learners to read about music and answer comprehension questions. There are comprehension, writing and communicative exercises on different aspects of music and even the different kinds of music found in the African continent. However, a passage has been provided in this same lesson to highlight the fact that music is neglected in education in African schools. In a passage taken from “Genius Ignored” from *The New Breed*, Fadlu-Deen confirms that Africans have a genius for music. Consider the ease with which we turn our folk songs and the great quantity of them which pour out in a short time. Far from being a relic of the past, the music of Africa has proved that it represents the very soul of Africa. […] Music is a vital part of African societies. The ethnomusicologist will enumerate many different categories of songs for private and public occasions, such as cradle songs, songs for naming ceremonies, weddings, crowning of chiefs and so on. […] But the genius of music in Africans finds little encouragement in our schools. If music is so much a part of Africa’s culture and if education doesn’t recognise this, then it is misleading the African.

It goes without saying that the neglect of music in the school curricula precedes the neglect of the use of music in teaching/learning a particular subject like the English language. Fadlu-Deen thinks that something has gone wrong and perhaps that “something” is education in which music has been ignored. Music is that precious aspect of an African’s culture which should be incorporated into his education and a basic experience of life itself (*Go For English “Terminale”: 119*)

This passage is taken from *Go For English “Terminale”* where the learner of the English language does not have the opportunity to do so with the use of music and song. Educationalists and textbook designers should therefore think about incorporating music in the school curricula and improving on the use of music and song in language learning. The rest of the textbook has no mention of the use of music or songs in any of the lessons. This certainly indicates that little, if any at all, is done at this level of language learning with the use of songs if this is completely dependent on the textbook recommendations.

6.4.3 **Indications of the Use of Role Play in *Go For English “Terminale”***

The teaching/learning process of a language makes use of different approaches. However, most learners are taken in by approaches that are fun and in which they can
participate. Role-play and drama in the classroom give learners the opportunity to take part in class activities and to improve on their speaking. Like the case of the two previous textbooks analysed, the authors of *Go For English “Terminale”* seem to have realised the importance of the use of role-play in language teaching/learning better than any other technique. Almost every lesson is provided with the opportunity to carry out dramatisation, role-play, pair and group work. There are even special exercises for “writing and communication” although it must be mentioned that the communication exercises are all written exercises instead of what should have been for oral practice. However, in spite of this provision, we know that very little practice with the language is carried on in Cameroonian schools and very few of the lessons are carried out with the use of role-play (see chapters 4 and 5). There are many challenges associated with the use of role-play or drama in a language class. Villier (2000:2) confirms that

> some students are very shy and rather private people. So [teachers] need to ensure they are not threatened by such participation. [...] Teachers too can be nervous of “doing drama”. There are fears about controlling the class, about justifying the time spent (instead of doing grammar and test); about what exactly is achieved (can it be measured/marked?).

The above challenges together with the constraints of time and space, of lack of co-operation\(^\text{27}\) from learners and the teacher’s lack of self confidence are the problems that face the use of role-play and drama as a technique for the teaching of English as a foreign language in Cameroonian schools. This shows why even when there are indications in the textbook for the use of this technique it is hardly carried out in most language lessons. It therefore indicates that although the teaching/learning of English is supposed to “achieve practical objectives which are relevant to students’ future lives” (“*Go For English*” *Terminale*: Introduction), very little of this practice is carried out in the actual lessons.

### 6.4.4 Indications of the use of Riddles in “Go For English” “Terminal”

Most lessons in *Go For English “Terminale”* begin with brainstorming exercises. These exercises are meant to stimulate the learners’ thoughts at the beginning of a lesson.

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\(^{27}\) Before now, oral examinations where carried out during official examinations in Cameroon. This gave students a reason to take their oral practice and communication exercises rather seriously. Since the oral examinations were phased out of the official exams, students no longer have any compulsion to learn the spoken language in class, although most of them would like to speak the English language. The very hardworking ones concentrate on grammar, vocabulary and writing which can give them a pass in the subject whether they speak the language or not.
The brainstorming exercises are done by asking students questions related to the topic to be learned in that lesson, which topic always has a story in the lesson. Students respond to these questions and some of them generate into a lively discussion about what they have to study in the lesson. Riddles and proverbs make for good brainstorming exercises at the beginning of a lesson and they could be used to consolidate communicative exercises in every unit. They could be used to practice speaking given that most “lessons do not use the type of language that is lively, common, and has the flavour that is easily understood and imitated” (Mallikarjun 2003:1). Riddles and proverbs always give a speech the cultural flavour from which they are derived, which flavour always spices speech in every society.

In “Go For English” “Terminale” there are no instances of the use of riddles and proverbs. Except probably for the use of a riddle or proverb in any of the comprehension passages, the use of riddles and proverbs is not obvious in the textbook. There is no instance where riddles and proverbs are used for brainstorming, as a lesson on their own, or where they are used to teach/learn certain language aspects. This indicates that the learners may not even be able to carry out their communicative activities using riddles and proverbs if their teachers on their own do not introduce them. It also shows a deficiency in the conversations that the learners are bound to hold in future in the language they are learning. Again we find that the authors either do not know about the use of this indigenous technique in language teaching/learning or they do not find it useful enough to include it in the lessons. Having seen the benefits of the use of riddles and proverbs in language teaching/learning however, it would be helpful if they are included in textbooks used in Cameroonian schools. Like the other indigenous techniques that have been analysed, riddles and proverbs may generate the much-needed interest for the students to learn English as a foreign language. Their use can however, be genuinely encouraged only if they are included in the textbooks that the teachers and learners use in schools. They will serve as a permanent reminder to them of the activities that they have to carry out in their language lessons.
6.5 **Summary of Results got from the Analysis of Textbooks**

The textbooks that are used in the teaching/learning of English in Cameroonian schools have been examined to find out if there are any indications of the use of indigenous techniques of communication. It has been found out that the textbooks contain no folktales at all either from the Cameroonian society or elsewhere. All the textbooks contain instructions for the use of role-play, dramatisation, pair or group work. There are no instances of the use of songs. Instances of the use of indigenous techniques of communication in the textbooks used in Cameroonian schools are summarised in the table 41.

Table 39. Indications of the use of indigenous techniques of communication in textbooks used in Cameroonian schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Go For English”</th>
<th>“Sixieme”</th>
<th>“Troisieme”</th>
<th>“Terminale”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Units</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of lessons per year</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Depending on the timetable and the teacher’s ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instances of folktales</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instances of role-play</td>
<td>Role-play, Pair and groupwork, and dramatisation in every lesson.</td>
<td>Role-play Pairwork, groupwork and dramatisation in every lesson.</td>
<td>Role-play, pair and group work and dramatisation in every lesson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instances of songs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instances of riddles and proverbs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be seen from table 41 that there is an absence of the use of indigenous techniques of communication in the lessons taught in Cameroonian schools. This may be for many reasons but most obvious is the fact that their use is not prescribed in the textbooks that are used in schools. Their lack of use in language teaching/learning may also be due to the fact that the teachers and learners are not made aware of how these techniques function in language teaching/learning. This means that even the teacher who may have his/her own repertoire of folktales, songs, riddles and proverbs that he/she can use in language lessons may not be able to do so. The learners do not therefore benefit from the use of these techniques.
All “Go For English” textbooks have three phases in their courses. There is the input phase where the learners are expected to draw on the knowledge of what they brought to class. This phase is presented in a reading or listening form. The next phase is the activation phase where learners are expected to use the language they have encountered and they are presented with communicative exercises from where much of the written work is generated. Then comes the consolidation phase which is supposed to be the reinforcement of lexical, grammatical, structural and functional exercises. The exercises in “Go For English” “fall into four broad categories which parallel the four skills of reading, listening, writing, and speaking” (Go For English” Introduction to Teacher’s Book: V11). There is however, an indication that the speaking skill is neglected because most of the activities that are supposed to be carried out to help the learner to get communicative in the language are ignored. There is more concentration on the consolidation phase and this begins from the activation phase where the learners are taught the lexical, grammar and structural exercises and made to practice them in writing. This gives very little room in most lessons for the practice of genuine communicative activities. The introduction of indigenous techniques of communication in the textbooks used in schools will help improve on the way some of these communicative activities are carried out presently. It will also help keep in line with the objectives of most of the Cameroonian learners of English as a foreign language who would like to do so to achieve some linguistic fluency necessary for everyday communication.
Chapter 7. Findings and Conclusion

The aim of this study was to determine whether the use of indigenous techniques of communication could have a positive impact on the motivation and enthusiasm of the learner of English as a foreign language in Cameroon. The study is intended as a contribution to the improvement of the learners’ motivation, enthusiasm and spontaneity in the learning of English as a foreign language and an attempt to render the learner communicative. It is also intended as a contribution to the search for improvement in the teaching/learning of English as a foreign language. This research was based on a survey carried out in a number of schools in Cameroon to determine the teachers/learners’ reaction to the present teaching/learning of English as a foreign language with regard to the use of indigenous techniques of communication. This study was influenced by the fact that many researches have been carried out in Cameroon on the attitude of the Francophone learner of English (Tinku 1989, Okwen 1989, Penn Tamba 1990) and from this researcher’s experience as a teacher of English for almost ten years to Francophone learners. Previous researches all discovered that the learners had a negative attitude towards the learning of English and that they showed little or no enthusiasm in learning the language. This study was aimed, therefore, at finding out if the use of indigenous techniques of communication could have a positive impact on the learners’ attitude towards learning the language. This chapter presents a summary of the findings of this study. The significance of the study and its theoretical implications are also highlighted in this chapter. Based on the results of this research a number of recommendations have been made, which if implemented, will help shape the course of future teaching/learning of English as a foreign language in Cameroonian schools. In view of the limitations of this study, suggestions for further or parallel researches are also made in this chapter.

7.1 Findings

The following findings were made from the results of the analysis of questionnaires:

1. There is a general interest in English language learning but most learners find their language lessons boring.
2. Although most learners would enjoy the use of indigenous techniques such as those used for teaching, techniques are rarely used for language teaching.

3. Currently used techniques do not enhance the student’s enthusiasm.

4. Little or no emphasis is given to the use of indigenous techniques in textbooks used for language teaching/learning.

The first significant finding is that students show a general interest in the learning of English as a foreign language in Cameroonian and most of them do so because they want to be able to communicate in it. This indicates that although English language is a compulsory subject in all school curricula, most of the learners would like to learn the language so as to be able to use it when they leave school and not just for passing their examinations. This is an aspect that is not given much consideration in the teaching that is carried out presently. This is important because Cameroon is a bilingual country with English and French as the official languages and every educated Cameroonian is expected to communicate in these two languages. By learning the language and most especially for oral communication most of these learners have a better opportunity of working in future in every part of the country. Every language is used principally for interpersonal communication and the objective for teaching/learning it should be pointed first towards this. Educational administrators and course designers for Cameroonian secondary/high schools should, therefore, be able to use this as a reason to promote communication in language learning in all the English language courses offered in Cameroonian schools. Results from the study also show that the present teaching/learning, with little emphasis on this communicative aspect, is part of the reason why most of these learners adopt a negative attitude and show very little enthusiasm in learning the language.

Apart from the inappropriate kind of teaching/learning that should help facilitate oral communication in English, this study found out that communication outside the schools is hindered by Pidgin English, which is a lingua franca in Cameroon and which is unofficially used almost everywhere and by everybody. This corroborates the fact that hardly any of these learners practice the use of the language either at home or in school, their declared aim of learning the language for purposes of communication notwithstanding. This is the reason why hardly any of the learners practice the use of the language but most especially, this study found out, it was because the techniques that
could be used for the improvement of learners’ linguistic fluency are not practised in language lessons in Cameroonian schools.

Another fact revealed by this study is that most of the learners are bored with their lessons probably because of the uninspiring techniques that are used but most especially because English language does not contribute much to their grades in the official examinations. Their total grades, on the contrary, are lowered by their poor results in the subject. This reveals that although the lessons are concentrated on grammar and vocabulary and geared mostly towards writing examinations the learners are not satisfied anyway. It also contradicts the reason why most of the students would like to learn the language - to be able to communicate in it. The boredom the students experience with their lessons also stems from the fact that the teachers are not helped with the techniques that are provided for in the prescribed textbooks to make their lessons interesting and they have little means of improving the situation on their own. It has been found out that the textbooks that are used for language teaching/learning are devoid of techniques that could help improve on the learners’ communication while at the same time helping them with the theoretical aspect of having to write and pass their examinations.

It has become evident from this study that very few teachers, if any at all, use role-play, songs, folktales, riddles and proverbs in their language lessons. The results show that most of the learners feel comfortable learning with these techniques but that there is a general absence of them in the teaching/learning that is presently carried out in Cameroonian schools. The reason for the absence of these techniques from the lessons, it was found out, was twofold. Firstly, it was due to the fact that these techniques are not prescribed in the textbooks that are used in language teaching/learning in the secondary/high schools. Secondly the teachers, on their own, do not practise the use of these techniques since most of them rely on their teaching instructions from the prescribed textbooks. It was, however, discovered that even a technique like role-play that is abundantly prescribed in the textbooks was hardly carried out by the teachers because of the inconvenience of space and numbers.

From the study we learn that many of the learners enjoy listening to folktales, but that most teachers never practise this activity in their lessons. It has been found out that although folktales are abundant in the Cameroonian society, they are never brought into the foreign language classroom. This creates a situation in which the learner is deprived of teaching material from his/her own environment, which some studies (Ness 1997,
Zamel & Spack 1998, Wolf & Simo Bobda 2000) have found out is essential for foreign
language learning. However, this study reveals that the teachers and learners enjoy
listening to and telling folktales and that the teachers who use folktales in their lessons
once in a while discover that their students are excited and want the lesson to continue.
This makes for a good teaching/learning technique, which could be adopted in the
language classroom and used successfully to help improve the learner’s enthusiasm and
change his/her negative attitude towards learning the language. The use of folktales in
language lessons, it was found out, will be beneficial both to the teachers and the learners
since they will be using learning material from their environment which they are familiar
with. This confirms the fact that Lado (1969), Gee (1987), Post and Rathet (1996), and
Simo Bobda (1997) think it is appropriate to learn a language beginning with the material
of the learners’ culture. This study however, found that some learners are not interested in
any folktales that are not found in their textbooks and many of the textbooks hardly
contain any. This, it was found out, is a reason for the course book planners to include the
use of folktales in the textbooks for secondary/high schools in Cameroon.

It has become evident from this study that most learners enjoy songs and they are
excited when the teachers use songs in their language lessons. However, results show that
little or no singing is carried out in the schools. It was discovered that if any singing is
done at all, it is mostly carried out in the junior secondary levels although even an adult
language class could benefit from the use of songs in their lessons. This study revealed
that lessons in the senior secondary are devoid of singing and the textbooks used in all the
levels examined do not contain any songs. It was gleaned from this study that this is even
a greater reason why most of the teachers are unable to use any songs in their lessons
even though a lot of them agree that songs give their lessons a lighter mood. Since
singing is a light-hearted activity even the teachers enjoy carrying it out but most of them
are hindered by the fact that there are hardly any songs in the textbooks that they can
relate to the lessons they are teaching. Given the absence of technological facilities in
Cameroonian schools, there is evidence that even those teachers who would love to use
popular songs in their language lessons are hindered from doing so.

This study discovered that very few teachers practice the use of role-play. This, in
spite of the fact that every lesson in the textbooks used in schools contains an instance of
role-play, dramatisation, group or pair work activity. In the very few instances where
role-play was seen to be used in the lessons, the learners thought it made the language
lesson noisy and boring, which could have been a poor attempt by some of the teachers to carry out this activity. However, this study discovered that the absence of the use of role-play was particularly due to the hindrances that some teachers faced in the course of trying to use them. It was seen from the study that most teachers were hindered from carrying out this activity firstly because the classes are too full and there is hardly any space to act out a situation. Secondly, because the classes have very large numbers and most of the learners are unwilling to co-operate.

Another noteworthy finding of this study is the fact that most of the teachers in Cameroonian schools do not use riddles and proverbs in their lessons and only a minimal number do so when their use is recommended in the textbooks. Results, however, show that riddles and proverbs are absent in these textbooks. Even the teachers who have their own repertoire of riddles and proverbs that they could use in their lessons admit that they find them difficult to explain because most of them only know riddles and proverbs from their first languages. However, results also show that many of the teachers would love to use them in their English language lessons, especially if they are prescribed in the textbooks they use in schools for teaching.

Generally, it is significant to note that most Cameroonian learners of English as a foreign language enjoy the use of indigenous techniques of communication. This study discovered that the learners whose teachers used indigenous techniques like folktales, songs, role-play, riddles and proverbs in their lessons enjoyed the lessons better and attempted to practise the use of the language for communication. However, it was discovered that very few teachers carried out their teaching with these techniques for the reason that they are not recommended in the textbooks used in schools and most of them depend on the activities prescribed in the textbooks. The results, however, indicate that the recommendation for the use of these techniques will help improve the negative attitude of the learners towards the learning of English. The introduction of the use of indigenous techniques of communication in the textbooks used in Cameroonian schools will help improve the way some of these communicative activities are presently carried out in schools. It will also present a completely innovative approach to those teachers who have never tried to use them and will enhance the teaching/learning of the language not only for examination success but also for oral communicative fluency.
7.2 Significance of this Study and Theoretical Implications

This study is significant in that it can be related to foreign language teaching/learning in all developing countries but most especially to the Cameroonian educational system where it was carried out. Its relevance is due to the fact that most of the facilities that are presently used for the teaching of a foreign language in advanced countries are absent in developing countries like Cameroon. These facilities include the use of audio and video cassette players, learning through the Internet, and even planned visits by schools to countries or communities of the target language. To help improve on the enthusiasm of the learner of a foreign language in Cameroon therefore, educational planners should resort to the use of indigenous techniques of communication, which this study has found out could have a positive impact on every foreign language learner if properly applied.

By investigating the use of indigenous techniques of communication in the teaching/learning of English as a foreign language in Cameroonian schools, there is an attempt to review the teaching/learning strategy in these schools. A change in the techniques that are presently used in schools will entail a change in materials in the course books to include the use of indigenous techniques of communication and a change in the teaching approach. It is, however, common knowledge that a change in teaching materials is not always paralleled by an attempt to achieve a change in the pedagogical values of the teachers involved in implementing the curriculum innovation (Gahin and Myhill 2001). Textbooks make a great contribution in achieving success in educational innovations. Recommending materials that embody a new approach to teaching and which require the use of innovative techniques implies that teachers will have to adopt a new teaching strategy. It is a well-known fact that teachers often tend to rely on routines and standardised practices. Professional change implies questioning one’s private theories and practises. This can appear quite threatening if no appropriate training conditions are provided (Hutchinson and Torres 1994). This study, therefore, has a lot of relevance to pedagogy in Cameroonian schools in that initial teacher and in-service training should focus on these techniques and on the teachers who are responsible for implementing them.

The findings of this study offer clear messages for educational administrators and policy makers especially in Cameroon. The results indicate that many more learners
would love to learn the language for purposes of interpersonal communication. This
implies that teaching/learning of English as a foreign language in Cameroonian schools
should hence be related more towards using it in future, especially in the learner’s
society, in the case of Cameroon. Educational innovation is easier to achieve on paper
than in reality and there are many obstacles to the implementation of change. A common
reason why most educational changes fail is because “teachers have feelings of anxiety
and insecurity” which create “a determination to resist the change and maintain the
existing context within which they feel secure (ibid.:321). In implementing new
techniques therefore, teachers should be taken into consideration since they are
responsible for developing, defining and reinterpreting the innovative techniques.
Implementing the use of indigenous techniques of communication will imply a change in
the attitude of the teachers who should be made to feel secure in a new technique they are
called upon to apply in their teaching.

This study is also significant in that it will help change the situation of the
teaching/learning of English as a foreign language in Cameroon. The learner of English
as a foreign language in Cameroon suffers from symptoms of a pedagogy of dependence,
a general lack of motivation, a passive role in classroom activities and a general inability
to communicate in the language. These symptoms reflect what this study has discovered
is characteristic of the kind of teaching techniques that are used in Cameroonian schools
– a complete dependence on the teacher and the textbook. The techniques that this study
has investigated upon, if implemented, will help involve the learner in the learning
process and will go a long way to encourage communication, independence and active
participation in the learning process.

Although the results of this study show that most of the learners would love to
learn the language for purposes of communication, it has been found out that the
communicative language teaching approach on its own cannot be adopted in schools in
the developing world and the Cameroonian language classroom in particular. The reason
is due to the constraints of large classes, poor classroom designs, reluctant learners and
pressure from parents and administration concerning examinations (Gahin and Myhill:
2001). This approach cannot also be adopted because it pays considerably less attention
to the overt presentation and discussion of grammatical rules that characterises the
structural approach. However, the learner of English as a foreign language in
Cameroonian schools needs both the structural and the communicative approaches. The
former because of its overt presentation and discussion of grammatical rules that the learner needs for writing examinations and fulfilling the requirements. The later because learners are encouraged to deal with unrehearsed situations that help to increase their fluency and communication. This combined situation can be achieved by adopting the use of indigenous techniques of communication. This study has found out that the use of these techniques have a positive impact on the learners’ enthusiasm and enhance communication while at the same time preparing the learner for a structural assessment like writing examinations in schools. This implies that the innovative techniques could be adopted in Cameroonian schools where the learner will be given the opportunity to learn and react in the English language to situations that he/she will realistically encounter in his/her society.

7.3 **Recommendations from the study**

The intention of this study is to make learning more effective and possibly more efficient for a larger group of learners in a developing country like Cameroon. It is particularly intended as a contribution to the search for improvement in the teaching/learning of English as a foreign language in Cameroonian schools. It is notoriously difficult to prove that any innovation in teaching/learning approach immediately improves on current standards of language teaching/learning. However, if that is a study’s intention, then it needs to be stated and the recommendations made, while hoping that the authorities responsible will react to it. Firstly, from the findings made in this study about the absence of indigenous techniques of communication in the textbooks used in schools and the fact that many learners and teachers enjoy using them, it is recommended that textbooks be revised to include these techniques. This will encourage their use in language lessons, since they would be present in the textbooks and the teachers and learners would be obliged to use them. This study discovered that there is a lot of dependency on the prescribed textbooks in the teaching/learning of English as a foreign language in Cameroonian schools and so any recommendation made in the textbook is bound to take effect.

Secondly, it is recommended that teaching/learning that is carried out in Cameroonian schools be related to communication and to using the language in the society. This, generally, is the reason why most of the learners want to learn the
language. As confirmed by Krashen (1981:10) “we teach language best when we use it for what it was designed for - communication”. This will mean an introduction of the indigenous techniques described in this study in the textbooks and in the courses for the training of teachers. It is not, however, unusual that teachers dismiss innovative ideas and approaches either before trying them out or after experimenting them without appropriate support. Changing familiar teaching styles is not an easy task. It is a courageous and at the same time risky venture (Simplicio 2003). It is, however, an essential component of good teaching and an excellent way to revive classroom activities, which the teachers and the learners need badly. It is therefore recommended that initial and in-service training of teachers in Cameroon should henceforth be focused on the use of these techniques if better results are going to be achieved in future.

Thirdly, although this study found out that teachers and learners enjoy indigenous techniques of communication, it has also established the fact that there are obstacles, like the large size of classes in Cameroonian schools, to carrying out some of these activities. It is recommended, therefore, for class numbers to be reduced if teachers are to carry on effective teaching with these techniques and achieve maximum efficiency. This study has found out that large size classes are the reason why most of the activities cannot be carried out even if they are prescribed in the textbooks.

Fourthly, the results of this study indicate that most of the learners will like to learn the English language for purposes of oral communication. However, we find that very little is done in a way of enforcing the practice of the use of the spoken language. It is recommended therefore, that the use of this language be enforced by assessing the learners in its use. This has to begin with participation in class activities through to carrying out oral examinations to test the spoken language. This will encourage the learners to take a greater interest in the spoken language and to take its practice seriously. It will also ease the use of indigenous techniques of communication, which the teachers and learners will find are a booster to their efforts.

Finally, this study recommends that textbooks used in Cameroonian schools provide some kind of interaction between the material that they contain, the teacher and the learner. Because the English language is increasingly used among non-native speakers and especially by the same nationality in a country like Cameroon, it is recommended that the teaching/learning should begin with material from the learner’s environment. Indigenous techniques of communication could therefore be adopted into
both the structural and communicative approaches to language teaching. In addition to encouraging linguistic fluency, language learning in Cameroonian schools has to be related to examinations. The structural approach on the one hand offers an overt presentation and discussion of grammatical rules that the learner needs for writing examinations and fulfilling a requirement. The communicative approach on the other hand, helps learners to deal with rehearsed situations that help to increase their linguistic fluency while preparing them for the use of the language outside the classroom. There is therefore a recommendation for a model of classroom interaction like the one in diagram 42 for maximum academic results and learner communication.

![Diagram of classroom interaction](image_url)

**Fig. I.** Model of classroom interaction for the teaching/learning of English as a foreign language in Cameroon

### 7.4 Suggestions for Further Research

A complete research into the teaching/learning of English as a foreign language in Cameroonian schools demands a lot of time and includes a lot of other facets. This study is therefore only a partial contribution to the topic. As a continuation from where this study ends or as a parallel contribution, further research could be made into other or related aspects of the teaching of English as a foreign language in Cameroon.
One of the drawbacks of this study is that it focuses on the use of many indigenous techniques of language teaching/learning at the same time. This means that individual techniques could be analysed and their effectiveness on language teaching/learning brought out. For example, only dramatisation could be researched upon as an effective language teaching/learning technique in Cameroonian schools. This may try to assess the positive and negative effects that this technique has on the teachers and the learners.

One of the limitations that this study has pointed out as a constraint to the use of indigenous techniques of communication is the existence of large classes in Cameroonian schools. A parallel or further research could be carried out on coping with large classes, especially in relation to teaching/learning of English as a foreign language in Cameroonian schools. This study has dwelled on the techniques that could be used to effectively get the learners involved in language learning. However, when a teacher has to deal with a class of more than 80 students like we find in Cameroonian schools, then no matter how good the teacher may be, he is bound to encounter a lot of difficulty. Carrying out a research on how to cope with such classes may therefore support the use of the innovative techniques that this study has advocated.

This study has done an assessment of the textbooks used in Cameroonian schools to find out if there is any prescription for the use of indigenous techniques of communication in them. This however, is not an exhaustive assessment. A further research could be carried out to evaluate the teaching materials that are used in the teaching/learning of English as a foreign language. The value of textbooks maybe assessed to find out what they expect learners to achieve at the end of each course and whether their expectations are met with or not.

Since the present study is only a partial contribution to the debate on language teaching/learning in Cameroonian schools, it is hoped that further or parallel researches will complement it for a better educational system in Cameroon.
APPENDICES

Appendix 1A   Students’ Questionnaire

1. What are your reasons for learning the English language?
   a. to further my education
   b. to pass my exams
   c. to be bilingual and get a good job
   d. others (please specify)

2. What language do you often speak at home?
   a. French
   b. English
   c. Pidgin
   d. Mother tongue

3. What language do you usually speak with friends at school?
   a. French
   b. English
   c. Mother tongue

4. What language do you usually speak with friends out of school?
   a. French
   b. English
   c. Mother tongue
   d. Pidgin English
   e. Others (Please specify)

5. What is your opinion about your English language lessons?
   a. Interesting
   b. Boring
   c. Difficult to assess
   d. No opinion

6. How do you rate the contribution English makes to your success in official exams?
   a. Very significant
   b. Much
   c. Little
   d. No opinion

7. How would you feel if English were eliminated from your official exams?
   a. Very happy
   b. Happy
   c. Indifferent
   d. Unhappy

8. What is the reason for your choice above?
a. I like English
b. English is our official language
c. English reduces my grade in exams
d. English is an international language
e. Other reasons (please specify)

9. What is your opinion about your English language teacher?
   a. Very kind
   b. Kind
   c. Patient
   d. Wicked
   e. Others (please specify)

10. What is your opinion about the use of role-play or drama in your English language class?
    a. Makes the class noisy
    b. Boring
    c. Makes me understand the lesson better
    d. He/she never uses role-play
    e. Others (please specify).

11. How often does your teacher use a song to teach a lesson?
    a. Sometimes
    b. Occasionally
    c. Never.

12. What is your reaction to the use of songs in your language lessons?
    a. I’m happy and sing along with the teacher
    b. They make the class noisy and make me forget the “real” lesson
    c. I am not interested in songs
    d. Others (please specify)

13. How often does your teacher tell folktales in class?
    a. Sometimes
    b. Always
    c. Never

14. If your teacher tells folktales, what’s your opinion about them?
    a. They are boring
    b. They are interesting
    c. They are difficult to understand
    d. They make the class noisy
    e. Others (please specify)

15. What kind of tales do you enjoy listening to?
    a. Tales from the African culture
    b. Tales from the European culture
c. Just any tale if it is not related to a grammar lesson

d. Others (please specify)

16. What is your opinion about your English language textbook
   a. Interesting
   b. Boring
   c. About OK
   d. Others (please specify)

Appendix 1B Teachers’ Questionnaire

1. What do you think makes your students learn the English language? They are learning:
   a. to pass their exams
   b. to have a good job in future
   c. because it is in the school curriculum
   d. because it is fashionable to speak English

2. How do your students react to your lessons in general?
   a. Uninterested
   b. Bored
   c. Noisy
   d. Interested

3. Why do you think some students feel bored with your lessons?
   a. Poor teaching method
   b. A general lack of interest in the language
   c. The classroom conditions.
   d. Others (please specify)

4. Is the use of role-play recommended in the textbooks in your school curriculum?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Sparingly

5. How often do you use role-play or drama in your lessons?
   a. Once in about every six lessons
   b. When it is recommended
   c. Never

6. When you use role-play or drama in class, do you find it easier to teach?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Never tried.

7. If you do not use role-play in your lessons, what are your reasons?
   a. the classes are too large
   b. I don’t know about the use of drama to teach English
c. The classrooms are too full – no space to act out a situation
d. The students are unwilling to co-operate.
e. Other (please specify)

8. How often do you use folktales to teach a lesson?
   a. Sometimes
   b. Never
   c. Don’t know about the use of folktales to teach English

9. What are your students’ reactions when you tell folktales in class?
   a. They enjoy the stories if they are not related to a lesson
   b. They don’t want to listen to anything else after the story
   c. They are excited and want the lesson to continue
   d. They are completely bored.
   e. Others (please specify)

10. Why do you think some students love folktales?
    a. They can retell folktales
    b. They feel entertained
    c. Folktales help them forget the “real” lesson
    d. They know they can learn some language from the folktales.
    e. Other (please specify)

11. If you had a choice, would you rather
    a. not tell folktales at all
    b. tell folktales sometimes
    c. never think of telling folktales

12. How do you feel about telling folktales in your language lessons?
    a. Folktales are difficult to tell
    b. Students are not interested in any tale that is not found in their textbooks
    c. Folktales are properly received if they are properly presented.
    d. Others (please specify)

13. Do the textbooks you use in schools provide for folktales and songs?
    a. Some songs but no folktales
    b. A few songs but no folktales
    c. Some songs and folktales
    d. None of them

14. How often do you use riddles and proverbs to teach?
    a. Sometimes
    b. When they are recommended
    c. Never
    d. Don’t know about the use of riddles and proverbs to teach

15. What are your students’ reactions to the use of riddles and proverbs?
a. They don’t understand anything about the use of riddles and proverbs
b. They are interested but find them difficult to use
c. They don’t know anything about riddles and proverbs and are not interested
d. Others (please specify)

16. What is/are your reactions to the use of riddles and proverbs in English language lessons?
   a. They are difficult to explain
   b. They make teaching a language point more complicated
   c. They are easy to teach
   d. Others

17. Which do you find more difficult to explain?
   a. Riddles and proverbs from the African culture
   b. Riddles and proverbs from the European culture
   c. All riddles and proverbs
   d. None of them

18. If you had a choice of whether or not to use riddles and proverbs in language teaching, you would prefer
   a. to use them
   b. not to use them
   c. to use them sometime
   d. other preferences (please specify)

19. What are your reactions to the combined use of folktales, role-play, songs, riddles and proverbs in language teaching?
   a. They make the class noisy and uncontrollable
   b. The students are excited but don’t want any follow up lessons
   c. They are difficult to use because of large classes and little space.
   d. Others

20. If you had to propose ways of making English language learning/teaching more interesting, what would they be?

Appendix 2 Sample Lesson with the use of a Cameroonian folktale

A Brainstorming
1. It can move in the air from one place to another. What is it? A Bird/An Aeroplane
2. It is a small animal that challenges bigger animals to a fight and always wins. What is it? A Tortoise
3. When is the only time some people can eat without paying for it? At a Feast
4. It is a small animal that moves with its house. What is it? A Tortoise
5. It doesn’t have hands yet it catches other insects in its house. What is it? A Spider
Why the Tortoise has a cracked shell

Once upon a time Tortoise made friends with Birds. One day he heard the Birds talking about a feast they have been invited to, up in the sky. He decided to take part in the feast although he cannot fly. He asked the birds to give him each a feather from their wings. Then he built himself two large wings with the feathers and flew to the sky with the Birds. On the way he convinced the Birds that because he looked different in his borrowed wings, they should all take on new names for themselves. He decided to call himself “For all of you”. When they arrived at the party, food was served to them by their host who did not forget to add that the food was “For all of you”. Tortoise who had taken the name “For All of You”, convinced the birds that the food was for him and that theirs will be brought later. He started eating while the Birds looked on. He ate until he was satisfied. Wine was served, again “For all of you” and Tortoise still convinced the Birds that it was for him. He told them that theirs will come later and drank up everything. The host who did not know about the custom of the Birds thought this was the way feasts were carried on in the land of the Birds. At last the feast came to an end without the Birds eating or drinking. They all got very angry and pulled their feathers from Tortoise’s wings. With the feathers taken away, Tortoise could not fly back to earth. He begged the Birds to tell his wife to bring out into the compound every soft thing they had at home so that he could fall on them without hurting himself. However, the Birds were very angry and told his wife to bring out all the hard and metal things in their home. When she was ready she called out to the husband who fell from the sky with a loud baaaang! He hurt himself and his shell scattered into pieces. A disease that will kill a man starts as greed. Fortunately, Spider helped to put the pieces together again and Tortoise had a new but rough shell. That’s why till today, the Tortoise has a cracked shell. The Birds went away happy at the punishment they have given to Tortoise and the friendship between the Tortoise and the birds ended because a man who eats alone walks alone.

Questions:
1. What did Tortoise hear the birds discussing?
2. What did he ask the birds to do?
3. How did he convince the birds to take on new names?
4. How did he explain the fact that he was eating alone?
5. What did the birds do at the close of the party?
6. How did Tortoise plan to go back to earth without wings?
7. What did the birds tell Tortoise’s wife?
8. How did Tortoise have a new shell?
9. What lesson do we learn from this story?
C. **Retelling the story**
Students close their books and try to remember the story. They retell the story in their own words with prompts from their teacher.

D. **Role-play**
Students take on the roles of the Tortoise and the Birds. In pairs they write out a short dialogue between the Tortoise and the Birds based on the story. The teacher oversees the pair work.

E. **Grammar**  
**Simple past tense**
Read the story again and pick out verbs in the past tense of the verbs listed below:
- make  hear  invite  decide  ask  build
- fly  convince  look  arrive  get  beg
- is  help  put  come  go  end

F. **Discussion**
Read the story again and pick out two proverbs that are found in it.

* A disease that will kill a man starts with greed
* A man who eats alone walks alone

a. What are the meanings of these proverbs?
b. Can you tell a story in which you can use these proverbs?
c. Write down any other proverbs you know and read them to the class.

G. Write down a short story you know and read it out the class. *(This could be done at home to give the learners a chance to gather more information).*

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**Appendix 3  Riddles and Proverbs**
The following is a list of proverbs and riddles that could be used in all levels of language teaching/learning in Cameroonian schools.

3.A **Proverbs**
1. A stream that moves alone bends its course.
2. A man is tallest in his own home.
3. What an old man sees when sitting down, a child cannot see even if he climbs the tallest tree.
4. One hand does not tie a bundle.
5. A chattering bird does not build a nest.
6. Rain falls on every roof.
7. He who gets blisters from the matchet handle does not starve.
8. When people talk about another person, listen as if it were about you.
9. He who eats alone has no mourners at his funeral.
10. The strength of a river is measured from its source.
11. The meat of a chicken is bad only if it is badly cooked.
12. All lizards lie flat on the ground but we do not know which one suffers from bellyache.
13. When two elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers.
14. An old woman is always uneasy when dry bones are mentioned in a proverb.
15. He who tells the truth is never wrong.
16. A man does not look where he fell but where he slipped.
17. The mouth that eats does not talk.
18. A goat eats grass where it is tethered.
19. Travelling is learning.
20. You don’t need clean water to put out a fire.
21. One who doesn’t cultivate should not wait for the harvest.
22. The man who has bread to eat does not appreciate the severity of famine.
23. The elephant never gets tired of carrying its tusks.
24. A man may be the head of the home but a woman is the heart.
25. He who feeds you keeps an eye on you.

3.B Riddles
1. What goes up but never goes down?  
   *Your age.*
2. My friend and I walk all day but don’t talk to each other. Who are we?  *You and your shadow.*
3. We are two neighbours who live on two opposite sides of the same hill, but we never meet. Who are we?  *Ears.*
4. What has a neck but no head?  *A bottle.*
5. What animal goes to bed with its shoes on?  *A horse.*
7. It flies when it is on the body and floats when it is in water. What is it?  *A feather.*
8. We throw away the outside and cook the inside then we eat the inside and throw away the outside. What is it?  *Corn.*
9. What is black and white and coloured all over?  *A newspaper.*
10. When you give it food it lives but when you give it water it dies. What is it?  *Fire.*
11. Everyone in the world is doing it at the same time. What is it?  *Growing old.*
12. What kind of umbrella does a teacher carry on a rainy day?  *A wet umbrella.*
13. What has holes all over it but still holds water?  *A sponge.*
14. It can never be seen or held but its presence is always felt. What is it? *The wind.*

15. People always shake hands with it when they come into or leave the house. What is it? *A doorknob.*

16. It goes places but it always remains in a corner. What is it? *A stamp.*

17. We come in the evening without being invited and in the morning we disappear without being stolen. What are we? *Stars.*

18. It lies on the ground and doesn’t make a noise, but it carries messages to different places when beaten. What is it? *A drum.*

19. It is hard and smooth outside but very soft inside. What is it? *An egg.*

20. It always runs forever in the same direction and never comes back. What is it? *A river.*

**Appendix 4  Songs**

Some of the songs listed below could be used in language lessons in Cameroonian schools.

1. ABC  DEFG…
2. 1 2 3 4 5…
3. Head, shoulders, knees, and toes.
4. Old MacDonald
5. Take a step
6. One man went to mow
7. Beautiful children of tomorrow’s generation
8. Yaounde Morning
9. Going to the Zoo
10. Morning has broken
11. Old mother earth
12. March with us today.


http://www.geocities.com/CollegePark/Campus/2159/art1.htm


http://www.report.ualberta.ca/stories/arts/tellme.html


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