

English Learning Circles: An Innovative Way to Foster Oral Communication among Efl Learners

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Abstract: *This experimental study aims to explore the values of English-related Extracurricular Activities (ECAs) programs. It attempted to examine the management of 130 Beninese intermediate EFL learners' anxiety and the development of their language skills through their participation in English Language Clubs.*

The outcomes have revealed that by participating, for a period of six months, in English Language Clubs, those learners who have never been exposed before to such programs and were randomly recruited from four public secondary schools of Benin, have developed both self-confidence and oral communication abilities. Based on those outcomes, this study addressed the value of ECAs' instructional programs to the teaching of English as a foreign language and recommended the necessity for policies to foster the use of English Language Clubs to developing speaking ability among EFL learners.

Keywords: *Intermediate EFL Learners, Extracurricular Activities (ECAs), English Language Clubs (ELCs), language anxiety, speaking ability.*

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The present study examines the management of Beninese Intermediate EFL¹ learners' anxiety and the development of their speaking ability through their participation in English-related Extracurricular Activities (ECAs) such as the English Language Clubs. It is based mainly on the theory of Tallon (2013, p.5)², the concept of some researchers such as Spolsky (1989, p.166)³ and the researcher's personal experience in English teaching and learning.

1.1. Background of the Study

Learning English in a foreign language context is not an easy task. To get a good command of that universal language, the learner has to practice it every day and in an environment that can approximate the one of native speakers. Thus, many organizations, associations or extracurricular activities programs related to English language learning have emerged in several non-English speaking countries to enable students and lovers of this Shakespeare's language to develop their language skills.

Therefore, in Benin, English Language Clubs (ELCs) have become learning crucibles where English is practiced effectively. Those who participate in them are often learners of all categories namely: high school students, students who are majoring in English, students who are majoring in other academic disciplines, civil servants, businessmen, etc.

The idea of English learning clubs has come from the fact that it is very difficult to learn a foreign language alone. As EFL learners do not often have enough opportunity to practice their new language in class, some of them, sometimes gather on a regular basis in groups of friends or learners out of school programs to hone their language abilities. There are learning places where learners can have the chance to have one-to-one or group discussions with their peers without experiencing too much anxiety. The learning of their new language becomes easier and more interesting for them when they

¹ EFL: English as a Foreign Language.

² "More exposure to the target language, outside of the classroom, may help anxious students become more comfortable with the language and thus help reduce the anxiety" (Tallon, 2013, p.5).

³ "The outcome of language learning depends to some extent on the amount and kind of exposure to the target language" (Spolsky, 1989, p.166).

are gathered in communities of learners where they share the same problems and have the same goals. Those groups usually provide learners with supportive and casual learning environment. They help participants to build confidence and discover the language skills they already have. There are learning places where there is no teacher. Learners receive feedbacks from one another and help each other to develop language skills. They learn to improve their leadership skills by taking different roles during the many activities they deal with in those learning circles. Some of those learning activities have to do with role-playing, listening and speaking, debates and discussions, reading comprehension, games and presentations, talking to native speakers, excursion to English speaking countries for language immersion, drama, watching movies and videos.

However, so far, no study has scrutinized the effectiveness of the teaching approach of those educational programs. Therefore, I have made the decision to examine through an empirical study, the impact that those English-related extracurricular activity programs have on the language proficiency of Beninese EFL learners.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Many studies have investigated the issue of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) management. However, little has been discovered about the best strategy to use to fight back students' anxiety which is believed to affect their determination to study and be able to speak effectively the target language.

English learning has always been a great challenge for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in Benin, due to their limited contact with native speakers and the lack of opportunities to practice English in their everyday lives. Added to that, the time (2 to 4 hours per week) allotted to teachers of English to teach the language does not enable them to devote sufficient time to oral communication teaching or extra activities in which they can practice the language with their learners. Moreover, very few of EFL learners are exposed to English out of the classroom, "which makes it difficult for them to remain motivated to learn English that they consider merely as a mandatory school subject" (Ho, 1998: cited in Liu, 2012, p.123). They do not have a convenient environment for interaction outside the reach of their classroom, so they cannot be enough subject to outside influences of English language. Accordingly, after attending many years of English language classes, they still dread speaking it. This lack of language environment may well explain why English immersion programs in some public schools and language training centers are so successful and why Beninese people long to go abroad only to have a good command of spoken English.

1.3. Research Question

Generating from the two objectives mentioned above, the present study attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1) Is there any relationship between the participation of Beninese intermediate EFL learners in English Language Clubs and the management of their Foreign Language Anxiety?
- 2) To what extent do Language-oriented ECAs programs such as the English Language Clubs promote the development of Beninese intermediate EFL learners' ability to speak English?

1.4. Hypothesis

It is assumed that speaking the foreign language is the most potential anxiety-producing factor and that teachers should have highly anxious learners participate in some form of supplemental instruction such as joining a language-oriented extracurricular activity. Based on that, the review of related literature has covered the assumption that the learner has some opportunities for choice of language learning club activities which can help her/him manage her/his anxiety.

Therefore, in order to carry out a reliable study, I have justified all my research work on these following hypotheses:

- The participation in language-oriented extracurricular activities can help lessen Beninese Intermediate EFL learners' anxiety.
- English Language Clubs have a high potential for developing speaking skills among Beninese EFL Intermediate learners.

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study is significant because its outcomes will enable EFL/ESL teachers to solve the problem of shyness, passiveness and fears that prevent learners from speaking fluently English, as it is expected. It will also help the learners feel more comfortable using English with people they trust, have fun with them about topical issues, open their minds to English background and develop in them the four language skills, critical thinking, public speaking, leadership and critical listening skills, competences and abilities so that they will perform better in oral and written tests.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The acquisition of oral skills in a foreign language setting has always been a real challenge for learners who, as it seems, ignore its importance because of the anxiety they experience when trying to speak the target language. As noted in Celce-Murcia (1991, p.125), “it has become apparent in recent years that there have been marked changes in the goals of language education programs”. Today, language students are considered successful if they can communicate effectively in their second or foreign language whereas two decades ago the accuracy of the language produced would most likely be the major criterion contributing to the judgment of student’s success or lack of success (see Riggenbach and Lazaraton, 1987 edited in Celce-Murcia, 1991, p.125). Speaking in a second or foreign language (L2/FL) occupied a peculiar position throughout much of the history of language teaching and began to emerge as a branch of teaching, learning and testing in its own right, rarely focusing on the production of spoken discourse (Bygate, 1987, p.14). Since recently, it has [become increasingly important and] emerged as a special area in language pedagogy (Bygate, 1987, p.15).

Foreign Language anxiety, on the other hand, is also important because it can represent an emotionally and physically uncomfortable experience for some students; if the students are very anxious in class, they are probably not fully engaged or engaged at all (Tallon, 2008, p.2). Horwitz et al. (1986, p.128) define it as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions beliefs, feelings, and behavior related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (see Wang, 2009, p.20).

The acquisition of a language is determined by the needs and the interests of the learners. As pointed out by Cook, Long, & McDonough (1979), “where there is a genuine purpose behind the foreign language in the curriculum, the L2 learner is not simply learning a new syntax and vocabulary, but also how to function in the new language” (para.10). This opinion is supported by Husni (2005) who says that “input serves as the raw materials that enable the language acquisition to take place” (p.63). Cook, Long, & McDonough (1979), when identifying the relationship between first language (L1) and second language (L2) asserted that “a child learning his first language is evidently learning a number of things besides language forms [...]; his language is involved in his developing cognitive structure, emotional states, relationships, and play”(para.8). They added that, “the same statement will of necessity be true of much second language learning in a ‘natural’ setting” and that “the learners’ language reflects his own needs and interests though these may be different from those of the child” (para.13). Simply put, the process of learning the second language should mirror the one of the first language; which raises the problem of the learning setting.

Husni (2005) defines setting as “a place and time where the language acquisition takes place” (p.64). To provide more information about this term, he referred to Littlewood (1984, p.15) by reporting that “in a behaviorist approach to language acquisition, the child’s environment is seen as exerting a major influence that provides both models which the child imitates and the rewards which make learning take place” (p.64). He then identified two types of setting, the formal setting in the classroom and natural setting outside the classroom (2005, p.65). To give more details about the two types of setting, he mentioned that “L1 is acquired by child in natural setting, while L2 is generally acquired by learner in formal setting” and that “the setting in natural situation enables the child to acquire the language freely without any anxiety or pressure about failure” (2005, p.65). On the other hand, he clarified that “the setting of L2 acquisition is generally very formal” and that “this situation makes the learner feel depressed, uneasy, or worry” (Ibid.).

Littlewood (1984, p.97), as reported by Husni (2005), “comments that, in the classroom, anxiety can hinder learning and make learners reluctant to express themselves through the L2” (2005, p.66). Husni (2005, p.66), when considering this comment, pointed out that “we should, therefore, avoid becoming

overcritical of students performance” and suggested that “we try to create space for each learner’s individuality to express itself, and work to produce a relaxed classroom atmosphere with co-operative relationship”. He concluded his analysis about this comment of Littlewood (1984) by mentioning: “this shows that the impression of the formal situation in teaching L2 must be dismissed” (2005, p.66). Like that, as suggested by Littlewood (1984, p. 91, cited in Husni, 2005, p.66) “almost our whole teaching effort should be directed towards creating contexts for language use in the classroom, by means such as listening and reading activities, discussion, communication tasks and roleplaying” or contexts that can help to approximate learning in a natural environment.

The main characteristics of learning in a natural environment, which might be approximated to learning through ECAs in an EFL context, pertain to the development of the three simultaneous adult functions as identified by Halliday (1975, cited in Cook, 2010, p.145): “the interpersonal (relating to people), the ideational (communicating ideas to other people) and the textual (relating one piece of language to another)”. Husni (2005, p.66) argued that “these contexts [for language learning through ECAs] should enable learners to construct their own representation of the language in the same way as they would in a natural environment, and pass through the same sequences of development as a natural learner”.

Many studies have shown that participation in extracurricular activities has a positive impact on students’ academic performance (Fujita, 2006, para.5). Reva (2012) pointed out that “In [...] applied linguistics and education, there is a general agreement to encourage extracurricular activities in university programs for students with different majors, because Extracurricular Activities (ECAs) help them to develop important skills, such as leadership, socializing, character training, and others”(p.1). Though many types of research have been carried out on this topic, very few have focused on its impact on the development of speaking skill and the management of language anxiety.

Extracurricular Activities (ECAs) are activities which are performed out of classroom setting. They are all activities which are not planned for the academic program but that help learners to strengthen their knowledge in a specific field. Campbell (1973: cited in Reva, 2012, p.1), defines them as “learners’ activities that fall outside the normal curriculum of educational institution; they supplement the regular course of classroom instruction and are sometimes organized or conducted with some participation of instructors”.

Today, many foreign language learners, all over the world, refer to a variety of Extracurricular Activities (ECAs) expecting to have a good command of their target language. In Benin, whereas many EFL learners claim to have succeeded in improving their speaking skill by participating in ECAs, a huge number of learners and educators are still not convinced about the positive impact those activities may have on English learning. It is then important to shed light on the value of those educational programs through an empirical work so as to foster EFL learners to make the most of them and enable EFL/ESL teachers to improve and increase their previous knowledge of the language and help them to get used to varieties of strategies leading to more lively and relaxed classes.

3. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

3.1. Selection of the Research Sites

The study took place in eight of the twelve territorial departments which subdivide now the republic of Benin after the reform of the territorial administration passed by the Law No. 97-028 of 15 January 1999 on the organization of territorial administration of the Republic of Benin⁴. These eight territorial departments are located in the following four geographical areas: *Atlantique- Littoral (AL)* in the south; *Ouémé- Plateau (OP)* in the southeast; *Mono-Couffo (MC)* in the south-west and *Borgou-Alibori (BA)* in the northern part of the county. I have decided to carry out this study in those four geographical areas because they cover the regions where the most known English-related Extracurricular Activity programs (English language clubs) adopted in the country by some language instructors and EFL learners to enhance the English language acquisition are established. Therefore, the data of the present study were collected from four public secondary schools (each from one of the four geographical areas above mentioned).

⁴ For more details about the reform of the territorial administration of the Republic of Benin, Cf. *Guide Juridique de la Réforme de l'Administration Territoriale, Tome 1* : Loi, N. 97-028 portant organisation de l'administration territoriale de la République du Bénin; 1999.

3.2. The Research Participants

A total population of 130 intermediate EFL learners randomly recruited from four secondary schools was involved in the survey. In each school, these learners were put into two sections. One of them (made of 65 EFL learners) constituted the experimental group while the other (made of the remaining 65 EFL learners) represented the control group. All of these learners were intermediate EFL students in lower 6th and upper 6th grade (Première and Terminale in the French educational system) and have never been exposed to language-oriented Extracurricular Activities (ECAs) programs before. They were all non-repeaters of those two school year levels. The participants of the experimental group were 42 (64.61%) males and 23 (35.39%) females. Those of the control group were 43 (66.15%) males and 22 (33.85%) females. Table 1 below presents the distribution of the subjects population of the four secondary schools selected throughout the country.

Table1. *Distribution of learners’ population in both groups (experimental and control)*

Research sites (Geographical areas)	School’s name	Experimental Group		Control Group		Number of Participants from each school	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Altantique-Littoral (AL)	CEG Godomey	9	4	14	6	13	20
Ouémé-Plateau (OP)	CEG Agbokou	8	7	6	8	15	14
Mono-Couffo (MC)	CEG 2 Lokossa	15	8	11	5	23	16
Borgou-Alibori (BA)	CEG Hubert MAGA	10	4	12	3	14	15
Total		42	23	43	22	65	65

Only the sixty-five (65) learners of the experimental group participated in the implementation of the English Language Club instructional program.

3.3. Research Instruments

To achieve the first and second objectives of this study, I have used respectively a test measuring the level of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) adapted from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCAS) designed by Horwitz et al. (1986) and an English Language Assessment Test adapted from Mewald et al.’s (2012) E8 Standards Speaking Test. In addition to those instruments, I have also referred to semi-structured interview questionnaires, focus groups and English language clubs observations to probe more in-depth the impact of the English Language Clubs on the 65 intermediate EFL learners who participated in those English-related ECAs for six months.

To design the Foreign Language Anxiety Test (FLAT) used in the present study, I somewhat reformulated the 33 multiple-choice items originally developed by Horwitz et al. (1986) to make them fit the foreign language anxiety realities in the Republic of Benin.

✚ Among the 33 items of FLCAS, 24 are negatively formulated so that students experiencing more language anxiety agree (or strongly agree) with the statements. The 9 other items (2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 22, 28, and 32) are formulated positively so that students experiencing less language anxiety disagree (or strongly disagree) with the statements. For the negative statements, the choice of “Strongly Agree” is worth 1 point, whereas the one of “Strongly disagree” is worth 5 points. When the statements are positively formulated, the points are reversed. So the choice of “Strongly Agree” is worth 5 points whereas the one of “Strongly disagree” is worth 1 point. Thus, the possible outcome for this instrument of analysis is between 33 and 165. Similarly, a high score (for example ‘165’) corresponds to a less level of anxiety and a low score (for example ‘33’) would identify the student with a lot of language anxiety. The implementation of the Foreign Language Anxiety Test (FLAT) as an instrument, to evaluate the level of foreign language anxiety among EFL learner, has been done through questionnaires method design.

According to researchers (Aida, 1994; Chang, 1999; Ganschow et al., 1994; Ganschow & Sparks, 1996; Liao, 1999), this foreign language anxiety instrument “has been widely adopted by many researchers to explore learners’ foreign language anxiety” (Chan & Wu, 2004, p.292) because of its success in terms of validity and reliability.

✚ Since the E8 Standards Speaking Test was originally designed to “encompass levels A2 to B1 in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)” (Mewald et al., 2012, p.35), to adapt it to the context of my work I have decided to develop the *E10 standards speaking assessment test* so that it could take in levels A2 to B2 in the CEFR through the assessment of 10 speaking standards. This E10 standards speaking assessment test as the E8 standards speaking test are

designed to be conducted by qualified examiners with paired test takers (EFL learners). It is made up of three parts:

- In part one which is a “Warm-up”, the test takers familiarized themselves with examiners.
- In part two, each test taker gives a monologue based on a verbal and/or visual motives.
- In part three, the two test takers take on a dialogue based on verbal and visual motives.

Examiners employ standardized improvement questions to guide participants and keep them from long pauses. Test takers are assessed about their strengths and weaknesses in oral communication by being involved in a language task completion without any preparation and in a context that is comparable to actual life language usage of their age group. The task lasted 15 minutes (Part1: 3 minutes; part 2: 5 minutes and part 3: 7 minutes).

3.4. Procedures and Statistical Measures used to Analyse the Data Collected from the Survey

The data collected from the study through questionnaires' entries (multiple choice, Likert scale, Yes/No questions) were entered on and analyzed with the help of a computer software program (SPSS 21 – Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The data collected from the semi-structured interview questions were analyzed with the keyword procedure (Keywords were extracted from the qualitative questions, entered on SPSS charts as texts, and the frequencies of entries were calculated). The semi-structured interviews, focus groups and English Language Clubs observations were used to gather more reliable and comparable information about the respondents' beliefs and attitudes towards the concept of the management of the foreign language anxiety and the development of speaking ability through the participation in English-related extracurricular activity programs.

Prior to the beginning of the study, all the 130 Intermediate EFL learners (involved in the experimental and control groups) were pre-tested regarding their primary anxiety level and oral communication standard. They were evaluated through the use of two different instruments: the Foreign Language Anxiety Test (FLAT) that I adapted from Horwitz (1986) and the E10 Standards Speaking Assessment test that I designed for this purpose. Only the participants in the experimental group were involved in English Language Club activities. The participants in the control group were taught oral communication through the use of the traditional approach. At the end of the six months that has lasted the experimentation, both experimental and control groups were post-tested regarding their anxiety level and oral communication skills. This was to check whether in the meantime they have improved or developed more self-confidence and speaking competence.

4. PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

4.1. Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation of the Findings

4.1.1. Interviews

The respondents to the present study were randomly selected with the help of some of their English language instructors. They were administrated an open-ended questionnaire before and after the experimentation through semi-structured interviews. The answers provided by all the participants in the survey during the pre-test were quite the same. All have confessed that they have never been exposed to a language-oriented ECA before and that the language skill they would like to improve most is their oral communication ability.

In fact, while 2.30 % of the participants expressed the need to sharpen their skills in Reading and 3.84 % in Listening, the big majority of them (93.86 %) has claimed the need to develop abilities in Speaking. Furthermore, the probability of Person Chi-square (0.000) was less than 1%. This shows that there is a strong link between the learners' proficiency level in English and the language skills they need to develop the most.

None of the EFL learners who participated in the survey answered “yes” to the question “*Do you feel satisfied with the different speaking activities you perform in class?*” Most of them mentioned that they were not satisfied and very few answered that they are somewhat satisfied. This proves that the English class activities are not sufficient to enable learners to improve their proficiency in English.

Most of the participants in the experimental group as well as those of the control group while being interviewed through the pre-test regarding their Foreign Language Anxiety level and oral communication abilities expressed themselves in a not well-structured English. One of them (from the experimental group) has for example provided the following statement: “My name is Codjo, I have 18 year old and I am doing the final year at school”. “I like to learn language like English and Spanish

but it is difficult for me to understand the two”. Surprisingly enough, after the six-month experiment, the quality of the English language production of those of the experimental group has changed whereas the one of those of the control group remained quite the same. During the review of the background information all the participants in the study have provided through their initial interview, most of those of the experimental group, contrary to the one of the control group, were able to speak better than the first time (as illustrated above) and answered differently to the same questions in terms of the English language syntax. The respondent named “Codjo” made for example the following statement: “My name is Codjo and I am 18 years old”. “I am in upper 6th and I am fond of foreign languages such as English and Spanish [...]”. The data gathered from their experience of the English-related ECA program (English Language Clubs) used in the present study revealed the following implicit beliefs: They believe that the program facilitates learning and provides them with positive and supportive learning environment where they can secure practical knowledge and commitment to self-development. Most of them pointed out that it definitely helps them in overcoming the anxiety to speak before an audience. Through this educational program, some stated, “I gained self-confidence and have accordingly improved my ability to speak English as a foreign language in front of a lot of people”.

4.1.2. Focus Groups

To elicit more information from the learners of the experimental group about the effectiveness of the English Language Clubs’ program, in language learning, some focus groups were carried out. To get the views of each of the 65 respondents of the experimental group about the effectiveness of this teaching approach in language learning, I have decided to split them into five groups. The first group consisted of 13 learners (9 males and 4 females), the second group was made of 15 learners (8 males and 7 females), the third group consisted of 11 learners (7 males and 4 females), the fourth was made of 12 learners (8 males and 4 females), and the fifth group consisted of 14 learners (10 males and 4 females).

To the question: “*How can you describe English Language Clubs’ programs?*”, most of the participants involved in each focus group pointed out that an English Language Club is a facilitative program that helps learners to develop oral communication and leadership skills. Commenting on the positives of this program some of them declared: “English Language Clubs helps learners to improve their pronunciation, listening and speaking skills. They also help them to develop more self-confidence”. “Through my experience with this program, I can say that it is a teaching approach that helps in overcoming the anxiety to speak before an audience”.

To the question: “*What kind of English language skills have you improved through your participation in English Language Clubs?*”, most of the subjects mentioned that they have improved both, their oral communication skills and self-confidence. Some mentioned that they have particularly learned to manage their anxiety to speak in front of an audience. They stated: “English Language Clubs taught me how to use specific words that communicate exactly what I mean. By making short sentences, it becomes easier for me to speak and make myself understood”. “English Language Clubs helped me to improve my listening and speaking skills. Through this program, I developed more self-confidence and widened my knowledge regarding personal development”.

4.1.3. English Language Clubs Observations

To examine the attitude of the experimental group’s participants towards the English-related ECA program which is under investigation, many English Language Clubs observations were carried out during the six months that lasted the experimentation. One English Language Clubs session was observed each week. Those English Language Clubs observations were conducted in each of the four geographical areas (AL, OP, MC, and BA)⁵ where the experimentation took place. During the observations, I emphasized the following points: 1) The kinds of activities performed; 2) The duration of the meetings; 3) The learners’ reactions and feelings; 4) The atmosphere of the environment; 5) The moderators’ roles. Only the results of one of the many observations carried out through each of the four English Language Clubs settings located in the four geographical areas are presented and analysed in the present research work paper (See Table 2 below).

⁵ See Page 22

Table2. Presentation and analyse of the classroom observations collected from each of the four English Language Clubs settings located in the four geographical areas where the experimentation took place

	English Language Club observation number one					English Language Club observation number two				
	Setting	Physical aspects	Date	Time	N	Setting	Physical aspects	Date	Time	N
Observation questionnaire guide	General Educational School of Godomey (CEG Godomey)	The room was well lit and had a blackboard on which the moderator (language instructor) put the agenda of the session. The tables and chairs of the room were repositioned in such a way that they could form a horse shoe. A table, from a height of approximately a meter and a half, was used as a lectern. There was no noise outside the classroom that could disturb the session.	19/03/2015	03:00 p.m. to 17:00 p.m	13	General Educational School of Agbokou (CEG Agbokou)	The room was well lit had a blackboard on which the moderator (language instructor) put the agenda of the session. The benches of the room were repositioned in such a way that they could form a horse shoe. A table, from a height of approximately a meter and a half, was used as a lectern. There was no noise or other obstacles that could disturb the session.	16/06/2015	04:00 p.m. to 18:00 p.m.	15
Activities performed	Free Talk (Making participants discuss about any topic of their choice); debate and discussion, games, songs, listening and reading.					Games; Jokes; drama; song performance; debate and discussion.				
Duration of the meetings	This was the third session of all the twenty-four in total, with one session per week for six months. It lasted two hours.					This was the eighteenth session of all the twenty-four in total, with one session per week for six months. It lasted two hours.				
Learners' reactions and feelings	Many learners have not yet become familiar with this English-related ECA program. However, most of them showed great interest in the meeting activities. Some raised some problems related to words pronunciation and vocabulary background.					Many learners have already had time to become familiar with the principles of English Language Clubs. All of them have already taken on many roles and delivered many speeches. Most of them showed great interest in the meeting activities. Some raised the problem of pronunciation.				
Atmosphere of the environment	The atmosphere was quite vivid because most of the participants were enthusiastic to take the floor and speak. They all wanted to give their opinions on the different topics.					Most of the participants were very active and very excited for having the opportunity to practice once more their English. They have become more confident when speaking and seemed to enjoy being involved in the				

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		different learning activities.
Moderators' roles	The moderator opened the session by presenting the agenda of the day, making the participants introduce themselves to one another and take different roles. She closed the session by providing the participants with a feedback on the different activities that took place during the meeting.	The moderator opened the session by presenting the agenda of the day and the different role takers. At the end of the meeting, he provided each role taker with a valuable feedback.

	English Language Club observation number three					English Language Club observation number four				
	Setting	Physical aspects	Date	Time	N	Setting	Physical aspects	Date	Time	N
Observation questionnaire guide	General Educational School of Lokossa (CEG Lokossa)	The room was well lit and little bit noisy because of the unpleasant sound made by an old fan. There was no blackboard but there was a flip chart in which the moderator has written down the agenda of the session. There was a very large table around which all the participants in the meeting were sitting. A lectern was placed at the right corner of the room. A stack of dictionaries (monolingual and bilingual) was arranged on a table.	25/09/2015	03:30 p.m. to 17:30 p.m.	23	General Educational School of Hubert Maga (CEG Hubert Maga)	The room was well lit and without noise. There was a blackboard on which the moderator has written down the agenda of the session. The tables and benches of the room were repositioned in such a way that they could form a horse. A table from a height of approximately a meter and a half, was used as a lectern.	15/11/2015	03:00 p.m. to 17:00 p.m.	14
Activities performed	Games; Jokes; drama; song performance; debate and discussion; news presentation.					Games; Jokes; riddles; idioms and expressions; reading and listening; song performance; debate and discussion; video projection.				
Duration of the meetings	This was the nineteenth session of all the twenty-four in total and it lasted two hours.					This was the last session of all the twenty-four in total and it lasted two hours.				
Learners'	All the learners have almost become familiar					All the learners showed great interest in all				

reactions and feelings	with the English Language Clubs procedures. Most of them showed great interest in the meeting activities. They have become more confident when speaking and seemed to enjoy being involved in the different learning activities. However, some of them complained about pronunciation and understanding problems.	the activities of the session. They were very enthusiastic to be involved in the different activities. Even though some of them were less fluent than the others, none of them looked reluctant to take the floor to speak her/his mind or participate in the activities.
Atmosphere of the environment	There were many active involvements of learners during this session.	The session ended with a video projection activity and the award ceremony to the best two learners who were voted by the audience as the best speakers. Simply put, there were many active involvements of learners during this session.
Moderators' roles	The moderator opened the session by presenting the agenda of the day and the different role takers. At the end of the meeting, he provided each role taker with a valuable feedback.	The moderator opened the session by presenting the agenda of the day and the different role takers. At the end of the meeting, he provided each role taker with a valuable feedback.

4.1.4. Results of the Analysis of the Data Collected Through the Use of the FLAT

The outcomes of the analysis of the data collected from the experimental and control group through the use of the Foreign Language Anxiety Test (FLAT) are presented as follows in the table 3 below.

Table3. Descriptive statistics of the Foreign Language Anxiety Test from the two groups

Group	Time Cluster	Gender	Pre-test			Post-test		
			Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Experimental group	Atlantique-Littoral	Male	.4194	.03957	9	.5774	.07244	9
		Female	.4436	.05782	4	.5076	.06691	4
		Total	.4268	.04488	13	.5559	.07579	13
	Ouémé-Plateau	Male	.4843	.05348	8	.7027	.12018	8
		Female	.4898	.11878	7	.6840	.07143	7
		Total	.4869	.08651	15	.6939	.09747	15
	Mono-Couffo	Male	.4515	.05502	15	.6843	.07913	15
		Female	.4786	.04942	8	.7339	.09535	8
		Total	.4609	.05364	23	.7016	.08637	23
	Borgou-Alibori	Male	.4606	.16482	10	.7159	.07899	10
		Female	.4568	.10433	4	.6705	.08537	4
		Total	.4595	.14602	14	.7029	.08035	14
	Total	Male	.4530	.09080	42	.6724	.09833	42
		Female	.4721	.08289	23	.6683	.11059	23
		Total	.4598	.08791	65	.6710	.10199	65
Control group	Atlantique-Littoral	Male	.4609	.12465	14	.3771	.04405	14
		Female	.4990	.08647	6	.4500	.05400	6
		Total	.4723	.11366	20	.4089	.04750	20
	Ouémé-Plateau	Male	.4586	.06821	6	.4424	.02710	6
		Female	.4977	.06931	8	.4661	.04178	8
		Total	.4810	.06914	14	.4560	.03702	14
	Mono-Couffo	Male	.4671	.04250	11	.4278	.04572	11
		Female	.4591	.06617	5	.4318	.01124	5
		Total	.4646	.04885	16	.4291	.03783	16
	Borgou-Alibori	Male	.4441	.04458	12	.3941	.02217	12
		Female	.4333	.01515	3	.4015	.11211	3
		Total	.4419	.04018	15	.3771	.06637	15
	Total	Male	.4575	.07996	43	.4909	.04588	43
		Female	.4805	.06982	22	.3951	.07306	22
		Total	.4653	.07691	65	.4123	.05601	65
Total	Atlantique-Littoral	Male	.4229	.12649	23	.4946	.15976	23
		Female	.4568	.10412	10	.4530	.14424	10

	Ouémé-Plateau	Total	.4332	.11958	33	.4620	.15419	33
		Male	.4848	.16749	14	.5054	.25283	14
		Female	.4508	.11028	15	.4611	.22277	15
	Mono-Couffo	Total	.4702	.14434	29	.4825	.23452	29
		Male	.4735	.10513	26	.5335	.19133	26
		Female	.4942	.12345	13	.5793	.21633	13
	Borgou-Alibori	Total	.4804	.11037	39	.5488	.19834	39
		Male	.4402	.12955	22	.4949	.22284	22
		Female	.4129	.15750	7	.5552	.16882	7
	Total	Total	.4644	.14110	29	.5100	.20934	29
		Male	.4541	.12998	85	.4794	.20639	85
		Female	.4785	.12307	45	.5859	.21037	45
		Total	.4625	.12768	130	.5116	.20699	130

Dependent Variable: *Normalized Anxiety Score*

Table 3 shows that through the outcomes of the Foreign Language Anxiety pre-test, there is a statistically significant correlation at ($=0.4129$) between the means scores of the learners from the experimental group and those of the learners from the control group. This proves that all the participants in the study had, prior to the implementation of the English-related ECA program (English Language Clubs), approximately the same characteristics regarding the level of their anxiety to speak English.

With regard to the findings of the post-test presented in table 3, they indicate that there are some observed differences between the means of both groups according to the factor level of anxiety. So, when comparing the results of the means scores obtained by the participants in the experimental group for the post-test with those initially obtained by them during the pre-test, we notice that there is a real difference in the outcomes. In contrast, when comparing the mean scores of the participants in the control group for the post-test with those of the pre-test, we notice that they have remained in general quite unchanged.

Therefore, the major difference that has been noted in comparing the results of the post-test with the ones of the pre-test is concerning the learners of the experimental group. This difference which is estimated through the use of the Difference in differences (DID) statistical technics as presented in the table below, is attributed to the English-related ECA program (English Language Clubs) adopted in the present study.

Table4. *Difference in differences (DID) estimation regarding the effect of the English-related ECA program on EFL learners' anxiety management*

Group	Pre-test	Post test	difference (post-test - pre-test)	t-test	p_value
Experimental group	0.458	0.691	0.233		
Control group	0.469	0.396	- 0.073		
Difference	- 0.011	0.295	0.306	(DID)	9.271 0.000

4.1.5. Results of the Analysis of the Data Collected Through the Use of the Speaking Test

Contrary to the data collected from the Foreign Language Anxiety Test (FLAT) which were directly computed and analyzed due to their size, those obtained from the speaking test were first presented in Tables 5a and 5b on the next page before being computed and analyzed.

The learners who have taken on the speaking test were evaluated on the basis of the following three components of the communicative competence as defined by the Common European Framework Reference (CEFR): (1) linguistic competencies; (2) sociolinguistic competencies; and (3) pragmatic competencies. On the six linguistic competencies identified by the CEFR, the learners were evaluated on the following four: (1) Grammar accuracy, (2) Vocabulary Range, (3) Vocabulary Control, (4) and Phonological Control. According to sociolinguistic competencies, partakers to the speaking skills test were assessed on the basis of their sociolinguistic appropriateness. Regarding the pragmatic competence, participants in the test were evaluated on the following four pragmatic competences of the six identified by the CEFR: (1) Taking the floor (Turntaking), (2) Thematic development, (3) Coherence, and (4) Spoken fluency. The interpreting score table below was elaborated according to the CEFR standards and has helped to estimate the level which was suitable for each partaker to the test.

Interpreting score

	Elementary	Pre-Intermediate	Intermediate	Upper Intermediate	Advanced
CEFR	[A1 A2[[A2 B1[[B1 B2[[B2 C1[[C1 C2[
Score	[0 5[[5 7[[7 9[9	10 +

Table5a. Descriptive statistics of the speaking Test from the experimental group

Experimental group																				
Proficiency level in English (Speaking skill)			Pretest							Post-test										
			Score					Mean	Std-Dev	Score					Mean	Std-Dev				
GA	Sexe	Eff (N=65)	5	6	7	8	9	10+			Sexe	Eff (N=65)	5	6	7	8	9	10+		
AL	Boys	2	1						6.444	1.065	Boys	2	1					7.444	1.065	
		3		1								3		1						
		2			1							2			1					
	Girls	2				1			6.5	1.118	Girls	2					1		7.00	0.707
		1	1									1		1						
		1		1								2			1					
OP	Boys	1				1		6.25	1.198	Boys	1							7.428	0.903	
		3	1									3		1						
		2			1							2			1					
	Girls	2				1		6.571	0.903	Girls	2		1					7.00	0.925	
		1	1									4		1						
		3			1							1			1					
MC	Boys	1	1					6.6	0.711	Boys	1	1						7.6	0.711	
		5		1								5		1						
		8			1							8			1					
	Girls	1				1		6.5	0.866	Girls	1							7.375	0.695	
		1	1									3		1						
		3			1							4			1					
BA	Boys	1				1		6.4	0.916	Boys	1							7.4	0.916	
		2	1									2	1							
		3		1								3		1						
	Girls	4			1			7.00	0.707	Girls	4			1				7.00	0.707	
		1				1						1			1					
		1					1					2			1					

Table5b. Descriptive statistics of the speaking Test from the control group

Control group																				
Proficiency level in English (Speaking skill)			Pretest							Post-test										
			Score					Mean	Std-Dev	Score					Mean	Std-Dev				
GA	Sexe	Eff (N=65)	5	6	7	8	9	10+			Sexe	Eff (N=65)	5	6	7	8	9	10+		
AL	Boys	2	1						6.5	0.823	Boys	4	1					6.214	0.939	
		4		1								4		1						
		7			1							5			1					
	Girls	1				1		6.5	0.957	Girls	1							6.333	1.105	
		1	1									2	1							
		2		1								1		1						
		2			1						2			1						

		1			1													
OP	Boys	1	1					6.5	0.957	Boys	1			1			6.333	1.105
		2		1							2		1					
		2			1						1			1				
	Girls	1			1			6.75	0.968	Girls	3	1					6.25	1.089
		2		1							1							
		3			1						3		1					
MC	Boys	2			1		6.00	0.953	Boys	1	1					6.454	0.782	
		4		1							5		1					
		2			1						4		1					
	Girls	1			1		6.6	1.019	Girls	1			1			6.6	1.019	
		1	1								1	1						
		2		1							2		1					
BA	Boys	1	1				6.416	0.759	Boys	1	1					6.666	0.745	
		6		1							3		1					
		4			1						7		1					
	Girls	1			1		7.00	0.816	Girls	1			1			6.333	0.942	
		1		1							1	1						
		1			1						2		1					
				1														

Tables 5a and 5b show that through the outcomes of the speaking pre-test, there is no statistically significant difference between the means scores of the learners from the experimental group and those of the learners from the control group. This proves that all the participants in the study had, prior to the implementation of the English-related ECA program (English Language Clubs), approximately the same proficiency level in English as far as oral communication skill is concerned. However, the results presented in these tables indicate that the girls' means scores are a little bit higher than the ones of the boys whether in the experimental group or the control group. With regard to the findings of the post-test presented in tables 5a and 5b, they indicate that there are observed differences between the means scores of both groups as far as the factor proficiency level in English or oral communication skill is concerned. However, contrary to the results of the pre-test, those of the post-test indicate that the boys' means scores are higher than the ones of the girls. One might be tempted to say that the responsiveness of man and woman regarding the principles of the theory and practice is not always the same. Although we often tend to say that women are naturally more gifted in literature studies than men, the results of this test indicate that men are more productive than women when placed in an experiential learning situation.

When comparing the results of the means scores obtained by each participant in the experimental group for the post-test with those initially obtained by each of them during the pre-test, we notice that there is a real difference in the statistics. In contrast, as far as the control group is concerned, there is no significant change between the average scores before and after the experimentation. So, it results that the six-month training based on English Language Clubs program is a treatment whose lack has wronged control group individuals.

Roughly, the major difference that has been noted in comparing the results of the post-test with the ones of the pre-test is concerning the learners of the experimental group. This difference which is estimated through the use of the Difference in differences (DID) statistical technics as presented in the table below, is attributed to the English Language Clubs program.

Difference in differences (DID) estimation regarding the effect of English-related ECA program on EFL learners' oral communication skill development

Group	Pre-test	Post test	difference (post-pre)	t-test	p_value
Experimental group	6.512	7.389	0.877		
Control group	6.179	6.425	0.246		
Difference	0.333	0.963	0.631	(DID)	2.202

To summarize, in light of all the above, we can say that the experience of the English Language Clubs program has effectively helped learners from the experimental group to lessen their Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) and develop their oral communication skills. This shows that there is a relationship between the participation of Beninese intermediate EFL learners in English Language Clubs and the management of their Foreign Language Anxiety. This also indicates that Language-oriented ECA programs such as the English Language Clubs promote the development of Beninese intermediate EFL learners' ability to speak English. This proves that the two objectives of the present study (see section.1. on page 1) have been met and that they support the two hypotheses of the study (see section. 1.4 on page 20).

4.2. Discussion of Results

In Benin, the English Language Learning difficulties experienced by learners are mainly related to their anxiety to communicate orally before people. Most of them do not have the opportunity to be put in a real-life learning situation or be exposed to the target language. Though, English is a compulsory curriculum requirement for students at all levels of Benin formal education, from secondary schools to universities, lots of Beninese EFL learners after spending many years to study it can hardly make a correct sentence.

Similarly, the analysis of the answers provided by the participants in the present study to open-ended and close-ended questions showed that they mainly experience anxiety when dealing with presentations in front of an audience and taking exams. Some learners are subject to foreign language anxiety even if they show interest in their target language learning. Some of them are interested in learning their new language because of academic purposes.

Moreover, the analysis of the learners' language attitudes and their responses to open-ended and closed-ended questions showed that Extracurricular Activities related to English language learning have a positive impact on their anxiety. Among the participants in the survey who were exposed to English Language Clubs, those who had a high level of proficiency in English declared to having reached this level through their participation in this educational program. They all admitted that this out-of-school teaching program has considerably helped them to reduce their language anxiety; develop oral communication, competence in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, flexibility and fluency in speaking through their ability to memorize words more easily and to speak in public. However, all of them have mentioned that they are still in need to practice to gain flexibility and fluency. This might be explained by the fact that language learning is a process that requires a lot of time and practice.

Therefore, the best way to manage the anxiety is to face it. By taking the risk of facing one's fear, it comes easier to manage it. As it is often said, it is no use fleeing one's problems or fears. The ideal is to face them. By taking the courage to face one's fears, we better succeed in keeping them away from us. Similarly, giving the learners the chance to participate in language-oriented Extracurricular Activity teaching programs is synonymous with giving them the opportunity to face their foreign language anxiety. By making them learn from their failure and success, they become more confident.

Roughly, the English Learning Circles program which is most of the time free of charge and not mandatory, through its learning by doing or Experiential Learning approach deals particularly with the needs and wants of learners. As pointed out by Yirun Wang (2015, p.5), it:

1. Raises learners' retention capacity through the use of various senses.
2. Develops leadership abilities to a meaningful level.
3. Enables the integration of various teaching/learning strategies into the curriculum to maximize creativity and flexibility.
4. Makes easy the transfer of knowledge and abilities.
5. Makes Learner-centered learning becomes the focus.
6. Makes activities memorable.
7. Makes the process of discovery of knowledge and solutions build competence and confidence.
8. Facilitates motivation to learning.
9. Makes learning more fun for both students and teachers.
10. Enables students to learn life skills that will be used over and over.

By attending English Language clubs learners who are already aware of such learning approach have the chance to be involved in an atmosphere ideal for their actual stress or level of anxiety. This kind of extracurricular activity that is a supplementary method to English Teaching/Learning is first designed for English majors' students. But however, it is usually noticed that many of the non-English majors' students are also involved in them in need of flexible atmosphere where they can improve their English.

We all know that we cannot learn a language without speaking it, and it is, therefore, essential to our learners to seek refuge in the English Language Clubs. Several activities are adopted by those learning circles to help learners develop speaking, listening and sometimes reading skills. We do not usually have time to practice our language in the classroom, and thus, the English Language Clubs are the ultimate solution for those who want to control their fear and speak in public".

In summary, Learning English in a French-speaking environment requires finding a space where one could have the opportunity to practice the language. Therefore, it is important for EFL learners to join English-related Extracurricular Activity programs such as the English Language Clubs (ELCs) to meet people having a good language proficiency and who have also experienced before the same language difficulties faced by them.

By joining English-related ECAs such as English Language Clubs (ELCs) Beninese EFL students participate in a variety of activities such as, debates, speech presentations, theatres, organized trips and excursions that enable them to hone their different language skills. They are trained to communicate on academic topics with their mates or pen friends from abroad.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

English learning is considered as a pet peeve for many foreign language learners. In Benin, one of the principal factors that impede the learning of this language has to do with the fear of making mistakes or not being understood by one's peers while speaking. To solve this problem, some Beninese EFL learners resort to a wide range of Extracurricular Activity programs related to English learning. Among those that provide Beninese EFL learners with a flexible and supportive learning environment are English Learning Clubs. To shed light on the effectiveness of those educational programs, the present Mixed Methods research has examined the management of 130 Beninese intermediate EFL learners' anxiety and the development of their speaking ability through their participation in some English Language Clubs.

The results of the different analysis and interpretations have shown that participating, for a period of six months, in English Language Clubs, those learners who have never been exposed before to such programs, have developed both self-confidence and oral communication abilities. Through role-taking, observations and participation, they have discovered a new way to manage their language anxiety and develop oral communication skills. Many of them have advocated the use of this educational approach for foreign language learning and mentioned that they might be participating in this program or similar English-related ECAs in the future. This suggests that English-related extracurricular activities are valuable educational programs for foreign language learning and highlights the effectiveness of English Language Clubs in language learning.

Future researchers on language-oriented Extracurricular Activities should attempt to explore the strategies to adopt to refine the management of those programs. They can also investigate other innovative approaches, similar to the one of English Language Clubs, to contribute to the development of English teaching and learning. Similarly, future research could include longitudinal studies to provide supportive evidence from the perceptions and beliefs of learners regarding the effects that their participation in language-oriented ECA programs have on the management of their language anxiety and the development of their speaking ability. To help to generalize the findings of the present study, further research with a larger number of participants could be carried out regarding the relationship that exists between the implementation of a language-oriented ECA program in English teaching and the development of intermediate EFL learners' speaking ability.

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APPENDICES / APPENDIXES

Appendix 1

Dear....

The undersigned is conducting a study on the “Management of Beninese EFL Learners’ Anxiety and the development of their speaking ability through their participation in English Language Clubs.

Please just encircle or tick the appropriate option whenever necessary.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Section One: Background information of Learners and the Perception of their Oral Proficiency	
1. Are you male or female? (please encircle) Male..... 1 Female.....2	2. How old are you? (please encircle only one of the age group which corresponds to yours) 18-29.....1 30-39.....2 40-59.....3 60 and over.....4
3. What is your proficiency level in English? (please encircle one only) Beginning.....1 Intermediate.....2 Advanced.....3	4. Which of the following four language skills do you need to develop the most? (please encircle one only) Listening.....1 Speaking.....2 Reading.....3 Writing.....4
5. Which of the following best describes your main reason for studying English? (please encircle one only) Academic requirement.....1 Job or professional requirement.....2 Traveling in an English-Speaking country..... 3 Understanding the culture of English-speaking countries4 Others (please specify).....5	6. How long have you been studying English? (please encircle one only) Less than three years.....1 Four to six years.....2 Seven to nine years.....3 More than ten years.....4
7. How often do you use your oral English to communicate? Always..... 1 Usually.....2 Rarely.....3 Never.....4	8. Which of the following best describes your level of oral performance in English? High.....1 Above average.....2 Average.....3 Low.....4

<p>9. Do teachers give you the opportunity to improve your speaking skill?</p> <p>Always.....1 Usually.....2</p> <p>Rarely.....3 Never.....4</p>	<p>10. Do you feel satisfied with the different speaking activities you perform in class?</p> <p>Yes.....1</p> <p>No.....2</p> <p>Somehow.....3</p>
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Section Two: Learners’ Opinions about their Foreign Language anxiety

<p>11. Have you ever experienced some anxiety when speaking or learning English as a Foreign Language?</p> <p>Yes.....1</p> <p>No.....2</p> <p>I don’t Know.....3</p>

12. This question is designed to evaluate the level of your Foreign Language Anxiety. The following statements describe how you feel about learning English. Based on your real situation, please read each statement carefully and choose the answer that suits you best then indicate whether you are (Please select one for each statement)

(1) *Strongly Disagree*
 (2) *Disagree*
 (3) *Neither Agree nor Disagree*
 (4) *Agree*
 (5) *Strongly Agree*

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking English.					
2. I don't worry about making mistakes when dealing with English-related activities					
3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on to speak English.					
3. It frightens me when I don't understand what the English speaker is saying.					
4. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more classes in English.					
5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more classes in English.					
6. When taking classes in English, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the courses.					
7. I keep thinking that the other learners are better at English than I am.					
8. I am usually at ease during English tests.					
9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation.					
10. I worry about the consequences of failing my English exam.					
11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over English learning.					
12. When learning or practicing English, I can get so nervous that I forget things I know.					
13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers to questions in a place where English is used or taught.					
14. I would not be nervous when speaking English with native speakers.					
15. I get upset when I don't understand what someone more proficient than me in English is correcting.					
16. Even if I'm well-prepared for my English classes, I feel anxious about them.					
17. I often feel like not going to attend my English classes.					
18. I feel confident when I speak English before people I know or in front of my mates.					
19. I am afraid that my English instructor is ready to correct every mistake I make.					
20. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm requested to answer questions in English.					
21. The more I study for an English test, the more confused I get.					
22. I don't feel any pressure to prepare very well for English classes.					

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23. I always feel that the other learners speak English better than I do.					
24. I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of an audience or other learners.					
25. English classes move so quickly that I worry about getting left behind.					
26. I feel more tense and nervous in my English classes than in my other classes.					
27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in a place where English is used or taught.					
28. When I'm on my way to attend English classes, I feel very sure and relaxed.					
29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English instructor says.					
30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak English.					
31. I am afraid that the other learners will laugh at me when I speak English.					
32. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of English.					
33. I get nervous when the English instructor asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.					
<p>13. Which of the following activities best helps you improve your English speaking skill?</p> <p>Listening to the teacher's talks and explanations.....1</p> <p>Doing grammar exercises.....2</p> <p>Doing vocabulary exercises..... 3</p> <p>Giving oral presentations.....4</p> <p>Attending English-oriented Extracurricular Activities.....5</p>					
Section Three: Learners' Opinions about Extracurricular Activities (ECAs)					
<p>14. Are you exposed to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) outside classroom?</p> <p>Yes..... 1</p> <p>No.....2</p>					
<p>15. How can you describe English Language Clubs' program?</p>			<p>16. Does regular participation in this Extracurricular Activity (ECA) help you to reduce your anxiety to speak English as a Foreign Language (EFL)?</p> <p>Yes.....1</p> <p>No.....2</p> <p>I don't Know.....3</p>		
<p>17. Which of the following language skills have you improved the most since the time you have been participating in this language-oriented Extracurricular Activity (ECA)?</p> <p>Listening Skill.....1</p> <p>Speaking Skill.....2</p> <p>Reading Skill.....3</p> <p>Writing Skill.....4</p> <p>Two of the four Skills (Please specify).....5</p> <p>Three of the four Skills (Please specify).....6</p> <p>All the four Skills (Listening, speaking, reading, writing).....7</p>					
<p>18. Have you noticed any impact of this ECA on your abilities to speak fluently and to be more motivated to study English? (Please discuss your answer)</p>			<p>19. Do you think that English Language Clubs are useful for your English acquisition? (Please discuss your answer)</p>		
<p>20. Would you like to participate again in any of those language-oriented Extracurricular Activities (ECAs) in the future?</p> <p>Yes..... 1</p> <p>No.....2</p> <p>I don't Know.....3</p>					
<p>Thank you very much for your cooperation</p>					

Appendix 2:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE GUIDE

The same process and set of questions were used to interview all candidates.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION REVIEW

Name:

Gender:

Age:

Proficiency level in English (Before experiencing the English Language Club teaching program):

Language skill to improve:

Reason for studying English:

Length of time of English learning:

Frequency of the use of English for oral communication (Before the ELC's experience):

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THE INTERVIEW

Introduction

Good morning/afternoon... (Name of the Interviewee). My name is and your teacher of English who is beside me is one of my colleagues. Thank you for volunteering for this interview session.

Purpose of the interview

We are here today to talk about your English Language Club's experience since you participated in the six-month oral communication classes based on that Language-oriented ECA approach that I initiated with the help of your teacher of English in your school. Although you have already been submitted to the completion of a questionnaire form to this regard at the end of that training, it is also crucial to gather additional information from you through one-to-one discussion. Therefore, the opportunity is given to you to support or change your mind regarding your first opinions about all you have experienced through that training. Simply put, the purpose of this interview session is to get your perceptions about the way this experience has impacted on your English learning. Thus, my objective is not to give you my opinion or share information with you. All that matters is your impressions. You will not be allowed to answer by Yes/NO and Right/Wrong. However, you have the right to change your mind. Please feel comfortable to speak your mind.

GUIDING OR EXPLORATION QUESTIONS

1. What do you think about the English Language Club's teaching approach?
2. How can you describe the English Language Club's teaching program?
3. On a scale of 1 to 10, how can you assess the level of your competence in spoken English before you experienced the English Language Club's teaching program? What is your new level (in the case of improvement)? Please make a short comment about your answer!
4. What are the positive aspects of this teaching program?
5. What kind of language skills have you improved through your participation in this training?
6. How has the English Language Club's teaching approach affected your self-confidence skill?
7. What do you prefer or dislike about this Language-oriented ECA approach?
8. What do you think now about the participation in English-related Extracurricular Activities?
9. What are you planning to do in the future to keep or improve your current level in English?
10. Provide any other comments.

CONCLUSION

Thank you very much for your cooperation. Your comments have been very helpful

Appendix 3:

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE GUIDE

INTRODUCTION, PURPOSE, AND WARNING FOR THE FOCUS GROUP

Hello, everyone! Glad to know that you have all volunteered to participate in this focus group. I know that you are all busy and give thanks for your time.

My name is and the one next to me is my colleague.....

The objective of the present group discussion is to evaluate your perceptions and beliefs about the impact of the English Language Club's teaching program on your English language learning. It is true that you have already been submitted to the completion of a questionnaire form to this regard at the end of the oral communication training you have been participating in since six months. It is also true that some of you have all been interviewed individually about that. However, your help is still required to gather more information about the real effect of this educational program on your English language acquisition. This group discussion will not last more than two hours.

Now may I audio-taped the discussion to make its retrospection easy? I ensure you that what you will be saying will be kept secret till they are transcribed literally and destroyed.

Please note that you will not be allowed to answer by Yes/NO and Right/Wrong. However, you have the right to change your mind. Please feel comfortable to speak your mind. There will be no particular order to have the floor. Just make sure that only one person speaks at a time. When you feel like saying something, please just go ahead! In addition, you do not need to share the same point of view with the other members of the group.

Does anyone have anything to say before we start? (If yes, please do!) If not, then I will ask my colleague to switch on the recorder.

WARMING UP OR ENGAGEMENT QUESTIONS

First and foremost I would like everyone to introduce themselves. Introduce yourself to your neighbor and ask about her/his name, dream country and hobbies.

Now I will be giving you two minutes to remember your best achievement in English-speaking since the time you have been introduced to the English Language Club's teaching approach (Something that you were not able to do in English and that you have succeeded in doing).Is there anyone ready to share her or his story?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. How can you describe the English Language Club's teaching approach?
2. How do you feel today regarding your English language learning?
3. What kind of English language skills have you improved through your participation in the oral communication classes based on the English Language Club' teaching approach?
4. What do you think about the integration of the English Language Club's educational program in English classroom activities?
5. After you have experienced the English Language Club's teaching program, what are your perceptions towards English-related extracurricular activity programs in general?
6. What do you prefer or dislike the most about the English Language Club's teaching approach?
7. How confident do you feel now when comes the time for you to speak English?
8. In addition to all we have been discussing so far, what else would you like to say in regard to your English Language Club's experience?

CONCLUSION

Thanks a lot for taking part in successful focus groups. Your views will be very useful for the study. The same process and set of questions were used for all the four focus groups.

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY



Coffi Martinien ZOUNHIN TOBOULA, is a student in the final year of PhD thesis of English studies at the University of Abomey-Calavi in the Republic of Benin. His strong interest in the acquisition of languages in general and foreign languages in particular, drove him to make of English and Chinese learning a real passion. His love for Shakespeare's Language quickly took the upper hand over his studies of legal sciences that he later completed after he joined the Armed Forces of his country. Despite his status as a police officer, his liking for teaching and learning English led him to specialize in English language didactics.

He is a promoter of several English Language Clubs and member of Toastmasters International where he holds the position of Vice President Education. He has several years of experience in the creation and management of extracurricular activities related to language learning.

This article is nothing but a brief summary of his long years of experience in using this pedagogical approach to learning the English Language.