

# Students' Attitude to Music in Foreign Language Classes in Secondary Schools in Enugu Urban

Dr. Sunday N. Nnamani<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Henry U. Anih<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Music, Faculty of Humanities, Alex Ekwueme Federal, University Ndufu-Alike Ikwo, PMB 1010 Abakaliki Ebonyi State, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup>Department of Social Studies, Peaceland College of Education Enugu, Nigeria

**Abstract**— Learners are the subject and the focal point of teaching and they should be accepted in a complex way. It is therefore necessary to innovate, change and complete the methodology and forms used to make learners to be harmonically developed. Music has a big pedagogical potential when used in foreign language classes. Numerous music can be used such as classical music, folklore, musicals and the modern types. This paper titled “Students' Attitude to Music in Foreign Language Classes in Enugu Urban” was conducted in nine secondary schools of Enugu Urban using a population of two hundred and forty students in Junior Secondary Classes of 1 – 3.

Six research questions were posed out of which thirty (30) questions were generated, distributed, collected and analyzed in the various schools. The results showed that music can be applied in foreign language class when practicing pronunciation, vocabulary, speech, melody and grammar. Using music in foreign language classes offers a possibility of students to identify with various foreign authors. French was chosen as the foreign language used.

**Keywords**— Music in Foreign Language, Secondary Schools, Enugu Urban.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Language is a means of communication, one whose importance as a means of human communication cannot be overemphasized. The language of music is a phenomenon which follows human beings to express their feelings, aspirations, and desires to interact with one another as far as the human society is concerned. It is a product of culture and a unifying factor in the integration of individuals within a given society. Language according to Fromkin V. et al (2007) “is a source of power”. This philosophy is expressed in the myths and religions of many people. The possession of language perhaps more than any other attribute, distinguishes human beings from other animals. Language is indeed an instrument of social interaction across the globe. Without language human existence would have been meaningless. No wonder Fawehinmi (2007) rightly expresses the importance of language when he said that “it is intricately woven to culture, civilization and the general mode of life of any given linguistic society”. This explains why language is a system

through which human beings understand not only one another but also the society.

### Language in Music

In recent years, there has been an unprecedented increase in the commercial use of music in our society in every-day life. The frequency of listening to music is growing and the ways of listening to music are quite varied but thanks to technological progress. Music is present everywhere – in venues of cultural and sports events, in public means of transport, shopping centers, hotels, restaurants, surgery rooms for therapeutic functions and in other places. Listening to music is timeless – pregnant ladies sing or listen to music (and this music has an impact on the not-yet-born child's development already). Music is played when the very last farewell is expressed at funerals. Human beings are in an active or passive contact with music nearly everyday.

It is also very important to mention that the issue of individual cognitive differences between peoples every human being perceives music in his/her own specific way,

which results from social differences and differences in age, qualification and so on. Music is an ‘art’ that has to do with humans and is inseparable with life. It is only human beings that can compose and sing music which can only be achieved by the use of language.

Even when music is only instrumental, it is expressed through the human thought directed and guided by the use of language. Therefore language and music work together for aesthetic arts and the audience whom it is meant for is also greatly considered. Quoting Udeze (2009) she said:

the use of language in music has become a powerful source especially in singing different kinds of songs for example, gospel music songs, songs for supplication, songs for curing, choruses, lullabies and infact songs for every aspect of life.

Music provides an excellent ground for raising historical, cultural and societal issues without overshadowing the linguistic component of the lesson. Music can make magic happen, for sure, but I think the results are best felt when it is aligned with a specific teaching goal.

#### **Music in Foreign Language Class**

According to Natascha (2015) he said “fortunately it’s not too hard to integrate music into the foreign language classroom, and the following are some of the effective ways to integrate it into your teaching”. Use it to teach vocabulary to build the community, to change their mood and to offer insights into a culture’s worldview and history. Quoting Natascha C. (2015) Twitter @ nataschachtena, she said:

One of the challenges I face teaching a daily language class is finding novel and creative ways to maintain students’ interest throughout my lessons. One of my favorite teaching

“tricks” is using music to MOTIVATE LEARNING, IMPROVE CONCENTRATION, CREATE A SENSE OF COMMUNITY and help my students to absorb material.

She went further to say,

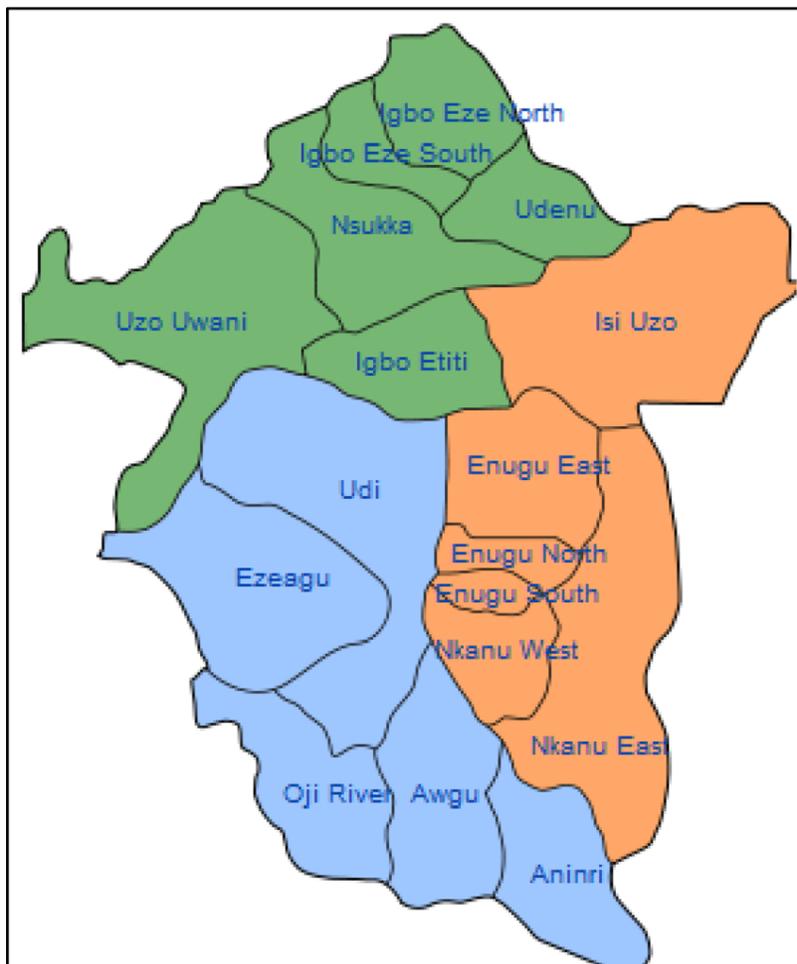
Music is a wonderful tool to integrate into your teaching repertoire, especially if you are a foreign language teacher. It has a way of capturing everything about a culture, its people and their language and it can inspire interest in a subject matter when other methods have failed. Not to mention that students love it and benefit from it intellectually and emotionally (even when they find your music taste questionable).

#### **History of Enugu State**

Enugu is usually referred to as Enugu State which is a state, on a hill, in South-eastern part of Nigeria, created in 1991 from the old Anambra State. Enugu is the capital of Enugu State from which the state derived its name. The state shares borders with Abia State and Imo state to the south, Ebonyi State to the east, Benue state to the northeast, Kogi state to the northwest and Anambra State to the west.

#### **Location and Population**

Enugu state is located in the south-east geographical zone of Nigeria with a population of 3,267,837 peoples according to the record of the 2006 census (National Population, 2006). Also the state has an estimated density of 460/km<sup>2</sup> (1,200sq mi) ([enugustate.gov.ng](http://www.enugustate.gov.ng) <http://www.enugustate.gov.ng>). It consists of 17 Local Government Areas.



Map of 17 LGA's of Enugu State.

### Education:

Every community in Enugu State has at least one primary school and one or more secondary schools; funded and run by the state government. There are also large number of private nursery, primary and secondary schools in Enugu State.

### Scope and purpose of secondary Education in Nigeria

Secondary education is provided for children of certain age bracket after their primary education. It is aimed at developing the intellectuals of the child after the primary level because it is obvious that the primary level is insufficient for the wards to acquire the required literacy, numeracy and communication skills (Yusuf, 2009, Ige 2011). Such education is provided in the secondary schools which can be owned by the government (state or federal)

individuals or community and is divided into two phases namely the Junior and Senior Secondary schools.

### The Junior Secondary Phase

This is the first three years of secondary education and the curriculum is pre-vocational and non prevocational subjects. The core subjects include English language, mathematics, French and a major Nigerian language other than that of the Environment and Basic Technology. The prevocational subjects include Agricultural science, Business studies, Home Economics, Local crafts, Fine Arts, Computer Education, religious knowledge and music while the non-prevocational subjects include physical and health education as well as Arabic. Certification at the end of this phase depends on the performance of the student in the continuous assessment test (CAT). Subsequently the results of the Junior School Certificate Examination (JSCE) is being coordinated by the State Ministries of Education or Federal as is

applicable. A child with a minimum number of passes in the subjects in the curriculum including English Language and Mathematics qualifies to proceed to the Senior Secondary level where he will be trained for three additional years. A child that failed JSCE exams (without the minimum passes plus passes in English language and mathematics) is expected to enroll in the teaching college, an out of school vocational training centre or an apprenticeship scheme in line with the 6-3-3-4 system of education.

### **Learners in the Process of Foreign Language.**

The Lexicon of Pedagogy links the term “learner” with reference to a human being without any age limitations who is the subject of teaching. This means that children, adolescents or adult can be considered as learners (Prucha, Walterova, Mares, 2013 p.389). Learners and their qualities and development are the main area of interest of several scientific disciplines which serve as supporting pillars for the current pedagogy. The focus of this paper is that of a learner of foreign language.

The common approach presently is geared towards foreign language teaching with a communicative approach which considers the learner as a teammate. Learners are trained to express their own opinions on issues of texts, interests, vocabulary and phrases. Presently, learners have to be very active just as Rampillon (2000) claim that learners create their own knowledge through discovering, comparing, connecting, communicating, trails, evaluation, refusals or confirmation, as opposed to passive acceptance and consumption.

Two other factors which are important in the educative process are the socio-cultural and socio-economic situations of the learners and their families.

These factors play quite an important role in the sphere of foreign language teaching. This is because these people are biological beings and social beings as determined by factors resulting from their social background. Actually, without a proper socio-economic and socio-cultural background, hardly can a gifted learner participate profitably in such activities organized by educational institutions.

The socio-cultural and socio-economic conditions of the family are important also for a child’s music development. Definitely, the compulsory music classes at schools are more or less limited to the reading of music notes, singing of folklore songs and to the learning of basic facts about famous composers. Only very few schools offer classes where some musical instruments or singing are taught. Another direct

support given by the family for the children’s musical development is to visit theatres, concert halls and similar children’s music programmes.

## **II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Students are the subject of the teaching process and should be accepted in various ways. Their harmonic development requires innovation, completion and the changing of work methodology and forms. The basic principle is that learners’ key competencies are to be developed, mainly communicative competence, personal and inter-personal abilities, the ability to work with modern communication technologies and also to solve problems in a creative and critical way. There should be support for the development of pupils’ aesthetic feelings and interests. It has been discovered that music is one of the means of making students motivated and to be continuously culturally developed.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This research is focused on secondary school students and their attitude to music in relation to foreign language teaching. The main objective is to research and describe the individual learners’ attitudes to and opinions on using music in foreign language classes.

### **Research Design**

This study employed the empirical and historical research design. These designs were adopted to gather information from the JSS 1 – 3 of the schools visited.

### **Research Questions**

1. To what extent are students interested and motivated when music is used in French Classes?
2. To what extent are students interested in classes when classical, folk or modern music are used?
3. Does music activate and the students’ level of participation in foreign language classes?
4. What level of social, emotional and cultural effect has music in the student’s understanding in foreign language classes?
5. To what extent do students understand, internalize and improve in their reading skills when music is employed?
6. Are students of secondary schools satisfied with the use of music in foreign language classes?

### **Population of the study**

The population of the study is the J.S.S 1 – 3 students of the secondary schools named below. A sample of two hundred and forty (240) students randomly selected from these schools in Enugu urban where French and music are taught.

- Enugu North: Uwani Secondary School Enugu,  
 Command Day Secondary Sch.  
 Enugu, Queens Sec School  
 Enugu.
- Enugu South: Baptist High School Enugu,  
 Marlex Secondary School Enugu,  
 Urban Secondary School Enugu.
- Enugu East: Nike Grammar School Enugu,  
 Urban Secondary School Abakpa  
 Enugu, Trans-Ekulu Girls  
 Secondary School Enugu.

At the onset, the researcher(s) visited the director of French Centre in Enugu to ascertain the names of the Secondary Schools where French is offered as a second language as is required by the National Policy on Education.

### Validation of the instruments

The instruments were presented to two experts (lecturers) for content and face validity.

### Instruments of Data Collection

Printed questionnaires were distributed and later collected in person and others through assistants in the various schools.

### Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were organized in tables and analyzed using Mean Deviation of the 4 point scale on Very Great Extent (VGE), Great Extent (GE), Low Extent (LE), Very Low Extent (VLE) with the points in descending order of 4, 3, 2, 1

**Decision Scale:** 1 – 2.49 Low Extent, 2.5 and above Great Extent

### Research Question I

To what extent are students interested and motivated when music is used in French classes.

Table I: Interest and Motivation of students using music

	VGE	GE	LE	VLE	MEAN	DECISION
Teaching French using music interests me	53	69	37	81	2.39	LE
Music motivates me to learn French	36	57	73	74	2.23	LE
As a member of the choir, I enjoy the use of Music in learning French	76	49	25	90	2.49	LE
Membership of the theatre endears me to French classes	65	53	62	60	2.51	GE
I am always interested if modern music is used in French class	93	99	27	26	3.10	GE
Music in French classes sustains a child's interest	81	62	53	44	2.75	GE
<b>GRAND MEAN</b>					<b>2.66</b>	<b>GE</b>

Table I shows data on the interests and motivation of students using music. From the table, teaching French using music interests the students to a low extent with the mean 2.39. Students are to a low extent motivated to learn French with the mean 2.23. Members of the choir to a low extent with mean of 2.49 do not enjoy the use of music in learning French.

But to a great extent, (2.51) membership of theater group endears the students to French classes. To a great extent (3.10) students are always interested if modern music is used in French class. The use of music in French classes sustains students' interest to a great extent (2.75). The grand mean of (2.76) shows that music to a great extent heightens the interest and motivation of students.

**Research Question II**

To what extent are students interested in class when classical, folk or modern music are used?

*Table II: Use of Classical, Folk and Modern Music*

	VGE	GE	LE	VLE	MEAN	DECISION
Classical music interest me in French Class	45	53	57	85	2.24	LE
Folk music interests me in French classes	32	41	81	86	2.08	LE
The melodies used make participation in class easy	90	54	62	34	2.83	GE
<b>Grand Mean</b>					<b>2.40</b>	<b>LE</b>

Table II presents data on use of classical, folk and modern music. From the table students’ interest in music are to a low extent (2.24) by classical music. Also folk music to a low extent (2.08) interests students in French classes. However, the melodies used make students’ participation in French class easy to a great extent with a mean of 2.83.

**Research Question III**

Does music activate the student’s level of participation in foreign language classes?

*Table III: Level of Participation*

	VGE	GE	LE	VLE	MEAN	DECISION
Music in French classes enhance my participation	61	62	56	61	2.51	GE
Music in French classes sustains my participation in class	52	50	48	90	2.27	LE
Music is an effective tool for learning activities in foreign language classes	130	73	17	20	3.3	GE
Music activates me during French classes	65	58	57	60	2.53	GE
My French teacher uses English always in class	49	67	44	80	2.35	LE
Participation in social activities is paramount when music is involved	97	63	29	51	2.86	GE
My involvement in learning foreign language is more when music is involved	102	66	34	38	2.97	GE
<b>Grand mean</b>					<b>2.68</b>	<b>GE</b>

Table III shows data on the level of participation. From the table, music in French classes enhance students’ participation (2.51) in class. With mean 2.27 showing low extent music in French class does not sustain student’s participation. To a great extent (3.30) music is an effective tool for learning activities in French language classes. Music activates

students during French classes with mean 2.53 portraying a great extent.

French teachers use English always in class to a low extent with mean 2.35. Participation in social activities is paramount in classes to a great extent with the mean 2.86. Students’ involvement in learning foreign language is more when music is involved with mean 2.97. The level of

participation of students in class is to a great extent is enhanced with grand mean 2.68.

**Research Question IV**

What level of social, emotional, and cultural effect has music on students’ understanding in foreign language classes?

*Table IV: Effect of rhythm, social, emotion and culture on students’ understanding*

	VGE	GE	LE	VLE	MEAN	DECISION
The rhythm holds my attention in the class	80	73	35	52	2.75	GE
The use of music in teaching foreign language has social effect on me	82	49	65	44	2.77	GE
Use of music in teaching French has emotional effect on me	66	73	49	52	2.64	GE
Music is used in teaching French only in the Junior classes	33	13	42	152	1.70	LE
The method of learning French through music is easy	103	65	34	38	2.97	GE
French is Internalized when music is used	87	65	53	35	2.85	GE
<b>Grand mean</b>					<b>2.67</b>	

From table IV which shows data on effects of rhythm on culture on students’ understanding of music, rhythm holds students attention in class to a great extent with mean 2.75. With mean 2.77, the use of music in teaching foreign language has emotional effects on students with a great extent mean (2.64). To a low extent (1.70) music is used in teaching French in only junior classes. To a great extent, the

method of teaching French through music is easy. Also to a great extent French is internalized when music is used (2.85)

**Research Question V**

To what extent do students understand and improve their reading skills when music is employed?

*Table V: Level of understanding and improvement of reading skills*

	VGE	GE	LE	VLE	MEAN	DECISION
Music increases the ability of students to communicate	138	77	12	13	3.42	GE
Music helps in the acquisition of reading skills	129	53	26	32	3.16	GE
Music increases ability of students to listen in French class	113	26	57	44	2.87	GE
Music increases a child’s ability to understand French	48	57	86	49	2.43	LE
<b>Grand mean</b>					<b>2.95</b>	

Table V shows data on effects of understanding and improvement of reading skills. The ability of students to communicate in French has a great extent of 3.42 stipulating that the students have acquired some level of fluency, reading skills with the mean 3.16 to a great extent and to a great extent of 2.87 which is the ability to understand words

in French. Nevertheless, a child’s ability to understand French when music is used recorded a low extent of 2.43

**Research Question VI**

Are students of secondary schools satisfied with the use of English in foreign language Classes.

Table VI: Level of satisfaction on the use of English Language

	VGE	GE	LE	VLE	MEAN	DECISION
Teachers use more of computerized songs in French classes	29	13	98	100	1.88	LE
Popular type of music is frequently used in French classes	37	51	101	51	2.31	LE
Music in French classes sustains a child’s interest	81	68	53	44	2.95	GE
<b>Grand mean</b>					<b>2.38</b>	

From table VI which shows the level of satisfaction of the students in class, teachers’ use of computerized songs has a low extent of 1.88, popular music also a low extent of 2.31. Interestingly, the use of music in French classes sustains the child’s interest with a great extent of 2.95

**III. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

Interests and motivation of students using music (table I), the interests of students are not very much affected by teaching French using music (2.39). Hence the use of music in the teaching of French does not influence students’ interest as it follows therefore that they are not motivated by music in French classes. These findings are reflected on the effect of membership of the choir in learning French with music (2.49). However, membership of theatre and other associated groups endears students to learning French due to the demonstrations that are involved.

Table II on interest in classical and folk music types showed low extent of 2.24, and 2.08 (Table II) respectively. However, the melodies used made participation in class very easy.

In Table III the use of music enhances participation that is to a great extent (2.51), is an effective tool for learning (3.30), activates students in class (2.53) makes participation paramount (2.86) and the students’ involvement more prominent. Nevertheless, the teachers’ continuous use of

English in French class did attract the students’ unfavourable remark of low extent of 2.35.

In Table IV, the effect of rhythm social, emotion and culture recorded high extents of 2.75, 2.77 and 2.64 were of height extent.

Also the method deployed by the teacher and the process of internalization (2.97) and 2.85 respectively. Co-relating this to the aspect of socio-economic and socio-cultural aspect of this study Prucha (2013) said:

... do not ignore the socio-cultural and socio-economic background. He claims that people are biological beings (and thus educative processes are determined by cognitive and psychical dispositions for development) and social beings (educative processes are determined by factors resulting from social background of people). The socio-cultural and socio-economic situation of learners play quite an important role in the sphere of foreign language teaching... But without a proper socio-economic background, only hardly can a gifted learner participate in such activities

organized by educational institutions.

Concluding this therefore, the socio-cultural and socio-economic conditions of the family are important for a child's musical development.

Table V is on the ability of the students to communicate effectively (3.42), acquisition of skills (3.16) and increased ability to listen in class (2.87), all are to a great extent. However, the child's ability to understand French properly had a low extent of (2.43). This shows that teachers should properly examine the level of vocabulary used in the class in order to enhance a better understanding of the lessons.

In Table VI, the use of computerized songs (1.88) and popular genres (2.31) were of low extent. However, music sustains a child's interest when simple and direct melodies are used (2.95).

The result therefore shows that teachers should use very simple melodies so as to sustain the interests of the students in class.

### **The Relevance of French Language in the Nigerian School System**

French Language is a very important and interesting language which is the maternal and official language of the French people. The French speakers represent a wide variety of ethnic and cultural background who live not only in France and other parts of Europe but also in Africa, North and South America. Today, French is the principal language in 38 countries of the world particularly in Africa. In Africa, they include Benin Republic, Togo, Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Gabon, Niger, Senegal, Mali etc.

Nigeria is surrounded by Francophone countries such as Republic of Benin, Niger and Cameroon. Therefore, Nigerians should learn the French language for these reasons.

1. French is an instrument of communication since Nigeria is surrounded by Francophone countries. Knowledge of French will remove the communication barrier and this will enable our citizens to travel to any of the francophone countries freely.
2. If Nigerians learn French, it will facilitate understanding, good neighborhood and relationship with our neighbors.
3. French like English language is important hence it is recommended in the National Policy of Education as a major language group beside the language of

the environment. It is one of the languages used in International organizations such as U.N.O, ECOWAS, A.U. etc.

4. It is used for business purposes because it makes business men and women from Nigeria to travel to francophone countries to transact their businesses with much hitch. Some international business organization also require the proficiency in French language.
5. Proficiency in French language can offer one a job as an interpreter or translator in one of the international organizations and Nigerian missions abroad. Knowledge of French language will also help our young graduates to gain employment in reputable French companies.
6. Learning French language will offer one the opportunity to be bilingual.
7. French is the language of technology and of modern medicine. Therefore the study/relevance of French language in the Nigerian school system cannot be over emphasized.

In pursuance of this, the French Ambassador to Nigeria, His Excellency, Mr. Denys Gauer visited our University on Thursday, November 30, 2017 where he delivered a lecture titled "The influence of French and Francophone policies on Nigeria".

### **IV. CONCLUSION**

From the data presented and analyzed, it can be seen that the involvement of music in foreign language teaching is generally considered as being fruitful. Music is not only a source of motivation for learning but it can be beneficial for the consolidation of the knowledge of foreign language.

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