

**IDIR'S SONGS : AN INVIGORATING TEACHING AID TO BUILD UP STUDENTS' LANGUAGE
COMPETENCIES IN TAMAZIGHT
THE CASE OF STUDENTS OF TAMAZIGHT AT THE DEPARTMENT OF TAMAZIGHT,
UNIVERSITY OF BEJAIA – ALGERIA**

**LES CHANSONS DE IDIR: UNE AIDE PÉDAGOGIQUE VIVIFIANTE POUR RENFORCER LES
COMPÉTENCES LINGUISTIQUES DES ÉTUDIANTS EN TAMAZIGHT
LE CAS DES ÉTUDIANTS DE TAMAZIGHT AU DÉPARTEMENT DE TAMAZIGHT, UNIVERSITÉ
DE BEJAIA - ALGÉRIE**

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Abstract

The current paper aims at exploring and identifying the nature of the contribution of Idir's songs to learners' language skills in Tamazight, at the department of Tamazight, university of Bejaia. Accordingly, this investigation concerns itself with the issue of how Idir's songs as a teaching tool can prop up students' competencies in learning Tamazight. Throughout this project, we are engaged in answering four further sub-questions: 1)-How effective is the implementation of Idir's songs during Tamazight language classes? 2)-What do students perceive as the most significant impact of the integration of Idir's songs on their learning achievements? 3)- Do age and gender have an effect on how students experience such type of teaching tools? 4)- What practical factors should teachers consider to attain better outcomes? As a presupposed answer for the foregoing inquiries, we hypothesise that the integration of Idir's songs during Tamazight language classes is an efficacious instructional tool to foster learners' self-motivation and language skills. For the sake of the present research project, we have opted for the quantitative method using a questionnaire designed for all the students at the department of Tamazight, except first-year students. The outcomes of this project demonstrate the critical role of song-based strategies in language teaching. Hence, the study recommends and highlights the relevance of introducing songs as a teaching tool to evolve Tamazight language learners' skills.

Keywords: Idir's songs, teaching aid, language skills, students' competencies, Tamazight language

Résumé

Le présent article vise à explorer et à identifier la nature de la contribution des chansons de Idir aux compétences linguistiques des apprenants de Tamazight, au département de Tamazight, université de Bejaia. Par conséquent, cette enquête se penche sur la question de savoir comment les chansons de Idir comme outil d'enseignement peuvent renforcer les compétences des étudiants dans l'apprentissage de tamazight. Tout au long de ce projet, nous nous engageons à répondre à quatre autres sous-questions : 1)-Quelle est l'efficacité de la mise en œuvre des chansons de Idir pendant les cours de langue Amazighe ? 2)- Qu'est-ce que les étudiants perçoivent comme le plus important impact de l'intégration des chansons de

Idir's songs: An invigorating teaching aid to build up students' language...

Idir sur leurs résultats d'apprentissage ? 3)- L'âge et le sexe ont-ils un effet sur la façon dont les étudiants subissent ce type d'outils d'enseignement ? 4)- Quels facteurs déterminants que les enseignants devraient considérer pour atteindre de meilleurs résultats ? Comme réponse suggérée aux questions qui précèdent, nous émettons l'hypothèse que l'intégration des chansons de Idir pendant les cours de langue Amazighe est un outil pédagogique efficace pour favoriser la motivation personnelle et les compétences linguistiques des apprenants. Pour le présent projet de recherche, nous avons opté pour la méthode quantitative au moyen d'un questionnaire destiné à tous les étudiants du département de Tamazight, à l'exception des étudiants de première année. Les résultats de ce projet démontrent le rôle essentiel des stratégies basées sur la chanson dans l'enseignement des langues. Par conséquent, l'étude recommande et souligne la pertinence d'introduire les chansons comme outil d'enseignement pour faire évoluer les compétences des apprenants en langue Amazigh.

Mots-clés : chansons, outil d'enseignement, compétences linguistiques, compétences des étudiants, langue Amazigh

Teaching and learning Tamazight is part of the Algerian higher education matters of serious concern. After its officialisation in 2016, a plethora of studies have been conducted. The nexus of these research projects is creating and establishing a standardised language with conventional forms, designing practical curricula which foster quality of learning in schools as well as universities along with developing efficacious teaching/learning methods during Tamazight classes. Subsequently, Tamazight has turned out to be a uniform language that maintains a common identity.

However, there are lacunae in the Algerian scholarship on the subject of implementing songs to brush up learners' language skills in Tamazight. To address this gap in part, we have carried out the current investigation where the issue under scrutiny is to ascertain the ways a song-based strategy can support the students to make progress in learning Tamazight. As a specimen, we have selected the songs of Idir, most of which cover themes of exile, parties and ceremonies, emotions and memories. His soft and poetic music is meant to be profound, triggering emotion and nostalgia, and fostering identity affirmation.

This survey is grounded on a twofold assumption which alleges that songs are a great medium to teach language structures; moreover, teaching using songs establishes healthy and fun learning environments. With this in mind, the overall objectives of this work are:

- a- Exploring and identifying the nature of the contribution of Idir's songs to learners' language skills in Tamazight, at the department of Tamazight, university of Bejaia.
- b- Assessing the extent of the effect of Idir's songs instruction on each language skill.
- c- Highlighting the importance of song-based strategies in teaching languages.

In the forthcoming discussion, we will point to a variety of research studies on the association between songs/music and language learning; then, we will proceed to a blueprint of the study, analysis and interpretation of the questionnaire, discussion, and finally conclusion.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous research projects, studies, and investigations have been carried out to scrutinise the effects of implementing songs in language classes. The outcomes of these latter are encouraging and convincing. According to Saricoban and Metin (2000), songs can be a valuable teaching tool to improve the four skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Yet, teachers should develop a positive attitude towards learning by means of songs in their learners (Eken, 1996). Claerr and Gargan (1984) and Vitale (2011) have highlighted the immense contribution of songs to learners' listening skills. In their turn, Blythe (2011) and Kusnierek (2016) assert that songs are valuable means to teach language structures and acquire them when taught using authentic natural language and vocabulary that respond to learners' age and needs. Employing songs in the learning environment boosts learners' motivation (Brunner, 1977; Nunan, 2003), which positively influences their learning efforts (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2008).

In relation to reading skills and linguistic performance, Fisher (2001) has concluded that the inclusion of songs has a significant impact on learners. Besides, songs introduce learners to various socio-cultural patterns and structures of language use and usage. Regarding speaking skills, a song-based strategy enhances students' confidence, fluency, accuracy, and comprehension during speaking sessions (Hassani & Hadizadeh, 2021). With respect to writing skills, the studies conducted by Hasan (2013) and Suardin (2017) have shown a noteworthy connection between teaching through songs and learners' progress in writing skills. In his turn, Kuśnierek (2016) asserts that songs will help automate the process of improving languages given that the automated process is fast and unstoppable.

The current study draws upon the abovementioned findings to investigate the effect of Idir's songs on students' language skills during Tamazight classes.

2. A BLUEPRINT OF THE STUDY

2.1. Population and Sample

The population under investigation is all the students at the department of Tamazight, except first-year students. From the whole number of students, there are merely $N = 100$ students who have taken part in this study. The number of participants denotes the sample of students to whom the questionnaire has been administrated. The sampling method we have opted for is the probability sampling method, particularly the simple random sampling method.

2.2. Method

This study is descriptive in nature, using quantitative statistics to organise and analyse the questionnaire's results.

2.3. Materials

The questionnaire we have designed is a structured questionnaire that serves to collect quantitative data. It is planned to gather precise information, initiate a formal inquiry, supplement data, check previously accumulated data, and help validate our prior hypothesis. The questionnaire comprises four distinctive sections:

Idir's songs: An invigorating teaching aid to build up students' language...

- 1- Students' background information.
- 2- Students' interest and motivation in learning by means of Idir's songs.
- 3- Students' perception of the contribution of Idir's songs to their language skills.
- 4-Students' evaluation of the influencing factors in teaching.

2.4. Procedures for Collecting and Treating Data

The questionnaire is administered using the computer questionnaire method. The respondents are sent the questionnaire via email.

3. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

3.1. Students' background information

A- Tick the relevant answer.

Table 1: students' gender, age, and level

Gender :

Female	Male
56	44

Age :

Age	19-24	25-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	Above 45
Percentage	57	23	20	00	00	00

Level :

Level	Second year	Third year	Master 1	Master 2
Percentage	27	31	24	18

The first section of this questionnaire aims at providing baseline data about learners' gender, age, and level, which will be used to answer the third sub-question in this survey. The results show a closeness of the percentage between females (56) and males (44), who have taken part in this study. The students are grouped into three distinctive categories, limited from 19 to 35 years old, from second year to master 2 students.

3.2. Students' interest and motivation in learning using Idir's songs

A-Please put a cross according to the frequency of each statement.

Table 2: students' readiness, interest, and motivation to learn through songs

Statement/Frequency	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
- I like listening to songs in Tamazight.	Total: 18% Female: 53 Male: 47%	Total: 79% Female:58% Male: 42%	Total: 3% Female:51% Male: 49%	Total: 0%	Total:0%

- I like learning Tamazight with songs.	Total: 9% Female: 55 Male: 45%	Total: 89% Female:54% Male: 46%	Total: 2% Female:52% Male: 48%	Total: 0%	Total: 0%
- I like listening to Idir's songs.	Total: 16% Female:51% Male: 49%	Total: 78% Female:58% Male: 42%	Total: 4% Female:53% Male: 47%	Total: 2% Female:100% Male:00	Total: 0%
- I like learning Tamazight with Idir's songs.	Total: 17% Female:54% Male: 46%	Total: 76% Female:58% Male: 42%	Total: 5% Female:53% Male: 47%	Total: 2% Female:100% Male:00	Total: 0%
- I am interested in understanding Idir's songs.	Total: 25% Female:51% Male: 49%	Total: 72% Female:56% Male: 44%	Total: 1% Female:00% Male: 100%	Total: 2% Female:100% Male:00	Total: 0%

The second section of the questionnaire is devoted to check students' readiness, interest, and motivation to learn using songs, in particular, Idir's songs. The Likert scale of the first question illustrates high percentages of the frequencies always and usually, in all the statements, either for females or males, with zero percent for the frequency 'Never' in all the cases.

B- Please put a tick in front of the option which reflects your degree of agreement or disagreement with each statement.

Table 3: learners' beliefs of the effect of Idir's songs on their emotions and learning motivation

Statements/ Degree of agreement	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
-Teaching Tamazight using Idir's songs inspires you.	Total: 43% Female:56% Male: 44%	Total: 55% Female:52% Male: 48%	Total: 0%	Total: 2% Female:100% Male: 0%	Total:0%	Total: 0%
-Teaching Tamazight using Idir's songs pleases you.	Total: 44% Female:53% Male: 47%	Total: 53% Female:55% Male: 45%	Total: 1% Female: 0% Male:100%	Total: 2% Female:100% Male: 0%	Total: 0%	Total: 0%
-Teaching Tamazight using Idir's	Total: 43% Female:52% Male: 48%	Total: 53% Female:57% Male: 43%	Total: 2% Female: 0% Male: 0%	Total: 2% Female:100% Male: 0%	Total: 0%	Total: 0%

Idir's songs: An invigorating teaching aid to build up students' language...

songs makes you feel relaxed.			Male:100%			
-Teaching Tamazight using Idir's songs makes you more interested to learn.	Total: 46% Female:56% Male: 44%	Total: 50% Female:52% Male: 48%	Total: 2% Female: 0% Male:100%	Total: 2% Female:100% Male: 0%	Total:0%	Total:0%
-Teaching Tamazight using Idir's songs encourages you to make more effort to learn.	Total: 44% Female:57% Male: 43%	Total: 52% Female:54% Male: 46%	Total: 2% Female: 0% Male:100%	Total: 2% Female:100% Male: 0%	Total:0%	Total:0%

This second question is a follow-up of the preceding one. It is an attempt to explore learners' beliefs of the effect of Idir's songs on their emotions and learning motivation. The Agree/Disagree scale demonstrates that the two options 'Strongly agree' and 'Agree' are the dominant ones, with marginal difference in results between females and males. Regarding the option 'Somewhat agree', it is represented only by males while the option 'Somewhat disagree' is represented merely by females, with a very small percentage for each.

3.3. Students' perception of the contribution of Idir's songs in the development of their language skills

A- Please put a tick in front of the option which reflects your degree of agreement or disagreement with each statement.

Table 4: students' views on the contribution of Idir's songs to the upgrading of their language competencies in Tamazight

Statements/ Degree of agreement	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
- Of all the songs I listen to in Tamazight, the songs of Idir are more likely to help me develop my language skills in Tamazight.	Total: 21% Female:60% Male: 40%	Total: 61% Female:57% Male: 43%	Total: 16% Female:40% Male: 60%	Total: 2% Female:100% Male: 0%	Total:0%	Total:0%

-Teaching with Idir's songs can facilitate the transmission of knowledge from the teacher to the student.	Total: 30% Female:55% Male: 45%	Total: 60% Female:57% Male: 43%	Total: 8% Female:47% Male: 53%	Total: 2% Female:100% Male: 0%	Total:0%	Total:0%
-Teaching with Idir's songs can foster positive teacher-student interaction and a healthy learning environment.	Total: 31% Female:56% Male: 44%	Total: 63% Female:59% Male: 41%	Total: 4% Female:42% Male: 58%	Total: 2% Female:100% Male: 0%	Total:0%	Total:0%
-Teaching with Idir's songs can support the teaching of Tamazight language in a socio-cultural context.	Total: 40% Female:55% Male: 45%	Total: 58% Female:60% Male: 40%	Total: 0%	Total: 2% Female:100% Male: 0%	Total:0%	Total:0%
- I play Idir's songs to assist me in improving my reading comprehension skills in Tamazight.	Total: 37% Female:59% Male: 41%	Total:58% Female:60% Male: 40%	Total: 3% Female:46% Male: 54%	Total: 2% Female:100% Male: 0%	Total:0%	Total:%
- I download the songs of Idir to acquire new vocabulary.	Total: 41% Female:62% Male: 38%	Total:56% Female:53% Male: 47%	Total: 1% Female:0% Male: 100%	Total: 2% Female:100% Male: 0%	Total:0%	Total:0%
-I use the words, phrases, and expressions which I hear in Idir's songs when speaking/writing in Tamazight.	Total: 48% Female:54% Male: 46%	Total:48% Female:56% Male: 44%	Total: 2% Female:0% Male: 100%	Total: 2% Female:100% Male: 0%	Total:0%	Total:0%
- I replay the songs of Idir to develop my listening comprehension abilities.	Total: 46% Female:53% Male: 47%	Total:52% Female:54% Male: 46%	Total:0%	Total: 2% Female:100% Male: 0%	Total:0%	Total:0%

Idir's songs: An invigorating teaching aid to build up students' language...

This third section is devoted to finding out students' views on the contribution of Idir's songs to the upgrading of their language competencies in Tamazight. Starting from the first statement to the last one, students' answers are arranged in a descending order from the highest percentages -which cover firstly the option 'Agree' then 'Strongly agree'- to the lowest percentages which encompass the alternatives 'Somewhat agree' followed by 'Somewhat disagree'. Once again, no answer for either the 'Disagree' or the 'Strongly disagree' alternative. Similar to the previous charts, the difference in percentage between females and males is trivial.

B-How would you classify the following language skills according to the extent of the contribution of Idir's songs to each element? Use numbers from 1 to 8.

- a- Speaking.....
- b- Listening.....
- c- Reading.....
- d- Writing.....
- e- Pronunciation.....
- f- Vocabulary acquisition.....
- g- Grammar.....
- h- The use of language structures in appropriate socio-cultural contexts.....

Table 5: students' classification of the extent of the contribution of Idir's songs to Tamazight language skills

Students' classification	Percentage
Classification1: b-f-c-e-h-a-d-g	Total:47% Female: 54% Male: 46%
Classification2: b-f-c-a-e-h-d-g	Total:23% Female: 52% Male: 48%
Classification3: b-a-c-e-f-h-d-g	Total:19% Female: 50% Male: 50%
Classification4: b-f-c-h-a-e-g-d	Total:11% Female: 43% Male: 57%

As table (5) shows, the outcomes of the informants' answers are parted into four distinctive categories. In all the classifications, either in the case of females or in the case of males, the students highlight first and foremost the contribution of Idir's songs to listening skills while writing skills and grammar are the least to which the songs contribute.

3.4. Students' evaluation of the influencing factors in teaching

A- Would you please give a mark from 0 to 10 to evaluate the factors that your teachers should take into account when using Idir's songs to teach you Tamazight language appropriately:

a- Teacher's method.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (.....)

b- Teacher's profile and training in using songs to teach language skills.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (.....)

c- Materials and means used in teaching with Idir's songs.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (.....)

d- Authentic curriculum that builds authentic and meaningful teaching/ learning experiences.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (.....)

e- The choice of Idir's songs which respond to learners' needs, wants, and abilities.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (.....)

Table 6: students' evaluation of the main determinants of teaching using Idir's songs

The evaluation	The percentage
Evaluation 1: -Teacher's profile and training in using songs to teach language skills (9-10) -Teacher's method (7-8) -The choice of Idir's songs that respond to learners' needs, wants, and abilities(5-6) -Authentic curriculum that builds authentic and meaningful teaching/ learning experiences (4-5). - Materials and means used in teaching with Idir's songs (3)	52%
Evaluation 2: -Teacher's method (9-10) - Teacher's profile and training in using songs to teach language skills (8) - Materials and means used in teaching with Idir's songs (6-7) -The choice of Idir's songs which respond to learners' needs, wants, and abilities(5) -Authentic curriculum that builds authentic and meaningful teaching/ learning experiences (4).	33%
Evaluation 3: -Authentic curriculum that builds authentic and meaningful teaching/ learning experiences	15%

<p>(10). -The choice of Idir's songs that respond to learners' needs, wants, and abilities(8-9) -Teacher's method (6-7) -Teacher's profile and training in using songs to teach language skills (5) -Materials and means used in teaching with Idir's songs (4)</p>	
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The current section is the last part of the questionnaire. It aims at answering the sub-question: what practical factors should teachers consider to attain better outcomes? According to the participants' responses, the peak evaluations are given to factors related to teachers, including profile, training, and method.

4. DISCUSSION

Right through this short inquiry, we have been involved in examining the effect of implementing Idir's songs in Tamazight language classes to improve students' language skills. To collect data, we have made use of a questionnaire that comprises four chief sections. The first section has provided important data on learners' gender, age, and level. In our study, the number of female informants exceeds that of males which can be related to the dominance of females at the department of Tamazight. Besides, the largest majority of the participants are young adults. In the course of this research work, neither gender nor age has affected learners' perceptions of the inclusion of Idir's songs. This can reflect the deep, influential nature of Idir's songs which have and still shaping the musical styles and genres of generations of adults over years. It is because these songs mirror the cultural heritage, traditions, customs, and identity of the Amazigh people in Algeria.

In the second section, the students have expressed their eagerness and excitement to learn by using Idir's songs. Furthermore, they have revealed the effect of Idir's songs on their states of inspiration, joy, relaxation, and efforts to learn, given that songs play a critical role in raising learners' motivation. Indeed, the merit of motivation is in increasing students' engagement, concentration along with the hard attempts to accomplish their learning tasks (Skinner & Belmont, 1993). This implies the fact that our learners' high motivation significantly affects their learning efforts, hence, their progress in Tamazight language learning.

The third section has demonstrated a range of language levels and aspects to which Idir's songs can contribute. Language skills, the input/output process, classroom interaction and environments as well as the socio-cultural contexts of language use are appreciably improved when Idir's songs are integrated. This supports the findings of the research studies mentioned in the introduction. In the classification of language skills, the entire number of participants have emphasised listening, reading, and vocabulary abilities as the most influenced by Idir's songs; whereas, the skills writing and grammar have been classified as the least influenced. Such classification implies the fact that the songs' effect in our context emerges chiefly in receptive rather than in productive skills.

Lastly, we have closed our investigation by examining the factors that the students think are indispensable when teaching using Idir's songs. The evaluations accentuate the role of instructors from the time when teachers are one of the two central poles of classroom interaction. Moreover, they are responsible for the success of the input-output process, which requires efficacious teaching methods and strategies, expertise in using songs as a teaching tool in addition to the use of practical materials. However, the preceding discussion does not imply neglecting a needs analysis of the target group of learners to determine which song to use, in which context, and to which level. Besides, instructors and experts are required to mull over designing authentic curricula which take in songs as teaching aids.

In a nutshell, the present paper has underlined the significance of integrating songs during Tamazight language classes. It has provided evidence of the efficiency of Idir's songs to prop up students' competencies in Tamazight by fostering their self-motivation as well as their language skills. It has accentuated the foremost contribution of the songs to listening, vocabulary, and reading skills. Yet, to use songs efficiently, teachers need to train themselves in the use of songs as teaching tools, to develop comprehensive teaching methods, to employ materials, means, and songs appropriate to the context, and to work in collaboration with specialists to design substantial, purposeful curricula.

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Idir's songs: An invigorating teaching aid to build up students' language...

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