



## Melody and Morphology: The Role of Songs in Teaching Verbal Structures of Foreign Languages

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Received: September 2025; Revised: October 2025; Accepted: November 2025 ; Published: December 2025

### Abstract

Verbs are important component of syntax and play a crucial role on how learners express meaning, both orally and in writing. This study explores how Daouda's song *La femme de mon patron* can be used as a practical tool for teaching French verbal structures to foreign language learners. The song was chosen because it contains a wide range of verbs, presented in clear and standard French, free from slang or dialectal forms that might confuse beginners. Through its simple yet culturally engaging lyrics, the song provides repeated exposure to verbs in declarative, conditional, and interrogative forms. The study demonstrates how teachers can use songs to enhance oral and written competence. Orally, students practice pronunciation, rhythm, and prosody in a natural context. In writing, the song enables activities such as verb identification, conjugation drills, and sentence transformation. The findings show that learners improved in verb identification with 80% accuracy and exhibited greater confidence in oral and written tasks. The study underscores the potential of integrating songs as structured grammar tools rather than supplementary activities. This study demonstrates that when carefully selected, songs can serve as instructional support for teaching verbs in foreign language classrooms compared to traditional grammar instruction. It concludes by proposing methodological guidelines for integrating songs into the teaching of verbal structures in French.

**Keywords:** Morphology; Melody; Verbal structures; Songs; Pedagogy

**How to Cite:** Amos, N.B. (2025). Melody and Morphology: The Role of Songs in Teaching Verbal Structures of Foreign Languages. *Journal of Language and Literature Studies*, 5(4), 865-877. doi: <https://doi.org/10.36312/ffhc3v75>



<https://doi.org/10.36312/ffhc3v75>

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## INTRODUCTION

My first day as a French learner at university was both exciting and intimidating. The joy of entering a new academic environment quickly gave way to frustration, as I struggled to follow lessons in a language that was entirely unfamiliar to me. The harder I tried, the more inadequate my efforts seemed. In the midst of this struggle, one lecturer, Mrs Ogulu, made a lasting impression on me and my classmates. She had a distinctive way of teaching through songs, and her classes were unlike any others. We eagerly anticipated her lessons because the music made the language come alive, and what had once seemed incomprehensible suddenly became memorable and enjoyable. I often told myself, “*One day, I will speak French like her*” and over time, this aspiration became reality. What struck me most was that my experience was not unique; my colleagues shared the same enthusiasm for her method.

This personal experience illustrates a broader pedagogical insight: songs can transform the learning of a foreign language into an engaging and effective process. When carefully selected and methodically applied, they not only entertain but also serve as powerful tools for linguistic development (Murphey, 1992). Among the many aspects of language acquisition, verbs stand out as one of the most complex yet essential areas for learners of French. Verbs carry the weight of syntax and meaning, and without mastering them, learners cannot construct accurate or meaningful sentences. The challenge lies in the fact that French verbs are numerous, morphologically complex, and often difficult for beginners to memorise and apply.

This article, titled *Melody and Morphology: Exploring the Role of Songs in Teaching Verbal Structures of Foreign Languages*, addresses this challenge by demonstrating how a well-chosen song can be used to teach French verbs in both oral and written contexts. It singles out verbs because of their central role in syntax and their difficulty for learners, while recognising that language acquisition is a gradual process that cannot encompass every linguistic aspect at once. By focusing on Daouda's song *La femme de mon patron*, the article proposes practical strategies that educators can adopt to enhance students' mastery of verbs through music. The aim is to show that songs, far from being peripheral, can serve as authentic and captivating tools in the teaching of French as a foreign language.

Despite growing scholarly interest in music-based language pedagogy, most existing studies have concentrated on vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, and listening comprehension, with relatively few exploring how songs can be used to teach grammar, particularly verbs, in French as a foreign language. This study addresses that gap by focusing on verbs, which remain one of the most challenging grammatical elements for learners to master. It contributes to the expanding discourse on creative grammar instruction by demonstrating a systematic, classroom-based approach to teaching verbs through music. In doing so, it seeks to show that songs are not only motivational tools but also structured linguistic resources capable of fostering morphological awareness and syntactic competence.

This paper is organised as follows: the literature review examines theoretical and empirical works on songs in language education; the methodology describes the classroom-based implementation of Daouda's *La femme de mon patron*; the results and discussion section analyse learners' engagement and outcomes; and the conclusion provides pedagogical implications and recommendations for teachers and researchers.

Accordingly, this study is guided by the following research questions: how can songs be systematically applied to teach French verbs in both oral and written contexts? What are the effects of song-based instruction on learners' motivation, engagement, and understanding of verb morphology? What practical strategies can language teachers adopt to integrate songs effectively into grammar lessons? To answer these questions, it is important to review what previous studies have established about the pedagogical and linguistic power of songs. The following section therefore reviews the existing literature on the role of songs in foreign language education, with emphasis on grammar and verbal structures.

## Literature Review

The use of songs in second and foreign language education has attracted scholarly attention over several decades. Researchers have consistently argued that songs are not only engaging but also pedagogically powerful, particularly in enhancing vocabulary acquisition, phonological awareness, and grammatical competence (Fonseca-Mora, 2000; Medina, 2002; Mora, 2003). This section reviews theoretical and empirical literature on the role of

songs in language pedagogy, with a specific focus on how songs facilitate the teaching and learning of verbs in French as a foreign language (FLE). The review is organised thematically, addressing songs as pedagogical tools, their impact on grammar learning, particularly verbal structures, the cognitive and affective benefits of music in second language acquisition (SLA), and the gaps that this study seeks to fill.

### **Songs as Pedagogical Tools in Language Learning**

Songs have long been recognised as authentic materials that bridge classroom learning with real-life linguistic experiences. Murphey (1992) described songs as “musical texts” that naturally embed linguistic patterns, making them valuable for language learners who require repeated exposure to target structures. Songs provide rhythm, rhyme, and melody, which reinforce memory and recall. Fonseca-Mora (2000) further noted that music enhances linguistic retention by stimulating both the left and right hemispheres of the brain, thus combining analytical and creative learning processes.

In French as a foreign language context, songs expose learners to authentic pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm, which are critical for achieving communicative competence (Murphey, 1992; Mora, 2003). They also support listening comprehension and oral fluency because the repetitive and predictable nature of lyrics allows learners to anticipate linguistic structures. Unlike contrived classroom dialogues, songs present language in its cultural and aesthetic form, enhancing learners’ motivation and interest (Medina, 2002; Richards, 2015).

### **Songs and Grammar Learning: Focus on Verbs**

While vocabulary learning has often been emphasised in music-based pedagogy, scholars have increasingly explored songs’ potential for grammar instruction. Verbs, being central to French syntax, present particular challenges to learners because of their conjugational complexity and variation across tenses and moods (Bybee, 2010). Research indicates that songs provide learners with repeated, contextualised examples of verbs in use, supporting implicit grammar acquisition.

Schön et al. (2008) demonstrated experimentally that learners could more easily segment and internalise grammatical patterns when presented in sung rather than spoken form. Similarly, Ludke (2010) found that singing verbs enhanced learners’ ability to memorise irregular conjugations, an area particularly challenging in French. Li and Brand (2009) observed that students learning grammar through songs showed higher retention and accuracy compared with those receiving traditional instruction.

In French, songs such as Daouda’s *La femme de mon patron* offer rich examples of high-frequency verbs in the present tense (e.g., *tomber*, *dire*, *proposer*, *avoir*, *devenir*). These verbs are embedded in meaningful and emotionally charged contexts, which strengthens learners’ grasp of both form and function. Larsen-Freeman (2015) argued that grammar is best taught as a dynamic system in authentic use rather than as abstract rules, and songs exemplify this principle by demonstrating grammar in action.

More recent studies continue to highlight the growing relevance of songs in grammatical instruction. For instance, Dildora (2023) demonstrated that structured use of songs in EFL classrooms improved learners’ mastery of verb tenses and reduced grammar anxiety. Similarly, Sadiqzade (2024) reported that melodic repetition enhances students’ recall of verb patterns, bridging the gap between implicit and explicit grammar learning.

These studies confirm the enduring pedagogical value of integrating music into grammar-focused instruction, aligning with the principles explored in the present study.

### **Cognitive and Affective Benefits of Music in SLA**

Beyond linguistic outcomes, songs in language education yield significant cognitive and affective benefits. Krashen's (1982) affective filter hypothesis posits that learners acquire language more effectively when anxiety is reduced and motivation increased. Songs lower the affective filter by creating a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere, thereby facilitating more effective input processing (Krashen, 1982; Fonseca-Mora, 2000).

Cognitively, musical repetition strengthens procedural memory, which is crucial for mastering morphosyntactic patterns such as verb conjugations (Baddeley, 2003). Salcedo (2010) observed that learners engaging with target-language songs demonstrated improved short-term and long-term recall of grammatical structures. Songs also provide prosodic features that aid in chunking language, making complex structures more digestible (Racette & Peretz, 2007). Emotionally, songs resonate with learners by combining linguistic input with melody and cultural meaning. This synergy increases attention and engagement, which are vital for deep learning (Richards, 2015). For learners of all ages, songs also foster social cohesion, creating a sense of community in the classroom, which Vygotsky (1978) highlighted as essential in sociocultural learning theory.

In recent years, research has expanded beyond affective benefits to emphasise the cognitive dimension of music in grammar learning. Putri and Sujarwati (2024) observed that consistent exposure to songs develops procedural memory for grammatical structures, while Ramadhanti and Haryudin (2021) found measurable improvements in tense recognition through rhythm-based instruction. These findings reflect an evolving understanding of music as not merely motivational but as a structured pedagogical medium for grammatical competence.

### **Gaps in the Literature**

Despite extensive research on songs in SLA, several gaps remain. Much of the literature has concentrated on vocabulary and pronunciation rather than grammar, and even fewer studies have addressed the teaching of verbs in French specifically. Moreover, while experimental studies provide evidence of songs enhancing grammar acquisition, there is a scarcity of detailed, classroom-based case studies that demonstrate the systematic integration of a single song for teaching the full range of verb morphology (tense, mood, and person) in French. This study aims to fill that gap by providing a replicable pedagogical procedure.

Another gap lies in the selection of appropriate songs. Scholars such as Richards (2015) caution that not all songs are suitable for pedagogy due to slang, dialectal interference, or overly complex structures. Songs like Daouda's *La femme de mon patron*, however, provide linguistically accessible and culturally authentic input free from argot, making them particularly suitable for intermediate learners. This study contributes to the literature by showing how a carefully chosen authentic song can be applied specifically to the teaching of French verbs in both oral and written contexts.

### **Theoretical Foundations**

The theoretical underpinnings of this study draw on Krashen's Input Hypothesis, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, and music-based learning theories. Together, they explain the linguistic, cognitive, and affective dimensions of song-based pedagogy.



### ***Krashen's Input Hypothesis***

Krashen (1982) argued that language acquisition occurs when learners receive comprehensible input slightly beyond their current competence ( $i + 1$ ). Songs provide such input by embedding verbs in authentic, repetitive contexts that learners can process with minimal stress. In *La femme de mon patron*, verbs like *tomber* and *dire* appear repeatedly, promoting acquisition without conscious memorisation. Songs also lower the affective filter, increasing learners' motivation and receptivity.

### ***Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory***

Vygotsky (1978) emphasised that learning is mediated through cultural tools and social interaction. Songs, as cultural artefacts, embody francophone values and linguistic norms. Within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), teachers can scaffold learners' understanding of verbs by guiding them from singing along to analysing and using verbs independently. Songs function as mediating tools for both linguistic and cultural learning.

### ***Music and Language Learning Theories***

Cognitive theories further explain songs' effectiveness. Paivio's Dual Coding Theory (1986) posits that information is more easily retained when encoded through both verbal and non-verbal channels. Songs activate verbal memory (lyrics) and auditory memory (melody), enhancing verb recall. Schön et al. (2008) showed that melody aids segmentation of grammatical structures, while Ludke (2010) demonstrated that singing enhances recall of irregular forms. Dörnyei (2001) argued that motivation is critical in SLA, and songs sustain motivation by evoking emotional and cultural resonance.

### ***Integrative Perspective***

Taken together, these theories suggest that songs provide comprehensible input (Krashen), act as cultural and interactive tools (Vygotsky), and enhance memory and motivation (Paivio; Schön; Ludke; Dörnyei). These perspectives converge to support the use of Daouda's song in teaching French verbs, making the methodology theoretically grounded and pedagogically justified. Building on these theoretical insights and the identified gaps, the following section outlines the methodological approach adopted in this study, detailing how songs, particularly *La femme de mon patron*, were systematically employed to investigate their effectiveness in teaching French verbal structures.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a qualitative, classroom-based study approach, documenting a specific pedagogical intervention. The design allowed the teacher-researcher to implement a structured, song-based lesson plan and collect rich, narrative data on learner engagement and comprehension.

### **Participants**

The study involved 30 learners of French as a foreign language. All participants were exposed to French within their academic curriculum and were positioned at a beginner-to-intermediate level of proficiency.

### **Teaching Material: The Song**

The selected material was *La femme de mon patron* by Daouda Koné. This song was chosen for its simple storyline, clear rhythm, and broad range of verb forms. It was

accessible, age-appropriate, and culturally engaging. Its repetitive structure and memorable melody made it suitable for highlighting conjugated verbs across different tenses.

### Pedagogical Procedure

The lesson plan was implemented in six stages.

#### *Stage 1: Introduction of the Song*

The lesson began with a brief discussion on music as a universal language. Learners shared songs they enjoyed in their local languages, thereby connecting their linguistic background to the foreign language learning task. The French song was then introduced and played once without interruption. At this point, learners were encouraged to listen and enjoy without analysis.

#### *Stage 2: Active Listening and Lyrics Distribution*

The lyrics were distributed and the song replayed. Learners followed the printed text while listening. The focus was on melody and pronunciation. After each stanza, the teacher paused to ensure comprehension of the overall meaning, while avoiding early emphasis on grammar.

#### *Stage 3: Identification of Verbs*

Learners, working in small groups, underlined verbs in the lyrics. With teacher support, these were compiled on the board and categorised.

*Example excerpt from the board activity:*

Table 1: Verbs Extracted from the Song

Lyric Excerpt	Verb	Infinitive	Tense/Mode	Person
Est tombée	est tombée	tomber	Passé composé	3rd singular
M'a proposé	a proposé	proposer	Passé composé	3rd singular
C'est	est	être	Present	3rd singular
Je ne veux pas	veux	vouloir	Present	1st singular
Elle m'a dit	a dit	dire	Passé composé	3rd singular
J'aurai de gros ennuis	aurai	avoir	Futur simple	1st singular
Je ne trouvais pas	trouvais	trouver	Imparfait	1st singular
Elle va se venger	va... venger	aller / se venger	Futur proche	3rd singular
Si je dis oui	dis	dire	Present	1st singular
Que faut-il faire ?	faut/faire	falloir/faire	Present/Infinitive	3rd singular
Je n'ai pas le choix	ai	avoir	Present	1st singular

This stage encouraged learners to perceive grammar not as an isolated system but as part of meaningful discourse.

#### *Stage 4: Verb Conjugation Tables*

After identification, learners created conjugation tables of selected verbs in different tenses. This was done collaboratively, with teacher's help.

Table 2: Conjugation Practice with Song Verbs (Selected)

Verb	Present (Je)	Passé Composé (Je)	Futur Simple (Je)	Conditionnel Présent (Je)
dire	dis	ai dit	dirai	dirais
vouloir	veux	ai voulu	voudrai	voudrais
être	suis	ai été	serai	serais
avoir	ai	ai eu	aurai	aurais
tomber	tombe	suis tombé(e)	tomberai	tomberais

This exercise highlighted morphological variation (e.g., *dire* → *dis*, *ai dit*, *dirai*, *dirais*), reinforcing the connection between melody and grammar.

#### Stage 5: Application through Exercises

Learners consolidated their knowledge through:

##### *Fill-in-the-Blank Listening*

Learners filled in missing verbs while listening.

*Example:* “La femme de mon patron \_\_\_\_ amoureuse de moi” → *est tombée*.

##### *Transformation Activity*

Learners rewrote sentences in different tenses.

*Example:* “Je ne veux pas de problèmes” (present) → “Je n’ai pas voulu de problèmes” (passé composé).

##### *Role-Play*

Learners adapted lines with different verb forms.

*Example:* “La femme de mon patron est tombée amoureuse de moi” → “Et si elle tomberait amoureuse demain ?”

##### *Creative Writing*

Learners wrote sentences with song verbs in multiple tenses.

*Example:* “Je dis la vérité” (present) → “Je dirai la vérité demain” (future).

#### Stage 6: Reflection and Mnemonic Reinforcement

Finally, learners reflected on which verbs were easiest to memorise and how melody supported retention. Many noted that the repeated refrain “Que faut-il faire ? Que faut-il dire ?” made *faire* and *dire* unforgettable. Likewise, the rhythm of “Si je dis oui, si je dis non” reinforced the conjugation of *dire* and conditional clauses.

In this way, verbs became memorable, living structures, accessible for recall and reuse in new situations.

Table 3: Complete List of Verbs Extracted from “La femme de mon patron

Lyric Excerpt	Verb(s)	Infinitive	Tense/Mode	Person
Est tombée amoureuse de moi	est tombée	tomber	Passé composé	3rd singular
Elle m’a proposé de devenir son amant	a proposé / devenir	proposer / devenir	Passé composé / Infinitive	3rd singular
Elle est riche et elle est belle	est (x2)	être	Present	3rd singular
Je ne veux pas de problèmes	Veux	vouloir	Present	1st singular
Son mari c’est mon c’est directeur	c’est	être	Present	3rd singular
Moi je suis son chauffeur	Suis	être	Present	1st singular
Les femmes sont Sont diaboliques...	Sont	être	Present	3rd plural
... elles deviennent très dangereuses	Deviennent	devenir	Present	3rd plural
La femme du patron m’a dit...	a dit	dire	Passé composé	3rd singular
... que c’est moi qui lui fait la cour	c’est / fait	être / faire	Present	3rd singular

Lyric Excerpt	Verb(s)	Infinitive	Tense/Mode	Person
Même si je suis innocent...	Suis	être	Present	1st singular
... j'aurai de gros ennuis	Aurai	avoir	Futur simple	1st singular
Je ne trouvais pas de solutions	Trouvais	trouver	Imparfait	1st singular
Moi je ne sais plus que faire	sais / faire	savoir / faire	Present / Infinitive	1st singular
Je n'ai pas tellement le choix	Ai	avoir	Present	1st singular
Si je dis oui, si je dis non	dis	dire	Present	1st singular
Elle va se venger	va / venger	aller / se venger	Futur proche	3rd singular
Que faut-il faire ?	faut / faire	falloir / faire	Present / Infinitive	3rd singular
Que faut-il dire ?	faut / dire	falloir / dire	Present / Infinitive	3rd singular
Ah, quelle histoire ! Oh, quelle affaire !	(no verb)	—	—	—
Et si je dis non...	Dis	dire	Present	1st singular
Que dois-je faire ?	dois / faire	devoir / faire	Present / Infinitive	1st singular
Que dois-je dire ?	dois / dire	devoir / dire	Present / Infinitive	1st singular

### Data Collection

Observation served as the main data collection tool. The teacher-researcher kept detailed field notes on learner participation, engagement, and errors. Learners' written exercises and group activities also provided supporting evidence. In addition, informal post-lesson interviews were conducted with small groups of learners to capture their reflections on how the song helped their understanding of verbs. These brief discussions, held immediately after class, provided qualitative insights into learners' affective responses and perceived learning gains.

During classroom observation, data were systematically recorded in three domains: (a) verbal and non-verbal engagement (singing, participation, and pronunciation attempts), (b) task performance (accuracy in identifying and conjugating verbs), and (c) collaborative interaction (peer explanations, group corrections, and joint writing tasks). These observations were later triangulated with learners' written outputs to ensure a balanced interpretation of behavioural and textual evidence. The focus remained on narrative insights rather than statistical measurement.

This methodological framework presented a song-centred pedagogy designed to make French verbs tangible and memorable. By embedding conjugation within rhythm and melody, the learners experienced grammar not as a mechanical drill but as a lively, enjoyable, and participatory exercise. This framework now provides the basis for the next section, which presents the classroom results and learners' responses.



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Learner Engagement and Motivation

One of the first observable outcomes of the intervention was heightened learner engagement upon the introduction of the song. Unlike conventional lessons that begin with verb paradigms on the board, starting with music immediately transformed classroom dynamics. Learners sat forward, moved to the rhythm, and displayed body language indicative of reduced anxiety and heightened curiosity, factors considered essential in affective theories of language learning (Krashen, 1982).

The first complete listening generated an atmosphere of novelty. Many students showed excitement at the dramatic storyline of *La femme de mon patron*, while others spontaneously repeated the refrain “Que faut-il faire ?” before guided activities began. The simplicity and rhythm of the refrain functioned as a “mnemonic hook” for linguistic forms. Motivation became particularly evident when printed lyrics were distributed. Learners eagerly underlined familiar words such as *oui*, *non*, and *patron*, even though these were not verbs. Their willingness to participate indicated that the song provided a low-stakes entry point into the traditionally challenging domain of verb conjugation. Peer interaction was another indicator of engagement. Students asked questions, clarified meanings, and corrected each other’s pronunciation. This collaborative learning reflected the social dimension of acquisition, where group participation consolidates individual understanding (Vygotsky, 1978).

### Identification of Verbs

The primary pedagogical goal was helping learners identify verbs within the source language (French). During the second listening, with pauses after each stanza, learners followed the lyrics and underlined verbs.

Students initially recognised obvious forms such as *veux* (from *vouloir*), *suis* (from *être*), and *dis* (from *dire*). Confusion arose with forms such as *c’est*, initially misinterpreted as a pronoun-article combination. The teacher clarified that *c’est* is a contraction of *ce est*, part of the verb *être*. This reinforced the awareness that verbs may appear in forms differing from the base infinitive. Compound tenses presented additional challenges. In “elle est tombée”, some learners underlined only *est* while ignoring *tombée*. Similarly, in “elle m’a proposé”, a few marked only *a*. These moments became teachable opportunities, illustrating that auxiliary + past participle constructions constitute a single verbal unit in the *passé composé*.

By the end of the activity, learners had underlined more than twenty verbs, with about 80 percent correctly identified when compared with the teacher’s master list. This close reading of the source language text (which is French) drew learners into active discovery and helped to make grammar concrete rather than abstract.

### Conjugation and Morphological Awareness

After the extraction stage, verbs were arranged in charts according to tense and person. Learners began to notice recurring forms and understood that a single verb could appear in different temporal contexts. For instance, *dire* occurred as *dis* (present), *a dit* (*passé composé*), and in conditional clauses such as *si je dis oui*, *si je dis non*. This variety illustrated verbal flexibility and reinforced the role of morphology in meaningful contexts.

Irregular verbs, especially *être* and *avoir*, were also highlighted. Instead of memorising long lists in isolation, learners connected forms with narrative examples. For example, conjugating *avoir* in the future (*j’aurai*) was anchored to the line *j’aurai de gros ennuis*, showing how context supports retention. Learners also grasped auxiliary selection in

compound tenses: *tomber* required *être* (*elle est tombée*), while *proposer* took *avoir* (*elle a proposé*). In this way, abstract grammatical rules became concrete when tied to the storyline of the song. Overall, conjugation practice linked form to meaning, demonstrating how verbs operate within authentic communicative sequences.

These observations directly address the study's first research question on how songs can enhance learners' understanding of French verb forms across tenses. The findings confirm that learners moved from surface recognition of verbs to a deeper morphological awareness, demonstrated by their ability to identify auxiliaries, differentiate between tenses, and apply correct conjugations in new contexts. In essence, the intervention improved verb mastery not through rote drills but through meaningful exposure within the song's narrative

### Oral Performance and Pronunciation

The song also proved valuable for oral practice. Refrains such as *Que faut-il faire ? Que faut-il dire ?* and *Si je dis oui, si je dis non* prompted choral repetition, which improved pronunciation and rhythm.

For example, learners initially mispronounced *faut-il* as two separate words, but singing naturally corrected this to [fo.til]. Stress placement also improved in phrases like *si je dis oui*, where learners began to follow the musical phrasing rather than rely on mechanical drills. Repetition through song further reinforced verb recall, students were able to reproduce sentences like *je ne veux pas de problèmes* and extend the structures to new contexts, as in *si je mange, si je ne mange pas*. Confidence in speaking also increased. Students who were usually hesitant participated eagerly in singing and role-play, reflecting the collective nature of the activity. Grammar became embodied. Verbs were not only analysed but heard, repeated, and performed, integrating into learners' oral repertoire.

### Written Exercises and Creativity

Learners transferred knowledge into writing by creating sentences in multiple tenses. Example: *Je dis la vérité* (present), *J'ai dit la vérité hier* (past), *Je dirais la vérité si tu me demandes* (conditional). Although accuracy was not perfect, learners demonstrated creative application of morphological knowledge.

Some students produced sentences inspired by the song's storyline, showing capacity for transfer and adaptation, a higher-order cognitive skill (Bloom, 1956). Errors, such as omission of gender agreement in past participles (*elle est tombé*), provided teachable moments that reinforced grammar through authentic contexts. Two-line mini-stories using song verbs encouraged creativity and humour, e.g., "Je ne veux pas de problèmes, mais j'ai rencontré une femme. J'aurai de gros ennuis demain." This activity demonstrated integration of multiple tenses into cohesive writing.

### Pedagogical Value of Using Songs for Verbs

The intervention confirmed the pedagogical advantages of song-based grammar teaching. Songs provided a multimodal environment—listening, singing, reading, writing, and acting, which aligns with multiple intelligences theory (Gardner, 2011). Verbs were contextualised in authentic discourse, rather than isolated paradigms. For instance, *dire* was experienced in a communicative dilemma, giving grammar narrative relevance. Repetition and rhythm enhanced retention, with refrains like "Que faut-il faire ?" reinforcing both the modal structure *falloir* + *infinitive* and interrogative forms (Murphey, 1992).

Songs also lowered the affective filter, reducing anxiety and encouraging risk-taking in oral production (Krashen, 1982). Collaborative learning was facilitated as students co-

identified verbs, sang together, and co-authored mini-stories, reflecting Vygotsky's sociocultural principles (1978). Overall, these findings collectively respond to the study's research questions by showing that song-based instruction strengthened learners' mastery of French verbs in both form and function. Learners not only memorised conjugations but also used verbs communicatively across oral and written tasks. This highlights the pedagogical potential of integrating melody and morphology as complementary dimensions of verb acquisition in French as a foreign language.

### Challenges and Limitations

Several challenges emerged. First, unfamiliar vocabulary, e.g., *ennuis*, *patron*, occasionally hindered comprehension. Slowed playback and glosses mitigated these issues. Second, contracted forms (*c'est*) and compound tenses required explicit guidance; songs alone cannot replace teacher mediation. Third, over-enthusiasm during singing sometimes distracted learners from grammatical analysis. Some were even beating on their desk as drum but the teacher redirected attention to maintain focus. Fourth, time constraints limited the depth of practice; a single 60-minute session could not cover all tenses or extended writing activities. Finally, the sample size ( $n = 30$ ) limits generalisability. In larger classes, maintaining discipline during singing may be harder; in smaller groups, peer dynamics differ. These limitations indicate that while songs are effective tools, careful planning, structured integration, and supplementary grammar instruction are necessary for optimal outcomes. These limitations suggest that while songs are powerful tools, they require careful planning, structured integration, and supplementary grammar work to achieve optimal results.

### CONCLUSION

This study explored the pedagogical value of using songs to teach in foreign language classrooms. Using Daouda's *La femme de mon patron*, the findings suggest that when music is systematically incorporated into classroom practice, it provides more than entertainment; it offers a memorable, authentic, and motivating context in which verbs are identified, practised, and internalised. Through activities such as identification, conjugation, oral repetition, written transformation, and creative storytelling, learners developed greater awareness of verb structures across tenses and demonstrated an ability to apply grammatical knowledge in both speech and writing.

Several benefits were observed. First, songs increase learner engagement by lowering anxiety and transforming abstract grammar into meaningful use. Second, rhythm and melody enhance memory, making verb forms easier to recall. Third, songs encourage cooperative learning as students collaborate to interpret, sing, and extend linguistic structures. Finally, the authentic discourse in song lyrics situates verbs in real communicative contexts, reinforcing the functional value of grammar. Some limitations also emerged. Songs may introduce unfamiliar vocabulary that diverts attention from grammatical focus. Learners occasionally required guidance to identify verbs accurately, and time constraints limited the depth of practice. At times, enthusiasm leaned more toward performance than analysis. These challenges highlight the need for careful planning so that enjoyment is balanced with structured grammar work.

Beyond the immediate classroom context, the findings of this study carry broader pedagogical implications. The integration of songs as a structured grammar teaching tool can be adapted not only to French but also to other foreign languages where verb morphology poses similar challenges, such as Spanish or Italian. Music creates an

emotionally engaging and culturally rich learning atmosphere that can lower affective barriers, enhance motivation, and support long-term retention of grammatical structures. Future research could investigate how different genres of music, such as rap, folk, or contemporary pop, affect learners' morphological awareness and language use. Longitudinal or comparative studies across proficiency levels could also provide deeper insights into the sustained effects of song-based instruction on verb mastery. Such inquiries would expand the theoretical and practical understanding of how melody and morphology interact in foreign language pedagogy.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made for teachers, teacher trainers, curriculum designers, and future researchers. Teachers of French and other foreign languages are encouraged to integrate songs into grammar lessons, particularly for verb instruction, ensuring that activities have clear objectives and purposeful follow-up tasks. Song selection should take into account learners' age, linguistic richness, and thematic relevance, and activities should progress gradually from listening and identification to guided conjugation, sentence construction, and creative application. Written exercises and storytelling can further consolidate learning, ensuring that practice extends beyond oral repetition.

For teacher training, workshops on music-based pedagogy could provide strategies for using songs systematically rather than incidentally, equipping educators with practical methods to combine enjoyment and structured grammar work. Curriculum designers may consider incorporating music as a regular feature in communicative syllabi, especially at beginner and intermediate levels where verb acquisition is crucial.

Future research could compare the effectiveness of songs with other multimodal tools such as drama, film, or digital games, and investigate whether song-based instruction produces lasting improvements in tense and aspect mastery. By following these recommendations, educators and stakeholders can harness the full pedagogical potential of songs in the foreign language classroom, ensuring that musical engagement translates into meaningful grammatical learning.

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