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**MOTIVATION IN ENGLISH TEACHING AS A FOREIGN  
LANGUAGE: A PROBE INTO THE DYNAMICS OF  
“LOCALIZING” EXTRACURRICULAR DISCUSSIONS  
DURING LESSONS**

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**E Isabela N. Kum Diom**

Ph.D. Fellow in Teacher Education

Email: [isakum2000@yahoo.fr](mailto:isakum2000@yahoo.fr)

**Norbert Wirsiy Nyuyki**

Ph.D.

Email: [norbynwirsiy@gmail.com](mailto:norbynwirsiy@gmail.com)

**Abstract**

This study was titled; motivating the English-as-a-foreign-language-classroom: a probe into the dynamics of “localizing” extracurricular discussions during lessons. The purpose of the study was to gather data in order to answer the following questions; How is English taught and learnt in the Mfoundi Division? What techniques do teachers use in this specific area to overcome the problem of low proficiency in English? What types of activities do francophone learners utilize to develop their English language skills? What are the pedagogical implications of these techniques? Data was collected from 108 respondents in a stratified sampling technique in from some linguistic centers in Yaounde municipality using a questionnaire and an observation scheme. Hypothesizing that that extracurricular discussions which have been fine-tuned to reflect the everyday experiences, learning styles and expectations of learners spur them to speak in the classroom, the study’s examination of teachers’ use of motivational strategies revealed that there was a general tendency for teachers to capitalize on strategies that would prompt learners to speak in class. Concerning the learners, their initial motivation to study English was first determined before their actual exhibition of motivated behavior or response to the motivational strategies employed by their teachers. It was discovered that learners responded to all motivational strategies, albeit in varying degrees. As concerns extracurricular discussions, it was observed that they motivate learners more when they are localized or when they reflect the local realities and everyday experiences of learners. It was recommended that; teachers should pay attention to the various motivational strategies they employ in the classroom; teachers should not only endeavor to depart from stereotypes in teaching techniques and lack of knowledge in the learners, but should equally contribute to learners’ self-awareness and to the understanding of others through the use of localized discussion; curriculum designers should in



consequence bear in mind that materials included in course books should be familiar to learners for them to react to them; Curriculum designers on their part should emphasize the contextualization of speaking topics in the curriculum. The correlative method of analysis was used and there is no claim that all has been done. The study was limited to the analysis of localized extracurricular activities. The question of how to proceed to the localization of these extracurricular discussions was not considered. It would therefore be interesting to dig into that domain to further research.

### **Keywords:**

*Motivation, localizing, extracurricular, discussions.*

### **Résumé**

*Cette étude s'intitulait « Motiver les élèves dans les cours d'anglais langue étrangère : une analyse de la dynamique de la « localisation » des discussions extrascolaires pendant les cours ». L'objectif de l'étude était de recueillir des données afin de répondre aux questions suivantes : Comment l'anglais est-il enseigné et appris dans la Division Mfoundi? Quelles techniques les enseignants utilisent-ils dans ce domaine spécifique pour surmonter le problème du faible niveau de maîtrise de l'anglais ? Quels types d'activités les apprenants francophones utilisent-ils pour développer leurs compétences en anglais ? Quelles sont les implications pédagogiques de ces techniques ? Les données ont été recueillies auprès de 108 répondants dans le cadre d'un échantillonnage stratifié dans certains centres linguistiques de la municipalité de Yaoundé à l'aide d'un questionnaire et d'un programme d'observation. Partant de l'hypothèse que les discussions extrascolaires, qui ont été affinées pour refléter les expériences quotidiennes, les styles d'apprentissage et les attentes des apprenants, les incitent à s'exprimer en classe, l'étude de l'utilisation des stratégies de motivation par les enseignants a révélé une tendance générale chez ces derniers à tirer parti des stratégies qui incitent les apprenants à s'exprimer en classe. En ce qui concerne les apprenants, leur motivation initiale à étudier l'anglais a d'abord été déterminée avant leur manifestation effective d'un comportement motivé ou leur réponse aux stratégies de motivation employées par leurs enseignants. Il a été découvert que les apprenants répondaient à toutes les stratégies de motivation, bien qu'à des degrés divers. En ce qui concerne les discussions extrascolaires, il a été observé qu'elles motivent davantage les apprenants lorsqu'elles sont localisées ou lorsqu'elles reflètent les réalités locales et les expériences quotidiennes des apprenants. Il a été recommandé que: les enseignants prêtent attention aux différentes stratégies de motivation qu'ils emploient en classe; les enseignants s'efforcent non seulement de s'éloigner des stéréotypes dans leurs techniques d'enseignement et du manque de connaissances des apprenants, mais contribuent également à la conscience de soi des apprenants et à la compréhension des autres grâce à l'utilisation de discussions localisées; les concepteurs de programmes d'études gardent à l'esprit que les supports inclus dans les manuels scolaires doivent être familiers aux apprenants afin qu'ils puissent y réagir; Les concepteurs de programmes d'études devraient, pour leur part, mettre l'accent sur la contextualisation des sujets de discussion dans le programme d'études. La méthode d'analyse correlative a été utilisée et il n'est pas prétendu que tout a été fait. L'étude s'est limitée à l'analyse des activités extrascolaires localisées. La*

*question de savoir comment procéder à la localisation de ces discussions extrascolaires n'a pas été examinée. Il serait donc intéressant d'approfondir ce domaine pour poursuivre les recherches.*

**Mots clés :** *motivation, localisation, extrascolaire, discussions.*

### **Introducing Motivation In English Teaching As A Foreign Language:**

The English Syllabus for Francophone General Schools outlines as course objectives that learners should, among other things: communicate orally and in writing effectively in varied situations; develop knowledge in listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary. From the above, it is evident that speaking is an important component of the language-learning process. For these objectives to be achieved, emphasis should be laid on motivation which is a corollary of appropriate teaching methods.

Sapir (1949) and Whorf (1956) in their postulates which later on gained the appellation Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, state that every language is “steeped against” a specific culture and that culture is reflected in language. From such an assumption, it has widely been held that to learn a language well the learner should understand the TL culture. Consequently, there has been a generalized tendency to include TL culture elements in EFL classrooms and course books. Dornyei and Csizer (1998) even give as the tenth commandment to motivate the foreign language classroom the inclusion of TL culture elements during lessons. In the same vein, Fahsi (1990) cited in McKay (2004:4) advances the following arguments to justify the inclusion of TL cultural elements in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language: it can promote international understanding, it can deepen an understanding of one’s own culture and it can motivate learners.

However useful such a practice could be, precautions should be taken in its application. In this vein, Fahsi (*ibid*) further affirms that there will be greater motivation to learn the English language if the language is presented in a way that bears on local realities rather than in a way that relates to the specificities of an English-speaking country. Furthermore, Smith (1976) argues that as English is an international language, it should be used to transmit local values and culture. Commenting on the status of an international language, Smith (*ibid*: 40) holds: non-native speakers do not need to internalize the cultural norms of native speakers of that language; an international language becomes “de-nationalized”, and the purpose of teaching an international language is to facilitate the communication of learners’ ideas and culture in an English medium.

In like manner, McKay (2003) states that learning the TL culture is not an imperative as “learners will not be living and interacting in the native English-speaking context.”

Learners’ attitude or outlook on the language-learning process is tributary to their motivation. In this regard, Cortazzi and Lin (1999:212) believe, “the culture of learning that learners and teachers bring to the classroom is a taken-for-granted framework of the expectations, attitudes, values, and beliefs about what constitutes good learning”. This simply means that cultural dispositions in the classrooms are in bearing with the ultimate

goal of effectively communicating in a language. In a nutshell, the EFL setting raises questions about what culture to focus on. In the course of learning therefore, it follows that the inclusion of cultural elements should be a source of motivation. Yet, as hinted by Brown (1994), such inclusions must take cognizance of the relationship between language and culture. The uses of extracurricular discussions in foreign-language classrooms, if wrongly oriented will “not reflect the learning styles or cultural values of the EFL learners who use them and as a result, the learners’ motivation suffers and they become reluctant to interact in class and share opinions or ideas” (Thi Cam Le *op. cit.*) From this extract, it is clear that if extracurricular discussions are intended as motivators, they should have a bearing with learners’ everyday experiences and expectations. If that is not the case, they could become “motivators that do not motivate” (Chen *et al* 2005:611).

The English language acquired “multiple statuses and ownerships” during its spread (Crystal 1997). The most basic distinction of world Englishes is that made by Kachru (1985) between native and non-native varieties. Native varieties refer to those spoken where English is a mother tongue of most, if not all, people while non-native varieties refer to those spoken by people who already have a mother tongue other than English. Kachru (*ibid*) further proposes what could be considered the most popular representation of the global community of English users; the three concentric circles of English. The innermost circle stands for native speakers of English such as Australians, Americans and those who live in the British Isles. These speakers were affected by what is termed the domestic spread of English. The second or outer circle represents those who use English as a second language like Indians and Ghanaians. These countries were affected by the foreign spread of English. In Cameroon, English is a second language for most Cameroonians of the North West and South West Regions.

The last or expanding circle relates to learners or users of English as a foreign language. These countries include France and Germany. Such countries were affected by the international spread of English owing to the interplay of socio-economic and political factors. However popular it is, Kachru’s classification has been criticized by some linguists. Graddol (2006:116) says such a picture does not portray the rising importance of the outer circle, coupled with the fact that in some European countries and elsewhere learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) are becoming more of second-language users. Graddol (*ibid*) further argues that “in a globalized world, the traditional definition of ‘second-language user’ no longer makes sense”. According to him, in talking of English as a second language, it is more reasonable to consider the speaker’s fluency in the language rather than their bilingual status. Graddol moves up a notch to say that Kachru has recently acknowledged the fault in his classification by suggesting that the inner circle be regarded as enclosing those with a high level of proficiency in English, regardless of how they learned or how they use the language.

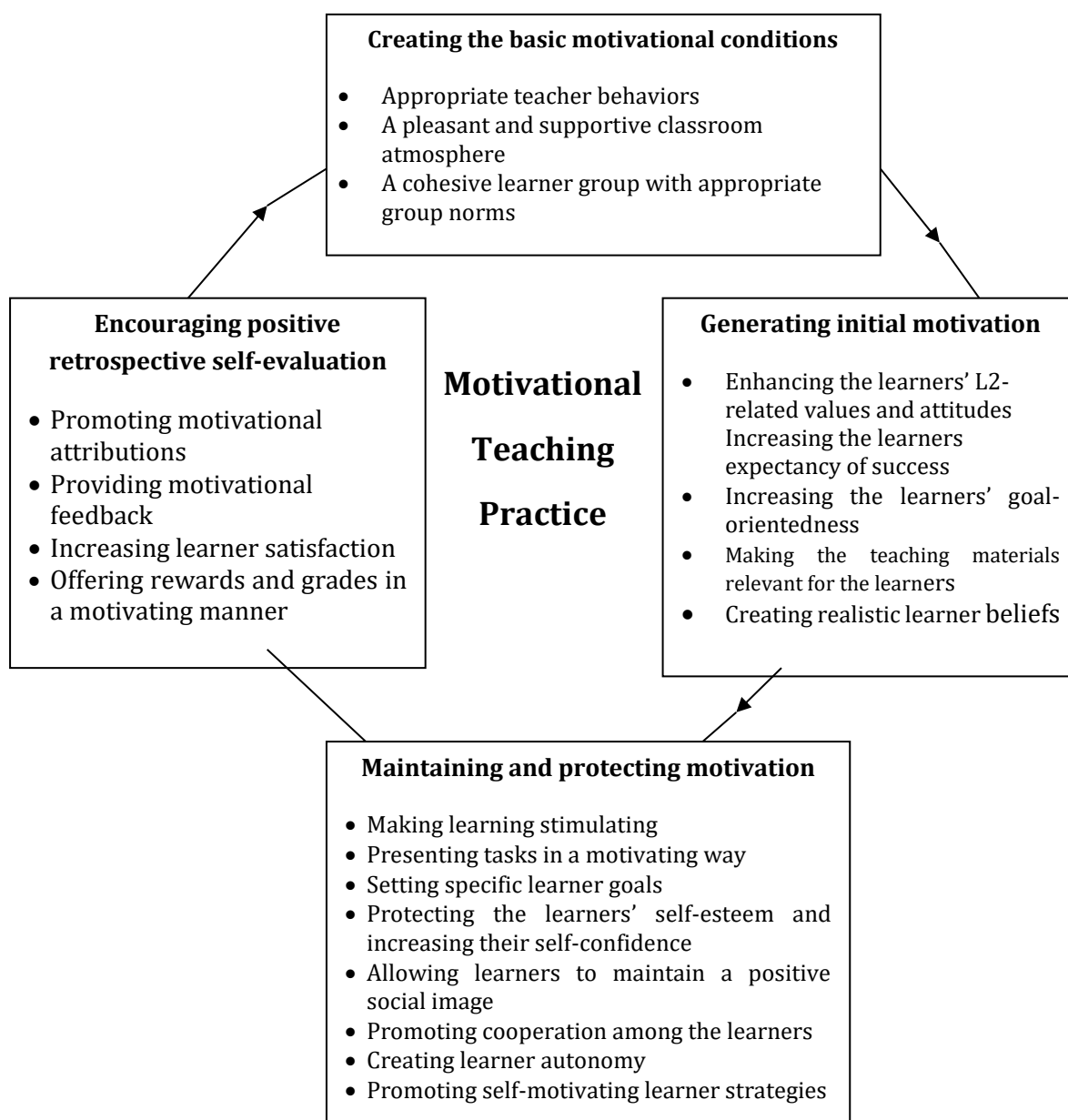
Mauranen (2003:513) has argued that there are now more users of English as a second or foreign language than there are users of English as a native language. From this premise, Thi Cam Le (*ibid*) is of the opinion that native varieties of English should no longer be idealized and that “we should recognize the importance of being effective English speakers

rather than sounding native-like”. In the same vein, Tran (2000) thinks English is a neutral and culture-free language which “belongs to all who use it”. Smith (1991:32) is particularly vocal when he states, “the use of English should not be governed by the phonological, linguistic, or cultural ‘chauvinism’ of native speakers”.

We can extrapolate from the foregoing that English as an international language (EIL) has become a no-man’s language, such that using TL cultural aspects that are not in keeping with learners’ experiences may not truly yield the expected results. Extracurricular discussions, whether they are based on TL or local culture, should thus reflect learners’ expectations if they are expected to yield any positive results.

### Conceptual framework

**Figure 1 The Components of a Motivational L2 Teaching Practice**



At this juncture, it would be necessary to situate extracurricular discussions within the context of the above-mentioned learning strategies. In this light, it can be said that they partake in generating initial motivation, as illustrated in Figure 1 above in that they enhance learners' foreign language related values and attitudes and increase learners' expectancy of success. Many conditions are needed to learn a foreign language successfully and be able to speak it fluently. Researchers would agree that motivation is one of the key factors that determine learning achievement. Hence, the necessity to probe into the dynamics of various learning and teaching strategies.

### **Motivational Practices**

Rivera (2006), probes into the use of communicative activities as motivators for middle school classrooms. She aims at showing that topics that interest learners make them speak, (which they love to do), and of course practice their oral skills. Such topics bear on themselves and other people as well as on their points of view on various topics. The ultimate idea in her study is to get learners to speak. For an effective application of communicative activities, Rivera (2006:34) proposes four tips as follows:

- Give one instruction at a time.
- Make sure that the instructions are very clear.
- Teach learners how to work in pairs before having them work in small groups.
- Make sure that there are predetermined signals for quieting learners in case they get too noisy. For example, you may want to hold up your right hand as a signal for everyone else to hold up their right hand and to stop talking. In this way you will be able to tell learners to be quiet or to give the next instruction without trying to yell over the noise.

To illustrate her conception of communicative activities, Rivera proposes a series of activities and how they could be implemented in a classroom situation. For example, to have learners practice their oral skills by talking about a person or character that is meaningful to them; the teacher could split the class into groups of four to five learners. Biographical information from the Internet and magazines are provided. Learners are then asked to jot down points about any famous person they admire. Later, they are asked to speak out what they have written after having taken cognizance of it.

Rivera concludes that no matter the language level of the students, communicative activities provide the structure necessary to make learners feel comfortable during English language lessons. In her own words, "little by little, the whole class will be involved, and teachers will be delighted with learners' performance and...learners and teachers will have fun!" (2006:36). The present study, just like Rivera's, dwells on motivational classroom practices. However, while he takes the effectiveness of an adopted strategy as a given, this one proceed to measure it using well-defined and finely-tuned variables.

Mounvera (2009) sets out to examine and evaluate the strategies employed in the teaching and learning of English in the Noun Valley in a bid to see how they affect learning and performance. The main focus of her research is to find out what learning strategies are used in the Noun Valley in the West region of Cameroon to enhance the learning of English; how and why they are used. Her work also examines the importance of utilizing good learning strategies in a foreign language context and takes into account the teacher's role in language learning strategies. Finally, it presents the pedagogic implications of learning strategies in EFL contexts. To this end, she formulates the following research questions:

- How is English taught and learnt in the Noun Division?
- What techniques do teachers use in this specific area to overcome the problem of low proficiency in English?
- What types of activities do francophone learners utilize to develop their English language skills?
- What are the pedagogical implications of these techniques?

Using an eclectic framework of analysis, she concludes from an analysis of data collected from a sample of sixty learners and ten teachers that in general, the use of both learning and teaching strategies is very low. This result, she further states, paints a clear picture of the situation in the Noun Division where almost all learners and schools operate in the same environment and under analogous conditions. Ultimately, the focus in her study is the demonstration that there is a direct link between the poor performance of EFL learners and the poor use of learning and teaching strategies in the Noun Valley. Put another way, learner performance is a corollary of teachers' application of specific teaching strategies. While Mounvera's study is an overall evaluation of whether or not the different teaching strategies are applied, this study probes into the dynamics of a specific motivational practice.

McKay (2004) explores the ambivalence of the link between EIL and the culture of countries where English is spoken as a native language. To exemplify this ambivalence, he begins by discussing several countries in which educators have rejected the inclusion of western culture and the values in the teaching of English. Then he demonstrates how ironically, at the same time, many of these countries include western culture and values in their approved textbooks. The examples McKay uses demonstrate three broad ideas. Firstly, that teachers believe learners will be more, not less, motivated to learn English if the language is presented in contexts that relate to their lives as young adults rather than in the context of an English-speaking country whose values are not familiar to them. Secondly, McKay illustrates how in many countries the teaching of English is becoming much more closely aligned with the host culture as those countries use local characters, places and issues as content for their teaching materials. And thirdly that in more subtle

ways, English is still being linked to the culture of English-speaking countries in characters other than local characters.

Maksutkyzy (2005) works on proverbs and idioms as a means of not only encouraging language learners but equally as a means of keeping the classroom always alert. He uses the categorization technique with learners at the Yasawi Kazak Turkish Internal University to justify the claim that teaching a foreign language successfully does not only depend on one's knowledge from books on methodology but equally on creativity. He thinks, "unless a teacher is creative, he or she will not be able to give a class that extra spark that truly inspires learning and that when a sense of humor is added, a tiresome learning process becomes something learners adore" (2005:43)

Maksutkyzy therefore uses idioms and proverbs that are related to the subject matter to bring in an element of surprise each time in his lessons. He states:

*The secret to being a successful teacher seems to be unpredictability. When learners do not know what you are going to do next, they are always alert. To keep their attention, it is good to crack jokes at serious lessons from time to time.*

Even though jokes and idioms can generate interest in an EFL setting and provide useful input, they do not provide the negotiation that two-way communication entails. Besides, an activity that is interesting but too cognitively challenging to manage in English will cause most learners to resort to their native language. Working with freshman composers at a US University branch campus in Panama, Doukas (1996) attributes the failure of a participatory classroom to inadequacies of the teachers themselves. In her study of 101 local secondary school teachers of English in Greece, Doukas uses a technique she calls "Tips for teaching a text" (1996:37). She further asserts that lack of classroom participation stems from the instructor's misunderstanding of the very nature of communicative language Teaching (CLT). She found out that even when using textbooks designed for communicative activities, teachers still resorted to traditional teacher-centered routines. Doukas therefore proposes that EFL teachers should focus on the communicative activities proposed in the course book to promote classroom participation and consequently, language learning. While Doukas encourages teachers to concentrate on the course book for a greater classroom participation, the study under focus departs from the school manuals as speech boosters to outside the manual discussions.

Krieger (2005) examines how resources like games can be exploited to meet learners' needs. He looks at how the use of such resources affects four areas of teaching: the motivation level of the students, activity selection, the use of learners' mother tongue (L1) in the classroom, and ways to approach L1 and the target language. Citing the research of Piaget, Maslow and Bruner, Krieger makes reference to his teaching experience in multilingual classes in San Francisco, California and Japan to affirm that "intrinsic drive stems from a profound human psychological need to grow" (2005:8). According to Krieger, in order to elicit English from learners in an EFL monolingual class, an activity ought to:

- Have a visible, clear, and compelling objective;
- Have English use built into the logic of the activity;
- Not be too cognitively demanding to manage in English;
- Be interesting to the students.

To meet these criteria, Krieger therefore proposes games in which the rules require learners to accomplish a task by speaking English only. To him, games provide an organizational framework that makes the activity more appealing and accessible to students. When the element of competition is introduced, tension is heightened by the urge to win. In a game scenario learners are willing to play by the stated rules; they are motivated to use English because they have a compelling reason to do so. It is thus important for teachers to instigate fun and work by carefully engineering activities to achieve both.

However, in a game situation, although learners are motivated to participate because they are given a compelling reason to do so, care must be taken because learners generally just want to have fun and not work. Consequently, the teacher must deal with the fact that the learners are probably not receiving any significant exposure to English outside the classroom and thereby maximize fluency practices and reduce the emphasis on accuracy.

Dornyei and Guilloteaux (2008) make an evaluation of teachers' motivational practices. Indeed they set out to establish a correlation between teachers' motivational practices and learners' motivated behavior. The researchers make a wholesale evaluation of the success of motivational practices as gauged by well-established variables. Their study draws the conclusion that learner's motivation is tributary to teachers' motivational practices. This study also pursues a similar scheme but focuses on localized extracurricular discussion with a view to determining how extracurricular discussion get greater success when they are localized. Komiyama sets out to distinguish among different types of motivation and illustrates that motivation-supportive instructional strategies in the classroom can create a dynamic environment where reading comes alive. She identifies different types of motivations and examines how they influence learner learning. The first type is the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) as proposed by Deci and Ryan. Here, considerations are put on how motivation may initiate and sustain interest in learning. SDT suggests that the more self-determined learners' motivations are, the more likely they are to develop and sustain their learning ability. To enhance self-determination motivation as opposed to extrinsic motivation, SDT proposes that teachers support learners' psychological needs for competence (C), autonomy (A), and relatedness (R) - the set of principles she refers to in this article as "CAR".

Komiyama also uses various learners' variables like age, grade and levels and also, instructional variables like textbook and course objectives to buttress her argument. With a set of Japanese EFL learners, she illustrates how CAR can be applied to reading by breaking an assignment into double steps. The results of the CAR principles on the Japanese EFL learners reveal: "competence is satisfied when learners accomplish reading activities

that are challenging but not overwhelming, so that learners feel they are capable of completing the reading tasks.” Learners’ needs for autonomy are satisfied when they feel that they are in control of their own behavior. Their sense of autonomy can be influenced by opportunities to choose topics and tasks as well as factors such as rewards and feedback. Relatedness let learners connect with their class mates and teachers.

The above review, far from trying to be exhaustive, is rather representative. It thus stands out that there is a general paucity of works that focus exclusively on an evaluation of adopted motivational strategies. From such an observation, this study probes into the possible discrepancies between the assumed and the actual motivational power of certain classroom practices.

### **Gaps And Prospects**

Previous writers have examined the part played by motivational classroom practices within a classroom setting. Most of them such as Montero (2005), Matters (2005), Izquierdo (2004), just to name a few, evaluated the effectiveness of different classroom techniques in the enhancement of student’s communicative competence. On their part, Adaskou et al (1990), Nkwenti (2009), Simo Bobda (2008) for example examined the cultural implications of the TL on student’s performance. Some of these researchers see the use of TL as a necessary and useful component in ELT learning while others think TL culture impedes learning.

The above-mentioned studies are similar to the present study in that they all deal with various techniques used by teachers in an EFL setting. The former and the present study all deal with cultural issues or teaching strategies. However, this study differs from previous ones in two ways: Firstly, it examines the stakes of digression in an ELT classroom and secondly, it investigates the relative success of localized and unlocalized discussions as motivators.

The above review, far from trying to be exhaustive is rather representative. It thus stands out that there is a general paucity of works that focus exclusively on an evaluation of adopted motivational strategies. From such an observation, this study probes into the possible discrepancies between the assumed and the actual motivational power of certain classroom practices. As illustrated by the examples above, manifestations of attitudes toward including Western culture in EIL materials vary by country. Some countries emphasize making the local culture the focus of the content while other countries reject the inclusion of Western culture. As Smith (1976) argued several years ago, the fact that English has become an international language suggests that English no longer needs to be linked to the culture of those who speak it as a first language. Rather, the purpose of an international language should be to describe one’s own culture and concerns to others. Consequently, only when English is used to express and uphold local culture and values will it truly represent an international language. Taking into consideration the various reasons why there is tremendous interest in learning English, it becomes an imperative for language

teachers to localize discussions, thereby captivating and enhancing the speaking skill of their learners.

### **Population Of Study**

The population of this study comprises EFL learners enrolled in various language institutes in Yaoundé (Cameroon) as well as English language teachers of these institutes. These language institutes are centers specialized in the teaching of languages such as English, French, German, Spanish and Italian. Learners learning English in these centers are in principle more instrumentally than integratively motivated. As it stands, they have an initial predisposition or motivation to learn English as this will benefit them *inter alia* in their academic and/or professional careers.

Learners are mostly Cameroonians as well as a few expatriates. Their ages range from twenty to about fifty. In general, however, there were many more learners in their twenties and thirties. The learners were from different ethnic groups and from all walks of life; students, civil servants, business persons as well as members of the clergy. The level of education varies from one learner to the other. Three language centers constitute the population for this study viz: The Pilot Linguistic Centre, the B & K Language Institute and the MTC Language Institute, all located in the town of Yaoundé. The Pilot Linguistic Centre is the biggest language center in Yaoundé and it is owned by the government. It is situated at the city center with main language course being English, French and German. The learner population in this center is quite dense, with over a thousand enrolled learners. The various learning levels, in ascending order, are the foundation, pre-intermediate, intermediate and upper-intermediate levels. Lessons at each level are scheduled at different hours of the day and learners choose the schedule that suits them best. In this Centre the class has a capacity of 26 learners and the classes almost always operate at full capacity. The learners or participants, as they are called here, are for the majority above thirty years of age. In this Centre, 108 learners were involved in this study. 62 of them were from the intermediate classes and 48 from the upper intermediate classes.

As concerns teachers, eight of them were consulted for the collection of data. Their ages ranged from 37 to 50. All of them were professionally trained and all had at least fifteen years of teaching experience. The B&K Language Institute is situated in the Nsimeyong neighborhood in Yaoundé. This institute is one of the biggest private owned language institutes in Yaoundé. It is equipped with an ultra-modern language laboratory and a specialized library for language learners. What is unique about this centre is that its language laboratory is equipped with computers, radio cassettes, Compact Disc players and ear-phones. What is more, each classroom is equipped with audio-visual facilities for video and listening lessons. The learning levels in this institute are the same as in the Pilot Linguistic Centre and only differ in appellation. These levels are Starter, Level One, Level Two, Level Three, Level Four, and Level Five. The classrooms have a capacity of ten to twenty-two students. In this Centre, 29 learners were involved in the study. They were thirteen learners chosen from the Pre-Intermediate, nine from the intermediate and seven from the Advanced levels. Learners here, as compared to those of the Pilot Linguistic

Centre, were younger. Their ages ranged from eighteen to thirty-five. Most of them were university students. As for the five teachers that were involved here, their ages ranged from twenty-five to forty-five. They were all professionally trained and had a professional experience of between five to eighteen years.

The MTC Language Institute is a relatively small (compared to the Pilot Linguistic Centre and the B&K Language Institute) language learning center situated at the Biyem-Assi neighborhood in Yaoundé. This institute has three learning levels: Elementary, pre-Intermediate and Intermediate. In this Centre, 08 learners were involved from the Intermediate level and 05 from the pre-intermediate level. As for the teachers, their ages ranged from 26 to 31. Out of the four teachers involved in the study, only one had received professional training. The classes were equipped with audio-visual aids.

### **Research Instruments**

The instruments of data collection for this study are the questionnaire as well as the observation scheme. Two separate questionnaires were administered in the course of this study. The first of them is the learner questionnaire which ultimately aimed at determining learners' initial motivational state. It has three main components. These components gauge learners' initial motivation by assessing their attitude towards the language. The questionnaire equally assesses learners' attitude towards discussion topics as well as their classroom anxiety. The teacher questionnaire aimed at evaluating teacher motivational classroom practices and the relative use they made of localized extracurricular discussion to prompt learners to speak. As concerns the classroom observation scheme used in this study, it was adapted from Dornyei (*Ibid*: 76). It was fine-tuned to reflect the aims of the work. The observation scheme globally aimed at establishing a possible correlation between teachers' motivational practices, with a special focus on localized extracurricular discussions, and learners' motivated behavior mainly in terms of volunteering to speak and classroom participation.

### **The Classroom Observation Checklist**

Apart from the questionnaire, an observation checklist was equally used to tap information from respondents. Specifically speaking, the observation checklist was to actually observe the use of extracurricular discussions and learners' spoken participation. The use of this observation check list was to compliment the information obtained from the teachers' and learners' questionnaires. During the two weeks spent in the various language schools, it was observed that no visible teaching aid was localized. The course books, audio and video cassettes were all foreign. The listening exercises were all drawn from these foreign sources. The accents in both the video and audio cassettes were so foreign that teachers had to rewind the cassettes or compact disks several times for any intelligibility on the part of the learners. This most often put the learners off and in centers like the B & K Language Institute and MTC Language Institute; one could actually hear learners sigh or grumble or simply give up trying to understand.

The foreign accent issue, which is reckoned to be a serious impediment especially in listening lessons was sometimes very tactfully managed by teachers. Some of them summarized either before or after the listening. Others asked leading or inferential questions while some others contextualized. Another set of teachers simply explained the listening and encouraged learners to relate the content to their personal lives. In other words, learners were encouraged to personalize the activity. Other teachers would bring in little bits of chit-chat either before or after the listening. All these strategies were successful to a greater or lesser extent.

The traditional approach to learning is to focus on the individual and the immediate environment that he or she faces. At the heart of the learning theory is the assumption that behaviors are learnt and influenced by managing the consequences of those behaviors. People generally repeat behaviors that bring them satisfaction and pleasure, and stop those that bring them dissatisfaction and pain. Consequently, the listening and the speaking tasks, which are the focus of these centers, had to be brought to the local realities and everyday experiences of the learners in order to be understood.

The need to focus on the learners and their immediate environment could be one of the reasons why the time spent on the various observational items differed from one teacher to another. The following table shows how much time teachers spent on the various items. It should be noted here that the time spent on the various items depended on the type of lesson that was going on. For example, during video lessons, much more time was spent on localizing and personalizing the issues than was spent on grammar lessons.

**Table 1. Individual time spent on various items on the observation checklist**

| TEACHERS                        |  | 1                        | 2                      | 3 | 4  | 5  | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |   |    |    |
|---------------------------------|--|--------------------------|------------------------|---|----|----|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|---|----|----|
| Learners motivated behaviour    | Eager volunteering   | ¼                        | ¼                      | ¼ | ½  | ¼  | ¾ | ¾ | ½ | ½ | ¾  | ¾  | ¾  | ¾  | ¾  | ¾  | ¾ |    |    |
|                                 | Participation  | ¾                        | ¾                      | ¾ | ¾  | ¾  | ¾ | ¾ | ¾ | ½ | ½  | ¾  | ¾  | ¾  | ¾  | ¾  | ¾ |    |    |
|                                 | Attention  | ¾                        | ¾                      | ¾ | 1  | 1  | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1 |    |    |
| Teacher's motivational practice | Encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation                         | Process feedback session | 4                      | 3 | 3  | 3  | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 1  | 3  | 0  | 0  | 2  | 4  | 0 |    |    |
|                                 |  | Neutral feedback session | 3                      | 3 | 3  | 4  | 2 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 4  | 0  | 2  | 2  | 4  | 0  | 4 | 4  |    |
|                                 | Generating, maintaining, and protecting situation-specific task motivation | Activity design          | Team competition       | 0 | 0  | 0  | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0  | 0  | 2  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0 | 0  |    |
|                                 |  |                          | Individual competition | 0 | 0  | 0  | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0 | 0  | 0  |
|                                 |  |                          | Tangible task product  | 0 | 0  | 0  | 3 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 3  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 3 | 0  | 0  |
|                                 |  |                          | Intellectual challenge | 0 | 0  | 2  | 3 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 3  | 0  | 3  | 2  | 2  | 0  | 2 | 0  | 0  |
|                                 |  |                          | Personalization        | 5 | 10 | 5  | 1 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 3  | 2  | 5  | 5  | 5  | 5  | 5 | 5  | 5  |
|                                 |  | P.S.s                    | Group work             | 0 | 0  | 0  | 2 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0  | 0  | 0  | 13 | 0  | 0  | 5 | 0  | 0  |
|                                 |  |                          | Pair work              | 6 | 6  | 5  | 7 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0  | 4  | 6  | 0  | 7  | 10 | 5 | 10 | 10 |
|                                 |  |                          | Individual work        | 7 | 5  | 10 | 8 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 7  | 7  | 5  | 5  | 5  | 10 | 8 | 6  | 6  |
|                                 |  | Teacher discourse        | Promoting autonomy     | 3 | 1  | 1  | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1  | 3  | 2  | 1  | 3  | 0  | 2 | 2  | 2  |
|                                 |  |                          | Promoting cooperation  | 4 | 0  | 0  | 0 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2  | 0  | 0  | 2  | 0  | 4  | 0 | 5  | 5  |

|  |  |                                 |    |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|--|---------------------------------|----|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | Scaffolding                     | 4  | 5  | 5 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
|  |  | Arousing curiosity or attention | 0  | 0  | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
|  |  | Promoting integrative values    | 0  | 0  | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|  |  | Establishing relevance          | 3  | 1  | 4 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 2 |
|  |  | Signposting                     | 2  | 0  | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 2 |
|  |  | Unlocalized discussion          | 2  | 6  | 3 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 4 |
|  |  | Localized discussion            | 10 | 11 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 7 |
|  |  | Social chat                     | 1  | 4  | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

Note <sup>a</sup>P.S. = Participation structure

The table overleaf clearly shows how teachers at the various language institutes distributed their time on the various motivational items. The following table is a presentation of a cumulative result of all observations that were made in the different classes of the language centers that were studied. From the table, it could be observed that classes lasted for a total of 900 minutes. This total number of hours was however spent on different items as indicated in the table. It can thus be observed that the five items on which more time was spent are localized discussions (130 minutes), individual work (98 minutes), pair work (92 minutes), personalization (87 minutes) and unlocalized discussions (85 minutes). The different items that constitute teachers' motivational practices elicited different responses as seen by the number of learners who exhibited motivated behavior. The focus, however, was on localized and unlocalized classroom discussions as can be seen on the table below.

With localized discussions, 3/4 of the class participated or attempted to speak each time discussions were contextualized. 4/5 of the learners were attentive in class and 2/3 eagerly volunteered to speak in class. As concerns unlocalized discussions, 2/5 of learners participated or spoke in class. 3/5 were attentive and 1/6 eagerly volunteered to speak in class each time discussions of this nature were introduced.

### Summary Of Findings

This study was based on the hypothesis that extracurricular discussions which have been fine-tuned to reflect the everyday experiences, learning styles and expectations of learners spur them to speak in the classroom. Given that teaching is a delicate activity in which the teacher must gauge the effectiveness of every strategy he employs, localized classroom discussions were contrasted with unlocalized discussions in order to show their relative effectiveness and success. The effectiveness of each motivational strategy was measured in terms of some specific variables observed in the learners and processed accordingly.

An examination of teachers' use of motivational strategies revealed that there was a general tendency for teachers to capitalize on strategies that would prompt learners to speak in class. In other words, teachers focused on strategies they judged would yield positive results mainly in terms of making their learners speak in class. Such strategies were manifold and had varying impacts on the learners. Generally the strategies employed by

teachers could be said to aim at generating initial motivation as well as sustaining it afterwards. Again, teachers had a general tendency of making extensive use of strategies that yielded positive responses from learners. Thus, apart from localized and unlocalized extracurricular discussions which are the crux of this study, other strategies were identified.

Concerning the learners, their initial motivation to study English was first determined before their actual exhibition of motivated behavior or response to the motivational strategies employed by their teachers. It was discovered that learners responded to all motivational strategies, albeit in varying degrees. As concerns extracurricular discussions, it was observed that they motivate learners more when they are localized or when they reflect the local realities and everyday experiences of learners. As asserted by Cortazzi and Jin (1999:197),

*...language teachers have become increasingly aware that a second or foreign language can rarely be learned or taught without addressing the culture of the community in which it is spoken. A second language learner's understanding of a second culture is fundamentally affected by his or her culturally –defined world view, beliefs, and presuppositions. These beliefs and presuppositions have pedagogical implications and need to be considered in second language teaching and learning.*

The implication of this citation is that focus on target language elements should be reduced to the benefit of local culture elements. Hence, the need to localize discussions is further reiterated here. All in all, from the above findings, it can be concluded that the hypothesis has been validated. This is owing to the fact that not only do extracurricular discussions prompt learners of English to speak, but also, they do so when they are fine-tuned to reflect the experiences of the learners.

### **Recommendations**

Teaching is a complex activity that has to be meticulously carried out to ensure a successful transfer of knowledge from teachers to students. When it comes to motivating students, it becomes even more challenging because it requires an imaginative teacher to trigger and sustain learners' interest and desire to learn English. Having found out that localized extracurricular discussions are not sufficiently being used as motivators, the following recommendations are addressed to EFL teachers, curriculum designers and course book writers.

To begin with, teachers should pay attention to the various motivational strategies they employ in the classroom. It goes without saying that teachers play a very key role in an EFL setting. Course materials effectively used and carefully planned by teachers are important considerations toward the effective acquisition of language in a setting that is gradually but surely departing from the content-based curriculum. Indeed, teachers should always localize their discussions to guarantee maximum effect on the learners because as said by Cortazzi and Jin (*ibid*: 197), "communication in real life situation is never out of context, and because culture is part of most contexts, communication is rarely culture-free."

Teachers should not only endeavor to depart from stereotypes in teaching techniques and lack of knowledge in the learners, but should equally contribute to learners' self-awareness and to the understanding of others through the use of localized discussion. The use of contextualized extracurricular discussions makes learners aware of the subtle and sometimes even startling differences in communication and speech acts, connotations and necessary language etiquettes. EFL teachers should henceforth be both target language and local culture teachers; they should be able to analyze and exploit both cultures to the utmost benefit of the learners.

Curriculum designers on their part should emphasize the contextualization of speaking topics in the curriculum. It has been observed that extracurricular based topics initiate and sustain speaking more than topics from the school manuals. As asserted by Barfield and Uzarski (2009:2), "language, like grasses on the plains during a wildfire, is only one component of the grass plants; culture - the roots - can survive the loss of the burned top grass". The desire for international travels, seeking jobs and the need to be bilingual should be taken into consideration when designing an EFL curriculum in a context like Cameroon. These reasons advanced by the majority of Francophone Cameroonians as what motivated them to learn English must necessarily be taken into consideration when designing a program for them. Localized extracurricular discussions will tremendously boost learners' interest in English and make the often long and tedious language learning journey fun and light-hearted both to the learners and to the teachers.

Curriculum designers should in consequence bear in mind that materials included in course books should be familiar to learners for them to react to them. In this vein, the wholesale inclusion of elements of the TL culture should be minimized to the lowest possibility. Put another way, there should be a general preference for localized as opposed to unlocalized materials for speaking tasks.

To the Cameroonian EFL textbook writers, a strong recommendation can only be made to include localized extracurricular topics in their works. These topics should be considered as exciting to the learners who usually participate in such discussions without any prompting and coaxing. This survey has shown that Cameroonian EFL teachers often digress from the proposed textbook topics to extracurricular ones for varied reasons such as to engender participation, for comic relief and to explain certain points. The question these textbook writers should be asking themselves is why 15/15 teachers should say they usually digress if they were no genuine reasons to do so.

## **Conclusion**

EFL learners in Cameroon do not actively participate in the English language classroom for a variety of reasons including unfamiliar discussion topics, the fear of making mistakes and cultural disposition. The Cameroonian EFL teachers face great challenges to thwart passive learning and make learners more engaged. This study recommends a learner-centered approach to selecting discussion topics as one way to overcome the problem. Localized

extracurricular discussions offer both learners and teachers the opportunity to make learning more purposeful and productive.

This however, requires effort on the part of the teacher, who must carefully scrutinize how topics are selected and adapted to create a classroom environment that supports interaction. Determining relevant cultural topics, providing authentic speech acts and bringing real language into the classroom are some essential tasks for topic selection. In addition, teachers must make sure to involve learners in the process. By applying these guidelines in selecting discussion topics, Cameroonian EFL teachers will increase the potential for learners to be active participants and fluent speakers of English.

This paper summarizes the findings, recommendations and suggestions for further research, serves as a conclusion to the entire work. After exploring the stakes of localizing extracurricular discussions during English lessons, it was remarked that when tuned to reflect learners' expectations as well as experiences, such discussions yielded satisfactory learner motivational behavior. This was exhibited through learners' motivated behavior in terms of classroom participation.

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