

**INSTRUMENTAL MOTIVATION IN OL2 LEARNING:  
A CASE STUDY OF EXOGLOSSIC BILINGUAL PROFICIENCY  
AMONGST CAMEROON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

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This paper investigates instrumental motivation in second official language (OL2) learning. Cameroon university students are required to study through the media of two exoglossic languages, French and English. This is in line with the government's policy of exoglossic bilingualism. The situation is further complicated by the fact that French and English are superimposed on a multilingual situation of about 273 indigenous languages, pidgin English and some form of pidgin French.

We notice that at the end of three and five years of study in an agricultural university, when the students graduate they possess a higher competence in their OL2. We investigate the strategies applied to accomplish this task, the degree of success in OL2 learning, and the problems encountered in studying through two exoglossic languages with one of them constituting an OL2. We also attempt to look at better and less strenuous approaches to the acquisition of the OL2 which is a must for every effective Cameroonian citizen.

## **1. Introduction**

This study was carried out among the students of Dschang University Center of Cameroon in 1986. The findings of the study are still very relevant to the Cameroon situation today.\*

The government of Cameroon is implementing an official policy of exoglossic bilingualism. French and English are used as official tools of communication. Historical factors are responsible for this position. Eight of Cameroon's ten provinces were colonized by France. So, French is the first official language (henceforth OL1) for the people of these provinces.

The remaining two provinces were colonized by the British. English naturally constitutes the first official language (henceforth OL1) for the population of these provinces. With the official policy of bilingualism, French and English become second official languages (henceforth OL2) for the Anglophone and Francophone populations, respectively. It is worth noting that French and English were superimposed on an endoglossic multilingual situation. There are 273 indigenous languages in Cameroon, a lingua franca of pidgin English in the two Anglophone provinces, and some form of pidgin French in the eight Francophone provinces.

Until 1994, Dschang University Centre was only the College of Agriculture of Cameroon University, the country's lone university. From 1995, following university reforms in Cameroon whereby six universities were created, four other colleges were added to the College of Agriculture, and Dschang University Centre became the full and independent University of Dschang. The students at Dschang were grouped in two curricula: ENSA (Ingenieur des Conceptions Agricoles) and ITA (Ingenieur des Travaux Agricoles). ENSA students spent five years of study while ITA students spent three years, and they all graduated into the Cameroon Civil Service to Category A<sub>2</sub> and A<sub>1</sub> respectively.

## 2. Statement of the problem

Students of Dschang University are taught through the media of French and English. These students have spent the first fourteen years of their pre-university years (i.e., primary, secondary, and high school years) learning only through the medium of French for the Francophones and English for the Anglophones. English is only studied as a curricular subject by the Francophones and French by their Anglophones counterparts. It is realised that the performance in English by the Francophone students and French by the Anglophone students is generally very poor. This is at the General Certificate of Education examinations for the Anglophone students and the *Probatoire* and *Baccalaureate* examinations for the Francophone students. Upon admission into the university these students are shocked to meet both French and English as media of instruction at the university. The introduction of both French and English as media of instruction is in line with the government's policy of exoglossic bilingualism. Since the government of Cameroon is predominantly Francophone, this policy is a manifestation of French assimilation and its consequent legacies in Francophone Africa, as vividly described in Bokamba (1991). However the government realised that when students spend three to five years at the university, they will possess a high degree of competence in their OL2 when they graduate. Thus, the students' competence in these languages increases, compared to when they first gain admission into the school. This work seeks to establish the fact that there is actually an improvement in the students' competence in their OL2. The work also investigates the factors actually responsible for students' improvement in OL2 in an establishment that is agriculturally oriented, and not a language school.

Also, we wish to explain the reasons for a faster acquisition of OL2 by linguistic adults within a very short period of stay in an agricultural university. We also wish to examine problems involved in learning through the OL2 media. Finally, there is also the need to look at the various attempts made by students to solve academic problems associated with learning through two exoglossic language media.

## 3. Review of the literature

The term bilingualism has an open-ended semantic coverage, and hardly any single definition of it is totally free of criticism. However, Haugen (1953:6) presented a more flexible and extensive description, thus: 'Bilingualism is a behavioral pat-

tern of mutually modifying linguistic practices varying in degree, function, alternation, and interference'. Other linguists who have also looked at the concept of bilingualism with varying degrees of acceptance include Bloomfield 1933, Weinreich 1957, and William F. Mackey 1977. They have all dealt with various degrees of mastery of two or more languages.

On language acquisition, Gardner and Lambert 1957 and Gardner 1960 carried out experiments on the learning of French by English-speaking Montreal high school students. They established two groups of factors: firstly, natural aptitude and intelligence, and secondly, indices of motivation: type of orientation toward the language and social attitude toward the speakers of the language the learner seeks to acquire. Furthermore, there are the works of a team of psycholinguistics and researchers headed by Gardner and Lambert (1972:3) who worked in Canada, the United States, and the Philippines. They state that 'an individual successfully acquiring a second language gradually adopts various features of behavior which characterize another linguistic and, as is often the case, another cultural group. The learner's ethnocentric tendencies and his attitudes toward the other group are believed to influence his success in learning the new language'. From the foregoing, we realize that intelligence and natural aptitude are primary factors for second language acquisition. Integrative motivation plays a secondary role. We are saying that instrumental motivation could be very important, and really plays a crucial or in other words, a primary role in second language acquisition.

Ellis 1995 observes that there is widespread recognition of the fact that motivation is of great importance for successful L2 acquisition. However, he points out that there is less agreement about what motivation actually consists of. He goes further to explain that motivation can be causative (i.e., have an effect on learning) and it can be resultative (i.e., influenced by learning) He also said that motivation can be intrinsic (i.e., derive from personal interests and inner needs of the learner) and that it can be extrinsic (i.e. derive from external sources such as material rewards)

He furthermore brings to light the fact that the main body of work in Second Language Acquisition research is that associated with Gardner, Lambert, and their associates, whose assumption is that the main determinants of motivation are the learners' attitudes toward the target language community and their need to learn the L2. He comments that motivation so measured affects the extent to which individual learners persevere in learning the L2, the kinds of learning behavior they employ, and their actual achievement. However, recent discussions on L2 learning such as Crookes and Schmidt 1990 emphasized the need for investigating other aspects of motivation in L2 learning such as intrinsic motivation.

This research is an appropriate response to the demand of intrinsic as well as extrinsic motivation in L2 learning. In other words, instrumental motivation in OL2 learning is in effect a form of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. This position is in line with arguments presented in Pinker 1994, where the instinctive nature of

language is investigated. Human beings are endowed with instinctive qualities and the need for survival will take prominence in every circumstance. Language is crucial for human growth and survival, and with its instinctive nature humans will acquire it whenever the need arises. We are in effect saying that, instrumental motivation in OL2 learning by Cameroon university students is a natural manifestation of the instinctive nature of language acquisition.

#### 4. Research methodology

##### a. Population and Subject:

The population used for this study is Dschang University. The subjects of the study are the students of ENSA and ITA.

##### b. Instrument:

The instruments used for investigation include the questionnaire, a direct observational language comprehension test, and a language assessment test.

##### c. Procedure and design:

The questionnaire designed comprises questions grouped into two major categories. The first category of questions sought to investigate the linguistic background of the students, most especially before they gained admission into the university. Also, there were questions designed to find out the aptitude and intelligence of the students. The questions sought to establish their level or degree of bilingualism before their admission. There was also an attempt to discover the languages used with close relatives. Also, there was an attempt to find out whether the second official languages were used with close relatives, like parents and siblings. There was also a move to find out the languages used between friends who speak different first official languages and consequently, to establish the status of the second official languages in the day-to-day activities of the students. To that end, the first twenty questions of part one of the questionnaire were designed to meet the objectives mentioned above.

The questions in the second category try to investigate the position (weight) of the second official language as medium of instruction. Hence, the number of courses delivered through the medium of the second official language was sought. The questions also attempt to find out whether or not the students encounter problems learning through this medium, and the steps taken to solve such problems. The questions sought steps made by individual students towards the reading of materials published in their second official language. Also, whether or not, as a result of language problems, the students avoid materials written in their second official language. The questions here also attempt to enable the students to establish their level of bilingualism. From these questions, one could establish the stage of the program at which a higher degree of bilingualism existed.

Of greater relevance here, the questions in this section seek to find out the motivation and attitude of the students toward the learning of their second official language. Here, the questions were highly motivational and attitudinal in orientation. There was use of a direct observational language comprehension test.

This sought to establish the degree of comprehension of lectures delivered through the medium of the second official language and how well notes were written on such lectures. Also, the verbal expressions during such lectures were observed.

In this connection, the researcher attended a total of sixteen lectures in both the ITA and the ENSA curricula, with eight of the lectures delivered in French, and eight delivered in English. In the ENSA curriculum, the researcher attended two lectures, each in the first, second, third, fourth and fifth year. Of the two lectures attended in each of the classes, one was delivered in French and the other in English. By the end of each lecture delivered in French, the notebooks of all the Anglophone students were collected and assessed. Likewise, by the end of each lecture delivered in English, the notebooks of all the Francophone students were collected and assessed. The same operation was carried out in the ITA curriculum. These notebooks were graded for comprehension of the topics treated and grammatical constructions of notes written during the lectures delivered in the OL2. Also, during the lectures, there was a general observation of the mode of expression and language used outside the classroom and around the corridors.

Finally, there was a language test administered to all the students of ENSA and ITA. For the Francophones, this test consisted of a passage on 'The History of Agriculture', written in English. The students were required to read this passage and proceed to answer ten questions in English from the passage. This was to test the level of comprehension of material written in their second official language and also to test their ability to write English words and sentences correctly. They also wrote an essay of four-hundred and fifty words on the topic 'Agriculture in the Third World'. This permitted us to assess their understanding of a topic in their field of study expressed in their OL2. We were also able to test their grammatical construction of sentences and their vocabulary use as well as their general mode of expression.

On the other hand, the Anglophone students had the same comprehensive passage in French, 'L' Histoire de l'Agriculture'. They also read the passage and answered ten questions from it in French. Finally, they also wrote an essay of four-hundred and fifty words on the same topic in French 'L'Agriculture dans le Tiers Monde'. They were all tested for the same goals as their Francophone counterparts.

## 5. Analysis and discussions

A total of five hundred and sixty (560) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to both the ENSA and the ITA curricula. Of these, 264 went to the ENSA curriculum, while 296 went to the ITA curriculum. A total of 560 responses were obtained from both the ENSA and ITA curricula. Questions related to the period of exposure and contact with the OL2 gave the following results. All the respondents, that is, five-hundred and sixty (560) students, were taught the OL2 as a curricular subject in secondary school, that is 100% of the total

population. Still, five-hundred and sixty (560) students, which is 100% of the population, were taught the OL2 in high school.

With regard to the students' performance in their OL2 at the General Certificate of Education ordinary level examination, the following results were obtained: All the respondents (560 students) wrote their OL2 at the General Certificate of Education ordinary level in examinations. 110 students (making 20% of the students) secured a passing grade in the examination, while 450 students (80% of the total) failed.

These results reveal the fact that every student had had the opportunity to study their OL2 as a curricula subject both in the secondary and high school. Therefore, every student had seven years of training in their OL2. However, only 20% of the entire group secured a passing grade in these languages in the General Certificate of Education ordinary level examination or its French equivalent.

From this performance, one can infer that these students either did not have good conditions to do well, or that they were not sufficiently motivated to take studies in their OL2 seriously. The students could not be generally weak in foreign language acquisition because they all had passed their OL1, a condition for admission to the university.

Questions dealing with languages used in communicating with close relatives showed the results tabulated below.

From these results, the following conclusions can be drawn: First, Cameroon languages play a dominant role in the home or domestic environments. Secondly, pidgin English plays a significant role in informal communication in Cameroon as a whole. This is particularly true for the Anglophone families. Just a handful of Francophones and Anglophones use English in their communications. There is code switching between French, English, and Pidgin English. The OL2 is neither a domestic nor an intimate language of communication. It is a language of formal communication used mostly in the classroom and the school environment.

Myers-Scotton's study of code switching (quoted in Eastman 1991:143) shows that regardless of what legally mandated languages hold sway in a polity, the choices that people make reveal and also form their multiple identities. This point is further pursued in Bokamba (1991:196) when he appreciates the difficulties in learning French by children in French-speaking African countries whose parents are mostly illiterate and have no clue in the use of the French language. Just as the results seen in our table above, the preference is for the mother tongue and then for pidgin English, a lingua franca that is almost creolized in a home and intimate setting.

Questions on the media of instruction and the number of courses taught through them gave the following results: A total of 83 courses were taught in the school. Each class had an average of twelve courses. Sixty-four lecturers taught in the school. Twenty eight taught in English, while thirty-six lectured in French. Of the 83 courses offered, forty-two were taught in English and forty-one in

French. A major observation here is that French and English hold almost the same status as media of instruction in the school.

**Table I A:****Languages used in communicating with close relatives:****Anglophones**

Total no. of students	Relatives	The different languages used by the students with the different relatives:				
		MT	OL1	OL2	Pdg. Eng.	English + Pdg. Eng.
55						
	Mother	44 (i.e., 80%)	1	-	7	3
	Father	44 (i.e., 80%)	2	-	6	3
	Siblings	33 (i.e., 60%)	4	-	8	10

**Table I B:****Francophones**

Total no. of students	Relatives	The different languages used by the students with the different relatives				
		MT	OL1	OL2	Pdg. Eng.	English + Pdg. Eng.
505						
	Father	404 (i.e., 80%)	96	-	5	-
	Mother	449 (i.e., 89%)	54	-	2	-
	Siblings	273 (i.e., 54%)	227	-	2	3

**Table 2 A:****Anglophones**

Total no. of students	Total no. of Anglophone students	Total no. of Anglophone students with Francophone friends	The different languages used by the Anglophone students to communicate with their Francophone friends				
			French	Eng.	MT	Pdg. Eng.	French + Eng.
560	55	55 (i.e., 100%)	44	3	2	2	4

Table 2 B:

## Francophones

Total No of students	Total no. of Francophone students	Total no. of Francophone students with Anglophone friends	The different languages used by the Francophone students to communicate with their Anglophone friends				
			French	Eng.	MT	Pdg. Eng	French + Eng.
560	505	500(i.e.99%)	489	3	2	2	4

Secondly, since there are far more Francophone students, more students in the university are studying through the OL2 medium. When asked whether students encountered difficulties studying through the OL2 media, students responded positively. In fact, in the first year of both ENSA and ITA, 36 out of 50 students and 80 out of 102 students, representing 72% and 78% respectively, acknowledged such difficulties. Again, when students were asked to list their three least-preferred courses, most of the courses listed by the lower-level students, and especially the first-year students, were those taught through the OL2 media. This shows that learning through the OL2 poses problems especially to lower level students. However, when students were also asked to list their three most-preferred courses; the response showed that many students selected at least one course taught through the OL2 medium. In fact, almost all the students at the final levels selected at least one course taught through the OL2. This fact indicates that many students were improving their skills in the use of the OL2. This was especially true in the case of the higher level students and, most especially, of the final-year students.

Questions relating to how the students were resolving the OL2 learning problems gave the following results: First, they were taking their OL2 learning program, i.e., *formation bilingue*, seriously. They read more material on non-agricultural subjects in the OL2. They also read agricultural text books published in the OL2 with the help of bilingual dictionaries. Many students were spending their vacations in the provinces where their OL2 was used as OL1. Also, the students indicated the importance for them of traveling abroad to countries where their OL2 was used as a mother tongue to give them the opportunity to meet native speakers of these languages and have direct contacts and exchanges. Also, students were watching more TV, as well as listening to more radio programs in their OL2. In this connection, many Francophone students were listening to the Voice of America and the British Broadcasting Corporation. The Anglophone students on their part were listening to Radio France Internationale (RFI) and Africa No 1 programs. All these steps showed that they were highly motivated to learn the OL2 to facilitate overcoming learning problems associated with studying through the OL2 media.

A direct observation test of OL2 performance during lectures was also undertaken. This exercise sought to establish the degree of comprehension of lectures delivered through the media of the OL2. We also investigated students'

ability to write down notes. We took into consideration subject comprehension, grammatical construction, vocabulary use, and correct spelling of words. The following averages were obtained from each class.

**Table 3A:**

**ENSA curriculum : Percentage of students who scored 50% and above in the following language tests from the different levels**

**Anglophones**

Class	Subject comprehension	Grammatical constructions	Vocabulary use and spelling	Total performance average for each class
1 <sup>st</sup> Year	40%	10%	25%	25%
2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	49%	17%	30%	32%
3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	60%	23%	37%	40%
4 <sup>th</sup> Year	72%	32%	51%	62%
5 <sup>th</sup> Year	89%	45%	80%	71%

**Table 3B:**

**ITA curriculum**

**Francophones**

Class	Subject comprehension	Grammatical construction	Vocabulary use and spelling	Total performance average for each class
1 <sup>st</sup> Year	35%	8%	20%	21%
2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	50%	15%	40%	38%
3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	66%	28%	58%	51%

From the tables above, the following results can be drawn. The final-year ENSA students performed best with a total class average of 71%. The students performed best in the subject comprehension and their worst performance was in grammar. There is progressive improvement with an increase in the duration of stay at the university. It was observed that some of the students wrote parts of their notes in their OL1. Therefore, there was code-mixing between OL1 and OL2. In this connection, we realised that students are more concerned with the understanding of their subject matter and pay less attention to the construction of grammatical sentences.

Finally, a language test written by all the students gave the following results: Fifth-year students of the ENSA curriculum scored an average of 77%, fourth-year 65%, third-year 59%, second-year 56%, and first-year 55%. For the ITA curriculum, we had the following results: The first year students had an average class score of 51%, the second year 58%, and the third year 62%. The results of this test, like some other types of tests observed earlier, reveal a general improvement in performance with an increase in the length of stay at the university.

## 6. Conclusion

From results obtained in this research, the following conclusions can be drawn.

First, students' competence in their OL2 improves during their stay at the University of Dschang. This competence is commensurable with the length of stay in the school. Also, the improvement in the competence of the OL2 is due to certain factors. The most important of these factors is students' motivation and attitude toward their OL2. This motivation is more instrumental than it is integrative. The students are instrumentally motivated in the acquisition and proficiency of their OL2 primarily to enable them to comprehend their courses and consequently to pass their examinations. To some extent, the students are also integratively motivated. Other factors include intelligence and aptitude.

Again from these results, it is evident that the OL2's constitute very vital media of instruction in the University of Dschang. This is the case for all the other institutions of higher learning in Cameroon. The students in the junior institutions are hardly sufficiently aware of this fact until they find themselves in the higher institutions of learning. From results obtained in this research, it is quite evident that the OL2 as a medium of instruction poses academic problems to students. This is especially true in the comprehension of lectures, writing down of class notes, reading of textbooks written in the students' OL2 and discussion among classmates with different OL1's.

To facilitate studies and improve the standard of education, there is a need to address the OL2 problem. In this connexion, the necessity for a very efficient mastery of the OL2 by Cameroonian students cannot be overemphasised. An efficient mastery of languages in general is faster and easier between the ages of two and thirteen. During this period, the act is spontaneous and natural. Hence, a country like Cameroon, with her singular situation of two exoglossic languages, can only boast of an efficient educational policy by extending a sound language policy to the nursery, primary-, and secondary-school levels. This could later be extended to the universities. With a sound language policy at the junior levels, the student will acquire a reasonable command of their OL2 before they ever proceed to the university. This will help to facilitate their studies at the higher levels of learning.

The above goals can only be obtained if the government will begin by putting in place the facilities that will enable the children to be taught their OL2 efficiently at the nursery, primary-, and secondary-school levels along with their OL1. This will require the appropriate training of language teachers to help in the accomplishment of these goals. Good television and radio programs for children will help them in OL2 learning. The children should be motivated to participate in these programs by making them win awards and giving them different prizes for good performance. This could take the form of quizzes organized in the OL2. There could also be debates and plays by primary and secondary school children in the OL2. In schools, one day of the week should be set aside for the use of the OL2 only. This will give the children an opportunity to express themselves in

their OL2. It will make them begin to face the realities of their future lives as Cameroonian citizens. At this level, the children are still too young to cultivate any strong political inclination to any of the languages. The children should be adequately informed and constantly reminded that French and English will be used as media of instruction at the university level.

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