



GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET

Similar Syllabuses – Different Didactics and Different Results:

*A comparative study of students learning English as a Foreign Language in
Sweden and Cameroon*

Author : **Constance Inju Tendoh**

Department : Department of Pedagogical and Curricular and Professional Studies,
University of Gothenburg, Sweden

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Supervisor : Lena Börjesson, Department of Education and Special Education,
University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg, Sweden

Examiner: Ulla Berglindh

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Abstract

This study focuses on how the syllabuses of English and didactics of English as a Foreign Language impact the performance of 13-15 year - old students in Sweden and Cameroon. The execution of English lessons was observed and the syllabuses for English of both countries were compared. Further, the teachers were given questionnaires on their educational background and teaching methods. The students' general performance in English was estimated from their performance in different language skills. I constructed a test for examining the students' performance in writing, reading, speaking and listening. In the general performance of English, the students in one Swedish school reached better results than the students in the other three schools. In the Writing test, no school had a high scoring profile but most students reached the lowest pass grade or failed. In the Reading test, the students of one school in Sweden and one in Cameroon performed better than the students of the other schools. In the Speaking test, the Swedish students performed better than the Cameroonian students. The students in one Swedish school performed better in the Listening test than the students in the other schools. There are several explanations for the differences in the performance of English between Swedish and Francophone Cameroonian students such as that the Cameroonian classes are about twice as large as the Swedish classes, the lack of resources to provide extra support for the students (e.g. internet, computers, books), and a great difference in the execution of the syllabuses. The gap that exists between the syllabus of English and its execution in some Francophone Cameroonian classrooms makes one assume that making a pass in the BEPC examination contradicts the syllabus of English for the Francophone Cameroonian Secondary school. The results suggest that there are differences between schools; nationally as well as internationally, and that it is more common that Swedish teachers follow the syllabus for English than the Cameroonian teachers do. In addition, one aspect of particular importance for Cameroon pointed out by this study is the hold of pidgin on the Cameroonian society. It makes it difficult for the Francophone Cameroonian learners of English to develop in their English competence and makes the education process difficult also for the teachers, the school administration as well as the state.

Key words: Secondary school, teaching, pedagogics, syllabus, foreign language, second language, didactics, English, Francophones, Sweden, Cameroon, comparative study.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Learning a foreign language has been a common practice for thousands of years and it is a very important part of interaction between people. It comes with some personal as well as national benefits. It is stated in the Swedish curriculum for compulsory school (LGR 11, p30) that language is the primary tool that human beings use for thinking, for communicating and for learning. Also, having knowledge in many languages give new perspectives on the world. According to Vygotski (Forsell, 2011, p164), language functions as a tool for communication both between people and among people. It serves as a link between the outer (communication) and the inner (thinking) and it is used as a tool for individual thinking. The English language has grown to become an important language in the world at large. My home country Cameroon and Sweden are no exceptions and the fact that English is learnt in both countries either as a compulsory Second Language or as a Foreign Language makes it interesting to investigate in a comparative study, the syllabuses and didactics used in teaching English in both countries. The English language has a very high status in Sweden. It is understood by almost every Swede and has facilitated communication between people especially immigrants who do not understand Swedish. In Sweden, many people confidently ask for help from strangers (drivers, shop attendants, passers-by, etc.) in English because of the status English holds in this society. According to the Swedish curriculum for Compulsory School (LGR 11, p30), the English Language surrounds us in our daily lives and it is used in areas such as politics, education as well as economy. Knowledge in English gives one the possibility to be part of different social and cultural connections and at the same time be able to have an international study and work life.

In Cameroon, despite the fact that English is a minority language used by 20 per cent of the population, it holds an important status in the society. 20 years ago, no one would speak English in governmental offices in Yaounde¹ and Douala, but today, Francophone parents do send their children to English schools so that they can learn English, which is considered as a important language on the international scene. The English language holding such a great status in both countries makes these countries suitable for a comparative study like this.

¹ Yaounde is the Capital of Cameroon while Douala is the Economic capital. They are both French speaking regions and French is the main language of communication used there.

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1.0 Historical background

Cameroon is a multilingual country with about 247 indigenous languages, one *lingua franca* (pidgin) and two official languages, French and English (Echu, 2004). Language is therefore an important part of the Cameroonian culture. Cameroon was founded in 1472 by Fernando Po, a Portuguese navigator. In 1884, it became a German protectorate but with the fall of Germany during WW1, Cameroon was divided between France and Britain. Britain got the small part of Cameroon (about 90,000 km²), which was called the Northern British Cameroon while the French got the rest of Cameroon (Echu, 2004). The French Cameroon got independence on January 1st 1960 while the British Cameroon got independence on February 11th 1960. But both countries consolidated on 1st October 1961 through the reunification of Cameroon (Echu, 2004). This explains why there are two systems of education in Cameroon as well as two official languages; English and French. In Cameroon, there are both the Anglophone² system of education that pursues the Anglo-Saxon system of education and the Francophone³ system of education that pursues the French system of Education. 80% of Cameroonians are Francophones⁴, who have French as their first language. Though English is the language of a minority group, students who pursue the French system of education in Cameroon have English as a compulsory subject in Primary and Secondary Schools and *vice versa*. This study therefore focuses partly on French-speaking Cameroonians learning English as a Second Language and on Swedish students who also have English as a Foreign Language.

1.1 English: A compulsory subject in Francophone Cameroonian schools

The origin of the English language in Cameroon can be traced back in the 18th century when Cameroon came in contact with Europe and North America through trade, evangelization and colonization (Bipoupout & Nguéfo, 2011). In 1844 English was introduced by Reverend Joseph Merrick, a Jamaican missionary, in the first ever created primary school in Bimbia⁵, as a subject and as a tool for teaching other subjects (Leke, 2003). The creation of this school marked the beginning of formal education and the introduction to what Bipoupot and Nguéfo refer to as ‘the Queen’s language’ in some parts of the ‘to be

² Anglophone: English speaking

³ Francophone. French speaking

⁵Bimbia is a small village in Limbe. Limbe is situated in the South West region.

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Cameroon'⁶ (Bipoupot & Nguéfo, 2011). While English prevails in the North West and South West regions (earlier ruled by the British), French prevails in the East, which includes the North, Far North, West, South, East, Littoral and Centre regions.

As a means to encourage and promote national unity in Cameroon, linguistic centers were created in different parts of the country and the ultimate objective was to facilitate national unity by training French speaking Cameroonians to speak English and English speaking Cameroonians to speak French. French was introduced in the syllabus of Anglophone schools while English was introduced in the syllabus of Francophone schools. According to Bipoupot and Nguéfo, (2011), the goal of education in Cameroon is to train citizens in all domains (cognitive, affective and psychomotor), in order to ease their effective integration into the society and the world at large. In this regard, the National Forum on Education of 1995 emphasized that a second language be introduced in the Nursery and Primary schools (Bipoupot & Nguéfo, 2011). In 1998, English therefore became a subject on the curriculum of the Francophone students (Bipoupot & Nguéfo, 2011).

There seemed to be a great gap between what the students learn within the classroom setting and how they actually implement it in the real world, which is where the knowledge is destined to be applied. In Cameroon, English is taught to the Francophones in the Nursery level for two years, in the Primary level for six years, Secondary level for six years, High School level for three years and at the University level. Despite the long years put in learning English, 'there is much concern and dissatisfaction over the marked deficiency in the level of English used by Cameroonian children at all levels of education' (Oduşina & Ayuk, 1995, p 32),

Since the primary essence of Education is to train a child in a way that he /she can later in life integrate without problem into his society, it is important that every Cameroonian student be bilingual in English and French since Cameroon is a bilingual country. But what kinds of approaches are used in Francophone Cameroonian schools and how do methodology and the curriculum for English influence the performance of the students? This question amongst others will be answered in the course of the study.

⁶ 'the to be Cameroon' is used because the East Cameroon was separated from the West Cameroon during the 18th century and was ruled by the English while the West was under the French rule.

1.2 English: a compulsory subject in Swedish schools

The process of globalization is gradually transforming the Swedish society into a multicultural one where Foreign Language acquisition is an important part of the school curriculum. Sweden has a variety of foreign languages amongst which English is the most popular and a compulsory subject from the third grade until the ninth grade and all students studying in High School must study English at least for a year irrespective of their line of study (Skolverket 2011a).

With an increase in global trade links, overseas travel, a strong Anglo-American influence in culture and tradition, a majority of Swedes have good knowledge of English (both British and American English). According to Sundqvist (2009, p 25), English became the global language for communication between people who had different mother tongues. The role of the English Language in the world and particularly in Sweden is becoming more and more dominant as most video games are in English and today's youth spend an average of 21 hours per week on the internet (Sundqvist, 2009, p 29). While boys play video games, girls listen to music over the internet and the most popular music of our time is in English and it is about the Anglo-American culture and tradition (Sundqvist, 2009). This amongst others may explain why Swedish children may be better in some English skills such as listening and speaking. One other reason why Swedish students may perform better in certain English skills is their exposure to the language. Swedes have the opportunity to hear and speak English, not only within the school environment but also outside of the school. In this regard, one would say that out-of-class learning or extramural English as referred to by Sundqvist (2009, p 1), plays an important role in the performance and learning process of learners.

Report number 375 from Skolverket titled 'Internationella Språkstudien 2011' (Skolverket, 2012b) shows the performance of the Swedish students in an international English test, which was carried out in 14 countries in spring 2011. Students were tested in English, Spanish, French, Italian, and German. In the test, the students' skills in the different languages were placed within the Common European Framework (Council of Europe, 2001). According to the report, the Swedish students were among the top 3 groups of students. Following the report from Skolverket, one would assume that Swedish students have a good knowledge of the English Language. Does this depend on the syllabus and didactics used in Sweden? Or does it depend on other factors such as the availability of study material to facilitate the learning process? Can one have the same result as presented in the report if the same

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comparison was done with a third world country like Cameroon? Or will the differences in their syllabuses, methodologies and study environments impact the results even more differently? These questions amongst others will be answered in the course of this study.

Considering the facts mentioned above, it is evident that Swedish and Francophone Cameroonian students have English either as a second Language or as a Foreign Language. These students therefore share the task of learning English as a Second or as a Foreign Language. However, there are several differences in the learning process between these two groups of students such as; in the curriculum, pedagogics, course literature, access to technical facilities, learning materials, the general study environment and the background of the teachers. Moreover, there are differences between the students, e.g. their motivation in studying English and their accessibility to the language outside of the classroom. In Cameroon for instance, the merit value of English is rated as five times higher than that of some other subjects (for Anglophone⁷ students) and as three times higher than other subjects (for the Francophone students), e.g. German and Physical Education. Such a large difference in the merit values between English and other subjects is not found in the Swedish system. *Can such a difference in the value of the subjects influence the performance of the students in English?* Despite the high value placed on English, Francophone Cameroonian students in some parts of the country still perform poorly in English education' (Odusina & Ayuk, 1995).

According to one of the teachers from the schools I visited for this study, the students are motivated, they attend classes but yet they do not perform as expected. One wonders if their poor performance is as a result of the didactics used by their teachers in teaching English. Many teachers depend most of the time on the course books (from my observations). The students do not do communicative learning, which permits them to interact with other classmates using the target language. The teacher, most of the time, is the only model for the students and therefore, it is difficult for the students to use what they learn in class in real-life situations. The school does not give the students the possibility to find their own learning styles that they are comfortable with as individuals. The teacher stands in front of the classroom, he/she decides the theme of the day, he/she decides how the students shall work and it is the same lesson plan for all the students and most of the time it is the teacher who does the majority of the talking in class. Tornberg (2009, p 20) holds that teaching has to be meaningful and for that to happen, the students shall take part in the planning of the lesson,

⁷ Anglophone is a term used to refer to English speaking Cameroonians, that is, Cameroonians from the two English regions (South West and North West).

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that is, the planning of the problem that they shall solve. People develop in different ways; some students are slow learners while others are fast learners; therefore it is important that the teacher takes this into consideration when preparing lessons for his/her students. The teacher's responsibility is to direct and help the student in finding his/ her own learning strategies that will facilitate his/her learning process (Tornberg, 2009).

1.3 Aims and research questions

Similar syllabuses but different teaching methodologies produce different results. How significant are the consequences of these forms of didactics on students learning English as a second or foreign language? This study focuses on the salient question of the acquisition of knowledge, which constitutes the Second and or Foreign Language of both Francophone Cameroonian and Swedish students. The general aim of the study is to investigate two forms of didactics used in two different countries and their consequences on the performance of the students in the different language skills (writing, reading, listening and speaking). From the main idea that different didactics produce different results stemmed the following research questions, which will be examined during the study:

- (i) *How do the syllabuses of English in Sweden and Cameroon impact the didactics in some classrooms in Sweden and Cameroon?*
- (ii) *Are there differences in the knowledge of English between Francophone Cameroonian students in two groups in Compulsory School and Swedish students in two groups in Compulsory School?*

Considering the questions that this study aims at answering, it will be interesting to see how different teaching methodologies, the syllabuses and other factors can influence the performance of the students. There has been previous research on methodology and students' performance and on how input out of school can influence the performance of students in English. Examples include Richards & Rodgers (2001) *Approaches and Methods in Language Training*, (Tonzock, 2006). "An Investigation into Classroom Methodology and its Effects on the Participation and Understanding of EFL Learners in some Secondary Schools in Yaounde, Djieuga (2008). "The Attitudes of Some Francophone Secondary School Students Towards English, etc. This study is a little special and different because it does not only investigate the didactics used in teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language in two countries by four different groups of students, it also compares the syllabuses of English stipulated by the Board of Education in both Cameroon and Sweden. The study also investigates how these

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syllabuses are practiced in the classroom. The study is limited to Francophone Cameroonian students in two groups in Compulsory School (Upper Secondary School) and Swedish students in two groups in compulsory school.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The learning theory used for this study is Vygotski's sociocultural approach to learning, which holds that the process of social interaction are appropriated and transformed into individual tools of thinking and problem solving (Forsell, 2011). Both the syllabuses of English in Sweden and Cameroon seem to have their bases from this learning theory, which holds much regard for the communicative functional perspective of learning. With this approach, teaching incorporates real life situations that necessitate communication. The teacher makes use of situations that the learners may encounter in their everyday life and this makes learning interesting (Tornberg, 2009, p 21). Since real life experiences change all the time, teachers should be prepared to vary their teaching methodologies to make them interesting for the students and to suit the changes of the society (Skolverket, 2012b)

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), which was published by the council of Europe in 2001, strives for the communicative approach to language learning. With this approach, greater emphasis is placed on the learner's productive skills and innovative assessment models (Council of Europe, 2001). The CEFR is a framework, which is used as a model for language teaching and for testing Foreign Language skills in many countries including Sweden. This framework describes the ability of language learners in terms of speaking, writing, reading and listening at six levels (Council of Europe, 2001). The communicative approach to language learning is student-centered and according to the CEFR, it is the responsibility of the teacher to make sure that learners achieve an ability to communicate, which goes beyond simple linguistic capacity (Council of Europe, 2001).

With the communicative functional approach the learner's motivation to learn depends on his/her desire to communicate in meaningful ways and about meaningful things and it is the learner who does most of the talking in the classroom (Skolverket, 2012b). The learners become autonomous and take responsibility of their learning (Tornberg, 2011, p94). The learners take part in setting the learning goals, the planning and even the execution of learning activities. With this kind of responsibility put on the learners, they become more responsible in managing their learning and they also gain self-confidence in using the target language

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(Tornberg, 2011). The teacher in a communicative classroom plays the role of a mentor, a supervisor who helps to stimulate the learner when he comes to what Vygotski refers to as the learner's 'zone of proximal development'⁸ (ZPD). The teacher also creates a learning environment where the learner will be autonomous and build up his/her self-confidence, therefore, the teacher provides the learners with cooperative learning exercises that will permit less competent learners to develop with the support of competent or skillful peers (Tornberg, 2011). The communicative learning theory is suitable for this study because it facilitates the comparison of the teaching methods of English in both countries.

2.0 Key Concepts

2.0.1 Second Language acquisition

Second Language acquisition is the main concept used in the study and as defined by (Sundqvist, 2009), it is the learning of another language after the first language is already established. Learning a second language is very popular in many countries because it facilitates communication with the outside world. Most especially, Second Language acquisition comes with some personal benefits, which have been mentioned in the introduction. According to Krashen (Schütz, 2007), language acquisition 'does not require extensive use of conscious grammatical rules, and does not require tedious drill.' In his theory of second language acquisition, Krashen holds that 'acquisition requires meaningful interaction in the target language – natural communication – which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding (Schütz, 2007).

2.0.2 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL)

According to Nordquist (2012), English as foreign Language (EFL) is a 'traditional term for the study of the English Language by non-native speakers in countries where English is generally not a local medium of communication. On the other hand, English as a Second Language is 'a traditional term for the use or study of the English Language by non-native speakers in an English-speaking environment (Nordquist, 2012). Such an environment includes countries where English is the mother tongue or an environment where English has an established role, e.g. Nigeria (Nordquist, 2012).

⁸ Zone of proximal development is 'the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers' (Forsell, 2011, p167).

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In Sweden, the English language is learnt as a Foreign Language just like German, Spanish and French. The fact that the Swedish society is surrounded by much English (in music, games, in the media, etc.) makes the language more or less a Second Language. Anyone who comes to Sweden for the first time would think that English is the Second Language of the Swedish people.

Cameroon being a French- English bilingual country makes English to be learnt by the Francophones as a Second language. Nevertheless, English is not widely used in all the ten regions of Cameroon; therefore, teachers of English are expected to search for and to provide English models for the students. While teachers of EFL must provide English models for their students, teachers of ESL base their teaching on the premise that English is the language of the community and the school, therefore, students have access to English models (Nordquist, 2012). Many a time people use EFL and ESL interchangeably. In this study, EFL will be referred to most of the time because the Swedish students and the Francophone Cameroonian students have the task of learning English either as a foreign or as a second language. Even though English is more or less a Second Language for the Francophone Cameroonian students, the syllabus and teaching methodology make it more or less a Foreign Language.

Nordquist (2012) holds that the ESL and EFL instructional approaches differ in significant ways. ESL is based on the premise that English is the language of the society and the school, and therefore, it is assumed that students have access to English models (Nordquist, 2012). An example of countries where English is learned as a Second Language is Australia. EFL is usually learned in environments where the language of the community and the school is not English (for example India). In such an environment, the EFL teachers have the responsibility of finding and providing English models for their students. It is usually assumed that EFL students are not surrounded by English and therefore need the help of the teachers to provide them with English models.

According to Krashen (Schütz, 2007), the best methods for teaching a Foreign and or a Second Language are those methods that provide ‘comprehensible input in low anxiety situations, containing messages that students really want to hear. These methods do not force early production in the foreign language, but allow students to produce when they are ‘ready’, recognizing that improvement comes from supplying communicative and comprehensible input, and not from forcing and correcting production’. Following Krashen’s theory, the communicative approach of learning is what is required for language teaching. In his theory, Krashen distinguishes two independent systems of foreign language performance; the learned system and the acquired system. From his definition, the acquired system is ‘the

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product of a subconscious process. It requires meaningful interaction in the target language – natural communication – in which speakers are concentrated not in the form of their utterances, but in the communicative act’ (Schütz, 2007). The learned system is ‘the product of formal instruction and it comprises a conscious process which results in conscious knowledge about the language, for example knowledge of grammar rules’ (Schütz, 2007). One would describe the system used in teaching English to the Francophone Cameroonian students as the learned system. According to Krashen (in Schütz, 2007) the learned system is less important than the acquired system. He holds that the role of conscious learning is limited in Second and Foreign Language learning.

Foreign Language acquisition has become an important aspect in the human society today and many countries do encourage their citizens to learn a second language or a foreign language. It is part of many school curriculums and even though the syllabuses and methods of teaching may vary, students do understand the value or benefits that come with learning another language either as a Foreign Language or as a Second Language.

The Common European Framework of Reference is one very important document that sets international standards for Second and Foreign Language teaching. The Swedish curriculum and syllabus for English is formulated following the CEFR and is based on the communicative approach to learning (Skolverket, LGR 2011). The Framework promotes methods of modern language teaching, which strengthens independence of thought, judgment and action, combined social skills and responsibility (Council of Europe, 2001). This framework in all details gives the different skills that language teaching shall cover and evaluate (Tornberg, 2009). The communicative skill, which is more visible in oral interaction, is one very important skill of the communicative –based approach of language teaching (Tornberg, 2009, p56). In such an approach, the teacher helps the student to find his own way and the school shall be a place for testing different exercises (Tornberg, 2009), not a place where the teacher stands in front of the classroom and talks while the students sit down quietly and listen to the teacher while he talks.

2.1 The syllabuses of English in Sweden and Cameroon

According to Nkwetisama (2012), the syllabus of English for Francophone General Secondary schools points out some very important issues which include ‘the socially appropriate and communicative use of language, the linguistic and general structure which include the social roles that the learners are called upon to play, the language functions and

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notions that are indispensable for the proper mastery of language, the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills; the grammatical, lexical and pronunciation skills as well as the thinking skills’.

Considering the syllabuses of English in both countries, one common thing one draws from them is the communicative aspect of language teaching. The theory of language teaching that has therefore been adopted by these syllabuses is based on the idea that learning is intended for communication among speakers in different social contexts. According to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), with the use of language, the learners do things and get things done in different situations (Council of Europe, 2001). The learners therefore become active actors of the learning process (Tornberg, 2009, p20). The learners are expected to develop skills and strategies of learning that will suit them as individuals. As a result, the teacher plays the role of a mentor and an organizer who monitors the strengths and weaknesses of the students so as to ensure the occurrence of effective learning. In monitoring the learners, the teacher provides learning tasks and organizes them in an interesting and satisfactory manner to enable the learners to derive the ultimate best from the lessons (Council of Europe, 2001).

The core areas of the syllabus of English for the Swedish Compulsory School are; reception (reading and listening), production and interaction [speaking, writing and discussion] (LGR 2011, p35). The core areas of the syllabus of English for Francophone General Secondary Schools in Cameroon are reception [reading and listening], production and interaction (speaking, writing and discussion). Even though both syllabuses present similar things, the difference is the extent to which what is stated on the syllabuses is implemented in the classroom world. One remarkable difference in the implementation of the syllabus in Cameroonian schools is the learning of grammar. Though not clearly stated on the syllabus that the English grammar should be taught, teaching grammar is a vital part of English lessons in Francophone Cameroonian schools. In the schools where this study was carried out, the teachers said that grammar is taught at least twice every week, that is in every lesson, time is devoted for teaching grammar, while oral communication seem to have no place. The reason being that, the students are not tested in oral communication both during class and national exams whereas, grammar comprises 30 percent⁹ of the grades in writing. Therefore, it is more important for the teacher to spend time explaining grammatical rules in class rather than engaging the students in communicative exercises. On the contrary, grammar is not a skill that

⁹ This point will be developed more in the result section.

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is tested according to the Swedish curriculum and therefore, teachers do not spend time on the board explaining grammatical rules as they do in Cameroon. In the communicative approach of foreign language learning, the focus is on meaningful interaction in the target language (natural communication) than on the form of their utterances (Schütz, 2007). Therefore it is more important for the learner to communicate naturally in the target language even if there are grammatical errors in his/her phrases.

The Swedish curriculum for the compulsory school states that the goal of the teaching of English is to give the students the opportunity to develop their all-round communicative skills (LGR 2011, p30). The Swedish curriculum for English states that the teaching of English should help students to develop their skills in searching for, evaluating, choosing and assimilating the content of spoken language and texts from different sources. They should also be equipped to be able to use different tools for learning, understanding, being creative and for communicating. Teaching should encourage students to develop an interest in languages and culture, and convey the benefits of language skills and knowledge. (LGR 2011, p32, English version).

2.2. Teaching methodologies in Sweden and Cameroon

In Sweden, the Communicative language teaching (henceforth CLT) is the most common teaching method used. This method makes use of real-life situations that necessitates communication and it enables the learner to communicate effectively and appropriately in the various situations he/she would be likely to find himself/ herself in. This approach makes use of real life situations that necessitate communication (CAL¹⁰, 1993). In the CLT, the teacher sets up a situation that the students are likely to encounter in real life, for example an encounter at the train station, airport, shopping, attending a job interview, etc. With the communicative approach, students' motivation to learn depends on their desire to communicate in meaningful ways about meaningful topics and real-life stimulations change from day to day. In one of the schools in Sweden where this research was carried out, the teacher is not the only model for the students. She provides the students with different tasks and the students sit in pairs or small groups and discuss and find solutions to the tasks. Usually, the students do not have the same tasks because they are assigned depending on their individual difficulties. This means that in a class of 30 students, the teacher gives three or four different tasks to three or four different groups of students. English is taught in Sweden in a

¹⁰ Centre for Applied Linguistics

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more practical way and the students do interact and deal with practical life situations, which they will encounter throughout their lives.

Grammar is not a skill that is tested directly in the Swedish syllabus therefore Swedish teachers (with example from the two schools where this study was carried out) do not spend time in class teaching grammatical rules. According to (Tornberg, 2011 p160), the teacher should not bother so much about correcting the grammatical errors made by the students when they communicate because these errors disappear with time as the students read and become aware of using the language. The teacher should only correct errors that can bring about a misunderstanding in what the student is trying to say. This is not the same thing that happens in a Cameroonian classroom. Grammar is an important part of language learning and the type of teaching method used in the classroom is more of a structural method, which sees language as a complex of grammatical rules which are to be learned. English Language for Francophone Cameroonian Secondary School is made up of four different sections; *Section A Grammar, Section B Vocabulary, Section C Reading Comprehension and Section D Writing*. Each section is 25% of the whole exam; therefore, they have an equal value. Listening Comprehension and oral production are not skills which are tested; therefore, English teachers do not spend time providing listening and oral tasks. The irony here is that, Listening Comprehension and Oral interaction are part of the skills stated on the national school curriculum but since these skills are not tested both in national and class exams for Francophone learners of English, some teachers have turned to neglect these skills in some schools in Cameroon.

The students in the schools in Cameroon where the study was carried out have 4 hours of English every week and each class is made up of an average of 55 students. It is also the same number of hours put in studying English in the Swedish schools that participated in the study. The unique teaching aid used for teaching English as a second language in the schools in Cameroon is an English language course book and a workbook. The school does not provide the books for the students. Rather, they are expected to buy these books and a dictionary.

One of the schools has a library, which according to the teacher is rarely visited by the students. There is no internet available for the students, no electronic devices to facilitate their acquisition of the target language. According to one of the teachers of the school Cameroon 1, the school has a language lab, which is rather not used by the students may be because of its state or because of time. On the contrary, Swedish students have a variety of study aid that facilitates their learning process. Apart from the course book, the students have access to computers, internet and other devices, which help them to search for study material and get

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acquainted to the target language. Most of the work in class is done individually, that is, the teacher stands in front of the classroom and talks while the students sit quietly and listen to the teacher. They only respond to a question when the teacher asks them to do so. The communicative approach of learning, which is stated in the Cameroon national curriculum of English for Francophone Secondary Schools, is not what is actually practiced in the classroom. Nkwetisama (2012) writes that English language teaching in Cameroon is ‘a matter of teacher, talk and chalk and course books; some of which are not adapted to the learners’ needs’.

3. METHOD

Considering the research questions which this study is designed to answer, the research method used for the study is the empirical research design. One principal method used for collecting data for the study was an English proficiency test, which was written by the participants of the study (appendix 3). In addition to the proficiency test, data was also collected by means of direct and indirect observation and this data was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Direct observation is a research method where the researcher observes and records what he/she sees and experiences (behavior, activities, events, etc.) (Stukat, 2011). For this study, I did what Stukat (2011) refers to as unsystematic observation. With this kind of observation, the researcher sits at the back of the classroom and notes down what he/she sees and experiences at that moment. Before the participants wrote the proficiency test, I took one day each for visiting each group during an English lesson. My intention was to experience what actually goes on in a classroom setting rather than just going by what I was told by the teachers and students (indirect observation).

Even though this observation was not my only source of data for the study, it was quite an interesting part of it because I could get first -hand information about the classroom climate, the didactics and the liaison between the syllabus and the practical realities in the classrooms. In addition to that, I could create some kind of familiarity with the students so that my presence in the classroom during the day of the proficiency test will not scare them away. Indirect observation is when a researcher does not rely on his own observations but on the observations of others (Stukat, 2011). Indirect observation here comprises the observation of the teachers, the Head of Department, the principals of the school and the inspectors that I met in the school Cameroon 1. My discussion with some teachers, principals of some schools and

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school inspectors also served as part of data for the study. As earlier mentioned in the study, the size of the class and the lack of incentives such as salary increase are part of the problems. In order to emphasize on the benefits that the competency-based learning approach will bring to the students, the government organized a seminar for English and French Language teachers in all the schools in the region where I carried out the study. During the seminar the competency-based approach to education was discussed.

Furthermore, the teachers of English in these four schools filled in questionnaires that I prepared (see appendix 1). The questionnaires were another source of data for the study. From them, much information about the teachers' background, teaching experiences, teaching methodologies was gathered and other information that was necessary for the study.

The participants of the study came from Sweden and Cameroon. These students were between the age range of 13 and 15 and had studied English for at least for 3 years. The average number of students who wrote the proficiency test in the schools Sweden 1 and Sweden 2 was 23 students per school. The students in these schools have 4 hours of English per week and the time is distributed in two days of class. The average number of students who wrote the proficiency test in the school Cameroon 1 is 55 while in the school Cameroon 2, the average number of students who wrote the proficiency test is 43.

The above methods were relevant because they helped to provide much data for the study. With the direct observation that was used for the study, I could gather relevant information about the teaching methodologies used for teaching English in these schools. The proficiency test, which was the principal method for collecting data for the study, the students' individual knowledge of English could be evaluated. Despite the relevance of the research method used for the study, they have their shortcomings. The methods require a larger number of participants. This will mean devoting more time for the study. Also, an English proficiency test is not enough to draw conclusions about the students' general knowledge of English.

3.0 The schools

The school Cameroon 1 is a Public General Education school and has a population of over 1000 students. It is a bilingual school that has both the French and the English sections. The English section follows the Anglo-Saxon system of education while the French section follows the French system of education. While the English speaking students spend five years in secondary school, the French speaking students spend four years. Its teachers are trained

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and have a teaching diploma from either the *École Normale*¹¹ or the *École Normale Supérieure*¹².

The school Cameroon 1 is funded and run by the state. The school is also supported by the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) of the school. The school Cameroon 1 has both Secondary and High School sections for both the Anglophones and the Francophones. In addition, it has a French-English bilingual Secondary section where the students are expected to do all the school subjects in both French and English. The students in this school pay a very small amount of money as school fees and the school does not provide books, food, uniforms, etc. for the students. The students get a book list at the end of each school year. It is the responsibility of the parents to provide all school material for their children including textbooks, workbooks and notebooks. The school has rules and regulations that shall be followed and respected by the students. The English teacher of this group of students who participated in the study has a teaching diploma and teaches English and English Literature to both the Francophones and the Anglophones. The students of this school have 4 hours of English per week and the time is distributed in two days of class.

The school Cameroon 2 is a private school with less number of students as compared to the school Cameroon 1. Cameroon 2 has about 300 students and it follows strictly the French system of education. The school is privately funded. It is small and has no library, no science laboratory and no computer lab. Most of its teachers have no teaching diploma but have a teaching experience of more than two years. Just like all Francophone students in Cameroon, the students in this school are required to learn English as a Second Language. They have 4 hours of English every week and they are distributed in 2 days of class. The English teacher of this school has no teaching diploma, and has not had any formal teacher training but has a teaching experience of over 10 years. He has a Bachelor Degree in English and he teaches in more than one school. In both the schools Cameroon 1 and 2, the students have to clean their classrooms every morning. There are two class prefects in every class who are responsible for running the class in the absence of a teacher. These prefects see into it that there is order in the classrooms, that the classrooms are clean, etc. To make the job easy for them, they draw a class roster, which states when each student cleans the classroom. When a student makes noise in class in the absence of a teacher, the prefects write down the name and take the list to the disciplinary master of the school who punishes the students. The punishment may include

¹¹ *École Normale* is the Teachers Training College for Secondary school teachers. Prerequisite for the entrance to the school is the G.C.E Advanced Level Certificate.

¹² *École Normale Supérieure* is the Higher Teachers Training College for Secondary and High School teachers. Prerequisite for the entrance is a Bachelor's Degree.

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whipping the students or making them work on the school farm or even clean other areas in the school.

The school Sweden 1 is a public lower and Upper Secondary school and has about 300 students. All the classrooms in this school are digitalized and the students have individual laptops, which are provided by the city commune. The school has wireless internet, which is available for all the students. The school provides the students with all course books, workbooks, writing material, and other learning aids like dictionaries. It provides lunch for all the students and equal education for all is a prior concern for the school. Being a public school, which is funded and run by the commune, there are no school fees and all the teachers in this school are expected to be trained. The English teacher of the group of students who participated in the study is trained and has a Bachelor's Degree.

Just like the school Sweden 1, the school Sweden 2 is a communal school and is run by the commune. The school has about 500 students. In this school, there is a library, six computer labs for the six different work units in the school. The students in this school get a portable computer from the commune and they have access to wireless internet which they use during lessons. The school provides all textbooks, workbooks and other writing material for the students. In addition, the students get free lunch in school and education is free. Moreover, the students in Sweden do not wear school uniforms and all the teachers are expected to have a teaching certificate.

My selection of schools for the study was random. Originally, I had planned to have three schools in each of the countries for this study; 2 state-owned schools and 1 private school. I started the study here in Sweden by working with 2 state-owned schools with the idea that I will have to work with the third school (a private school) when I return from Cameroon. Due to time constraint I couldn't complete the study in three schools in Cameroon, so I decided to work with only 2 schools in each country in order to be effective and to meet up with time for the submission of my thesis. In Cameroon, I decided to work with one private and a state school in order to see if there will be any differences first at a national level and then at an international level. Despite the small number of participants, I decided to convert the results into percentage to facilitate the comparison between the different schools since the classes are different in size. Also, calculating the results in percentage makes it easier to get relative figures.

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3.1 Material

I prepared an English proficiency test, which comprised three skills: listening, reading, writing and speaking (appendix 3). In preparation for the proficiency test material, I considered the assessment framework of PISA¹³. With the guidelines for reading presented in PISA and the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe, 2001), I could select a reading comprehension text that suited students in both countries. This means that both the content and form of the passage were of international standard. I chose PISA and CEFR before selecting the Reading Comprehension because they also give an international guideline for suitable material for testing students in foreign language acquisition. With this I could choose a passage that is suitable for students of the age group that participated in the study.

Considering the PISA and the CEFR, which are the guidelines for International testing of language proficiency, I decided to include the following skills in the proficiency test: The writing and communicative ability of the students, the receptive¹⁴ ability of the students and the oral communicative ability of the students. In preparing the proficiency test, I had not gone into the classrooms of the Francophone Cameroonian learners of English but I considered the syllabuses of English of both countries and I considered the fact that these documents are guiding documents for every teacher. Therefore, in my expectation, the Francophone students in Cameroon as well as the students in Sweden do follow the communicative approach of education; therefore, they were considered as good samples for the comparison.

3.2 Running of the proficiency test

i. Listening Comprehension.

The listening comprehension (appendix 3D) was a 45 minutes test and it was divided into five sections. In the first section, the students listened to a dialogue between two people after which they answered 5 questions for that section. First the students were given 2 minutes to read through the first 5 questions before listening to the dialogue. After listening to the dialogue corresponding to section 1, they were given about 5 minutes to answer the 5 questions of that section. The answers were multiple choice and the students had to put a tick

¹³ PISA: Program for International Student Assessment is a system of international assessments that focuses on 15-year-olds' capabilities in reading literacy, mathematics literacy, and science literacy. PISA also includes measures of general or cross-curricular competencies such as problem solving.

¹⁴ Receptive skills: reading and listening.

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on the letter corresponding to the correct answer. After answering the questions, the students went on to the second section.

The students listened to another dialogue, which was about Christmas. Just like in the first section, they were given five minutes to answer the five questions in the second section. The same process continued in sections three and four. In section five, the students were required to listen to a short passage twice and fill in the blanks alongside as they listened to the passage.

The listening comprehension test was taken from a book titled 'Effective listening'. It is published by DC Education Publishing. The passages and dialogues were in British English and designed for students between the ages of 12 and 14 years old. The students in the two Cameroonian schools were not familiar with Listening Comprehension tasks and their teachers said that it would be difficult for the students to do the test. Even though Listening Comprehension is one of the skills which the students should learn according to the national syllabus of English for Francophone Secondary Schools, the teachers turn to neglect this skill probably because it is not tested at the BEPC¹⁵ exam. This makes one to believe that the learning is directed more towards getting a pass grade at the BEPC exam than towards gaining life - long knowledge.

Nevertheless, the teachers and students of these schools accepted to do the Listening Comprehension. There were no sockets to which to connect the radio so that the students could listen to the listening comprehension passage in these schools. In the school Cameroon 2 the listening test was moved to the next day. The socket was replaced and the students wrote the test the next morning.

During the exercise, some of the students had difficulties in understanding the speakers and they said directly that they didn't understand the speakers but with the assistance of their English teacher, the students were persuaded to stay focused and to listen to the text attentively. They did that and many of them managed to write something. The reaction of the students in the school Cameroon 2 shows that the students are not used to such listening comprehension exercises. Moreover, they are used to only one English model in school, which is the teacher. There are not much variations in their lessons and even if they have to do dictations (which they did not do), the teacher would be the only model. He would be the one to read the passage to the students. This makes it difficult for the students to communicate and understand English spoken by someone else other than their teacher.

¹⁵ BEPC means Brevet d'Études du Premier Cycle

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In the school Cameroon 1 (a government school) there were also no sockets. The Head of Department for English tried to find a classroom with sockets so that the students could move in there, but to no avail. The school authority did not provide sockets as in the first school, because it was not just the socket that was bad but the whole connection had a problem and it required much work. So we decided to suspend the listening comprehension test in that school.

In each of the four schools, I first of all read out the instructions for the listening comprehension exercise before the start of the exercise. The students were provided with writing material and they sat in such a way that they could not copy from their friends. I told them how important it was for me to have them do the test without the help of their friends. In Cameroon, the students in the school Cameroon 2 sat two persons per desk to avoid copy work. The desks were so small but the students had to manage. Usually they sit two or three per desk during normal lessons.

ii. Reading comprehension

The reading comprehension (appendix 3A) was a one hour exercise, which consisted of a passage in English and some questions to be answered after reading the passage. The passage was titled ‘dirty business’ and was a revised version of an article from ‘The Economist’, July 26, 2001. The questions were grouped in five parts. Part A consisted of 4 questions. These questions were multiple choices and each question had at least two alternatives from which the students were to cross out the correct answer. Section B was vocabulary. The students were required to match words and expressions in Column A with words and expressions in the group of words and expressions in Column B. All the words and expressions in Column A came from the text.

In part C the students were given 5 words/expressions from the passage and were asked to formulate sentences with these words/expressions using their own words. Part D was grammar. The students were required to use the prepositions [by, of, over, and to] and complete seven sentences. In part E, the students were required to reformulate three sentences in their own way. They could use the exact words in the sentences but they had to reposition the words in the sentences. The sentences came from the text and the students were to play with the words and rephrase the sentences. Running the reading comprehension test in all four schools was no problem because the students were familiar with reading comprehension tasks. But again the students in Cameroon were not familiar with such a long text. When I asked the Cameroonian teachers to give their feedback about the exercise, they said that it was an

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interesting passage, and that the questions were very good, but that the passage was a little too long for their students. The students usually get very short (three paragraph passage) for the examination. It is surprising to hear that everything that the teachers said was connected to exams and by exams what they mean most of the time is the national exam (BEPC) that the students take at the end of Secondary School (Compulsory School). This means that despite what the school curriculum and syllabus for English requires, what the students and teachers are more interested in is how the students can pass in the final exam. But the question is what happens after the exam?

In one of the schools in Cameroon, there were two blind students in the class who wanted to participate in the test. Unfortunately, it was impossible for them to participate in the reading comprehension test. I only allowed them to do the writing test. I did go an extra mile in helping these students. I didn't want to stop them from doing their test for fear that they would feel rejected because of their condition. I therefore read out the different essay topics to them and they chose the first topic; letter writing and wrote their essays using slates and stylus. Unfortunately it was impossible for me to transcribe what they wrote. I decided not to grade their work. But I listened to them read their essay and that made them to feel satisfied.

In each of the four schools, I first of all read out and explained the instructions for the Reading Comprehension exercise before the students started to write. Just as in the other sections of the test, the students in all the schools were provided with writing material and they sat in such a way that they could not copy from their friends. Some students in all four schools had difficulties in understanding some of the words in the reading comprehension text and wanted help from me and one of their teachers who was in the classroom with me. I told them that it was not allowed and that they should write what they understood. Using the dictionary was allowed in the Reading Comprehension exercise and it was quite helpful to the Swedish students who had dictionaries available in class. The Swedish students used their dictionaries during this exercise.

For the Francophone Cameroonian students, they did not have access to dictionaries. I had informed the school that the students will be required to use their dictionaries during some parts of the test and that the school should inform the students two weeks prior to the test. Surprisingly, the school did not have dictionaries for the students because the school does not provide school material like books for the students, rather it is the responsibility of every student to buy a dictionary as part of his/her tools for learning English. No student had a dictionary in class and the teachers in both schools didn't want the test to be cancelled because of that. The students were willing to continue with the test even without the

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dictionaries. I decided to go on with the test and to indicate in my report that these students did not use dictionaries as the students in Sweden did.

iii. Writing

The writing test was done in 1 hour and it consisted of 3 essay topics (appendix 3B). The first topic was guided composition (letter), the second and third topics were free composition where the students were required to write in prose. The students were required to choose one of these topics and write an essay of 150 maximum 200 words. They were given directions for writing. Most of the students finished writing before the 40th minute. In Cameroon, some students came late to class, they were like 5 minutes late and the class teacher stopped them from participating in the test. I couldn't intervene because that was part of the school rules or the teacher's rules. The students stood outside the classroom begging to come in and write the test, but that was not possible.

Before the students in the different schools started writing the test, I read out the instructions to them. During the writing exercise, I assisted some students who still had problems in grasping the essay topics. I went around those students who rose their hands up to call for help.

iv. Speaking

The students were paired up and sometimes grouped in three or four. They randomly selected two cards on which were written questions (appendix 3C). They interacted with each other and discussed the questions on the cards. They were graded on their ability to interact with each other, their ability to speak English fluently without using their first language and their ability to stimulate the conversation. Each group had to speak for about 5 minutes and they were recorded. The process of the speaking exercise was the same in all the schools both in Sweden and in Cameroon. In all the four schools, the groups for the speaking exercise were formed by the class teacher of each school and the students followed me into a quiet and empty classroom where the exercise took place. They worked one group at a time. They first of all wrote their names and codes on a sheet of paper which was later handed over to their class teacher at the end of the exercise.

The grading scale of the proficiency test was (A, B, C, F). This scaling is what is generally used in Cameroonian schools. I decided to use this scaling because I found it more convenient and easy to be understood by the students and teachers in all the four schools. The grading of the listening and reading test in all four schools was similar and each correct answer scored a point. The total score was 30 and this was converted to a grading scale of A, B, C and F. A was the best grade corresponding to the Cameroonian grade 'Excellent'. In order to have an A

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grade in listening, the student was required to score between 25 and 30 points in total in the listening exercise. The grade B is equivalent to ‘very good’ in Cameroon and in order to get a B in listening comprehension, the student shall score a total of 20 and 24.5 point. C is the last pass grade which is equivalent to ‘good’ in Cameroon. The student needed to score a total point of 15-19.5 to have a C grade. F is equivalent to Failed in Cameroon and having an F in the Listening Comprehension means that the student scored below 15. The same scaling applied to the reading comprehension.

In grading the speaking skill, I considered the grading criteria of the Common European Framework of Reference, which are coherence, fluency, accuracy, interaction, and range (Council of Europe, 2001). Amongst these criteria, the students were graded following fluency, accuracy, interaction and the students’ ability to speak English without using his/her mother tongue was all taken into consideration. The Common European Framework of Reference served as basis for me because it has a great impact in the educational policy not only of Sweden but of Cameroon as well. The students got grades between A, B, C and F depending on the criteria mentioned above.

Speaking is not a skill that is tested in the class and national examinations in Cameroon, especially in grade 9. According to the teachers the size of the Cameroonian classroom makes it very difficult to test the speaking skills of the students. Moreover, speaking is not part of the BEPC or G. C. E¹⁶ exams therefore; teachers do not focus on speaking. Nevertheless, the students in all four schools did the speaking test and they were all graded on the same scale. It is important to note that the students were graded in groups not as individuals.

The criteria for grading the writing test is in the appendix (appendix 2) and the scaling was between A, B, C and F. In Cameroon, essay writing is graded on 10 points; expression 3 points, content 3 points and accuracy 4 points. Accuracy is divided into 2 sections: Accuracy format 2 points and accuracy mechanical (the student follows all the steps required especially in topics like letter writing, invitations, etc.) 2 points. Usually the students get 3 essay topics from which they choose one to write about. Among the three essay topics, 1 of them is a guided composition (e.g. a letter, an invitation, etc.), the 2nd is a descriptive essay and the 3rd is a narrative essay. This is a little different from the Swedish system where students are graded on a scale of A – F rather than allocating points to accuracy, content and expression.

Running the proficiency test in these four schools was not as easy as I thought it would be. The students in all four schools were happy to participate in the study especially as they knew

¹⁶ G.C.E is the General Certificate of Education. It is taken at the end of secondary school and it qualifies you for High School studies. It is the Anglophone version of the BEPC exam.

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that it was anonymous. It is important to note that the test was anonymous and the students were informed two weeks before the day of the test. The students were given codes, which they used instead of their names. The school had a copy of the code and the names of the students. Therefore, it is only the school which could identify each student with his/her corresponding code. The reason is that the teachers will be able to return the scripts to the students after correction with all the feedback from me. The school Sweden 1 had codes between A1 – A30, and school Sweden 2, F1 – F30. In Cameroon, the students in school Cameroon 1 had codes ranging between B01 – B055 and in school Cameroon 2 the students had codes ranging between G1 – G55. These codes did not have any special meaning except for the fact that they differentiated the students. The test was corrected by me. In the tests, students were graded into percentage students reaching certain levels to facilitate evaluation and comparison. The scripts of the students were returned to the teachers after correction. In addition, the teachers got samples of the grading criteria for all the different parts of the test.

3.3. Limitations of the study

This study was carefully prepared but I am aware of its limitations and shortcomings. First of all the samples are small. This study was conducted in four schools with four groups of Secondary School students studying English as a Second and or Foreign Language. The population of the participants was not enough for a researcher to draw a conclusion concerning the differences in the knowledge of English between the Swedish students and the Francophone Cameroonian students. It would be better if it was conducted with more schools and more participants.

The study lasted for eight weeks, which was small. It would be better if the time was longer so that the students' speaking performance and communicative ability in normal classroom setting would have been observed and considered as part of the data for the study.

Thirdly, all the different parts of the test could not be written by students in all the schools. The Listening Comprehension was not done by one group of the participants. This made it difficult to actually do a full comparison between the students especially in the Listening Comprehension.

Also, the fact that the students in the schools in Sweden had dictionaries that they used during the Reading Comprehension exercise while the students in the schools in Cameroon had no dictionaries was not good because it gave the Swedish students some advantage over the Francophone Cameroonian students.

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In addition to these reasons, the fact that the proficiency test was conducted by me (the author of the study) makes it obvious that there is some degree of subjectivity¹⁷ as compared to if the proficiency test was conducted by examiners. If the test had been conducted by examiners, there would have been some sort of objectivity.

4. RESULTS

The results were converted first into a grading scale, which shows the score of each student except in the Speaking test, where the students got group grades. To facilitate evaluation and the comparisons between different schools I calculated the percentage of students reaching each of the four grades in the four schools.

Observing at least one English lesson in each of the four schools played an important role in the study. This is because I gathered much information during these meetings that served as part of data for the study. During my observation, I noticed a great difference in the methodologies of the two schools in Sweden and those in Cameroon. Despite the similarities in their syllabuses, the communicative approach to education, which is used by the teachers in the schools in Sweden, is not used by the teachers in the two schools in Cameroon. In Sweden, the teachers play the role of mentors. They placed the students to work in pairs/small groups, and went round the classroom to meet and supervise them. Most of the talking in these Swedish classrooms was done by the students. The students discussed with their class and group mates and did class presentations in the target language. In contrast, the teachers in the Cameroonian schools stood in front of the classroom to teach. It is like doing everything for the students and the students are not given the opportunity to develop, exchange knowledge with their peers and to test their own knowledge. The students do not sit and work in small groups as students in the Swedish schools do.

One great difference that I observed between the schools in Sweden and those in Cameroon is the disciplinary aspect. The students listened to what the teacher said and there are no objections to that. There came up a situation in the school Cameroon 2 where the teacher punched a student for disturbing in class. Since discipline was not the focus of the

¹⁷ An example of subjectivity in the study is the fact that after reading out the instructions of the writing test to the students, I still intervened and gave extra help to the students by explaining in more simple terms what was demanded from them in each of the essay topics.

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study, I have not written much about this. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy to say that corporal punishment, which is present in some Cameroonian schools, might affect the performance of the students in a negative way. It may make a student to lose his/her self-esteem and thus perform poorly in his education.

4.0 Analyses of the overall result of the proficiency test

i. Writing

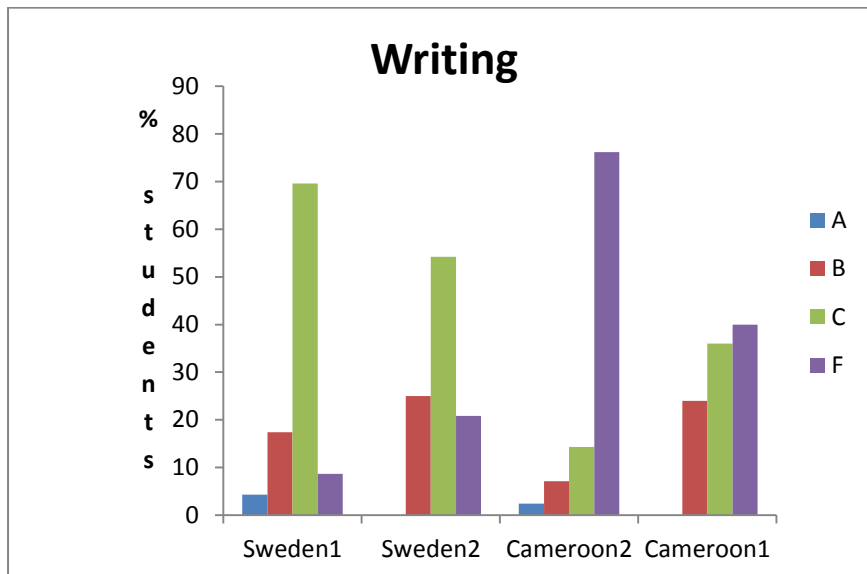


Figure 1. Percentage students reaching different grades in the Writing test in the different schools. The students were graded according to a scale where A is the highest grade, B the next highest grade, C the third grade and F is the least grade (it is a fail grade).

In the Writing test (Figure 1), no school had a high scoring profile but most students reached the lowest pass grade or failed. In the international comparison, proportionally more students from the Swedish schools passed compared to the students in Cameroon, particularly the students in the school Cameroon 2. Interestingly, in each country the students from one school performed better compared to the students in the other national school. Thus, students in Sweden 1 and in Cameroon 1 reached higher grades than in the other schools. Probably, there is a certain variation in the students' performance in Writing in a Foreign Language between schools in Sweden as in Cameroon.

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ii. Reading Comprehension

In the Reading Comprehension test (Figure 2), the students of two schools, Sweden 2 and Cameroon 1 performed better than the students of the other schools. The results suggest that the students in Cameroon 1 performed slightly better than the students of the other schools, including the school Sweden 2. Thus, the proportions of students scoring A and B were higher in the school Cameroon 1, than in the other schools. It is noteworthy that the proportions of students that failed, scoring an F, were very high in the Swedish school Sweden 1 as well as in the Cameroonian school, Cameroon 2.

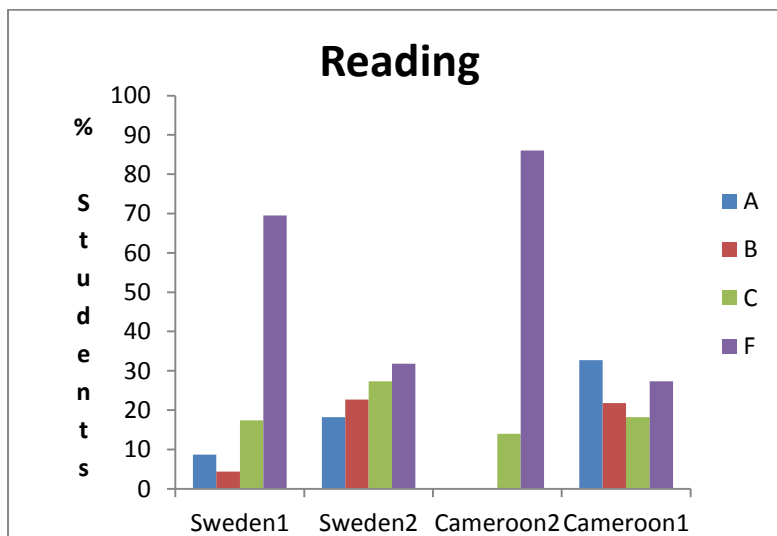


Figure 2. Percentage students reaching different grades in the Reading comprehension test in the different schools. The students were graded according to a scale where A is the highest grade, B the next highest grade, C the third grade and F is the least grade (it is a fail grade).

The score profiles of the schools show that the students in Sweden 2 and in Cameroon 1 performed more equally than the students in Sweden 1 and Cameroon 2 (Figure 2). There was a much larger variation in student scores in Sweden 1. The spread in the scores among the students in Cameroon 2 was smaller compared to the other schools (Figure 2). Mainly due to that only 25 % of the students reached a C while 75 % of the students failed.

iii. Speaking

A very interesting result appeared in The Speaking test (Figure 3) as no student failed in this test but all students reached at least a C. There was, however, a clear difference between the students of the two countries. The Swedish students performed better than the Cameroonian students in the Speaking test (Figure 3). The students in the school Sweden 2 performed best as all of them scored an A, the highest grade. In the school Sweden 1, 75 percent of the

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students scored an A while the other students, 25 percent, reached a B (Figure 3). Among the Cameroonian students, the ones from the school Cameroon 1 appeared to score better in the test compared with the students in the school Cameroon 2 (Figure 3). In the latter school, no students reached the grade A, the highest grade.

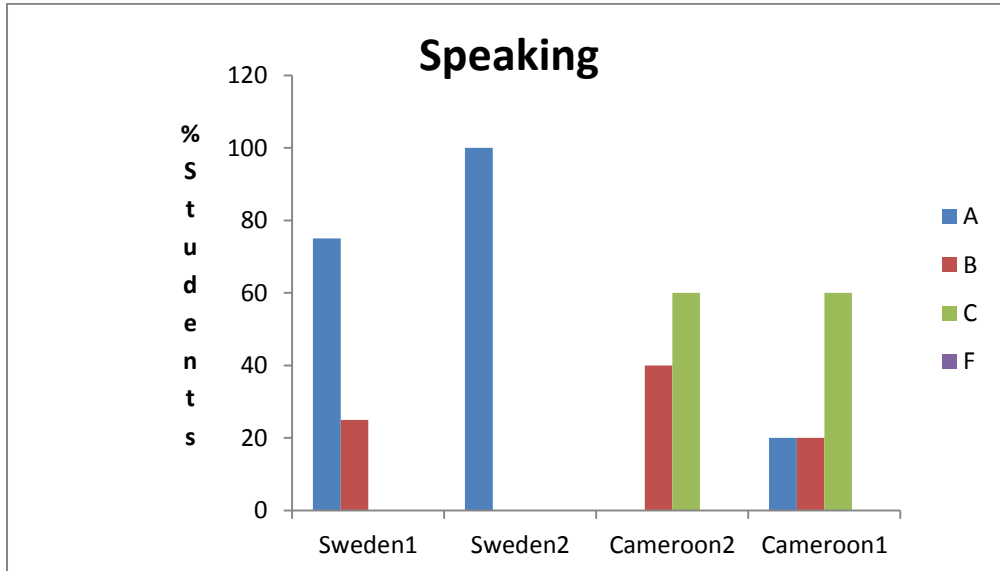


Figure 3. Percentage students reaching different grades in the Speaking test in the different schools. The students were graded according to a scale where A is the highest grade, B the next highest grade, C the third grade and F is the least grade.

iv. Listening

The listening test was not taken by the students in the school Cameroon 1; therefore the school Cameroon 1 does not feature on the Figure (4). There was a striking difference in the performance of the students in these three schools. The students in the school Sweden 2 performed better as compared to the students in the schools Sweden 1 and Cameroon 2.

52.2 % of the students in the school Sweden 2 scored an A grade in the listening test whereas only 15.8 % of the students in the school Sweden 1 scored an A grade in the same test. On the contrary, only 2.3 % of the students in the school Cameroon 2 reached an A grade in the test. Interestingly, there is a great difference in the performance of the students in the schools Sweden 2 and Sweden 1 and those in the school Cameroon 2 where 55.8 % of its students got an F in the listening test. Apparently, the percentage of students who failed in the listening test in the Swedish schools Sweden 1 and Sweden 2 is quite close.

The Head of Department in the school Cameroon 1 decided that the Listening Comprehension could not be done in the school for the fact that it was impossible to replace the socket in one of the classrooms.

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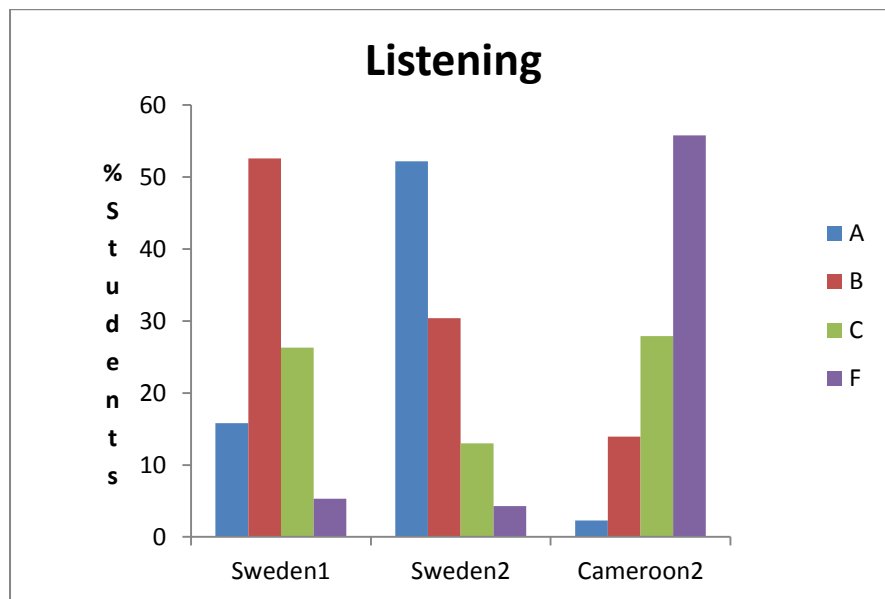


Figure 4. Percentage students reaching different grades in the listening test in the different schools. The students were graded according to a scale where A is the highest grade, B the next highest grade, C the third grade and F is the least grade.

v. General performance in English

To get an idea of the general knowledge of English, I combined the data from Writing, Speaking and Reading to estimate the General Performance in English (Figure 5). The Listening test was not included in this combined comparison because data from one school was lacking.

About 40 percent of the students in Sweden 2 scored an A in the general performance in English (Figure 5). Another 15 % of the students in that school reached a B in the combined skills. Thus, the students in Sweden 2 appear to be slightly better in English than the students in the other schools (Figure 5). Also many students both in Sweden 1 and in Cameroon 1 reached grades above C (Figure 5). In the school Sweden 1 and in Cameroon 1, respectively, there were about 45 % and 40 % of the students scoring either A and B. The students in Cameroon 2 did not perform well (Figure 5). Only 16% of the students got a grade above C (Figure 5). Perhaps, more important is that 54 % of the students failed (got an F) according to the analysis combining the different skills in English (Figure 5).

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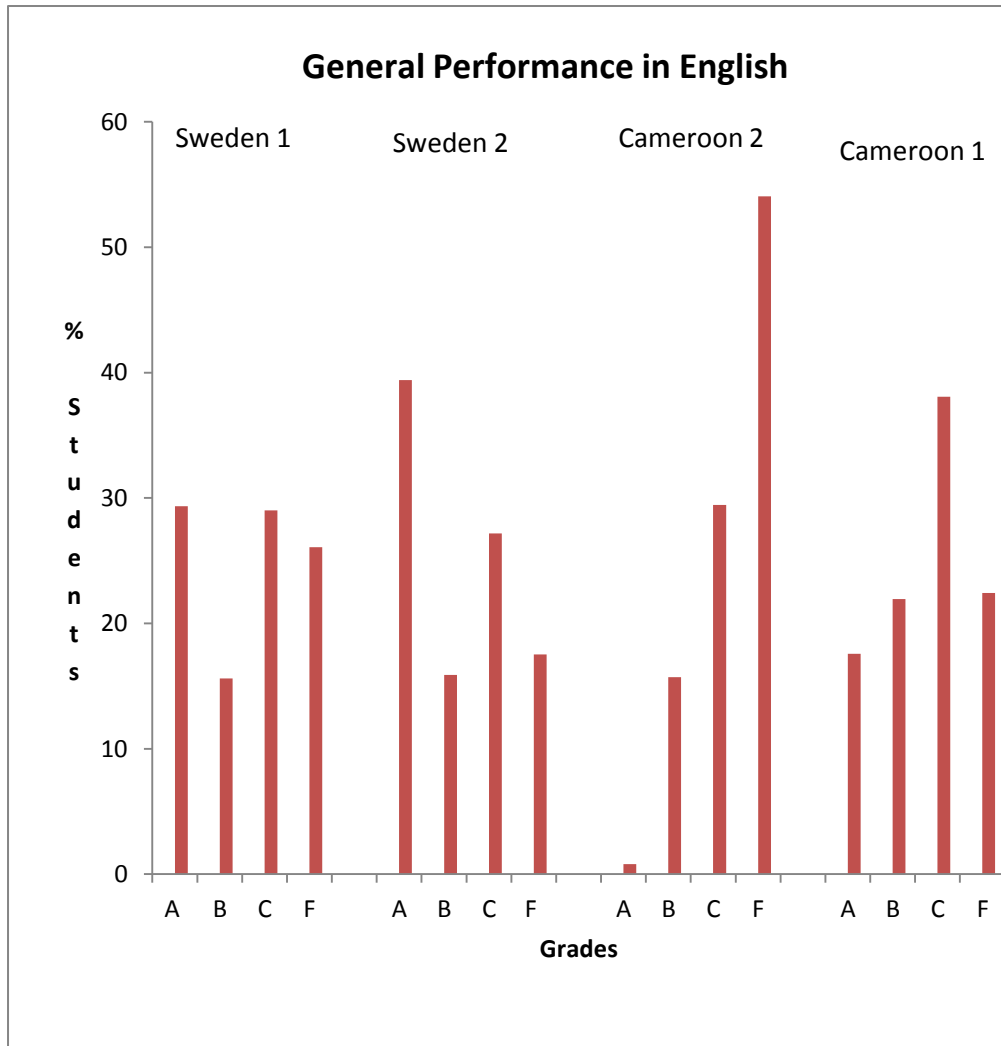


Figure 5. Percentage students reaching different grades in General Performance in English based on the combination of the results obtained in the tests of Writing, Speaking and Reading abilities. The students were graded according to a scale where A is the highest grade, B the next highest grade, C the third grade and F is the least grade.

4.1 A national comparison of the results of the proficiency test

i. Results of the schools Sweden 1 and Sweden 2

Following the results presented in Figure 6, there isn't any great difference in the performance of the students in Sweden 2 and Sweden 1. One remarkable difference is in their performance in writing where 8.7% of the students in Sweden 1 got an F as against 20.8% among students in Sweden 2. On the other hand, the students in the school Sweden 2 performed better in the listening test with 52.2% of the students scoring an A grade as against 18.8% in Sweden 1.

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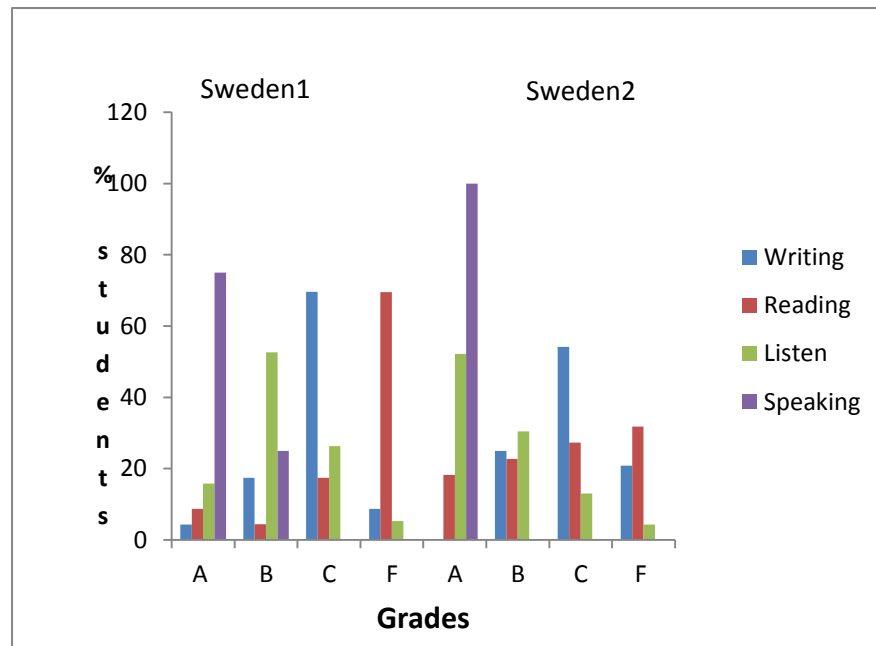


Figure 6. Percentage students reaching different grades in all four skills in the different Swedish schools. The students were graded according to a scale where A is the highest grade, B the next highest grade, C the third grade and F is the least grade.

ii. Results of the schools Cameroon 1 and Cameroon 2

Between the schools in Cameroon that participated in the study, there is a difference in performance between the students in the schools Cameroon 2 and Cameroon 1. Results show that the students in the school Cameroon 1 performed better in writing and reading (Figure 7). 76.2 % of the students in the school Cameroon 2 got an F in writing and 86 % of them got an F grade in reading. On the contrary, 24, 5 % of their peers in the school Cameroon 1 reached a B grade in writing while 21.8% of the students got a B grade in Reading. No comparison has been made in the performance of students in these two Cameroonian schools in Listening Comprehension because the students in the school Cameroon 1 could not take part in the exercise.

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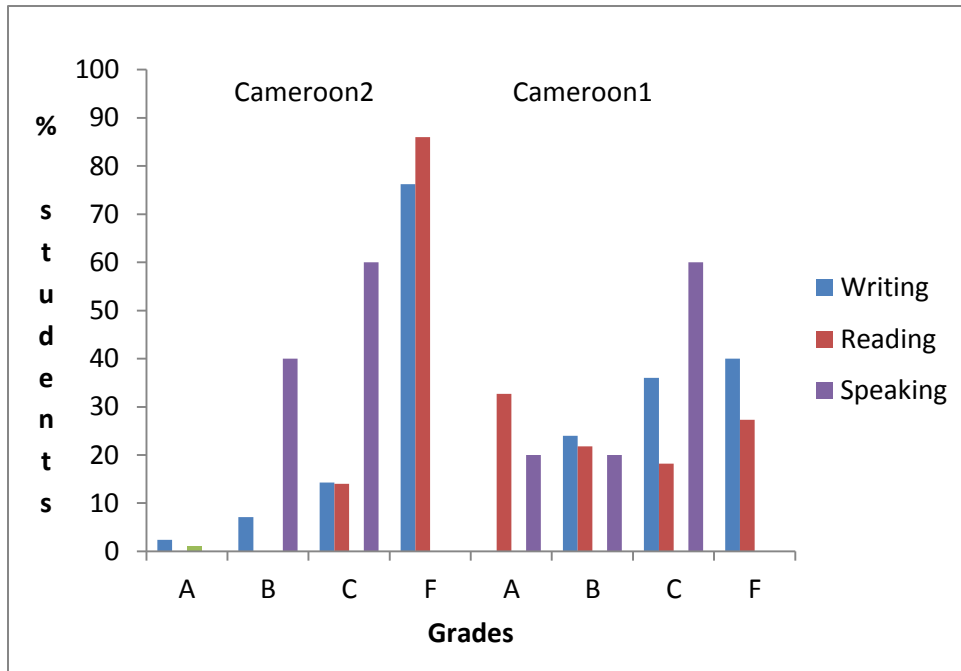


Figure 7. Percentage students reaching different grades in three skills in the different schools in Cameroon. The students were graded according to a scale where A is the highest grade, B the next highest grade, C the third grade and F is the least grade.

5. DISCUSSION

Looking at the overall general performance of the students in all four schools (Figure 5), one sees that there is a distinction in the performance of the students in the schools in Sweden and those in Cameroon. But what is more interesting is the fact that the school Sweden 2 and the school Cameroon 1 performed better in areas such as Reading Comprehension. Moreover, the students of these schools scored high in the General Performance in English. This shows that everywhere one goes, there is a probability that students in one school will perform better than their peers in another school in the same country and even when they follow the same syllabus. Further, the results, both the individual tests and the combined analysis, clearly show that the differences in language performance, in this case English, can be very small between schools in different countries, as shown by the students in Sweden 2 and in Cameroon 1. While the students in the schools Sweden 2 and Cameroon 1 are seriously competing, the school Cameroon 2 seemed to be out of place in the analysis of General Performance in English. However, in the individual tests the students in Cameroon 2 and Sweden 1 performed poorly. In contrast, the proportion of students scoring an A in the Reading Comprehension

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was higher in the school Cameroon 1 than in the other schools. Thus, the differences between students in English can be as high within a nation as it can be between nations.

It would be interesting to know how much of the students' performance in English is a reflection of the teacher's contribution, individual motivation among students and their parents as well as external support by e.g. the government to reduce class-sizes. In Cameroon, class-sizes vary between 50 – 70 students while in Sweden class-sizes usually do not exceed 35 students.

5.0 Explaining the differences in the results

One possible explanation why the students in the school Cameroon 1 have a better knowledge in English than the students in the school Cameroon 2 is that Cameroon 1 is a state school while Cameroon 2 is a private school. It is a requirement that the teachers in state owned schools in Cameroon have some training in pedagogy. This therefore gives students in state schools an advantage over students who attend private schools. Nevertheless, this cannot be a grounded reason for the poor performance of the students in the school Cameroon 2 because sometimes, students in private schools do perform better than students in some state schools. It is therefore difficult to confidently say that the fact that the school Cameroon 2 is a private school explains why its students performed poorly in the English proficiency test.

Apparently, the syllabuses of English for Sweden and for Cameroon are quite similar and one would expect the students in both countries to perform similarly well (see 2.1). But data shows that though the syllabuses are similar, the actual execution of the syllabuses in these countries is different. When I came to the school Cameroon 1, I was very fortunate to meet five inspectors from the Ministry of Education in Yaounde. Their mission was to see how teachers of the school have embraced the change in the syllabus implemented by the Ministry of Secondary Education (MINESEC)¹⁸. According to the inspectors, the Competency-based approach to education was introduced as a change in the National Education Policy, which calls for Education For All (EFA). With this approach in mind, the education system will help the learner in making learning meaningful. This approach allows the learner to develop his/her capacity to think and do things accordingly to a vision of the world that the learner will construct day by day.

¹⁸ MINESEC : Ministère des Enseignements Secondaires (Ministry of Secondary Education).

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Accepting and implementing this change in Cameroonian schools will mean that the teacher has to go from his/her traditional and old-fashioned fixed teaching techniques to a kind of flexible, learner-centered and communicative functional approach of learning, which will match international standards. This approach requires the use of different English models for language teaching. The teachers and the English course book being the only English models in these Francophone schools is already a limitation for the students. Nkwetisama (2012) clearly states that English language teaching in Cameroon is a matter of teacher, chalk and course book.

The inspectors gave three reasons why some teachers were reluctant to follow the new approach to education (competency-based approach). The first reason was that Cameroonian schools had very large classes¹⁹, which make it difficult for a teacher to focus on the construction and development of every learner's knowledge. Secondly, such a change in the education policy does not come with any financial benefits for the teachers. Therefore, teachers would prefer to continue with their old-fashioned every day teaching techniques. In addition, Cameroonian schools lack the resources to support students in this kind of approach (competency-based approach). For example, there is no internet available for the students in Cameroonian schools, and the students have to pay for their own books and other writing material. There is the probability that not all parents can afford for all the material required by the school and therefore some students will not have the textbooks that they need to find useful information for their studies. A clear example that I witnessed was the lack of English dictionaries in the classrooms. None of the students had an English or an English/French dictionary in a language class. There were no dictionaries provided by the school in class. This does not facilitate the learning process because instead of searching for the meaning of a word themselves from the dictionary (this is part of the learning process), the students will only turn to the teacher for help. The teacher becomes some kind of mobile dictionary for about 60 students in one class. What happens if every student needs help with one word and the teacher has to attend to two groups (120 students) per day? The teacher will have no option other than avoiding challenging exercises.

¹⁹ Some schools have up to 70 students per class. Despite the size of the class, there is only one class master (mentor).

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5.1 The national curriculum for English versus the syllabus of English for the BEPC Examination.

One of the reasons that explain the difference in the general performance of English between the Swedish students and the Francophone Cameroonian students who participated in the study is the disconnection between the national curriculum for English and the syllabus of English for the BEPC examination. The fact that the listening and speaking skills of the Francophone students are not tested at the BEPC examination makes some teachers not to teach these skills in school. As a result, the Francophone Cameroonian students will not perform as good as the Swedish students in the listening and speaking skills. The Ministry of Education needs to see into it that the students are tested in all the areas of English stipulated in the syllabus. The syllabus is written by the Ministry of Education and it is the Ministry that is responsible for the running of the exams. Unfortunately, results of the study show that the BEPC examination syllabus seems to decide the methodology in the some Francophone classrooms. According to one of the teachers in the school Cameroon 2, he does not need to spend time teaching the students things that they will not be tested on (by this he meant listening comprehension and oral interaction). It is very important for private schools in Cameroon to get good results at the national exams like the BEPC because this is what determines their success. If a private school does not get good results at the national exams, students will not attend the school and since it is not government funded, the school will eventually go bankrupt. Sometimes, teachers who do not get many students to pass in the BEPC exam run the risk of losing their jobs. This therefore explains why this teacher thinks that it is more important for him to focus on what will be tested in the exam and secure a good result in the BEPC rather than working to achieve life-long knowledge even though that is what the student needs.

On the contrary, the national exam (national test) in Sweden is what shows that the teachers have actually followed the guidelines given by the Swedish National Agency for Education; Skolverket (Skolverket, 2011a). The national test in Sweden is not done in all the school subjects but in Cameroon it is not the case. It is the national test that determines whether the student goes to the next level or not. If a student fails in the national test, he / she will have to repeat the class. There are no second chances during the same year because the examination takes place only once every year. Therefore, one can clearly see why some teachers in Cameroon put more effort into preparing the students to pass in the National Exams than working with them for gaining life-long knowledge.

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Cameroon, being a French-English bilingual country, one would expect Francophone Cameroonian students to perform very well in English. This is because; it is easy to believe that this group of students has more exposure to English than the Swedish students. Unfortunately, this is not the case. In Cameroon, English is a minority language and is spoken by just 20 percent of the population (Echu, 2004). This means that the country is dominated by French-speaking Cameroonians. Many TV programs and movies are in French and this makes it even more difficult for French learners of English. Francophone parents who want their children to learn English send their children to English (Anglo-Saxon) schools where they can learn English.

In another classroom observation, the teacher spent time explaining to the students how their essays shall be graded in the BEPC exam and told them that if they clearly and correctly write out the address of the sender (that is if they choose letter writing where the name and address of the sender is usually provided), they get three points. If they begin the letter with the normal ‘Dear sir’ (for official letters) or ‘Dear friend’ (for friendly letters), they get another three points, and if they conclude the letter by writing ‘yours sincerely’ (for official letters) or ‘Your friend ...’(for friendly letters and using the name provided by the examination board) they get another three points. They get already 9 points out of 13 without writing anything in the body of the letter which is four points. The teacher continued saying that if the students managed to write something that makes sense, that is something related to the object of the letter then he gets a few points if his grammar is not good. Telling these things to the students already shows that what they spend time doing in school is not to gain life-long knowledge; knowledge that will live with them, knowledge that will serve them later in life, but rather they spend time just to get a pass grade and move on to the next class. I think the whole view of examination should be reviewed in these schools and teachers should encourage students to learn to acquire life-long knowledge and not just knowledge for examination purposes.

Talking about gaining knowledge for examination purposes, it was very clear when I read through the papers of the students who participated in the study. Amongst all the students, Cameroonian as well as Swedish, who chose the first essay topic which was letter writing, the francophone Cameroonian students were very careful with the form. The presentation of their essays was so perfect that I questioned why not even one student from the Swedish groups presented his/her letter in such a way. The Francophone Cameroonian students who participated in the study had good presentation of their essays, but when it comes to the body

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of the essays, many of them went off topic, especially in the school Cameroon 2. Sometimes, the students even exaggerated the rule they had learnt in class by presenting a free composition topic as though they were writing a letter. This also occurred with some of the Swedish students but it was not a call for concern because very few of them did that.

5.2 Pidgin: a hindrance to the Cameroonian students

One reason why Francophone Cameroonian students have very little input of English outside of school is the wide use of pidgin²⁰ in Cameroon. Most of the time the students express themselves in a mix of pidgin and English, which is grammatically wrong. For instance, one of the students wrote '*cam and move the pot for fire*' (instead of: come and remove the pot from the fire!). Therefore, the out of class input that the Francophone learners of English get is very misleading and does not facilitate their learning of the English Language. On the other hand, the Swedish students are more exposed to English than the francophone Cameroonian students and they do not have such a lingua franca like pidgin that has a hold on the people. Therefore if a swede wants to speak to someone who does not understand Swedish, he will speak English not pidgin as the case in Cameroon. Pidgin is a kind of unifying language that everyone in Cameroon understands. Educated parents try hard to avoid their children from using pidgin at home, but this doesn't stop them from learning the language because they will hear it from friends in school, media, comedy shows, in the markets, shops, etc. The whole society is surrounded by pidgin and people just can't avoid it in Cameroon.

The Swedish students have access to the Internet where they have the possibility to download games, films, music and to chat with friends in English. As earlier mentioned in the historical background, research shows that 39 per cent of swedes use English every day (Sundqvist, 2009). Swedish students are more acquainted to the internet than Cameroonian students and most of the sites they visit online are in English. Many Swedish television channels show movies in English and as the society is constantly increasing its immigrant population, English is almost becoming a national language as it is the common language that non- Swedes use to facilitate communication. There is therefore no doubt that Swedish students will have a better ability to communicate in English especially oral communication, than the Francophone Cameroonian students in the schools where the study was carried out.

²⁰ Pidgin is a lingua-franca which is widely used in Cameroon in all the ten regions of the country. It is a kind of unifying language which is spoken by almost everyone and that has influenced the performance of the francophone learners of English.

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Looking at the results of the speaking part of the proficiency test, it is clear that students in the schools in Sweden that participated in the study performed better than the students in the schools in Cameroon. Even though no student in all four schools had a Fail grade in the speaking exercise, there was an outstanding difference in their capacities. Considering the different types of errors made by the students, it is clear that first language influence play an important role on second language acquisition. By first language I mean the learner's language that he/she learnt as an infant. It was interesting to see that in the speaking as well as in the writing exercise, students from the two schools in Sweden made similar errors.

Some common problems that occurred on the papers of the Swedish students were their use of the letter 'w' for 'v'. Instead of writing 'very', many students wrote '*wery*' and how they constantly misspelt the word 'who' [hwo]. Also, they misused relative pronouns like who/which, for example: '*another dish who is famous in Sweden...*' In the speaking exercise, the Swedish students made sentences such as '*my parents was married then*' '*grand-ma have a big house*', '*he were there with us*'

These errors made by the Cameroonian group of students differed quite much. Some of the errors made by these students are: '*... give for your customer*', '*I think that all your customers should happy*', '*You turn the soup until it done*'

From the errors made by the Francophone Cameroonian students and the Swedish students who participated in the study, it was clear that the Swedish students had more problems with the English grammar than the Francophone Cameroonian students. An explanation to this may be that Cameroonian students take time to learn grammatical rules, which they try to apply when writing an essay. But they have more serious problems when it comes to speaking. Some of the students in this group found it very difficult to speak continuously in good English for 1 minute. This is because they have to first of all think for a while and even make unnecessary pauses when they speak for fear to make a poorly constructed sentence. In that case, some of them couldn't finish their sentences, or completed their sentences in a blend of French and pidgin²¹ most of the time.

The errors made by the Swedish students are simple errors that can be corrected with time and constant exposure and usage of the target language. On the other hand, the Francophone Cameroonian students face a more serious situation because they have very little exposure to

²¹ Pidgin is a lingua franca used all over Cameroon. One can say that it is the most popular language in spoken as it is spoken and understood by almost every Cameroonian.

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the target language, their constant exposure and use of pidgin interferes seriously with their acquisition of English, the methodology used by some of the teachers and the lack of adequate resources all place these students in a difficult position to acquire English as a Second Language.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The results of the study affirm the idea that similar syllabuses with different teaching methodologies produce different results. The syllabuses for English in both Sweden and Cameroon seem to get their roots from the sociocultural theory of learning which emphasizes the competency – based approach to education. Nevertheless, while the methodology in English as a Second Language is the communicative functional approach, some teachers in Cameroon rely on the traditional approach.

Despite the similarities in the syllabuses, data shows that the execution of the syllabuses in Sweden and Cameroon is no doubt one of the reasons why the Swedish participants have better skills in oral interaction than the Francophone Cameroonian participants. The differences which exist in the general knowledge of English between the Swedish students and the Francophone Cameroonian students can be explained by the fact that the Cameroonian classes are about twice as large as the Swedish classes. The size of the classes and resource difference are good reasons for this difference in competence. With about 50 – 60 students in a classroom, the teacher finds it difficult to support and follow-up the individual development of the students. Also, the lack of resources to provide extra support for the students (e.g. internet in the classroom, individual computers, books, etc.) makes it difficult for the teacher to give challenging tasks to the students. With such tasks the students will be required to work in small groups, search for information on the internet, in books and from other sources to solve problems and present their work to their peers in class presentations, role play, debates, etc. These are all learning techniques that make the learner to voluntarily use the target language in discussions with their peers. The inability to execute such communicative learning techniques is a shortcoming for the Francophone Cameroonian learners of English.

The gap that exists between the syllabus of English and its actual execution in the Francophone Cameroonian classroom (in the schools which participated in the study), makes

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one to assume that the BEPC examination syllabus contradicts the syllabus of English for Francophone Cameroonian Secondary school as stipulated by the Ministry of Secondary Education. The fact that the Francophone Cameroonian learners do not have Listening and Speaking as part of their English test at the BEPC examination makes some teachers to avoid teaching these skills. From the discussion I had with some of the teachers of the schools in Cameroon, it is evident that these teachers understand that the skills of Listening and Speaking are very important competences in second Language acquisition, but due to circumstances, they cannot focus on these skills.

One aspect that the study points out is the hold that pidgin has on the Cameroonian society. This makes it very difficult for the Francophone Cameroonian learners of English to develop in their English competence. If what the students learn in class cannot be transferred or applied in their day to day life, then, what they learn in class ends within the entrance of the school. And what they learn outside of school (pidgin) cannot also be applied in the school context. Thus, the whole learning process lacks meaning. This makes the education process difficult for the students, the teachers, the school administration as well as the state who tries to implement new teaching methodology for the benefit of the students but which, as the school inspectors said seem difficult to function. As a result, both the students and the teachers will focus more on how to make a pass in the BEPC rather than gaining life-long knowledge.

In a nutshell, the results of this study suggest that the teaching practices are better in line with the syllabus of English in Sweden than in Cameroon. There, the examination syllabus for the BEPC examination impacts the didactics in some classrooms more than the national syllabus for English. As a result, there are differences in the knowledge of English between the Swedish students and the Francophone Cameroonian students.

For further research, the second part of this study will be carried out with more participants in both countries. It would be interesting to consider the participation of more private schools in order to investigate if the same difference in performance that exists between the students in the two distinct Francophone Cameroonian schools will be found in Sweden where the syllabus influences the didactics and where the National Exam (National test) is not only a reflection of students' capability but also an investigation of the teachers' actual execution of the syllabus.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire

The following is a survey for language didactics for English as a second language. I would greatly appreciate your co-operation by filling out this questionnaire. Your response to this survey will be treated as confidential therefore; you do not need to write your name on this questionnaire.

A. Background questions

1. I amyears old.
2. Nationality
3. I am a teacher in
 - a) Communal school
 - b) Private school
4. I have been teaching for years
 - a) Less than 2 years
 - b) 2-5 years
 - c) 5+ years
5. I work hours per week
6. I have a degree
 - a) Bachelor's degree
 - b) Teacher's training certificate
 - c) OtherPlease specify.....
7. How many students do you have in your class?
.....
8. How old are your students?
 - a) 14
 - b) 15
 - c) 14 and 15
 - d) Less than 14
9. What is the aim of the program (English) as prescribed by the national curriculum?
.....
.....
.....
.....
10. When do francophone students start learning English in school?
.....
11. All the students have French /Swedish as a first language?
 - a) French
 - b) Swedish
 - c) other, specify
12. What language do you usually use in class?
 - a) English
 - b) Swedish
 - c) French
 - d) Both English and Swedish
 - e) Both English and French
13. How often do your students have English per week?

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14. What are the different areas of English do you teach your students (ex. Writing, speaking, etc)

15. What are the students' attitude towards learning English

- a) Motivated
- b) Not motivated
- c) other, specify

16. How many times per week do you teach

- a) Grammar
- b) Reading and listening comprehension
- c) Writing
- d) Speaking
- e) Other

Please specify.....

17. What kind of study material do the students have?

18. What kind of teaching aid do you use? (ex. Films, music, etc)

19. What kind of input do your students get from the environment outside of school and how does that impact their performance in school?

20. Which teaching approach do you use? (ex. Communicative, task-based teaching approach, direct method (all lessons are given in the target language), etc)

21. What kind of creative activities do the students do as part of the English learning process?

22. What methods do you use when working with reading and listening comprehension?

23. What methods do you use when working with vocabulary?

24. What methods do you use for teaching grammar?

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25. How do you plan your lessons? What do you take into consideration?
.....
.....
.....
26. To what extent do your students take part in your lesson plan?
a) Very much b) Much c) Little d) Not at all
27. What kind of contribution do your students make in planning your English lessons?
.....
.....
28. Is there a library in your school?
a) Yes b) No
29. How often do your students go to the library?
a) Once every week b) daily c) other, specify

B. Test and Assessment

1. How often do you test your students?
.....
2. I inform the students before a test
a) 1- 2 month b) 1-2 weeks c) 0-1 week d) Never
3. What kind of test do you give? Please specify the number of times that the students are tested in the following skills
- i. Reading Comprehension: *how often are the students tested in this skill?*
 - ii. Listening Comprehension: *how often are the students tested in this skill?*
 - iii. Writing: *how often are the students tested in this skill?*
 - iv. Speaking: *how often are the students tested in this skill?*
 - v. Literature: *how often are the students tested in this skill?*
 - vi. Others, please specify. *How many times are the studentstested?*
3. Do you have special exams?
- a) Yes. Please specify.....
 - b) No

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4. How is the correction of a test/exam usually done?

- a) Teacher
- b) Peer assessment
- c) self-assessment

5. Do the students get feedback after every test?

a) Yes, please specify.....

b) No, why?

6. Do you usually have development talks with your students?

a) Yes.

b) No. Why?

If yes, how often?.....

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS SURVEY

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Appendix 2: Grading criteria for the writing test.

	A Grade (Excellent)	B Grade (Good)	C Grade (satisfactory)	F Grade (Failed)
GRAMMAR	<i>Free of most grammatical errors</i>	<i>Some grammatical mistakes but generally shows successful grammar usage</i>	<i>Frequent grammatical errors</i>	<i>Appropriate grammatical knowledge not displayed for current language level</i>
ORGANIZATION	<i>Essay shows clear organization with appropriate transitions</i>	<i>Essay shows good organization but may lack appropriate transitions</i>	<i>Essay lacks clear organization and appropriate transitions</i>	<i>Essay is disorganized and confusing</i>
OVERALL EFFECT	<i>A strong overall effect with clear communication and support</i>	<i>A good overall effect with some support and adequate clarity</i>	<i>Essay struggles overall and does not give a coherent message</i>	<i>Essay has a poor overall effect and does not fulfill assignment</i>

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Appendix 3: Samples of the proficiency test.

A. Reading Comprehension

Part 1: Receptive skills – Reading and Listening comprehension

A. Reading

Instructions: Read the text carefully and answer the questions which follow.

Time: 1hr

Dirty Business

The drug industry is simple and profitable. Its simplicity makes it relatively easy to organize; its profitability makes it hard to stop. But the risks of being caught and being sent to jail are high and the business is dangerous and uncertain. The Economist, July 26, 2001

Agricultural and chemical drugs

The industry makes two kinds of products. Most of its products are agricultural, but a growing sideline consists of simple chemicals. Production of farmed drugs is concentrated increasingly in two countries. About two-thirds of the world's heroin may come from Afghanistan and four-fifths of cocoa comes from Colombia. Only cannabis is produced in considerable quantities not just countries, principally Mexico, but also in rich countries. It is a tolerant crop, which can be interplanted in cornfields in Kentucky or lovingly tended in an apartment in Amsterdam. The bulkiness of cannabis, and its relatively low value, makes it a crop best grown near the market.

Tracking crops is difficult, but it is easier, thanks to spy satellites, than tracking chemicals. Nobody is sure whether the Netherlands is the world's main producer of ecstasy or merely the world's main trading center for a product made in Poland and other parts of Eastern Europe. Methamphetamines seem to be produced mainly in small factories on both sides of the Mexican-American border.

International distribution of drugs – an expensive chain

Getting drugs from the poor world to the rich requires a distribution network. The task is tougher for cocaine than for heroin, because cocaine is more frequently shipped or flown to its markets. Most heroin appears to travel overland. But this is where the big money starts to be made. The price paid to a Pakistani farmer for opium is, according to the United Nations, 90 dollars a kilo. The wholesale price in Pakistan is almost 3,000 dollars. The American wholesale price is 80,000 dollars and on the street the retail price is 290,000 dollars.

A.1. Questions

Working with the text.

Circle the correct answer

- Which of the following statements are true according to the text?
 - Agricultural and chemical drugs
 - Most drugs are made from chemical products.
 - Not only poor countries produce drugs.
 - It is easier to find the places where chemical drugs are produced than the places where agricultural

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drugs are grown.

2. *International distribution of drugs*

- a) A distribution network is extremely important
- b) It is the farmers who make the biggest profits from agricultural drugs
- c) Cocaine is generally transported overland whereas heroin is carried by plane

3. *Local distribution*

- a) Distribution within a country is very often controlled by immigrants.
- b) The final deal is often done by junkies.
- c) Dealing is not an important source of employment in poor areas of big cities.

Part 2 - Written production

Time: 1hr

Instructions: Choose one of the following topics and write an essay of about 150 words, maximum 200 words.

1. MS Olsson wants to open an international restaurant but she needs your help to write out a menu for her restaurant.

Directions for writing: Before you begin writing, think about three special dishes in your country. Write a letter to MS Olsson telling her the different dishes which are special in your country, also tell her how to prepare them.

2. Everyone has thought about what it would be like to travel through time and visit the past or the future.

Directions for writing: Before you begin writing, think about an interesting time in your life that you will like to visit or re-visit.

If you could travel back in time or into the future, which would you choose and what exact period of time would you like to experience? Use specific reasons and examples to support your choice.

B. Speaking

Describe the person/persons in your family who you most admire.

You should say:

what his/her/their relationship is to you

what they have done in their life

what they do now

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and explain why you admire them so much.

If you could change one thing about your past, what would it be?

C. Listening Comprehension

Time: 45 minutes

Question sheet

A. Listen to the sentences and choose the correct words that you hear. (total 5 points)

- () 1. A. Parking cars B. Playing cards C. Paying coins
- () 2. A. Take a bus B. Take baths C. Take a shower
- () 3. A. Match B. Math C. Teaches