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Collaborative and Multidisciplinary Research in Africa

Journal Information and List of Contributors

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(A Multidisciplinary Peer Reviewed Journal Dedicated to Scientific Research within the Commonwealth)

Volume 7, Number 2
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Editors
Kizitus Mpoche
Balasubramanyam Chandramohan

Journal of CJSC

Cameroon Journal of Studies in the Commonwealth (CJSC)

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(Submission) Guidelines to Authors

Cameroon Journal of Studies in the Commonwealth ((*CJSC*) is a multidisciplinary peer reviewed journal dedicated to publishing original scientific work relating to issues in the Commonwealth. The journal invites submissions of original manuscripts on a full range of topics related to the Commonwealth in all disciplines. Empirical submissions of a time-sensitive nature are prioritised.

To qualify for consideration, submissions should meet the scholarship standards within the appropriate discipline. Authors are also required to produce their manuscripts in accordance with the journal's formatting and reference style. On submitting an article to *CJSC*, authors should include a statement declaring that the same article has and will not be submitted elsewhere nor has it been published or accepted for publication elsewhere. Submissions accepted for consideration will be evaluated anonymously by two reviewers. *CJSC* expects the content of all manuscripts to be original.

Articles should include the title of the paper, the author's full name, current affiliation, and a short biography (100 words or less), an abstract of 200-300 words, and a correspondence email address. This information should appear on the first sheet of the article. Receipt of all submissions will be acknowledged by e-mail. Articles (4000-8000) words should be submitted in MSWord as email attachments to journalcommonwealth@ymail.com   Manuscripts should be typed in Times New Roman 12-point font, with 1.5 line spacing. Quotations, footnotes and examples should be in 11-point fonts. Topics 16, subtopics 14, subsubtopics 12 bold.

The final publication depends on the quality and topicality of the manuscript, the associated peer review process, thematic issues, and the number of manuscripts which have already been accepted. The journal will attempt to publish accepted manuscripts within a reasonable time span from the date of acceptance. Complicated tables and graphs may be submitted in separate files and their positions within the text clearly indicated, e.g. [insert table 1.gif here]. It is the responsibility of the author to ensure that his/her tables or graphs are user-friendly as this may cause delay to the publication of their paper. Black and white tables and graphs in .gif or .jpg format are preferred but authors with necessarily colour graphs and tables should contact the editors for advice on the production of such. Articles should be page numbered top right-hand corner continuously without any section breaks.

In-text citations: e.g.1 Sango (2010:3) claims that 'the aim of the cane is the same' today as it was yesterday. e.g.2 In Bobe's (2011) opinion, beating the child does not yield any fruits. Use single quotation marks with double quotes inside single quotes for texts up to 3 lines. Indent for texts above 3 lines. *CJSC* requires the use of footnotes inserted automatically as generated by a word processor programme such as MSWord.

Reference Style

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Contributors

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Editorial

Cameroon Journal of Studies in the Commonwealth (CJSC) from its very beginning in 2011 explored the experience of researchers on community issues affecting the lives of citizens of Commonwealth member countries. It addressed one of the main objectives of Higher Education which is outreach and development. After 13 years of existence, *CJSC* has appeared fourteen times (including this number) despite the difficulties involved, as described in the 'About' page of the journal website.
[About The Cameroon Commonwealth Journal | Cameroon Journal Of Studies in the Commonwealth](#)

Contributions to *CJSC* have often come not only from scholarship in Cameroon, but also from the rest of the Commonwealth and the world at large. It is in this respect that we have managed to underpin Collaborative Research between scholars from within the Commonwealth, for example, Nigeria, Ghana, and India, and outside such as Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Equatorial Guinee.

CJSC provides a scholarly outlet for collaboration between individuals and institutions through consistent support and publicity for a range of conferences, seminars, summer schools, feedback on research submitted for publication, and a WhatsApp Group that serves as a Community of Practice. These efforts help to foster innovative research, professional development, inclusive pedagogy, and socially impactful research. On public policy and practice, largely but not exclusively, the journal foregrounds scholarly analysis of lived experiences of woman and minority communities captured in different genres and art forms.

The authors of articles in the current issue map collaborative research across different universities in Cameroon. Coinciding with the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Samoa, 21–25 October 2024, that focuses on Freedom of Expression in one of their themes, especially at the People's Forum, multiple articles discuss matters of relevance to youths, women, and minorities.

Following recent focus on 'individual bilingualism' in Cameroon, departing from the normal practice of providing author bio and summary of article in both English and French, in this issue we include details only in the language in which the article was submitted. Readers from outside Cameroon who feel they would benefit from a translation can contact the editors via the website.

Kizitus Mpoche (Douala) and
Balasubramanyam Chandramohan (London)

Introduction

Fostering Collaborative Research in the Humanities in Africa

Fasse Mbouya Innocent & Mpoche Kizitus Nformi
University of Douala

Collaborative research activities can either be intradisciplinary (same discipline), interdisciplinary (many disciplines coming together to propose joint solutions), multidisciplinary (different disciplines proposing different solutions to the same issue) or transdisciplinary (disciplines going beyond their boundaries to integrate sources of knowledge and people outside scientific areas for collaboration) and they may involve national or multinational teams of experts. Despite the key importance of collaboration in research long established in many fields of science, the *humanities* seem to have always lagged behind, with solo research endeavours given more prominence than collaborative research undertakings. This is probably why in 2017, Burroughs made the following statement comparing happenings in vast domains of research: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), Medicine and the Humanities. This is what she said:

> While numerous studies over the past 20 years demonstrate that science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and medical research practices have become progressively more collaborative, in fact participating in a 'collaboration imperative', there have been fewer studies on collaborative practices in the humanities" (P 507).

Burroughs' words above generate a number of questions to a keen reader. Does the "humanities" as a domain of research preclude collaboration? Are there unsurmountable challenges to collaborative research in the humanities? Or is the lack of collaborative research undertakings in the humanities the result of established but unwritten practices fostering solo research endeavours and discouraging joint or team scientific undertakings? There have even been cases of colleagues being slowed down on their career progress by evaluation commissions due to dominance of co-authorship in their scientific productions.

It equally happens that some very prolific researchers in the humanities tend not to include in their CVs, articles produced in collaboration with peers or junior researchers. Single authorship seems more valuable to them than any joint production. Yet, the world is growing more and more complex and one wonders whether this complexity can be captured in its entirety by a single pair of eyes, no matter the research domain at stake.

Indeed, with the growing complexity of today's world which challenges humans with multifaceted issues, the coming together of scholars from within same disciplines or better still from across disciplines stands as the way to elaborate adequate solutions with much ease.

In this line, Bikash et al. (2019) posit that most critically important scientific issues or innovative technologies can often be solved by working together of teams of researchers from different backgrounds. The merging of different fields can make possible the

achievement of incredible goals. Collaborative research, therefore, can be defined as research involving coordination between researchers, institutions, organisations, and/or communities. This cooperation can bring distinct expertise to a project. Collaboration can be classified as voluntary, consortia, federation, affiliation, and merger.

Another powerful statement that captures the dire need of collaboration in research to tackle today world issues, is the following:

> As the world becomes increasingly complex, collaboration has become more critical. Researchers must work together to solve complex problems and make informed decisions. Collaborative research is the key to developing solutions that can have a significant impact on society (QuestionPro Experts, 2024)

Having become increasingly aware of the importance of collaborative research, a team of scholars from many state universities of Cameroon and other African universities, most of whom specialise in the humanities decided to gather under the banner of "Collaborative Research on Africa" (www.collaborativeresearchafrica.org). This was in 2017 at the University of Douala after reflections and encounters dating back in 2005 with the holding of AILA conference at the University of Yaounde I. The group which today comprises 237 members has been organising joint scientific events in the form of thematic international conferences and summer school sessions on various topics of interest to budding as well as seasoned researchers. The rationale of this research team is clearly expressed as follows:

> In an ever-changing world, where the humanities are, at best being shielded, it becomes compellingly obliging for scholars to contribute their quota in giving focus and new orientations to contemporary realities. This calls for every hand to make life better in its entirety for sustainable communities that eschew development wholly and not just fragmentarily (collaborativeresearchafrica.org).

The mission statement of the collaborative research activities of these scientists is:

- Committed to provide innovative research and professional development;
- Resolved on boosting academic achievement;
- Engaged in supportive inclusive pedagogy in an enabling environment;
- Focused on encouraging and promoting socially impactful research (www.collaborativeresearchafrica.org).

To achieve such a mission, members of this group rely on individual support after accessing their allowance for the modernisation of research based on their grades. Some of their key events have been the Summer Schools of August 2022, 2023, 2024, international conferences in March 2021 and 2022. To focus their aim, the team organised in March 2023 an international conference on "Collaborative Research on Africa" after their 2024 Conference on "Discipline, Punishment and Violence at Home and in the School Milieux" held at the University of Dschang from February 28 to March 1, 2024.

The March 2023 conference which took place at the University of Douala brought together close to 200 researchers both junior and senior, especially mentors and mentees. These researchers, most of

whom belong to the "Collaborative Research on Africa" platform presented papers in many disciplines in the humanities. Organisers intended to contribute in their own way to fostering collaborative research in the humanities. And the fruits are here to be seen. This first of 2 special volumes of the *Cameroon Journal of Studies in the Commonwealth* (CJSC) is the fruit of this initiative.

Presentations during the March 2023 conference cut across disciplines in the humanities (Linguistics, Education, Literature, Sociology, Anthropology, History). This volume of *CJSC* presents 15 articles in which 9 are co-authored thus emphasising the idea of collaborative research. The single-authored papers that appear here are retained because of their pertinence and originality.

Chieftaincy titles in Essoh-Attah Fondom is at the core of a PhD research that Linus Mbabgong is working on at the University of Buea under the supervision of Primus Fong who is an Associate professor. This interesting topic which forms the soul of the *Nweh* traditional institutions I Lebialem Division of the South West Region of Cameroon is brought to light in this paper by supervisee and supervisor to show how meritocracy in the attribution of titles has been challenged, giving way to unmerited decorations with traditional titles.

In a similar vein of supervisee-supervisor connection, Asongwe Geofrey, researching on a PhD at the University of Douala on Language Use in Conflict Management in Mundum Community pulls in his supervisors, Fasse Innocent (Associate Professor) and Kizitus Mpoche (Professor) as they jointly investigate how language use in conflict management in Mundum community in North West Cameroon either curbs conflict or flames it.

Sometimes, more than one lecturer has come together with a research student to work on a paper generally deriving from the student's PhD research. Ernesta Tendong (PhD student), Esther Chie (Associate Professor and supervisor of the candidate) at the University of Bamenda, and Mbu Martha from the University of Maroua jointly worked on Language Contact and Language Attitude in a Multilingual Setting: The Case of Some Trasimene and Premiere Students of GBHS and Lycée Mixte de Kousseri.

It investigates the effects of attitudes on the language used by secondary school students of Kousseri, a linguistically diverse locality in the Far North Region of Cameroon. It verifies the daily language habits of this group of students.

Dancing to the same tune, Mbia Bekono and Kizitus Mpoche (supervisee/supervisor) evaluate the impact of the Skill-Based and the Competence-Based Approaches on the Written Performance of Terminale A4 Students in the Northern Regions of Cameroon. This study compares students' performance in writing under the Skill-Based and the Competence-Based Approaches in language teaching and questions whether Richards and Rodgers' (2015:1) take that "Adopting the newest method will lead to better results than the previous method" holds here. The results of this research challenge the above assumption as there is no significant difference in the written production of Terminale students at the Baccalaureat

examination during the periods when the two approaches were adopted in Cameroon.

In the same light, Rigobel Obi and Eunice Fombele (supervisee/supervisor at the University of Buea) investigate Migrant Women Ontological Dis/Abilities and the Cyberspace Abilities in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Americanah. They analyse the work of art within the paradigm of cultural dis/abilities in coloniality in order to demonstrate how migrants can negotiate identity by abrogating western epistemology's forced disabilities on their being, race, gender.

In like manner, Dongmo Randy and Wanchia Titus (supervisee/supervisor) University of Buea study the difficulties which students of the School of Translators and Interpreters at that University of Buea encounter upon graduation essentially due to lack of mastery of either the source or the target language. These difficulties among others cause students not to graduate on time and make them to encounter difficulties in the job market.

Apart from drawing topics from PhD theses as is the case above, lecturers and research students at this collaborative research conference presented papers on topics of interest to both within their domain of research. This is the case of Madeleine Ndjeyiha (senior lecturer) and Jeff Kamagoua (PhD student) from the University of Yaounde I. Both find interest in language policy and extend this interest to the use of local languages and the integration of non-natives on the basis of language use, centring on the case of Medumba, a local language

spoken in the Moungo Division of the Littoral Region of Cameroon.

At times, colleagues within the same domain though at different universities come together to do research on a given topic. In some cases, we have senior and junior colleagues as is the case of Primus Fonkeng (Associate Professor at the University of Buea) and Comfort Kimah, Senior Lecturer at the University of Bamenda) who researched on The Role of Livestock in Poverty Alleviation and Wealth Creation in the Bamenda Grassfield, 1961-2016. Their paper analyses the roles livestock played in the alleviation of poverty and creation of wealth in the Bamenda Grassfield from 1961-2016.

Collaborative research draws together researchers from far and wide. We have the case of Okana Marcel who is a pedagogue and writer in secondary education who has partnered with Amadou Danlami at the University of Dschang to research on Intermediality, Identity and Culture in A. Igoni Barrett's Blackass. They are interested in how mediatic elements amplify identity and cultural crisis in *Blackass*. While identity and cultural problems are age-long concerns, its contemporary context, coupled with the digital age, have amplified the way people present themselves "frontstage" and "backstage" of everyday interaction.

The single author papers included in this volume on the bases of their currency and originality include Beyoh Dieudone's *Contribution of Secondary School Students' Attitudes towards Cooperative Learning on their Academic Performance in Mathematics in the Bamenda Municipality.* Although the concept of cooperative learning is not new, approaching it from a meta perspective and centring it on

Mathematics students in the Bamenda municipality in the North West of Cameroon gives the paper a new dimension. Still within the educational setting, Azambou Laurent discusses *The Issue of Students' Background in Interpreter Training in the Advanced School of Translators and Interpreters (ASTI) of the University of Buea.* The importance of the paper lies in the fact that it defines the profile of the ideal interpreter trainee in the context of the Advanced School or Translators and Interpreters (ASTI) of the University of Buea. It specifically examines some components of differences amongst interpreter trainees and paves the way for the training of future candidates. Recency is seen in Ethel Ngere's paper that revisits the issue of sexual harassment tertiary education with the case of the University of Buea being studied here. Jude Berinyuy's paper on *Taming the Madeness in Naming* sociolinguistically profiles the issue of identity in Cameroon as regards naming. In like manner, Veronica Dashaco's paper on *Discourse of Persuasion in Advertising in Cameroon* is original in terms of examining how an agro-food company, has been using the discourse of persuasion to create and bond with its customers for a long time. This highlights the importance of language in the economic growth of a country. Based on originality from a cultural perspective, Mathew Forka's paper on *Traditional Communication Systems in Mboland* found space in this volume. The paper elucidates the various traditional verbal and non-verbal modes of communication systems in Mbo pointing a finger at archaic tradition and recommending the revitalization of other traditions.

It is hoped that many such initiatives will take place in universities and research laboratories across Africa so that collaboration becomes the key criteria for according weight to scientific production. In this wise, seniors would mentor juniors and peers would put their intellects together for stronger scientific productivity for the benefit of Africa and the world at large.

In fact, organisers of the March 2023 collaborative research on Africa conference equally strongly believe as Bekash et al. (2019) that increased collaborations can save considerable time and money, and that, most often, breakthrough research comes through collaboration rather than adhering to tried and true methods. We wish to have sown a seed that will keep growing and that will be enjoyed beginning with the reading of this first special volume and followed by adhering to collaborative research.

Collaborative Research on Africa also led to an avant guarde, intensive and extensive interdisciplinary collaborative research project known as *The Sociolinguistic Profile and Development of Cameroon (SPDC)* which aims at establishing the current sociolinguistic profile of the country more than 44 years after the first of such a endeavour took place under the coordination of Koenig and Chia in 2008. Within the framework of this project, summer school sessions are held to prepare post-graduate students to meet the exigencies and face the challenges of a multidisciplinary research in terms of data collection, data analysis, and data conservation. This brings together participants from several public as well as private universities of Cameroon and abroad. Through this project, the seeds of collaboration are planted in Cameroon and Africa to contribute to development.

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Collaborative research in modern era: Need and challenges

Seema Bansal, Saniya Mahendiratta, Subodh Kumar, Phulen Sarma, Ajay Prakash, and Bikash Medhi; Indian J Pharmacol. 2019 May-Jun; 51(3): 137–139.

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Chieftaincy Titles in Essoh-Attah Fondom: Change and Continuity

Primus Fonkeng
Linus Mbabngong
University of Buea

Abstract

This paper examines the debate on chieftaincy titles in Essoh-Attah Fondom in Fontem Sub-Division of Lebialem Division, South West Region of Cameroon. Chieftaincy forms the soul of the *Nweh* traditional institutions. But this has been challenged, especially in Essoh-Attah with a paradigm shift from the norms and reasons for the attribution or acquisition of these titles in the Fondom, like other parts of the *Nweh* polity. This study argues that the advent of missionary activities in Essoh-Attah Fondom exacerbated the modification of title acquisition in the Fondom which affected the people and brought profound and divergent views on who should be conferred a chieftaincy title, and how chiefs should be classified in the Fondom. In fact, the debate has continued into other circles as to who should be selected in public or not during enthronement ceremonies and seating positions after the Fon. Using content analysis of views from oral tradition and written sources, the study examines how this phenomenon has impacted and transformed the development of the Essoh-Attah customs and traditional set up. This study made use of descriptive research method with a qualitative approach. Findings reveal that the traditional method of acquiring a title in Essoh-Attah has witnessed drastic modifications while the present generation influences change through modernism. The study recommends that, in spite of modifications as a result of modernism, the fundamental norms of enthronement and acquisition of traditional titles should be maintained to ensure continuity and preservation of Essoh-Attah Fondom's cultural rites.

Key Words: Chieftaincy titles, Essoh-Attah, Change, Continuity

1. Introduction

The Essoh-Attah Fondom is one of the nine Fondoms (Lewoh, Ndungatet, Nwanmetaw, Nwangong, Njenawung, M'mouck Mbin, M'mouck Ngie, Lebang, Essoh-Attah and Njogwi) that constitute the *Nweh* [1] country. These Fondoms are administratively part of the Lebialem Division, precisely in the Alou, and Fontem Sub Divisions, in the South West Region of Cameroon. Essoh-Attah, like the other eight *Nweh* polities, claim their origin from the Bamileke clan of the Western Grass Field (Danis Fomin, 1994). Yet other inhabitants of these polities are of the opinion that their ancestors migrated into Essoh-Attah from the Banyang land, Cross River State and the Mbo Clan (Njika, 2005: 2). *Nweh* refers to a language, a people and a clan, in the Bangwa country. The different origins of the people of Essoh-Attah have been used to justify their claims of autonomy and sovereignty. This therefore shapes the perceptions of the different segments of the people on chieftaincy titles in Essoh-Attah.

The centralised nature of the polity makes chieftaincy institution and it acquisition supreme in the eyes of the custodians of the tradition in this part of the *Nweh* polity. Citizens of the Essoh-Attah polity who originated from the Bamileke Grassfield believe in their traditions and in the preservation of chieftaincy institution and titles. To affirm the origin of a segment of the Essoh-Attah people, Fomin concludes that Essoh-Attah is not only a microcosm of the prestigious *Nweh* culture per sé (as distinct from the Bamileke culture from which it is purported to have emanated) but it is probably its very arche-type. Yet those who originated from the Mbo and Banyang countries with a decentralized philosophy of traditional

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[1] Nweh is language, clan and territory that harbors the Bangwa people.

administration prefer titles to be an affair of who can afford and accord less importance to the tradition. This is because they migrated as sovereign individuals but were subjugated by the founders of the Essoh-Attah polity. Also, the educated class, elite and politicians prefer that chieftaincy titles can be acquired through any means for their prestige and recognition. However, a considerable number of the population in the Fondom prefer to preserve the *Nweh* traditional values and norms and see chieftaincy titles as an important position reserved for a certain category of people. These perceptions and debates on the Essoh-Attah traditional institutions and cultures emanated from the advent of Christianity in the Fondom and had tremendous impact on the tradition and cultures of the land (Achankeng, 2006: 6).

The *Nweh* traditional polity as other centralized polities in Cameroon like Tikar, Chamba and Bamileke, were established with a concrete philosophy of governance. This governance style was and is still incarnated by their governance institutions like *fua*, *mfor* and *nfor*, which forms the executive arm of traditional administration. *Lefem*, *kwifor*, *kwifon*, *kwifyon*, *numba*, *laikam* (Ngoh, 2019: 5-13) and "*troh*" constitute the legislative arm of the traditional governance system. The judicial aspects of their traditional administration were and are still handled through the collaboration of the executive and the legislative arms of traditional administration. Decisions taken were reinforced with the use of the services of *manjong*, *takumbeng, njong,* and *nkweh*. These were war clubs used to protect the territorial integrity of their Fondoms, achieve their expansionist ambitions, and conquer other weaker territories. According to Ngolefac Constance (Ngolefac,

2017), the hierarchical structure of the Lebialem society was strictly built on various strata with defined powers and authority. This included *Fuamallah*[2] (Fon) at the helm, assisted by chiefs, *Befuallah* (provincial chiefship), who gained the title by bravery, and others by achievements and finally by *Bekemallah* (nobles). In Essoh-Attah, governance institutions were incarnated by *fuamallah* (Fon) also known as *Fuatenagwat*, *Nyatemeh*[3] (Paramount Ruler) and his cabinet, *Mafua, Nkwetta, Asaba* and *Asaha* (Executive Arm). *Troh* and *lefem* (Legislative Arm), and *manjong, nkweh* and other divinities reinforced law and order.

The executive arm of the Essoh-Attah traditional governance was a centralized system headed by the Fon and his cabinet, his chiefs (*befua*) who were also in different categories, *Bekem*[4], quarter heads and quarter councils. This organization of paramountcy was in a hierarchical form. The hierarchical philosophy preserved their various titles and positions in strict respect of cultural norms in all senses of the word, in order to make life worth living in the Fondom. The Fuamallah (*Fon*) in Essoh-Attah is an inherited title. All Fons were members of the royal family tree. But below the paramountcy position, Essoh-Attah Fondom had mechanisms for the attribution of the chieftaincy titles of *Befua* (plural of *lefua*, *fua*) and *Bekem*. The *Nweh* chieftaincy titles were very prestigious, a chief was identified from the size of his palace, but many chiefs and title holders today have just their titles and outfit as their own sign or symbol of royalty or chieftaincy.

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[2] Paramount Ruler of the "country".

[3] These are titles attributed to Faumallah (Fua, Fon,)

[4] The second category of traditional administrative hierarchy after the Fua and chiefs.

Chiefs owned and managed villages, and before an individual was made chief, he ought to have expanded the territorial boundary of his Fondom in a way, fought and subjugated invaders and established in a virgin forest far from the Fon's palace but paid allegiance to the Fon. The creation of these villages constituted what made up the Fondom and had authority over judicial matters in the territory. But nowadays, the situation and picture are far from this; for instance, the village Njub was founded by Fualemnchong at his subjugation by Fualeke Tanjoaunji. Today, this village harbors many chiefs, namely Fuanjileke, Fuatembeh, Fuankengcha, Fuatabong-Alem, Fuanzenallah and Fuache-Alem, with palaces almost facing each other. In addition, many chiefs have just their palaces and titles as visible attributes to prove who they are, with no land or territory and population. These are the modern chiefs, some of whom acquired their titles through fraudulent means, and do not respect the norms of chieftaincy titles. This article traces the origins of chieftaincy institutions, examine the adulteration of chieftaincy institutions and analyze the resilience of chieftaincy institutions in spite of numerous changes.

2. Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the Evolutionary Governance Theory (EGT) as outlined by Kristof Van Assche, Raoul Beunen and Martijn Duineveld (Van Assche et al, 2014). Evolution in EGT perspective is a process of creating and weeding out variations. It is a process of creating new variations out of older ones, of gradual emergence and hardening of structure out of flow, and of gradual transformation of that structure in continued evolution. The above-mentioned authors describe EGT as a radically evolutionary perspective since they consider everything as a product of evolution, both elements and structures, their interaction and the rules of transformation. Therefore, in governance, they consider rules (institutions), rulers (actors) and organizations (embodying roles), their interactions and their transformation roles as the result of evolution. They are difficult to comprehend without reference to evolution.

The interaction between institutions, actors and organizations led to a rapid evolution in the mode of chieftaincy attribution and acquisition in the *Nweh* country in general and Essoh-Attah Fondom in particular. This can generally be attributed to the loss of independence by the *Nweh* societies and the formation of colonial states, Fons and chiefs operated in between two determinants, political and cultural forces. *Fons* have to provide protection for their communities in order to maintain their legitimacy, but also to protect the interest of the educated and politico-administrative elites. The people's well-being and development are primordial, though not without pressure from other quarters for self-interest. Therefore, self-preservation and reservation are likely the invisible forces chiefs and Fons need to advance to preserve their inheritance, traditional values and chieftaincy titles.

Despite arguments, criticism and skepticism on their relevance, African traditional institutions still stand as those institutions with potential that can facilitate transformation and development in the continent. This theoretical framework explains the evolution, dynamics and values incarnated by traditional institutions, especially the role played by the chiefs in their various categories and ranks. The dynamics involved in the authority of chiefs and Fons in centralized or decentralized systems

determine their social position in the governance. The debates on chieftaincy titles can be better understood by analyzing the origins of chieftaincy titles in Essoh-Attah Fondom.

3. Attribution of Chieftaincy Titles in Essoh-Attah before the Advent of Missionaries

The 19th Century population movement in Cameroon saw an influx of population into the Essoh-Attah Fondom, like other *Nweh* polities, by migrants who were in search of safe havens to exercise their sovereignty. While in Essoh-Attah, these groups lost their sovereignty and were made chiefs by the Fon of Essoh-Attah, called *Befuanteh* (Bebetta, 2001: 16). They included chiefs like Fuangunji of Nkong, Fualem of Njub, Fualebiehngung of Lebiehngung who were subjugated by the paramount ruler of Essoh-Attah and lost their powers, sovereignty and population to Essoh-Attah Fondom. These chiefs were positioned by the paramount ruler at strategic positions in the Fondom after their subjugation, to occupy more territories. The next category of chiefs who emanated from the palace were appointed by the Fon after consultation with some notables to create a balance between the palace and those chiefs that migrated into the Fondom. These categories of chiefs were called *Befua*-akoh, vassals of a paramount ruler. They included Fuachanyi, Fuange Fuaka, Fuamhinleke. Some authors (Atem, 2000: 13) refer to them as Befua-*nkiangeah*.[5] who were palace children honored by Fuamallah. These chiefs had certain royal symbols like owning a village, *lefem* secret

society, *troh* secret society, *nkiangeah*[6], and were part of the *atemnjoh*[7] secret society. They were enthroned with their cabinets by the Fuamallah upon the disappearance of their fathers. The chiefs' main functions were to settle disputes in their quarters or villages and other major political, economic and social issues in their areas of jurisdiction.

After these categories of chiefs, other brave warriors who could use super natural means or powers termed *aziah* (Atem, 26-27), to protect their Fondom were given chieftaincy titles, for instance *Fuachoanya* and *Mbe Nzang*. These titles carried a message and meaning; *Fuachoanya* means "*he who sites and does not miss animals*", *Nzang* means anger in the *Nweh* Language, meaning he was noted for his outright confrontation of enemies during warfare and in handling recalcitrant citizens. The 19th Century Cameroon with its migratory movements made many communities to be hostile in a bit to protect their territories. Other chiefs emanated from their skills in the *manjong* war clubs, *nkweh* and *ku-ngang*. These secret societies were specialized in fighting and protecting the territorial integrity of Essoh-Attah. Today, *manjong, nkewh* and *ku-ngang* are dance groups with secret and mysterious performances as a vivid demonstration of their activities in the war fronts in the late 18th and early 19th Centuries (Edward Fomin, 2005: 42-52). Also, some chiefs acquired their titles from their hunting skills. Hunters specialized in the hunting of royal symbolic games like lions, tigers, and leopards, were given titles, gifts and even princesses as wives (especially bachelors) to compensate for their prowess. These animals and other games were presented to

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[5] Nkiangeah is a drum placed at the entrance of lefem in the Fua palace and the palaces of Befua-akoh.

[6] A drum used by the royal family chiefs to pass vital information through communication to other quarters or villages in the Fondom.

[7] The Supreme order of Secret Societies in the Fondom.

Fons in the *Nweh* country. Hunters who failed to present these royal games to the palace were immediately executed or were exiled from the Fondom because the act was considered a high crime against the supreme order of the polity. Fuachoanya led the execution.

Some distinguished individuals were compensated with chieftaincy titles as a result of important services rendered to the Fondom, like providing the Fondom with schools, roads, pipe born water and other services that alleviated poverty and suffering among the population of Essoh-Attah. In most cases, these titles were accorded at the discretion of *Fuamallah* and were presented to the persons concerned only at the enthronement of a new *Fuamallah* or during the *begellah* cultural festivals, like those of Fuabezankeng, Fuabelenhang and Fuatabong-Leke. These titles came with a lot of meaning and messages to the community. Fuabezankeng means chief with lots of peace as *nkeng*[8] in the *Nweh* country is a peace plant. Fuabelenhang means '*if the Fon wants to rule, where will he keep the enemies of the land?'*. This message and title came as a result of the infighting, succession dispute between the princes on who should be the Fon and Nkwetta, after the disappearance of Foreke Fuanjinya. The infighting became visible to the ordinary indigenous people in the Fondom. The title *Fuabelenhang* was given by Foreke Faunjinya, the Fon of Essoh-Attah who died in 1993. This was a sign of regret for the disunity he witnessed among his children, the princes and was observed during the preparation for the

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[8] Peace plant in the Nweh country is a symbol of peace, mainly used in the twin dance eseeh by Tanyi and Manyi, chiefs, medicine and to sue for peace in a dispute.

enthronement of the new Fon and His cabinet where the prince who was proposed as Nkwetta protested the decision and walked out of the enthronement ritual ceremony. Orally, the Fon on his dying bed in the *Nweh* tradition could effect changes over the choice of his successor even without a will, and inform his closest advisers and/or kingmakers (Brain, 1967: 23). This was witnessed after the death of Foreke Fuanjinya, paramount ruler of Essoh-Attah on the enthronement of his successor, Asongtia II, in 1993.

These chiefs (Fuabezankeng, Fuabelenhang and Fuatabong-leke) had a symbolic and logical position as close aids and friends to the new *Fuamallah* (Fon), to guide him in his new mission, especially on external affairs and developmental projects which were vital in the Essoh-Attah polity. It was another golden opportunity for the departed *Fon* to recognize the services rendered by these persons to his people and to give his successor an avenue to also enjoy their benevolence. All of the above-mentioned chieftaincy titles holders had a full cabinet, made up of Nkwetta or Ankwetta (female) rare to find women with these titles, Mafua (female) rare to find a male with the title, Asaha (the judge of the cabinet) and an Asaba who is *de facto* the first child of the deceased Fon. This cabinet therefore owned and managed a village or quarter inherited from their father. The new cabinet also formed a village council, owned and managed their secret societies like *troh*, *lefem*, *nkweh*, and other attributes as stipulated by the customs and tradition of the land, and reiterated to them upon their enthronement by the Fon and/or his king makers. The Nkwetta(s) of the departed *Fuamallah* were equally made chiefs as a sign of recognition for the services rendered to the Fondom. They included chiefs like Fuachanyi, Fuange and Fuawetndah. After the

departure of a *Fuamallah*, members of his cabinet, like Nkwetta, relocated to a new site that was reserved for him and the new *Fuamallah* changed his title from Nkwetta to a chieftaincy title, became owner of a village or quarter and had all the attributes of a chief (*Befua-akoh*).

The Essoh-Attah hierarchical pyramid placed another set of titles after the *Fuamallah* (paramountcy), *Befuanteh* and *Befuankiangeah* (chiefs) called *Nkem* (plural, *Bekem*). This category of title holders was divided into three and included the chief priest of the land called *Nkemallah*. The first *Nkemallah* in Essoh-Attah was made chief and called Fuatembeh. He retired from this function and was made chief by the palace as a sign of appreciation for the services he rendered to the Fondom. The next *Nkemallah* was Nkemasong and this title was inherited by his son Fuanju as the next chief priest. *Nkemallah* stood as the face of the secret societies of the palace like *troh* and *lefem*, very active in the enthronement ritual of the *Fuamallah* (Fon) and other notables of higher ranks in the Fondom. He also delivered important announcements in public, either in the markets and/or other public gatherings. The chief priest was closely followed by other *Bekemallah* who were of service to the palace. This group of title holders were made to serve the Fon and chiefs in the palace and in out-door activities like Nkemambin, Nkemazem. Mbe was another *Nkemallah* title conferred on very important personalities of the Fondom for their services (wisdom in handling matters and diplomatic missions) to the palace and the Fondom. Some of them included Mbe Nwetlatuh, Mbe Tanyileke, Mbe Nzang, Mbe Tanya and Mbe Ashutembe. These groups of persons were noted for their wisdom in handling conflicting and other burning issues that threatened the integrity of the Fondom. They were part of the palace traditional council mostly as clerks and held the secrets of the Fondom in their hands. They could be upgraded to the ranks of chiefs by the palace, like in the case of Mbe Ashutembe who was the head of the palace *lefem* secret society and his successor was made chief and called Fuankengcha. *Bekemallah*[9] were enthroned by the Fon and/or his chiefs entrusted with that mission.

After *Bekemallah* in the traditional title hierarchy, chiefs then had their cabinets made up of Nkwetta (male), Ankwetta (female), Mafua (female), Asaha (judge of the cabinet) and Asaba *de facto* first born of the family. These titles remained at the level of the chief's village or quarter. Members of the chief's cabinet did not enter the Essoh-Attah Fon's palace with their caps. Their traditional and territorial sphere of influence and recognition ended in their village or quarter. However, they could enter the palaces of other chiefs of the same rank with their caps. Chiefs also attributed titles to some members of their families and quarters; holders of such titles were called *Bekemlefew* (quarter titles).

4. **Chieftaincy and Traditional Institutions in Essoh-Attah**

Essoh-Attah chieftaincy titles were accompanied with certain symbols like the structures of the chief's palace and secret societies or traditional institutions which assisted the palace in its activities. Essoh-Attah like other *Nweh* polities had a vivid representation of the chief's palace described by Robert Brain as large cluster of houses which gave the

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[9] Servants of the Fondom.

impression of a village. The chief's palaces comprised houses for the chief's servants and for important associations like *troh* and *lefem* (Edward Fomin, 42); the chief's sleeping quarter, the *nti ma*[10], *lemoo*[11] for the holding of important meetings or occasions and *ndia ala* (house of the country), *ndia ndi* (the great or big house). *Ndia ndi* had two main doors and all title holders knew which of the doors to use as failure to use the right door when entering or leaving the *lemoo* attracted a fine to that chief. Not all chiefs had their *ndia ndi* with two doors. The structure of the chief's palace was closely followed by other attributes like *lefem* and *nkiangeah*. *Lefem* in the Essoh-Attah Fondom was owned by the Fon, *Befuanteh* and *Befuankiageah*. *Lefem* is a sacred forest usually at the left-hand side of the palace entrance. This secret forest harbored lots of medicinal plants used in the treatment of specific illnesses which were common in the village, and those related to witchcraft. Members of *troh* and *ku-ngang* (Bowie, 2000: 70-71), exploited these herbal medicines. *Lefem* secret forest also harbored many species of birds and animals.

The palace was a reference place in the village for any critical health challenge and herbs from *lefem* provided solutions to these health problems. *Lefem* secret society was an entertainment group but it also provided an avenue for top secrets of the society or village to be discussed and members took an oath of secrecy. Children and women were not members of this society because it handled and dealt with very delicate issues of the *Nweh* tradition and

all its members were initiated to the society. *Lefem* is also called the nine-gong or nine nights society, and it is very instrumental during the enthronement ceremonies of the Fons and chiefs in the *Nweh* country. Men whose fathers and elders were still alive were not part of this society. It was believed that their membership into *lefem* could precipitate the death of their fathers.

Certain categories of chiefs (*befua*) were also part of *atemnjoh ama*, *aloubachaba*[12] and *nkweh* secret societies which were owned only by the *Fuamalllah*. These societies dealt with the transformation of *Fua* and some chiefs into lions, tigers and leopards (royal games) for very important missions during the cleansing ceremonies of the Fondom, like preparation for war and other supernatural activities to protect the Fondom. These missions were accompanied by powerful traditional herbalists and diviners. The Ku-*ngang* secret society had as mission to protect the palace, *Fuamallah*, and other notables against the invisible forces of witchcraft (*lekang*). *Nkiangeah*[13] as a symbol of royalty and authority was owned only by the Fon and chiefs who were of the royal family blood. Though some chiefs who were not of royal blood also owned *nkiangeah* like Fuangunji of Nkong village and Fuabellah of Bellah village. This drum (*nkiangeah*) was placed immediately at the entrance into *lefem* as it had a spiritual connection with the *lefem*. The drum had as functions to pass non-verbal communication to other villages or quarters on happenings in a chief's palace or inviting them to the palace. The messages were coded and could only be decoded by a particular group of

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[10] Inside the Palace.

[11] Reserved house for the holding of important meetings.

[12] Palace dance, owned only by the Fon.

[13] A drum, placed at the entrance into the lefem secret forest.

people as interpreters in their quarters or villages. During the commemoration of the Essoh-Attah Sabbath day at *Asieh*[14], chiefs who were members of the *atemnjoh* signified their presence in the Essoh-Attah Fon's palace by drumming the *nkiangeah*. Drumming the *nkiangeah* indicated their titles, ranks and names.

Befuankiangeah also owned *troh*, the night society, the nine nights, the feared arm of the law, fearful weapon of the chiefs which carried out punishment for serious crimes (Lockhart, 1994: 16). This secret society is today called "Bangwa police". The presence of *troh* means total silence as it is always involved in the enthronement of a Fon, chiefs and notables at the disappearance of their members. The *troh* secret society in *Nweh* country is supreme in the administrative positioning of the *Nweh* governing traditional institutions. It protects the Fon and chiefs against enemies. *Troh* also had as functions the settlement of disputes on land matters by placing injunctions on the disputed land, judged and fined defaulters, passed very important announcements in their quarters or villages. They appeared in public in very dark cloths, with their faces covered, and a dark walking stick called their "gun". They performed very funny gestures which caused people to laugh thereby attracting a fine. The *troh* society communicates in a coded language which is understood and responded only by its members. They declare "cry die" of their members opened after performing their traditional rites and rituals on their successors. These important traditional institutions in Essoh-Attah Fondom were owned by certain categories of chiefs but today

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[14] Day of the week in the Nweh Language.

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most chiefs are in possession of these institutions even those who were not initiated. Also, the acquisition of chieftaincy titles has been adulterated and does not respect the norms attributed to it before the introduction of missionary activities in the area.

5. The Adulteration of Chieftaincy Titles in Essoh-Attah

The attribution of chieftaincy titles in Essoh-Attah Fondom in recent times experienced several changes which were tantamount to creating conflicts with some individuals while others benefited from the process. The founding fathers of the *Nweh* country migrated and settled in their present sites with these titles as part of their tradition, customs and norms for the organisation of their societies. There are no lay-down written constitutions or documents which spelled out the functions and functioning mechanisms for the protection of chieftaincy titles and other titles in the *Nweh* country. But the people over centuries documented orally their ways of acquiring titles and this became law; even defaulters knew the consequences that awaited them in case they went against the customs and traditions of the land. In Essoh-Attah, for the attribution of a chieftaincy title and/or change of ranks, the *atemnjoh* made up of all the chiefs met in the palace at *Asieh* considered as the Sabbath day commemoration to decide on who to confer the title. But recently, chiefs were announced in public by the Fon and certain members of the inner circle of *atemnjoh*.

In 1979, an order by the Senior Divisional Officer for Fontem Sub-Division recognised 14 (fourteen) quarters and chiefs in the Essoh-Attah Fondom (Fontem Sub-Prefectoral Order No. 4, 1979). These quarters were headed by chiefs who were the tax collectors of their

independent quarters or villages in Essoh-Attah. This order may not have shown the true picture of quarters in Essoh-Attah because the phenomenon of tax evasion was common and getting the true tax figures remained difficult. But at the same time, the Fon of Essoh-Attah had to declare a true picture of his Fondom's tax to the state as he retained a portion of the money collected. Therefore, the number of chiefs and villages (fourteen) that existed in Essoh-Attah by 1979 was not far from the reality on the ground. Today, we can count more than seven chiefs in a quarter or village, ruled by a chief. Chief palaces now share common boundaries with the palace of other chiefs. Like the case of Njoagwi Atetap, a quarter with chiefs owning only their palaces with no territory and traditional institutions like the lefem. These chiefs included Chiefs Fualem, Fuatabong-Alem, Fuatembeh, Fuankengncha, Fuanzenalah, Fuache-Alem, and Fuanji-Leke. These chiefs all resided in a village formally owned by Fualem called Njub. Today, the number of chiefs in the area has increased due to the enthronement of new chiefs. This quarter or village had a new form of settlement, cluster settlement, in a typical village setting community. The various chiefs know their ranks but the presence of many chiefs in the area resulted to several disputes on the issues of sovereignty and autonomy.

Following this ugly situation of chieftaincy title attribution, Constance Ngolefac is of the opinion that chieftaincy in the area has been adulterated. She maintains that, the younger generation "the intelligentia", influence the "marketing" of chieftaincy titles to the highest bidders among the money-class in society (Ngolefac, 2017). Nkemnji likens this phenomenon of chieftaincy title acquisition to

Befua Kafe (coffee chiefs), due to the exponential rise in the number of chiefs' population (Nkemnji, 2006: 57-64) in the *Nweh* country. This new phenomenon of chieftaincy referred to as *kafe* chiefs occurred in the 1970s, when cash crops such as coffee and cocoa fetched more revenue in the Fondom. Wealth was power and money conquered culture. The surplus revenue from the sales of coffee and cocoa was used in the acquisition of chieftaincy titles. The neo-liberals argued that chieftaincy was corrupted by the colonial state and by the clientelism of the post-colonial mode of governance; the population under traditional authorities lived as "subjects" rather than "citizens" (Economic Commission for Africa, 2007: 4). Therefore, the chieftaincy institution served its own interest at the detriment of that of its citizens. Although chieftaincy institutions were living institutions and needed to be confronted with the changing trends, Crook opined that they were living institutions, not museum pieces (Crook, 2005: 1). But these changes were supposed to be in line with the customs and traditions of the people.

In order to protect the changes that occurred in the chieftaincy attributions, some Essoh-Attah citizens are of the opinion that tradition is not static but dynamic in nature. They argue that chieftaincy titles have to suit the context of their generation because they are not museum pieces, but have to evolve with major world cultural philosophy. Others believe that, irrespective of the changes, chieftaincy title attributions should be guarded to maintain their originality and reflect the people's way of life, their culture and tradition. The Chambers Twenteith Century English Dictionary defines the noun "tradition" as handing over, oral transmission from generation to generation, anything bound up with or continuing in the life of a family or community (Cheka, 2008: 71). This points to the fact that

chieftaincy title acquisition, as part of a people's tradition, forms the oral transmission from one generation to another. And is not an affair of the Fon or a few individuals in a Fondom. Nor should tradition be adulterated with monetary value.

Atemnkeng in his reflection concluded that, in today's world, every single country and people experience this process of a watering down of its identity through globalization (Atemnkeng, 2006). One could therefore conclude that the *Nweh* culture and tradition have been desecrated and adulterated, and, if care is not taken, the worst is still to come. In Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart,* the author outlined that "a man who pays respect to the great (ancestors) paves the way for his own greatness" (Achebe, 1958: 15), and therefore the protection of our cultural legacy is the path to our greatness. The debate of leadership has been laid to rest as many concepts and theories emerged in the scholarly world, yet the educated class for a majority turned to be the worst set of leaders the world is witnessing in African countries. This points to the concept and problem of transformation, change and evolution, brought to African communities by modernism/ Catholicism through education and other doctrines.

Education which was looked upon as a tool to savage the situation of chieftaincy, made a bad situation worse. The Essoh-Attah educated elite, who doubles as chiefs for a majority and politicians took chieftaincy institutions in the Fondom hostage. As the influential class, many of its members altered the good old order of seating position, especially in public ceremonies after the Fon and who should be selected or seized in public during their enthronement ceremony. The debate took different dimensions as chiefs resisted being selected or seized in public in the *Nweh* society. Achankeng argued that the enthronement of the chief of Mbindia brought conflict between the Mbindia kingmakers and the Paramount Ruler of Lebang, as the kingmakers claimed their chief should not be seized in public during his enthronement ceremony (Achankeng, 2006). The *Nweh* tradition demands that all chiefs who originated from the palace (*Befua Nkiangeah*) should be selected or seized in public during their enthronement ceremonies. *Befuanteh* who were subjugated by the different paramount rulers in the *Nweh* country, should be dressed and presented in public during their enthronement ceremonies. The educated elites are of the opinion that the importance of the chiefs should be determined by their level of collaboration with those who hold the reign of power. Traditional authorities now served as 'vote banks' in the advent of democracy. Constance Ngolefac called them the "bookmen" who have their eyes on the good things of life and take to "marketing" chieftaincy titles to the highest bidders among the money-class in Lebialem society (Ngolefac, 33). The decree of 1977 which recognized and assigned roles to traditional authority was at odds with the educated elites, as Cheka opined: academics and the Cameroonian legislator were at odds with each other as to the role of traditional authority today. The academics saw the traditional authority's role as a negligible one. The educated elites used their influence and positions as politicians to alter traditional norms to their favor. Even among the children of the same womb in Essoh-Attah, we observed infighting as to who should be their chief. Kingmakers were corrupted so much that, during the selection ceremonies, they pretended not to know the rightful person to select. This brought a lot of miss-trust

onto the chieftaincy institution by onlookers and the Essoh-Attah population.

The creation of Fontem Sub-Division in 1966 under the Manyu Division was accompanied by government institutions like the Divisional Officer (D.O), Police, Gendarmerie, and other Administrative Units. These institutions played the same role as traditional institutions like chieftaincy (*lefua*), *troh*, and *manjong*, leading to the decline of the latter's functions. Even the customary court at Azi, Lebang Fondom, was negatively affected, even though these institutions ought to complement each other. Individuals then used these government institutions to settle scores, corrupt them and the money syndrome took its full gear. Commoners and non-title holders could sue the whole traditional institution (council) to answer charges before the police, *befen nkuo* (black dress) or gendarmerie, *bebang acheh* (red cap) as they were called by the *Nweh* population. The indigenous population considered traditional institutions out-dated or not fair in the dispensation of their functions as not even the paramountcy of the *Nweh* land could escape the influence of state institutions. Cheka argued that the 1977 chieftaincy law placed the traditional authority in a middle-of-the-road situation, with an incomplete mix of both pros and cons (Cheka, 84).

The Essoh-Attah Cultural and Development Association (EDCA) that regroups sons and daughters of the Fondom from all corners of the globe with Essoh-Attah citizens or affiliation is a call for concern. The good intentions of the founding fathers of this Association included bringing the children of the Fondom closer to their home while far from home Essoh-Attah. This association has branches in all the major towns and cities of Cameroon and a very powerful diaspora, Essoh-Attah Development Association (EDA), United States of America and Canada (Fomin et al, 2018). The association had as its main mission to regroup the Essoh-Attah children in towns to be connected with their ancestors back home through cultural performance (*begehllah*), brainstorming on the development of their Fondom and other humanitarian works. But while in the various meeting venues in towns and cities, the phenomenon of chieftaincy titles and seating positions as a way of practicing culture and tradition (*begehllah*) met with disagreement between natural title holders, commodity title holders and common men who are novices in the practice of their culture. This situation was preoccupying because those who went home to succeed their parents were strangers. As for many, it was their very first time to set feet on the soil of their ancestors. Immediately after the closing of the enthronement ceremony, they were the first to leave the village only with their caps/titles to show as their own symbol of identity and belonging. They are empty in the spirit as the gods of the land did not recognize them, they were strangers. They went to the village occasionally and had no time to commune and create that link with the gods (*belem*) of the family. Therefore, rites performed on them were mere formalities. They could not appease the gods in case any misfortune affected their families. While in towns and cities, they had only their caps and titles to show off. "The money speaks" types of title holders then mixed with this novice group of title holders to justify their legitimacy and positions in the EDCA meeting halls and beyond.

Today, many chiefs possess only palaces and titles as visible attributes to prove who they are, with no land or territory and population. It

was tradition for chiefs to have a day when they called for community labor in their quarters, kept traditional Sabbath (to worship their gods, *belem*) and animation in the *lefem* secret society. A quarter today in Essoh Attah resided by several chiefs pose the question of, whose authority will be supreme to coordinate community labor? Alain Special, an Essoh-Attah musician and artist is of the opinion that the chiefs have dragged the chieftaincy title in the mud in his soundtrack titled "*Befua Tap Lefua*" (Alain Special, 2023). This artist recounted how important and respected chieftaincy title and institution were in the past. He lamented that what is witnessed today is the contrary as chieftaincy titles have been dragged through the mud and commanded no respect any longer.

6. **Towards Future Chieftaincy Debates**

The future of chieftaincy debates should be promising if the custodians of the *Nweh* in general and Essoh-Attah traditional leadership in particular reflect on what was experienced in the past. Cultural hegemony and globalization are the order of the day in cultural debates around the world. Communities are therefore moving toward a cultural dynamics model in order to be at the same level with the world trends to avoid being engulfed by other dominant cultures, especially Western. Atemnkeng admits that, as we bemoan the decline of our institutions, Africa as a whole is lamenting the loss of its Africaness (Atemnkeng, 10). This lamentation can be halted if traditionalists rethink culture in a global sense, engaged in cultural modification, evolution and/or transformation. As parents, they should be able to arrest the situation and re-educate their children on the importance of the *Nweh* language which is their first identity as a

people. The population of Essoh-Attah who live in the villages forms a very insignificant percent of its global population and, therefore, language as the main medium for cultural assimilation should be encouraged among children in towns and cities. Parents have abandoned the education of their children to strangers, schools, the society at large and mass media. Others have been brainwashed to thinking that if they do not speak English or French to their children at home, they will not perform well in school. These languages are part of a people's culture even in the Western world. Traditional institutions are a vital component of customary administration and development which should be implemented in the villages and by the government (Olin, 2021: 145-161).

The Essoh-Attah paramount institution as other institutions that formed the pillars of the chiefdom was and is still an inheritance. Inheritance is priceless and not to be marketed. Therefore, in no instance should leadership actions depart from this philosophy. Traditional leadership is and should remain apolitical. The palace is a common house for all the sons and daughters of the land, how then could this institution be partisan? The *Begehlah* festivals which have been a golden opportunity for the education of Essoh-Attah citizens should be encouraged and promoted. This festival must not be organized only once a year in the palace, it could be in a form of mini festivals organized in the towns and cities too. This would provide a better avenue for the "born and bred in coast" to come closer to their home through culture. It should equally not be a drinking festival but an educational one, where traditional dishes, dresses, folktales, proverbs, dances, language, among other cultural aspects of the *Nweh* and Essoh-Attah are exhibited. They should also include traditional games, competitions and prize award ceremonies.

The Essoh-Attah Development and Cultural Association (EDCA), equally has a big role to play in the Essoh-Attah cultural reawakening. When holding their monthly meetings, cultural norms have to be strictly followed and respected. It is common for a non *Nweh* citizen to attend EDCA meetings and go home without asking questions because the language of the meeting in most cases is English or Pidgin English which are not *Nweh* languages. In this regard, rigorous reforms need to be introduced to see to it that the *Nweh* language is used for communication and other transactions during the meetings. Language classes should be introduced to assist parents and children in improving their *Nweh* language skills. Title holders should be schooled on their role as the custodians of the chiefdom, their seating position and hierarchical nature should be strictly followed and respected, even in public occasions. EDCA could create an academy with a well-elaborated program on the study of Essoh-Attah cultural values (*begehlah)*.

The educated elite should use the knowledge they acquired to better their community, Essoh-Attah. It was witnessed in an occasion during refreshment where chiefs were separated from elite and an elite who bought his chieftaincy title, chose to dine with government officials and other elites. But when he was reminded by other chiefs that he is a chief, he responded that, he was also an elite. This aspect exposed the mixed-up that reigned among chiefs who got their titles through fraudulent means. Some were forced to denounce their positions and titles in public. Consequently, educated elites should keep politics out of the *Nweh* tradition. The role of the elites is to provide development in their community, provide social amenities,

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construct roads and other developmental projects. Their role and status as elites should not be confused with chieftaincy titles.

7. Conclusion

This paper investigated the fact that chieftaincy titles and it acquisition in the Essoh-Attah Fondom, *Nweh* country, witnessed alarming changes. It argued that the importance of this traditional institution of governance was determined by the methods of its acquisition, in strict respect of the cultures and traditions of the *Nweh* people in general and the Essoh-Attah in particular. The paper elaborated on the genesis and evolution in the acquisition of chieftaincy titles in Essoh-Attah and provided reasons for the changes in this acquisition. It also advanced certain points for continuity and suggestions to remedy the situation in order to preserve the traditional institution of governance and the culture of the Essoh-Attah people. It posited that the adulteration of chieftaincy titles in the area dates as far back as the period of missionary incursion into the Essoh-Attah Fondom.

In order to protect the changes that occurred in the chieftaincy attributions, some Essoh-Attah citizens were of the opinion that tradition is not static but dynamic in nature. They argued that chieftaincy titles should suit the context of their generation because chiefs are not museum pieces, but have to evolve with major world cultural philosophy. Others believed that, irrespective of the changes, chieftaincy title attributions should be guarded to maintain its originality and reflect the people's way of life, their culture and tradition. The word "tradition" denotes the handing over or oral transmission from generation to generation, anything bound up with or continuing in the life of a family or community. This points to the fact that chieftaincy title acquisition, as part of a people's traditions, forms

the oral transmission from one generation to another. And is not an affair of the *Fon* or a few individuals in a Fondom, nor tradition should be adulterated with monetary value.

In today's world, most countries and their citizens experience change in their identity through globalisation. One could therefore conclude that the Essoh-Attah chieftaincy attribution and tradition have been desecrated and adulterated, and if care is not taken, important aspect of their cultures will be extinct. In *Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe outlined that "a man who pays respect to the great (ancestors) paves the way for his own greatness" (Achebe,1958: 69) and therefore the protection of our cultural legacy is the path to our greatness. The debate on chieftaincy titles cannot be laid to rest as many concepts and theories emerged in the scholarly world. This points to the concepts of transformation, change and continuity, brought to African communities by modernism through education and other doctrines.

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Contribution of Secondary School Students' Attitudes towards Cooperative Learning on their Academic Performance in Mathematics in the Bamenda Municipality

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Abstract

In contemporary education, fostering skills like critical thinking and collaboration is pivotal. Mathematics, often perceived as daunting, necessitates innovative approaches to engage students effectively. Cooperative learning, a method emphasising group collaboration toward shared goals, offers promising outcomes. This study explores how secondary students' attitudes towards cooperative learning impact their academic performance in Mathematics, focusing on schools in the Bamenda Municipality. Drawing from the ABC Attitude Model, which integrates affect, behavior, and cognition, the research examines students' emotional, behavioral, and cognitive dispositions towards cooperative learning. It further investigates gender differences in attitudes, considering varying preferences for competitive and cooperative environments. Surveying 304 Form 3 students in Bamenda Municipality, the study correlates attitudes towards cooperative learning with academic performance in Mathematics. Findings reveal a significant positive relationship between attitudes towards cooperative learning and performance in mathematics, with attitudes explaining 49.1% of performance variations. Notably, male students exhibit significantly higher positive attitudes than their female counterparts. These results underscore the vital role of cooperative learning attitudes in Mathematics performance. Recommendations include nurturing cooperative learning dispositions among students and augmenting the integration of cooperative methods in Mathematics instruction, fostering collaborative environments conducive to learning.

1. Introduction

In this 21st century, driven by explosions in technological advancements, most educational systems are advocating for teaching and learning strategies that can help students develop skills such as creativity, critical thinking, digital literacy and collaborative skills among others. The development of these skills in foundational subjects like Mathematics is highly solicited. This subject is considered to be a language of the sciences. The famous Galileo even said that Mathematics is the language which God used in creating the world. Unfortunately, it is one of the most hated and dreaded subjects within Cameroonian secondary schools.

Barich (2004) asserts that the world's educational systems are becoming increasingly diverse. Consequently, it is crucial that learning strategies are beneficial in educating a wide variety of students. Teachers must engage students so that they should be able to retain and comprehend subject matter in the classroom and provide them with the proper social skills needed to succeed beyond the classroom environment. One of the learning methods educators can use to help students develop those necessary skills is cooperative learning.

Cooperative learning method is a strategy that develops healthy interaction skills, promotes success of the individual student and group members, and forms personal and professional relationships (Johnson & Johnson, 1996). It is a teaching approach in

which learners of diverse abilities, talents, and backgrounds, work together, in small groups, to attain a common goal. Cooperative learning is group learning activity organized so that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups and in which each the learner is held accountable for his or her own learning and is motivated to increase the learning of others (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Students' attitudes towards cooperative learning will likely affect the way they learn.

Students' attitude has different definitions as suggested by literature. Kibrislioglu (2015) defines attitude as liking or disliking of the subject; a tendency to engage in or avoid an activity; a belief that one is good or bad at something; and a belief that something is useful or useless. Furthermore, Tahar et al. (2010) define attitude as a positive or negative emotional disposition towards something. From these, when defining attitudes towards cooperative learning, both aspects of beliefs and emotions should be considered. Thus Tahar et al. look at students in both the cognitive and social perspectives. It is also necessary to understand students' attitudes by their gender.

According to Jordan et al. (2004) although men's self-concepts are based more on separation and autonomy, women are more rooted in connections and relatedness. Men like being in competitive environments more as they perform better and tend to focus on achievement. On the other hand, women avoid being in such environments because they cannot achieve better results.

This is probably because they tend to focus more on interpersonal aspects of competition (Inglehart et al., (1994). Rodger et al. (2007) assert that if women had more positive attitudes than men toward cooperation and social interdependence, then it follows that learning methods that allow for the development of trusting and interdependent relationships among students and between students and teachers should be more effective for women than for men. Thus, where interdependence, cooperative attitudes, and desire for affiliation exist, competitive teaching methods may not create the most effective learning environments for women. Research done in supporting this view has shown that women are superior in affiliation, cooperative attitude, and interdependence (Fultz & Herzog, 1991; Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

This study is hinged on the ABC Attitude Model, also called a Tripartite Model of Ajzen (1993). It serves as a useful theoretical framework for developing cooperative learning attitude measures. The ABC Attitude Model conceptualises an attitude as an amalgamation of three separate measurable components: affect (A), behaviour (B) and cognition (C). Affect is the emotional component consisting of feelings and emotions that are associated with an attitude object (in our study cooperative learning). Behaviour is the action component consisting of predispositions to act in a particular way towards the attitude object. Cognition is a mental component that consists of belief and perceptions people hold about the attitude object. These three components must be present before we say that an attitude exists.

A particular attitude may consist of a positive emotion that is, feeling happy in a cooperative learning classroom (affect), intend to learn more Mathematics during cooperative learning (behaviour) and belief that Mathematics through cooperative learning is easy (cognition). Students may form a favourable or an unfavourable attitude towards cooperative learning of Mathematics. Students acquire attitudes over time through direct experience of learning Mathematics in cooperative learning groups. Students use the learned attitudes as a guide to their overt behaviour with respect to cooperative learning of Mathematics, resulting in consistently favourable or unfavourable patterns of reactions towards the subject. Attitudes are assumed to be precursors of Mathematics learning behaviour. In predicting behaviour based on a particular attitude, Ajzen and Fishbein (1977) postulate that there should be a correspondence between measures of attitude and those of behaviour. Students' attitude to cooperative learning of Mathematics represents their evaluation of learning Mathematics cooperatively. Attitudes can be verbal or non-verbal actions (Ajzen, 1993). Several researchers have attempted to measure attitude using different instruments. Ajzen proposes three measures of behaviour. They include observable actions performed by the subjects that are recorded by the investigator, individual commitment to perform the behaviours, and self-reported behaviour. However, the last two measures can only be considered if it becomes difficult to make direct observations of certain behaviours. High correspondence between attitude and behaviour measures can be achieved through standard scaling measures like Likert scale (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977) which has been adopted in this study.

Several studies have demonstrated that attitudes towards Mathematics are directly and significantly associated with students' performance. For instance, Mensah and Kurancie (2013) conducted a study in Ghana and found a significant positive correlation between students' attitude and performance. Similarly, Nicolaidou and Philippou (2003) found that attitude and achievement in Mathematics are significantly related. In a more recent study, Ngussa and Mbuti (2017) conducted a study in Arusha, Tanzania, involving secondary school students. They established a moderate relationship between student's attitude and performance when teachers use humour as a teaching strategy. They concluded that the enhancement of students' positive attitude can boost students' performance in Mathematics. However, Joseph (2013) in his study of community secondary school students in Kagera, Tanzania found that the majority of students (55%) had a general negative attitude towards Mathematics, with a positive and significant correlation between attitude and performance (r = 0.33).

In their research, Ellison and Boykin (1994) found that university women gained more success when cooperative learning was followed more than individualistic learning. They also asserted that cooperative learning created more positive attitudes toward the learning experience and more perceived ability. Fultz and Herzog (1991) reported that women were more oriented to connection with others and nurturance which was closely related to gender difference

in cooperative learning. In other words, women were higher than men in affiliation, whereas men were higher than women in working independently and focused to goal achievement.

This study however takes a different twist as it is not interested in verifying students' attitude towards Mathematics directly. It is more interested in verifying how students' attitudes towards teaching methods, precisely cooperative learning, can impinge on their academic performances. Although research studies have shown that cooperative learning is a successful learning method, it is important to consider not only the aforementioned twist, but also to express quantitatively, how secondary school students' attitudes towards cooperative learning in Cameroon contribute to their academic performance in Mathematics. It is against this background that this study focuses on determining the contribution of secondary school students' attitudes towards cooperative learning on their academic performance in Mathematics. It further compares the mean attitude scores of male and female secondary school students towards cooperative learning of Mathematics. Based on these two objectives, two corresponding research questions were developed to be answered:

❖ What is the contribution of secondary school students' attitudes towards cooperative learning on their academic performance in Mathematics?

❖ What are the mean attitude scores of male and female secondary school students towards cooperative learning of Mathematics?

To further give focus to the study, two hypotheses were developed to be tested:

H0$_1$: Secondary school students' attitudes towards cooperative learning do not significantly contribute to their academic performance in Mathematics.

Ha$_1$: Secondary school students' attitudes towards cooperative learning significantly contribute to their academic performance in Mathematics.

H0$_2$: The mean attitude scores of male and female secondary school students towards cooperative learning of Mathematics do not differ significantly.

Ha$_2$: The mean attitude scores of male and female secondary school students towards cooperative learning of Mathematics differ significantly.

2. Methodology

The study adopts the survey research design. It was carried out in Bamenda Municipality. The population of the study is made up of 1451 Form 3 students from all the five functional public secondary schools in Bamenda Municipality. The Krejcie and Morgan table was used to obtain a sample of 304 students. The proportionate stratified sampling technique was employed in obtaining this sample. Data was collected using a 15-itemsed questionnaire, divided into three

sections: Section A had three items soliciting the demographic information of the respondents, Section B had ten items dealing with students' attitude towards Mathematics and making use of the 4-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Students were expected to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement with each statement by ticking appropriately. Section C had two items seeking for students' first term performance in Mathematics for the 2022/2023 academic year. The various averages provided by the students as demanded on items 14 and 15 were verified with the help of the various Mathematics teachers of the different schools and classes concerned. The questionnaire was vetted by three experts, pilot-tested, and its Cronbach alpha reliability was established to be 0.87. Thus, the reliability of the instrument was assured.

Data was collected using the Direct Delivery Technique (DDT). The collected data was coded and scored. Students could obtain a maximum attitude score towards cooperative learning in Section B of 40 and a minimum of 10. Students were considered to have a positive attitude towards cooperative learning in Mathematics if they scored at least 25 in this section. A score of less than 25 was an indication that the student had a negative attitude towards cooperative learning of Mathematics. Frequency counts, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) and the coefficient of determination (r^2) were used to answer the research question. The p-value and t-test for independent samples were further used to test the hypotheses at the 5% level of significance.

The analysis was aided by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and the outputs presented on Tables.

3. Analyses and Findings of the Study

Research Question One: What is the contribution of secondary school students' attitudes towards cooperative learning on their academic performance in Mathematics?

H0$_1$: Secondary school students' attitudes towards cooperative learning do not significantly contribute to their academic performance in Mathematics.

Ha$_1$: Secondary school students' attitudes towards cooperative learning significantly contribute to their academic performance in Mathematics.

Table 1: Contribution of students' attitudes towards cooperative learning on their academic performance in Mathematics

		Students' attitudes towards cooperative learning	Academic performance in Mathematics
Students' attitudes towards cooperative learning	Pearson Correlation	1	.701**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	304	304
Students' academic performance in Mathematics	Pearson Correlation	.701**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	304	304

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 reveals that a high positive relationship (r = 0.701) exists between students' attitudes towards cooperative learning and their academic performance in Mathematics. This suggests that when students' attitudes towards cooperative learning increases, their academic performance in Mathematics also increases. The table further indicates a coefficient of determination (r^2) of 0.491. This means that 49.1% of the variations in students' academic performance in Mathematics can be accounted for by their attitudes towards cooperative learning. Finally, the table shows a significant p-value of 0.000. This means that a significant relationship exists between students' attitudes towards cooperative learning and their academic performance in Mathematics. Consequently, $H0_1$ is rejected and it can be concluded that secondary school students' attitudes towards cooperative learning significantly contribute to their academic performance in Mathematics.

Research Question Two: What are the mean attitude scores of male and female secondary school students towards cooperative learning of Mathematics?

$H0_2$: The mean attitude scores of male and female secondary school students towards cooperative learning of Mathematics do not differ significantly.

Ha_2: The mean attitude scores of male and female secondary school students towards cooperative learning of Mathematics differ significantly.

Table 2: Attitudes of Male and Female Secondary School Students Towards Cooperative Learning of Mathematics

Sex	N	Mean Attitude Score	Df	t	2-tailed Sig.
Males	106	30.64			
Females	198	25.21	302	17.324	.000

Table 2 shows that the mean attitude score of male secondary school students towards cooperative learning of Mathematics is 30.64, while that of their female counterpart is 25.21. This gives a mean difference of 5.43. Thus, while the males had a high positive attitude towards cooperative learning, that of females was just slightly positive. The table further shows that the value for the independent samples t-test at 302 degrees of freedom is 17.324. this value is significant ($P < 0.05$) and consequently, $H0_2$ was rejected. It can therefore be concluded that male students show a significantly positive attitude towards Mathematics than their female counterparts.

4. Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study reveal that 49.1% of the variations in students' academic performance in Mathematics can be accounted for by their attitudes towards cooperative learning. The findings further reveal that secondary school students' attitudes towards cooperative learning significantly contribute to their academic performance in Mathematics. These findings corroborate with those of Mensah and

Kurancie (2013) in Ghana and Ngussa and Mbuti (2017) in Arusha – Tanzania. They all demonstrated that attitude and achievement in Mathematics are significantly related and concluded that the enhancement of students' positive attitude can boost students' performance in Mathematics. The findings of this study suggest that when students develop a positive attitude as they work cooperatively, they are bound to achieve better results. This is surely because what one person is unable to do, he/she is pulled along by those who are able to, thus supporting each other in the learning process.

The findings also reveal that both male and female students have a positive attitude towards cooperative learning even though male students show a significantly positive attitude towards cooperative learning of Mathematics than their female counterparts. This finding contradicts that of Ellison and Boykin (1994) who established that university women gained more success when cooperative learning was followed more than the men. The contradiction may be as a result of the fact that Ellison and Boykin worked with university women while this study deals with secondary school students. Furthermore, the two studies were carried out in different centuries.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study set out to determine the relative contribution of secondary school students' attitudes towards cooperative learning on their academic performance in Mathematics. The findings have revealed that 49.1% of the variations in students' academic performance in Mathematics can be accounted for by their attitudes towards cooperative learning. The findings also revealed that secondary school students' attitudes towards cooperative learning significantly contribute to their academic performance in Mathematics. Furthermore, both male and female students have a positive attitude towards cooperative learning even though male students show a significantly positive attitude towards cooperative learning of Mathematics than their female counterparts.

In line with the findings of this study, it was recommended that:

- Teachers should imbue in their students cooperative learning attitudes as this will significantly improve their performances in Mathematics.
- Mathematics teachers should increase the frequency of usage of cooperative learning in their Mathematics classrooms.

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Language Use in Conflict Management in Mundum Community

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Abstract

This work investigates language features used in conflict management in Mundum. Several studies have been carried out on conflict management but none has written on conflict management in Mundum community. Yusuf (2018) holds that conflict resolution is a process through which conflicting parties address contending issues. He does not suggest language features used in managing the conflict. Yagcioglu (1996) also posits that conflict resolution is a peaceful way to end an escalation of conflict. He does not also suggest language features used in conflict management. Adopted in the analysis of data in this study are: ethnography theory by Gehard (1800), Functional Pragmatic theory by Dewey (2011) and Semiotic theory by Leach (2008). Quantitative and qualitative instruments were used for data collection. Respondents were selected through purposive sampling technique and non-probability technique was also used to select participants. Language strategies used for conflict management identified in the study include lexicalisation and rhetoric.

Key Words: Conflict management, respondents, Rhetoric, Ethnography

1. Introduction

Language is the medium through which humans express their ideas, emotions, experiences and expectations. It is a system of conventionally spoken or written symbols by means of which human beings communicate (Henry (1995) Kegl (1999)). Language is therefore species specific to man. Language is uniquely a human endowment (Afolayan (2006)). Human beings are unrestricted in what they can communicate about. No area of experience is necessarily incommunicable though one may have to adapt one's language in order to cope with new discoveries or new modes of thought. In the Greek Intellectual tradition Aristotle declares that speech is the presentation of the mind and this is translated by Lankin (1978).

According to Yoshihisa (1998) humans have the capacity to use complex species on earth. Humans use language while other species communicate but cannot speak. Language is an essential tool that enables us to live the kind of lives that we do; much of the contemporary human civilization would not have been possible without it. Every community has a distinct language they use and it identifies them. Thus, language is used to identify different cultures and to solve human problems or manage conflict.

Borisoff et al (1998) declare that conflict means an active disagreement among people with different opinions. Conflict management is the process of handling the situation while interacting with the different people in the community. It is the actor's ability and skill to handle a situation. When people live in a community there is always the chance of raising conflict on different issues.

According to La Roche (2016) conflict management is the process of handling incompatibilities, disagreement and quarrels with the different people in the community.

Cameroon is one of the countries located in the SubSaharan Africa, with close to 283 languages Ebehard and Fenning (2021). It comprises ten (10) regions and the North West Region is one of those regions that has experienced multiplicities of conflicts. Majority of the linguistic groups in this region are rocked by conflicts (Eyongetah

(1974)) especially in Mundum Community. This study investigates the language that is used to manage these conflicts. As a results, the following research questions guide the study:

1. What are the language related causes of conflict in Mundum community?
2. What are the language techniques used in conflict management in Mundum community and their results?
3. How can these language expressions contribute in conflict management in the Mundum community?

These research questions correspond to the following established objectives for the paper:

1. To examine the language related causes of conflict in Mundum community
2. To come up with the language techniques used in conflict management in Mundum.
3. To show how these language expressions contribute in conflict management in the Mundum community.

2. Background to the Study

Jennifer (2018) postulate that the First World War was caused by the wrong use of language. She states that Wilhelm II is considered by many to be the major contributor to the outbreak of the first international conflict because of his undisciplined rants and bitter criticisms of European leaders. Several of his outspoken comments and misjudgments are said to have fuelled European tension in the decode prior to World War I. Wilhelm remarks were full of gaffes and undisciplined rants including bitter

criticisms of the English Government (Savage (2016)). Wilhelm was so prone to inflammatory remarks; for example, his remarks about 'cross-eyed' Chinese raised eye brows around the world.

Gerald and Wolfgang (2005) say that Hitler's invasion of Poland in September 1939 drove Greak Britain and France to declare war on Germany. This was the beginning of the Second World War. After the two world wars, Africa also experienced a period of conflicts. Annan (2014) posit that there have been conflicts in West Africa for example the Somalia civil war in 1991, Nigeria civil war in 1967, and the Rwanda genocide 1994.

Afisi (2009) says that for decades, countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast and Guinea Bisau were crippled by conflicts and civil strife in which violence and incessant killings were prevalent.

In Cameroon there were conflicts. Lawyers and teachers staged legitimate strike actions in October and November 2016 respectively. The situation got worse when the civil society:

(business persons, bike riders, drivers in fact a mob) got involved. Ateki (2017) holds that the coming to birth of Cameroon Anglophone Civil Society Consortium (CACSC) in December 2016 helped to worsen the situation. This conflict was marked by arrests and shut down of internet services. Students and teachers boycotted classes. Religious leaders were dragged to court. The main concerns that occasioned this strike action: preserving the common law system practiced by Anglophone lawyers and the restoration of the Anglo-Saxon system of education seemed to give way to other unimagined claims.

Other conflicts in the North West Region include the Fulani problem in Nwa subdivision in Donga Mantung Division. This problem evolved around land issues where natives battle it out with Fulani cattle farmers as a result of grazing land, CHRDA (2021). The natives regarded the Bororos of Fulanis as undesirable aliens (Keizer (2014). The center for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa CHRDA 2018 says that there is continues conflict between the native farmers and the Bororos in the entire grassfield area of the North-West Region.

In Mundum community many conflicts exist amongst which are farmer-grazer conflict over ownership of land. Religious conflict between the Kwifor and faith denominations, just to mention but these. All these conflicts are managed through language use.

3. Empirical and Theoretical Issues in Language Use

Spir (1941/1964) posits that language determines thought. He goes further to clarify that, anyone who has no past tense verb in his language would be challenged to think about the past.

Language and ethnicity contribute immensely to issues on language use. Fishman et al (1984) say that every language carries a distinct and weighty ethnic baggage. Each ethnic group expresses and identifies itself by the language it speaks and its cultural paraphernalia is shaped by its language (cf Abu (2006). Sameness of language and ethnicity creates a bond of acceptance and provides a bases for togetherness.

The guiding of language by social factors is another area of concern on issues on language use. Ferdinand de Saussure (1887-1913) sees language as a type of social behaviour contrary to Durkeim (1958-1971) who sees no methodology in investigating social factors in language use.

Bamgbose (1991) explains that in some parts of Africa there an inclination to form ethnic rather than linguistic bonds. Baodir (1971) point out that, it was because of cohesion in political units that European languages were imposed on sub-Saharan Africans. That African government saw these European languages as instruments of unity.

4. Empirical and Theoretical Issues in Conflict Management

Akinboye and Ottoh (2007) state that conflict expresses itself in a number of ways, and that international governments have to be sensitive so as to identify conflicts and devise measures to handle it. Conflict can manifest through a covert verbal aggression. Umoh (1996) outlines causes of international conflicts: National prestige, acquisition, Religious and ideological extremism, and mutual distrust and suspicion.

Monscheng (1939) (cf Weber (1885)) holds that it is the state that has the supreme authority to resolve conflicts. Robert (1985) picks up this idea and emphasizes that the state as a political authority maintains domination and has the power to enforce internal stability and also external security. Funnel (1997) goes ahead to explain social conflict, in which he thinks that it is the confrontation of social power. Akinboye and Ottoh (2007) explain that conflict goes

with suspicion and destruction. Okolie (2005) acknowledges the existence of international conflict and says that what caused the creation of the United Nations failed to resolve the crisis caused by international conflict. Gambari (1992) corroborates by saying that the founding fathers of the United Nations come up with the idea of creating this peace-making body because they were determined to save the generations coming from behind from the scourge of war.

Ferris (2008) holds that civil society sometimes stimulates the act of conflict management when there is conflict and that civil society also has the power to act but her power is limited. To Adejumobi (2002), civil society can in time of conflict collaborate with international parties to offer relief supplies to displaced persons and other victims of war.

Obasi (2021) reports that the Catholic Church in Warri has been preaching peace and bridging the religious gap with other faith-based movements, and that relief movements were offered by the church to Internationally displaced persons.

Max (2008) reports that 110.000.000 people lost lives in over 250 conflicts around the word while some were crippled and others severely wounded. Obi (2007) profits from this to posit that man's concerning in conflict should not be how to eradicate it, but the way to manage it.

Mcquail (1997) brings the idea that social media has the responsibility of mobilising people towards social change. Nwosu (2004) posits that, in times of conflict, adequate measures to manage the conflict are considered to be a critical factor, with regard to these issues in conflict management.

The Social Responsible Theory designed by Siebert, Peterson, and Schram (1956) guides this perspective of the study. It is an ethical theory in which individuals are accountable for fulfilling their civic duty, and the actions of an individual must benefit the whole society. The civic duty of an individual is to maintain peace in the community and to participate in community service projects. Therefore, in Mundum community this theory is applicable because the people of Mundum consider the act of managing conflict as a civic duty incumbent on them all.

Studies on language use in conflict management have been conducted from many perspectives and contexts.

Losenje (2019) examines Mokpe proverbs use for conflict management. Losenje uses critical discourse analysis theory while our study investigates all aspects of language use in conflict management in Mundum. It also hinges on five theoretical frameworks: Ethnography Theory. Taylor (1988), Functional Pragmatic Theory Dewey (2011) Speech Act Theory Gerhard (1800), semiotic theory Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) and social Solidarity Thoery, Durkheim (1803).

Furthermore, Invemizzi and Baldaramo (1989) put forward the idea of age and how important it is in conflict management. They are supported in this opinion by Manimaran (1992). They postulate that in conflict management those who are older use competing style in

conflict management and the younger ones use accommodating style.

Adaeze (2020) in writing on Language conflict management and conflict Resolution, in Owerri says that the people of Owerri North are honest and peace-loving. Despite being peace-loving, they also have misunderstandings and misconceptions from time to time coming from land issues. They use just language to manage such conflicts since they all speak the same language. Adaeze (2020) did not suggest language features used in managing conflict in Owerri.

The specificity of our work shows conflict management in a rural community. It is different from the works of others who are writing most especially on conflict management in urban areas.

Emike (2009) investigated the potency of language in conflict resolution in Africa and the world at large. He said reasons why conflicts persist is because the pragmatics of language has not been exploited. From the work of Emike it is seen that he is giving but a reason why conflicts in Africa have not been managed. Data of Emike's study is collected from two warring communities, Azuwa and Ezinma. The work of Emike is different from ours in that Emike did not bring out language features used in conflict management, but our study has a plethora of language features used in conflict management such as code mixing and code switching, lexication, proverbs and metaphors.

This paper upholds five theories for our analysis: Ethnography Theory by Taylor (1988) the Functional Pragmatic Theory by Dewey (2011), Speech Act Theory by Gerard (1800) Social Solidarity Theory by Durkheim (1803) and Semiotic Theory by Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913).

Ethnography Theory by Taylor (1988) handles issues concerning the culture of Mundum people, using language to manage conflict in Mundum is a cultural issue. This theory is supported the semiotic theory which helps to give meaning to signs and symbols used in Mundum for conflict management. Injunctions put on disputed pieces of land are signs relating to peace making.

Dewey (2011) postulates the Functional Pragmatic Theory to provide meanings of difficult words, and Audin (1975) provides the Speech Act Theory which is a theory that talks about the offering of apology when it happens that an individual offends the other. Durkheim (1803) introduces the social solidarity theory which talks about a community where elders help in managing conflict. It is suitable in this study because in Mundum, there is the council of elders above 60 years that is involved in conflict management.

5. Methodology

In this study the methodology consisted of collecting information from sixty-two (62) informants from Mundum community through, interview, participant observation, and focus group discussion. Information was also collected through a questionnaire from 300

respondents with open ended questions. We went to the field three times, the first time to see the Fon.

Participation in the research was based on the willingness of the individuals and purposive sampling technique was used in the selection of participants.

The interview questions were semi-structured in nature. They were open ended questions. The interview focused on the type of language informants use in managing conflicts, how effective the linguistic features are in managing conflicts in Mundum. Another question required informants to say why they code switch during conflict management.

Three hundred questionnaires were distributed to the respondents. Through questionnaire the respondents were asked if there were conflicts in Mundum community, the causes of the conflicts and examples of language that fuels conflict in Mundum. Data was analysed using quantitative and qualitative approach to determine the presence of conflicts in Mundum community and how these conflicts are managed.

6. Ethical Consideration

The ethical considerations were respected by informing the participants about the steps that were to be taken in the research. The participants were informed that participation was voluntary and their position in Mundum community will not be affected. We also agreed with the participants about how their identifiable private information will be handled, managed, and disseminated.

7. Data Analysis and Interpretation of Results

In this section we will look at feedback from interview and questionnaire that we administered to informants and respondents in Mundum. What constitutes the analysis will be the language used in managing conflict in Mundum and the various linguistic strategies used by different informants in managing such conflicts as well as their effectiveness. Language used in managing conflict in this community sometimes calmed down belligerents in a case but sometimes, it rather fuelled the conflict.

A. Language that fuels conflicts in Mundum community

To be able to obtain aspects of language use that fuel conflict within the Mundum community, respondents were asked what they think fuels conflict and their responses are captured on the table below.

Table 1: Some major language related causes of conflict in Mundum

S/N	Language	Number	Percentage
1	Hate speech	100	33%
2	Juvenalian satire	25	8%
3	Pejorative language	95	32%
4	Loudness of voice	80	27%

From the table above, we see language related causes of conflict. From the selection what is needed is some major language related

causes of conflict. Hate speech has 100 respondents with 33%, followed closely by pejorative language with 95 respondents with 32%. Loudness of voice 80 respondents 27% and lastly juvenalian satire 25 respondents 8%. Therefore, from the table, it could be seen that hate speech, pejorative language, and loudness of voice are three major language related causes of conflict in Mundum. For the fact that juvenalian satire has 25 respondents and 8 it means it is another cause of conflict in Mundum but not a major one.

Concerning language related causes of conflict, the respondents were required to answer by indicating the linguistic features that cause conflict in their community. The question asked was: What are some language related causes of conflict? One hundred out of 300 answered that it was hate speech. Ninety-five said that it was pejorative language and eighty said that it was loudness of voice that fuelled conflict.

Table 2: Order of major language related causes of conflict

S/N	Language	Number	Percentage
1	Hate speech	100	33%
2	Pejorative language	75	32%
3	Loudness of voice	80%	27%
4	Juvenalian of voice	25	8%
5	Total	300	100

The above table shows the descending order of magnitude in terms of major language related causes of conflict. Hate speech tops the table. It means in Mundum, hate speech fuels conflict more than any other form of language. It incites a lot of problems

in Mundum community. Out of 300 respondents 100 responded that hate speech is a major language related cause of conflict, with 33%. From the table, it could also be seen that pejorative language moves closely to hate speech and it is another major language related cause of conflict. 95 respondents with 32% indicated that it is a major language related cause of conflict. However, hate speech is more than pejorative language with 5 respondents. It means that pejorative language could not be ignored as conflict inciting form of language. People in Mundum community hate pejorative language.

Loudness of voice is the third form of language related cause of conflict in Mundum, on the frequency another major language feature that ignites conflict in Mundum. Its' intensity cannot be compared to table. 80 respondents 27% ticked it. It could be concluded that, this form of language is hate speech and pejorative language.

Lastly on the frequency table is juvenilia satire with 25 respondents 8%. This form of language does not ignite conflict like hate speech pejorative language and loudness of ones voice.

Asked if all conflicts were caused by wrong use of language, the following responses were obtained:

Table 3: Are all conflicts caused by wrong use of language?

S/N	Response	Number	Percentage
1	Yes	-	-
2	No	300	100%
	Total	300	100%

Concerning conflicts caused by wrong use of language, the respondents were required to respond to the above question in terms of Yes or No. Three hundred (300) of the respondents answered No (100%) not all conflicts in Mundum are caused by wrong use of language.

In settling a dispute concerning the destruction of ones maize farm, it was observed that a focus group member was addressing both parties by saying, ''you know, you are brothers, it will not bring peace between the two of you if we tax you to pay for the maize eaten by your goat. We will only ask you to compensate for the destruction'' the result is that the mentioned of the word brother makes the parties in conflict to become aware that they are one, even though not blood brothers. The Fon said during interview that in conflict management he will tell the disputants:

> Can you not see how dangerous it will be to continue in this quarrel? If you do not leave this attitude, you will soon be yelling for help from outsiders. Can you not know that this will cause you harm in the future if you do not desist from this malicious intent? have you not taken note that for the past years this village has been in a state of peace?

This is categorised under pathos in rhetoric. The Fon said the disputants will desist from quarrels or any form of an act that could result to conflict when he uses the above indented sentences.

In an observation forum in the council of elders above 60 years it was mostly observed that they were using metaphors to appease an aggrieved party during conflict management.

Metaphors will assuage the bitterness on the aggrieved party's heart. The way they used metaphors was quite interesting. One of the elders was addressing a disputant thus: "do you know that you are a pillar in this community? Do you know that you are an eye of the Kwifor in this community and quarrel should not come from you?" For someone to be addressed as a pillar in the community and also an eye of the Kwifor, is like adding a red feather on his cap. It is attributing a place of importance to him in the community. The metaphor "pillar" and "eye" are used for appeasement.

In the courtroom of the quarterheads, an interview was conducted and what was discovered was the fact that they were using a language feature caption as contextual recall of antecedent. It could be heard from one of the quarterheads saying that they use this strategy to make the parties in conflict undergo a quick retrospection, it puts them in sober reflection before the mediator says what he is out to talk to the parties in conflict. The quarterhead said, it was the use of such language that brings a close to the case of the conflicting parties, most especially the one who is attacking the other.

The quarterhead said words like, "your action is their death", "your decision is their life". Pointing at and addressing the parties concerned will make them refrain from any act of attack.

During an interview with the Kwifor, a secret society in Mundum responsible for managing conflicts and helping the Fon in matters of the village traditional laws, they said, most often, they use proverbs to resolve serious issues in the village. They quoted some proverbs such as, "It is the beginning of war that we know, nobody

can tell how it will end''. The explanation the Kwifor gave was that, it is better to avoid conflict and interpersonal problems because no one knows how it will end. As far as the effectiveness of this proverb is concerned, the Kwifor said the proverb acted as a deterrent to a possible uprising of a conflict and also stops a conflict which is in progress, that it brings to the understanding of the parties in conflict that conflict, like war can be disastrous.

In another instance another Kwifor member used in managing a conflict the proverb which says, "nobody shows a mad man the road to the market''. In his explanation, a mad man can be likened to trouble and market symbolises anyone. He said that no one invites problems, so in conflict management the party at fault should not be blamed to an extent because he may be a victim of circumstances.

When we proceeded to another quarter council, we interviewed a quarterhead how he handles issues of conflict in his council. He said since the quarterheads do not use the police in the act of conflict management, what they do is just the application of some language features. Below, we can see the use of indexical.

> It is true as a man of peace I know how important peace is. I have been in this council for years. You can attest to it. I have always desired to see that every case brought here should be resolved amicably. We can both attest to the fact that no party has ever left this quarter council with a counterpart of his and become enemies.

He is saying that he wants peace to reign between the parties in conflict in the community as a whole.

8. Discussion of Findings

The results presented in the preceding sections are the following: there are language features in Mundum community that fuel conflict. The dominantly used ones are hate speech 33% pejorative language 32% and loudness of voice 27%. These percentages reveal that the rate of conflict fuelled by hate speech in Mundum community is higher than any other language feature.

Another result presented is that of revealing if in Mundum what usually causes conflict is the wrong use of language? In this case all the respondents answered no, therefore (100%) said no. These percentages reveals that there are some other causes of conflict in Mundum that are not language related.

Another area of our focus was on the observation of the focus group discussion. We observed them to see the application of linguistic features in managing conflict. We observed this management of a case by the focus group. It was a case concerning the destruction of crops. A member of the team began by saying 'we are brothers and it will not benefit us when we allow problems beset us. "Crops yield finance for the wellbeing of your brother and his family, and goats equally yield finance for you, so by this reason you are requested to compensate your brother, and confine your animals''. We gathered that the noun "brother" was used here to let the two parties know that they are one, even though not blood brothers. It was discovered that hate speech ignites hatred between two persons and could result to the involvement of two families of those quarreling.

The second research question was, what were the language techniques used in conflict management.

In the discussion the informants mentioned some lexical items operating under a familiar semantic field. Such lexical items included brother, sister and friend. In conflict management the mention of such words appeals to the sense of family hood.

Another language technique was rhetoric, the informants mentioned rhetoric as an essential element in a mediator's tool kit. This feature was mostly used by those who hold positions of responsibilities in the community such as the Fon and the quarter heads.

The third research question is to show how these language expressions contribute in conflict management in Mundum community. They use lexical items such as brother, sister and friends it brings to the people in the community the idea of being together as a family. It is conceived that reminding disputants that they are brothers, sisters, or friends will bring peace to them since they fight but enemies and not family members.

The use of proverbs is an effective means to manage conflict in Mundum. When people quarrel over a piece of land and bracing up for a fight, a mediator will use the proverb which says: "It is the beginning of word that we know, nobody can tell how it will end". It means it is better to avoid conflict and interpersonal problems because no one knows how it will end.

The peculiarity of this work is that it focuses on the methods in which conflict could be managed. The work finds its quality of being new in its attempt to gather and analyse data that goes beyond methods used in conflict managements by touching language strategies in the area of paralanguage and linguistic features like proverbs.

9. Conclusion

Language users can construct language strategies to meet up with their various aims. Language can be used to manage conflicts as well as ignite conflicts. So, language users can manipulate it in any form they like which would satisfy their needs or suit their purpose. The work has established that language and conflict have a kind of "chicken and egg" relationship. Language use creates conflict and conflict creates a type of language to be used in managing it. A lot can still be researched in relation to this topic. Cameroon has about 283 languages Fenning (2021) so a different community could use linguistic features peculiar to that community to manage conflicts. Also, there have been conflicts after 2022 where this work ends. Therefore, other researchers can decide to carry out research on such conflicts.

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The Issue of Students' Background in Interpreter Training in the Advanced School of Translators and Interpreters (ASTI) of the University of Buea

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Abstract

This study is an attempt to define the profile of the ideal interpreter trainee in the context of the Advanced School or Translators and Interpreters (ASTI) of the University of Buea. It specifically examines some components of differences amongst interpreter trainees. The analysis is based on data collected from lecturers and archives of ASTI. The methodology consists in seeking the opinion of selected lecturers and correlating data collected from archives in order to ascertain the existence of particular trends. Instruments for the research are interviews and documentary analysis. From the analysis, it appears that in the specific context of ASTI, prior translation training tends to be an asset for the interpreter trainee. However, it may also impede interpreter trainee performance. Besides, other socio-educational and socio-psychological factors, as well as a gamut of individual learning strategies must not be neglected if we are to attempt to draw a comprehensive profile of an ideal interpreter trainee in this specific context. The study further suggests that every effort should be made to shift the focus of trainees with a translation background from the word to the idea, and to harmonise the prior translation experience within the framework of the general programme and the design of objectives so that this experience is carefully managed to maximise interpreter trainees' performance. The study recommends that trainees with a background in translation, on their part, should add to their prior translation training the attitude towards hardwork and the right motivation.

Key Words: Interpreter, Translator, Training, Background, Performance

1. Introduction

The Advanced School of Translators and Interpreters (ASTI) was created by Presidential Decree N°551/CAB/PR of 07 August 1985, in a bid to fulfil national needs in translators and interpreters, with particular attention to the public service. The first batch of translation students effectively commenced training toward a Master's degree during the 1985/1986 academic year. Since inception, training in translation has sustainably been a two-year postgraduate programme, which admits holders of at least a first degree in any discipline. ASTI therefore recorded its very first translation graduates in 1987. Its interpretation programme was set up in 1988 as a one-year post graduate programme operating, like the whole higher education in Cameroon, under the average system. Till 2008, it was exclusively open to holders of a master's degree in translation. Its first batch of trainees graduated in 1989. The reform of 1993 transformed the then Buea University Centre into the fully-fledged University of Buea which adopted the Anglo-Saxon tradition with the credit system. This development was announced in May 1991 and confirmed by decree No. 92/074 of 13 April 1992.

However, 'the higher educational reforms that gave birth to the Bachelor, Master, and PhD (BMP) system in 2006 sought to focus more attention on competency-based approaches to learning' (Sakwe, 2014). Thus, after the ratification of the Bologna Process establishing the BMP system, from the 2008/2009 academic year, the interpretation programme changed into a Master's programme and therefore, moved from one to two years with thesis writing and defence, and was no longer open exclusively to MA degree holders in translation.

Thus, since 2008, students admitted into the interpretation programme at ASTI are holders of a Bachelor's degree in any disciple,

just like is the case for translation. However, many students admitted happen to be also holders of a Master's degree in translation.

Researchers are still debating whether it is preferable to study translation prior to studying interpretation or not. As an interpreter trainer, the author came to realise in the course of delivering training that even amongst interpretation students who exhibit a good mastery of their working languages, more often than not, the incidence of their prior translation background stems up at the level of their performance. In order to avoid hasty conclusions, a decision was made to carry out this study as a contribution to answering the question of the importance of a translation background in a successful interpretation training.

Targeting the interpreter training programme of the Advanced School of Translators and Interpreters (ASTI) of the University of Buea Cameroon, and spanning from 2008 to 2017, this article therefore aims at assessing the incidence of prior translation training on interpreter trainees' performance. Covertly, it is an attempt to define the profile of ideal interpreter trainee in the ASTI context, behind the hypothesis that interpretation training is more effective when trainees have a translation background.

2. Background

As an academic discipline, interpretation is relatively young, and very few contributions have been published on the structure and contents of its curriculum. Nevertheless, there is widespread agreement on some basic principles, as shown by the AIIC recommendations on the criteria that must be met by interpreter

training courses (Mackintosh 1995, 1999, cited by Sandrelli, 2005). In short, applicants to conference interpreting courses should have a university degree or equivalent and must pass an entrance exam, aimed at verifying their language skills, their ability to analyse texts, and their general knowledge. Students should be trained in both consecutive and simultaneous interpreting, and the course structure should reflect actual market demands, particularly as regards working language combinations. Professional ethics must be taught and interpreter trainers must be practising interpreters themselves. Finally, external examiners from international or national organisations should be present at the final examining sessions (Sandrelli, 2005).

Four models of interpreter training programmes are generally adopted across the world (Renfer, 1992, cited by Sandrelli, 2005): the two-tier system, in which interpreter training follows translator training; parallel training, in which students have to choose between translator and interpreter training at the beginning of the course; the Y-model, in which students choose between translator or interpreter training after a common trunk, and postgraduate interpreter training. Al-Zahran (2007:79-81) gives more details about each model.

2.1 The Two-Tier System
In this model, students must go through a translator training programme where they acquire theoretical and practical aspects of translation and communication. After graduation, students have the choice of entering the market as translators or move on to the interpreting department after an admission test. During the interpreting course, students are trained extensively in consecutive interpreting (CI) and simultaneous interpreting (SI) before they are awarded a

certificate in conference interpreting (Renfer 1992: 176-179, cited by Sandrelli, 2005). Many advantages are attributed to this system. Firstly, students will have acquired enough general knowledge, theoretical background and practical experience to envisage moving into an interpretation programme with more serenity. Secondly, they will know that they have to develop an interest in a number of issues like current affairs, new developments in technology, science, politics, economics, cultures, etc., even if this attitude was not part of their habits. Thirdly, they will better know how to exploit the tools which will help them in their professional career such as dictionaries, encyclopaedias, libraries, etc. Finally, the acquisition of language and translation skills early in the course will allow students who move on to the interpretation course to concentrate solely on interpretation techniques and skills such as flexibility, improvisation, oral expression, etc.

2.2 The Parallel Translator and Interpreter Training

In this model, students have the option to focus on either translation or interpretation. Training is delivered in relatively shorter time than in the previous system; it is recommended for mature students who must have acquired the necessary background knowledge in linguistics and general knowledge in a different previous environment (Renfer 1992: 180f, cited by Sandrelli, 2005).

2.3 The 'Y-model' of Translator and Interpreter Training

In this model, the two-tier system and the parallel approach are combined. After a common part for all students (2 years), the programme splits into two branches: one for translation (2 years) and the other for interpretation (2 years). The common section's curriculum is dedicated to the development of language skills, cultural background, translation theory and practical work on a variety of text types. An eliminatory intermediate examination divides students into translation students and interpretation students (Renfer 1992: 181f, cited by Sandrelli, 2005).

2.4 Postgraduate Interpreter Training

This type of programme is offered by interpreter training schools and international organisations. Students without any prior training in translation or interpretation are admitted with those with a certificate in translation. The problem is the lack of the necessary background and theoretical knowledge. But being trained at international organisations exposes trainees to real practical aspects of the interpretation process. However, they may have difficulties working in alien environments. Besides, some students may lack awareness for example in the theoretical components and communication processes inter alia (Renfer 1992: 183, cited by Sandrelli, 2005). Renfer (1992:183f, cited by Sandrelli, 2005) is

> in favour of the two-tier model because his experience at the Zurich School shows that the failure rate among postgraduates in examinations and on the market is higher than that among students who have gone through a comprehensive translation and interpreting programme. Moreover, Padilla and Martin (1992: 196) argue that training students who have a background in translation as interpreters is easier than teaching those with no knowledge of translation because both translation and interpreting are after all 'concerned with communication', and the essential element is that students should be made aware of the differences between written and oral communication (al-Zahran, 2007:81).

The level of preparedness that prior training in translation may offer at entry to an interpreter training programme can also be acquired at undergraduate level. In short, unlike translator training which is strongly represented at undergraduate level, the most common model situates the training of conference interpreters at postgraduate level.

Thus, at postgraduate level, ASTI moved from the Two-tier model (translator training-admission test-interpreter training) to a mix of Parallel Translator and Interpreter Training model (option to focus on either translation or interpretation) and Postgraduate Interpreter Training model (students without any prior training in translation or interpretation are admitted with those with a certificate in translation). The recent launching, in 2019, of the BA in translation, interpretation, and intercultural studies will later make the ASTI programme a full cycle of 'Y-model' of Translator and Interpreter Training (a combination of the two-tier system and the parallel approach). This will happen when the first BA batch graduates after four years.

Al-Zahran (2007) is of the opinion that the Postgraduate Interpreter Training model (the one currently applied in ASTI) may prove very difficult to apply in purely academic training settings because of the heterogeneous nature of the class, with some students drawing from their background as translators and others showing limitations in that necessary asset.

How 'necessary' is that asset in the context of this research? Empirical data collected and analysed over a certain period of

time will help the researcher attempt an answer in the specific context of ASTI.

Besides, Niska (2005) writes as follows:

> Though both require the ability to transfer a text expressed in one language into another, in performance the two processes of translation and interpreting respectively draw upon fundamentally different aptitudes and skills. The execution of a written translation permits (long) reflection and the consultation of documents and auxiliary material, whereas all forms of interpreting presuppose that this has already taken place and exploit the interpreter's rapidity and spontaneity in conveying an immediately comprehensible text. A course profile for interpreting would therefore include or presuppose a certain level of translation skills, and (...) part of the course profile for translation will be considered a prerequisite for a course in conference interpreting in undergraduate courses irrespective of whether the final degree is one of translation and/or interpreting. (European Language Council 1999)

What happens in a class where some students have none of the translation skills Niska considers 'a prerequisite for a course in conference interpreting'?

3. Literature Review

Sawyer (2004) warns that:

> There are little empirical data on whether translation ability, or basic competence in consecutive interpreting, should be required at specific points in the curriculum progression or whether translation ability should be a prerequisite for consecutive course work, which in turn would be a prerequisite for classes in simultaneous interpreting. In this matter it is interesting to note that, on the program level, the notion has been challenged in traditional instructional design "that a large amount of prerequisite instruction must take place before a student is ready to practice complex, real-world performance" (Derry & Lesgold 1996:804).

However, the following was gathered from a cursory glance at the literature. Studies on learners' differences have gained grounds in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) studies and have progressively

been adopted in interpretation in the works of Think Aloud Protocol (TAP) methodologists. In SLA for instance, the works of Gardner and Lambert (1972) and Shuy and Fasold (1973) on attitudes concerning language learning provide the underlying generality that favourable attitudes and motivation can contribute to the ease and depth of interpretation learning. Lambert (op. cit.) considers interpreters as special people and relates their interpretation competence to their bilinguality, a determining factor in interpretation performance. He goes on to observe that it may be that their bilinguality, a composite of their socio-educational background, has the effect of providing them with special forms of prior knowledge, sensitivity, and skills which are indispensable in successful learning.

The works of Gardner (1972) and his colleagues suggest that basic social attitudes provide a positive or negative predisposition towards learning in general and interpretation learning in particular. In respect of his/her cognitive development, the trainee interpreter's output is also dependent on the socio-educational environment, in particular the relative status of the curriculum and the logistics put in place to implement it. Depending on whether the curriculum and logistics are socially valued in his/her environment, the trainee will develop different attitudes, which would impact positively or negatively on his/her output in interpreting. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that all factors related to teaching and curriculum, are held constant. These authors do not make any discrimination between a translation-related socio-educational background and a non-translation-related one.

Toury (1995), a major translation/interpretation scholar opines that there is a "predisposition" for interpreting. However, some other individual learner characteristic factors such as age, socio-psychological factors (attitude, motivation), personality, cognitive style, and learning strategies are necessary to apply this specialised predisposition (aptitude) to interpretation learning. His view emphasises the importance of socio-psychological variables and social factors in interpretation learning. At this point, Toury's "predisposition" doesn't highlight translation in particular.

Although very little is known about the acquisition of translational competence as compared to language acquisition, it is suspected that translational competence is not acquired by transferring linguistic structure, but by interacting with the participants in the interpretation situation (Toury 1995:248-58). In lay terms, this relates to the common complaint heard among professionals that students may know a lot about language but cannot handle interpretation requirements imposed by an actual interpretation task. Interpreter training thus needs to facilitate the acquisition of translational competence through communicative interpretation tasks (authentic assignments with specification of the purpose, audience and other contextual/pragmatic factors).

Interpretation as a form of language use, is not a language transfer exercise or a search and replace operation, but an activity performed with the objective of achieving a particular communicative function across cultural and linguistic barriers.

In sum, SLA/language teaching and interpreter training are moving in the same direction: facilitating language acquisition through emphasis on language use for communication, rather than on language as a mere formal construct.

More recently, Azambou (2019:374) highlights as worth noticing, the preference of many stakeholders for the former ASTI training model which admitted only students with a background in translation into the interpretation programme. The study further reveals that 87.5% of lecturers on the programme would advise students to train in translation first, the reasons being because translator training would better prepare them for interpreter training.

Considering the fact that much less attention has been paid to the translational competence among the individual differences of the trainee interpreter as a person in interpretation learning, this research intends to pursue this domain and hopes to add to the literature of interpretation learning. The study of the trainee interpreter's performance and the factors that correlate therewith is or should be the central figure in any teaching/learning process in interpretation education. In cases where increased institutional support is given to the trainee's profile, more positive attitudes towards learning interpretation may begin to be expressed overtly and quantitatively.

4. Theoretical Framework

The management-oriented evaluation CIPP (Context, Input, Process and Product) model was adopted and used for this study.

This model was developed by Daniel Stufflebeam from 1971 onwards. Its original purpose was to 'delineate, obtain, and provide useful information for judging decision alternatives' (Stufflebeam, 1971:267). The overt or covert, direct or indirect aim of all evaluation endeavour is to inform decision-making. The BMP reform that the interpreter training programme of ASTI underwent in 2008 seems to have been dictated more by external factors than internal ones. Internally motivated decisions on the programme must be based on some scientifically established trends like those the present study strives to highlight. The information ensuing thereof can help 'judge decision alternatives'. This theory provides us with the necessary theoretical base to examine some elements of the Context and Input dimensions of the ASTI interpreter training programme in this research.

The model distinguishes four types of evaluation:
- *Context evaluation* – which helps in planning and developing objectives;
- *Input evaluation* – which helps to determine the design by examining capability, resources and different strategies;
- *Process evaluation* – which helps to control the operations by providing on-going feedback;
- *Product evaluation* – which helps to judge and react to the programme attainments in terms of outputs and outcomes.

It is understood here that the type of input brought into the programme may determine the type of product expected at the end of the training process.

Another theory which seems to be particularly relevant as underpinning to this study is Constructivism. Brinner (1999: 1), cited by Stuff (2004), writes as follows:

> Constructivism can claim a long and prestigious heritage: Dewey, Piaget, Bruner, and, perhaps most importantly today, Vygotsky, are all taken to endorse the constructivist cause. While the influence of postmodernism and constructivism on the field of applied linguistics in general and SLA research in particular are hard to separate, one can easily appreciate how much more strongly the latter impinges on theories of learning. Constructivist learning is based on students' active participation in problem-solving and critical thinking regarding a learning activity which they find relevant and engaging. They are 'constructing' their own knowledge by testing ideas and approaches based on their prior knowledge and experience, applying these to a new situation, and integrating the new knowledge gained with pre-existing intellectual constructs.

In 'reformed' interpretation classes, which are a mix of students with a translation background and students without a translation background, each participant builds their own knowledge based on their prior experience. This study is precisely trying to measure the impact of a particular aspect of experience on the learning process.

5. Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative approach to collect data. First, short interviews were conducted with lecturers of interpretation. Four of them were identified and selected and they agreed to have their opinions recorded. The selection was not at random. Actually, these lecturers all had more than ten years of interpretation teaching practice and some are even administrators in interpretation programmes. It was deemed proper to interview experienced lecturers since they are the ones fully in touch with interpreter trainees. Table 1 presents the questions that were asked to interviewees in 2018.

Table 1: Questions asked during the interview

N°	Question
1	What skills do you consider necessary for interpreting?
2	Does prior translation training have an impact on trainee interpreters' performance?
3	What to you are those individual variables that could account for the discrepancy that exist among trainee interpreters' performance?
4	It appears trainees have different motivations bringing them to study interpretation. Do you think motivation is equally an important factor?
5	Do you think the trainee's personality has an impact on their performance?
6	Could the learning styles of trainees have a bearing on their performance?
7	Can the social background of trainees affect their performance?
8	Trainees have different attitudes towards the profession, do you think it has a bearing on their performance?
9	What needs to be done to improve trainee performance?

Secondly, interviews were completed by a focused documentary analysis of programme documents from archives including portfolio sources (students' results) to validate/correlate learner's characteristics and performance. Interpreters' performance could also

be as a result of the university system, evaluation system, the curriculum, etc. These variables were held constant.

Information from the archives was classified into two sections: information on trainees with a background in translation, and information on trainees without a background in translation. The trends for both groups were then compared after calculation

6. Some Background Data

From the 2008/2009 academic year when the system changed into the BMP system, admitting both candidates with and without a background in translation, statistics showed some concerning trends. For example, Table 2 provides an idea of the general success rate in the programme from 2008 to 2016:

TABLE 2: GENERAL FAILURE AND GRADUATION STATISTICS IN INTERPRETATION FROM 2008 TO 2017 (BMP SYSTEM, M.A., 2 YEARS WITH THESIS) [SOURCE: ASTI ARCHIVES]

N°	Batch	N° of stdts admitted	N° of stdts pass in 2 years (FE+TWD)	N° of stds not pass in 2 years	% Failure	N° of stds pass in more than 2 years	N° of stdts not pass	% stdts not pass
1	2008/2010	07	04	03	43%	02	01	14%
2	2009/2011	11	01	10	91%	03	07	64%
3	2010/2012	13	00	13	100%	06	07	54%
4	2011/2013	11	02	09	82%	06	03	27%
5	2012/2014	10	01	09	90%	03	06	60%
6	2013/2015	14	00	14	100%	03	11	78%
7	2014/2016	10	03*	07	70%	00	07	70%
8	2015/2017	10	03	07	70%	03	04	40%
Total	8 batches	86	14*	72	84%	26	46	53%

*The three (03) students of the 2014/2016 batch, including one Cameroonian, were admitted under the OIF (Organisation internationale de la Francophonie) scholarship scheme.

These statistics show that since 2008, and over 8 batches, 53% of the students admitted onto the programme never graduated, and very few (16%) have completed the programme within its two years duration, including final examination (FE) and thesis writing and defence (TWD). This relatively high percentage of students who never graduated is among the reasons that justify this research, in an

attempt to identify the underlying factors of failure in the programme. It is worth noting that the three (03) students of the 2014/2016 batch who happen to have completed their programme within its two years duration were beneficiaries of the OIF scholarship scheme, and would have seen their stipend suspended if they had not done so. This, with other data presented in this study, is evidence of the fact that completing the programme within its two years duration, including thesis writing and defence, is not an impossible requirement to satisfy. Why this is hardly done in ASTI (Interpretation) calls for explanation and, possibly, remedy.

Also worthy of note is the fact that out of the 46 students (53%) who never graduated, 30 students (65%) have successfully completed their final examination which technically qualifies them as professional interpreters, but they never wrote and defended their research project, which disqualifies them for formally graduating from the university.

Failure and dropout rates in the programme were also analysed over three landmark periods. The following table summarises the situation:

TABLE 3: EVOLUTION OF THE GENERAL FAILURE AND DROPOUT RATES OVER THE PERIODS 1988-1993 (AVERAGE SYSTEM), 1993-2008 (CREDIT SYSTEM), AND 2008-2017 (BMP SYSTEM)

Period	Failure rate	Dropout rate
1988-1993 (average system)	25%	15%
1993-2008 (credit system)	51%	27%
2008-2017 (BMP system)	84%	52%
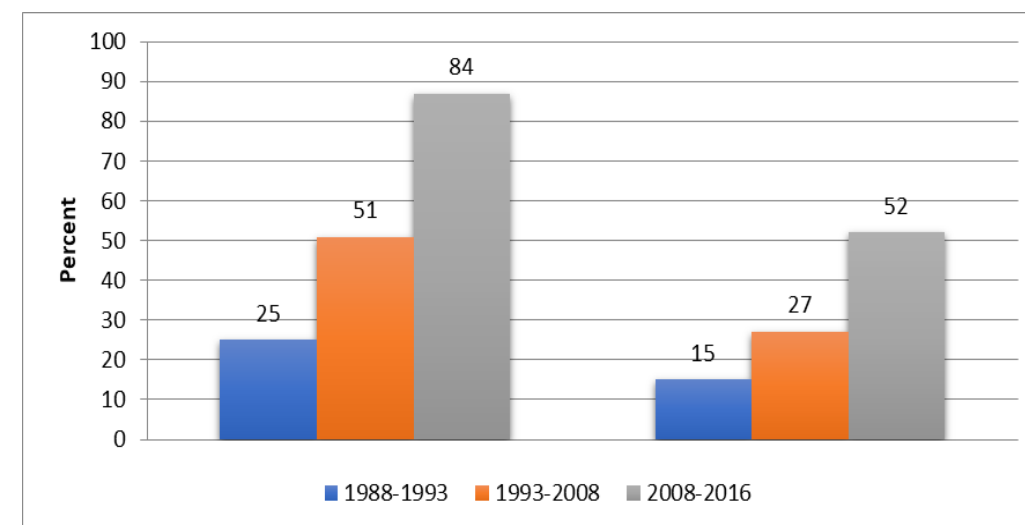
Figure 1: Variation in general failure and dropout rates over some landmark periods

From 1988 to 2008, the failure and dropout rates can be noticed not to be particularly alarming (25% and 15% for the period 1988-1993, and 51% and 27% for the period 1993-2008, respectively), in comparison with what obtains in other interpreter training programmes in the world. But these figures jump up to 84% and 52% for failure and dropout respectively for the period 2008-2017. The figures apply generally to the programme, without any discrimination between students with a background in translation and those without a background in translation.

In view of these statistics, and given the heterogeneous nature of the class, it became urgent to conduct a study to determine if a specific category of students was more inclined to failure and/or dropout than another, more specifically, if students with prior translation training were more inclined to failure or success than others.

7. Data Analysis

Answering the question of the skills necessary for interpreting, the four lecturers interviewed talked about a good command of working languages, a proper voice, versatility of the mind, the ability to multitask and readiness to learn as well as openness to change.

As to knowing if prior translation training has an impact on interpreter trainees' performance, all the lecturers were of the opinion that the answer is Yes to a large extent. Such trainees adopt a more thorough approach to interpretation and they are in the position to better process information before they deliver, and most often the language problems have already been dealt with. They most often have leverage in terms of vocabulary and language register. However, it could play negatively in the sense that a trainee with a translation background will want to pay so much attention to the choice of words and it takes much time for them to process, render and to understand that the interpreter has just a split second to make decisions.

On the question of whether attitude and motivation were important in interpretation learning, the four lecturers were unanimous that they are absolutely important.

Requested to say whether, to their opinion, the trainee's personality and learning style have an impact on interpretation learning, the lecturers were all of the opinion that interpretation is a sophisticated profession, thus, trainees' looks and how they appear is very important. The lecturers all said interpretation is a collaborative exercise, so the learning style is equally important.

The following table summarises interpretation lecturers' opinions from the interviews conducted.

Table 4: Summary of the opinions of interpretation lecturers in decreasing order of importance

N°	Variable	Remarks
1	Command of working languages, proper voice, versatility of the mind, ability to multitask, readiness to learn.	
2	Translation background	To a large extent. However, it could play negatively if trainee pays too much attention to the choice of words and takes much time to process, understand and render.
3	Attitude and motivation	
4	Personality and learning style	

It is worth noticing that among the four groups of variables examined, only Translation background was perceived by lecturers as also being a potential limitation for an interpreter trainee.

Finally, asked about the training model that could best fit the ASTI context, the two-tier system (training as translator before training as interpreter, former ASTI training model) was perceived by all the lecturers interviewed as their preferred interpreter training model for ASTI (see Azambou 2019, op. cit.).

7.2 Data from documentary analysis

In this section, data from programme archives are presented, with a view to highlighting any trend characteristic of students with or without a translation background.

Table 5: Best student analysis

Batch	No. enrolled	No. 'graduated' FE	Translation background 'graduated'	No translation background 'graduated'	No. not 'graduated' no FE	Best student
2008-2010	7	4	1	3	3	No translation background
2009-2011	11	5	1	4	6	Translator
2010-2012	13	6	5	1	7	Translator
2011-2013	11	7	6	1	4	Translator
2012-2014	10	4	3	1	6	No translation background
2013-2015	14	12	6	6	2	Translator
2014-2016	10	5	3	2	5	Translator
2015-2017	10	6	4	2	4	No translation background
Total	**86**	**49**	**29**	**20**	**37**	

From these statistics, we get to see that out of 8 batches, the Advanced School of Translators and Interpreters, Interpretation Division enrolled 86 students, a total of 49 (57%) have passed the final exam, 29 (59%) with prior translation background and 20 (41%) with non-translation background. Out of the 8 batches, translators have graduated 5 times (62.5%) as best students against 3 times (37.5%) for non-translators.

8. Discussion of Results

This study posits that interpretation training is more effective when trainees have a translation background. Away from the various opinions expressed in the literature for or against this hypothesis, this study aimed at gathering contextual data to support any pronouncement on this highly debated issue. The findings reveal that translators had a tendency to be more thorough in their approach to interpretation and they process information before they deliver. However, there are some exceptional cases of very brilliant trainees without a translation background. No focus was put on the other disciplines in which the trainees had their first degrees; the role such factor could play in these findings is still to be investigated. Plurality in disciplines may also account for the individual differences that exist among trainees. Likewise, learners' cognitive background, personality, learning styles, attitude and motivational factors have a great role to play in interpretation learning, for socio-educational and socio-psychological factors to interpretation are crucial. Besides, the age difference of the trainees could account for differences in their performance because their backgrounds and level of exposure are different. However, experience does not necessarily mean age because some youngsters can bridge the gap by reading extensively.

Worthy of note is the fact that the graduation criterion used in this study is the final examination which technically, but not academically, qualifies graduates as professional interpreters. To be academically certified as interpreter, one additional requirement introduced by the BMP reform is an MA thesis writing and defence. It has been noticed that fulfilling this requirement is often a cause for delay in academic graduation. The reason for this is unclear and calls for another study.

9. Conclusion

It is generally admitted that training as an interpreter requires huge assets in general knowledge and a constant knowledge seeking attitude. Prior training as a translator may help develop these aptitudes in a potential interpreter, whereas candidates seeking admission into the interpretation programme just after their Bachelor's degree (any specialty) might not have had the opportunity to acquire the required knowledge, nor the right attitude. The BA in translation, interpretation, and intercultural studies which was launched at ASTI in 2019 may fill this gap by better preparing future Bachelor holders for joining the M.A. in interpretation programme under the BMP system; because the 'B', the 'M', and the 'P' of the BMP will be from the same area of study, or from close areas of studies. It is believed that this will contribute a great deal in feeding the M.A. in interpretation programme with more homogenous profiles, though heterogeneity might be perceived as an asset for the interpretation academic discipline and profession. However, many other elements and agents influencing the programme may be interconnected and interdependent within the system. Wolf-Branigin (2013:3) writes as follows:

> Complexity as a research paradigm has roots in the area of non-linear dynamics (how a system changes over time through a process that uses feedback to continually inform that system) and includes several components focusing on the interconnectedness of individuals and aspects within their environments.

This study stands as a contribution to the study of the relationship between profile and performance of interpreter trainees in ASTI in particular, and in the Cameroon context in general. It calls for further studies for a broader and more comprehensive picture of such a relationship.

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Medumba Language Use by Non-Natives: Factor of Social Integration or Singularity

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Abstract

The increasing and diversified internal mobility in the peri-urban and rural areas of Cameroon leads to a proliferation of cultures and a close contact between native and migratory languages. In such a plurilingual context, the coexistence of languages, practices and varieties with varying statuses and symbolism can be a source of dynamisation or alteration of the autochthonous languages whose intergenerational transmission is challenged by a defy of originality. This article examines the sociolinguistic impact of Medumba language use by non-natives, thereby addressing the question: What is the sociolinguistic impact of Medumba language use by non-natives? The theory of interactionism (Hymes 1972, Goffman 1974, Gumperz 1982, Kerbrat-Orecchionni 1990, 1998, 2009) which examines the interaction between language and society in order to understand the language practices resulting from situations of languages in contact frames this study. It argues that the permanent contact between languages and the interaction between their speakers have a considerable impact on their structures and uses. The analysis is based on previous work, verbal interactions and oral information collected through direct observation techniques, surveys and semi-structured interviews with informants. It reveals that Medumba language use by non-native speakers leads to the emergence of a composite language, representing a hybrid variety that incorporates the different cultural and social realities of the non-native communities. The use of those composite languages represents a communicative strategy implemented by non-natives to preserve their culture thereby ensuring communication with natives for a better living together.

Key Words: Medumba, non-native languages, living together

1. Introduction

Whether in Africa, Europe or in the rest of the world, migratory phenomena are accompanied by language contact and linguistic variation. They create the desire for integration and interaction, and generate situations of plurilingualism that gradually make linguistic homogeneity a myth and a scientific curiosity. From a sociolinguistic point of view, this linguistic diversity is reflected on heterogeneous language practices produced by plurilingual speakers with varied linguistic skills, resources, and repertoires (Léglise 2017). In addition, it represents a major challenge for the protection of indigenous and minority languages. According to Piebop (2019), in a situation of multilingualism, there are cases where languages assume equal or different statuses, strength and power. Some languages may, depending on the types of relationships they have, become neutralized or, on the contrary, become dominant. The languages in the process of being dominated can in some ways, develop strategies to revitalise themselves and counter the hegemony of the dominant languages, or they can accept this domination and, in some ways, cooperate peacefully.

The Medumba cultural area is a multilingual environment characterised by a long-term coexistence between indigenous and migratory languages of other localities and regions of Cameroon. As in all situations of languages in contact, this coexistence involves either a peaceful collaboration characterised by an alternate use of indigenous and non-indigenous languages or a conflictual collaboration characterised by a preponderance of indigenous or migrant languages in social communication as well as a structural impact of migrant languages on indigenous languages and vice versa.

This study questions the sociolinguistic impact of Medumba use by non-native speakers. The research question involves a deep analysis

of the impact at the level of the language and the society. More precisely, it examines whether the use of Medumba by non-natives is characterised by a decontextualisation of the uses or a dynamisation. On the other hand, it takes a look on the socialisation of non-native speakers with the view to see if their practice of Medumba represents a factor of integration or singularity.

In its sociolinguistic acception, the dynamisation of a language means the phonological, morphological or lexical enrichment of the language by the introduction of items reflecting the imported realities, foreign to the culture of the natives. In addition, it can lead to the development of alternative language practices, resulting from intercultural assimilation. The decontextualisation of a language implies the modification of the language by the non-natives in order to better adapt it to the needs of communication. It is also reflected on conflicts of subsistence between the altered and the original languages.

The first question of the problem, that is, the impact of the practice of non-natives on the language is observed from the point of view of native speakers through the direct observation of, and indirect interactions between non-natives and natives. The second question of the problem, that is, the societal impact is observed from the point of view of non-natives through the same methodological process. To address the different aspects of the problem, the study has adopted a morpho-syntactic and socio-pragmatic analysis of the data and information resources. The morpho-syntactic analysis involves the identification of word and word processes through which items have been introduced in the discourse by non-natives and accepted by the Medumba community for communication purposes. The socio-pragmatic is dedicated to the understanding of the logic of the insertion and acceptance of lexical items in Medumba discourse and by extension, the Medumba linguistic community. In general, the study follows the empirico-inductive data analysis method which is fundamentally a corpus-based approach involving interpretation of scientific phenomena through empirical materials. The study is built in four sections. The first section presents the state of the research through various previous publications addressing different aspects of the phenomenon under study. The second section brings up the theoretical framework and research methodology. Section three deals with data collection and method of analysis. In section four, data analysis is followed by discussion of research the results. The study ends with orientations and recommendations regarding the protection of native languages in Cameroon.

2. **State of the Research**

Language contact and linguistic interaction between native and non-native speakers have drawn a wide attention in sociolinguistics and still witness extensive research. Many of the publications have adopted an interdisciplinary approach to the discussion of the subject. They have also widened the debate over native language acquisition and practice by non-natives with relevant issues and unprecedented contributions.

The Zinszer et al (2014) view of native language acquisition, learning and practice by non-natives focused on lexical categorisation

and dual challenge in vocabulary learning. They tested Chinese-English bilinguals in China and in the US on a lexical categorisation task and examined which L2 learner's language history variables (length of immersion, L2 training, age of L2 onset, and code-switching patterns) and language variables (e.g., native speaker agreement on picture naming) predict performance on this task. The authors reported that words with high name agreement and few alternate names elicited high performance; at the same time, immersion, age of L2 onset and code-switching patterns contributed positively to learners' performance.

Sköldvall (2015) investigated whether a non-native speaker interaction constitutes a good learning situation in the teaching of English as a foreign language in Swedish secondary schools. The discourse analysis performed in his study has provided detailed information on the interaction among intermediate language learners. Through a qualitative mode of analysis, it was possible to show how the pupils assisted each other in order to overcome problems and why the strategies and techniques that they used can facilitate the learning process. Breakdown in communication occurs frequently in the studied conversations between non-native speakers of English since they acquired it differently. To instantly repair their lacks and achieve collective comprehension, the speakers prefer the other-repair approach. In other words, they collaborate and help each other to produce acceptable contributions to the interaction. When they lack a specific vocabulary item, they replace it with a similar word and incorporate it into the turn. As such, they do not halt the

conversation when a key word is missing but find ways to circumvent the problem.

Focusing on behavioral and neuroimaging research, Pliatsikas & Chondrogianni (2015) indicate that it is largely accepted in the relevant literature that successful learning of one or more non-native languages is affected by a number of factors that are independent of the target language(s) per se; these factors include the age of acquisition of the target language(s), the type and amount of instruction learners have received, as well as the amount of language use that the learners demonstrate. Besides, recent experimental evidence suggests that one crucial factor for efficient native-like performance in the non-native language is the amount of naturalistic exposure, or immersion that the learners receive in that language. This can be broadly defined as the degree to which language learners use their non-native language outside the classroom and for their day-to-day activities, and usually presupposes that the learners live in an environment where their non-native language is exclusively or mostly spoken.

Liddicoat (2016) provides a deep analysis of native and non-native speaker's identities in interaction. He believes that interaction between native and non-native speakers is characterised by a relationship of power. The relative power of native and non-native speakers as language users comes to shape the nature of interactions. In interactions with native speakers, there are two potentially salient positionings for non-native speakers: language user and language learner. As a communicator, the non-native speaker acts as language user. When, however, the focus of interaction moves from the content

of communication to the form of communication, this reconstructs the user as a learner and as a deficient communicator. When this is the case, the native and the non-native speaker are brought into an inequality as speakers of the language that is based on the ideology of the native speaker as the ideal competent language user. In these interactions, the native speaker takes up a position as having greater cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1982) than the non-native speaker by right of his/her knowledge of the language as native speaker. In such instances, linguistic affiliation is used as a basis for differentiation and to construct an asymmetry that confers status on the native speakers on the basis of the native speakers having something which the non-native speakers as learner is presumed to want and to lack - linguistic competence.

3. **Theoretical Framework**

This research is driven in the light of the theory of interactionism as developed by Goffman (1973, 1974, 1987), Gumperz (1962, 1964, 1968, 1969, 1982,1989a, 1989b, 1989c), Hymes (1967, 1972, 1974, 1984, 1991), 2009), Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson (1974), Strauss (1992), Sacks (1992), Schegloff (1992), etc. which represent the second generation of researchers who contributed to the scientific expansion of interactionism from the 1950's - 1990's, and Kerbrat- Orecchioni (1989, 1990, 1992,1994, 1994, 2005, 2009), Winkin (2001), Becker (2004) Cooter & Reutzel (2004), Codleanu (2009), etc. representing further authors who contributed to the enrichment of this theoretical field.

In this section, we will briefly discuss the consistency of interactionism, focusing on language acquisition and practice.

Interactionism is a multidisciplinary theoretical framework involving sciences of the physical world, human and social sciences. According to Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1998), interactionism is not a homogenous scientific domain, but rather an imported notion from both a geographical and a disciplinary point of view. It is in the field of American Sociology that this notion has simultaneously received its theoretical status, and its descriptive effectiveness. In linguistics, social interaction addresses among others, issues of language acquisition, language practice, language interaction and interpersonal communication. It is based on the principle that linguistic structures and uses are formed through interaction and it aims at helping understanding how languages are shaped through interaction. In addition, it assumes that language acquisition is influenced by the interaction of a number of factors such as: the physical, the linguistic, the cognitive, and the social (Cooter & Reutzel, 2004).

Following Hymes (1972), social interaction at the language level requires contextualisation because it is not enough to use a language or to know how to speak it well, but to know the contexts in which languages can be used with relevance within a community. For this reason, he speaks of the ethnography of communication, stigmatised in the notion of ''speaking''. At the interpersonal communication level, Goffman (1973: 23) speaks about the face-to-face interaction, which he designates as the reciprocal influence that the participants exert on their respective actions when they are in the immediate physical presence of others. On the other hand, Goffman discusses the

relevance of the notion of stigma in conversational interaction. He indicates that stigmata consist of attaching an image to a speaker, basing on language skills and more specifically on oral competence in a given language.

Thus, interactionism is the most relevant and appropriate approach to understand verbal interaction and address language acquisition and practice issues in linguistics (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1998).

The analysis of autochthonous language use by non-natives initiated in this paper is essentially based on verbal interactions. It involves a deep examination of the different linguistic resources used in interactions, with the prime objective to provide facts that will allow a holistic impact of autochthonous languages used by non-natives. At the methodological level, interactionism is a corpus-based analysis since it privileges the interpretation of a scientific phenomenon from the point of view of the informant and follows the descriptive empiricism, which implies work from corpora made up of recordings of interactions that are as authentic as possible.

4. Data Collection and Method of Analysis

This study is accompanied by a flood of publications on the subject, which helped to have the necessary information resources to design the conceptual framework of the analysis and to grasp the significance and the relevance of the problem. Using the sample of convenience, data was collected from natives and non-natives through individual and collective interviews, which were administered to them at the different stages of the research

(between 2022-2023). The native speakers were chosen following some principles like the age and the mastery of the language and the Medumba community history. The factor of age was determinant to provide a diachronic study of the interaction and influence relationship between native and non-native languages over the years. Participants of 70, 50 and 30 years were selected so as to obtain sufficient linguistic elements to discuss the above-mentioned issue. As for non-natives, participants in the two localities, namely Tonga and Bangangte were sampled for the analysis. The aim was to provide an objective analysis based on data from linguistic communities geographically or not geographically related to the Medumba community. Considering the affective factor[15] that governs the relationship between Medumba and its geographically close languages (the languages of the Grassfields) were considered as relevant. We assumed that the complementary relationship between Medumba and several Grassfields languages characterised by the introduction of processes such as code switching and code mixing in order to ensure an inter-comprehension and representativeness of the codes which impacted the use of Medumba.

The data obtained is made up of discourses through direct observation; oral, qualitative (and quantitative) information which particularly provides more insight in the understanding of the phenomenon. As indicated earlier, the analysis follows in general the

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[15] The affective factor in language use or interaction leads to a reciprocal use of the codes through discursive processes like code-mixing and code-switching. Speakers usually interact in the languages involve in communication without borrowing words or expressions. In case of a lack when using the language of their interlocutors, they come back to their languages and use their own term, in order not to break communication.

empirico-inductive and a corpus-based approach involving interpretation of scientific phenomena from the point of view of informants, i.e., through corpora made up of authentic recordings of interactions and discourses that lead to the deep understating of the different segments of a phenomenon before any analysis and interpretation. In particular, a morpho-syntactic study of the data leads to the identification of word and word processes through which items have been introduced in the discourse by non-natives and accepted by the Medumba community for communication purposes. Pragmatics involves contextual features of interactions. The context is used as the basis for interpreting what is said and decoding why it is said (Ehineni 2016). In this case, the study of the data from a socio-pragmatic standpoint contributes to the understanding of the logic of the insertion and acceptation of lexical items in Medumba discourse and by extension, the Medumba linguistic community. Also, it helps to understand the context and motivation surrounding the alternation between native and non-native languages in the Medumba cultural area.

5. **Data Analysis and Results**

The results of this research will be presented and discussed in this section which is the core point of the study in which the descriptive and analytic scheme of the linguistic impact of Medumba used by non-natives is constructed. It is designed in the discussion of the following questions addressed to informants through individual and collective semi-structured interviews.

A. **The linguistic impact of Medumba use by non-natives**

This first subsection is dedicated to the impact of Medumba used by non-natives at the level of the structure and the practice of the language. Let's remember that the analysis has been provided based on the point of view of the native speakers. After a clear explanation of the phenomenon and the key concepts, these questions were addressed to the informants. As indicated in the sampling, 50 informants were addressed this first question on the identification of non-natives and the others (150) were required to answer the other questions.

1) Do you know some non-natives that are among you?

Answers	Numbers	Percentages
Yes	50	100 %
No	0	0%

Table 1: Identification of non-natives 1

2) If yes where do they come from?

   A- *The West region*

   B- *Bamenda and Anglophones communities*

   C- *The Northern part of Cameroon*

   D- *The rest*

Answers	Numbers	Percentages
A	50	100%
B	50	100 %
C	50	100 %
D	5	10%

Table 2: Identification of non-natives 2

This question was a strategic introduction of the study, leading us to perceive the level of knowledge of the Medumba community by natives. As the answers indicate, the participants indicate that they have knowledge of the foreigners present among them. They note a strong presence of people coming from the West region, that they called "Ngraphi" meaning "Grassfields". In addition, they indicate a strong presence of people from Bamenda and other Anglophone communities of the North-West Region. In answer C of table 2, residents indicate a strong presence of the people originating from the North regions, that they usually called

"Nordistes" for the young and "Yaoussa" for the less young. The fourth category of foreigners very weakly represented in the Medumba community is what we call "the rest". It includes foreigners from all other localities other than those mentioned above. The natives call them "nkrwah", a name very commonly used to designate the Beti-fang and the people of the coast.

3) Do you speak the Medumba language with non-natives?

Answer	Number	Percentage
Yes	38	76 %
No	12	24 %

Table N^0 3: Medumba language use by non-natives

4) If yes, how do you appreciate the use of medumba by them?

A.Foreigners have a decontextualised communication style;

B.Foreigners express themselves in a rudimentary style;

C.Foreigners communicate by including expressions specific to their cultures

Answer	Number	Percentage
A	10	20%
B	15	30 %
C	25	50 %

Table 4: Medumba language use by non-natives

The data in 5 are illustrations of some interactions that have been observed between natives and non-native speakers. They highlight

the uses of the native language in interactions.

5) **Some interactions between natives and non-natives in different contexts**

A. *Interaction in the market (code mixing between French, Medumba and Pidgin English)*

- Speaker 1 (non-native): Bonjour mama ''Good morning mum''

- Speaker 2 (native): Bonjour ma fille mề fá kề wù ? "Good morning my son what shall i do for you?"

- Speaker 1: I di find na pepe to buy "I would like to buy pepe"

- Speaker 2: u fit fana at market B "You can only buy at market B"

- Speaker 1: Thank you.

B. *Interactions at home (code mixing between Medumba and a Grassfields language)*

- Speaker 1 (non-native): ndềbô "A word of appreciation in greetings to say Hello my dear"

- Speaker 2 (native): **ndềpá** "A word of appreciation in greetings to say Hello my dear"

- Speaker 1: mế tsjéŋ ú ŋkɔ̀k   ngế   **lók sú** á
  nề **lóksế**

      I   call you yesterday only   see you only to see

      "I was calling you yesterday only to see you"

- Speaker 2: **Pwóŋkế?** fù tʃûp mề

      Children P2 say me

"My children say it to me"

- Speaker 1: bú   gế   nền tsjến ndândʒû mế tʃúp
  mbề bù   **nế? ndàhá**

"They want go call but I said that they leave like that."

"They wanted to go and call you, but I said that they   should not disturb you''

C. *Interaction between a young native and non-native speaker who are going to the farm*

- Speaker 1 (native): ndề gế gars "Hello in a basic Medumba speaking"

- Speaker 2: mề lî "Hello in a basic Medumba speaking"

- Speaker 1: ù   nền á zît tʃwết

        You go which farm

   "You are going to which farm"

- Speaker 1: nsôŋgwá (the name of the place where the far is located)

- Speaker 2: nề wìt gí "to plant?"

- Speaker 1: ngá nề lû tʃàŋ "No to take food''

D. *Interaction at home between a less young non-native speaker and an old native speaker*

Speaker 1 (non-native): ozíá mere "Good morning mumy''

Speaker 2 (native): hềhềề **tâʃìn** bî zíà

                Yes   dear you sleep

          "Yes my dear how are you"

Speaker 1 (non-native): hềhềề bàk zí

                Yes we sleep

          "Yes we are fne''

hèhèɛ̀ bàk zí **nètá** (answer from a native speaker)

Yes we sleep fine

"Yes we are fne"

Speaker 2 (native): ù   gə́ nên á já

You going where

" Where are you going"

- Speaker 1: mə̀ gə́ nên á tʃwĕt

I PROG go farm

"I am foing to farm"

mə̀ gə́ nên á tʃwĕt **nə̀ făʔ nà** (answer from a

native speaker)

I PROG go farm to work farm

"I am foing to farm"

The expressions in bold in (5B) are the foreign expressions used by non-natives. Those in (5D) are expressions that could complete the answers of non-natives and make them conform to those of native speakers.

The issue of language used by non-native speakers is not unanimous among the respondents. As we can see in Table 3, a minority of informants indicates that foreign speakers do not speak the native language. The reasons given by the latter are related to the motivation for learning and using the language. Therefore, to ensure an efficient communication, natives prefer to speak French language with foreigners coming from the French-speaking regions and English or Pidgin-English most of the time, with those coming from the English-speaking regions. Thus, the possibility of using French and Pidgin-English as palliative

linguistic choices is a fundamental motivation for the lacks observed in Medumba learned and used by foreigners. Also, cultural preservation is an additional motivation of the lack of practice of the language by non-natives. Informants believe that non-natives do not learn and practice the local language in order to preserve their culture and protect themselves from the phenomenon of cultural engulfment or alteration.

In second language acquisition process, several studies have examined the factors that frame the practice and demonstrated that cultural preservation may be at the root of resistance to native language use. According to Bretegnier (1999), second language use, whether socially high or minority, is problematic for community integration and acceptance. Learning and practicing the language is a means through which speakers can feel recognised in the linguistic community to which they are seeking admission. However, it implies somehow the loss of the language and the redefinition of linguistic identity, which calls to question the real social identity of the subject. In another perspective, Laponce (1984) thinks that acquisition, prior to the practice of the language, is essentially motivated by intention. When the intention is instrumental and the effect is also purely instrumental, linguistic identity is not in question. However, an intention which, at the beginning could be purely instrumental can have disintegrating effects. We then observe in certain subjects who fear losing their basic linguistic identity, a certain resistance to the acquisition of the second language. He adds that a speaker needs the foreign language as an instrument of communication, so he learns it; but he fears that its acquisition will separate him and distance him

from the ethnic group which gives him his social identity.

The great majority of informants as indicated in the tables above believe that Medumba is a means of communication very often used by non-native speakers in their interactions with native speakers. In order to obtain a global opinion of the practice of the Medumba language by non-natives, we questioned the informants about the use of this language among children, young people and old speakers. The answers provided by the respondents, mainly in interviews and questionnaires provided relevant information that we have grouped into three levels of language, namely common speech, decontextualised speech and composite speech, allowing us to follow the objective of the study.

Common speech is used by non-native speakers with basic knowledge of the language. It is more used by children and young people and is characterised by rudimentary expression. Decontextualised speech is used by speakers with a good knowledge of the language, of the community and with a communicative style close to that of the native speakers, but different with regard to contextualisation. The expressions produced are certainly well pronounced and arranged in terms of syntax and semantics, but from the point of view of the context and pragmatic constraints, they lack certain components, notably proverbs, appreciative expressions, adages, adjectives, etc. The informants noted that this communicative style is recognised in people who have spent a very long time in the community and have learned the language in immersion. Language learning in a language immersion context has specificities and similarities with acquisition that many researchers in second language acquisition have scrutinised. According to Moret (2011), learning is a more laborious process because it is "conscious" and requires effort, whereas acquisition is a more natural phenomenon that occurs (almost) unconsciously. The immersion method is certainly on the borderline between the two processes. At the root of immersion is the assumption that learning a foreign language can be based on mechanisms similar to those underlying natural language acquisition. In the immersive perspective, communicative competence benefits from a real-life communicative context and a broader and easier level of adaptation to interactions. Immersion can be applied in different ways. However, the continuous exposure to language practice leads to the development of new communicative skills in a more natural way.

The third level of language expression is composite speech, characterised by code mixing, a practice by assimilation and lexical, semantic and pragmatic incorporation. It is more used by older people (between 50 and 65) with a proven knowledge and easy expression in both codes. In addition, it is more used by speakers of the Grassfields community, due to the proximity between Medumba and the Grassfields languages. Informants indicate that it is a communicative style that is very much integrated in the interactions between natives and non-native speakers of this age group and especially a dynamic style in the practice of Medumba. It is a sociolect, modeled by the older generation, because it reflects their perception that a young person can neither understand nor use. Piebop (2019) believes that this practice contributes to the dynamisation of the language, insofar

as it creates changes in the language that covers for the most part the areas of borrowing, proso-/phonology, connotations of idiomatic expressions, derivation, trans-categorisation, periphrases, calques, onomatopoeia, etc. In the same vein, Blanchet (2010) believes that a society is a system of cultural exchanges with symbolic values. In any society, ethno-socio-linguistic communication is fundamental to ensure understanding and communicative harmony between individuals. Regular social relations with people lead either to an occultation of otherness (ignorance of the relativity of cultural systems, and thus linguistic systems), or to a progressive integration of the interpretative references of others into one's own linguistic and cultural repertoire. The encounter with people leads to an appropriation of linguistic and cultural reference points.

B. The social impact of Medumba use by non-natives

This subsection focuses on non-native speakers. It aims to capture the social effect generated by their use of Medumba. After a clear explanation of their scope, we addressed the following questions to the informants:

    6) Why do you speak Medumba?

    A- Only for communication

    B- To integrate easily into the Medumba community

    C- To communicate and be accepted

Answer	Number	Percentage
A	10	28, 57%
B	15	42,85%
C	10	28,57%

Table 5: Motivation of Medumba use by non-natives

This question was addressed purposely, considering the impact of motivation in language learning, use and social integration. As the table indicates, the minority of informants indicate that they communicate in Medumba for strictly communicative purposes, that is, when a specific situation requires the use of the language. This type of motivation is found among non-natives who are strongly represented in the Medumba community, particularly non-natives from the Northem part of Cameroon and speakers from English-speaking regions. The majority of the informants indicated that they use the Medumba language to communicate. In a general observation, we find people who have a real project of inclusion and participation in the life of the community and who see the language as an entity carrying an additional cultural identity by which they wish to be defined. In order to facilitate the integration of foreign communities, community leaders, including the Chiefs and representatives of community groups have implemented a number of strategies. At the level of the higher chieftaincy, land has been granted to foreigners to allow them to settle and develop their abilities. This is how new neighborhoods such as Hausa Quarter in Tonga have been created in the community. At the neighborhood level, a mandatory neighborhood committee has

been created to bring together natives and foreigners for mutual and deep knowledge and assistance. In these committees, non-natives have the opportunity to express themselves in the official languages, Pidgin-English or Medumba. In the community groups, communication is mainly done in the local language. Although there is no official requirement to speak the local language, members need to know it in order to interact easily. This represents a challenge for non-natives who want to integrate into these groups.

7) Does speaking the Medumba language allow you to integrate into the community?

Answer	Number	Percentage
Yes	35	100 %
No	0	0 %

Table 6: Medumba use as a factor of integration of non-natives

8) If yes, how would you describe this integration?

A- *The community accepts us as part of theirs*

B- *The community includes us in their community activities*

C. The natives constantly communicate with us in Mendumba

Answer	Number	Percentage
A	0	0%
B	20	57,14 %
C	15	42,85 %

Table 7: Medumba use as a factor of integration of non-natives 2

As we can see in Table 6 above, the issue of language practice as a factor of integration is unanimously supported by the respondents. They believe that language use represents a strong lever of social integration; it breaks down barriers of exclusion and reveals an effort of integration that is rewarded by interaction with native speakers in the local language and the inclusion in community activities (see Table 7). However, language use alone does not ensure a full integration. Consider the following question:

9) How can you describe the non-integration of native speakers?

A- *The community considers us as foreigners although we speak the language*

B- *The natives communicate with us with difficulty in Medumba considering our practice as singular*

Answer	Number	Percentage
A	18	51,42%
B	17	48,57%

Table 8: Medumba use as a factor of singularity of non-natives

As Table 8 shows, speaking the local language does not guarantee to be considered as a native speaker. The differentiation or singularisation of non-native speakers is perceptible in the subjective reactions of the speakers, which can consist of stigmatisation or attestation, the valorisation or devaluation of a particular phonic realisation, a particular syntactic structure, the use of a particular lexeme, etc. Social integration is a more global and profound look on the practice of the language. It involves the implementation of communicative strategies that contribute to the apprehension of the communication apparatus in a given linguistic community. As Gumperz (1972) points out, in the broader perspective of a description of the speech patterns of an individual, a group or an entire society, the study of integration represents a possible look at a whole that includes: attitudes, opinions and values; economy of speech; personal voice. Attitude, as a response to a situation has a dynamic character. Focusing on his experiences, a speaker readjusts his attitudes, seeking to adopt those that are more successful, that integrate him more. Attitude is therefore not data constructed in an isolated way: it is in the interaction and according to the others that the subject adopts such or such attitude. Thus attitude has a primordial function in the social integration process, since it is a means of expressing one's values and opinions (Bretegnier 1999).

6. **Conclusion**

This article has examined the sociolinguistic impact of the practice of Medumba by non-native speakers in a context characterised by internal migratory phenomena in Cameroon. The analysis of the data in the light of interactionism theory reveals that the use of the language by non-native speakers leads to the emergence of three levels of language speaking, namely the common language, decontextualised and composite speech. At the social level, the use of the language is an asset for the integration of non-native speakers into community groups, representing what we call the third level of social integration implemented in the community in which communication is essentially in Medumba. However, this integration is limited given that the natives consider the language practice of the non-natives as singular and different from their own. This situation leads to the use of official languages, namely French and Pidgin-English to communicate with the French- and English-speaking non-natives. It can safely come to the conclusion that these communities are a model of living together. It shows how the natives and non-natives of the Medumba community at Bangangté and Tonga interact from the language use point of view, and live together.

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Discourse of Persuasion in Advertising in Cameroon: Focus on some Made-in-Cameroon Brands

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Abstract

This paper examines how the Cameroonian agro-food company, Chococam Tiger Brands, specialised in the manufacturing of chocolate and confectionery products that are marketed in Cameroon, Central and West Africa, has been using the discourse of persuasion to create and bond with its customers for a long time now. Content analysis is used as methodology to examine and analyse the message content of 25 products under 7 categories of its brands. This research scrutinises how this company uses some slogans or choice of words for its products to build an unconscious preference in the thought processes of its customers, which are further activated in cultural, individual and social discourses, and how persuasive discourse is also used as a conscious effort to reconstruct cultural values in the consumption habits of consumers of its products in the CEMAC region. Data for this study is collected from selected Chococam Tiger Brands online adverts on the Google Ads Platform. The contents of slogans are analysed on the persuasive rhetoric platforms of ethos, pathos and logos. Findings reveal that Chococam Tiger Brands use discourse as both a conscious and unconscious effort to construct and at the same time, reconstruct preference for its various product categories in the thought processes of its customers. The choice of words and expressions used do not only appeal to the customers' reasoning through clear factual evidence of the quality of its products, but also communicates its ethical values and credibility, which is very significant in motivating positive actions in consumer behaviour. Thus, with the rational use of the persuasive techniques of the rhetoric triangle of logos, ethos and pathos, there is no logical reason to contest the fact that advertising agencies would create more positive impact in their market areas, as well as, on their profit margins.

Key Words: Discourse, Persuasion, Consumers, Chococam Tiger Brands

1. Introduction

According to Anchor Digital (2023), advertising is a natural occurring phenomenon, which dates as early as 3000 BC with political and religious messages that appeared on sheets of papyrus in the city of Thebes in ancient Egypt, and later in ancient China, where calligraphic signboards and inked papers were used in the 7th century B.C. With expansion in business, new technologies have brought growth in the advertising industry. Today, advertising has developed, and spreads across various media outlets ranging from radio to commercial television, cable television and the internet, and has generated different characterisations. It has also embraced various techniques that have provoked a paradigm shift, compelling advertisers to focus on their brands, stimulating the need for superior insight into consumer purchasing, consumption and usage behaviour, needs, wants and aspirations. (Petty, R.D., 2016).

Referencing Encyclopedia Britannica (2023), advertising is defined as '*the techniques and practices used to bring products, services, opinions, or causes to public notice for the purpose of persuading the public to respond in a certain way toward what is advertised*'. El-Daly (2012) refers to advertising as a form of discourse which does not only influence the structure of language and the modality of lifestyle, but also the content of daily routine acts of

communicative exchanges that cut across different cultural experiences. Maka (2018) dissects this advertising into three comprehensive categories: Consumer advertising, Trade advertising and Public Relations advertising.

Present-day advertising also covers what Davidsons (1992) describes as '*social language, a genre of spectator/reader experience, a technique of persuasion…almost a world in its own right with its own languages, customs and history'*. We observe this blend of tradition, history, experience and language in advertising through wall paintings, billboards, street furniture, printed flyers, rack cards, shopping cards, mobile telephone screens, social media platforms, banners, and cinema all over the globe.

Like lectures, speeches and other communicative acts, advertising also includes contents, subjects, relations and connections. The objective is to inform and persuade subjects to bring their values, beliefs, and choices to positively agree with the language and imagination of the advertiser within a limited time and space as propagated by Fairclough (2001). This same idea is captured by Kress and Hodge (1979), who holds that thoughts and experiences can only become shared when they are verbalised.

This leads us to discourse which has to do with the various strategies of language usage. These strategies could be cultural, rhetorical, social, interactional, pragmatic, semantic, schematic or stylistic. Dijk (1983) purports that culture plays a primordial role in any discourse because it includes not only knowledge about

different geographical areas and locations, but also different social structures, institutions and events; different communicative events, languages, discourse types, speech acts, superstructures, local and global coherence conditions, styles and rhetoric, symbolic or ritual values and functions, beliefs, opinions, attitudes, ideologies and norms, as well as their implicit or explicit use in the production of the discourse.

According to Dijk (ibid), discourse is an action that must take into account the audience's knowledge and feelings. He says we should consider the communicative process as a form of social interaction and at the same time, a coherent part of larger interaction sequences. This implies that discourse is equally meant to affect the verbal or nonverbal actions or the knowledge, beliefs, opinions, or motivations of the audience. The audience is expected to understand the discourse strategy and then make some assumptions about the intentions, purposes, wishes, preferences, beliefs, opinions, attitudes, ideology, emotions, and personality of the speaker (Maka, 2018).

Cook (2001: 219 – 220) provides an elaborate description of advertising discourse, which according to him includes ads that use a variety of substances; ads that are embedded in an accompanying discourse; ads that are presented in short bursts; ads that are multi-modal, and can use pictures, music and languages, either singly or in combination, as the medium permits; ads that are multi-sub modal in their use of languages in writing, speech and song, either singly or in combination, as the medium permits; ads that foreground extensive and innovative use of paralanguage; ads that foreground connotational, interminate and metaphorical meaning, thus effecting

fusion between disparate spheres; ads that make dense use of parallelism, both between modes and within modes; ads that involve many voices, though they tend to be dominated by those that are parasitic: appropriating the voices of other genres, and having no independent existence. He also includes ads that are often heard in many contradictory ways simultaneously; ads that merge features of public and private discourse and the voices of authority and intimacy, exploiting the features which are common to these poles; ads that make extensive use of intertextual allusion, both to other ads and to other genres; and ads that provoke social, moral and aesthetic judgments ranging from the most positive to the most negative as part of advertising discourse.

This paper examines how Chococam Tiger Brands has been using the discourse of persuasion for many years, as an advertising technique, to create and bond with its customers in the entire CEMAC Region and beyond. For this objective to be met, an attempt is made to answer the following questions:

I- Does this company just use some slogans or choice of words to build an unconscious preference in the thought processes of its customers which are further activated in their cultural, individual and social discourses?

II- Does it use persuasive discourse as a conscious effort to reconstruct cultural values in the consumption habits of consumers of its products in the CEMAC region?

III- Is it that the company's products and brands are really of the best quality in their market area, from expert endorsements?

2. Background

Cameroon is situated within West and Central Africa. Due to its colonial history, it has two official languages, which are English and French. Advertisements are often made in either or both languages. Furthermore, there are over 250 indigenous languages in Cameroon, in addition to English Pidgin and French Camfranglais which is a mixture of aspects of English and French (Dashaco, 2010). Given this diverse and rich linguistic culture, a new trend in advertising is fast developing in Cameroon, especially in the South West region with Dash Media, whereby wordings from particular local languages, coupled with specific brand images are printed on billboards, flyers and posters for various indigenous communities. Any advertiser can use any of the languages to effectively pass across their messages to the target audience.

This trend is backed up by point 9 of article 3 under general provisions of Law No 2006/018 of December 29, 2006 governing advertising in Cameroon, which defines advertising as "*An assortment of procedures and techniques aimed at attracting the attention or curiosity of an audience by informing it about a good or a service, to convince people to buy it, use it or adopt it.*" This law oversees the organisation of advertising activities; defines the rules concerning the form and content of advertising messages; and sets the general

framework for the oversight and regulation of advertising activities in Cameroon.

It is obvious that social media advertising has witnessed a surge in recent years globally, and in Cameroon, in particular. It provides a variety of advertising formats and platforms that companies can choose from in a way that aligns with their business objectives, to reach out to specific target audiences with the aim of increasing their sales. Braccialini (2022) observes that Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube, Snapchat and TikTok are the most popular social media networks that companies across the globe use. But Google Ads also provides different methods through which advertisers can reach out to their potential customers. With Google Ads, the advertiser can add a clickable "call" button to the adverts to get more phone calls or use video adverts to showcase their brands.

This shift from predominantly traditional advertising is also witnessed in Cameroon especially as it seems to offer faster and more cost-effective methods of reaching targeted audience within the general framework of the law governing advertising in Cameroon. This also probably explains why Chococam Tiger Brands uses the Google Ads Platform to market its brands; takes action; visits its store; and also receives direct calls from its potential customers. On this platform, Chococam Tiger Brands uses key words and expressions to tag its adverts into categories. Each product is accompanied by descriptions, ingredients used, its health benefits, and its distinctiveness. Through the Google Ads, Chococam can decide how much it intends to spend on

adverts depending on the percentage of the audience who interact with its adverts. Also, it can quickly track the effectiveness of its adverts; make desired changes to improve its results; and connect with its customers on personal bases through their computer, tablets, mobile phones, and other applications. (Google Ads Help, 2023).

Online advertising marketing research conducted by Bayus et al (2022) reveal that about 10% of the entire population on the African continent buy their goods and services online, and as of 2022, online sales in Africa are growing at about 25% yearly with more than 10 million people buying online each year. They suggest that to forge ahead, African businesses should consider developing "*a robust digital marketing solution",* and claim their own *"space at the vanguard of the digital sales frontier*". They end up proposing five key principles through which success can be achieved:

1- Engage global expert knowledge through social media platforms like Google, Bing, and WhatsApp to tap into the expertise of global specialists for a positive competitive edge above other companies,
2- Account for context in local marketing strategy for well-planned digital marketing,
3- Activate own marketing channels like mobile applications, websites, emails, and social media groups to improve conversation rates,
4- Produce regular reports and cross-functional teams to efficiently manage channels and campaigns in order to leverage customer insights, and develop strategies to increase sales,
5- Experiment constantly by regularly generating, testing, and evaluating new ideas to improve communication, formats for creative solutions, and new audience. (Bayus et al, 2022).

Chococam Tiger Brands is exploiting some of these options through the Google Aps platform to expand its market.

3. Empirical and Theoretical Overview

Conferring Steen, advertising discourse has some main functions such as informative, persuasive, and instructive intentions (Steen 1999:113). Perucha (2009: 292) supports this view by breaking down discourse into two criteria; *persuasive discourse* and *discourse of emotional appeal for help.* She intimates that persuasive discourse invites the reader by means of imperatives to buy the product/service; visit the advertised place; or find more information about them. Similarly, Nippold (2007) defines persuasion as the use of arguments to convince another person to perform an act or accept the point of view of the persuader. Suhandang (2016) purports that, persuasive discourse is part of a democratic process. When the correct choices of words or expressions are used within context, it has the ability to attract the attention of the audience, and influence their perspectives and choices concerning a service or a product. Therefore, persuasion is a social discourse directed at a specific audience. It influences decision-making; analyses different opinions and values; cuts across different fields of knowledge and is very present in the field of advertising.

Advertisers actually take advantage of the act of persuasion to make profit in their business. Widyanto (2018), reiterates the impact of persuasion on the hearts and minds of consumers through the appropriate use of language. Fairclough supports this line of reasoning when he says that advertising discourse is a form of social practice (Martutik, 2013).

Seino (2016) carried out research on the different strategies of persuasion that *Les Brasseries du Cameroun, MTN Cameroon and Orange Cameroon* use to represent their products. She observes that through the use of words in naming and describing their brands, the companies succeed in creating mental representations in the consumer's mind, thereby giving the impression that the richer the emotional content, the more likely the consumers will go in for the product. She concludes that such persuasive strategies are ideologies embedded in language, which in conjunction with the happenings in society, give advertisers the power to work on the representations in the minds of the consumers, their needs and motivations, and on these, build their advertisements.

Writing on the stylistic structures of the advertising slogans in the Bamenda Urban Council, Seino (2017) states that the slogans mostly show structures of declaratives, imperatives, parallelisms, verbals, prepositional groups, adverb groups, and nominal groups, which are most dominant at the rate of 40%. This is probably explained by the fact that, nominal groups usually have additional particles of meaning, which can be considered as modifiers that help to add to the description of the product. She concludes that in spite of the high frequency of occurrence of nominals in the advertising slogans at issue, all "structures function in their different ways in persuading consumers and giving the beauty in the variety of language used in designing slogans".

The Rhetoric Triangle was first propagated by Aristotle as fundamental compositions or appeals of persuasive designs (John Geddes, 2015). According to him, persuaders of all sorts within

different contexts, always state their case in order to win over an audience for a service or a product. For them to succeed, they need three important parameters upon which to operate: a) an objective b) an audienc c) a message.

Aristotle identified three parts of the art of persuasion, which have become very fundamental rhetorical strategies of every successful advertising text. They include Logos, Ethos, and Pathos.

Logos appeals to the audience's reasoning and clear factual evidence of the product's quality. It also has to do with changes in production or distribution, and customers' reviews, which are made known to the public in a logical and ethical way. With Ethos, the presentation of the brand has to be thorough, and should establish authority and credibility in such a way as to generate more opportunities for sales and expansion, without which the company may suffer great loss. For instance, a company like Chococam Tiger Brands should communicate in clear, understandable language, while minimising the use of jargon or vague expressions or words, in a bit to appeal to the audience's emotions. Ethos also appeals to the character or ethics of the company while selling its products. As far as Pathos is concerned, the advertiser evokes positive and/or negative emotional response from the consumer. Conferring Plutchik (2001: 345-346) states:

> An emotion is not simply a feeling state. Emotion is a complex chain of loosely connected events that begins with a stimulus and includes feelings, psychological changes, impulses to action and specific, goal-directed behavior. That is to say, feelings do not happen in isolation. They are responses to significant situations in an individual's life, and often they motivate actions.

The objective of pathos is to create a shared emotional experience with the audience. The advertiser should have the ability to evoke the audience's emotions, and strategically connect these emotions with elements of their design, which in this case can be the service or product. Also, the audience obviously influences the composition of the persuasive design or choice of words to be used. Given the importance and diversity of consumers' cultural beliefs and values, advertising should equally target the right audience to win their trust through emotional appeals, ethics, and gestures of expertise and goodwill.

The theory of Content Analysis used in this paper dates back to the 18th century in Scandinavia. Rosengren (1981) describes it as a family of analytic approaches ranging from impressionistic, intuitive, interpretive analyses to systematic, strict textual analyses. It focuses on the characteristics of language as communication with attention paid to the content or contextual meaning of the text (Budd, Thorp, & Donohew, 1967; Lindkvist, 1981; McTavish & Pirro, 1990; Tesch, 1990). Text data might be in verbal, print, or electronic form and might have been obtained from narrative responses, open-ended survey questions, interviews, focus groups, observations, or print media such as articles, books, or manuals (Kondracki & Wellman, 2002). According to Amy Luo (2022), this theory can be both quantitative (counting and measuring) and qualitative (interpreting and understanding). Here, words, themes and concepts within a text are grouped together and then analysed for results. This analysis can cover inferences made about the producer's purpose, message and

effects of the communication content on the audience. Specifically, qualitative content analysis makes inferences from the analysis of the meaning and semantic relationships of words and concepts.

This theory spreads across a variety of fields including marketing, media studies, anthropology, cognitive science, psychology and other social science disciplines. The main objectives of content analysis are: finding correlations and patterns in how concepts are communicated, understanding the intentions of an individual, group or institution, identifying propaganda and bias in communication, revealing differences in communication in different contexts, and analysing the consequences of communication content such as the flow of information or audience responses.

Downe-Wamboldt (1992: 314) observe that the goal of content analysis is "to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study", which can be explicit or inferred. In this article, we use qualitative content analysis as a technique to examine how and why Chococam Tiger Brands uses language to convince its customers to remain loyal to its various brands and products.

4 Methodology

Qualitative analysis of expert opinions, online description and advertising slogans of Chococam Tiger Brands products are used in this paper. More specifically:

- Salient characteristics of adverts according to categories of coding will be isolated;
- Words and phrases on the brand products will be analysed. We will like to know if there is a common theme, or concept running through Chococam Tiger Brands adverts;
- Some distinguishing features from expert opinions on Chococam Tiger Brands and its products will be examined;
- Common patterns will be established and conclusions drawn in response to the research objectives.

We will use content analysis to discuss the results and conclude on the platform of the persuasive rhetoric triangle of ethos, pathos and logos.

5 Analysis and Results

The discourse of persuasion utilises various strategies to induce others to agree with our facts; share our values; accept our arguments and conclusions; and adopt our way of thinking (Saylor Academy, 2014). In this study, we focused on the following Chococam Tiger Brands products categories: *Culinary, Spread pastes, Beverages/drinks, Bubble gums, Candies, Professional chocolates, and chocolates*. From the analysis below our results reveal that this company uses certain persuasive techniques on its Google Ads platform page to bond with its customers. These techniques vary mostly from appeals that relate to customers' intellectual capacities, health and family values; to evidence of the quality of products from expert opinions and descriptions; the use of colour language; the use of colours; and anaphoric repetitions.

5.1 Appeals to Intelligence and Health

Intelligence is the ability to solve complex problems or make decisions within an environment, with outcomes that benefit the person who is directly involved. The concerned persons should have the ability to reason, plan, solve problems, think practically, understand complex concepts, and learn fast from experience. Parankimalil (2014) states that intelligence is an innate natural endowment of the child. It helps the child to learn, plan, take advantage of his previous experiences, face the future with compliance, and develop a sense of discrimination between right and wrong. He further asserts that intelligence, though largely determined by congenital factors, is also affected by environmental factors necessary to improve it. Chococam Tiger Brands tries to create that suitable environment to stimulate the intellectual capacity of the child from a very tender age with its product *Matinal*, when it says: *Contributes to the awakening and healthy growth of the child.*

Parankimalil (ibid) says that the developmental period of intelligence spans from birth and adolescence. This lends credence to the above slogan used for Matinal. The word *'awakening'* has to do with revival or renewal of interest or attention; recognition, realisation or coming into awareness of something in the process of development (Dictionary.com). Thus, with the help of Matinal, the child's skills and knowledge of his personal qualities improve as they grow older.

Also, some authorities reveal that antioxidants can reduce the risk of health challenges that relate especially to heart diseases and certain cancers. This is because they can scavenge free radicals from body cells, which action helps to reduce damage caused by oxidants. The major oxidant vitamins are beta-carotene, vitamin c and vitamin e, which are found in the Mambo chocolate, rich in fiber and proteins, minus salt. Besides, its antidepressant properties also provide emotional balance to consumers and reduce the symptoms of restlessness and anxiety in them, as evident in the slogan *Has antioxidant and antidepressant properties.*

Again, nowadays, most people are very health conscious. They engage in a lot of physical exercises and restrict themselves to special courses of food, to either lose weight or for other medical reasons. Chococam's Mambo chocolate helps to reduce the intensity of consumer's appetite, which may help to create a balance in their weight and also keep them healthy as captured in the slogan: *Ideal appetite suppressant in case of diet.*

5.2 Appeals to Family Values

The traditional African family provides essential values for a healthy social lifestyle. This does not only provide a feeling of security and love, but also that of belonging. The online slogans of Chococam Tiger Brands' Tartina, Matinal, Chocolate and Benny beef appeal to these family values. Consider the following slogans:

- *Ideal format for large families (Tartina & Matinal)*
- *Great gift idea for family and friends (Chocolate)*
- *Contributes to give more taste to your meals and will delight your guests (Benny beef)*

Given that most African families are very extensive, it would be logical and responsible to go in for a product of quality and quantity with great flavour like the above, to help satisfy the needs of all family members and also guests and friends, during social occasions. This is the spirit of solidarity.

5.3 Evidence

According to Doctionary.com, evidence is 'the available body of facts or information indicating whether a belief or proposition is true or valid'. It can take the form of testimony, documents, photographs, videos, voice recordings, DNA testing or other tangible objects. An article published by Eclipse Forensics in 2022 points out that there are three types of evidence, vis: physical, forensic and digital. The third refers to any type of file extracted from an electronic source – it may be audio, video, email or text messages. Hence, other persuasive techniques that provide evidence of Chococam Tiger Brands' products' authority and reliability comprise of expert opinion and descriptions. Research carried out by ISO on the Economic benefits of standards, with Chococam Cameroon as case study, identified four major value drivers as represented below:

- *Quality and product safety,*
- *Effectiveness and efficiency of processes (particularly manufacturing & sales),*
- *Attractiveness of Chococam products for the customer and for customer satisfaction,*
- *Training and motivation of the workforce. (ISO.org, April 2012)*

Another expert opinion comes from two successive CEOs of Barry Callebaut. The first is Peter Matlare who says: *'Chococam is a quality acquisition with high market shares'*. The second is Patrick De Maeseneire who says; '*We have found an optimal new owner – based on its strategy and experience … to secure a great future'*. (Referring to Tiger Brands Ltd becoming the parent company of Chococam).

This expert knowledge communicates a positive reassurance of the quality of the products, not only to other shareholders and distributors, but also to consumers. The endorsement influences the consumers to make serious consumption considerations due to reliability, experience and careful scrutiny.

5.4 Description

Description is a specific discourse type that is intended to give a mental picture of that which is described. It brings out the salient characteristics or features of the said entity while paying close attention to details. Chococam Tiger Brands uses this technique with Benny beef and Chococam Mambo thus:

- *Benny is a brand of culinary seasoning products made from ingredients carefully selected from around the world to give your meals an incomparable taste (Benny beef)*
- *A nougat with a delicious and authentic taste that delights the taste buds and gives pleasure to the person who consumes it. –serves as a hunger suppressant during the day… (Mambo chococrok)*

These descriptions position the consumer to respond emotionally and accept the information provided and the inclination derived from the product's essence. The details also add interest, assurance and credibility to the promoter who communicates the impression that he has personally discerned the particularities of the product.

5.5 Colorful Language

This is when unusual striking words, most often adjectives, are used to create strong images in the minds of consumers. This not only captures the interest of consumers, but also helps to influence their view of the product. Instances abound below:

- *Rich in spicy and natural flavor (Benny beef)*
- *Delicious and nourishing/tasty (Arina)*
- *Unique chocolate taste (Tartina)*
- *Good taste of pure cocoa (Matinal)*
- *Easy and quick to prepare (Matinal)*
- *Unique and authentic formula (Chocolate)*
- *Fine and melting milk chocolate (Mambo)*
- *Tartina is suitable for a successful day (Tartina)*

The slogans above suggest that Chococam Tiger Brands products impact a most suitable and uncommon flavor to food without omission, due to preference of special mixtures from inartificial and agreeable use of nutrients needed for consumers' healthy growth and development. The spices also provide a burning sensation and a pleasant taste in the mouth. Words like *easy, quick, authentic* and *suitable* suggest that consumers' can optimise their use of the products in a way that suits their personal needs, activities and plans without much effort. The adjectives

also describe the highly satisfying nature of the products, which lends credence to a conception of perfection, eminent beyond comparison. All these appeal to consumers' sense of sight, smell, taste, touch and reason.

5.6 Use of Colours

The use of colours is one of the most salient, resonant and meaningful features that advertisers use to create visual mental images. Colour actually carries symbolic and associative information about product categories and specific brands that may turn out to be very beneficial to both advertisers and consumers. According to Hilbert (1987) and Sacks (1995), the use of colour is a very compelling cue for persuasive communication purposes such as conferring identity, meaning or novelty to an object or idea. Chococam Tiger Brands thus uses this technique to provide clear forms of its product varieties of Bubble Gum and Chocolate in consumers' minds, as exemplified below:

- *White and brown candy,*
- *Candy yellow with eucalyptus mint flavor,*
- *Candies with fruity and colored aromas,*
- *Dark chocolate sticks,*
- *Nougat coated with chocolate,*
- *Extra dark chocolate bar,*
- *Milk chocolate inlaid with crispy rice,*
- *Intense dark chocolate.*

Given that the above products are food, such use of colours goes a long way to enhance consumers' appeal and satisfaction, and equally plays a great role in influencing their perception and choice.

5.7 Anaphoric Repetition

Although online advertising is a one-sided communication, we concord with the fact that persuasion can be achieved through the use of different language forms. Grace (in Dendrobium, 2016) observes that repetition of words and ideas is often used to strengthen the power of persuasion of a message. The objective here is to implant what is advertised in the mind of the consumer in such a way that they easily remember. Repetition is a powerful tool used by most advertisers. It can either be anaphoric, epistrophic or alliterative. From the brand categories we examined in this study, we discovered that Chococam Tiger Brands mostly uses anaphora in its online adverts. Certain words and phrases keep coming up in almost all the advertising texts of the seven categories. Instances are shown below:

- *Good taste of roasted peanuts/pure cocoa*
- *Great taste*
- *Mint taste*
- *Delicious and tasty*
- *Delicious and nourishing*
- *Unique chocolate taste*
- *Incompatible taste*
- *Authentic taste*
- *Spicy taste*

This repetition allows for the creation of an interesting pattern in the minds of the audience, which in turn lays emphasis on a recurrent concept that runs through the products. This brings clarity as to why these products have been selling in increasing proportion for the past decades. Consumers' minds are influenced by the repetition of positive adjectives that have the driving force to capture the attention of the consumer. For instance, the word '*delicious'* suggests that which is highly pleasant and delightful in taste and smell, and should always be expected and anticipated. '*Nourishing'* suggests that which contains substances necessary for health, strength, growth, development and good condition. It equally denotes that which enhances fertility and generates a long-lasting positive feeling in the mind of the consumer. '*Taste'* appeals to the sense of recognition, the ability to distinguish and tell of the quality of a flavor that is set apart. '*Unique, authentic, great, good and incomparable'* are all descriptive of the concept of perfection; of that which is most suitable and indisputably original; of that which is unlike anything else; of that which is eminent beyond comparison.

6. Conclusion

The objective of this study was to investigate whether Chococam Tiger Brands uses persuasive discourse in its online adverts to create an unconscious preference in the consumption habits of its customers, or whether its extensive market share and high revenue turn overs are a result of the good quality of its products. Having analysed the message content of 25 products under 7 categories of its online adverts, it would be safe for us to conclude that this company makes use of the discourse of persuasion to advertise its products on the Google Ads platform. This discourse is both a conscious and unconscious effort to construct and at the same time, reconstruct preference for its various product categories in the thought processes of its customers. Its choice of words and expressions not only appeal to the customers' reasoning through clear factual evidence of the quality of its products, but also communicates its ethical values and

credibility, which is very significant in motivating positive actions in consumer behaviour.

From its concepts and ideas that mostly center around the uniqueness of its brands as relates to taste, health, relationships, family values and business success, it does not only provide colourful and vivid images to implant a positive mental appeal (pathos) but also uses strong arguments, documentation and powerful endorsements to establish its credibility and authority (ethos). Its messages are clear, concise, specific and logically presented to the audience (logos). With the rational use of persuasive techniques of the rhetoric triangle of logos, ethos and pathos, there is no logical reason to contest the fact that its products rank best in its market area.

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Taming the Madness in Naming: A Sociolinguistic Profile of Cameroon

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Abstract

Naming is a means of identification that distinguishes people and tags personality. In our daily interaction, we hardly come across someone without a name. This paper was motivated by the observation of how Cameroonian academics; and others from different walks of life, have changed or modified their names to suit their taste or the exigencies of their status. It is either they are not quite comfortable with the way they were named from birth and would want to be referred to differently, or to adhere to some societal norms. As such, they reorder their names, abbreviate or simply suppress the undesired name(s) for easy or preferred referencing in their domains or professions. Sometimes, there is the complete change of name or adoption of another name. This work argues that the emergence of such gymnastics is an attempt to tame the madness in naming. To the academics or authors and editors of books, it is apparently meant to match the required standards in referential ordering since most of our names do not follow a chronological and consistent order for easy and common referencing. For artists, they are seemingly interested in gaining fame with a particular name or identity that is unique, which does not necessarily have anything to do with their roots. Data for the study was collected through a questionnaire administered to 100 educated Cameroonians randomly selected from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Using the functional theory for analysis and interpretation, the results show that the tendency of changing or modifying names is common among Cameroonians and this has given many a new identity different from the one at birth.

Key Words: Taming Madness, Naming, Sociolinguistic Profile

1. Introduction

Some people may bear similarity in terms of behaviour, profession or even personality but what makes each of them somehow unique is the name given to them at birth because it bestows on the individual an element of reference and identity. Although we have people who have been attributed the same name either coincidentally or intentionally, for reasons best known to the attributor, the fact remains that one's name is a mark of identity. No wonder that when establishing a birth certificate or any other certificate such as academic, marriage, professional, it is on this basis that we are called. The urge to write this paper stemmed from my observation that some Cameroonians from different walks of life have changed, modified reordered their names to suit their taste or the exigencies of their status. It is either they are not quite comfortable with the way they were named from birth and would want to be referred to differently, or it is to adhere to some societal norms. As such, they reorder their names, abbreviate or simply suppress the undesired name(s) for easy or preferred referencing in their domain or profession. Sometimes, there is the complete change of name or adaptation of another name, especially among artists.

From observation, name ordering in Africa on the one hand, and in the West on another hand is sometimes contrasting. What is generally referred to within the Cameroonian context as *family name* comes last, preceded by *name* and *surname* while among the westerners like the British, the *surname* follows what is viewed as *first name* or simply *name*, especially when the individual has just two. Consequently, referencing someone within a scientific piece, in the bibliographical entry or tagging an honorific to their name using standard norms becomes easier in the Western context but usually

challenging in the African context[16]. In order to tame this madness[17], some academics resort in name modification, name changing or any other gymnastics to project the identity they want to be identified with. Art, religion, and marriage have also influenced people to modify their names or see their names modified by others for diverse reasons. This paper thus argues that the emergence of such a phenomenon amongst Cameroonians is an attempt to tame[18] the madness they perceive in the way they were named at birth so as to acquire a personality that meets their taste.

2. Conceptual Background

Naming is an essential aspect of human life that must be taken seriously, irrespective of where we come from. It carries in it a 'magical' trademark that cuts across the board because a name gives one a unique sense of identity that may not be replicated elsewhere, even by someone with a similar name. Over the years, the argument has been that the way we are named ultimately determines a lot in our lives. In Cameroon, for example, people have gained favour or suffered persecution because of their names which link them to a particular tribe, family or person. Chamary (2017) takes interest in the narrative about names from another perspective and makes reference to Professor James Bruning from Ohio University who is convinced that the impact of names comes from how people expect to see you. While prejudging someone based on their name might seem unfair, we sometimes do so when making decisions. Bruning notes, for example, that those with an Oriental name are thought to be good at Mathematics, so an employer looking to hire a computer programmer might push an application to the top of the pile if they see a Chinese name on the CV. Specific names are also associated with a person's perceived ability to do a job. Such stereotyping, by ourselves as well as others, might explain why some people seem to have picked occupations that perfectly suit their name, a phenomenon dubbed 'nominative determinism' (Chamary 2017). Even the letters of our name can have an influence on the career path we might choose to follow. According to Dr Brett Pelham, an analyst for a statistics firm Gallup, people tend to follow professions that resemble their first names, meaning that lawyers called Laura and dentists named Dennis are especially common. Pelham et al. (2002) describe how this 'name-letter effect' can influence our life choices. It's an effect so far-reaching that it goes

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[16]The challenges in publishing and referencing authors, due the nature of their names, shall be revisited extensively using the work of Marušić (2016).

[17]Madness is this context is a less euphemistic appellation to describe a phenomenon that has got no organised, common and acceptable way through which this cacophony in identity can be solved.

[3]We prefer the expression 'tame' or 'taming' to refer to what is going on in Cameroon in an attempt to cope with this disparity in addressing the confusion because everyone seems to be doing it his or her own way. In fact, there is no uniformity.

beyond alliteration. Names also hold the secret to success[19]. As Professor Richard Wiseman from the University of Hertfordshire points out, we're used to associating things at the top of a list as winners. Whether it's being called for the school register or a job interview, people with the top names have got used to being first. To test this theory, Wiseman invited Telegraph readers to rate how successful they thought they were in assorted aspects of their life – including career, finances, health and 'life in general'. The scores were then combined into an overall measure of success.

From the foregone review on names, it is indeed evident that names play a vital role in the society. It can influence choice of profession, where we live, whom we marry, the grades we earn, the stocks we invest in, whether we're accepted to a school or are hired for a particular job, and the quality of our work in a group setting. Much of the apparent influence of names on behaviour has been attributed to what is known as the implicit-egotism effect[20]. However, this view has been subjected to criticism. For instance, the psychologist, Uri Simonsohn, has

questioned many of the studies that purport to demonstrate the implicit-egotism effect, arguing that the findings are statistical flukes that arise from poor methodology. A problem that he cites in some of these studies is an ignorance of base rates-the over-all frequency with which something, like a name, occurs in the population at large. It may be appealing to think that someone named Dan would prefer to be a doctor, but we have to ask whether there are so many doctor Dans simply because Dan is a common name, well-represented in many professions. If that's the case, the implicit-egotism effect is no longer valid.

Still in line with the names, Marušić (2016) is preoccupied by the fight between authors and publishers about the name to be used in the publication. She narrates her personal experiences with publishers during which the confusion has been a disturbing issue. She further cites the situation of author referencing Arabs, Chinese and even Spanish and points out that it seems that the usual practice to index authors by surname(s) and first name(s) initials is a serious problem for complex names because the logic behind them is often very different from that for most western names. According to her, the problems with indexing authors' names do not stop there. There are cases where author's names are used for purposes other than giving actual research credit. There is a famous story of Polly Matzinger, immunologist from the National Institutes of Health in the USA, and her Afghan hound Galadriel Mirkwood, who co-authored her paper published in the *Journal of Experimental Medicine* in 1978. Rumour has it that she was blacklisted by the journal's editor after the identity of the second author was disclosed, and the ban was lifted only after

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[19] In 2006, American economists looked at the link between surnames and academic prominence, finding out that those with initials early in the alphabet were markedly more likely to work in prestigious university departments and win a Nobel Prize. This 'alphabetical discrimination' was probably due to the fact that the authors of academic papers are often listed in alphabetical order.

[20] By this concept, we are generally drawn to the things and people that most resemble us. Because we value and identify with our own names, and initials, the logic goes, we prefer things that have something in common with them.

the editor's death. Her conclusion then is that editors should not go into fights with authors about their personal wishes for their name(s) presentation in an article by-line. They should embrace the solution already at hand - author identifier. For example, since 2013, MEDLINE has the option of adding unique author identifiers to the indexed article, such as Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID), International Standard Name Identifier (ISNI), or a name from Virtual International Authority File (VIAF)[21].

So far, it is evident that naming has been a preoccupation across the world and the phenomenon has been appreciated from various angles. For this study, the perspective is that in Cameroon, for one reason or another, quite a good number of persons resort to renaming, name modification or name change along the line in order to tame the madness they seemingly perceive in the way they were named at birth. This has adverse consequences in their identity.

3. Framework

Functionalism or functional theory covers a wide range of fields. Since the 1970s, inspired by the work of Jespersen, Bolinger, Dik, Halliday, and Chafe, functionalism has been attached to a variety

of movements and models making major contributions to linguistic theory and to various subfields within linguistics such as syntax, discourse analysis, language acquisition, cognitive linguistics, typology, and documentary linguistics. The theory holds that language always changes and adapts to the needs of its users. Allen (2007:254) remarks that functionalism is built on the premise that linguistic structures can only be understood and explained with reference to the semantic and communicative functions of language, whose primary function is to be a vehicle for social interaction among human beings. The main goal of functionalist approaches therefore is to clarify the dynamic relationship between form and function.

Functionalism sees functionality of language and its elements to be the key to understanding linguistic processes and structures. Consequently, functional theories of language propose that since language is fundamentally a tool, it is reasonable to assume that its structures are best analysed and understood with reference to their functions. These include the tasks of conveying meaning and contextual information. In the functional paradigm, a language is in the first place, conceptualised as an instrument of social interaction among human beings, used with the intention of establishing communicative relationships. This paradigm attempts to reveal the instrumentality of language with respect to what people do and achieve with it in social interaction.

On such basis, it has been observed that Cameroonians use language, through their names to communicate the identity and personality they want the world to tag on them. Those not satisfied with their names from birth tend to modify or change them while

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[21]According to the information on MEDLINE indexing processes, indexers pay special attention to indexing names, including full authors' names instead of "last name – initials" format. MEDLINE also recognizes that some authors may have only a surname, which is then indexed in that field (Last Name data element). Listing only first names, as discussed in the WAME List serve case, seems not to be an option in MEDLINE.

others are simply conditioned by circumstances to adopt or accept a new name.

4. Methodology

After a period of observation, interaction and informal cross-checking of the relationship of how some Cameroonians were named at birth and how they are called at present, I proceeded to data collection. A questionnaire was designed and administered to 100 educated Cameroonians from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In effect, through a random sampling technique aided by the availability and willingness of the correspondents to participate in the research, the sample was chosen for this paper. The exercise for the informants comprised a brief questionnaire made up of three key questions. The first question required them to provide the name given to them from birth or as it appears on their birth certificate. The second required them to state their current appellation or as they preferred to be referred to. The last question asked the informants to say why they would prefer to be referred to as such. In asking the first and second questions, the intention was to know whether there is any variation between names given to them at birth and the ones they bear in their present status. The third question was intended to find out the variation, switch or modification in name.

On the basis of information gathered through observation and questionnaire, it is established that at a mature age and in order to tame the naming madness, Cameroonians resort to name modification, name change or other similar manipulation to instil the identity they want.

5. Analyses

Feedback from the questionnaire suggests that quite a good number of Cameroonians who took part in the exercise have seen their name modified, changed or adjusted either through their own volition or due to their profession, status or religion that sometimes technically imposes a new name on them. Thus, after sorting out and classifying the data, the following analyses were made.

a. Global View of the Scenario

The key information to retain from the field is that whereas some people, for whatever reason, have seen their names modified, changed or readjusted, others have not experienced any of such because they still retain the name they were given at birth. As such, what I term "change of name" refers to the first category and "non-change of name" relates to the second. For clarity and comprehension, I have decided to present a global picture first before subsequent analyses relating to reasons for change or non-change of name. The idea here is to present the general information gathered from the informants in relation to whether in their present status, they retain their names as from birth or there have been some changes. Thereafter, different stages of changes and the rationale are presented.

Table 1: Global View of the Scenario

Reason for Change of Name	Change of Name		Non-change of Name		Total	
	N° of Cases/100	%	N° of Cases/100	%	N° of Cases/100	%
Marriage	18	18	07	7	25	25
Academics	25	25	09	9	34	34
Profession	17	17	05	5	22	22
Religion	10	10	03	3	13	13
Royalty	00	00	06	6	06	6
Total	70	70	30	30	100	100

The table reveals that, from a global perspective, out of 100 Cameroonians from different backgrounds who filled in the questionnaire, 70% admitted that they have seen their original name undergo changes for diverse reasons; marriage, academics, profession, religion and royalty. This is significantly higher than the 30% of those whose names have not changed for the same reasons. The subsequent presentation focuses on the reasons for the change of name or non-change of name among the respondents. This is strengthened by sample data from some informants where necessary.

b. Marriage as Reason for Change of Name

When the informants who related their change or non-change of name to marital status were asked to state the reason, the majority pointed out that upon marriage, the name had to change to reflect their marital status. It should be pointed out that those who confessed that their name had changed because of marriage were exclusively the female correspondents.

Table 2: Marriage as Reason for Change of Name

Reason for Change of Name	Change of Name		Non-change of Name		Total	
	N° of Cases/25	%	N° of Cases/25	%	N° of Cases	%
Marriage	18	72	07	28	25	100
Total	18	72	07	28	25	100

It can be retained from table 2 that 72% of the informants affirmed that their original names had changed as a result of marriage, contrary to the 28% of those who said their names were maintained, despite their marital status. The examples below further attest to this view:

1. Mirabel Akimbom *changed to* Mirabel Akimbom épse Munjam
2. Che Onoline Sirri *changed to* Che Onoline Sirri épse Nyobe

From the sample information displayed on table 2 above, it can be retained that due to marriage, the correspondents in question now have new appellations wherein their names have been readjusted through the addition of "épse" followed by the husband's name, for the two sample cases. There were also informants whose names begin with the husband's name followed by "née", and then the bearer's name. Some of the correspondents attested that this changed had actually taken effect even in official documents such as the National Identity Card, Passport or Pay Voucher.

c. Academics as Reason for Change of Name

As concerns academics, information from the respondents suggests that quite a good number of persons' names have changed as a

consequence of their academic profile. In other words, because of academic achievement, they have modified or changed their names. This is particularly noticeable in the way they refer to themselves in publications or academic forums.

Table 3: Academics as Reason for Change of Name

Reason for Change of Name	Change of Name		Non-change of Name		Total	
	N° of Cases/34	%	N° of Cases/34	%	N° of Cases	%
Academics	25	73.53	09	26.47	34	100
Total	25	73.53	09	26.47	34	100

Table 3 displays that a total number of thirty-four (34) cases were noticed that relates to academics as rationale for name change or non-change. We can note that, a significant 73.53% of those contacted do no longer use their original name as a results of their academic status, even if this change does not extend to official documents. As such we have the examples that follow as feedback from the field:

1. Seino Akwanjoh *changed to* (Professor) Seino
2. Forbang Gilda Nicheng *changed to* Dr Looh

The first informant indicated that instead of referring to her using her entire name, the honorific 'professor' is now added and only "Seino" is retained. As concerns the second example, a new name which does not feature in the original name has emerged. Although there has not been an official change to these names,

we can note that the bearer has gradually gained popularity with different identity, particularly within the academic circle and even beyond. For instance, some academics indicated that the name they use in publications is different from the one they were given at birth. They have had to either reorder the name, suppress one or abbreviate it so that they are cited using the name they desire.

d. Profession as Reason for Change of Name

At the level of profession, I sought to know if there are Cameroonians whose original names have changed due to what they do for a living, either on part-time or permanent basis. Majority of these informants were artists like actors, musicians, film directors among others and their feedback produced the statistics below.

Table 4: Profession as Reason for Change of Name

Reason for Change of Name	Change of Name		Non-change of Name		Total	
	N° of Cases/22	%	N° of Cases/22	%	N° of Cases	%
Profession	17	77.28	05	22.72	22	100
Total	17	77.28	05	22.72	22	100

Among those who were classified within the category of profession, it turned out that the frequency of name change was up to 77.28% as compared to 22.22% for those whose names were maintained despite their profession. This is further reinforced by the examples that follow.

1. Fonban Emmanuel Lendzemo *changed to* Uncle B.
2. Venyuka Conelus *changed to* Aakony.

Here, we have the case of a film director, *Fonban Emmanuel Lendzemo,* who now goes by the name *Uncle B.* In effect, he actually admitted that many people do not know his real name, especially in the showbiz because they can only identify him by the new appellation. On the other hand, we have a musician, *Venyuka Conelus*, who is today identified as *Aakony.* According to him, his original identity is at the verge of extinction and that does not bother him because he prefers to be called *Aakony*, even in formal contexts. This phenomenon among artists seems to emanate from their quest for popularity by adopting the name of a popular star like Aakony who is a popular Cameroonian musician. or taking up a new name which is euphonic and more enticing.

e. Religion as Reason for Change of Name

Another category of people indicated that when they switched religion, in order to accommodate the exigencies of the new faith, they had to change name. In that light, we registered Christians who now bear Muslim names and vice versa as testified by statistics on the table below.

Table 5: Religion as Reason for Change of Name

Reason for Change of Name	Change of Name		Non-change of Name		Total	
	N° of Cases/13	%	N° of Cases/13	%	N° of Cases	%
Religion	10	76.92	03	23.08	13	100
Total	10	76.92	03	23.08	13	100

Table 5 demonstrates that the number of those who have changed their name due to new religious faith dominated among the informants. Out of the 13 informants who fell under this category, 76.92% of them had changed their name and just 23.08% still retained their original name, even after changing their religion.

1. Tangwa *Mamudu* Mbashi *changed to* Tangwa *Peter* Mbashi
2. Nsohai *Youssufou changed to* Nsohai *Useful*

Even if within Christianity religious faiths vary, the above samples come from those who have moved from Islam to Christianity. In both exemplary cases however, the religious name has changed since *Mamudu* has become *Peter,* for the first case, and *Yousufou, Useful,* for the second. According to the respondents, exigencies of their new faith conditioned them to change their names. For instance, they were told they could not be baptized into Christianity using Muslim name(s) and so they had to relinquish them. We also had situation of Christian names changed to Muslim names for the same reason as is the case with the former indomitable lions player Patrick Mboma who is now called Abdul Jalil Mboma.

f. Royalty as Reason for Change of Name

The last reason identified as linked to change or non-change of name has to do with royalty. Here, persons' names have changed due to the royal status they now occupy. This is applicable to both men and women, especially those that hail from the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon. Once more, let us turn to the statistics and samples for a more comprehensive appraisal of the phenomenon.

Table 6: Royalty as Reason for Change of Name

Reason for Change of Name	Change of Name		Non-change of Name		Total	
	N° of Cases/06	%	N° of Cases/06	%	N° of Cases/06	%
Royalty	06	100	00	00	06	100
Total	06	100	00	00	100	100

Table 6 suggests that out of the six persons who are related to royalty, none still retains his or her original name. Either because of coronation or attribution of a traditional title due to their attachment to royalty, they now bear a name they would do so till death, according to them. The samples below back up the claim or declaration.

1. Lemnsa Joseph …. *changed* to *Fon Ngwe II*
2. Brunhilda Kongla *changed to Yaah wo Kitukelah*

The two informants used as samples here are all part of royalty. In the first situation, it has to do with His Royal Highness, the Fon of Mbiame. He was born and named Lemnsa Joseph and has borne the name throughout. But after ascending the throne, he is now officially referred to as *Fon Ngwe II.* In the second example, we are faced with a woman who from birth bore the name *Brunhilda Kongla*. However, following the attribution of a traditional title to her as per her family lineage that is associated with royalty, henceforth, she goes by the traditional title *Yaah Wo Kitukelah.* Further information obtained from the field even indicates that it is an abomination or sacrilege to refer to any of these persons by

their former name once they have been given the royal title or new name.

6. Summary of Findings

This study has demonstrated that name change is a reality in Cameroon. As such, for one reason or another, quite a good number of Cameroonians have changed, modified or reordered their names or have seen their names undergo any of the processes, as the case may be.

For some, their marital status has an effect on their names, especially in official documents such as the National Identity Card, Passport, Pay Voucher among others. This is specifically to women who, by virtue of their marital status, have to take up their spouse's name. The tendency is that somewhere along the line, it becomes a normalcy that most of them are referred to using their husbands' name and as such, their original identity fades away.

In addition, it has also been established that one's academic status can lead to change of name. Some academics modify their names, others reorganise theirs while another category eliminates or abbreviates one of the names based on what identity they want to project to the world. As such, in the academic milieu or scientific publication, it is the new name that they have adopted which is used and they are referenced using the name they want. Since the ordering of names varies from context to context, there are people who do not envy the way theirs were ordered at birth because it does not project the name they want. It therefore becomes challenging to know the exact name of the person in question, except one is told or comes across where such a name is written in its original version.

Another discovery is that profession influences name change. Musicians, actors, singers and film directors are either thrust a new name or they themselves decide to go by an artistic name they want to be recognized with. In some cases, they pick up a name that is related to a star they admire or create their own depending on what they want. The outcome is that eventually; the real name is overshadowed by the adopted one. When one even gets to know the real name, it is sometimes difficult to reconcile it with the popular name. There are even some artists who for reasons best known to them, do not want to be identified with their original name.

Besides, change of religion in most cases necessitates change of name. The study reveals that those who have switched from Christianity to Islam or vice versa, for example, have had to change their name to accommodate the new faith. Indeed, for religions that have marked distinction in names, it is imperative to change name to mark a new identity that reflects the new faith. Although this may not affect their official documents, it somehow influences their appellation and identification in the society.

Finally, the paper sought to know how royalty affects one's original name in Cameroon. It was retained that in some cases, once someone ascends the throne or is given a particular traditional title, they tend to adopt a new name and go by it even in official contexts. The person is no longer referred to using the original name, especially by those who pertain to that custom and tradition because it becomes a sacrilege to do so.

7. Conclusion

Name change is considered the Cameroonian way of taming the madness of naming. Although various reasons abound why people change their name or have to accept change of name, it is not in every case that this occurs. There are persons, who, for the same reasons, retain the original name and go by it. As for those who accept or decide to change, the consequence is that eventually, their original name fades away which can lead to identity problems.

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Sexual Harassment and Academic Welfare of Female Students in the University of Buea, Cameroon: Reverberations and Actions

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Abstract

Over the years sexual harassment has remained a recurrent trend in various strata of the society and professional milieu including higher institutions of learning. Though both males and females maybe either victims or perpetrators of sexual harassment, the female student in the University of Buea in Cameroon is disproportionately more of a victim than a perpetrator compared to the male. The key reason for the act is exploitation and the factors are sundry. But the factors, manifestations, effects and remedy approaches vary from one female to another irrespective of their statuses. This paper presents a snapshot of the factors responsible for the sexual harassment of female students and its reverberations on their academic welfare at the University of Buea. It is guided by Article 11:18 of the General Recommendation adopted by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Radical Feminist Theory. An exploratory research design was employed with the use of unstructured interview guide to purposively selected 40 female students and analysis was both quantitative and qualitative. The findings reveal that female students of all levels are vulnerable to sexual harassment from male lecturers primarily due to failure to take continuous assessment at the scheduled time with devastating reverberations on their academic welfare ranging from psychological depression, poor academic performance to failure in graduating in record time. Endorsing and implementing a policy on sexual harassment in the University of Buea will protect and minimize its reverberations on female students.

Key Words: Sexual Harassment, Academic Welfare, Students, University of Buea

1. Introduction

Women around the globe are victims of several forms of violence among which is sexual harassment which is also the most unbridled. Sexual harassment which initially occurred mostly in work places began featuring in academic institutions such as schools, colleges and universities in the beginning of the 1980s (Janice, 2015). Generally sexual harassment denotes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours and other verbal or physical conduct of sexual nature (Aluede, 2000). But sexual harassment in educational institutions according to Till (1980: 7) is defined as behaviour by authority that involves "the use of authority to emphasize the sexuality or sexual identity of a student in a manner which prevents or impairs that student's full enjoyment of educational benefits, climate or opportunities". Sharma (2013) extends the concept of sexual harassment in education to include: 1) inappropriate sexualized comments or gestures; 2) unwanted physical contact such as touching, pinching or groping through threats of exam failure; or 3) sexual assault and rape. Sexual harassment could also include making inappropriate jokes or remarks (Aliou, 2019) and sexual favours in exchange for good grades or preferential treatment in class. The perpetrators can be students, lecturers or administrative staff.

Over the years, sexual harassment remained an everyday experience in tertiary institutions which affect most students but particularly female students and prevent them from enjoying normal academic life. Over three quarters of Czech University students have been victims of sexual harassment (Borufka, 2010). In Lebanon, about 18% of 221 women surveyed from the American University of Beirut,

University Antonine and Beirut Arab University were harassed by their professors (Janice, 2015). In Bangladesh 76% of female students of higher education institutions faced sexual harassment within or outside campus (The Daily Star, 2012). While 1 in 2 female students and 1 in 4 male students have been sexually harassed to some degree at the hands of both academic and non-academic staff at Kenyan Universities (ActionAid, 2019) and in Nigeria, Abe's (2012) reported that 23% of male students were physically harassed against 85% of female students. However, the majority of such incidence are scarcely reported for fear of victimization and stigmatisation and consequently policy redress towards this vice is still far-fetched.

Furthermore, it is imperative to note that sexual harassment stems from unequal power relation that is also associated with gender-based violence and violation of human rights. In most cases, the harasser is usually older, more powerful and poses something of value that is beneficial to the harassed (Schuffer, 2000: UN, 2022) which can affect academic welfare. Academic welfare encompasses student's mental health, physical and emotional wellbeing, study environment, equal treatment, diversity and insurance which are all essential for self-worth, positive performance and general development.

Moreover, the factors responsible for sexual harassment are many and diverse. These include socio-economic and individual factors and range from female students' provocative dressing (Imonikhe et al, 2011; Omonijo, 2013), lack of morality,

conscience, and abstinence, uncontrolled passion, poor habit, personality disorder, inferiority complex, immaturity, cheapness, and abuse of power (Ogunbameru, 2006) to poverty (Taiwo et al., 2014). Others include coercive sexual behaviour such as withholding or threatening to withhold grades earned or deserved, submitting or threatening to submit an underserved performance evaluation, denying or threatening to deny a scholarship recommendation or college application. These behaviours are used to control, influence or affect the educational opportunities, grades, and/or learning environment of a student (Imonikhe et al., 2012). Taiwo and Omole (2014) purport that sexual harassment is also associated with assault, bullying, coercion, discrimination, favouritism; exploitation and intimidation. To Sen (2018) it is a sexualised form of gender inequality and to Kopels & Dupper (1999), the alarming trend of sexual harassment in a space that is described as a centre of excellence, and the springboard for building virile future leaders and intellectuals is a cause for concern.

The reverberations of sexual harassment are very disastrous and devastating on the student victims both physically and psychologically. Psychologically reverberations are related to anger, anxiety, feelings of powerlessness, reduced self-esteem and loss of confidence (Schneider, 1997; Ekore, 2012). On the academic platform, opportunities, grades, the learning environment, outcomes and experiences of female students are all affected (Imonikhe et al 2011) as some may be forced to repeat such courses (Omonijo et al, 2013), skip classes, or abandon their studies, (Ladebo, 2003; Ikwumokoni and Ojo, 2013) with huge financial consequences. It may

also affect future employment prospects of these student victims due to poor grades. According to Davidson & Fielden (1999) sexual harassment can further lead to contracting sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancies, poor academic performance, poor image, failure to achieve the institutions' objectives of producing wholesome graduates, increased alcohol consumption, smoking, and dependence on drugs (Davidson & Fielden, 1999).

However significant actions such as legislation and policies have been endorsed in many countries (Australia, United States and in the United Kingdom) to prohibit sexual harassment in higher educational settings. For instance, in the United States, sexual harassment in education is a form of discrimination under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1999). France approved a legislation that made sexual harassment a crime and it covers sexual harassment in educational institutions. Cairo University recently established the Anti-Harassment and Combating Violence against Women Unit (Janice, 2015).

In Cameroon, the focus is not on sexual harassment in educational institutions but rather on general gender-based violence according to the National Strategy to combat Gender-Based Violence 2022-26. The Cameroon Government stands by the orientations of the International Community to spearhead a fight against gender-based violence. By this, they contribute to the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, the Beijing Platform for Action and other international conventions and agreements in this domain. Thereafter Cameroon developed and implemented its second Strategy to combat Gender-Based Violence which covered the period, 2017-2020. After assessing its strengths and weaknesses, the Government through the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family (MINPROFF), undertook a revision of the document in order to develop a third-generation strategy based among others on the National Development Strategy by 2030 whose pillars include the Promotion of human capital and welfare. The document perceived sexual harassment to include such acts as overly insistent approaches, saucy compliments, unwanted touching or kissing, exhibition or showing of pornographic pictures or films. The main objective of the National Strategy to combat Gender-Based Violence 2022-2026 is to contribute to the reduction by at least half the rate of Gender-Based Violence by 2026, in a context weakened by security and humanitarian crises.

Moreover, the amendments relating to women's rights contained in the draft Criminal Code, the Civil Code and/or the Code of Persons and the Family aim to eliminate discrimination, to better protect the rights of women and to punish violations thereof indicates that sexual harassment is severely punishable by law.

In Cameroonian Universities, Aliou (2019) articulated that, sexual harassment is a deeply ingrained issue. Pondi (2011) corroborates that sexual harassment in higher education is a known

phenomenon. There are verbal abuse, comments about privacy, remarks about the body, veiled or explicit sexual proposals. He also noted that expressions such as "sexually transmitted Notes" or "sexually transmitted averages", are known to everyone and abuse of power and harassment are visible. Unfortunately, there is the challenge to understand the magnitude of the vice due to the unavailability of quantitative surveys. He further notes that, both men and women, harass each other and all modern means of telecommunications are used to get an appointment (phone, SMS, skype, internet, mail, etc.). Relating to actions taken so far, the University of Yaounde 1 has a telephone line through which they can listen and counsel victims of sexual harassment. Also, victims can channel their complaints to a local association (Association de la Lutte Contre la Violence faites au Femmes) through their email address.

In the University of Buea, there used to be a Sexual Harassment Committee (SEHACOM), which defined sexual harassment as any unwelcome, unwanted, unsolicited and/or physical contact made by a member of the community. It could result from threats to downgrade marks, demote, withhold privileges and rights and dismissal for the refusal of sexual advances or the promise of a reward for accepting sexual advances. Moreover, the current Vice-Chancellor Professor in an interview with the *Sun Newspaper* emphasized that sexual harassment allegations are being given due attention contrary to recent claims that such complaints were treated with levity (Azonhnwi, 2020). To intensify the fight against sexual

harassment in the institution, a mechanism has been set up to look into the phenomenon whereby, the former Registrar of the institution, through a signed notice to staff and students of the Faculty of Social and Management Sciences called on victims of sexual harassment to submit complaints alongside supporting evidence (Le Journal du Cameroun, 2020).

Sexual harassment on especially female gender in higher institutions of learning generally infringes on human rights and unfairly deprives them of a safe environment in which they can participate, excel, innovate and contribute positively to their personal and educational development. The thrust of this paper is to examine the factors responsible for the sexual harassment of female students and its reverberations on their academic welfare at the University of Buea.

2. Methodology

This research was conducted in the University of Buea located in the South West Region of Cameroon. It is the pioneer Anglo-Saxon University in Cameroon, also known as "The Place to Be". Created by presidential Decree No. 93/034 of 19 January, 1993, the University of Buea effectively started with 768 students in a few faculties. By 2019, the University had nine faculties (Faculties of Arts, Education, Engineering and Technology, Health Sciences, Laws and Political Science, Science, Social and Management Science, College of Technology and Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine) and two schools (Advance School of Translators and Interpreters and Higher Technical Teachers Training College) with a student enrolment of over 16,000 (University of Buea Records, 2019).

The target population for the study are female students of the University of Buea. This is because the female gender, especially female students of the university are more vulnerable to sexual harassment by virtue of their sex than male students. A total of 40 female students were identified through student's representatives of faculties (who are partially responsible for the welfare of students on campus and to whom students report issues cases including casessexual hasrassment) and through an ongoing study on sexual harassment policy carried out by the Department of Women and Gender Studies in 2020-2021. The researcher identified the student representatives through a list from the Vice-Dean in charge of Student's Affairs and Records who (student representatives) then provided contacts of victims from their records, The researcher personally contacted victims with whom she interacted and purposively recruited 40 females. Regarding the ongoing study on sexual harassment policy carried out by the Department of Women and Gender Studies in 2020-2021, the researcher simply got the list of victims from the Department of Women and Gender Studies. These 40 female students who are victims of sexual harassment were purposefully selected. The sample also included one gender focal point on sexual harassment in the University of Buea. The role of the focal point was to represent the voice of the administration of the University of Buea.

An exploratory research design was employed to describe the factors responsible for the sexual harassment of female students and its reverberations on their academic welfare at the University of Buea. Both primary and secondary instruments were used to collect data. The primary instrument was unstructured interview guide and it consisted of open and closed ended questions related to the objective of the study. The reason for using this interview guide is because it gives room for in-depth information by engaging in conversation that enables respondents to share their subjective experiences. The interview guide was divided into two sections with the first focusing on the demographic characteristics of respondents and the second section on questions that relate to the main objective of the study, that is the factors responsible for sexual harassment and reverberations of sexual harassment on academic welfare of female students of the University of Buea. For validity and reliability, the instruments were pre-tested on mainly female students who were victims of sexual harassment in a private higher institution of learning in Buea and adjustments were made. Interviews were conducted in an environment agreed upon by the interviewees and each interview lasted averagely an hour. This study also made use of secondary data from books, articles, journals, magazines, newspapers, official reports and the internet.

Data was analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative data was analysed using a spread sheet derived from qualitative data, and the unit of analysis was the individuals selected for the study. The response sheets corresponding to each respondent were studied, and identified answers given to each question based on the objective of the study. Percentages, modes, means were used for analysis. While for qualitative data, the interviews were transcribed by the researcher, after which data was organized under descriptive codes, generated

from the literature and the interview. The codes were pilot-tested on a set of observations before coding proper finally took place. A frequency table was drawn from the theme derived from the codes. At the end of the process, varied patterns, relationships and conclusions were drawn and meanings derived from the results presented. Data was presented using descriptive statistics.

Before the data collection process, the verbal informed consent of the participants and the authorities were obtained. Respondents were also assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their information. They were equally reminded that they were not forced to participate in the study and so were free to withdraw any time they desired for whatever reasons.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by Article 11:18 of the General Recommendation adopted by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1992. It stipulates that "it is discriminatory when the woman has reasonable ground to believe that her objection would disadvantage her …, or create a hostile working environment." (Art. 11.18). In this light, the study concentrated on three major aspects: the manifestations of sexual harassment, factors that influence sexual harassment as well as the reverberations of sexual harassment on the victims' academic welfare.

This paper is also guided by the radical feminist theory which grew out of the radical feminist movement formed in the 1960s in the U.S., Europe and Australia (Gemzöe, 2002). It is a theory of women's position in the world, designed and made by women for women. The theory argues that women are oppressed due to their sex. The oppression manifests through men's control of women in families, sexual oppression within and outside the family (including educational institutions) and violence against women (including sexual harassment). Lewis (2020) opines that radical feminism opposes patriarchy, a social system based on male domination over women and unequivocally promotes a power imbalance between men and women in heterosexual settings.

Summarily, radical feminist theory addresses the issue of gender-based violence (including sexual harassment) as a product of existing patriarchies. Also, radical feminism strives for social transformation rather than make adjustments through legal changes. It recognizes the rights of women and emphasizes that the core of women problems lies at socially constructed constraints against women based on their sex and that if these barriers are removed, the growth of the female will be accelerated (Oakley, 2002).

For this study the main indicators are: patriarchy and the unequal power relation between the harasser (lecturer) and the harassed (female student). The harasser possesses power by virtue of patriarchy for outstanding pass marks but in return for sexual favours from the harassed, failure of which may result to poor grades and results. The table below presents pertinent information on sexual harassment in schools.

Table 1: Concepts, Indicators and Variables'

Concepts	Indicators	Variable
Manifestations of sexual harassment	Unwelcome sexual behaviour	Physical, verbal and non-verbal
Factors that influence sexual harassment	-Non-participation in compulsory academic exercises	Quiz, assignments, continuous assessment
	-Gender of supervisors	Male supervisors
	-Patriarchy -Unequal power relation	-Male dominance (age, decision making) -Access to resources (marks)
Reverberations of sexual harassment	-Academic performance	Course grades, grade point average
	-Health	Psychological problems (stress, trauma, fear)
Challenges faced by victims of sexual harassment	School environment	-Attendance -Level of concentration and participation in class. -Repeat course

Source: Adapted from theoretical frameworks and fieldwork

4. Data Analysis and Results

4.1 The Demographic Characteristics of Respondents of Sexual Harassment

The profile of respondents was based on age-range, level of student, type of sexual harassment, harasser and frequency of sexual harassment

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by their Demographic Characteristics

Age Range	n	%
18-21	14	35
22-25	20	50
26-29	6	15
Total	**40**	**100**
Level of student	**n**	**%**
200 (1st year)	7	17.5
300 (2nd year)	8	20
400 (3rd year)	14	35
500 (4th year)	11	22.5
Total	**40**	**100**
Type of Sexual harassment	**n**	**%**
Physical	10	25
Verbal	26	65
Non-verbal	4	10
Total	**40**	**100**
Harasser	**n**	**%**
Academic staff	40	100
Support staff	0	00
Frequency of Sexual harassment	**N**	**%**
Once	22	55
Twice	6	15
Several times	12	30

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

Table 2 above presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents, There were three major age-ranges: 18-21. 22-25 and 26-29. The mode is 22-25 making up 50% of the sample population while the oldest age-range (26-29) constitutes the east percentage (15). Students of all levels in the University of power were part of this study but the third year students were the majority making up more than one-third (35%) of the sample while freshwomen made up 17.5%. Three types of sexual harassment (physical, verbal and non-verbal) were experienced by these female students with verbal carrying the day (65%). Moreover, the principal harassers were academic staff and the majority of female students (55%) (have been harassed once and the reverse is true for those harassed twice.

4.2 Manifestations of Sexual Harassment

The manifestation of sexual harassment took various forms as indicated in table 3 below.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Manifestations of Sexual Harassment

Manifestations of sexual harassment	n	%
Verbal advances	24	60
Unwanted touching or kissing	6	15
Holding hands	4	10
Charming looks	4	10
Exhibition or showing of pornographic pictures or films	2	5
Total	40	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

The manifestations of sexual harassment as seen on table 3 included verbal advances, unwanted touching or kissing, holding hands, charming looks and Exhibition or showing of pornographic pictures or films with verbal advances making up the highest percentage (60%). Only 5% attested that sexual manifestation was in the form of exhibiting of pornographic pictures or films.

4.3 Reaction of Victims after Sexual Harassment

This section focused essentially on the reactions of the victim of sexual harassment after the act. That is if they reported the act or not.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents on whether Victims Report Sexual Harassment

Whether victims report sexual harassment	n	%
Yes	0	00
No	40	100
Total	40	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

Table 4 portrays the reaction of victims of sexual harassment in the University of Buea is which was negative. All 40 victims fail to report the act to any authority.

4.4 Factors that Influenced Sexual Harassment

There were several factors that influenced sexual harassment ranging from personal to external.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents on Factors that Influenced Sexual Harassment

Factors that Influenced Sexual Harassment	n	%
Failure to write the continuous assessment	40	100
When female students are assigned to male supervisors	40	100
Lack of morality	25	62.5
Poverty	20	50
Provocative dressing	0	00

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

According to table 5, there were numerous factors that influenced sexual harassment. But the most outstanding were failure to write the continuous assessment and when female students are assigned to male supervisors which both registered a 100%. This was followed by a quarter (25%) of respondents who mentioned lack of morality as an influencing factor and the least factor (20%) indicated by victims was poverty.

4.5 Reverberations of Sexual Harassment on Academic Performance

The reverberations for sexual harassment were either in terms of poor or low grade point average.

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents on the Reverberations of Sexual Harassment on Academic Performance of Victims.

Reverberations of sexual harassment on academic performance	n	%
Poor grades	40	100
Low grade point average	40	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

On table 6, there are two key reverberations of sexual harassment on academic performance of victims which are poor grades and low grade point average which both registered a 100%.

4.6 Reverberations of Sexual Harassment on Student's Health

Reverberations of sexual harassment on students' health took three forms: trauma, stress and fear.

Table 7: Distribution of Respondents on Reverberations of Sexual Harassment on Health of Victims

Reverberations of sexual harassment on Student's health	n	%
Trauma	40	100
Stress	40	100
Fear	35	87.5

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

Pertaining to Reverberations of sexual harassment on Student's health as reflected on table 7, more students suffered from trauma (100%) and stress (100%). While some (87.5%) of respondents were overcomed by fear.

4.7 Challenges Faced by Student Victims of Sexual Harassment

This part dwelled on the major difficulties encountered by student victims as a result of sexual harassment.

Table 8: Distribution of Respondents on Challenges Faced by Victims

Challenges faced by student victims of sexual harassment	n	%
Lack of concentration in class	40	100
Repeat courses once or severally	40	100
Reduced possibility to foster education due to low GPA	37	92.5
Lack of motivation to study	33	87.5
Reduced educational opportunities like scholarships	24	60

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

Table 8 demonstrate the challenges faced by victims of sexual harassment in the University of Buea. A larger proportion (100%) of the sample population lack of concentration in class and repeat courses once or severally. Some 92.% of respondents experience reduced possibility to foster education due to low GPA while 87.5% of respondents lack of motivation to study while the least percentage (60%) mentioned reduced educational opportunities like scholarships.

4.8 Coping Strategies of Student Victims

After sexual harassment the victims needed to cope by either depending on themselves or friends.

Table 9: Distribution of Respondents on Coping Strategies Adopted by Victims

Coping strategies of student victims	N	%
Stay prayerful	40	100
Work harder	35	87.5
Seek support from friends	20	50
Switch to another course	16	40

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

Table 9 shows that student victims of sexual harassment adopted some coping strategies. The majority (100%%) of victims stay prayerful, s7.5 % of the victims worker harder, half of the sample population seek support from friends and the least percentage switch to another course.

4.9 Level of Student's Awareness on UB's Actions toward Sexual Harassment in the University of Buea

The University of Buea has taken some actions against sexual harassment and this section concentrates on the level of students' awareness of these actions

Table 10: Distribution of Respondents on Student's Awareness on Mechanisms to Reduce Sexual Harassment in the University of Buea

Level of student's awareness on mechanisms to reduce sexual harassment in the University of Buea	n	%
Low	8	20
Very low	32	80
Total	40	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

On table 10 above student's awareness on mechanisms to reduce sexual harassment in the University of Buea is low for 20% of victims but very low for up to 80% of victims of sexual harassment.

5. Suggestions on Minimizing Sexual Harassment on Campus

This portion presents the way forward to curbing sexual harassment on campus from the students' victim perspective.

Table 11: Distribution on Respondents' Suggestions to Reducing Sexual Harassment on Campus

Suggestions to minimizing sexual harassment on campus	n	%
Sack lecturers who harass students	19	47.5
Bring perpetrators to justice	9	22.5
Strip harassers of their salaries and academic career	6	15
Demote lecturers involved	4	10
Deny them pension	2	5
Total	40	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

Table 11 shows respondents' suggestions to reducing sexual harassment on campus. The majority which constitutes almost half of the sample (47.5%) suggest that lecturers who harass students be sacked while a smallest proportion (10%) thinks that lecturers should be denied pension.

6. Results of Interview with the Gender Focal Point on Actions toward Minimizing Sexual Harassment in the University of Buea

The gender focal point of sexual harassment in University of Buea reported that there are several mechanisms which the University has adopted as far as remedying sexual harassment is concerned. According to her, the University of Buea protects students against sexual harassment by raising awareness through talks on sexual harassment by gender experts during orientation and open days. On such occasions, students are educated on how to identify a sexual harassment act or incident, what to do when they are harassed and how to avoid vulnerability to sexual harassment. Most importantly students are drilled on the dress code which is often deemed a vector of sexual harassment.

Moreover, she asserted that most faculties equally have a guardian counsellor who is responsible for coaching and directing students with challenges of any nature in the learning environment. She also mentioned that the University has campus police and some are stationed at the main entrance of the University to check indecent dressing that could provoke sexual harassment of female students.

In addition, she noted that great attention is given to sexual harassment cases by the authorities in place and that a sexual harassment policy is pending. Moreso, a gender unit was created in October 2020 to handle gender related issues including sexual harassment. She also confirmed that the University has also granted the possibility of students to report sexual harassment cases with evidence. This is through a notice from the Registrar to the Dean of

the Faculty of Social and Management Sciences where sexual harassment is rampant.

It is imperative to note that academic staff (both new and old) are also educated on sexual harassment issues during congregation at the beginning of the school year. The staff are schooled on sexual harassment signals from students and how to carry on with the matter. She concluded that sexual harassment of female students by male staff is a violation of the right of the student but can largely be minimized if the cases are reported by the victims so that actions be taken.

7. Discussion

The demographic information of the female student victims revealed that all female students of the University of Buea irrespective of their ages or levels have been harassed differently but more verbally at least once (60%) by an academic staff. The female students in their final year (35% and 22.5%) are more vulnerable to sexual harassment to academic staff which is contrary to the situation in Kenyan Universities where first and second-year students as well as the financially vulnerable students were the most susceptible to sexual harassment from both academic and non-academic staff (ActionAid, 2019). This corroborates the view of the radical feminists who hold that women are oppressed by virtue of their sex.

The manifestations of sexual harassment were more of verbal advances (60%) with unwanted touches or kisses, holding of hands, charming looks and exhibition or showing of pornographic pictures or films in some cases. A 22year old level 400 student affirmed thus: "…he touched my cheek and…". This confirms Okeke (2011) who found in her study on sexual harassment of women undergraduates in the Anambra State of Nigeria that sexually harassed female students are touched inappropriately by a faculty member.

Regarding the reaction of female student victims after a sexual harassment incident, findings show that none of the students in the sample population reported the act to the University authorities, "for fear that the University would not support me but logically take the side of their colleague, since the power is in their hands" reported a level 400 female student. This falls in line with the observation of American Association of University Women (2006) who purported that sexual harassment is unreported and considered a serious moral and social problem in tertiary institutions. It equally confirms the thrust of radical feminist theory (Lewis, 2018) which opposes patriarchy described as a social system based on male domination over women and unequivocally promotes a power imbalance between men and women in heterosexual settings such as higher institution of learning.

Moreover, diverse factors were cited by female student victims that influenced sexual harassment but the dominant element was failure to write the continuous assessment (100%) and when female students were assigned to male supervisors (100%). Interestingly, more than two third of female student victims (62.5%) perceived lack of morality as another factor while half (50%) of the victims rather identified poverty as a sexual harassment factor as rightly advanced by Taiwo et al. (2014). Hence both the school and socio-economic

environment contribute to influence sexual harassment of students. No female student perceived provocative dressing was a factor that influenced sexual harassment on the basis that Muslim students "who cover themselves from head to toe would not be victims, which is not the case" said a 21-year-old level 500 student victim. This contradicts the opinion of (Imonikhe et al, 2011; Omonijo, 2013; Ikwumokoni and Ojo, 2013; Abe, 2012), who identified female students' improper dressing as a cause of sexual harassment. Besides, it reiterates the fact that the female sex and not the dressing is the key motive for harassment.

The reverberations of sexual harassment on female student victims were directly linked to their academic performance and their psychological health. The study revealed that poor grades and low grade point average which both recorded 100% were the major effects on the academic platform. This indicates that, there was supposed to be an exchange of sexually coloured marks, locally referred to on campus as "sexually transmitted marks" for sexual favours. Failure of which earned the student victim poor grades which culminated to low grade point average and thus predisposed the student victim to an unhealthy academic welfare. This confirms the Article 11:18 of the General Recommendation adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which states that "…her objection would disadvantage her …, or creates a hostile working environment". This also captures Schuffer (2000) who highlighted that the harasser is usually older, powerful and poses something of value that is beneficial to the harassed which can positively affect academic welfare. Eventually, in a learning environment, marks are a highly treasured resource valued by all students including female students (harassed) but which can be provided only by the lecturer (harassed) based on merit. It is this power over marks which the harasser unjustly use to victimize female students with devastating effects on students which jeopardizes their academic welfare. It is a discriminative act which violates the human right of the student and deserves corresponding punishment.

Health wise, female student victims of sexual harassment were psychologically unstable. They were traumatized, stressed or mustered fear which generally impacted negatively on their ability to study successfully in the University of Buea. A 20-year-old level 400 student said: "…I always freeze each time I see the lecturer…I avoid him by skipping his classes… when I manage to attend, I do not participate…". This consequently endangered the academic welfare of the student.

Sexual harassment was accompanied by a plethora of challenges for female student victims. They ranged from lack of concentration in class, repeat courses once or severally, reduced possibility to foster education due to low grade point average, lack of motivation to study to reduced educational opportunities like scholarships. Sexual harassment actually left its victims helpless and hopeless, without any zeal to study or carry on. Students' academic welfare and prospects were drastically reduced with very high possibility of dropping out especially for poor female students, who barely struggled with school in terms of finance. This not-withstanding female student victims of sexual harassment coped by staying

prayerful, working harder or seeking support from friends. Some rather switched to a new course. This was often the case when the said course did not have a compulsory status. Hence the coping strategies adopted were on a personal level since it could prevent them from victimization and stigmatisation.

Pertaining to student's awareness on actions toward minimizing sexual harassment by the University of Buea, findings showed that female student victims were almost ignorant of the mechanisms put in place by the University authorities for the purpose. The majority of them were only aware of the dressing code clause (whose non-conformity could make them vulnerable to sexual harassment). This was because they had witnessed severally how the security guards at the entrance to the University sent away female student who were not properly dressed for lectures. They actually took it for fun and ignored the gravity of the issue.

The majority (47.5%) of student victims however suggested that lecturers who harass female students should be sacked while a relatively smaller proportion thinks that harassers should be demoted and denied pension respectively. To them it is normal that justice take this trend because a destroyed academic welfare can never be replaced and no female student deserves such. In other words, if these barriers are removed as reiterated by Oakley (2002) the growth of the female students will be accelerated.

Unlike other higher institutions of learning in Africa where there exists no policy on sexual harassment, the University of Buea, Cameroon used to have a Sexual Harassment Committee

(SEHACOM) which clearly defined sexual harassment and all related issues. Recently, it took a step ahead to protect victims of sexual harassment through various mechanisms. They traditionally educate both students and staff on sexual harassment during particular occasions like orientation, open days and congregations. In the event of a sexual harassment case reported, the University appoints a committee of competent staff that methodically investigates the matter and makes informed decisions. In fact, the University has handled cases of sexual harassment of female students by academic staff in the past with the student obtaining justice and the staff severely sanctioned. Besides, the University of Buea is at the verge of endorsing a policy on sexual harassment and is also encouraging students and staff through notices to report cases of sexual harassment with evidence. They have also endorsed a gender unit in charge of gender concerns. However, a lot still needs to be done in terms of sexual harassment, its reverberations and remedies.

8. Conclusion

Sexual harassment is a serious form of violence against girls on University campuses with alarming reverberations. It is also a discriminatory treatment that infringes on human rights and unfairly deprives female students of a befitting academic welfare, a safe learning environment in which they can take part, lead, transform and contribute positively to their personal and educational development. Consequently, urgent and concrete actions from the authorities concerned are indispensable to silent the disease that is seriously eroding academic excellence and welfare in our tertiary institutions.

This is absolutely imperative not only to escalate female students to an appropriate context of learning in higher educational institutions but also to give young girls the opportunity to exercise their human rights on the educational platform as well as enjoy appropriate academic welfare.

The endorsement of the National Strategy to combat Gender-Based Violence 2022-2026 of which sexual harassment comprise an integral part, is a laudable gesture by the Cameroon Government through the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family. But the implementation of this instrument at the level of public institutions including tertiary institutions will enormously contribute to the reduction by at least half the rate of gender-based violence by 2026, in a context already weakened by security as expected. This will equally go a long way to enhance radical feminism which recognizes the rights of women and the need for social transformation.

9. Recommendations

The University should multiply its efforts towards mitigating sexual harassment on campus by:

- Embarking on consistent sensitization of students on sexual harassment, that is increasing the number of occasions for such activity and focus on breaking the silence.
- Endorsing and implementing the policy on sexual harassment in the University of Buea in tandem with the National Strategy to combat Gender-Based Violence 2022-2026.
- Encouraging gender experts, counsellors, and deans in charge of student's affairs and student representatives to work in a concerted action to organize talks on the sexual harassment and especially during the period of 16 days Activism on Violence Against Women Organized by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family and other Non-Governmental Organizations.
- Introducing a topic on sexual harassment in a general course such as civics and ethics to enable female students especially who failed to attend the orientation session to understand the concept of sexual harassment in academics and its reverberations.
- Encouraging students to denounce perpetrators of sexual harassment (for fear of the cost on their academic life) by creating remedies to guarantee the rights of victims.

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Language Contact and Language Attitude in a Multilingual Setting: The Case of Some Trasimene and Premiere Students of GBHS and Lycée Mixte de Kousseri

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Abstract

Language contact has a major impact on how languages form, transform, progress, and in some cases, regress. This study addresses the notion of language contact and language attitude in a multilingual community. It investigates the effects of attitudes on the language used by secondary school students of Kousseri, a linguistically diverse locality in the Far North Region of Cameroon. It verifies the daily language habits of this group of students. Examining the central question "how do students' attitudes towards English and French influence their language use?" the paper argues that the setting, motivation and covert intention of the speakers condition the code choice of the students in the area. The research uses an ethnographic design and a mixed-method approach involving a questionnaire, participant observation and focus group discussions to obtain data from a convenient sample of the population that includes 175 participants. Halliday's (1985) Systemic Functional Linguistic theory and Howard's (1982) Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) are used as the bases of our analysis. The data reveals an inclination to the use of local languages by students both in and out of the classroom and a positive attitude towards English and French. However, the students adapt their speech patterns to diverge from these two languages. Thus, over generalisations and misinterpretation are evident in their speech and writing as they tend to code-mix and code-switch unconsciously and wrongly from one language to another. Students maintain their use of indigenous languages and Chadian Arabic which are associated with economic power, religious prestige and cultural identity.
Key Words: Language contact, Language attitude, Students, Kousseri

1. Introduction

The study of language contact and language attitudes is relevant and dynamic in Cameroon, a postcolonial country with a complex linguistic situation of 279 indigenous languages and two official languages characterised by the existence of four major lingua fracas (Kouega 1999b). Language contact and language attitudes are two closely related terms as language contact can affect language attitudes. The two terms represent interdisciplinary fields of study, linking linguistics with sociology and psychology, with culture, identity, aesthetics, morality and epistemology. The attitudes that most students in Kousseri (which is a multilingual setting) have towards English and French languages play a vital role in their language use and language choice strategies. A multilingual setting can be considered as an area characterised by individuals or groups of people who use several languages or language varieties for interaction. According to Thomason (2001) this language contact situation can cause "any linguistic change that would have been less likely to occur outside a particular contact situation". This includes the transfer of material from one language to another, loss or attrition of linguistic material and emergence of new languages and varieties. Language contact can influence students' attitudes with regards to prestige, accommodation, language shift and loss and linguistic borrowing. Language contact also influences the social and psychological aspects of language use, such as speaker's identity, motivation, preference and loyalty. Language attitudes can influence the outcome and direction of contact

as well as the speakers' behaviour and choices in multilingual settings (Thomason 2001).

Language contact occurs when speakers of two or more languages or varieties interact and influence each other. Although language is unquestionably a strong factor of identity and culture of a people, the need for social, economic, political and demographic relations amongst individuals with different languages and cultures makes room for language contact. Thomason (2001) says that language contact is the use of several languages in the same place and at the same time and this usage will cause language change since one language will affect the another. The language that an individual or group selects at this point depends on several factors that determine certain language choices or usage like the topic, the social scene, the relative status of the speaker, their aspirations, their feelings of identity and other covert intentions.

Language attitudes are opinions regarding language or language varieties, positively or negatively assessing a certain language or variety. *The Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching* (2002) defines language attitudes as "the attitudes which speakers of different languages or language varieties have towards each other's language or their own language". The measurement of language attitudes provides information which is useful in language teaching and language learning. According to Crystal (1992) "language attitude is the feeling people have about their own language or the language of

others". Attitudes are affected by experience. Thus, attitude change is an important notion in linguistic settings.

2. Background to the Study

As a multilingual country, French and English are official languages, a heritage of Cameroon's colonial past as a colony of both France and the United Kingdom from 1916 to 1960. English and French therefore became the languages of education, administration, commerce, etc. English and French coexist alongside many other indigenous languages in Cameroon as Ethnologue (2021) estimates about 279 indigenous languages in Cameroon. According to Chia (1983), as quoted by Kouega (1999b), there exist four major lingua francas in Cameroon namely: Mongo Ewondo (spoken in the Centre and South Regions), Shuwa Arabic (spoken in the Far North Region), Fulfulde (spoken in the Adamawa and North Regions), and Pidgin English (dominantly spoken in the South West, North West, West, and Littoral regions).

This study focuses on the linguistic situation in Kousseri which has witnessed language contact as several languages interact in this locality due to the regular migration of people of different language backgrounds to the city. Kousseri is a small city situated in the Northern part of Cameroon, described as extending across the left bank of the Logone River and the Chari River, delineating the boundary between Chad to the north and Cameroon to the south. The rivers not only serve as natural borders but also as corridors of migration, trade and cultural exchange, contributing to the rich linguistic and cultural diversity observed in the region (Tourneux, 2019). Kousseri is the capital of Logone and Chari Division in the Far

North Region. The Kotoko are the original settlers of Kousseri and they speak Lagwan, a language popularly called Kotoko. The geographical positioning of Kousseri as a border town makes it a melting pot of cultures and languages, fostering an environment where multilingualism is not only common but necessary for social and economic participation (Tourneux, 2019).

Lycée Mixte de Kousseri (LMK) and Government Bilingual High School (GBHS) Kousseri admit students who live in Kousseri and hail from all the regions of Cameroon and from the neighbouring countries - Chad and Nigeria. The locality has recently been occupied by migrants from the other nine regions of the country and from the neighbouring Chad and Nigeria. The majority of the population from Chad is Shuwa Arabs and they speak Chadian Arabic (Shuwa Arabic) as their lingua franca and French as their second language and basic language of instruction in schools while those from Nigeria speak Igbo, Hausa, Pidgin English and English Language. Other languages such as German and Spanish are taught in schools, and considered as foreign languages. English and French are the two official languages also used as the languages of instruction. Cameroon Pidgin English (CPE) is regularly spoken among indigenes who have migrated from the other nine regions of Cameroon to settle in Kousseri. These languages exist side by side with the most frequently used languages being Arabic (Shuwa Arabic) and French.

3. An Overview of Research on Language Attitudes and Related Topics

Studies in language contact and language attitudes in the Cameroon are many and various. Early studies focused on the elements of language attitudes as a field of psychology. Questions on Francophone learners' attitudes towards English as a second official language have characterised recent research.

Rosenberg & Hovland (1960) believe that the concept of language attitudes, which is rooted in the field of social psychology, is made up of such elements as cognition and behaviour. They equally suggest that attitudes are hypothetical constructs that interfere between observable, precedent stimuli and subsequent behaviour. According to The Cognitive-Affective-Behaviour Model of Attitudes (Rosenberg & Hovland 1960), attitudes consist of three components:

1. Affect - relating to what a person feels about the attitude object

2. Cognition - relating to what a person thinks about the attitude object

3. Behaviour - relating to how the person acts toward the attitude object

In a linguistic setting, the affective component could be made of like or dislike of a particular language or of anxiety over learning that particular language. The researchers suggest that the key to understanding attitude has been the evaluation of the affective component. The cognitive component of how an attitude object perceived could refer to the English or French languages themselves being the attitude object. Attitudes of acceptance and rejection are not

purely on linguistic basis but have to do with factors like age, gender, and socioeconomic level. Attitudes play a great role in the survival of a language. The attitudes that most students in Kousseri have towards English and French languages have inhibited the progress in their performances in these language subjects. The overall change that would have come with language in the community is thus limited due to the lack of interest, poor motivation and the negative attitude expressed towards these languages.

Abongdia (2009) studies language ideologies and attitudes of Francophone learners toward English in the Central Region of Cameroon. This offers a critical examination of the different attitudes and motivations of Francophone learners towards English as a second official language in secondary schools in the city of Yaounde. The study also presents the factors that appear to play a role in shaping their attitudes towards English, a language that many of the respondents find hard to learn. His findings reveal the largely negative language attitudes that Francophone learners have towards English as well as the principal influences that help to shape these attitudes. Most of the students have instrumental rather that integrative motivation (Gardner & Lambert, 1972) for learning English.

Tanda & Eposi (2017) presented the results of a study that set out to unravel the attitudes acquisition conundrum exhibited by Francophone Cameroonians in the learning of English as a second official language. It submitted that notwithstanding the widely negative attitude they hold of English and the Anglophone Cameroonians who speak the language, this negativism seems not, more recently, to blight their quest to learn and use the English language when necessary. The study contained that as Francophone Cameroonians overtly show a disdain for the English language, they at the same time recognised its role as an outlet to the global world.

In testing the adequacy of Gardner's (1979) socio-educational model, Gardner, Lalonde and Pierson (1983) used integrativeness and attitudes towards the language learning situation as attitudinal constructs in order to determine learners' motivation. Both motivation and language anxiety were found to have an effect on second language achievement. Results indicated that integrativeness and attitudes toward the language learning situation are causally linked to motivation and in turn may cause second-language achievement.

To substantiate the notion of multilingualism and its prevalence in Cameroon, Akumbu and Chie (2020) examine the language used by the Mbororo living in Badem, Kejom Ketinguh, to shed light on the factors responsible for their multilingualism. According to them, the seminomadic cattle-rearers are highly multilingual in their mother tongue, CPE, and at least one other language. The authors explain that the Mbororo people hold a language ideology where Fulfulde is "primary" and other languages are learned for specific purposes (facilitate cattle-grazing, commerce, maintain social ties). The authors reach the conclusion that the relationships among the languages in this setting are influenced by local ideologies not prestige.

This study intends to find out if this is the same case for the secondary and high school students of Kousseri. It attempts to tackle the topic from a different angle. Participants are students between the ages of 14 and 20 years in GBHS and LMK of Kousseri. All of them have undergone primary schooling in a Francophone background. This paper seeks to describe the linguistic attitudes from the point of view of a contact situation. The study proposes strategies that can be used to enhance students' attitudes towards the learning of English and French and those that can be used by teachers to motivate learners in the English language classroom. This study also examines the modality of interaction in the classroom and also proposes better interaction strategies.

4. Methodology and Theoretical Framework

Data for this study were obtained from observation, focus group discussions and a questionnaire administered to the respondents of the two secondary schools; GBHS and LMK Kousseri. A sample of 87 students from GBHS and 88 from LMK of both sexes was purposefully selected based on their knowledge, life-experience and academic level as students in examination classes preparing to write the Brevet d'Etudes du Premier Cycle (BEPC) and Probatoire examinations respectively. The participants were within the age range of 14 to 20 years. Prior to observation and questionnaire administration, focus group discussions were carried out with a sample of the target population. These discussions were carried out to find out students' linguistic attitudes towards English and French. This

was done in order to find out if their language use is affected by their attitudes.

The questionnaire for this study was carefully designed to elicit students' opinions about their attitudes towards the two official languages and their choice of language use in several domains (school, home, market, meetings). We also intended to find out what motivates the students to learn English and French. A series of questions using the Likert scale were designed for students. The Likert scale often has five potential choices (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree). The final average score often "agree" represents the level of accomplishment or informants' attitude towards the subject matter. However, the researchers limited the potential choices to four and the students were to tick whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree. After collecting the data, marking and analysis of the data was done to find out the relationship between students' language attitudes and their language use in the community. This suggests the rate at which students' attitudes towards English and French are dependent on factors like contact, motivation, identity, prestige and other socio-economic factors.

Participant observation was done with the help of an observation guide. The purpose of this check list was to enable the research to stay focused on the purpose for the research. While present in school within a three to four months' timeline, the researcher observed the language use pattern of both students and teachers in and out of the classroom. Thus, the observation was limited to the following: students' use of English in and outside the

class; students' thoughts and expressions about English and French during their discussions; students' responses to teachers during English language classes; the methods employed by teachers when teaching English language; and, students' responses to the use of the English language out of the classroom.

Focus group discussions were carried out with some of the students in the two schools. These discussions took place within four sessions held four times within the month of May 2023. Each group was made up of 10 members excluding the moderators (researchers). The research questions were modified so as to formulate appropriate, concrete sub-questions suitable for discussion with the participants. This was done in order to find out students' opinions, experiences and perspectives so as to solicit their attitudes towards the English and French languages. Several discussions were carried out on the basis of knowledge regarding their language use patterns and preferred language use in several domains. Their responses were collected, evaluated and compared and finally interpreted in a way that made it possible to answer the main research question.

Though the target population was up to 200 students, the student population who provided valid responses was 175 (valid meaning that there was an actual answer to the question and that it could be interpreted within the context of the research).

Table 1 : Student respondent population

School	Frequency	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent
GBHS KOUSSERI	87	49.7	49.7
Lycee Mixte de Kousseri	88	50.3	100.0
Total	175	100.0	
Class	Frequency	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent
Troisieme	71	40.6	40.6
Premiere	104	59.4	100.0
Total	175	100.0	

Source: Conceived by researchers, June 2023

This paper is guided by two theories. The interpersonal function of Halliday's Systemic Linguistics Theory expatiates on the notion of negotiating attitudes. Halliday posits that language has developed in response to three social-functional needs; firstly, to be able to construe experience in terms of what is going on around us and inside us; secondly, to interact with the social world by negotiating social roles and attitudes; and the thirdly, to be able to create messages with which we can package our meanings in terms of what is new or given, and in terms of what the starting point for our message is, commonly referred to as the Theme (Halliday & Hasan 1985). Halliday calls these language functions metafunctions; ideational, interpersonal and textual respectively. His point is that any piece of language calls into play all three metafunctions simultaneously. The interpersonal function refers to the way language is used to interact with others and express attitudes and feelings. This meta-function is concerned with the negotiation of social relationships. This includes

the expression of attitudes, emotions, and social roles, as well as the negotiation of power and status. According to Halliday & Hasan (1985), attitudes can be conveyed through the use of modality, which is a system of linguistic resources for expressing degrees of certainty, obligation, and inclination. Modality can be used to convey attitudes towards propositions, including beliefs and opinions, as well as attitudes towards other people, including respect and politeness (Halliday & Hasan 1985). Within the context of our study on attitudes, the interpersonal meta-function is evident in expressing attitudes through students' opinions on language use and negotiating social roles between the students and teachers.

Giles' (1982) Communication Accommodation Theory explains the notion that the attitudes speakers show towards each other, the languages of instruction and shared social contexts in accommodation can trigger either language convergence or divergence. The initial incarnation of the theory, as proposed by Giles (1973) was that speakers' language may either converge towards that of the interlocutor(s) or diverge from it or, thirdly that speakers maintain their own language without accommodation. The motivation behind accommodation lies in the assumption that the addressee(s) will interpret convergence positively (that is as a sign of liking) and divergence negatively (that is as a sign of dislike). The concept of linguistic convergence constitutes a linguistic process wherein a speaker modifies his or her speech to closely resemble the addressee's speech and divergence is evident when a speaker distances or shows disapproval by using a language or language variety that differs from that of the other speaker. This theory guides the study to determine whether students in Kousseri tend to converge or diverge in their language use as expressed by their attitudes.

5. Data analysis

Information obtained from questionnaire revealed that students were very comfortable using Shuwa Arabic in several domains. At home, 61 of the respondents communicate with their parents and siblings in this language and in school, 54 of them feel most comfortable using Shuwa Arabic among their peers. As a commercial city, almost every child is involved with buying and selling every day after school. While at the market, they feel very much at ease using Shuwa Arabic and 26 of them use French. English language is rarely used by students out of school. English language is particularly limited to classroom as a language of instruction. Since Shuwa Arabic is widely spoken everywhere in town, the respondents prefer to communicate in this language instead of English, French and their respective indigenous languages. With regards to the analysis of the questionnaire, the data shows that only 1 student uses English at home, 3 during social gatherings and 10 of them use English in school. 37 respondents effectively use English and French in school. The respondents preferred languages used in different domains is presented on the table below.

Table 2: Respondents' preferred language(s) in different domains

To what extent do you agree with the following?	Agr		SA		Dis		SD		Total	
	N	% Agr	N	% SA	N	% Dis	N	% SD	N	% Total
I prefer to speak English and French only in class	27	15%	18	10%	51	29%	79	45%	175	100%
English and French are preferable out of class than Shuwa Arabic	38	22%	44	25%	50	29%	43	25%	175	100%
I use English or French during the Exams just because it is obligatory	33	19%	47	27%	42	24%	53	30%	175	100%
I would rather learn how to speak than write in the English Language	54	31%	21	12%	68	39%	32	18%	175	100%
Total	152	22%	130	19%	211	30%	207	30%	700	100%

Table 3: Distribution of responses to questions based on language use

	CPE	English	French	Shuwa Arabic
At home	8	1	58	61
Social gathering	5	3	53	61
To talk with friends	10	0	39	71
In the market	16	0	26	58
At school	16	10	27	54
In church/mosque	4	0	16	92

Source: Conceived by researchers, June 2023

The figures on the table above basically help to expatiate on the extent to which these languages are used in the various domains, the same students who use Shuwa Arabic at home may or may not be the same ones who use it at the market. Students shy away from using the two official languages. They rather feel comfortable using Shuwa Arabic, a foreign Lingua franca of the neighbouring country, Chad. French is basically used among the students, thanks to its influence from Chad, the media, technological advancement (using ICT gadgets) and academic demands.

The questionnaire also investigated the language attitudes demonstrated by students by designing a series of questions using the Likert scale. We however omitted the neutral option of the responses to be able to determine the extent to which the students' attitudes are positive or negative based on their responses. Thus, instead of the five potential choices (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree), the students were limited to four. This is illustrated in the table below.

The results drawn from the analysis presented on table 3 show an inclination to the use of French and English be it in or out of the classroom for both schools under study. For the first statement investigating whether students prefer to speak English and French only in the classroom, 75% of the students disagreed. Thus, 130 respondents out of the total of 175 respondents do not prefer to limit the use of these languages only to the classroom. Considering the second statement, 54% of the students disagreed that English and French are preferable out of the classroom as compared to Shuwa Arabic. This disagreement concerns the majority of the respondents implying that they prefer to use Shuwa Arabic outside the classroom than the two official languages but their preference does not disregard the fact that 46% of the respondents were comfortable using English and French outside the classroom. With regard to using English or French during examination because it is obligatory, 46% of the respondents agreed and 54% disagreed. The highest percentage of the respondents (30%) strongly disagreed with the assertion. A total of 95% of the 175 respondents do not use English or French in examinations simple because it is obligatory; they have other motives for which they use these languages. Again, out of the 175 respondents, 100 students disagreed that they would rather speak than write in the English language. This 57% of the respondents will not only learn how to speak but attempt to write in the English language. The other 75 students however prefer to learn how to speak rather than learn to write in English.

We can state, based on the answers to the questionnaire that, the respondents have a positive attitude towards English and French: they do not consider these languages difficult to learn; however, as there is no need to use English outside of school, they do not learn it well. A certain defence mechanism of the students can be traced as many of them lay responsibility for the failure in learning English well on the basis that English is a language they hear only during the period it has been assigned to be taught on the time table. Nevertheless, this is significant from the point of view of the importance of English language teaching in schools: as students in Kousseri do not have to use the language outside the classroom, their learning of English solely depends on the institutionalised teaching of the language. French on the other hand is used to teach other subjects in school and outside the classroom for communication and commerce so the learners have basic knowledge of the language although their proficiency in the language is still low.

There are other possible reasons why some students show positive attitudes towards the languages but their outcomes during and after the teaching and learning process are most of the time poor. These reasons were captured through observation of students in class.

During observation, it was noticed that the manner in which students responded to questions and statements made by the teacher portrayed a negative interest in the subject. When an English language class was to take place after the break period, most students tended to sleep in class. Others just sat sluggishly as though they had been forced to attend the class and worst of all they hardly

participated in the lessons. Other students preferred that the teacher should give lectures and leave them with exercises to do. Most of the time in a majority of the English language classes, the students formed the habit of silence wherein when a teacher asked a question, no one attempted to give a response. Some teachers often repeated the questions or rephrased them. Other teachers probed or prompted the students to respond while some of the teachers remained calm and even attempted a translation of the question from English to French but still responses from students were hard to come by. Others got agitated and either carried on with the lesson or insisted that the students respond to the questions by pointing them to stand and answer the question one after another. Teachers employed other forms of reinforcement; some were positive (offering an extra mark for any student who attempted an answer) and others negative (threatening to punish them or ordering them to kneel down).

The focus of observation was on the reactions, interactions and behaviour of students in the classroom and the way they approach or respond to teachers. These reactions could be interpreted as what they think and feel about the languages. It was realised that students' reactions were sometimes influenced by the teachers' behaviours. The kinds of instructions and language tasks given by teachers and their comments on the responses and reactions of the students were also taken into consideration.

After the focus group discussions with groups of 10 students at a time, we compared and interpreted their responses which revealed that a majority of the students have a positive attitude towards English and French as they explained that these two official languages give them a sense of identity as Cameroonians and learning and using these languages can give them greater job opportunities in the future. According to the discussions, having a repertoire of three or more languages gives them social, economic and political advantages.

This study suggests that special teaching aids like actual objects, flip cards, pictures, flash cards, card boards, charts, recordings, and techniques like dramatisation, passive exposure should be used more often so as to accompany students' positive attitudes and enhance the use of English and French both in and out of the classroom. More attention should be directed towards the communicative function of both languages.

6. Conclusion

This study has described the language contact situation of Kousseri and investigated the linguistic attitudes of some secondary school students in that city in order to verify the impact of the attitudes on language use in this community. The study used observation, questionnaire and focus group discussion to elicit students' attitudes with regards to aspects such as affect, cognition and behaviour. As evident in students' responses, 60% of the respondents show a positive attitude towards the use of English and French both in and out of the classroom as they disagreed with ideas that limit the use of both languages to the classroom. Thus, 130 respondents out of the total of 175 prefer not to limit the use of these languages only to the

classroom. However, when these students attempt to converge towards the use of English and French, as revealed through observation, they tend to make utterances characterised by overgeneralisations, code mixing and misinterpretations which are evident in their speeches and writings. This affects their learning and usage of English and French negatively. These students also show a positive attitude towards Shuwa Arabic and lack motivation to study in the two official languages English and French. During the focus group discussion, the opinions and expressions of 70% of the participants suggested that students in Kousseri exhibit the notion of divergence as they shy away from using English and French and rather communicate in the foreign lingua franca, Shuwa Arabic and other native languages more comfortably in and out of classroom. These native languages are associated to economic power, religious prestige and cultural identity in this locality. It is necessary to find ways to enable teachers and students communicate better so as to redirect students' attitudes towards French and English language in this community. This will ease the teaching and learning processes in the school and class settings which will enable them use these languages more often in their daily interactions. Understanding linguistic attitudes that learners portray towards a language and the influences that such attitudes have with regards to students' language encourages better approaches to teaching of English and French in schools.

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An Evaluation of the Skill-Based and the Competence-Based Approaches on the Written Performance of Terminale A4 Students in the Northern Regions of Cameroon

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Abstract

This study compares students' performance in writing under the Skill-Based and the Competence-Based Approaches in language teaching. Informants are candidates of the *Baccalauréat* examination in the three northern regions of Cameroon (Adamawa, North, and Far North) which are known as Priority Education Areas in Cameroon due to their delay in access to education. The main concern here is whether, and to what extent the change of the approach to teaching English in the country has contributed to the amelioration of students' performance in writing in this area. Richards and Rodgers (2015:1) posit that "Adopting the newest method will lead to better results than the previous method". Chomsky's (1965) Linguistic Competence, Canale and Swain's (1980) Communicative Competence, and Stufflebeam's (2003) Context Input Process and Product (CIPP) model that was developed to enable school programmes in the US to improve and achieve accountability are used as theoretical frame. The data stems from *Baccalauréat* A4 candidates' scripts collected from two examination centers for the 2018 and 2021 sessions representing the Skill-Based Approach and the Competence-Based Approach respectively. The data is analysed following the content analysis method with descriptive statistics to report students' performance in writing. Results reveal that students' performance in writing under both approaches in teaching is not significantly different. The study proposes a series of measures to be taken for the amelioration of students' writing at this level of education.

Keywords: Writing, *Baccalauréat*, Skill-Based Approach, Competence-Based Approach

1. Introduction

The teaching of official languages in Cameroon is a constitutional requirement that the law of December 2019 promoting official languages reiterates in its article 5: *"… (2) Specifically, this law aims to … promote the teaching of English and French in the education system"* (P. 1). To implement Government policy related to the promotion of official languages, secondary school teachers have been subjected to various approaches including the Skill-Based Approach (SBA) and the Competence-Based Approach (CBA). It has been observed that despite the change of teaching approaches, there is no corresponding significant change in the performance of students in writing at the Baccalauréat examination. This situation is observed in Essay Writing in the three northern regions of Cameroon which are Adamawa, North and Far-North. For instance, in 2018 under the SBA, out of 25 candidates that were selected per region for this study, the performance was as follows in Essay Writing: Adamawa (General Average 2.5/10, Success Rate 28%), North (General Average 5.6/10, Success Rate 60%), Far-North (General Average 4/10, Success Rate 40%). In 2021 under the CBA, the candidates performed in Essay Writing was as follows: Adamawa (General Average 2.92/10, Success Rate 8%), North (General Average 3.1/10, Success Rate 20%), Far-North (General Average 2.98/10, Success Rate 24%). Considering these results, the main question that needs answering is whether, and to what extent, the change of the approach to teaching English in this country has contributed to the amelioration of students' performance in writing in this part of the country. The study checks how founded Richards and Rodgers' (2015:1) stand that "Adopting the newest

method will lead to better results than the previous method" is, regarding the teaching of writing in Cameroon.

2. Background to the Study

Information relating to issues of education in the northern regions, the SBA and CBA syllabuses as well as the model of evaluation of the teaching approaches under study is necessary for the understanding of the major concern in this paper.

Cameroon, like many African countries can trace the origin of its formal education to evangelisation and imperialism, both of which have greatly influenced the development, structure and content of its educational system (Epah 2007). Imperialism and evangelisation met a fierce resistance in the northern regions, causing a great delay in access to western education. The deep roots in culture as well as its preservation were determining factors in this resistance. Local culture is a precious asset in this part of the country where people are more introvert than in other parts of the country. Low enrolment rate in school is recorded in this area, the influence of a vehicular language, Fulfuldé is felt, early marriages are arranged, literacy jobs such as animal breeding are preferred to formal schooling, etc. All this gives the area the status of Priority Education Area in Cameroon.

In the Far-North region especially, terrorist attacks have worsened the situation. Boko Haram's attacks and armed counter offensives have prevented thousands of children from receiving formal education. The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) explains that the ongoing conflict in the region is jeopardising the future of children and exposing them to recruitment by extremist groups and criminal gangs. After the first attacks by Boko Haram in Cameroon, about 23000 school-age children were out of school, while 92 primary and secondary schools remained closed, according to UNICEF. The situation should be worse today. Teachers who fled Boko Haram affected areas have not returned and many of the schools have been burnt, bombed, heavily damaged, and in some instances used as counter offensive bases. In other instances, the schools lack basic equipment, such as benches, desks, chairs and chalkboards for the students.

It is worth mentioning that this crisis has also affected the neighbouring regions, that is, North and Adamawa which saw the enrolment of their schools double because they welcomed Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from the Far North Region. It becomes obvious that this new configuration of schools in the northern regions: overcrowded enrolment, lack of infrastructure and shortage of teachers does not facilitate the teaching and learning practice. In a word, education has taken a big hit from terrorism in this part of the country.

To this new look, we should add the change of the teaching approach. SBA has been replaced by CBA in these regions just as in the rest of the country. Does this change in teaching approach correlate with students' academic performance especially in the domain of writing?

SBA and CBA are teaching approaches that have been practised in Cameroon education system over the past two decades.

The former has to do with a specific way of using language that combines structural and functional ability independent of specific settings or situations, and attitudes. The focus here is on detached or individual skills. The latter is learner-centered and focuses on the construction of the learner's knowledge. It aims at developing the competences that are regarded as essential for the learner of the new century: the ability to interact orally, process oral and written texts and write texts taking into consideration the learner's environment known as 'Real Life Situation'.

In general, the SBA syllabus stipulates that Terminale students should be able to consolidate all the language skills, upgrade their linguistic competence and communicate with fluency and accuracy in varied listening, speaking, reading, and writing situations with confidence. They should match style and response to audience and purpose. For writing, a Terminale student should be able to:

- master all the writing skills of the preceding years;
- write in a variety of forms with a clear purpose and awareness of audience e.g. notes, personal letters, formal letters, instructions, newspaper articles, stories, poems;
- compare, contrast, persuade, entertain, express attitudes or emotions in writing;
- recognise where and when redrafting and revising are appropriate and act accordingly. Write a second or third draft following the discussions of peers;
- demonstrate an awareness of what is appropriate and inappropriate language use;

- deal with text in various ways: extending, contracting, enriching, etc.;
- describe in detail; objects, people, places, and processes;
- write poems, dialogues, and stories;
- develop note taking skills;
- develop imaginative and creative writing abilities;
- write argumentative essays (MINEDUC 2004).

The CBA syllabus on its part holds that by the end of the year of the second cycle, the French-speaking learner of English will be able to use the language resources acquired to effectively perform a certain number of tasks in different real-life situations in the target language. The learner should:

- write complex sentences of appropriate length and structure;
- complete sentences with expressions of their own;
- write coherent compositions of appropriate lengths on various topics (formal/informal letters, articles, speeches, talks, e-mails, poems, etc.)
- participate in more authentic writing tasks such as writing letters to peers, applying for a job, taking down notes in the target language, etc.
- recognise and use discourse markers for cohesive and coherent paragraphs or texts;
- identify the different parts of a paragraph/text (MINESEC 2020).

These two approaches as per Bindzi (2012: 7) are differentiated in a tabular form as below:

Table 1: Summary of the Differences between SBA and CBA

Skill-based syllabus	Competence-based syllabus
Subject-based and skill-based: more of theory than real-life problem solving.	Goes beyond the skills and integrates them to prepare learners for life; focus on social roles.
Prepares learners for exams and for future academic performances.	Prepares learners directly to be responsible citizens while placing them in problem-solving situations.
Teacher gives exercises.	Teacher gives competence-based tasks.
Teacher sets classrooms objectives.	Outcomes are defined in relation to situations of life.
Skill-based instructions	Real-life problem-solving instructions
Teacher can pick any situation he likes, real-life or not, to teach the skills.	Situations of life are provided by the official syllabus.
The focus is on detached skills or individual skills (i.e. even though other skills are used, only one is actually taught and tested individually).	Skills are carefully selected and complementarily taught in view of developing a competence.

Source: Bindzi (2012: 7)

Stufflebeam's (2003) Context Input Process and Product (CIPP) model is used to evaluate these approaches. CIPP was developed in the US in the 1960s to enable school programmes to improve and achieve accountability. The main components of the model are used for our brief evaluation of the approaches. They will be taken in turn to see how they apply in our study. We adopt the question answer procedure for purposes of understanding.

i. Context

Q: What was it that the SBA could not achieve for the learner which we thought the CBA could, that is, why did we abandon SBA for CBA? Is the CBA doing what we envisaged?

A: The SBA was mostly subject-based and skill-based. Students were prepared to perform well in a specific subject and skill. There was more of theory than real-life problem-solving which is the specificity of the CBA. Using language to solve social problems (MINESEC 2004). Unfortunately, the CBA does not meet expectations. The results obtained are still unsatisfactory.

ii. Input

Q: What is put in place to help students develop skills or competences? How is the teaching and learning done?

A: Most teachers do not master the CBA. They continue to practise the SBA. For instance, while marking Writing in the Baccalaureat exam in 2021 (under the CBA), almost all of them chose the SBA marking scheme; and the results were slightly worse than those of the SBA.

iii. Process

Q: How should the CBA be implemented? What is the ideal situation? How is it being implemented?

A: Skills should be carefully selected and complementarily taught in view of developing a competence. The student should be at the center of the teaching and learning process. The teacher is then a mere facilitator. However, this ideal does not seem to be reached by teachers. Most of them continue to be preponderant in the classroom

putting aside the student-centered aspect of the teaching process hence the non-mastery of the writing skill because of the lack of practice.

iv. Product

Q: What kind of learner are we producing? What can they do? Are they doing it?

A: Learners are expected to perform social roles by using language in real-life situations. Unfortunately, the practice is otherwise on the field. They still have a long way to go in order to meet these expectations.

In all, the CBA has been adopted to fill certain failures observed in the use of the SBA. Unfortunately, the context in which this new approach is practised is not conducive enough for language studies. Besides, both learners and teachers still face tremendous difficulties to understand and implement the requirements of the CBA, hence the low performance of students.

3. Issues in Teaching Approaches and Learners' Performance

Teaching approaches and learners' performance are closely linked. One depends on the other. The two dimensions of the teaching and learning process have a relationship of cause and effect: under normal circumstances, learners' performance depends on the teaching approach. These issues are reviewed in terms of their empirical and theoretical aspects.

Previous works on teaching approaches and learners' performance abound. A number of researchers have carried out works related to the SBA and CBA, the two approaches under study here. Their aim has been to evaluate these approaches, that is judge their worth, merits and shortcomings (Lao et al 2004). Among these researchers, we have Arkin, Chi, Nkwentisama, Wiysahnyuy, and Amah and Diangha whose research works caught our attention and are reviewed below.

Arkin (2010) evaluates the Skill-based Approach to language teaching. The evaluation comprises various outcomes, measures, and aspects: learning resources, curriculum development and organisation, teaching delivery, content materials, and assessment. The evaluation involves key staff such as skill coordinators whose perspectives are essential for the collaboration process (Atkinson et al, 2005 cited in Arkin, 2010). The decision by the researcher to use a participant-oriented approach enhanced the involvement of the skill coordinators who provided first-hand experience with programme activities and settings. Furthermore, following a participant-oriented approach enables the skill coordinator to strengthen their ability to critically evaluate programme effects and learning during the evaluation process.

Arkin's (2010) evaluation study has achieved some key assumptions with regard to skill-based language teaching. First and foremost is the impact of the quality of the skill-based approach. It needed proper staging and organisation over a longer period. It is likely to be more beneficial to design the evaluation to involve the key people in every stage of the evaluation process from the design

process to the action plan. As the evaluation suggests, the English Preparatory School (EPS) programme has undertaken a number of efforts and inputs to improve the skill-based approach. Various actions are presented and proposed to achieve better functioning of the skill-based teaching approach. In particular, issues related to the design of the syllabus; mainly contents and delivery, the quality of resources and materials, timing, the resources and environmental concerns are considered.

Chi (2016) demonstrates that the former skill-based and oriented-based Cameroon General Secondary Education system trained knowledgeable and examination-passing geniuses who learnt mostly notes and reproduced them during examinations. These students had as main - objective the reproduction of the knowledge learnt in class. 'The finality of knowledge learnt is not only to pass examinations but to also use that knowledge in solving societal problems and helping the acquirer of such know-ledge' (P. xi). He posits that it is imperative to turn away from this kind of educational system that focuses on knowledge learning to that which applies this knowledge to Cameroonian real-life-problem-solving situations.

The researcher lays more emphasis on the teacher's role. He clearly explains that as opposed to the old system whereby the teacher, as a master, thought of their students as empty vessels into whose heads they had to ramp up knowledge, the new approach sees learners as partners and active participants in their learning process. The learner comes into the language class with some background knowledge and through proper planning,

the class Manager manages instruction to achieve desirable attitudinal outcomes in learners. In this new instructional process, both teachers and learners from the outset know where they are starting and where they are heading to and what behaviours are expected of them at the end of the process. Only that learner knowledge and language use at this point are not orderly and not developed enough and it is the duty of the teacher together with their learners to organise, build and consolidate learner language knowledge in a particular communicative situation or context.

In his evaluation of the CBA, Nkwentisama (2012:518) states: "*Walls seem to exist between the knowledge they [students] get in the classroom and the implementation of the knowledge in the real-world society in which that knowledge is destined*". He explains that English is taught from the nursery level for two (2) years, the primary level for six (6) years, seven (7) years at the secondary level and three (3) years at the university level. In spite of this length of time of learning the language, there is "… *much concern and dissatisfaction over the marked deficiency in the level of English used by Cameroon children at all levels of education*" (as cited in Odusima and Ayuk 1995, p.32). In our work, we add the dimension of the approach to teaching English language. It is demonstrated that despite the change of the approach, French-speaking learners of English continue to face serious difficulties in that language.

For an effective implementation of the CBA, Nkwentisama (ibid) proposes a revision of the syllabus. For him, the syllabus of English for Francophone general secondary schools clearly spells out that English Language Teaching (ELT) is in a state of constant flux and

teachers of English have to be abreast with current trends so that products of the system would not sound outdated in what they do with language. Products of the system would have to use language to cope with the many varying situations and contexts in which they find themselves at all times. Language should be taught in such a way that the learners are provided study skills and strategies to cope with an ever-changing world. The syllabus should take into consideration the following pertinent issues: the socially appropriate and communicative use of language, the linguistic and general structure to include the social roles that the learners are called upon to play, the language functions and notions that are indispensable for the proper mastery of language, the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills; the grammatical, lexical and pronunciation as well as thinking skills.

In his investigation, the researcher goes further to portray learners' inadequacies, incompetency and frustrations that are often demonstrated in their daily conversations. This implies that in Cameroon, learners are taught grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, but they do not learn to use them functionally in English. So, they are not competent. He remarks that English language learning is the matter of the classroom, and not for social interactions.

Wiysahnyuy (2021) also lays emphasis on the practical aspects of the CBA. She presents the degree of implementation of this approach in the Cameroonian education system. She states that all institutions in the system endeavour to practise the CBA and that the CBA has gained grounds in the academic world.

The researcher demonstrates that through this approach, the learner will not only acquire knowledge but also use it in a meaningful way in various situations of life; work and family, social and professional.

Referring to the English Language, she says that the Cameroonian Competence-based approach through Real-life Situations (CBA-RLS) has ushered in the use of language in communicative real-life-problem-solving situations. That the new paradigm syllabus caters for learners' needs and interest areas and who talks of needs and interest, talks of motivation and high performance. This is an approach that integrates the knowledge, know-how and attitudes in the solution of real-life problems. This approach seeks for linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the language.

The aspect of textbook evaluation is not left out in the evaluation of the CBA. Amah and Diangha (2020) set out to investigate the Mastering English series with a focus on students' book 5 to find out the extent to which the book aligns with the stipulations of the CBA in Cameroon. Concerning English language teachers, they noticed that many colleagues complained of many problems in dealing with the students' book 5 of the Mastering English series. Some of them believed that this textbook is beneath students' level. Furthermore, they noticed that many students were not able to use the language properly and this may be due to the nature of the textbook. So, in this study, they adopt a critical analysis into the students' book 5 to find out its strengths and weaknesses. The findings reveal that regarding the physical appeal of the book and ancillary materials, general opinion is negative. Most teachers think

that the paper quality and durability of the book is of very low standard. Concerning learners' needs, the study reveals that the book satisfies learners' needs to some extent but a lot of improvement is still needed to foster originality of sample sentences for the grammar points treated in the book. With regards to the alignment of activities in the book to the stipulations of the CBA, the investigation shows that the book meets the requirements of the CBA to some extent. The overall impression of the book based on the empirical evaluation is negative and the great majority of participants have confirmed that the book needs some improvement. To solve the problem, the researchers make these few recommendations: the physical presentation of the book has to be improved, especially the paper quality of the back cover, intellectual activities of the book need to be revised in order to meet the requirement of the CBA and the needs of the learners, the notion of lesson too has to be reviewed. For instance, instead of 'lesson', the publisher could use a more conventional word 'unit' to better capture what the word really means.

The different studies presented above evaluate in one way or another the SBA and CBA, highlighting their strengths and weaknesses. They diverge from this paper that focuses on the correlation between teaching approaches and performance in writing.

Substantial empirical work has been done on learners' performance in English. Mpoche and Ngoh (2012) examine the impact of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) on learners of English as a second language (ESL) at the tertiary level of education within an officially (English-French) bilingual context. The study focuses on the written production of language students of the University of Yaoundé I. The researchers base their study on the assumption that CLT implemented in secondary schools has a negative impact on the written production of students at the university level. To them, the effect is obvious in comparison with the written production of university students from two different subsystems where language teaching approaches at the secondary school level differ. The Anglophone subsystem adopts the CLT whereas the Francophone subsystem lays emphasis on overt grammar instruction. Students from these subsystems merge at the tertiary level in the Bilingual Series and the effect of approaches adopted at the secondary school level surfaces.

The analysis and interpretation of their results reveal the weaknesses of the CLT approach and the necessity for overt grammar instruction. It has also been noticed that learners who have been taught English only through the CLT approach have more vocabulary, build longer sentences and produce longer essays than those who have been overtly taught grammar. Nevertheless, these learners end up with more errors of omission, substitution, ordering, punctuation, spelling, concord, sentence fragments addition and other wrong forms.

In another study, Kouega and Sokeng (2013) look into the performance in English of Francophone learners in general, and into their mastery of structure and written expression in particular. The researchers notice that in Cameroon, the performance in English structure and written expression of secondary school leavers is very

poor. Their study aims at describing the students' proficiency in English and examining the testing tool in English language at the *Baccalauréat* examination. This study involves learners in the ten regions of Cameroon and the results obtained after data analysis show that the performance of Francophones who have been taught English as a secondary school subject for seven years is below college level English. In all the ten regions, as the study reveals, learners face serious problems related to structure, especially, tenses, agreement, plurality, collective nouns, etc. The authors propose the revision of the English syllabus in Francophone schools.

Ndoumget (2018) analyses EFL learners' grammatical errors under the CBA. The researcher first recalls the context in which the CBA was introduced in our educational system. The CBA was prescribed by Law N°. 98/004 of April 14, 1998 - the law of the orientation of Education in Cameroon and was introduced in 2012 by MINESEC in order to meet up with the general objective of Education in Cameroon as the new approach to teaching and learning English to Francophone learners. With this new approach, learners are no more taught the language haphazardly, but from a real-life situation-based context so much so that they can become proficient and autonomous in real-life communication situations. He then notices that despite the introduction of the CBA, students are still not proficient in English.

In the same vein, Nah (2021) examines the use of grammar in Upper Sixth Arts students' essays of GBPHS Yaoundé. The researcher notices that in this school, Upper Sixth students often talk about the introduction, the body, the conclusion and coherence in a text and very little is heard of the grammar of the text. Besides, in the course of marking Upper Sixth students' essays, a lot of grammar errors were noticed. Her study aims to identify, describe and analyse some common grammatical errors. The researcher shows that students do not use grammar correctly. The pedagogical implications of this study are remarkable. This study gives inspectors and syllabus designers a deep insight of specific and dire needs of Upper Sixth ESL students in poor classroom acquisition situation where exposition to the language is confined to just two hours of lectures per week. In essay writing, emphasis is laid on structure rather than content and calls for attention. Besides, the participants' errors 'help teachers to identify the problematic area of language at different levels of instruction. With this, they will be able to infer the nature of the students' knowledge of the area at a given stage in their learning career and discover what they still have to learn' (P. 71).

Unlike the above researchers who focus on grammatical errors on students' essays, Ekoum (2021) lays emphasis on paragraph development in the essays of Form 5 students. His study aims to look at the types of cohesive and coherence markers in students' essays, bringing out the frequency of the use of these cohesive markers and identifying the cohesive markers which pose serious problems to students. The researcher notices that the average performance of students at the GCE O/L is due to the different linguistic problems that they have, especially the proper use of cohesive markers to achieve coherence in their essays. His findings reveal that out of the four

categories of grammatical devices, conjunction ties were the highest, followed by reference and finally substitution and ellipsis. Within the conjunction ties, the author enumerates four, namely adversative conjunctions, causal conjunctions, additive conjunctions, and temporal conjunctions. As far as reference is concerned, the results reveal that learners mostly use personal reference in their write ups.

The pedagogical implications of this study are quite significant. The results reveal that students make use of syntactic ties more frequently than semantic ties. Thus, teachers of ESL should enhance students' understanding of semantic ties through vocabulary building, teaching word relations, teaching reiteration, and the use of synonyms to connect sentences and ideas. The analysis also shows that Form 5 students incorporate a large number of conjunction devices in their compositions; their use is mostly confined to coordinating conjunctions such as *"and, or, but"* (P. 78). Teachers should therefore give much attention to complex conjunction ties such as *"nevertheless, therefore, furthermore, similarly, consequently, on the other hand, in contrast, to name the few"* (P. 79). Learners also need to be given exercises to practise the use of proper conjunctions effectively. Furthermore, substitution and ellipsis should be integrated in the writing curriculum and students should receive adequate practice for their application.

As it can be noticed, our study has similarities with some of the above-mentioned works in the sense that most of them have to do with students' performance in essay writing. Our work also looks at students' performance in essay writing but we endeavour to link it to the teaching approaches en vogue.

Chomsky's (1965) linguistic and communicative competence (cf Canale and Swain (1980)) are chosen for this research. They are chosen to better explain the effect of teaching approaches on learners' performance. In general, the two theories provide a framework for understanding the whole issue.

Chomsky's (1965) linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech-community, who know their language perfectly and are unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors in applying their knowledge of the language in actual performance. He makes a fundamental distinction between competence (the speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language) and performance (the actual use of language in concrete situation). A grammar of a language is a description of the ideal speaker-hearer's intrinsic competence, and this underlying competence is a system of generative processes. An adequate grammar should capture the basic regularities and the productive nature of a language. Chomsky calls this "descriptive adequacy" of the linguistic theory, in the sense that it correctly describes its object, namely the linguistic intuition – the tacit competence – of the native speaker. In this sense, grammar is described on external grounds, on grounds of correspondence to linguistic facts.

Linguistic competence by Chomsky is somewhat similar to Saussure's concept of "language and parole". Competence to him

refers to the native speaker's knowledge of his language, the system of rules, the ability to produce and understand; whereas performance is the study of the system of rules, the study of actual sentences, the actual use of the language in real-life situations. So, the speaker's knowledge of the structure of language is his linguistic competence and the way in which it is used is his linguistic performance. Besides, competence is an underlying mental system, taking into consideration actual behaviour, ability to analyse language, ignoring mistakes, understanding new sentences. Competence is a set of principles which a speaker masters, performance is what a speaker does. As competence is a kind of code, performance is an act of encoding or decoding.

Communicative competence has to do with knowledge of not only if something is formally possible in a language, but also of whether it is feasible, appropriate, or done in a particular speech community (Richards and Schmidt 2010). Canale and Swain (1980) used Hymes's (1972) work to build their model of communicative competence. Their framework is useful in the understanding of the knowledge and skills a person needs to acquire for effective communication (Young 2011 as cited in Abdurahman and Emad 2019). Three components are included in Canale and Swain's (1980) framework: Grammatical Competence, Sociolinguistic Competence, and Strategic Competence. Grammatical competence consists of "knowledge of lexical items, rules of morphology, syntax, sentence grammar semantics, and phonology" (p 29). Sociolinguistic competence is divided into two sets of rules: sociocultural rules of use and discourse rules. Sociocultural rules identify the way in which utterances are produced and perceived appropriately in different sociocultural situations, whereas rules of discourse refer to cohesion (grammatical link) and coherence (appropriate combination of communicative functions) of a combination of utterances. The third one is Strategic Competence which contains both verbal and non-verbal strategies such as paraphrase, repetition, and guessing, employed by speakers in order to manage breakdowns in communication, and also to enhance the effectiveness of communication (Bagaric & Djigunovic 2007 as cited in Abdurahman and Emad 2019). With its simplicity and accessibility, Canale and Swain's framework has been popular in the field of English language teaching ever since it was introduced (Furko 2013).

3. Method

The target population of this study consists of candidates of Baccalauréat A4 examination. Our study is based on candidates' scripts, more precisely Essay Writing. Three regions are involved in this study with a total of 150 scripts representing the same number of candidates. Since our study is comparative, 75 scripts were selected for each approach (SBA 75, CBA 75). 25 scripts were chosen per region as table 2 below shows. Scripts of 2018 represent the SBA while those of 2021 represent the CBA.

Table 2: Presentation of the number of scripts per region and per approach

Approach & Year	SBA/2018	CBA/2021
Adamawa	25	25
North	25	25
Far-North	25	25
Total	**75**	**75**
General total	**150**	

To access candidates' scripts, we wrote to the Minister of Secondary Education for permission. Once permission was granted, we went to 2 examination centres where these documents are kept as archives; one in the West and the other one in the Littoral region. In these two examination centers, we were interested in juries of at least 50 candidates and selected 25 scripts for candidates who covered at least one full page in Essay Writing.

To process our data, we first classified the scripts per region and per year. The year 2018 was for the Skill-based Approach and 2021 concerned the Competence-based Approach. After this classification, we recorded the performance of candidates per year and per region. This performance concerned the four sections of the English language (Anglais) paper, that is, Section A Grammar, Section B Vocabulary, Section C Reading Comprehension, and Section C Essay Writing. This recording

enabled us to have a clear idea of the general performance of candidates in English Language. It also gave us the opportunity to focus on the last part of the paper which is the core issue of our study, that is, Section D: Essay Writing. Tables and percentages were used to illustrate facts.

The analysis of the data collected was done at two different levels: (a) at the level of the general performance in Essay Writing, and, (b) at the level of performance per rubric, that is, Layout, Content and Organisation, and Expression and Accuracy. These rubrics are the criteria taken into consideration to evaluate candidates' essays at the Baccalaureat.

5. Analysis of Learners' Performance under the SBA

The rubrics taken into consideration when marking Essay Writing are: Layout (for letter writing and speech), Content and organisation, and Expression and Accuracy. In letter writing and speech writing, layout refers to the general presentation, that is the format of the letter or speech. It includes elements such as addresses, greetings, heading, opening, closing, salutations, etc.

Content and organisation in essay writing have to do with the message, that is the content of the essay. It is at this level that examiners realise whether candidates understood a topic or not. The main question to be answered here is "Is the candidate's piece of writing related to the topic chosen?" Very often, be it in class tests or in the official examination, candidates copy reading comprehension passages and present them as essays; or they cheat by copying word

for word their classmates' essays. For organisation, emphasis is laid on the logic used in expressing ideas.

Expression and Accuracy refer to language use; we mean vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, in a nut shell, all language elements used by a candidate to express their ideas. Accuracy peculiarly has to do with paragraphing, length of work, punctuation and neatness.

5.1 Performance in Writing in the Adamawa Region

In the Adamawa Region, performance in writing is evaluated at the level of three rubrics as defined above, that is, layout, content and organisation and expression and accuracy.

Table 3: General Performance in Essay Writing in the Adamawa Region

Candidates	Layout/3	Content and Organization/4	Expression and Accuracy/3	Total/10
1	2.5	1.5	1	5
2	2.5	1.5	1	5
3	2	2	1	5
4	2.5	1.5	1	5
5	1.5	1	0.5	3
6	1.5	1.5	1	4
7	1.5	2	0.5	4
8	1.5	2	1	4.5
9	2.5	2.5	1.5	6.5
10	1.5	1	1	3.5
11	1.5	0.5	0.5	2.5
12	2	1.5	1	4.5
13	1	1	0.5	2.5
14	2	2.5	1	5.5
15	2	1.5	1.5	5
16	1.5	2	1	4.5
17	1	1	0.5	2.5
18	1.5	2	0.5	4
19	1.5	1	0.5	3
20	1.5	1.5	1	4
21	1	2	1.5	4.5
22	1	1	1.5	3.5
23	2.5	2	1.5	6
24	2	1.5	1	4.5
25	2	2	1.5	5.5
Average	1.62	1.58	0.98	4.3

The above table presents the following facts:

For general performance in writing, 9 students out of 25 got an average mark giving a success rate of 32%.

For performance according to rubrics, we have (a) Layout: 21 out of 25 passed making a success rate of 84%, (b) Content and organisation: 10 out of 25 got an average mark which gave a success rate of 40%, and (c) Expression and accuracy: 6 passed out of 25 giving a success rate of 24%.

The rubric layout records the highest average (1.62/4) whereas the lowest average is registered in expression and accuracy (0.98/3).

5.2 Performance in Writing in the North Region

Like the Adamawa Region, performance in writing is evaluated at the level of these three rubrics namely layout, content and organisation and expression and accuracy.

Table 4: General Performance in Essay Writing in the North Region

Candidates	Layout/3	Content and Organization/4	Expression and Accuracy/3	Total/10
1	1	0.5	1	2.5
2	1.5	0.5	1	3
3	1.5	2	1	4.5
4	1	1	1	3
5	1.5	1	1	3.5
6	2	2	2	6
7	3	1	1.5	5.5
8	2.5	3	2.5	8
9	2	2	2	6
10	1	1	1	3
11	1.5	2	1.5	5
12	2.5	2.5	2	7
13	1.5	1.5	1	4
14	2	1.5	1.5	5
15	2.5	2.5	2	7
16	1.5	2	1.5	5
17	2	2.5	1.5	6
18	3	2.5	1.5	7
19	2	1.5	1.5	5
20	2.5	3	2.5	8
21	2	2.5	2	6.5
22	1	1	1	3
23	1.5	1.5	1	4
24	1.5	2.5	1	5
25	2	2	1.5	5.5
Average	1.8	1.8	1.48	5.12

The table above shows the following results:

> For general performance in writing, 15 candidates out of 25 got an average mark giving a success rate of **60%**.
> For performance according to rubrics, we have (a) Layout: 21 out of 25 passed making a success rate of 84%, (b) Content and organisation: 14 out of 25 got an average mark which gave a success rate of 56%, and (c) Expression and accuracy: 15 passed out of 25 giving a success rate of 60%.

The rubric layout records the highest average (1.8/4) whereas the lowest average is registered in expression and accuracy (1.48/3).

5.3 Performance in Writing in the Far-North Region

Like the other two Regions, performance in writing is evaluated here at the level of layout, content and organisation and expression and accuracy.

Table 5: General Performance in Essay Writing in the Far-North Region

Candidates	Layout/3	Content and Organization/4	Expression and Accuracy/3	Total/10
1	2	1.5	1.5	5
2	2	2	1	5
3	2	2	2	6
4	1.5	1.5	2	5
5	1	1.5	1.5	4
6	1.5	1.5	2	5
7	1	1	1.5	3.5
8	1	1	1	3
9	2.5	2	1	5.5
10	1.5	1	0.5	3
11	2	3	1.5	6.5
12	2	1.5	1.5	5
13	2	1	1	4
14	1	1	1	3
15	0	1	1.5	2.5
16	2	2.5	2	6.5
17	2	1.5	1.5	5
18	1.5	1	1	3.5
19	1.5	2	1	4.5
20	2.5	2	1.5	6
21	2	1.5	1	4.5
22	2	2	1	5
23	1.5	1	1	3.5
24	1.5	1.5	1.5	4.5
25	0.5	1	0.5	2
Average	1.6	1.52	1.3	4.44

The table above shows the following results:

For general performance in writing, 12 candidates out of 25 got an average mark giving a success rate of 44%.

For performance according to rubrics, we have (a) Layout: 19 out of 25 passed making a success rate of 76%, (b) Content and organisation: 8 out of 25 got an average mark which gave a success rate of 32%, and (c) Expression and accuracy: 13 passed out of 25 giving a success rate of 52%.

The rubric layout records the highest average (1.6/4) whereas the lowest average is registered in expression and accuracy (1.3/3).

6. Analysis of Learners' Performance under the CBA

The analysis of performance under the CBA follows the same procedure as that of the SBA, that is, general performance first then performance per rubric.

6.1 Performance in Writing in the Adamawa Region

Students' performance is evaluated here according to these three rubrics: layout, content and organisation and expression and accuracy

Table 6: General Performance in Essay Writing in the Adamawa Region

Candidates	Layout/3	Content & Organisation/4	Expression & Accuracy/3	Total/10
1	1.5	0.25	0.25	2
2	2	1.5	0.5	4
3	1	2	1	4
4	1.5	1.5	1	4
5	1.5	2	0.5	4
6	1.5	0.5	0.5	2.5
7	1.5	1.5	0.5	3.5
8	1.5	1.5	1	4
9	0.5	1	1	2.5
10	1.5	0.5	0.5	2.5
11	1	1.5	1	3.5
12	1.5	0.5	0.5	2.5
13	0.5	0.5	0.5	1.5
14	1.5	0.5	0.5	2.5
15	0.5	0.5	0.5	1.5
16	0.5	0.25	0.25	1.5
17	1.5	0.5	0.5	2.5
18	1.5	3	2	6.5
19	1.5	2	2	5.5
20	0.5	0.25	0.25	1
21	0	0	0	0
22	1.5	1	1	3.5
23	1.5	1	0.5	3
24	1	2	1	4
25	1.5	0.25	0.25	2
Average	**1.2**	**1.04**	**0.66**	**2.96**

The table above shows the following results:

For general performance in writing, 2 candidates out of 25 got an average mark giving a success rate of 8%.

For performance according to rubrics, we have (a) Layout: 15 out of 25 passed making a success rate of 60%, (b) Content and organisation: 5 out of 25 got an average mark which gave a success rate of 20%, and (c) Expression and accuracy: 2 passed out of 25 giving a success rate of 8%.

The rubric layout records the highest average (1.2/4) whereas the lowest average is registered in expression and accuracy (0.66/3).

6.2 Performance in Writing in the North Region

Like the Adamawa Region, these three rubrics are considered to evaluate writing in the North Region namely layout, content and organisation and expression and accuracy

Table 7: General Performance in Essay Writing in the North Regio

Candidates	Layout/3	Content & Organisation/4	Expression & accuracy/3	Total / 10
1	1	0.5	0.5	2
2	0.5	0.5	0.5	1.5
3	2.5	1.5	1.5	5.5
4	1.5	2	1.5	5
5	1.5	1.5	1	4
6	1	1	1	3
7	2	1	1	4
8	1	1	1	3

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9	0.5	0.5	0.5	1.5
10	1	1	1	3
11	1	0.5	0.5	2
12	1.5	1	1	3.5
13	1	0.25	0.25	1.5
14	1.5	1	1	3.5
15	1	1	1	3
16	2	1	0.5	3.5
17	2	2	1.5	5.5
18	1	2	1	4
19	0.5	0.5	0.5	1.5
20	1	0.5	0.5	2
21	1	0.5	0.5	2
22	0.5	0.5	0.5	1.5
23	2	1.5	1.5	5
24	0	0.25	0.25	0.5
25	1.5	3	1.5	6
Average	**1.2**	**1.03**	**0.86**	**3.1**

The table above presents facts as follows:

For general performance in writing, 5 candidates out of 25 got an average mark giving a success rate of 20%.

For performance according to rubrics, we have (a) Layout: 10 out of 25 passed making a success rate of 40%, (b) Content and organization: 3 out of 25 got an average mark which gave a success rate of 12%, and (c) Expression and accuracy: 5 passed out of 25 giving a success rate of 20%.

The rubric layout records the highest average (1.2/4) whereas the lowest average is registered in expression and accuracy (0.86/3).

6.3 Performance in Essay Writing in the Far-North Region

Like the other two regions, we evaluate writing here according to the following rubrics: layout, content and organisation and expression and accuracy

Table 8: General Performance in Essay Writing in the Far-North Region

Candidates	Layout / 3	Content & Organisation/4	Expression & Accuracy/3	Total / 10
1	0	0	0	0
2	1	0.5	0.5	2
3	0	0.25	0.25	0.5
4	1.5	0.5	0.5	2.5
5	1.5	0.5	0.5	2.5
6	2.5	3.5	3	9
7	1	0.5	0	1.5
8	2	2	2	6
9	1.5	2.5	1.5	5.5
10	1.5	2.5	1	5
11	2	1.5	1.5	5
12	1	1	0.5	2.5
13	0.5	1	1	2.5
14	1	0	0	1
15	1.5	0.5	0.5	2.5
16	2.5	1	1	4.5
17	0.5	0	0	0.5

18	1	0.5	0.5	2
19	0.5	1	1	2.5
20	2	2	1	5
21	2.5	1.5	1	5
22	1.5	0.5	0.5	2.5
23	0.5	0.5	0	1
24	1	2	1	4
25	2	1	1	4
Average	**1.3**	**1.07**	**0.79**	**2.98**

The table above reveals the following facts:

> For general performance in writing, 7 candidates out of 25 got an average mark giving a success rate of 28%.
>
> For performance according to rubrics, we have (a) Layout: 13 out of 25 passed making a success rate of 52%, (b) Content and organisation: 6 out of 25 got an average mark which gave a success rate of 24%, and (c) Expression and accuracy: 4 passed out of 25 giving a success rate of 16%.

The rubric layout records the highest average (1.3/4) whereas the lowest average is registered in expression and accuracy (0.79/3).

7. Discussion

The findings in this study raise a number of important issues related to the approaches to teaching and the performance of students in writing at the Baccalaureat. First and foremost, the study reveals that the change of the teaching approach has not brought any substantial change or amelioration in the

performance of students in the northern regions. In fact, the difficulties learners experienced with the Skill-Based Approach are almost the same in the Competence-Based Approach. In reality, the situation has been worsened since performance under the SBA is slightly better than that of the CBA. This is a clear indication that the approach alone cannot contribute to the amelioration of learners' performance though Richards and Rodgers (2001:1) show that "Adopting the newest method will lead to better results than the previous method". Richards and Rodgers' assertion is an ideal to be attained. The Ministry of Secondary Education set the goal to ameliorate learners' results in English by adopting the Competence-Based Approach as the new paradigm to teaching English. Unfortunately, in the northern regions of Cameroon, this objective seems not to have been attained. Essay writing continues to be a nightmare to most students. Their linguistic and communicative performances are unsatisfactory.

Neither the SBA nor the CBA has been able to upgrade learners' linguistic performance in writing. Learners' weaknesses in the writing skill are so obvious. The quality of language used by Terminale students in essay writing is not satisfactory. In this light, Kouega and Sokeng (2013) show that the performance of Francophones who have been taught English as a secondary school subject for seven years is below college level. In students' essays, the rubric "Expression" appears with the lowest scores: 0.66 in the Adamawa, 0.86 in the North, and 0.79 in the Far-North. This means that students face serious difficulties in the components of writing skill.

Communicative competence also appears as a serious problem in students' essays. The problems students encounter in their essays are not only due to the wrong use of language, but also the inadequate content of their writing. In most cases, they fail to link their writing to the topic chosen. We write for effective communication (Young 2011 as cited in Abdurahman and Emad 2019). Effective communication, here, has to do with the perfect understanding of the topic and connecting the piece of writing to that topic. As a matter of fact, content features are really not respected in students' essays. Their essays lack organisation, cohesion, accuracy, and originality. Besides expression, students also recorded very low marks in the rubric content. This is a clear indication that there is a discrepancy between students' composition and the topic chosen. Adamawa appears with 1.04/4, North 1.03/4 and Far-North 1.07/4.

More importantly, the results of this study reveal that many students opt for topics like letter writing and speech writing. Students prefer these topics because of the layout or presentation which is particular and standard, that is, does not change; it is always the same for a specific type of letter or speech. Layout in letter writing and speech writing is worth three 3 marks, and the topic already provides the key elements required in this part of the letter: addresses, salutation, date, addresser, addressee. Most students know that if they handle this section with satisfaction, it will be easy for them to get an average mark. For this study, the rubric layout emerges with better scores as compared to the other two rubrics: Adamawa 1.2/3, North 1.2/3, Far-North 1.3/3. This shows that students learn in a mechanical way, reciting and reproducing faithfully what has been taught in the classroom, whereas Simo Bobda (2012) makes it clear: "An essay is a creative piece of writing…" in which the writer chooses, selects, and organises his own ideas in a body of material that attracts the reader. Students do not like thought-provoking topics, that is, topics that require them to think, analyse and give their opinion. Letter writing and speech writing are presented like ready-made products for consumption. No particular effort is needed for their realisation.

Furthermore, we notice with dissatisfaction that neither of the approaches to teaching under study managed to change students' attitudes towards essay writing. Most students view this part of the "Anglais" question paper as an account of lesson learnt in class, hence a mechanical reproduction or recitation of certain notions, especially the layout in letter writing and speech writing. In fact, retaining and reproducing what has been acquired in the classroom is not totally negative. The point is that, essay writing is more than that. It goes beyond lessons learnt and integrates the creative and imaginative dimensions which many students fail to understand despite the change of the approach to teaching.

As a matter of fact, there are some educational challenges around teaching approaches and students' performance in writing.

i. The integration of context into the approach to teaching. The context in which students learn English is not conducive enough for language studies. The approaches under study, more specifically the CBA, do not take into consideration the context in which students

learn. Just as CLT, CBA has always neglect one key aspect of language teaching – namely the context in which it takes place thus the consequences of this impact learners' performance negatively (Bax 2003). The context, as shown above, is one which does not facilitate easy learning of English. Learners evolve in a French-speaking environment which means that they are not sufficiently exposed to English. This lack of exposure to the English language is not really integrated in the CBA, hence learners' poor performance in writing. It is obvious that an increased student exposure to the English language would likely improve their writing performance. This exposure has to be reinforced in the Northern Regions of Cameroon because of the weight of local culture in that part of the country. Teachers should therefore keep students in permanent contact with English through carry home assignments, interaction in the classroom and outside the classroom, feedback on assignments, etc.

ii. The implementation of the writing culture. Writing should be of paramount importance in the teaching approaches. As one of the main language skills, writing needs to be treated with special care in the CBA. More importantly, Terminale students after seven years of studies in Secondary School, should display qualities of good writing. This, consequently, means that teachers should avoid assumptions while teaching writing to Terminale students. Concretely, they should take writing from A to Z, that is, from the basis to the higher level, from word formation processes to paragraph writing.

iii. Training learners to think and not to pass exams. In other words, knowledge first and exam after. This study has revealed that in Essay Writing, candidates choose topics like letter writing and speech writing because they want to gather marks to pass the exam. And, as shown above, their choice is motivated by the fact that the rubric "layout" for these types of essays is easily manageable. Unfortunately, the new approach, CBA, has not been able to change the situation. Passing exams is the main preoccupation for most learners. Teachers should endeavour to make students understand the importance of progress in the writing skill. This should be done through constant formative evaluations which enable teachers to measure the attainment of objectives set before a given lesson and see how learners make progress in the skill taught. Formative evaluation is more helpful to both the teacher and learner whereas summative evaluation is important for the administration since it requires marks which the administration uses for different statistics to be forwarded to hierarchy. The information got from students' performance in Essay Writing makes us understand that teachers value more summative than formative evaluation.

8. Conclusion

This paper has examined and compared the performance of Baccalaureat A4 students in Writing under the Skill-Based and the Competence-Based Approaches. The informants were former Baccalaureat candidates from the three northern regions of Cameroon namely Adamawa, North and Far-North. The analysis revealed a number of interesting facts. First, the change of the approach has not ameliorated students' performance in Writing. In other words, the CBA

has not fulfilled expectations, the situation has been worsened to a certain extent. This shows that Richards and Rodgers (2001:1)'s stand that "Adopting the newest method will lead to better results than the previous method" is not true for this study. Secondly, according to the three rubrics taken into consideration while evaluating writing, candidates perform poorly in expression and content whereas they do better in layout. This is a clear indication that learners face serious difficulties as far as writing is concerned. Their incapacity to use English language correctly (expression) and link ideas to the topic chosen (content) is obvious throughout their essays. Thirdly, most students chose letter writing and speech writing because of the layout, the rubric that enables them to score marks easily. This situation is evidence that students are unable to think and reason. What they can do is to reproduce or recite mechanically what was learnt in class. To remedy this situation, we propose teachers to take the context into consideration by exposing students to English. They should also implement a true writing culture through constant writing exercises and feedback. And they should teach writing not for the exam but for a better practice of this skill in life. So, the change of the approach alone could not be the solution to students' poor performance in writing.

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Traditional Communication Systems in Mboland: Verbal and Non-Verbal Modes of Communication

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Abstract

This paper elucidates the various traditional verbal and non-verbal modes of communication systems in Mbo. The prominent verbal modes of communication employed in the area are the use of proverbs, riddles, simple verbal commands, songs, folktales and myths while non-verbal communication modes on their part include signs, symbols, body gestures, objects and instruments. It is argued in the paper that each mode of communication intends to provide news, give general information to individuals and the public, educate or combine a bit of each of these elements. The paper reveals that the various verbal modes of communication in Mbo are used for different purposes. Proverbs are used to give information, advise, rebuke and lament. It is for this reason that the mastery of the use of proverbs is held at very high esteem in the entire Mboland. Riddles are complete language posed to individuals to test their perception of their socio-physical environment. On the other hand, non-verbal communication methods such as drums are used for wider communication purposes. Various messages in Mbo are communicated to the community as occasion demands by varying the beating of the drum. A few conspicuous symbols used to convey messages are palm fronds and feathers. A feather of an eagle is pinned on caps and worn exclusively by chiefs, title holders and men of great substance. Information for this paper has been gathered mainly through oral interviews that were conducted with aged informants in Mbo in 2021 and 2022. The informants were met individually, using various materials to record their responses. Archival documents, dissertations, journal articles, and book chapters also provided some useful information, as did a few published books.

Key Words: Tradition, Verbal and Non-verbal Communication, Mbo

1. Introduction

The intent of this paper is to decipher Mbo traditional verbal and non-verbal modes of communication. A Nigerian scholar, Chinwe Okpoko, has rightly put it that any communication has chance to provide news, give general information, offer leadership by providing opinions and arguments, educate or combine a little bit of each of these elements (Okpoko, 2009: 325). This brief definition summarises the mission of the communication media in any given society. Communication is vital for any human existence, thus there can be no social life or social organisation without communication. It is only through communication that people develop consensus and shared set of meanings and it is only when a consensus exists that people are able to act together because they can then make fairly accurate predictions about one another's behaviour. This view was corroborated by Duyile (1976) when he wrote that communication means establishing commonness with whoever we wish to communicate with. Parties try to share information, ideas or attitudes. Communication is primarily carried out through the use of signs and symbols as people respond to cues in their environment. In essence, they engage in sign behaviour, which should arouse in oneself what it arouses in the other individual. It must have that sort of universality to any person who finds himself in the same situation. Communication therefore maintains and animates life. This lends credence to Akinyeye's (1986) view that communication is to society, what the nervous system is to the body of an individual. On the basis of this it can therefore be inferred that communication is crucial to man's efforts to achieve higher quality of life because it

affects his productivity, personal expression, social needs, and aspirations.

In African countries like Nigeria, Cameroon and others where majority of the population is made up of rural dwellers, conventional mass media have limitations. These couple with an inadequate power supply, high level of illiteracy, low-in-come, poor accessibility and others. These impediments restrict mass communicated messages to a particular class of the society. It follows therefore that any means of communicating effectively to them must not only adapt to their social milieu, but also utilise their indigenous knowledge and communication systems. This explains the continued significance of traditional communication systems in present-day Cameroon. Some scholars have referred to these traditional forms and channels of communication as oramedia.

In Mbo, three key avenues were employed to serve information and communication needs, namely verbal (proverbs, riddles, simple verbal commands), non-verbal modes including the use of the gongs, dane guns, camwood, drums (Fomine, 2016: 53) and body gestures. This paper therefore examines traditional communication in Mboland. It analyses the various modes of communication, highlights their individual values with a view to showcasing their relevance in today's society.

Certain objects in Mbo convey particular messages. For example, the ordinary stone. The ordinary stone was one of the items used in placing *etemnzoh* injunction in the entire Mboland.

Furthermore, before the introduction of colonial rule, the four Nkongho-Mbo paramount chiefs, carried out their traditional diplomatic negotiations at a place in Sukee, near the compound of Fongwa where four stones were carefully placed, each representing a paramount chief and his chiefdom. The four paramount chiefs were: Chief Fonven of Lekwe village, Chief Fonjungo of Njungo village, Chief Fonki of Tock village and Chief Fogukang of Lebock village (Fomine, 2008). Issues discussed at the site included inter-chiefdom disputes, theft, divorce of royal wives, epidemics, traditional diplomatic alliances and the offering of *meloque* (sacrifices) for a better harvest. Equally, when the paramount chiefs foresaw trouble in Mboland, they went to the site, deliberated and poured libations. By so doing the paramount chiefs acting as traditional diplomats, maintained peace, security and close ties among the various chiefdoms.

2. Geographical and Historical Background of the Mbo

Mbo area under study includes the English-speaking and the French-speaking Mbo. Before the imposition of colonial rule and later the partition of Cameroon in 1916, the Mbo constituted a single linguistic ethnic entity. But from 1916, the group was divided by the Anglo-French boundary following the expulsion of the Germans. What became English-speaking Mbo comprised the Nkongho and the Mangen clans. The area inhabited by these two clans is situated between Latitudes 5° 19 and 5° 22'E and Longitudes 9° 40'N and 9°56 (Rutherford, 1923: 5). It is bounded on the west by the Manyu Division, (Tabe, 1991: 2) on the east by Menoua Division, on the south by Meme Division and on the north by Lebialem Division (Kungang, 1996:31). The Nkongho-Ngen section makes up only a tiny

fraction of the entire Mbo group. The Anglo-French boundary of 1916 left two-thirds of Mbo land and people under the French. The area inhabited by the Nkongho and the Ngen is 31,456 Square kilometres (Fomine, 2002: 6). The Nkongho occupy 4,493 square kilometres while the Ngen occupy 26,961. However, Crawford (1996) in his Assessment Report on the Bangwa, gives a different figure. According to him, the total area occupied by the Nkongho and the Ngen is 1,208 square kilometres.

Mbo is one of the ethnic groups in Cameroon that were arbitrarily divided by the colonial partition line of the French and the British. Consequently, the Mbo are found in three Regions – Littoral, Western and South West. The Nkongho and the Ngen population together was approximately 31,673 in 2000 (National Demographic Census, 2005). Earlier, in 1992, the population figure, according to Neba (1999: 120) for the towns of Nkongsamba, Loum and Melong was 142,953 inhabitants. In 2005, the Mbo of the three regions numbered 1,750,000 inhabitants (National Demographic Census, 2005).

There has always been a great contradiction in published and unpublished sources relating to claims of the origin of the Mbo as an ethnic group. Even within the Mbo group itself, there are significant differences in relation to the origin of different lineages. According to the Assessment Report by Rutherford in 1923 (classified in the Buea National Archives), the Mangen originated from Bangante. In spite of the fact that some lineages within the Mbo group claim different origins, many writers are of the opinion that the Mbo as an ethnic entity originated from Ngoe

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(Ejedepang-Koge, 1985). Other coastal ethnic groups of Cameroon that share this ancestry with the Mbo are the Balong, Bafaw, Bakundu, Bakossi, Abo, Miamilo, Baneka, Bareko, Bakaka and Maneha (Ngalame, 1985: 76). Ejedepang-koge (ibid.) traces the origin of the Mbo, the Bakossi and other groups to the sons of Ngoe who were thirteen in number (Asomengoe, Anongoe, Mbongoe, Abongoe, Menamngoe, Ngemengoe, Ngubengoe, Ngelengoe, Ekengoe, Mukundangoe, Nkaarengoe, Nfongoe and Mboengoe). Among these, the Mbo originated from Mbongoe. Hedinger (Hedinger, 1984) postulates that Ngoe originated in the Maneguba region. While roaming the plains of Mount Maneguba in the course of hunting, he met a young woman called Sumediang whom he married. They settled on the western slopes from where their offspring later migrated to different parts of the region (ibid.).

The Mbo consider marriage as an important ceremony in the life of an individual. Marriage transaction is organised in two parts, namely betrothal and marriage proper. Although inexistent nowadays, there once existed what is now known as debt marriage. Debt marriage was contracted long before the marriage was consummated. This resulted from the debt owed by the father of a girl who was unable to pay it back to the lender. The lender of the money then laid claim to the debtor's daughter as her husband. However, if the debtor had no daughter, the creditor was obliged to wait patiently until he afforded the money. The manner in which the debtor's daughter was taken to her "compulsory" husband was not different from the marriage of an ordinary woman. The type of marriage that is

commonly practiced in Mbo nowadays is that in which adult men and women choose their spouses themselves.

In earlier times, on the first visit of the girl to her future father-in-law, her father would be given a goat while other provisions and similar presents followed during subsequent visits. Bride wealth among the Mbo was paid at intervals on demand. There was never a definite or a fixed amount to be paid, but as soon as the girl attained maturity two witnesses, one from the family of the bride and the other from that of the groom, were charged with the duty of accounting and presenting their tallies for final reckoning. If the dowry was insufficient, the father would permit his daughter to start having children with a lover until the legitimate husband completed the bride wealth and claimed the children. If the bride wealth was disputed, the father paid it back and broke off the engagement.

Following the exchange of visits, a day was fixed for the suitor to go to the girl's compound with his relatives. On the appointed day, gallons of date palm wine, kola nuts, a goat, a fowl, cocoyam dumpling, soup, maize cake and beans cake were brought. On arrival at the home of the girl's father kola nuts would be served to the guests. After this the prospective husband's father would present the date palm wine to the family. In the course of drinking, the people would engage themselves in a discussion. The issues discussed that were pertinent to the marriage institution included how to build a happy marital home and the importance of a housewife respecting her husband. As soon as everybody understood the purpose of the gathering, food

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was served. After clearing the plates, the host would call his daughter to the gathering. A horn was then filled with date palm wine and handed to her who either gave it to her father or to her husband-to-be. If she gave it to the suitor, it implied that she had accepted him; otherwise, it implied refusal.

A newly delivered woman was (and still is) given special meals throughout her three months of confinement after delivery. Following the introduction of the modern maternity, on the day of discharge in the hospital, a chicken was killed and prepared for the newly delivered woman. She was served the gizzard. From that day on, her cocoyam dumpling was served in a special bowl from which she ate alone or with the father of her baby. The baby is named after a member of the maternal or paternal family who died or who is still living. It can also be named after a good friend of the parents. The principle of naming children is by turns between the husband's and the wife's family members. If the first child is named after the relative or friend of the father, the next child is named after that of the mother. The Mbo have different names for male and female children.

3. Functions of Traditional Communication Systems

Prior to modern communication, traditional communication has been used by Christian missionaries, Muslim Mullahs, colonial rulers and development workers to get messages across and to influence and change rural people's behaviour. These forms of communication were not widespread when compared to modern communication, but they were very effective. Sociologists, anthropologists, and even mass communicators have recorded the values inherent in these forms of communication, howbeit, sociologists generally took the lead,

emphasising it as a socialising and mobilising tool (Okpoko, 2009: 326). In other words, oramedia are made up of dialogue and verbal exchange they are functional and utilitarian by way of definition. The most important purpose is to provide teaching and initiation, with the object of imparting traditional aesthetic, historical, technical, social, ethical and religious values. They also play other roles in the village society, such as sharpening people's awareness of their own history, magnifying past events and evoking deeds of illustrious ancestors.

Verbal communication involves the use of language. Indigenous language is so closely related to oramedia and without it, we cannot guarantee effective cultural communication. Language and culture are therefore inseparable. According to Aubakar (1989), language is a powerful instrument used to keep alive and pass on society heritage of oral tradition (myths, legends, and folklore) and a symbol for unity. Thus, language and its relative oramedia, are only meaningful in a context in which the language is spoken.

Verbal communication may take the form of spoken or sung communication. Spoken communication includes proverbs, riddles, narratives, simple commands, requests, exclamations and statements of one or more words. Sung communication comprises songs, relating to birth, war, work, royalty, festival, folktales and others. These modes of traditional communication are valuable tools in education, socialisation and entertainment. Through them children get to know consciously or unconsciously what their societies consider good or bad behaviour, the taboos

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and sanctions against them and the general belief system. Through these modes of communication, young African girls in general and those of Mbo in particular were taught the basic moral virtues such as knowing how to sit down properly, the virtues of greeting and above all, abstention from sexual immorality. The males were taught the virtues of hardwork. On the basis of the above, it can be inferred that verbal communication not only teaches but it is also effective in mobilising people that would have otherwise remained unreachable by the modern mass media and consequently would exhibit apathy and show a high degree of anomie in the governance of the state. Verbal communication is distinctive in the sense that messages are often more easily decoded by the receiver. He often appreciates the message since he is familiar with the language of the communicator.

On the other hand, non-verbal communication involves the use of signs, symbols, instruments and body gestures to express the intended message to the receiver. For instance, symbols were used to convey specific messages. Symbolic messages of this nature have been likened to telegraphy because of their coded nature. Instruments such as drums were commonly used for wider communication purposes. Various messages in Mbo speech could be communicated to the community as occasion demanded by varying the beating of the drum.

In many rural African societies in general and traditional Mbo society in particular, a combination of the verbal and non-verbal modes of communication is commonly used to convey a variety of messages. A prominent example is the town crier, interchangeably called the village gong man. He was, and is still the main person who

disseminates information in village gatherings. Thus, the town crier signifies the gong and word in action. But the word preceded the gong. This goes to say that traditional communication naturally began with word-of-mouth (Okpoko, 2009). And through the medium, socialisation occurred within family circles and larger groupings and consequently, the invention of instruments to aid the communication. This was based on the recognised need to summon and address the whole population or their representatives at one and the same time.

Interestingly, traditional communication modes were quick and facilitated owing to the size of settlements and the relative homogeneity of rural people who were generally of identical stock and spoke the same language. Some of the distinguishing factors in these forms of communication include the affinity between participants in the communication process, the ability of the audience to talk back almost immediately and simultaneously and the perceived credibility and respect accorded the source of the message. According to Akpabio (2003), traditional communication systems are part and parcel of the way of life of a people because they utilise symbols from the community and hence readily connect with the people, and the values of the community as well as age-old institutions come into play in the communication process. The foregoing implies that traditional communication media are grounded in an indigenous culture produced and consumed by grassroots members of the society (Akpabio, 2003). On the basis of the above analysis, it is apparent that oral tradition is the best-known method of communication and information

dissemination in oral societies like those of different Mbo villages. It is therefore agreeable that oral-media not only produce more discernible effects than other forms of communication in their face-to-face contact, but also reinforce the values of the society.

4. Verbal Communication

We may commence our discussion with what proverbs are all about and their important functions in verbal communication in the traditional Mbo society. Proverbs are sayings of wisdom, and are taken as a mark of wisdom and familiarity in Mbo. As Madu (1992) rightly observes, proverbs are the kernel in which wisdom is contained. They are employed in a variety of ways including the control of human activities without the use of force, as shaming devices, navigate difficult circumstances without losing face, praise devices, prophetic utterances, and general explanations of certain circumstances beyond ordinary human comprehension. They are also used to give information, advise, rebuke and lament. Apart from giving precision and brevity, the mastery of the use of proverbs is often regarded with high esteem among the Mbo. It is therefore common to see orators and elders inter-mix proverbs in their speeches. It is believed that any person worth his salt in Mboland as in many other traditional African settings must master the effective use of proverbs (Okpoko, 2009). Because of the importance of proverbs in Mbo culture, especially in relation to the control of behaviour, social approbation and general education of the young, those who are knowledgeable in them are well respected as those who lack the knowledge are referred to as foreigners or children. Thus, according to one of the Mbo popular sayings, if a proverb is interpreted to a Mboman, then the bride-wealth

of his or her mother is in vain. Even Chinua Achebe (1986) puts it clearly in his best-selling novel, *Things Fall Apart,* that proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten.

Let us now turn to a few Mbo proverbs to illustrate the point.

1. A Grassfield child eats corn even if he is toothless
2. The tortoise said that when the log will get rotten, he will attend his mother's funeral entertainment
3. The sun first shines on those standing and not on those kneeling
4. An old woman is always uneasy when old bones are mentioned in a wise saying
5. A baby on the mother's back does not know that the way is long
6. No matter how two dogs like themselves, they do not share a bone at the same time

(Interview with Fomelack, 2021).

The Mbo also say that do not send a child with a pear fruit that is sufficiently ripe. This means that in the course of playing the child will spoil the fruit due to its state of softness, granted the fact that children generally play with whatever object they find.   This extensive use of proverbs reflects the cultural values, beliefs, and the high wisdom of Mbo people and serve as a source of guidance and inspiration. The significance of these proverbs lies in their ability to convey complex ideas, messages and concepts in a concise and memorable way.

Unlike proverbs which are commonly used by the elders and the wise, riddles are more popular among Mbo children. They are complete language posed to individuals to test their perception of their socio-physical environment. The poser may say for instance, *kwaleng kwaleng*. And expect a correct answer which is a hand-less knife. The poser may as well say that a fish

has entered in a hole and the tail fin is outside. The correct response he expects is how the penis and scrotum function during sex. While the penis enters inside the virgina during sex, the scrotum always remains outside. The Mbo may also say: *Huo em*. The response is *seh ntah*. Literally this means crying when one is bereaved on a foreign or distant land. According to the Mbo, this is senseless because the crier will not be comforted by anybody on a foreign land where he or she is unknown. They would also say: *Ngangeh mpong ndong mebueneh Betreh*. The correct response is road. Another riddle is: *Nfortem a gou Nforlebang sagah*. The correct response is: *eteng bolefou*. This means water shuttle and a pool of water. Sometime the Mbo will ask: what took water up. The correct response is coconut. This is also a popular proverb among the Igbo (Okpoko, 2009). Another popular riddle in Mbo goes as follows: my baby is being seen during my pregnancy. The correct answer is the bush lamp because of the light that it generates. The Mbo generally ask: when I am hungry, I eat my intestines and when I am thirsty, I drink my blood. The correct response is the bush lamp that uses kerosene and a rope. When these questions are incorrectly answered, it is believed that the person being asked is not fully acquainted into the Mbo traditional society.

Songs are also important sources of historical knowledge. Mbo songs serve the entire Mbo populace like newspapers. Like newspapers, they not only give vent to one's feelings, but plague one's opponents. They are great means of expression and communication with all kinds of allusions to the past and present. The Mbo use songs as a social control mechanism to protect themselves

and their society. While some of the songs are composed to praise notable individuals, or sing war victories, others are used to condemn certain human actions. Songs are also used to celebrate and commemorate such rites of passage like childbirth, naming ceremonies, marriage ceremonies, burials and initiations into important secret societies (Tazifor, 2005).

In a nutshell, Mbo songs could be classified as work, war, birth, death, title taking, praise and political songs. Work songs are used during communal labour to convey messages of strength, prowess and dignity for labour. War songs on their part are used to encourage valour during war. Birth songs are used to announce the arrival of new babies. Once sung, members of the community immediately appreciate that they have a new member. They then rally round to sing praise to God while contributing items and gifts for the upkeep of the new baby and their mother. Some of the songs are related to the sound generated by the bed during sex. Songs of loyalty and respect are often sung to mark title taking ceremonies. Prominent traditional titles taken in Mbo are sub-chief, kingmaker and paramount chief (Fomine, 2009). Heroes and achievers are often praised to encourage them to achieve greater heights. For instance, after a heroic hunting expedition in which a hunter kills an animal like a chimpanzee or a leopard, several songs of praise are sung by the entire Nkongho-Mbo populace.

Some songs sung in Mbo often have political implications. The songs inform their listeners on what happened during a particular historical epoch. For example, the song entitled: *Foncha*

Winnie Endeley eya e e. This song was sung in 1961 to praise John Ngu Foncha who defeated EML Endeley in the plebiscite that was organised in Brtitish Southern Cameroons in that year (Fanso, 1989).

Apart from songs, simple commands are effectively used in Mboland to convey messages. Elders use commands when the occasion demands to instill discipline and ensure obedience by the young ones. The most prominent of the simple commands in Mbo is known as *Tonghor-Tonghor*. This is practiced when an elder sends a young one for an errand; he would spit on the ground and then tell the young man that if he should return when the saliva is dried up then he or she will no longer grow in life (Interview with Fonsa, 2021). This implication makes children to run as fast as they can when sent to relate a message or to deliver a good.

Folktales are traditional stories, which are fictional in nature. Like other genres of Mbo literature, folktales constitute a repository of knowledge. In the case of the Igbo, they serve as the bearers of Igbo folk music, folk customs, beliefs, morality and medicine, idea of the universe, of the super natural, heroism, propriety, desirability, and beauty (Okpoko, 2009). In addition to their rich cultural contents, Mbo folk tales contain marvels, which make them very interesting. Their impersonality makes them appear as messages from the gods and goddesses, and are therefore taken very seriously. They are effective instruments of moulding the character of Mbo children because they are important part of Mbo indigenous education. As Green (1948) puts it, not only do they make vivid and reiterate cultural standards and values, but they train the child to think and express himself clearly and swiftly, a matter of importance in a society where oratory plays a vital

part. Usually, each folktale has a prose and a verse. While the folktale teller tells the tale, the children sing the verse to ensure children's participation and sustenance of their interests in the tale. Parents generally tell children the tales during moonlight or any leisure time.

The narration of folktales to children formed part of the early childhood education even before formal schools of learning were introduced into the Mbo society. At school and even during the early stages of childhood development teachers gathered children under tree shades to tell them different kinds of folktales. Some tales provided children's entertainment, ensuring a proper mental and psychological development. Others taught morals such as obedience to parents and elders. A number of them were tales for amusement.

Myths on their part relate to the supernatural, religious and sacred forces which affect human beings. Myths have the potential of explaining historical institutions and development by appealing to non-historic factors and forces, and by the supernatural acting at times through the agencies of humans, lower animals and inanimate objects. They attempt to explain human culture, society and the entire universe along religious forces. The myths are either historical or otherwise, and are often described as crude until they are refined to produce a fine and clean product. Myths therefore contain and convey historical information.

5. Non-Verbal Communication modes in Mboland

In identifying the various traditional communication modes in Mboland, distinction needs to be made between the non-verbal and verbal modes of communication. The two forms constitute the core of traditional communication in Mboland. Non-verbal communication modes in Mboland involve the use of signs, symbols, body gestures, objects and instruments to express intending messages to the receiver. Signs and body gestures are used regularly among the Mbo to communicate. These include nods that indicate satisfaction or dissatisfaction, hugs and hand-shake to show affection, winks to show an appreciation of expressed intention and cap-off by the men to show an unreserved respect when greeting an elderly person.

Facial expressions also convey meaning to the viewer. For example, a snarling face will likely say something different from a smile. Prominent facial expressions like smiles, frowns, narrowed eyes may be intended to transmit friendliness, anger or disbelief. Similarly, physical positioning also conveys messages. For instance, keeping distance from someone or sitting closer to someone are all forms of using non-verbal cues to communicate. They transmit awareness of differing status, a close working relationship or relaxed mutual trust respectively (Interview with Fossoh, 2021).

Among the conspicuous symbols used in Mboland to convey messages are palm fronds and feathers. The palm frond is used to convey a message as the occasion demands. When tied on a tree, it means strict avoidance. Nowadays, when placed on a vehicle, it

signifies that the vehicle is either conveying a dead body or escorting it. A feather, especially that of an eagle, is pinned on caps and worn mainly by chiefs, title holders and men of great substance. The feather symbolises authority conferred on the wearer of the cap by the traditional authorities in place (Fotabong, 2010).

Certain symbols signified death in the society. For instance, a person seen with completely shaved hair (known in the Cameroonian English repertoire as *crobo*) be it a man or a woman, it implies that a kinsman of the person in question recently passed away. In the same vein, a folded loin cloth tied round the waist with fallen ends also signifies that a relative of the person passed away recently. Also, dried banana leaves discarded on a crossroad or junction signifies that a person died in the neighbourhood and his or her closed relatives slept on the dried banana leaves for a given period of time. This varies from one village to the another (Interview with Elumba, 2021).

Squirrels too help to convey significant messages to their viewers when seen on specific spots. A squirrel seen crossing the road in front of someone or heard making a sound on the right or left-hand side of the road means much to a Mbo depending on the sex of the individual. Generally, if the squirrel is on the right-hand side of a man, then it symbolises good fortune while on the left it signifies ill luck or misfortune. Similarly, while trekking in Mbo, people take special note of the leg they accidentally hit on an obstacle be it a stone or whatever. Hitting the left leg to many women signifies bad omen while hitting the right leg signifies good

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fortune. The reverse is generally true for the men (Interview with Fossung, 2021).

The leave known in Lekongho language as *lebongeogegee* also conveys significant message in Mboland. A knot of it on the head of a traditional title holder conveys feelings of fear, danger, and utmost silence. It also marks the beginning of the funeral entertainment of a traditional title holder, an occasion which starts with the enthronement of the successor of the departed. The same leave is also placed on a stone and tied on a stick to symbolise the highest injunction (*etemnzoh*) in the area. A defaulter of this injunction pays an irreplaceable fine of nine goats (Fomine, 2002).

The birth of babies with some physical abnormalities also conveys some vital information to the parents of such babies. For example, a baby born with six fingers on one palm or a baby born with half fingers. This was regarded as ill luck. It signified impending danger in the family. In ancient times such babies were thrown into the evil forest because it was believed they brought ill luck into the families where they were born.

Unlike signs and symbols, instruments are used to send messages to a wider audience. There are instruments of varying sizes and shapes among the Mbo that generate varying sounds all of which individually or collectively send messages. Prominent among them are the talking wooden drums. The drums are not merely instruments for musical entertainment, rituals or aesthetics but more intrinsically, they are instruments for social communication. As Basden (1938) puts it, they are not intended to be instruments of music, rather they are used

for disseminating information, for ceremonial purposes, and at sacrificial festivals. In many Mbo villages, the talking drum represented and still represents what the telegraph is to the modern and industrialised world. It is still the quickest means of transmitting messages of community-wide importance. The talking drums that are of different sizes are used to send different types of messages within or between communities and villages. The drum is beaten to summon people for community labour, funerals, and other emergencies (Interview with Kuku, 2022). It is also used to thrill and sing the praise of traditional rulers or titled men. During the Mbo-German war, it was used to announce the arrival of White men in the society (Tazifor, 2005).

Similarly, the metal gongs are also used to disseminate information. The gongs are often conical in shape and of various sizes. They are mainly used in combination with the word to deliver such messages. First, the town crier beats the gong to elicit attention and thereafter gives the word and its associated messages. In some villages the gong is used to thrill masquerades to action. The metal gong is also used to announce the arrival of a paramount chief in any given ceremony. The gong is also played in the market by the town crier to call for the attention of the entire populace before making an important announcement (Interview with Nkie, 2022). Following the introduction of Christianity in Mboland, the functions of the gong increased tremendously. The gong is played nowadays as an instrument of entertainment during Catholic Church services but its most important role is to announce the spiritual arrival and

presence of Jesus Christ at the altar during consecration (Tazifor, 2005).

The horn too is a vital instrument of social communication in rural Mbo society. Horns are used during festivals and burial of titled and influential men. The users often exploit the opportunity to show their wealth, since they are usually highly placed persons in the society. Although the Mbo do not raise cows, interestingly, cow horns are the exclusive instruments used by all Mbo titled men to drink palm wine. Accompaniments of the palm wine include bitter kola that has the shape of a human small finger and the ordinary African kola nut that is in lobes.

Turning to the functions of canons and dane guns as instruments that convey varying messages in Mboland, it is imperative to make the point clear that when canons or dane guns are repeatedly shot, it signifies the death of an important personality in rural Mbo communities. People are adjudged highly placed if they can boast of reasonable and unquestionable monetary acquisition, if they are philanthropic, or if they have records of brave deeds. Both canons and dane guns on their part are fired during burial ceremonies of important personalities. They are also fired as a mark of respect at marriage ceremonies of influential people.

The bell was the last but not the least among the instruments used for traditional communication in Mboland. The ringing of it in the market signified the arrival of *(ekekwe)* the bride and about ten young girls who had stayed in a confinement for a period of seven weeks for fattening purposes. The young girls (known in Lekongho language as

Baakekwe) were aged between five and ten years (Interview with Mateh, 2022). The *ekekwe* was organised by the family of the bride with material and financial assistance from the family of the bridegroom. The girls together with the young woman who was about to get married often had quite a nice time. During their seven weeks of seclusion, they spent most of their time eating, drinking and sleeping. They bathed at least four times each day. After each bath, they would rub their bodies with camwood mixed with palm oil. From the beginning of the fattening period to the last week, they were dressed in pieces of clothes tied round their waists (Fotabong, 2010).

The functions of camwood in Mbo traditional society was not limited to it being applied on the body as an ointment. The camwood was applied on the corpse of traditional titled holders prior to burial. The process was simple. It was ground into powder and applied on the corpse externally as a sign of saying adieu to the departed noble man.

The bird known as bush fowl or partridge is very important in Mbo traditional communication system. It is the first timekeeper of the day and works for about three hours. It keeps time by singing. The bird sings its first song at about 3am. This marks the beginning of the day. In the past when long distance trade was still very widespread, it was departure time for traders. It is believed that by the time the bird begins to sing, all night walkers, that is witches and wizards, have returned into their sleeping bodies. At the same time too, hunters begin their return journeys whether successful or frustrated. There are women who wake up

at this time to prepare family meals or food for those colleagues who will work for them in the circle of mutual farm assistance known in Lekongho language as *Mpogole*. It is popularly believed in Mbo area that illness is more severe at night than in the day. So too, at this moment patients begin to feel a certain amount of relief and some do actually fall asleep. Another belief about this hour is that dreams are closest to the eventual reality (Fotabong, 2010).

Another animate timekeeper in Mbo is the cock. It first crows at about 4am. By estimate about 60 percent of adults are awake at this time though still in bed pondering over events of the day. Some people are only half awake while children are still in their full sleep. In the past when the practice of *Ngia* was still very common, such lovers will be packing their bags to return to their own homes, that is, putting on their clothes, picking up their machetes and lighting their lamps. Some actually lit the traditional torch known in Mbo as *miuu mbeh* or a bamboo lamp. *Ngia* means concubine. Stories of things that happen to *Ngia* partners are usually very many and humorous – fights between rivals, the female partners who refuse to 'open up' and are beaten up by their partners, men who must hang around because forced out by stronger rivals and unable to return home too early so as to avoid arousing curiosity, window jumping, lying under beds and struggling not to cough nor snore. Any attempt to cough or snore, the individual is noticed and therefore severely beaten by a stronger rival.

The cock crows the second time at about 5am. Most people are awake at this time and have started making full preparations for the day's activities – assembling of farm materials, cooking food for the day, traveling to distant places, opening the *ezeng mbu* for goats to

walk out and enjoy the freshness of the morning. At this time all cocks begin to crow and one can hear women calling out to their mates to join them on the farm paths. Hens and cocks begin walking out of their cages and enclosures to begin the day's pickings. Young couples try the last bout of sexual intercourse to secure a pregnancy or to feed the baby in the womb.

Although there were many species of insects in Mbo, the dragon fly was unique as a conveyor of information. Its first appearance in October was very significant as it ushered the beginning of the dry season. Although there were other symbols that ushered the dry season, the first appearance of the dragon fly in October was known by the entire Mbo populace. Another dry season usher was a variety of butterfly known to the Mbo as *Ekekogo*.

The appearance of the moon too is very significant among the Mbo. The size of the face of the moon is interpreted to know the start, the middle and end of the month. The size is very small at the beginning, full-blown in the middle and small again with less bright light at the end of the month. During its middle course one can see the man splitting firewood quite clearly as the clouds match pass the face of the moon. The rainbows appearance tells the time when a female leopard is giving birth or the time of the departure of the spirit of a great man from earth prior to his death. Architecturally, Mbo parlours generally have one door that serves as an entrance. It is very unusual to find a parlor with two doors. Once a parlor has two doors, it indicates that the house is owned

by a paramount chief. While chiefs and women enter through the right door, non-title men and youths enter via the left door.

As already mentioned, certain signs in Mbo traditional setting conveyed peculiar messages. For instance, a domestic dispute involving co-wives may offer a special comic scene as the women are likely to remove their head-ties, bind them around their waists, clap their hands and stamp their feet on the ground, while showering insults on each other. The incident may then erupt into full-scale fighting, depending on the mood of the audience watching them and also the depth of bitterness between the adversaries. Once the fight begins, spectators would burst into rapturous and overwhelming applause or rib-cracking laughter. The signs in this scene are apparent. For example, when a Mbo woman removes her head-tie, stamps her leg on the ground and claps, this symbolises anger. This mode of anger is the same in many African societies (Jegede, 1986: 365).

6. Conclusion

The primary objective of this paper was to provide evidence that the Mbo communicate using both verbal and non-verbal modes of communication. The non-verbal modes included signs, the moon, insects, cock crowing, bush fowl, camwood, bell, canons, horns, gongs, drums, palm fronds and feathers. The paper has revealed that verbal communication has to do with the use of language and considering the fact that language and culture are strongly interwoven, verbal communication therefore plays a significant role in deciphering the culture of Mbo people. For instance, Mbo songs illuminate

different aspects of Mbo culture. While some songs are used during collective labour to pass messages of strength, prowess and dignity for labour, some announced the arrival of new babies, some gave soldiers courage during war and some announced death in the community. The paper further reiterates that non-verbal modes of communication such as the use of symbols, instruments and others also convey different historical information in the society. Once a person was seen with completely shaved hair and tied a folded loin cloth round his waist, it signified that his close relative died recently. The metal gong on its part was used to announce the arrival and departure of a paramount chief in any ceremony.

This research has a number of recommendations. First, the Mbo need to improve on their verbal and non-verbal modes of communication. This is imperative because some served and continue to serve as historical repositories. For instance, in the past when an elder sent a child to relate news to someone or to go and collect an object, he would spit on the ground and tell the child that if the saliva should dry up before he returns, then he will no longer grow in life. This simple verbal command made Mbo children to be very obedient. This needs to be revamped. Second, prior to traditional wedding, the bride and about ten young girls were kept in a strict confinement for a period of about seven weeks. During this period of seclusion also known as fattening period, the bride and her companions were heavily fed at the expense of the family of the bride and that of the bridegroom. The aim of the confinement was to fatten the young woman who was about to get married in order to ease her conceiving a baby immediately she got married. This practice has been abandoned by the entire Mbo populace. It is very important that contemporary Mbo people encourage this aspect of their culture.

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Migrant Women, Ontological Dis/Abilities and the Cyberspace Abilities in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*

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Abstract

This article analyses Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* within the paradigm of cultural dis/abilities in coloniality, in order to demonstrate how migrants can negotiate identity by abrogating western epistemology's forced disabilities on their being, race, gender and epistemologies. The study employs the paradigms of cultural disabilities and the decolonial perspectives to examine the different forms of social discrimination that the migrant female protagonist encounters during her long stay in America, and the agency she gains through her emerging technology skills and social relations abilities. It demonstrates how through the narrative process Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie chronicles the story of a migrant woman character who abrogates the Western disablement of her ontology. The analysis reveals that in the midst of various forms of social discrimination and injustices that relegate black migrants to the zone of non-being, the migrant woman in Adichie's *Americanah* sees the cyberspace as a platform through which she can decolonise and restore black ontology to the zone of being. Through blogging, the migrant woman devises strategies to outsmart social injustices and to create a better world for herself and for others. To enhance her existence, the migrant woman is portrayed with abilities to appropriate emerging technologies and use them to negotiate and renegotiate her identity in the midst of social entanglements.

Key Words: Immigration, Women, Disablement, Cyberspace, Decoloniality

1. Introduction

Migration has been a constant and persistent feature in the history of humankind. It is one of the most important and pressing global issues of our time. When people cross the border of a country, a metamorphosis happens to their legal status. They suddenly gain a special label or status – of migrants (Tataru 2020:12). Our world is made of states and individuals who constantly come and go. It is also a world of borders that people cross for many reasons: to work, to visit their families, to escape violence and natural disasters, to study, to heal or to return to their country. "Migration is not the mere act of crossing the border, but an important factor in the erosion of traditional boundaries between languages, cultures, ethnic groups and nation-states, affecting all those involved" (Tataru 2020:14). The production of migrants continues as a result of multiplicity of phenomena including war and civil strife which are strategies used by the former colonisers to make Africans remain disabled and polluted, whereas the West is portrayed as a safe haven. This is what pushes Ifemelu and other migrant women in Adichie's *Americanah* to cross-geographical boundaries to the USA with the sole intention to seek for greener pastures. Nevertheless, the irony is that, Ifemelu and others are faced with bitter realities of double racism both because of their gender and skin colour.

2. Empirical Issues

Many literary critics discussed *Americanah* in the light of migrant identity, living in the west and in internet language. In Sajna (2014), racism is unmasked through *Americannah*'s narrative process as the author investigates the characters' encounter with the West. Pucherova (2018: 407) discusses *Americannah* in the light of an Afropolitantism narrative. Appropriating the notion from Achille Mbembe, he considers Afropolitant migrants as Africans of the world with emphatic identities, people with "a way of embracing […] the

foreign, the strange and the distant, this capacity to recognise oneself in the face of another." Begum (2019: 619) looks at *Americannah* as a transnational feminist novel that focuses, "on spaces of conflict, of contradiction, of contact in which women, women of colour, and other marginalised actors, have transformed discourses and spaces that exclude them, into spaces of possibility and collaboration."

Martinez (2020) in "Art as an Antidote to Clandestine Migration: A Study of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* and NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*", questions the triple oppression of black women experiences through Ifemelu by attempting a deconstruction of social categories associated with black women. Yet, in their experiences of colour and gender inequality in relation to the west, female African immigrants still struggle to reconfigure their identities. According to (Bimbola Oluwafunlola, n.d.), return migration is the quintessential closure as migrant women like Ifemelu decide to return to their roots or homeland. Muhammad and Rahat (2022) reveal that female characters in *Americannah* are discussed from the perspective of immigrant gender issues while in Shamshad and Asad (2022) hybridity in migration is the focus of investigation.

Two articles related to the focus of the present study, Information and Communication emerging Technologies as appropriated and used as strategies of narration for effect in the context of migration are Guarracino (2014) and Aor (2022). While Guarracino (2014: 20) looks at blogging in *Americannah* as a strategy demonstrating how "the interaction of different modes of writing expands on the complex relations among different experiences", Aor (2022) demonstrates how internet-mediated language and style appropriated and used in *Americannah*, indicate that the language of ICT is relevant in Literary creativity during this emerging technology era.

It should be noted that while the previous works reviewed relate to the present study because they discuss migrant related issues, the last two works reviewed relate to this write-up in that they all demonstrate the overlap between emerging technologies and recent literary creative articulations in *Americannah.* However, the present work is peculiar in that it looks at how the experience of migration can be disabling for Africans who for that reason have to seek for innovative strategies to enable their capacities in the host countries. One of such innovativeness observed in *Americannah* is the use of the cyberspace to decolonise disability and to reconstruct abilities through blogging. Consequently, this paper examines disability as a mechanism of coloniality which does not align with the Afropolitant migrant perspective of transformative relationships, whereby, their spatial mobility has informed their inner mobility and their readiness to negotiate reality (Mbembe 2006).

3. Theoretical Issues

In order to demonstrate how migrant women negotiate identity by abrogating western epistemology's forced disabilities on their being, race, and epistemologies, this study uses the paradigm of cultural disabilities in coloniality that has kept the women/the-global south in the state of disablement. "Disability culture is the difference between being alone, isolated, and individuated with a physical, cognitive,

emotional or sensory difference that in our society invites discrimination and reinforces all that and being in community…" (Kuppers 2011:30). Thus the basic detrimental effect is generally seen in the very process of construction of the phenomena of disability to be something quite out of the world rather than treating the same as a pretty much normal attribute of an individual or a group of people. So, even in this field, there is the process of the construction of a particular form of abnormality, which further relegates the affected group of persons to an even, marginalised position.

When it comes to attaining any sort of power, this group is regarded as poor. They are considered powerless and cultureless both literally and figuratively. In the general scenario, any group of persons suffering from some kind of cultural disability in the society is in one way or another suffering from double marginalisation. The simple reason behind this is that there is also a sense of inferiority complex, which is associated with any culturally disabled group by another group of persons. This sense of inferiority complex is greatly heightened when the inflicted group suffers terribly in the hands of the society or another group in terms of being given a relegated position due to their being, race, gender and epistemologies.

In fact, the history of coloniality has created a model for pathologising of migrant ways of fostering instead dependency, frustration and disability. This calls for new strategies to decolonise imposed disability on migrant experience. Decolonising disability requires both an acute awareness of the

coloniality in process that contributes to and causes disablement (Hollinsworth 2013:604). The accumulation of racial barriers on black people is a purposeful strategy to maintain white supremacy and racial authority over black and or African migrants and so disable blackness. Soldatic (2015) ascertains that disability exists in juxtaposition of capitalistic mechanisms of coloniality, which seeks to commodify minds and bodies in the name of progress. In Annamma, Ferri $ Connor (2018) and (Goodley 2017), opinions hold that in the context of coloniality, migrant disability is maintained through explicit structures of oppression and discrimination, such as racism, classism and sexism. In the context of migrant experience, disability is one of many factors which depress migrant futurity and self-determination. It is therefore necessary to examine within the paradigm of cultural dis/abilities in coloniality the abilities of a migrant woman (Ifemelu) who uses emerging technology (cyberspace/blogging) as a platform to decolonize the mind and restore black ontology to the zone of being.

4. Methodology

The purpose of this study is to examine Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* in order to demonstrate how through the narrative process the author chronicles the story of a migrant female character who abrogates western disablement of her ontology. This study does a qualitative thematic analysis of *Americanah* using the paradigm of cultural dis/abilities in coloniality and the decolonial perspectives. The work employs both primary and secondary research materials. The primary data are from the literary selected text, *Americannah*, while the secondary data are from the library and the internet. These literary

data were carefully observed with the aim of selecting a postcolonial literary text which embodies the issues of migrant women, ontological dis/abilities and cyberspace abilities within the postcolonial experience. The researchers purposively selected Adichie's *Americanah,* because the novel is concerned with migration, dis/abilities and emerging technological abilities (cyberspace/blogging) in the postcolonial context. Portions from the text relevant to the thematic consideration in this study were selected, interpreted and analysed based on the researchers' comprehension of migration, ontological dis/abilities and cyberspace abilities. This text serves as a microcosm of the macroscopic postcolonial literary world and is used to discuss how through cyberspace/blogging, migrant women, particularly Ifemelu negotiate identity by abrogating western epistemology's forced disabilities on her being, race, gender and epistemologies thereby creating a better world for everyone.

5. Textual Analysis

The analysis in this paper is divided into two parts. The first part discusses the disablement of African ontology by the West; the second examines how through cyberspace/blogging Ifemelu embarks on the mission to unveil the evils of coloniality thereby decolonising the minds of both the blacks and the whites and restoring black ontology.

Western Disablement of Black Ontology

The novel, *Americanah*, tells the story of Ifemelu, the female protagonist and her high school friend, Obinze, who part ways to

diverse geographical locations, the USA and the UK, respectively because of complex existential conditions and choices. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Frantz Fanon opines that:

> The Black man possesses two dimensions: one with his fellow Blacks, the other with Whites. A black man behaves differently with a white man than he does with another black man…The black man entering France reacts against the myth of the Martinican who swallows his r's…He will make every effort not only to roll his r's, but also to make them stand out. On the lookout for the slightest reaction of others, listening to himself speak and not trusting his own tongue…desperately working on his diction" (1986:1-5).

Fanon's submission is reflective of the experiences of migrant women like Ifemelu in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*.

Adichie in this masterpiece brings to the limelight how African women immigrants are forced to take back seats in a foreign land, either because of their blackness (skin colour) or because of their gender. Nevertheless, Ifemelu demonstrates some toughness of character while overpowering these hurdles, eventually emerging as a self-reliant individual with the aid of cyberspace (blogging). In the beginning, Ifemelu stays with her Aunty Uju and her son, Dike at Brooklyn. Ifemelu has migrated to America on a student visa and her aunty gives her a fake identity card so that she can search for work. Her school friend, back at home in Nigeria, Ginika, introduces her to American culture and its racial politics. In an attempt to secure a job, Ifemelu (black) is disabled in her accent as she forcefully adopts American accent. She equally changes her hairstyle to suit the dominant culture. In the end, she retains her black culture and at the same time transforms herself to suit to American culture.

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Frantz Fanon contends that:

> There is a fact: White men consider themselves superior to Black men. There is another fact: Black men want to prove to White man, at all costs, the richness of their thought, the equal values of their intellect. How do we extricate ourselves?" (1:1986).

Two processes are at work in producing ontological disabilities suffered by the Africans. Firstly, the Negro is constantly humiliated. As it is, he is told that he has no culture, no civilisation and no historical past (Fanon, 1986) and whatever he has is deemed inferior vis-à-vis that of the colonisers. Secondly, everything that he learns and absorbs himself in since childhood is that of his coloniser's world. Little wonder then that, as Fanon points out, the black schoolboy in the Antilles "in his lessons is forever talking about 'our ancestors, the Gauls,' identifies himself with the explorer, bringer of civilization, the white man who carries truth to savages-an all- white truth" (Fanon 1986).

The above submission by Fanon is unavoidably evident in Adichie's *Americanah.* The black migrant woman is disable of her gender. During her years in American, Ginika, Ifemelu's schoolmate, changes drastically, but ultimately. She changes to conform to the western (American) ontology of her gender standard. From the moment Ifemelu steps off the bus in new Jessey, Ginika's physical transformation strikes her: "Ginika was much thinner, half her old size" (2013:149). As Ifemelu is new to America, she has not been integrated into the culture that praises thin women, but Ginika has been. In order to fulfil America's standardised depiction of a woman, Ginika closely watches what she eats, and she reveals that, in America, comment about weight loss are not rude as in Nigeria, but instead are compliments.

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Ginika is subtly disabled of her gender as the perception of her gender within the American society epistemicised her black/African epistemic ideal of her gender in Nigeria. Hence, she loses her cultural and historical epistemology in order to survive in her new geographic location.

To the racist white, the Negro often symbolises the negative: "whether concretely or symbolically, the black man stands for the bad side. He is 'a symbol of 'evil', 'sin' and archetype of the lowest values in every civilised and civilising countries, particularly Europe" (Fanon 1986: 10). When Ifemelu arrives at Princeton University for orientation and registration, the professional staff member, Cristina Tomas initiates Ifemelu to the assumptions that are going to be made about her based on her accent. After inquiring if she was in the correct place for freshman registration, Ifemelu is told by Cristina Tomas:

> You-will. First. Need. To. Get. A. Letter, Form. The. International. Students Office (Ifemelu half smiled in sympathy because Cristina Tomas had to have some sort of illness that made her speak so slowly, lips scrunching and puckering, as she gave directions to the international students office. But when Ifemelu returned with the letter) Cristina Tomas said, 'I need. You. To. Fill. Out. A. couple. Of. Forms. Do. You. Understand. How. To. Fill. These. Out?' (and she realises that Cristina Tomas was speaking like that because of her, her foreign accent, and she felt for a moment like a child, lady - climbed and drooling). (2013:163)

A college coordinator, Tomas' assumptions about Ifemelu and her inability to understand English because she is black take precedence over who Ifemelu is and it is a disablement of her identity. Her attitude introduces Ifemelu to the hasty reactions and conclusions that some individuals are going to have about her, simply because of her skin colour and accent. By seeing Ifemelu as an undereducated student,

Tomas effectively disables her because of her physical difference. Thus, Ifemelu's experience is sadly a realistic example of the disablement of the identity of an African immigrant because she is African, not because she lacks the capacity to communicate. Furthermore, this process of disablement depicts the African as an Other, as not fully human in relation to the western subjects. Hence, on an ontological level, the other or difference has been denied or excluded, which accounts for the violence of the colonial logic of conceptualising African as objects of the zone of non-being. The essence is the blogging narrative process in *Americanah* is therefore one that necessitates the restoration of black ontology through the capacity to innovate using emerging technologies.

6. Decolonising the Mind and Restoring Black Ontology through Blogging

Decolonising disability requires both an acute awareness of colonial processes that contribute to, and cause disablement (Hollinsworth 2013). It entails a deliberate attempt to remove these structures from our social organisation (Tuck and Yang 2012). The accumulation of barriers to the fruition of black people is a purposeful tactic to maintain white supremacy and colonial authority over Africans. Though Ifemelu is free, when she is introduced by Curt to his family and friends, she observes biased remarks which imply feelings of dominance on the part of white women. In fact, their relationship is ideal but his white privilege is always a source of constant bewilderment and concealed embarrassment that reminds her of the dissimilarities between them. After she separates with Curt, she is disheartened again. She questions herself if 'race' is one of the reasons that affected her relationship with Curt.

She then launches a blog: "Raceteenth or Various Observations about American Blacks (Those Formerly Known As Negros) by a Non-American Black." In a short span of time, this blog gains popularity and finds a large number of followers. The blog carries several posts that portray the experiences of African immigrants in the US. Her blog becomes a platform where she renders her opinion of 'race' frankly. As Ifemelu experiences America's conceptualisation and categorisation of race as a mature adult woman, it fuels her quest to disseminate her own accumulated experiences and personal knowledge to other Black Immigrants. Thus, Ifemelu's blog is established and eventually almost as if talking to her old self (the newly immigrant Ifemelu) addresses the immigrants:

> Dear Non-American Black, when you make the choice to come to America, you become black as well as "So what if you weren't black in your country?" You're in America now (2013: 237).

Ifemelu's sarcastic observation reveals her a criticism of race and discrimination in the American society. Thus, through her time immersed in American society, Ifemelu has observed other individuals place her body on a racial meaning she has never experienced, one that, hitherto, had not been identifiable or labelled a part of her identity. She is left with no option than to find a way to resist racist tendencies and blogging becomes that option.

From her resistance to the overwhelming forces that she encounters daily due to racial discrimination, Ifemelu blogs about race, gender, and sexuality to provide her readers a critical and distanced perspective. Recording her observation, Ifemelu blogs about seeing other groups racialised beyond the black community. She reports:

> Hispanic means a slight step above American blacks in the American race ladder, Hispanic means the chocolate-skinned women from Peru, Hispanic means the indigenous people of Mexico. Hispanic means the biracial-looking folks from the Dominican Republic. Hispanic means the paler folks from Puerto Rico. Hispanic also means the blond, blue-eyed guy from Argentina. All you need to be is Spanish-speaking but not from Spain and voila, you're a race called Hispanic. (2013: 129)

In this case, Ifemelu ironically shows how this racial concept reduces the reality of the diversity of origins and ethnicities included under this label, thus demonstrating its absurdity. The comment of the reader also serves as an acknowledgement for Ifemelu's use of her voice, confirming that Ifemelu uses it to call for resistance and to create a space for discussions. The reader also says the blog posts triggered "real conversation", meaning without filters and without having to adapt as to please her audience. Just as the reader puts it, Ifemelu writes in an "irreverent" tone, taking no shortcuts, describing reality as she sees it. Linguistically, the term 'irreverent' which is used several times when describing Ifemelu's writings is also a synonym for 'rebellious' and 'troublemaker.' All these synonyms show that Ifemelu challenges the established order in her posts.

Through her blog, Ifemelu creates a space where she can express herself freely, as well as her readers, therefore creating a common discourse. Ifemelu clearly states this intention in the following post:

> This is for the Zipped-Up Negros, the upwardly mobile American and Non-blacks who don't talk about Life Experiences That Have to Do Exclusively with Being Black. Because they want to keep everyone comfortable. Tell your story here. Unzip yourself. This is a safe space (2013: 307).

Ifemelu overtly states her intention to offer a platform of free expression to American Blacks as well as Non-American Blacks, where they can express themselves freely, without being criticised for discussing race issues. Ifemelu knows from personal experience that talking about race is not acceptable in the American society, so she creates a space of free speech on this topic. This pivotal moment in the protagonist's life perfectly illustrates what Audre Lorde (1984) has described as "the transformation of silence into language and action", an essential step for Black women on the path to empowerment that Patricia Hill Collins (2009) has called the 'coming to voice' process. By analysing cultural contexts through her personal feelings, thoughts and anecdotes, and sharing these with her reader, Ifemelu also sheds light on her interaction with the world, defining herself as well as her environment in the process.

As her time to depart from America draws closer, Ifemelu begins to see the problems with oppressed individuals refusing to bond together to strive for better treatment, and she remembers individuals, like Jane, Aunty Uju's neighbour, perpetuating the racialisation enacted by the dominant racial group. Published as a

blog entry, Ifemelu's viewpoint on the issue is delivered passionately as she writes:

> There is an oppressed Olympics going on. American racial minorities—blacks, Hispanic, Asians, and Jews—all get shit from white folks, different kinds of shit, but shit still. Each secretly believes that it gets the worst shit, so, no there is no United League of the Oppressed. However, all the others think they're better than blacks because, well, they're not black" (2013: 253).

As she is introduced to America's conception of race, Ifemelu realises the unspoken rule, one is already better if she or he can simply declare his or her difference from African American the lowest rungs of the social ladder. Yet, she recognises the possibilities that could come about simply if the groups would end their bickering and come together as one powerful force. A solidarity front of oppressed individuals could demand and achieve social change. One of the main problems Ifemelu observes in such a social movement is the racism that groups perpetuate against one another.

In a blog entitled, "Job Vacancy in America-National Arbiter in Chief of Who is Racist," Ifemelu brings this issue to light. As she blogs, "In America, racism exists but racists are all gone" (2013: 390). By using present tense with "racism" and participle with "racists", she does not limit this proclamation to anyone, month or year, leaving her readers the case of agreeing with the statement whether it was today or ten years ago. Indeed, by being an author and blogger on issues of race, she creates a path for herself away from social conventions, where she no longer needs to relax her hair to appear professional. She confidently replies to the hairstylist's criticism of the nature of her hair by saying, "I love

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my hair the way God made it" (2013: 12). As can be seen, emancipation from imposed norms and resistance come from the intertwined tropes of liberated hair and writing, it was by liberating her hair that she felt the need to start a blog, which in turn allowed her further freedom.

7. Conclusion

The main trust in this paper was that in the face of different forms of social discrimination encountered by migrant women in America due to racial ontological disablement, Ifemelu through cyberspace/blogging negotiates identity by abrogating western epistemology's forced disabilities on her being, race, gender and epistemology. This enables her to gain agency through her emerging technological skills and social relations abilities. In telling the story in parallel Adichie discusses the problems faced by African women as immigrants while also addressing the issues of cultural disabilities due to the colonial agenda of constantly keeping the African continent in particular and the global south in general in the state of disablement and dependency. Emerging technologies then constitute global culture, platforms available for appropriation by any person with abilities to use them to gain agency and hence, enhance transitional solidarity.

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Etude des contraintes liées à la performance des élèves-interprètes en fin de formation en interprétation de l'Ecole supérieure de traducteurs et interprètes (ASTI) et du Programme panafricain en traduction, interprétation (PAUTRAIN)

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Résumé

Le présent article part du constat de la difficulté des élèves-interprètes de l'ASTI et de PAUTRAIN à obtenir leur diplôme et à intégrer le marché avec succès pour avoir rencontré des difficultés à communiquer le message de la langue source à la langue cible. Il se donne deux (2) objectifs : Premièrement (1) d'identifier et décrire les problèmes rencontrés par les élèves-interprètes en fin de formation ; deuxièmement (2) de décrire les défis liés à l'écoute-analyse. Sur la base de l'observation et une recherche documentaire, un échantillon de 100 extraits d'interprétation de quatre (4) discours par les élèves-interprètes en fin de formation a été analysé quantitativement et qualitativement, appuyé par des théories (théories interprétative et linguistique) et stratégies de traduction et interprétation (domestication, étrangéisation, équivalence textuelle et équivalence formelle) ainsi que la méthode de l'analyse critique du discours. Il ressort de l'analyse des données que (1) il existe 3 principales catégories de contraintes rencontrées par les élèves-interprètes, notamment syntaxique, sémantique et syntactico-sémantique ; de même, (2) les problèmes rencontrés par les apprenants sont liés à la pratique ; à la formation et à l'effort d'écoute-analyse. Les stratégies visant à résoudre lesdits problèmes consisteraient à revoir les contenus et méthodes de formation en vue de concevoir des exercices ou unités d'enseignement visant à développer, voire améliorer son écoute et tirer le meilleur parti de ladite écoute aux fins d'analyse. Ce faisant, ces recommandations contribueraient à améliorer les performances des élèves-interprètes de manière générale.

Mots clés : Contraintes ; évaluation ; interprétation

1. Introduction

Un aperçu de la littérature sur l'état de la question nous permet de dégager les constats selon lesquels il existe un nombre important de recherche effectuée dans le domaine de l'interprétation, particulièrement dans le cadre des difficultés généralement rencontrées par les apprenants lors de la pratique de l'interprétation. Toutefois, très peu, ou presque pas d'études réalisées se sont focalisées sur la question des défis rencontrés par les élèves-interprètes dans le cadre de l'évaluation de la qualité d'un corpus d'interprétation de ces derniers et pour des programmes de formation spécifique. D'un point de vue géographique, l'Afrique en général et le Cameroun en particulier n'ont pas servi de contexte et de terrain d'étude pour cette problématique. Par ailleurs ces approches sont restées parcellaires et fragmentées, ne permettant pas d'avoir une idée d'ensemble sur les difficultés rencontrées par les élèves-interprètes pendant la pratique et les stratégies proposées pour en venir à bout. La présente étude se propose de « recoller les morceaux » pour proposer une étude préliminaire de la question dans le contexte du Cameroun au travers de l'analyse d'un corpus de 100 extraits problématiques réalisés par 16 élèves-interprètes en fin de formation de l'Ecole supérieure de traducteurs et interprètes (ASTI) ainsi que le programme Panafricain de Masters en traduction, interprétation et études interculturelles (PAUTRAIN).

Il se dégage de ce qui précède le problème selon lequel les élèves-interprètes en fin de formation de l'ASTI et PAUTRAIN ont du mal à achever leur étude en interprétation et à intégrer le marché

avec succès parce qu'ils rencontrent des problèmes d'ordre sémantique, syntaxique et sémantico-syntaxique. Le présent article se donne deux objectifs, premièrement d'identifier et décrire les problèmes rencontrés par les élèves-interprètes en fin de formation ; deuxièmement décrire les problèmes liés à l'écoute-analyse. Les hypothèses qui en découlent sont : (1) les défis rencontrés par les élèves-interprètes pendant la pratique de l'interprétation sont clairement identifiables ; de même, (2) les défis liés à l'écoute-analyse sont sous-tendus par de nombreuses causes. Il s'articule en trois parties ; la première sert de toile de fond, décrit les différentes contraintes rencontrées par les élèves-interprètes de la littérature. La deuxième partie présente les données recueillies sur le terrain et leurs analyses. Enfin, la troisième partie interprète les résultats et formule des recommandations.

2. Cadre conceptuel

La revue empirique de la littérature nous permettra de passer en revue les recherches menées en rapport au présent sujet. Il sera question de relever dans la recherche les défis relatifs à la pratique de l'interprétation et à la formation en interprétation. En outre, nous passerons en revue les recherches se rapportant aux contraintes relatives dans un premier temps à la pratique de l'interprétation, à la formation et ensuite à l'effort d'écoute-analyse ; nous présenterons par la suite l'état de lieu de la recherche sur l'évaluation de la qualité en interprétation.

2.1 Défis liés à la pratique de l'interprétation

De par notre expérience de praticienne, il s'avère que l'interprétation de par sa nature même est un exercice qui requiert un important effort cognitif. En effet, il est question pour l'interprète de gérer les aspects du processus, notamment de l'écoute-analyse à la compréhension, la déverbalisation en passant par la production et la chaîne continue. Tous ces efforts varient en fonction du débit de l'orateur, son accent, la technicité du sujet abordé, l'équipement pour le cas de l'interprétation simultanée, entre autres.

C'est dans cette logique que Seleskovitch (1968) résume les problèmes fondamentaux que rencontre l'interprète en quatre points : problèmes de compréhension, de connaissances, de communication et problèmes linguistiques (Seleskovitch, 1968, p. 36 cité dans Alhalaki 2019). Selon elle, le processus d'interprétation se déroule en trois étapes :

- Audition d'un signifiant linguistique chargé de sens ; appréhension (langue) et compréhension (pensée et communication) du message par analyse et exégèse.
- Déverbalisation : oubli immédiat et volontaire du signifiant pour ne retenir que l'image mentale du signifié (concept ou idée).
- Production d'un nouveau signifiant dans la langue cible (LC), qui doit répondre à un double impératif : exprimer tout le message original et être adapté au destinataire (Seleskovitch, 1968 ; p. 35). La reformulation en langue d'arrivée s'effectue à partir du sens et non pas de la structure linguistique ou des choix lexicaux précis du discours original. Cela permet de proposer une interprétation plus compréhensible et plus convaincante pour ceux qui l'écoutent que ne le serait une interprétation-transcodage. (Alhlaki, 2019, p. 26).

Ces défis tels que présentés par Seleskovitch apparaissent au niveau de tout le processus interprétatif et s'apparente aux différents efforts présentés par Daniel Giles (1985) dans son modèle d'Efforts.

Cette partie du cadre conceptuel nous a permis de présenter les différents efforts ou problèmes auxquels sont soumis les élèves-interprètes dans la pratique de leur activité. Il faut relever que l'exercice d'interprétation en lui-même est un exercice difficile qui nécessite toute la concentration possible entre les différents efforts afin d'arriver à un rendement acceptable. Ceci nous permettra de mieux comprendre les défis auxquelles les élèves-interprètes qui se sont adonnés à l'interprétation des extraits du corpus du présent travail ont fait face pendant l'exercice afin de mieux informer les stratégies proposées. Vu que les contraintes liées à la pratique sont davantage perceptibles au niveau du processus, qu'en est-il des difficultés liées à la formation ?

2.2 Défis relatifs à la formation en interprétation

Parlé des difficultés relatives à la formation revient à mettre en corrélation compétences et critères d'évaluation. En effet, l'on se rend compte que les compétences sur lesquelles les programmes de formation mettent un accent renvoient, mieux se rapportent d'une manière ou d'une autre aux paramètres sur lesquels s'appuient l'évaluation de la qualité de l'interprétation. De même, de ces compétences et critères émergent la plupart des difficultés que rencontrent les élèves-interprètes pendant la formation et même après ladite formation.

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Selon la Théorie Interprétative de la Traduction (TIT) pendant que se déroule l'interprétation, compréhension, déverbalisation et reformulation « se chevauchent et se superposent les unes aux autres en nombre variable à chaque instant » (Seleskovitch et Lederer, 1984 [4e éd. 2001], p. 137). Aussi les difficultés en interprétation tournent-elles autour de ces trois concepts. Seleskovitch et Lederer (1989 [2e éd. 2002]), au fil de leur analyse de l'enseignement depuis la consécutive sans prise de notes jusqu'à l'interprétation simultanée avec texte, identifient un ensemble de difficultés. Le chapitre 3 de leur livre, consacré à la simultanée, met en exergue les difficultés que rencontrent les étudiants ainsi que les compétences dont ils ont besoin pour les surmonter. Le résumé du classement des difficultés selon leur ordre d'apparition dans l'ouvrage par Seleskovitch est présenté ainsi qu'il suit :

Ces problèmes sont d'ordre linguistique, liées à la compréhension, au processus et à la pédagogie. Dans le cadre des problèmes linguistiques, il est mis en exergue le danger de s'adonner au transcodage de deux systèmes linguistiques ; la problématique de la maitrise de ces langues de travail ; la restitution du message dans la langue maternelle de l'interprète censée être celle que l'on maitrise parfaitement ; la langue étant intrinsèquement liée à la culture, il est question de la difficulté liée à la gestion des éléments culturels liée à chaque langue et culture.

Concernant les difficultés de compréhension relevées par Seleskovitch, elles se rapportent à la compréhension du message de la langue source à la langue cible ainsi que la clarté et la cohérence du message restitué.

Les difficultés relatives au processus d'interprétation, de l'écoute, à la compréhension, en passant par la déverbalisation et la réexpression, notamment la gestion des éléments dudit processus.

Enfin ces difficultés se rapportent aux éléments de pédagogie rencontrés par l'enseignant pendant la formation. En effet, la tâche de l'enseignant n'est pas aisée, dans la mesure où il doit se concentrer à la fois sur le discours original et sur l'interprétation, juger de la cohérence de celle-ci par rapport à celui-là, mais aussi juger de la méthode suivie par l'étudiant et parfois prononcer lui-même le discours, à défaut de pouvoir disposer des services d'un étudiant-orateur

En effet, les facteurs qui interviennent en interprétation simultanée ne présentent pas le même degré de difficulté pour chaque étudiant, que ce soit le calque, le retard pris sur l'orateur ou le décalage, les omissions, etc. Ainsi la difficulté en interprétation n'est donc pas absolue, car les apprenants ne progressent pas en ligne droite (Seleskovitch & Lederer 1989, p.186). Aucun interprète ne travaille de façon strictement identique à celle d'un autre.

Après avoir passé en revue les défis liés à la formation, il ressort que dans le cadre de la formation les difficultés se rapportent aux questions de langue, de compréhension, de gestion des éléments culturels, de la gestion du processus d'interprétation et les problèmes rencontrés par les enseignants pendant la formation des apprenants. à la suite cet état de lieu

des difficultés relatives à la formation, il est important d'aborder les contraintes liées à l'écoute-analyse.

2.3 Contraintes relatives à l'effort d'écoute-analyse et interprétation

Pour les besoins de notre propre analyse, nous avons souhaité prolonger ces principes généraux en adoptant le cadre conceptuel des Modèles d'Efforts de Daniel Gile (1988a, 1995a, 1999 et 2009), et notamment le Modèle d'Efforts de l'interprétation simultanée. En effet, notre choix s'est porté sur ce Modèle, qui constitue l'un des piliers de notre cadre conceptuel, parce qu'il a été mis au point dans le but d'expliquer les défaillances des interprètes lorsque celles-ci ne résultent pas d'un simple manque de connaissances linguistiques ou thématiques. Il se base sur une analyse de l'interprétation au regard des contraintes cognitives, contraintes dont l'existence fait elle aussi l'objet d'un consensus quasiment généralisé parmi les interprètes. Nous pensons que ce Modèle nous sera particulièrement utile pour analyser les interprétations des élèves-interprètes en fin de formation de l'anglais en français.

En effet, le Modèle d'Efforts met l'accent sur la pression cognitive à laquelle sont soumis les interprètes, notamment lors de la production par l'orateur du discours en langue source (LS). S'appuyant sur des connaissances psycholinguistiques robustes, Gile estime que les trois « Efforts » (écoute et analyse, mémoire à court terme et production) qu'il envisage dans le cadre de son Modèle d'Efforts ne s'apparentent pas à des opérations automatiques, mais sont au contraire des opérations qui nécessitent des ressources

attentionnelles. Son Modèle prévoit des phénomènes de saturation cognitive ainsi que les effets susceptibles d'en découler (maladresses, impropriétés, prononciation incorrecte, etc.) pouvant affecter la structure de la phrase, la grammaire ou encore les mots individuels. Ces mêmes Modèles expliquent également les tactiques permettant de prévenir la saturation cognitive. Ils postulent en effet un mécanisme de concurrence entre les trois Efforts de base (Daniel Gile 1988a, p. 5) à même d'expliquer les limites et les défaillances de l'interprète, qui ne sont que rarement mentionnées dans les publications en traductologie (Daniel Gile 1995a, p. 81 ; Alhalaki 2019, pp. 27-28) Ces défaillances se manifestent sur la forme et le fond du discours produit par l'interprète. Au niveau de la forme, Daniel Gile (1995) note une dégradation dans la qualité de la voix, de l'énonciation et de l'accent (interférence avec la langue de l'orateur), ainsi que dans la qualité prosodique et linguistique de l'interprétation (fautes et maladresses de langue sur les plans lexicologique, terminologique, grammatical, stylistique et pragmatique). Quant au fond, le discours restitué présenterait des omissions non justifiées, des ajouts d'informations ou une déformation de l'information.

En outre, les facteurs environnementaux, les connaissances linguistiques extérieures et la compréhension de l'interprète semblent ne pas suffire à expliquer tous les incidents susceptibles de se produire lors de l'interprétation. En effet, l'observation montre que les erreurs des interprètes surviennent souvent sur des segments de discours qui ne présentent aucune

difficulté apparente. Nous résumons ci-dessous du point de vue de Daniel Gile (1995 : 89) certaines des contraintes auxquelles doit faire face l'interprète :

- le principal facteur de difficulté en interprétation est la pression du temps ;
- l'interprète énonce des idées qui ne sont pas les siennes et dont il vient juste de prendre connaissance, il doit souvent commencer à interpréter une idée avant même de l'avoir saisie dans sa totalité ;
- il est astreint à la fidélité au discours de l'orateur ;
- il n'a que quelques fractions de seconde pour préparer son discours ;
- son horizon ne dépasse guère la phrase, voire un segment de phrase dans le discours de l'orateur;
- son attention est fortement partagée puisqu'il doit à la fois interpréter et écouter la suite du discours ;
- il doit lutter contre les interférences linguistiques que risque d'engendrer la présence simultanée de deux systèmes linguistiques actifs.

Dans le modèle d'Efforts, Daniel Gile (1995) met en lumière une vérité qui pourrait passer pour une banalité mais à laquelle mieux vaut sensibiliser le plus tôt possible les élèves traducteurs/interprètes : traduire requiert du talent (compétence) et de l'énergie (cognitif) ; pour bien traduire, il faut s'y préparer et consentir à des efforts soutenus. Il ne faut pas se le cacher : le métier d'interprète est difficile, exigeant et éreintant. Ainsi, interpréter exige une attention constante en même temps que cet exercice prive l'interprète de sa spontanéité, puisque la performance de ce dernier ne peut s'appuyer sur des automatismes, langagiers par exemple. L'interprète se trouve constamment sollicité : il doit comprendre, analyser, mémoriser, prendre des notes (en

consécutive), éviter les interférences (particulièrement en traduction à vue) et reformuler le discours tout à la fois tout en continuant de comprendre, analyser, mémoriser, prendre des notes éventuellement, éviter les interférences et reformuler. Que l'énergie spécifique vienne à lui manquer pour exercer une de ces fonctions, et son rendement en souffre. Une des différences entre le traducteur et l'interprète tiendrait précisément à ce « multitâche » qui oblige l'interprète à gérer tous ses efforts simultanément.

D'après le Modèle d'Efforts de l'interprétation simultanée élaboré par Daniel Gile (1995a et 2009), il s'agit pour l'interprète d'être capable d'agir dans une situation caractérisée par des contraintes, elles-mêmes déterminées par des facteurs extérieurs tels que le manque d'autonomie sémantique, la pression du temps et les risques d'interférence entre les processus étroitement liés à la production et à la compréhension du discours. (Alhalaki 2019, p. 18).

En somme, les difficultés liées à la pratique, la formation et l'écoute-analyse sont intrinsèquement liés, car en réalité il s'agit des défis liés à l'exercice de l'interprétation en soi. De fait, de par son caractère spontané, l'interprétation s'avère être un exercice difficile. Car l'interprète doit pouvoir gérer la spontanéité propre à l'exercice tout en maintenant une attention constante et un effort soutenu.

Les auteurs présentés jusqu'ici ont davantage abordé la question des défis liés à l'interprétation ou traduction de manière théorique. Le présent travail se veut un prolongement de la question avec des bases pratique s'appuyant sur étude du corpus

des élèves-interprètes en fin de formation d'interprétation. Ceci nous permettra d'identifier les difficultés que ces derniers rencontrent pendant l'exercice, les classer et proposer des stratégies visant à en venir à bout.

Après avoir traité des défis liés à l'exercice de l'interprétation, notamment les difficultés liées à la pratique, la formation et l'effort d'coute-analyse, il serait de bon ton de passer en revue la littérature propre à l'évaluation de la qualité de l'interprétation.

3. Cadre méthodologique et théorique

Sur le plan méthodologique, la présente étude se veut empirique et mixte, bâtie autour des questions, des objectifs et des hypothèses de recherche. Elle vise une étude pratique sur le problème d'écoute-analyse chez les élèves-interprètes en fin de formation de deux Ecoles de formation, à savoir PAUTRAIN et l'ASTI. Les outils de collecte de données se compose de l'exploitation des données issues d'un corpus, et une analyse documentaire. Son analyse repose sur l'utilisation des données objectives, dont un échantillon de 100 extraits des interprétations de 4 discours sur des sujets différents par les élèves-interprètes en fin de formation de l'ASTI et de PAUTRAIN. Enfin, les analyses sont appuyées par les théories et stratégies de traduction et interprétation ainsi les théories de l'analyse critique du discours (CDA).

La base théorique de la présente étude sur l'évaluation de la qualité de l'interprétation des élèves-interprètes en fin de formation est constituée de la théorie et des approches de l'analyse critique du discours (CDA) associée aux théories et stratégies de la traduction/interprétation informée par le Modèle de l'Effort.

La CDA, développée par Fairclough (1997) et Wodak (2001) entre autres, est une approche globale de l'étude de la relation entre l'utilisation de la langue et son contexte social. La CDA propose le cadre analytique qui éclaire la présente étude de la manière suivante. Premièrement, l'analyse incorpore les niveaux textuels, de traitement et sociaux de l'analyse du discours. Deuxièmement, le texte est au cœur de l'analyse. Les textes sont à cet effet analysés pour trouver des preuves linguistiques des réponses aux hypothèses émises dans le cadre du travail d'analyse du discours. Enfin, la présentation du rapport de pouvoir en interprétation est abordée dans le contexte de la présente étude étant donné qu'outre les éléments textuels et discursifs, la CDA met en avant trois entités : les détenteurs de pouvoirs, les marginalisés et en quelques sorte une personne dont le rôle est de rétablir cette relation de pouvoir.

Le modèle de l'Effort, développé par Gile (1995), abordé de manière assez détaillée dans les parties précédentes, constituera un élément qui informera notre analyse des données. En effet, vu qu'au final la plupart, sinon toutes, les contraintes que rencontrent les interprètes pendant l'exercice d'interprétation résulte dans une certaine mesure de la difficulté liée à sa nature même, d'où les efforts présentés dans le cadre de ce modèle.

Etant donné, que les difficultés sont inhérentes aux différents efforts, notamment l'efforts d'écoute-analyse, effort de mémoire, effort de production et effort de coordination, de la même manière nous nous appuierons sur les éléments issus de ce modèle dans un premier temps pour identifier les problèmes relatifs à l'interprétation d'une portion du discours source ; dans un second temps essayer d'expliquer la cause éventuelle d'un tel problème ; et enfin justifier le choix d'une stratégie ou de certaines décisions prises pour venir à bout desdits défis. Il peut s'agir d'une contrainte résultant par exemple de l'accumulation ou la saturation de la charge cognitive également expliquée par le modèle de la corde raide ou d'un cas de déficit individuel ou encore de disponibilité informationnelle au moment d'interpréter faisant aussi intervenir le modèle gravitationnel.

A l'issu du cadre théorique qui jette les bases de l'analyse des données, il ressort que les élèves-interprètes en fin de formation des deux institutions susmentionnées rencontrent de nombreuses difficultés pendant la pratique de l'interprétation. Ces problèmes sont clairement identifiables et descriptibles. Par ailleurs, il est suggéré des stratégies qui contribueraient à améliorer le rendement, mieux la performance de ces derniers.

4. Méthodologie de collecte, d'analyse et d'interprétation des données

Cette partie portera sur la présentation dans un premier temps des instruments de collecte des données. Les données ainsi collectées seront soumises à l'analyse ainsi qu'une interprétation en rapport aux questions de recherches.

4.1 Méthodologie de collecte des données

La population de recherche comprend exclusivement des élèves-interprètes en fin de formation, car ces derniers possèdent la compétence quasi-nécessaire pour intégrer le marché de

l'interprétation et de ce fait sont à même de fournir des interprétations acceptables indépendamment du type de discours et du contexte d'interprétation. Il s'agit de 16 élèves-interprètes, soit 8 hommes et 8 femmes. Tous les 16 candidats possèdent la même combinaison linguistique, notamment le français comme langue de travail (langue A) et l'anglais comme seconde langue (langue B).

La population interrogée est choisie suivant un ensemble de critères bien précis. Cette population de professionnels en devenir est basée au Cameroun pour la plupart et au-delà des frontières nationales pour d'autres. De plus, lesdits professionnels en devenir sont choisis en fonction du fait qu'au moment de la collecte des données, ils étaient tous en fin de formation d'interprétation. Il faut noter que les données ont été collectées sur trois années ou trois promotions : 2019 (pour les promotions 2017-2018), 2020 (pour les promotions 2018-2019) et 2021 (pour les promotions 2019-2020). Les données ont été collectées dans un premier temps entre 2019 et 2020. Après les avoir dépouillées, nous avons constaté que nous n'avions assez d'extrait pour pouvoir poursuivre la recherche. Ce qu'alors que nous avons décidé de procéder à une autre collecte en 2021 afin de compléter les données précédemment collectées. De même, l'identité des candidats interprètes est connue, bien que n'étant pas pris en compte lors des évaluations.

Les 16 candidats ont été soumis à une interprétation de 4 discours sélectionnés au hasard et ont par la suite enregistré leur prestation. Ces données issues de l'enregistrement desdites prestations sont utilisées dans le but de déterminer si une portion d'interprétation est bonne, acceptable ou pas en fonction des critères prédéfinis par nos soins.

La présente étude a donné lieu à une collecte de données pour laquelle nous avons procédé de la manière suivante :

- nous avons choisi 4 discours, au hasard, (par opposition à des interprétations de discours composés spécialement à des fins de recherche) prononcés entre 2020 et 2021, période marquée par la lutte contre la pandémie de Covid-19 et d'autres fléaux qui minent le monde ;

- identifier parmi les étudiants en fin de formation à l'ASTI, Division II, entre 2019 pour la première phase de collecte et en 2020 pour la seconde phase, les candidats ayant pour combinaison linguistique français A et anglais B. ensuite procéder de la même manière pour les étudiants en interprétation du programme panafricain pour les mêmes périodes, soit 2019 et 2020. Ces étudiants avaient pour combinaison linguistique, tout comme ceux de l'ASTI, français A et anglais B et tous en fin de formation au moment de la collecte ;

- les discours étaient au nombre de 10 au départ. Néanmoins, après dépouillement 4 ont été retenues. Il s'agit pour le premier de l'enregistrement du discours de Von der Leyen, Président de la Commission européenne, prononcé lors du *One Planet Summit* à Brussel en janvier 2021 ; le second discours l'enregistrement du discours prononcé par Nana Akufo Addo, Président du Ghana, à l'occasion de sa prestation de serment

pour le second mandat en 2021 ; le troisième discours est celui du Président du Comité des Représentants Permanents (COREP) lors de 41ème session ordinaire ; et enfin le discours du Premier Ministre, Boris Johnson, lors de l'Assemblée Générale de l'ONU le 26 septembre 2020. Tous ces discours sont des enregistrements téléchargés sur Internet. Pour 3 des discours, il s'agit des vidéos enregistrées en direct des différentes rencontres en question, et pour une des vidéos il s'agit d'une session tenue à distance via Zoom.

Tous ces discours sont prononcés dans un contexte sanitaire marqué par la pandémie de Covid-19, de ce fait on peut dire qu'ils sont d'actualité. Ces discours mettent un point d'honneur sur les défis auxquels est confronté le monde de manière générale et l'Afrique en particulière, outre la lutte contre la pandémie de Covid-19. En outre, l'appel est lancé à la communauté internationale sur le fait que ce n'est qu'en faisant front commun que le monde parviendra à éradiquer les différents fléaux auxquels la planète est confrontée. Nous pouvons dire à cet effet qu'ils étaient abordables car d'actualité.

- Les discours présélectionnés ont été acheminés aux candidats identifiés via plusieurs canaux, notamment par courrier électronique et par WhatsApp. Au départ, nous avions identifié près de 30 candidats, mais au final nous avons reçu les retours de 26 d'entre eux. Néanmoins, nous n'avons pu exploiter que les bandes de 20 candidats du fait de plusieurs raisons, notamment les bandes inaudibles, les bandes incomplètes (à peine 1 minute pour une bande censée durée au moins 8 minutes), entre autres. Les discours soumis pour interprétation constituent des types de discours pouvant être destinés à la pratique de l'interprétation simultanée et consécutive selon la sensibilité de l'enseignant. Nous avons choisi de les utiliser pour collecter des données en interprétation simultanée.

- Des 20 bandes exploitables, nous avons conçu une grille d'analyse afin de les exploiter.

Les données à analyser, constituées de 100 extraits d'interprétation, sont présentées selon une grille d'analyse qui sera détaillée ci-dessous.

4.2 Présentation de la grille d'analyse des données collectées

Ces données sont organisées dans une grille d'analyse suivant les éléments suivants : extraits à analyser, éléments d'intérêt et type de problème relevé. Les éléments de la présentation sont déterminés suivant nos questions de recherche et de façon de nous permettre de mener à bien notre analyse desdits éléments suivant les méthodes et les approches de la *Critical Discourse Analysis* (CDA).

Lesdites données collectées sont traitées et analysées suivant la méthode d'analyse du discours. Le canevas suivant est élaboré à cet effet :

a) les contraintes relatives à l'interprétation sont identifiés dans le texte source ;

b) la catégorie grammaticale de la portion problématique est déterminée ;

c) au sein de cette portion problématique, l'élément d'intérêt est mis en exergue ;

d) le contexte de production de la portion identifiée est présenté ;

e) la description de l'élément d'intérêt est effectuée ;

f) l'intention de l'auteur est présenté ;

g) la présentation de la portion problématique dans le texte cible ;

h) la détermination de la méthode utilisée par le candidat interprète est faite. La méthode est subdivisée en 3 catégories :

- les théories de l'interprétation ;
- les stratégies de traduction/ interprétation ; et la
- critical discourse analysis (CDA).

i) Le jugement de valeur est porté. Il est question ici de savoir si l'interprétation est satisfaisante, acceptable ou pas satisfaisante ;

j) Proposer une interprétation de la portion si le jugement de valeur n'est pas satisfaisant ;

k) Justifier la méthode utilisée par le chercheur pour arriver à cette proposition tout en la confrontant à la proposition interprète pour cette portion. Il est important de noter que, cette partie est calquée de la partie du même nom en ce qui concerne la méthode du candidat interprète ;

l) Proposer une justification à la méthode du chercheur en la confrontant à celle du traducteur tout en expliquant

pourquoi l'une ou l'autre des théories est adaptée par rapport à l'autre.

Le tableau ci-dessous illustre cette démarche pour le premier extrait problématique identifié.

	EXTRAIT 1	CATEGORIE : **syntaxique**	
1	*Texte source*	The world turns over a new leaf **for our planet**	
2	*SOURCE*	VDL 2021: 1	
3	*Élément d'intérêt*	**for our planet**	
4	*Contexte de production*	L'auteur par ce propos relève l'importance de la nature en rapport à l'avenir de la planète.	
5	*Description de l'élément d'intérêt*	Groupe prépositionnel constitué d'une préposition, un adjectif possessif et un nom	
6	*Intention de l'auteur du texte source*	L'auteur fait une projection sur l'avenir de la Planète à l'issu du sommet	
7	*Texte cible*	Le monde tourne une nouvelle page **de sa planète**	
8	*Méthode du candidat interprète*	Théorie interprétation	**Linguistique**
		Stratégie de traduction	Macro stratégie	**Etrangéisation**
			Micro stratégie	**Équivalence formelle**
		CDA	**Aspect discursif (structure grammaticale incorrecte)**	
9	*Jugement de valeur*	**Pas satisfaisant.** Car l'interprète utilise l'interprète utilise l'étrangéisation comme macro stratégie en lieu et place de la domestication ce qui l'écarte légèrement de l'intention de l'auteur du texte source.	
10	*Interprétation proposée*	Le monde tourne une nouvelle page **pour notre planète**	
11	*Méthode du chercheur*	Théorie interprétation	**Linguistique**
		Stratégie de traduction	Macro stratégie	**Domestication**
			Micro stratégie	**Équivalence formelle**
		CDA : Approche socio-culturelle de Fairclough	**Aspect discursif et textuel :** calque du modèle syntaxique de la langue source	
12	*Justification méthode du chercheur*	L'analyse critique des éléments syntaxiques du discours en faisant usage de la théorie linguistique de la traduction, la domestication et nous a permis de transposer les équivalents linguistiques du texte source au texte cible afin d'arriver à la traduction/ interprétation proposée dans le respect de l'intention de l'auteur de départ.	
	Après avoir analysé le présent extrait suivant la grille d'analyse proposée, il serait judicieux de passer à l'analyse de l'extrait suivant.		

4.3 Vérification des hypothèses

En ce qui concerne les catégories de problèmes, ils sont à 12% syntaxique, à 71% sémantique et à 17% à la fois syntaxique et sémantique.

Il ressort de l'analyse que la manière de gérer les difficultés ou contraintes d'interprétation chez les candidats interprètes était soit satisfaisante à hauteur de 16% ou pas satisfaisante à 84%. Pour évaluer le degré de satisfaction et de non satisfaction des différents extraits, nous avons fait appel à différentes théories et stratégies de l'interprétation.

Selon l'analyse statistique, il ressort qu'en terme de théorie de l'interprétation portant sur les 100 extraits sujets à notre analyse, les théories linguistiques et interprétative ont été utilisée de manière équitable, soit 50 fois chacune. Pour les macro stratégies, la domestication est utilisée 80 fois contre 20 pour l'étrangéisation ; tandis qu'en ce qui concerne les micro stratégies, l'équivalence formelle est utilisée 60 fois contre 40 pour l'équivalence textuelle. Enfin, pour la CDA, tous les candidats se sont inscrits avec succès dans l'approche discursive et textuelle de l'analyse critique du discours tel que présentée par Fairclough.

Après collecte, dépouillement et analyse des données, il ressort que l'hypothèse n°1 est validé à 100% car les problèmes sont catégorisés en 3 groupes, notamment syntaxique à hauteur de 12%, sémantique à 71% et à la fois syntaxico-sémantique à 17%, validant ainsi ladite hypothèse.

En outre, pour ce qui concerne l'hypothèse n°2, il s'avère que du fait des différentes catégories de problèmes mentionnées plus haut, 16% des prestations objet de notre corpus sont satisfaisants, tandis que 84% sont insatisfaisants. Ce faisant la deuxième hypothèse est validée.

Il ressort de cette analyse de la configuration statistique relative à la catégorisation que la plupart des contraintes rencontrées sont liées au sens. Il faut relever que ces contraintes d'ordre sémantique sont intrinsèquement liées aux contraintes relatives à la compréhension qui émanent principalement de l'effort d'écoute-analyse. Ces contraintes rentrent dans le cadre des défis relatifs à la pratique, la formation et l'effort d'écoute-analyse. De fait, les contraintes sémantiques sont intrinsèquement liées à la compréhension attribuable à la nature même de l'interprétation et les contraintes relatives à la formation.

En effet, la difficulté liée à l'interprétation réside dans l'effort mental que requiert l'exercice d'interprétation. Il s'agit de gérer l'écoute-analyse, la compréhension et la réexpression. Dans le même ordre d'idée, les contraintes sémantiques se rapportant à la formation peuvent être attribuables à la non maitrise ou à la maitrise approximative de ses langues de travail, une mauvaise écoute, une mauvaise gestion du débit et l'accent de l'orateur, l'absence de culture générale sur la question traitée par l'orateur. Elles peuvent également avoir trait au chevauchement des phases du processus d'interprétation et donc, selon les termes de Daniel Gile (1995), une mauvaise coordination entre les différents efforts que requiert le processus d'interprétation.

L'impact du défi sémantique en rapport à l'effort d'écoute analyse, l'énergie mentale requise par la pratique ainsi que les compétences qui s'y rattachent.

L'analyse statistiques de ces catégories des contraintes montre que les candidats interprètes sont davantage confrontés au défi de l'extraction et de la conversion du sens. Ce constat conforte notre hypothèse suivant laquelle les interprètes rencontrent effectivement des difficultés lors du processus d'interprétation.

5. Recommandations

La contribution de la présente étude part déjà de la revue de la littérature qui constitue elle-même une contribution à l'avancement de la recherche en traduction, en ce qu'elle donne une certaine visibilité du sujet traité.

L'analyse de l'évaluation des interprétations des apprenants en fin de formation d'interprétation ; étude des contraintes liées à l'interprétation appelle une réorientation des méthodes d'enseignements (en cours de formation) et de travail (pendant son parcours professionnel) pour ce qui est de la gestion des contraintes propres à la pratique de l'interprétation. De plus, les programmes de formation devraient promouvoir l'adaptation des contenus de formation d'interprétation aux besoins, mieux à l'évolution du marché. Il est question d'intégrer les nouvelles compétences afin de permettre aux produits des deux programmes de formation objets de la présente étude de mieux s'intégrer, mieux de s'adapter au marché en perpétuel évolution.

Les professionnels en devenir et même les praticiens (interprètes) désormais conscients des contraintes inhérentes à la pratique de l'interprétation devraient travailler au quotidien à développer, voire renforcer les compétences d'écoute-analyse, de mémoire, de reformulation ou réexpression et l'effort de coordination. Ceci étant, le travail personnel sur ses lacunes (en termes de compétence), la préparation des réunions (recherche documentaires, recherche terminologique, culture générale, entre autres) s'avèrent être le lot quotidien d'un professionnel efficient qui veut s'arrimer à l'évolution du marché de l'interprétation, mieux se positionner parmi les meilleurs dans son domaine. Ce faisant la qualité des prestations serait assurée par les professionnels qualifiés pour le rayonnement de la profession.

Les institutions de formation, qu'elles soient étatiques (ASTI) ou privées/supra-étatique (PAUTRAIN), pourraient faciliter le travail des professionnels en devenir en amont en les outillant de compétences nécessaires à leur épanouissement professionnel. De plus, la formation des professionnels de qualité passerait par l'adaptation des contenus de formation aux nouveaux besoins, voire aux nouvelles compétences tributaires des évolutions technologiques ainsi que l'évolution du marché. À cet égard, les contenus des programmes de formation devraient être revue ou alors si ces contenus sont déjà adaptés, revoir et évaluer les méthodes de formation.

6. Conclusion

Le cadre conceptuel relatif aux différents défis auxquels sont confrontés les élèves-interprètes en fin de formation nous a permis de relever que les défis rencontrés par les apprenants sont réels et se

situent dans la cadre de la pratique proprement, la formation et l'effort d'écoute-analyse. L'analyse statistiques de ces catégories des contraintes montre que les candidats-interprètes sont davantage confrontés au défi de l'extraction et de la conversion du sens. Ce constat conforte notre hypothèse suivant laquelle les interprètes rencontrent effectivement des difficultés lors du processus d'interprétation. Ces contraintes sont liées à la pratique même de l'interprétation, en d'autres termes l'effort que requiert l'exercice d'interprétation de l'écoute-analyse à la réexpression en passant par la compréhension. Ces difficultés relèvent également de la formation.

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The Role of Livestock in Poverty Alleviation and Wealth Creation in the Bamenda Grassfield, 1961-2016

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Abstract

This article analyses the roles livestock played in the alleviation of poverty and creation of wealth in the Bamenda Grassfield 1961-2016. After independence, a significant portion of the population in the area depended directly or indirectly on livestock value chains. Livestock was used for food, crop production, as a means of transportation, source of cash, investment and storage of wealth, for ritual and spiritual purposes geared towards ensuring sustainability. This study argues that though the demand for livestock and by-products as a source of quality protein were scarce in some areas, poverty alleviation and wealth creation constantly increased. This has produced much by-products that has helped to sustain the population. In order to attain the objectives of the study, data was largely dependent on secondary and tertiary sources consulted from books, articles in journals and the internet. Questionnaires were administered taking into consideration the different age groups and the data was presented using analytical, narrative and descriptive research techniques. These sources were interpreted through a qualitative method with the use of chronological approach. Our findings reveal that despite the numerous challenges, livestock breeding was improved through the implementation of scientific methods with appropriate decision making which influenced sustainable development in the livestock sector. This paper contribute's to knowledge-sharing on the government's economic policies with focus on improving the livestock sector.

Keywords: Livestock Breeding, Bamenda Grassfield, Poverty Alleviation

1. Introduction

In most communities in the Bamenda Grassfield, livestock rearing is one of the main preoccupations of the rural population besides farming. In fact, this is the main economic activity on which the people depend on as a source of generating substantial revenue and ensuring better livelihoods. From time immemorial, livestock played diversified roles. The role of donkey was primordial especially in the northern part of Cameroon as it served as pack, transport and draft animals. They generated income for the household when rented to perform one of the various functions. Women and children easily handled these hardy but docile animals (Abeiderrahmane, 2010.). Hence, donkeys were valuable assets for the households, mostly to women in the rural areas as they reduced the burden of domestic responsibilities. From the precolonial to post-independent era, livestock breeding played a major role in sustainable socioeconomic development. After independence, the demand for animal products increased tremendously as the growth of human population improved.

Prior to independence, cattle production was in the hands of the Mbororos and Fulbes who used traditional methods of breeding destined for immediate consumption and catering for their basic needs (Boutrais, 1986). Recently, new production systems such as artificial insemination have emerged as a result of environmental, economic and social demands as well as increase in population. While these changes are largely in favour of the new systems, the traditional herdsmen face competition from the local population. With the new system, farmers produce and sell more animals than in the previous years. This helps them to meet up with family demands which include food, clothing and in a few cases education of children. With the old system, there was also an abusive exploitation of herds in the form of tributes paid to local chiefs (Abdullahi, Daneyel, Habib, 2015.), an old

tradition which is still in force in most parts of the country especially the northern part.

While livestock rearing remains an important economic activity in the Bamenda Grassfield, households own relatively a smaller number of cattle and other small remnants where the production capacity is destined for immediate consumption. Cheese plays an important role in the livelihood of populations. They do not only constitute a permanent income source for pastoral and agro-pastoral households, especially women who are traditionally processing and selling cheese, but also represent the main available and accessible protein for the well-being of the population. This article will analyse livestock breeding systems in the Bamenda Grassfield by showing how it contributed to wealth creation, poverty alleviation and sustainable development, as well as its constraints and prospects.

2. Theoretical Framework

There exist different schools of thoughts as regards changing dynamics of livestock over time and space. These theories which include the modernisation, state development and the theory of change is a collection of ideas, hypotheses and concepts that explain how the desirable changes in a society are achieved while taking into consideration the realities of the society and the environment. It is worth noting that all the theories examined here fall within the sphere of economic development.

Modernisation theory states that development can be achieved by following the policies implemented by developed countries to achieve growth. This theory which was propounded in America gained grounds in most countries of the world after the Second World War. Scholars such as (Peet and Hartwick, 1999) propose stages of development taking into consideration the realities of both developed and less developed countries. They consider development to be a linear process which every society or community must pass through. The modernization theory takes into consideration the state as a central actor in transforming backward or underdeveloped societies. According to this theory, education and technology play a key role because it is believed that the introduction of technology in lesser-developed countries would spur economic growth. It is based on this premise that the introduction and the implementation of the modern method of artificial insemination in cattle within the Bamenda Grassfield helped traditional stock breeders to improve on their breeding techniques despite the challenges involved in the process.

The state development theory holds that an economy is intertwined with politics and therefore the take-off period in development is unique to each community. It further emphasizes the effects of class relations, the strength and the autonomy of the state on historical outcomes. Its proponents hold that development is dependent upon state stability and influence both externally and internally. In such a situation, development can be achieved by monitoring and supervising the developmental processes by state agents. Thus, development involves interactions between the state and its partners because there is need for cordial relations for the state to impact the lives of its people. The theory holds that the state

is at the centre of piloting all developmental projects earmarked in an economy. This theory is applicable in the context of our study in that it facilitated the creation of corporations through partnerships with both national and international institutions to help boost the livestock sector in the Bamenda Grassfield.

According to (Black, 1999) the theory of change seeks to improve the quality and sustainability of animal sourced foods through climate smart livestock production systems, anchored on diversification of incomes and optimised livestock utilisation and through animal diseases control. Therefore, breeders were able to improve livestock productivity and sold better quality and increased quantities to the market, thus able to negotiate better prices and increased household income. The diversified streams of incomes improve the living conditions of resilient communities especially in the Bamenda Grassfield. Engagements among different stakeholders enabled long-term and mutually beneficiary relationships to be established. The theory of change is anchored around the following results which are all interconnected. Climate adapted and cost-efficient production, marketing and investment practices and innovations for livestock production systems in the Bamenda Grassfield's agro-ecological areas were selected on the basis of scientific evidence. Animal husbandry and related practices in technologies and innovations such as artificial insemination was tested, evaluated, integrated and out-scaled in production systems in the agro-ecological centers found in the Jakiri and Dumbo Sub Divisions. It was based on this premise that these technologies were tested and evaluated with selected

breeders from the traditional sector who acted as learning points. Furthermore, this theory of change foster income generation and diversification of livestock value chain with a strong integration of livestock and crop systems.

According to the Resource Allocation Theory, an individual genetic potential could only be realised in an environment in which essential food resources are adequately supplied. It described resource allocation patterns in natural populations, the costs, preferences and trade-offs of maintenance, growth, reproduction, the consequences of selection for high production efficiency in livestock species, methods that could be used to quantify resource allocation patterns, and the application of resource allocation theory to improve animal production and well-being in the Bamenda Grassfield.

3. **Livestock Breeding Systems in the Bamenda Grassfield**

The study highlights two types of grazing systems practiced in the Bamenda Grassfield region. The grazing systems include extensive and intensive grazing patterns. Prior to the independence of Cameroon, some scholars revealed that the majority of the grazers (91.6%) practiced extensive (free-range) system of grazing (Mimba, 1979). The seasonal movement of cattle was accompanied by herders (Fulani and indigenous people) within the hills and the valleys during the day and the cattle were allowed to graze on their own at night. The predominant use of this system could be attributed to inadequate financial means and human skills to adapt to the modern methods of cattle rearing among which are the establishment of cattle ranches. To some, the practice of extensive grazing system was an intimate part of

their culture as they were not comfortable seeing cattle confined in a limited grazing space while others were of the view that the practice of extensive grazing was as a result of extensive, available lands and the absence of clear demarcation of grazing land between one herdsman and the other (Mimba 1979).

Besides the overwhelming practicing of extensive grazing, a very insignificant proportion of the households (8.4%) practiced intensive system of cattle rearing. Cattle were kept alternately in ranches cropped with improved pasture and only temporally sent out during the driest period of the year when almost all the pastures in their confinement were exhausted. This system was divided into two main sub systems viz; intensive and semi intensive grazing. Intensive grazing system (zero grazing) is the case with dairy farmers. Here, cattle were stock fed with processed feed mainly for the production of milk for instance, the case of the Jakiri cattle Ranch in Kumbo Central Sub Division. Likewise, semi-intensive grazing was carried out alternately where animals were stock feed and at the same time allowed to graze on the immediate available pasture all year round like the case of the Dumbo cattle ranch in Misaje Sub Division (Kimah, 2020). According to statistics of 2016 from the Regional Delegation of the Ministry of Animal Breeding, Fisheries and Animal Industries (MINEPIA) of the North West Region of Cameroon, it was estimated that the livestock population cattle, sheep and goats, stood at about 66300, 56700, 1 327 000, respectively. Table 1 below demonstrates the fluctuations in cattle population in the Bamenda Grassfield between 2013 and 2016.

Table 1: Fluctuations in Cattle Population in the Bamenda Grassfield 2013-2016

Division	Grazing Land km	Number of Graziers	Number of cattle 2013	Number of cattle 2014	Number of cattle 2015	Number of cattle 2016
Boyo	24773	580	71963	86078	97517	123959
Bui	66500	1125	59443	71108	80558	100758
Donga Mantung	115963	1702	141605	168882	191325	239302
Menchum	144120	780	684412	81868	92141	116005
Mezam	37431	285	23860	28537	32329	40436
Momo	105610	51	16422	19648	22259	27841
Ngoketunjia	932	25	9752	11696	13250	14586
TOTAL	**495329**	**4548**	**391518**	**467817**	**529379**	**662882**

Source: Regional Delegation of the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industry (MINEPIA), Bamenda, North West Region, 2022.

From the table above it is important to mention that the statistics of the cattle population per division fluctuated over the years with a general increase from 2013 to 2016. Concomitantly, there was a mass increase of cattle production (in tons) as well as its by-products in order to meet the increasing demand of the population.

4. History of Livestock Breeding, Wealth Creation and Sustainable Development

Generally, the Bamenda Grassfield livestock sector has inadequate appropriate breeding programs and policies geared towards generating wealth. Obviously, this was consistent with the general belief that livestock producers in the rural areas kept large numbers of livestock as source of prestige rather than few productive herds and flocks (Ejedepang, 1985). On the other hand, smallholder farmers kept small numbers of livestock, since their priority was crop cultivation and they were not often interested in the establishment of

systematic breeding programs (Briggs, 1980.). Therefore, in most traditional livestock systems, breeding program was merely observance of priority criteria in choosing breeding animals. This mainly involved the use of supposedly good males, often selected by visual assessment and without control over mating. Nevertheless, traditional knowledge of livestock breeder was not supposed to be underestimated.

In the Bamenda Grassfield, livestock played a predominant role in the livelihood of rural populations, whose daily activities revolved around the exploitation of livestock and whose monetary needs were animal-dependent. From the precolonial times to post-independent periods, the sales of livestock and its products contributed to the acquisition of basic livelihood foodstuff and goods such as cereals, sugar and clothing as well as to support expenses for raising or educating children, to pay for health services and for other social activities. In agro-pastoral systems, farmers invested in livestock with much revenues that promoted crop cultivation activities as a means of gaining more wealth. Moreover, in the Bamenda Grassfield, livestock contributed 69 percent of the income generation (Awasum, 1984). The number of households which reared livestock as source of food and those that made use of them as a means of security and prestige realized an increase in demand as a result high population density. This illustrated the role of livestock at household level in addition to the role as prime commodity for the generation of income for national economy and source of employment.

In addition, livestock played an important role in household food security and the development of crop production, the latter was through animal draft power and the supply of manure for soil fertility. It provided high nutritional value protein, in form of meat, and milk, and played a vital role in food security on its own or exchange with grain. In the case of herdsmen, milk and its products contributed a big portion of the basic diet and provided essential micro-nutrients. Also, meat give either resources to purchase grain, or was consumed occasionally as a high-quality food (Douffissa, 1993). Indeed, animal products supply energy, minerals and vitamins. However, their predominant role was in the supply of some essential amino acids and vitamins, which the human body could not synthesized. Foods of animal origin were also important in the recuperation of nutritionally deficient in kids and pregnant or lactating women. Many cases of malnutrition in the region were related to the poor animal product intake (Douffissa, 1993). Also, the role of draft power and manure provision was particularly important due to the abundance of integrated crop-livestock systems where livestock producers needed crop residues to feed their animals and crop farmers needed manure to maintain soil fertility. Draft animals provided a valuable resource to prepare the land for cropping (Chilver, 1989) and transported products to markets and inputs from markets to farms.

5. Livestock Breeding and Poverty Alleviation

The contribution to the fight against poverty in rural areas required a set of strategies targeting better resilience of the agricultural production systems to external shocks, value addition of products, and the diversification of income sources. In this sense, it was

fundamental to take into account the trade-offs arising from the resilience of local breeds and the high value they achieved in the local market (Ejedepang, 1985) when designing actions to relieve poverty like supporting more productive breeds.

Livestock played a financial facilitation role for rural economies in the Bamenda Grassfield. It constituted an income source readily available to carry out rural household expenditures (like medical expenses, student fees and supplies, off-season food supplies, among others). For rapid small and fast expenditures, fast-reproducing cattle or small stock (sheep and goats) were used, while family savings of larger payments usually involved more resilient but less prolific cattle and/or camels (Water-Bayer and Bayer, 1992). In that aspect, resilient animals and breeds were preferred over those highly productive but less resilient ones, as the main objective was to minimize risk. Although the role of livestock as a source of capital to mitigate climate shocks has been debated, Research in West Africa, nevertheless, shows that other capital sources are actually used to protect the livestock breeding for the opportunities it presents to livestock owners after a post-drought scenario, with pressure released from communal grazing grounds (Bunette, 1998).

Among the Fulani communities within the local communities, livestock was used as means of in-kind payment (Boutrais, 1986). Salaries of farm workers, especially herders, were paid on a seasonal or yearly basis as agreed upon, out of the yearly calf crop. The in-kind payment received was generally kept in the same herd by the herder until it was mobilized

whenever need arose. Part of herders' salaries were also paid in the form of milk (Chilver 1989), and such payment was usually made on a weekly basis. Another common use of livestock as means of payment was the dowry (bride price), although sometimes animals were returned after the wedding (Boutrais, 1986), the meaning of a livelihood provision was clear. The "blood money" for compensation of death or crimes committed using livestock was also common.

The livestock production in the Bamenda Grassfield was usually managed by adult males, usually visible in livestock markets and registered as owners of the animals. However, both women and children played significant roles in the livestock-associated livelihoods, and their roles implied also their social importance within their communities. The role they played in livestock production gave important opportunities for their empowerment and for designing entry strategies in achieving it. In general, accurate data are not available on the breakdown of Agro-Pastoralism and herdsmen by gender. It was nevertheless known that women tended to own less livestock than men, but that they tended to control small stocks such as small ruminants and backyard animals.

Women often controlled milk production and its value chain because of its relevance in the nutrition of small children, and they took care of less mobile elements of the herd, such as lactating ewes and cows, or lambs and calves. The role of women in controlling livestock that ensured household food security sometimes reinforced their empowerment in rural societies. Their involvement in managing livestock stimulated their participation in credit schemes (Brigg, 1980). However, the low productivity of livestock controlled by women due to

poor access to inputs, social norms or extension services (Njeuma and Awasum,1990) was a concern in the Bamenda Grassfield. Traditionally, milking is not a gender specific task in pastoral and agro-pastoral systems. However, milk processing and marketing was women attribute, as the transformation and storage of milk products was associated with the provision of food to the family in times of crisis (Njeuma and Awasum,1990). Consequently, women had control of surplus sales, as in Fulani communities in Banso. However, an increased commercialization of milk could erode women control over dairy products (Boutrais, 1986).

The milk processing and marketing activities in the Tadu Milk processing plant in the Jakiri Sub Division generated large numbers of jobs relevant to women and youth taking into consideration the small ruminant sub-sector. About 100 liters of milk was produced daily as a result of the introduction of the simgoud specie fast gaining grounds with the implementation of the scientific method of artificial insemination. However, this contributed in making local cattle breed (red guadali and the aku specie) to suddenly disappear within the agro-pastoral setup. Most of these milk and milk products were distributed in within the local population, urban and peri-urban markets in Kumbo, Nkambe and in Bamenda Town, thus making the channel a good supply link to urban population. Women derived higher income from butter sales. They made between 12-15 percent more when sold in the urban markets. But this means that women had to walk some distance or paid for transportation to the urban market.

Unfortunately, with the eruption of the ongoing socio-political crisis within the study area, several projects were abandoned. Livestock had an important role in terms of livelihood asset and family capital. Such direct economic roles, especially linked with large ruminants, implied a degree of social prestige through provision of wealth, capacity to invest in bride dowry (Boutrais, 1986). The economic skills necessary to manage herds in changing climatic conditions translated into the prestige of being able to build wealth in a difficult environment.

Livestock was often perceived to cause a series of positive impacts on the environment. In reality, the traditional extensive livestock rearing had a series of wide environmental benefits, through especially herdsmen practiced that were more linked to the surrounding ecosystems and traditional livestock practices in general (Ismail, 1970). Following an extensive review of the main environmental roles structured after the three main United Nations Environmental Conventions (Ismail, 1970), livestock provided environmental services in terms of biodiversity conservation, prevention of soil degradation and in combating climate change. These measures helped in the alleviation of poverty in the Bamenda Grassfield but there were some activities that affected livestock production in the area.

6. Constraints to the Development of the Livestock Production in the Bamenda Grassfield

The population of the area under study is on a steady increase leading to an increasing demand for animal and its by-products. Even before the challenges of meeting the growing demand for food of animal origin, this sector was confronted with different problems

ranging from sociocultural to environmental, investment and institutional that ultimately caused low productivity, weak processing and supply levels resulting to rural poverty. While some of these challenges require thorough investment, others stem from misguided views on the local livestock production system and from counterproductive investments. These are related to structural limitations, in terms of both constraints posed by the local environment and its natural resource base, and by the socioeconomic adaptations to it. As a result, several limitations combine with others, creating even bigger and complex hurdles for livestock development.

The local environmental condition in the Bamenda Grassfield exerts a strong limitation on the type of expected livestock production. As a tropical area, the climatic condition of the area with high temperatures, partly humid and partly dry, determine the type of animals reared, limiting in this way the profitability of investment. Such limitations also condition the cultural adaptation developed locally, both in terms of animals exploited and in economic arrangement among local producers. Also, the low economic development of the region hampers the benefits of investment aimed at large-scale production, as a larger portion of the population depends on small-scale livestock keeping, subjected to low inputs, for their livelihood.

The management options of resilience strategies for local livestock producers in the Bamenda Grassfield are dominated by traditional practices. However, some of these local practices have major limitations for development. In the case of herdsmen system, a different array of issues limits the husbandry practice. In the first place, this system is constrained by the financial structure of rural settings in the area under study. The banking or financing services are absent, and cash is neither available nor secured to keep. Hence, livestock constitutes the major financial asset, both as a cash source (small ruminants) and as a capital investment. Therefore, there is capital-based livestock management in herdsmen system, not a productivity-based one. The outsider perception holds that herd management is non-rational, driven by number rather than productivity. The constraints of such production system also render separation between extensive production, calving and fattening phases useless, leading to further limitations. Investments tend also to ignore these systems. The extensive nature of livestock production system coupled with seasonality of production prevents the development of large scale and continuous collection of locally produced milk.

The total rainfall and its temporal distribution are subject to annual variations in the Bamenda Grassfield. Although burning fossil fuels is the main cause for global climate change on earth, livestock production is reported to be a great contributor to climate change. Methane, mainly produced from enteric fermentation by ruminants, and manure emissions of nitrogen oxides, which are the bulk of the livestock emissions, and mitigation strategies are also discussed, especially in the context of sustainable intensification of mixed farming system (Baker, 2000). The herdsmen system with minimum external input are assumed to have zero net effect on climate change. Baker suggests that any mitigation measures for mixed farming systems

should be evaluated with extreme care if applied to the context of herdsmen. The deterioration of the sustainable traditional range land management systems triggers degradation of range lands by uncontrolled grazing and logging. Degradation leads to the loss of soil carbon and exacerbation of the climate change effects, while also triggering change that diminishes local rainfall (Njeuma, 1978).

The institutional environment acts as an important limitation, affecting the whole production system in which farms have embedded. Individual action has little or no potential for change, and changes are to be undertaken either by farmers themselves as a collective, or by upper instances with enough investment power, such as the state or international donors. Within the entire seven divisions that make up the Bamenda Grassfield region, limited investment is a major hurdle to livestock development. The ongoing socio-political instability also contributes to an inadequate investment environment, the extreme of it is he recurrent farmer-grazier conflicts that affects the entire region.

The livestock sub-sector, just like the agricultural sector in general, does not attract the funding (public or private) it deserves to achieve its function of contributing to food security and reduction of poverty, especially with rural households. There is no proven well-established adequate credit system to encourage investment in livestock production or livestock product processing. In most cases, financial tools are not experienced in the remote areas. The existing credit system has high interest rate for

investment in livestock business, and at times intermediaries introduce prohibitive commissions. The stakeholders in the sub-sector have limited investment resources and there is a strong social stratification determining who is able to invest in the most input-intensive systems.

The first aspect that policies and regulations are lagging behind in is was the nonavailability of reliable statistics. A simple revision of the data provided by the Delegation of Livestock in the North West Regional database reveals that most communities within the region have poor livestock statistics. Lack of reliable statistics is a major handicap both for efficiently planning policy and for designing proper advocacy (Briggs, 1980). The specific challenges of livestock statistics include insufficient and poor-quality information on the value chain, including supply, demand and transfer costs. While herdsmen contributions are very difficult to track, especially in terms of Total Economic Value (Chilver, 1989), the contribution to household income in rural areas is not well documented. This is also key for gender issues, as it is a major support to revenue of women in rural areas.

The efficacy of policy and regulatory measures are lacking due to rampant corruption at different levels and poor institutional environment. There are numerous road blocks, long delay at border crossing points with frequent road harassment from public security services along the livestock migratory corridors especially during periods of transhumance. The existing policy measures are scant and most regulations which might affect the livestock sub-sector are outdated. The product quality (sanitary, organoleptic, nutritional value, etc.), trade policies and safety requirement are the major areas, which

pose problems to trade channels of livestock products within and outside the region.

The high-impact animal diseases such as trypanosomiasis constitutes a crucial risk for the livestock sub-sector in the Bamenda Grassfield, affecting animal production and trade as well as food security and nutrition. This disease and a host of others are endemic in the region and the risk of spreading is increased by environmental and socioeconomic trends especially during seasonal movements (transhumance) in search of pastures. This does not only result to production losses, but also increases the risk of human sickness and death, since most of them are zoonosis. A general lack of updated accurate information on the livestock sub-sector, combined with insufficient veterinary services, non-existent or inadequate regulations concerning animal production, trade and health, are other important obstacles for the prevention and control of such diseases.

7. Prospects of Livestock Breeding and Trends in Shifting Production Systems

The recent development of livestock farming around communities in the Bamenda Grassfield with varying level of intensification is a major shift in the regional animal production systems which was observed under traditional low-input management system. The creation of ranches in Dumbo and Jakiri are indeed a departure from low input, low output traditional system towards a modernized and market-driven animal production. The growing demand for milk products due to population growth and

urbanization (Njeuma, 1978) presents opportunities for the development of smallholder commercial milk production system (Tadu Milk Processing plant) based on crossbred cattle and and/or imported pure breeds such as the simental specie.

The causes and effects of natural disasters related to climate change have already been analysed above. Hence, mitigation measures are very important. Improving the prediction of these events using meteorological indicators is the best way to mitigate risk and impact. These tools allow national authorities to predict climate-related emergencies, identify potential risk areas and thereby to implementing measures to prevent their emergence and mitigate their consequences. The challenge still remains on how better to disseminate and use this information for the development of preparedness, contingency and mitigation plans at national and regional level. The National Adaptation Programs of Action (NAPA) on climate change provides a way to identify priority actions that needs to be taken to respond and to adapt to climate change.

The animal losses during emergencies could be significantly reduced through the implementation of animal health interventions such as vaccination, vitamins, minerals and improved diagnosis and treatment (Boutrais, 1986) and the provision of feed and water. Restocking is another practice commonly used in response to drought, when livestock conditions deteriorate and the animals are likely to die. Restocking could help to relieve pressure on grass and water resources to the benefit of the selected breeding stock, providing a source of meat and cash for their owners or source of meat for emergency feeding of the population requiring food

assistance. Ideally, restocking programs should be state-supported in order to avoid significant decrease in market prices and speculation by traders. In the recovery phase, the provision of livestock or restocking can make a significant contribution to rebuilding livestock assets.

8. Conclusion

This paper has reviewed the socioeconomic framework of livestock production systems as a means of poverty alleviation in the Bamenda Grassfield in Cameroon. It argued that the evolution of these activities has led to the high demand for animal and its by-products which is considered as a source of quality protein, poverty alleviation and wealth creation taking into consideration the constant increase in population growth and increase consumer preferences. The paper posits that the ability to achieve these objectives are marred by some challenges ranging from poor husbandry practices, inadequate feed and water, the prevalence of animal diseases, inadequate infrastructure and limited market access. It is therefore important to integrate political economy and governance issues in the socioeconomic debate on livestock production systems. The paper also demonstrated how climate change, extreme weather conditions, incidence of conflicts and insecurity endanger livestock specie.

The study analyzed the significant roles that livestock breeding (cattle) plays in the lives of the population in the Bamenda Grassfield after independence and provides a broad spectrum of remedies to render the problems and challenges sustainable. Indeed, the non-agricultural sectors tends to have a

higher response to changes in livestock production than agriculture itself. Nevertheless, in the Bamenda Grassfield, the livestock sub-sector is highly segmented and the levels of labour productivity differs between processing and production and within production, between commercial and subsistence farmers. Thus, a simple multiplication of similar opportunities could result in an expansion of underemployment. Therefore, policies should promote livestock system models that can lead to higher labour productivity, facilitate value-addition and should be labor-intensive in the area.

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Intermediality, Identity and Culture in A. Igoni Barrett's *Blackass*

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Abstract

This paper discusses how mediatic elements amplify identity and cultural crisis in *Blackass*. While identity and cultural problems are age-long concerns, its contemporary context, coupled with the digital age, have amplified the way people present themselves "frontstage" and "backstage" of everyday interaction. In Barrett's' *Blackass*, there is a strong link between Intermedial notions, identity and culture. How then does intermedial elements deepen identity and cultural crisis in *Blackass*? This question led to the hypothesis that identity and culture are portrayed as a crisis in *Blackass* with the help of mediatic elements. The aim therefore is to investigate how identity and cultural crisis in *Blackass* are intensified by mediatic elements and the meaning it unravels to a contemporary reader. This explains why this research adopted the Postcolonial Theory as its main theory while the intermedial approach is used as a complementary approach. The Postcolonial theory is used to enhance the understanding of identity and cultural crisis in *Blackass* while intermedial notions like the material and the sensorial modalities were used to enable the researchers explain how media can influence identity and culture. Analytical findings from this research showed that in Barrett's novel, the society of the text is an intermedia society, that the characters' identities are shaped and informed by their experiences with digital media; that characters obsessed with social media end up depressed and frustrated; and that characters use social media to express their opinions, share their experiences, and shape the collective consciousness of their society. Writers like Barrett who uses such a blend, produce a work that is a good reflection of a media-oriented world through literature. We therefore strongly suggest that more African writers could merge literature and elements of media to serve as a technique of narration while literary scholars can use intermediality as a technique for literary analysis.

Key Words: Intermediality, Identity, Postcoloniality, LiteraryTechniques

1. Introduction

There is a growing interest at the international, national and local levels amongst scholars on issues related to intermediality, identity and culture. Since they are each studied in different fields like sociology, media studies, Literature, philosophy, psychology, linguistics, just to name a few, the approach to these variables vary according to the domain of interest and field of study. In this paper, our introduction focuses on the background to the study, the implication of new media on contemporary identities and cultures, the articulation of the research problem, hypothesis, the objective and the theoretical approach.

Writers in Africa like Chinua Achebe's *Anthill of the Savannah* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* have some traces of media in their works of fiction. There is growing interest by African writers to use elements of media to portray ideological concerns. In the early 2000s according to Esteban (2019), social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and many more arose. These networks represent spaces for building individual identity and displaying oneself in the public sphere. They are a window through which individuals who use them can view the subjective worlds of others. Since literature and media are two inseparable cogs, yet discretely and strikingly distinguishable as Tushar (2020) puts it, we need to study its implication on identity and culture. The new media has real implication on contemporary cultures and identities.

The goal of these writers who use mediatic elements is usually to blend media with aspects of the African life and portray its influential role in forming their identity and cultures. Young people come from varying cultural backgrounds which may or may not relate to the social media culture (what is popularly accepted on social media). In a most recent study by Radwan (2022) on "Effect of Social Media usage on Cultural Identity of Rural People: A Case Study of Bamha village, Egypt", the results show that the level of change in cultural identity was high in relation to their use of social media and that there was a significant relationship between some independent variables of respondents and the degree of change in their cultural identity . This is why contemporary writers like A. Igoni Barrett's *Blackass* depict social media to interplay with cultural identity and according to Giddens (2005), represents that spiritual bond that binds individuals to their society's religion, language, dynasty, history, and culture. To these African writers, cultures and identities are in a crisis and in total need of redemption from expulsion.

Looking at media literature from the perspective of African Literature, Anietie (2018) in his Ph.D. thesis, looked critically at the influence of the New Media Technologies on African Literature. The research investigated the role of new media technologies in the development of African Literature. He examined the different ways that these new technologies such as the internet and mobile phones have revolutionised the way Africans write and read literary works on the continent. Anietie used the Uses and Gratification and the Diffusion of Innovation Theories as his theoretical framework. After conducting a survey of 30 African writers and questionnaires to 300 readers, the study indicates that the internet has a big impact on the reception of African Literature, creating endless opportunities, easy accessibility, promotion of work and networking with peers and literary community. Findings also show that social media has increased networking opportunities and provides a platform where readers access, share and discuss African Literature. This study is very important in two distinct ways; first it enables one to see the relationship that the social media (intermediality) has with literature, and secondly, the fact that the focus and findings are on African Literature and its interaction with African writers. Though Anietie (2018) focuses on influence of social media on the writer and reader community in African Literature, the work is similar to this research in that both are looking at issues related to intermediality (social media) in relationship to African literature. This study however, differs in the uses of theories and also in that it focuses on intermediality in its complete sense of examining many mediatic elements (television, telephone, museum, signposts and more) and not just limited to the social media which is just an aspect of intermedial element.

Similarly, writers like Chinua Achebe (1987) for example, used the journalistic technique in *Anthill of the Savannah* at a time where the highest media was newspapers. He used it to project ideological concerns, partly because, he himself was a journalist and a writer. Media has kept evolving. Igoni Barrett (2015) is one of those African writers that has paid attention to social media elements and have merged them with other literary techniques to produce a work

sparking attention all over the world. Lack of representation of media in works of arts may disconnect the readers from the real daily realities of the digital age. This explains why Arianna (2022) insists that lack of representation in media can lead to negative psychological outcomes on identities that are underrepresented or negatively portrayed (qtd. in Tukanchinsky, R. et al.). In the same vein, Micunovic et al. (2016) showed that digital technology and media offer new ways to produce literary works, but they also require writers to develop different styles, techniques, skills, methodologies, and conventions of communication, between themselves and their readers, and also between themselves and their work. That authors and their public in the digital era are inclined to move towards new forms of literacy (qtd. in Horning, 185-87). There is therefore a need for the use of intermediality as both a narrative technique and analysis.

2. Statement of The Research Problem

In the course of research, it was observed that writers like Barrett present identity in *Blackass* as a crisis or a negotiation but the crisis is represented through the new media (social media) and other intermedial elements. There are two fundamental problems from this observation. First, the fact that identity is presented as a crisis in contemporary times, shows that identity is a problem that keeps resurfacing through different methods in different societies. Secondly, the new media plays a role in the moral consciousness of the characters who take decisions that have serious impact on themselves or others in the society. This makes the problem critical because the social media or digitalisation has come to stay.

From the statement of problem, since identity and cultural crisis in *Blackass* is represented by mediatic elements, our main research question is; how can intermediality serve as a method of narration? Also, how are identity and cultural crisis be represented by mediatic elements in *Blackass*? In order to answer these complex questions, our research methodology is based on content analytical style in order to verify the hypothesis that writers can blend elements of media as a narrative technique. Also, that identity and culture are portrayed as a crisis in *Blackass* with the use of mediatic elements. The objective of this paper is therefore to investigate identity and cultural crisis in *Blackass* represented by the use of the new media.

3. Postcolonial Theory and Intermediality

Ashcroft et al. (2002) in *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* explain that Post-colonialist literature is an academic study investigating the interplay between two discourses: colonialism (1871) and post-colonialism (1980). Postcolonial studies started to reflect the decolonization of nations in theory, referred to as 'intellectual decolonization'. Postcolonial literature became centrally about strategically subverting colonizers' hegemony over the colonized by dismantling Eurocentric discourses. The essence of the Postcolonial Theory is fundamental in debunking the European continues influence politically, economically and socially on especially the African continent. Ashcroft adds that as time evolved in academia, literary theory has been the traditional home of postcolonial analysis such as the work of Gayatri Spivak on '*the subaltern*', Edward Said on '*orientalism*', Homi K. Bhabha on

'hybridity', Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o on 'language'. These notable theorists are referred to throughout postcolonial literature and specifically in *The Empire Writes Back* when discussing colonial politics (qtn. in Sarah, 2023). This theory is important to examine *Blackass* in the light of intellectually decolonizing the mind by portraying the imbroglios that go with trying to be "white" in the mind and African by culture. It is also to see the confusion that African identity and cultures undergo as an aftermath of colonialism in contemporary times. While the postcolonial theory is important to this study, it does not have elements that can enable us to examine how the use of media can influence identity and culture. In that case, we choose to complement the postcolonial theory with the intermedial approach.

Intermediality on the other hand, is an art theory, a term coined in the mid-1960s by Fluxus artist Dick Higgins, to describe the strategies of interdisciplinarity that occur within artworks existing between artistic genres. Over the years, intermedia has been used almost interchangeably with multi-media and more recently with the categories of digital media, technoetics, electronic media and post-conceptualism postulated by Friedman, (2018). Intermediality examines the relationship between mediums, technologies, institutions, collective imaginaries and social discourses. It covers a wide range of disciplines including media studies, film studies, literature, history of art, and communications as well as architecture, anthropology, sociology, and philosophy. James' (2021) Intermediality: History and Theory of the Arts, Literature and Technologies, adds that intermediality examines the relationship between mediums, technologies, institutions, collective imaginaries and social discourses. The scope of intermediality extends to many fields or disciplines. This perhaps explains why many find it too broad or very problematic. To Straw (2015), the scope can even be extended to all objects and machines that can enable sociability possible. It can thus designate objects and machines as much as discursive formations or forms of sociality", Straw, (2015) adds. In this study, we will use intermediality like social media-twitter, the Internet, passport, and the use of Telephone (Bruhn and Beate's perspective, 2021) as the interaction of different media types *within* the text *Blackass*. Bruhn and Beate (2021) propose four modalities of intermedial approach to analyse mediatic elements. These modalities include the material, the sensorial, the spatiotemporal and the semiotic. In this study, only the material and the sensorial are used.

4. Intensification of Identity and Culture by Mediatic Elements in *Blackass*

Igoni Barrett's *Blackass* is a postcolonial Nigerian novel that defies easy categorization. Set in modern-day Lagos, Nigeria, the novel tells the story of Furo Wariboko, a young man who wakes up one morning to discover that he has transformed into a white man. As he navigates his new identity and the prejudices and assumptions that come with it, Furo must confront the complexities of race and belonging in a rapidly changing world. At its core, *Blackass* is a novel about transformation and the ways in which our identities are shaped by the world around us. Through Furo's journey, Barrett explores the complexities of identity and culture in Nigeria, a country that is still grappling with the

legacy of colonialism and the ongoing effects of globalization. By blending intermedial elements of magical realism, social commentary, and satire, Barrett creates a work that is both deeply thought-provoking and highly entertaining.

The main objective of this paper has been to analyse Igoni Barrett's use of mediatic elements to enhance identity and cultural crisis in *Blackass*. This can be seen in the protagonist's transformation from a black man to a white man, which is framed by the backdrop of a situation in which the digital age has become so integrated into daily life that race and ethnicity—which used to be key factors in one's identity—are no longer relevant. Instead, the characters' identities are shaped and informed by their experiences with digital media. Take for instance the case of Igoni, a character who chooses to transform himself from a man to a woman. This desire for identity transformation is totally against the cultural norms of the Nigerian society where it is generally believed that a man should be a man and not change to a woman. Igoni is one of those who spend time on google or the social media and it would be clear that he has imported this from a foreign culture. Let's look at Igoni statement as he tries to find out about Furo on social media.

> Furo Wariboko persisted in my thoughts after I left him at the mall, and so I did what everyone does these days: I Googled him. The search results pointed me to either Facebook or Twitter, and since I was no longer on Facebook (I deleted my account after I started receiving homophobic messages over my personal essay on wanting to be a girl), I followed the Twitter links (58).

Igoni says he does what everyone does these days, that is, spend time on google, Facebook and twitter. Barrett's use of these mediatic elements of intermediality unveils the fact that these material modalities of Bruhn and Beate (2021), represents identity and cultural crisis as we see in Igoni's desire to become a girl contrary to his cultural norms. He himself is overwhelmed by the level of criticism he receives over that decision especially as he undertakes an essay which he intends to publish on his desire to become a girl. This immediate critique from his audience and community shows the general disgust to something that is considered antipodal to local cultural acceptance.

Also, even Furo's transformation is discovered by Igoni on Twitter. The Twitter platform in *Blackass*, is one of the major elements of media that Igoni Barrett employs. The effectiveness of this intermedial approach is that it permits the readers to link strong thematic concerns like that of identity and culture, symbolic of the current digital malaise that is plaguing the different societies of the world in general and Africa in particular. This explains why he Igoni says:

> For that discovery I have Twitter to thank. It was there that I found out about the Furo who had gone missing in Lagos one day before I met my Furo. And it was from the tweeted photos of that lost Furo that I realized my own Furo used to be black (46).

The protagonist's transformation is presented as a mysterious occurrence that is shrouded in mystery, and the novel's climax revolves around the characters' attempts to use the digital realm to understand what has happened. This example of intermediality in *Blackass* help to shape the narrative of the novel. Throughout the

book, we see characters using social media to express their opinions, share their experiences, and shape the collective consciousness of Lagos. Igoni is already obsessed with foreign behaviours antipodean to their beliefs. As Igoni himself puts it: "For here was a young lady (referring to Furo's kid sister) whose full-blood brother had just gone missing, and there she was on Twitter collecting followers and trading jokes? If her digital persona was not misleading, then her real one had to be full of shit" (60). The sensorial modality Bruhn and Beate (2021) here, has been artfully crafted to give the feeling one derives just like that of Igoni on the total neglect that has arisen by the influence of the media which seems to attack the very cultural essence of African solidarity. This use of intermedial elements serves to highlight the ways in which technology is shaping the way that people in our African context view one another and its impact on our identities and cultures. This is also how Barrett masterfully uses intermediality to project the enhancement of the already existing identity and cultural crisis in *Blackass*.

In addition to using digital intermediality to frame the narrative, Barrett also uses the material modalities to create tension and suspense. For example, at the very beginning of the novel, Furo tried to remember what he had dreamed of, but all he recalled was climbing into bed with the same dread he had slept with since "he received the *email* notifying him of his job interview" (1). The use of email here is a mediatic element carrying a strong communicative power that puts Furo into a hyper consciousness of moving out of the house to face his destiny. Through his

Blackberry phone, he is alert to hasten to the interview by which he realizes a change in his skin colour and tries to leave the house unnoticed. There is tension and suspense as to whether Furo should relate his new-found identity to his family or not. Here Barrett technically uses the material modalities Bruhn (2021) like email on a phone to create an interior consciousness of the change in identity that Furo Wariboko has entered into. As Furo walks on the streets; he meets local hawkers with armloads of pirated music CDs, Nollywood VCDs, telenovela DVDs, showing a media-oriented society. Even at the interview location, Furo sees a white *signboard* announcing in green block letters: HABA! NIGERIA LTD, and people standing in formal clothes for the interview (18). He had seen their faces under *newspaper* banners before. Barrett again makes an intermedial display of signboard, newspapers and films as high communicative elements that portray a society that is not only surrounded by modernism but has become part of the culture of the society. The use of intermedia enhances identity crisis in that it activates consciousness of the self and sense of difference in ones' identity as exactly the state at which Furo finds himself. The enhancement is increased by either Furo and Igoni trying to use these media platforms to change their identity in order to gain, maintain their jobs or give a deceptive impression to those who used to know them for who they used to be. This explains why Furo uses Syreeta to make a passport that shows him as a European in order to deceive his Nigerian community that he is actually from the western world and should be given certain privileges. Intermediality here is at its peak as it enables Barrett to use divers mediatic elements just like "Hans Hiebel, who

defines media as "material or energetic transmitters of data and information units" to show how they facilitate identity and cultural crisis (qtd. in Werner, 2011).

Similarly, one of the most interesting things about *Blackass* is the way in which Barrett uses intermediality to explore complex themes and ideas. One of the most striking examples of this is the scene in which Furo visits an art gallery in Lagos. As he wanders through the gallery, he is struck by a painting that seems to capture the essence of his own transformation. The painting, which depicts a black man with a white face, serves as a powerful metaphor for the ways in which race and identity are constructed and deconstructed in modern-day Nigeria.

Furthermore, intermediality in *Blackass* is an effective way for Barrett to explore the effects of the digital age on identities and cultures and how this impacts people's relationship with one another. By incorporating digital or intermedial elements throughout the novel, Barrett is able to hint at larger concerns such as, the erosion of culture in modern society, the power of digital media, and the importance of creating meaningful connections in the digital realm. In the text for example, Barrett show Furo's father obsessed with media elements because though it has become a new culture to him, it ends up leaving him depressed and frustrated.

> Did his father listen? He watched TV. Not the Betamax cartoons that Furo wanted, but the local news. Every day, schooldays and weekends, he would oust Furo from his TV throne and switch to News at 5, News at 7, News at 9. He drank his beer as he watched droid-voiced newscasters, his face getting sadder and angrier, his haggard eyes stuck to the screen even when he threw back his head to suck from the bottleneck; and now, thirty years later, Furo recalled how he used to wonder why his father watched so much TV when all it did was make him ugly. (35-36)

This self-imposed new culture of his, does not only upset Furo's father himself but also Furo, his mother and everyone else in the house. Still, he is unable to stop the addiction and return to the way he used to live with his family when the media was absent. Barrett's ability to artfully use intermedial elements like the television and the radio in projecting the cultural shift in Furo's father is statuesque. Through this fascinating use of intermedia, cultural crisis is been enhanced in a way that is ravishing and sublime. Cultural crisis brings up a myriad of emotions from the protagonist, and is a compelling story that truly stands out in the African cultural landscape.

On the other hand, looking at the matter from a postcolonial perspective, Barrett masterfully illustrates how the Nigerian government is both a product of and perpetuates the inequality and discrimination it was created to reverse. By focusing on issues of identity, gender, and culture, Barrett gives his readers an intimate look at how post-colonial Nigeria is shaped by these structures of oppression. Moreover, Barrett's use of language further illustrates the way in which post-colonial systems of power shape his characters' identities. His characters speak Nigerian pidgin, a language that is at once a protest of the state's authority, but also a submission to it. Pidgin language is used in Igoni Barrett's novel *Blackass* to emphasize the characters' Nigerian heritage and to create a sense of realism. Pidgin is a mixture of English and Nigerian languages, and it is used throughout the novel to show how the characters

communicate. Pidgin is also used to give the characters a voice and to add flavor and texture to their dialogue. The use of pidgin lends a sense of authenticity to the novel as well as a vivid picture of life in Lagos. The use of pidgin in Igoni Barrett's novel *Blackass* is a means of expressing the characters' sense of identity and belonging. As a postcolonial language, pidgin is often used to bridge the gap between the colonizer and the colonized and to evoke a sense of solidarity among those who share the same language. In this way, it acts as a unifying force, allowing *Blackass*' characters to relate to one another in a way that transcends their individual backgrounds and experiences. By utilising pidgin, Barrett is able to emphasise the shared experience of marginalisation and oppression among those of African descent.

Through this subtle juxtaposition, Barrett is able to show how post-colonialism reaches far beyond the physicality of the state and instead shapes the identities of the nation's citizens. In *Blackass*, the protagonist is an African man living in a postcolonial Nigeria. His life is dominated by his own inner struggles between his African heritage and his desire to be accepted by the white minority. He is often seen as an outsider by both white and black communities, and his hybrid identity creates a unique experience of oppression, belonging, and belongingness. Furo's white body is a symbol of the power imbalance that colonialism created, as well as a physical manifestation of the privilege that many majority groups don't have access to. Throughout the story, it's clear that Furo is struggling to reconcile his racial identity with his newfound

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white body, leading to an internal conflict that can't be solved with the flip of a switch.

5. Exploring the Complex Interplay between Identity and Culture in *Blackass*

Identity and culture are two intertwined concepts that shape our understanding of ourselves and the world. Our identities are formed by our personal experiences, beliefs, values, and cultural backgrounds, while culture refers to the shared beliefs, practices, and values of a group or society. In the Nigerian novel, where the protagonist Furo Wariboko wakes up one day to find that he has transformed into a white man, unveils the complex interplay between identity and culture in contemporary Africa.

To begin, Identity is a multifaceted concept that encompasses our personal experiences, beliefs, values, and cultural background. Our identity is shaped by the environment we grow up in, the people we interact with, and the experiences we have. *In Blackass*, Furo's sense of identity is deeply rooted in his Nigerian culture and the color of his skin. When he wakes up as a white man, his identity is shaken to its core, and he is forced to question who he really is. This transformation highlights the fragility of identity and how it can be easily influenced by external factors. Take for instance Furo Wariboko who finds himself in the street and is unable to go home because of the transformation of his skin color. He fears the reaction of his parents and those who had known him before the mysterious transformation. While he comes to The Palms, where whites and blacks, people of all nationalities (Chinese, Senegalese, Indians, Lebanese, Chadians etc) came to have fun, the whites didn't pay

much attention to him like the black folks. For Furo, "better the people who ignored him than the ones who didn't. Moving through the crowd, he began to feel more at ease with the approach of non-blacks" (41). Here, we see an identity crisis where Furo who was originally black now finds it uncomfortable to be among blacks. This is because he has become a stranger in his own homeland. He prefers the approach of non-blacks whose culture is not of paying attention on people around them unlike the black culture where solidarity is primordial.

Furo's experience also highlights the importance of self-discovery in shaping one's identity. Throughout the novel, Furo struggles to come to terms with his new identity and what it means for him. His journey towards self-discovery is not an easy one, but it is necessary for him to gain a deeper understanding of himself and his place in the world. When he comes in contact with a newspaper announcing that he is missing, he sees both his old self and his new self and choses his new self though he does not fully understand his new self and how he is:

> Furo picked up the newspaper and gazed at the face bearing his name. Tired face, tired eyes, tired mouth, and black skin: that's all he saw. That person wasn't him. He had moved on beyond that. The only problem was, even as he'd forgotten how he used to look; he didn't know what he now looked like. White skin, green eyes, red hair – black ass. Mere descriptions for what people saw, what others saw in him, and not who he was. He had to find out who he was. It was time to see his face (108).

This self-discovery through newspaper remains a struggle for Furo for who he actually is. There is a kind of interplay here between identity and culture in that, Furo while struggling to

understand who he truly is, faces the cultural trauma of going back to his parents and submit to the norms of the family like before. This consciousness makes him prefer to remain out of home unidentified by the family. As a Nigerian, Furo is deeply immersed in the traditions and customs of his culture, and his identity is closely tied to his cultural background. Ultimately, Furo's experience challenges readers to reflect on their own sense of identity and how it is shaped by their cultural background and personal experiences.

Again, one of the key themes in *Blackass* is the clash of cultures. Furo's transformation into a white man puts him in a unique position to experience firsthand the cultural differences between Nigerians and Westerners. He is able to observe the subtle ways in which cultural norms and values shape our interactions with others. This theme highlights the importance of understanding and respecting cultural differences, and the impact these differences can have on our sense of self and our interactions with others.

Furthermore, In *Blackass*, the relationship between identity and culture is complex and multifaceted. Furo's experience highlights the ways in which our cultural background and societal norms shape our sense of self. As a Nigerian, Furo's identity is deeply intertwined with his cultural background. Barrett explores the relationship between identity and culture that Furo is forced to confront and the uncomfortable truths about his society, grappling with racial and cultural dynamics that have shaped his identity. Through his journey, Furo is forced to confront his own assumptions about identity and culture, discovering that what he thought was true is not always the case. He eventually learns to accept himself for who he truly is and to

embrace the culture that shaped him. This perhaps explains why Stuart (2020) in *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* puts it that "cultural identity, is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. This is how Furo continues the struggling of 'becoming'. His transformation into a white man challenges his understanding of himself and his place in the world.

Through Furo's experience, we see how language is intimately tied to culture. As a Nigerian, Furo's identity is closely tied to his cultural background, and his use of language reflects this. His transformation into a white man challenges his understanding of language and its role in shaping his identity. This theme highlights the importance of language in shaping our sense of identity and culture, and the impact it can have on our interactions with others.

- *Identity and cultural interplay in relation to themes in Blackass*

Blackass is a complex and multifaceted novel that explores a range of themes related to identity and culture. One of the key themes is the fragility of identity and the impact of external factors on our sense of self. Furo's transformation challenges his understanding of himself and his place in the world, and highlights the ways in which our cultural background and societal norms shape our sense of identity. Another key theme is the clash of cultures. Furo's interactions with Westerners reveal the cultural differences between Nigerians and Westerners, and how these

differences can impact our sense of self and our interactions with others. This theme highlights the importance of understanding and respecting cultural differences, and the impact these differences can have on our sense of identity and culture. There is also cultural assimilation where the protagonist struggles to find his place in two cultures and how to integrate both into his identity. In addition to cultural assimilation, is family dynamics, where the novel explores how family dynamics can shape a person's identity as well as how family members can influence each other's beliefs and values. Lastly, there is gender roles seen in the novel as traditional gender roles exist within Nigerian culture and the society at large.

Similarly, race and ethnicity play a significant role in shaping our sense of identity and culture. In *Blackass*, Furo's transformation into a white man highlights the significance of race and ethnicity in contemporary Africa. His experience challenges the reader to reflect on the impact of race and ethnicity on our sense of self and our interactions with others. The novel also highlights the ways in which race and ethnicity can be used as a tool of oppression. Furo's interactions with Westerners reveal the power dynamics that exist between Nigerians and Westerners, and how race and ethnicity can be used to justify these dynamics. This theme highlights the importance of understanding and challenging the impact of race and ethnicity on our sense of identity and culture in a postcolonial setting.

Finally, the impact of globalisation on identity and culture in *Blackass* cannot be undermined. we see that globalisation has had a profound impact on identity and culture in contemporary Africa. In *Blackass*, we see the ways in which globalisation has influenced

Nigerian culture and its relationship with the West. Furo's transformation into a white man highlights the power dynamics that exist between Nigerians and Westerners, and the impact of globalisation on these dynamics. Furo's transformation challenges his understanding of himself and his place in the world, and highlights the ways in which external factors can influence our sense of identity.

6. Conclusion

Intermediality has been used to good effect to portray the dire need for Africans to wake up to the call of valorising and keeping guard over their identities and cultures that the new media is battling to extinct. Both the material and sensorial modalities of intermedial elements are tools in the hands of Barrett to blow the timely trumpet of a crisis that is not just impending but has gained grounds in the continent. However, the interplay between imported and already existing African values is one of the major backbones of the cultural crisis that Barrett decries. This is perhaps why Mustafa Koc (2006) in "Cultural Identity Crisis in the Age of Globalisation and Technology" strongly believes that through homogenisation of culture local beliefs and cultural values might become universalised besides demolishing the distinctiveness of local identity. This is critical because the rate of media influence on culture could bring forth a generation that may be identified to no culture because an intermediality of cultures would have overshadowed any local culture existing. Mustafa (2006) adds that such openness to foreign content can erode the traditional values and indigenous cultural identity. Igoni Barrett's

Blackass has presented this postcolonial malaise which we still believe can be regulated by our collective intellectual and political wills.

Also, this paper has explored the complex interplay between identity and culture in contemporary Africa. Through Furo's journey, we see how our perceptions of ourselves and others are deeply rooted in our cultural backgrounds, and how these perceptions impact our interactions with the world around us. The novel challenges readers to reflect on the ways in which our cultural and societal norms shape our sense of self, and the impact of external factors on our sense of identity. Literature plays an important role in exploring the complexities of identity and culture. By exploring these themes in literature, we gain a deeper understanding of ourselves and the world around us. *Blackass* is a powerful reminder of the importance of understanding and respecting cultural differences, and the impact these differences can have on our sense of identity and culture. We therefore strongly suggest that African societies and individuals should hold firm to their cultures by creating a strong cultural bond and sensitise its citizenry on the dangers of abandoning their identity and cultures to a media-oriented trajectory culture.

Finally, our findings show that Barrett's novel, the society of the text is an intermedia society, that the characters' identities are shaped and informed by their experiences with digital media; that characters who are obsessed with social media end up depressed and frustrated; and that characters use social media to express their opinions, share their experiences, and shape the collective consciousness of their society. Also, intermediality (merging literature and elements of

media), can as well serve as a technique of narration to portray complex contemporary ideological concerns. It should not only be viewed as an object of study or as a theory, but as a technique for literary analysis. As seen above, it has served as a technique to analyse identity dynamics and ideological concerns raised in Barrett's *Blackass.*

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