

ATTITUDE AND PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS ON THE USE OF MOTHER TONGUE IN ESL CLASSROOM IN CAMEROON

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ABSTRACT

Education in the local languages can be one of the means for improving the living conditions of the disadvantaged rural population. The obstacle to Education remains the use of foreign languages for teaching and learning in the early years of primary education. The advent of independence was considered the gateway to complete eradication of the colonial past. On contrary, colonial teaching practices, involving the use of foreign languages, continue to dominate the classrooms. This article revisits the issue of language of instruction in the early years of primary schools in Bafut after many years of mother tongue education implementation. It examines the effect of using English, a foreign language in teaching indigenous Bafut children, in the suburbs who do not have the opportunity to acquire English to the level necessary for effective engagement with the curriculum. The study investigates the opinions and attitude of primary school teachers toward teaching using an indigenous language (Bafut). The researcher used triangulation, involving a variety of data sources including classroom observation, interview, focus group discussion and documentation. Data was collected from twenty four primary school teachers from six purposively selected primary schools in Bafut. The findings revealed attitudinal barriers to using the mother tongue as language of instruction in early years of education. After many years of sensitization, and many admirable polices developed throughout Africa, the efficiency of their implementation is questionable. English and French continue to receive exclusive attention in the classroom as the language of instruction and examinations, whereas the role of Mother Tongue has remained undefined. This had yielded ample evidence to question current practices and suggest the need to adopt new approaches in language use in education.

Key Words: Revisiting, Indigenous language, mother tongue, medium of instruction, code-switching.

1. INTRODUCTION

Observably, the use of the mother tongue is an issue of great concern in Africa where most children learn in languages that they neither speak nor understand. The medium of instruction is always a foreign official language. This notwithstanding, mother tongue education remains a highly contentious and quite often contestable subject of discourse within public and private spheres. In Cameroon, the situation has not been any different. We have two strong opposing currents that do not usually agree. On the one hand, we have proponents of official language use in education and on the other hand, we have supporters of mother tongue-based bilingual education, (Chiatoh, Blasius A. & Akumbu, Pius W¹. 2014).

The English language is fast gaining world popularity at the expense of other languages. Because of the economic, political and social status often attributed to the English language, speakers of other languages unconsciously develop feelings of inferiority towards their own languages, an

awareness of the low status of their languages and an anxiety to be associated with the “elite” class of people that use English, (Tamanji, P. N². 2009). Since reunification in 1961, Cameroon has implemented an exoglossic language policy based on the exclusive use of English and French as the languages of teaching and learning (Chiatoh³, 2012). As such, half a century since the adoption of this policy, its application has still not been adapted to the realities of the Cameroonian classroom. Similarly, despite more than thirty years of experimentation of mother tongue-based bilingual education as an alternative to educational innovation (Mba & Chiatoh⁴, 2000), government is still lukewarm towards integrating mother tongues into the educational system particularly at the primary level. Some countries opt for one language of instruction, official or majority language, others have chosen to use educational strategies that give national or local language an important place in schooling, (UNESCO⁵, 2003).

After several decades of independence, the educational system in Cameroon continues to mirror educational paradigms inherited from former colonial administration. Young pupils in Cameroon schools continue to experience challenges in learning given that the curriculum does not reflect African cultural experiences. The advent of independence was considered the gateway to complete eradication of the colonial past. On the contrary, colonial teaching practices, involving the use of foreign languages, continue to dominate the classrooms. This is disruptive to indigenous languages.

The African continent was the site of UNESCO’s early interest in multilingualism in education. There is ample evidence over the years, on the value of mother-tongue-based multilingual education. In 1953 UNESCO published a report that explored the use of vernacular languages in education. It indicated that after three years of mother-tongue medium education children could successfully switch over a foreign language; such as English or French, for learning in schools.

After gaining independence, many African countries ignored these recommendations, prioritizing foreign over local languages, even in the early years of primary school. Nevertheless, most countries in “Anglophone” Africa, including Cameroon have attempted some form of early literacy development in the local language before children switch to English medium education.

1.1 Objectives of the study

This study intends to achieve the following objectives.

1. This study focuses on primary school teachers’ attitude and perception of the value of using mother tongue in English as a second language (ESL) classroom.
2. Specifically, the study investigates the use of code switching enhances the learning of ESL in the early years of primary education the in Bafut community

1.2 Research questions

RQ 1 What is your perception towards the value of using the Bafut language in ESL classroom?

RQ 2 Does code switching enhance the teaching-learning process?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Echu⁶, (2003a), 247 indigenous languages live side by side with English and French (the two official languages) and Cameroon Pidgin English (the main lingua franca). Breton and Foutung⁷, (1991), list 248 national languages, with 2 official languages (English and French), and Pidgin English. The official languages are the heritage of Franco-British rule between 1916 after the defeat of Germany by allied forces and 1961 when Cameroon became independent. This unusual multilingual situation is a major handicap to communication given the absence of a common indigenous nation-wide language, for inter group communication.

2.1 English in Cameroon

The importance of English in the education system in English-speaking Cameroon as a language of instruction across the curriculum has been re-emphasised. While this language has been given exclusive attention by the language policy, the role of Mother Tongue has remained undefined. English is used for instruction at all levels of education. It is also the language of examinations. National examinations are set in English. Meanwhile, many Cameroonians think that, English and French are very important for social and economic advancement. Besides, a successful user of English or French identifies himself as a successful integrated member of the elitist language community. However, this is an imperialist propaganda slogan, as there are graduates who are not advanced socially and economically. After all, there are many socially and economically empowered Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba speakers who are star actors in the Nigerian film industry.

It is expected that the processes of decolonisation should include the use of national languages at all levels of education. These languages are spoken by majority of Cameroonians, yet, Cameroon still uses the languages of the former colonizers as the only official languages. Such a situation manifests the continuation of imperial domination. Children who have the opportunity to study through their mother tongue have the best chance of understanding what is taught. In English-Speaking Cameroon, English is spoken by the elites, whereas the indigenous languages which are not recognised outside their communities are spoken by the rural population. Thus, this study revisits the issue of language of instruction in the early years of primary schools in Bafut after many years of mother tongue implementation. The study focuses on the educational situation of children in selected schools, in the suburbs of Bafut Sub Division in the North West Region of Cameroon.

2.2 Education in Cameroon

As previously stated, the law guarantees education in either English or French, depending on the linguistic zone, from class one throughout secondary school. The teachers, as state employees, must use the official languages in communication with the learners. Primary school pupils are not encouraged to speak the mother tongue in class. Thus, the use of indigenous languages in the classroom is restricted to a few private schools and pilot projects; Operational Research Programme for Language Education in Cameroon (PROPELCA⁸, 1995). Bitjaa Kody⁹, (2001a; 2001b) asserts that the national languages of Cameroon are losing ground to the official languages. He further reiterates that the national languages are disappearing even in endogamic households where family members speak the same national language. Many years after the 1998 bill was passed by parliament emphasizing the teaching of indigenous languages and subsequently promulgated into law N° 98/004 of 14 April 1998 by the Head of State, the efficiency of their implementation is still questionable, (République du Cameroun, 1998¹⁰).

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the trilingual approach developed by the PROPELCA coordinator Maurice Tadatjeu.

2.3.1. Extended Trilingualism, a Multilingual Education Model

Tadadjeu, M.¹¹ (1995), advocates a trilingual approach, which is in consonance with the UNESCO policy. This model enables the average Cameroonian to be instructed in at least three languages:

an African language (preferably the mother tongue), the first official language (English or French depending on the region) and a language of wider distribution or the second official language. Echu¹², (2003a, p.13) posits that the model is realistic as long as mother tongue literacy programmes are encouraged. The PROPELCA model is referred to as “extended trilingualism” by Tadadjeu, implying the development of all Cameroonian languages.

The partnership agreement between the Ministry of National Education (MINEDUC) and ANACLAC in March 2002 opened new avenues for the introduction of the PROPELCA programme in formal education. This had a positive effect on enrolment and results. According to Tabi Manga¹³, (2000, p. 100), the positive experiences of the programme may show politicians a practical way of language policy which really acknowledges the national languages and gives them a natural place in society. Most of these languages have attained an advanced stage of development.

In spite of this partnership agreement between them, most work done by ANACLAC is based on economic support from other organisations. The state has continued to be passive towards mother tongue education in Cameroon. Therefore, MT education in Cameroon should be reconsidered.

2.4 Empirical framework

National languages have been taught in Cameroon mostly in private primary and secondary schools for more than 50 years. Since 1981, the programmes have been incorporated in the Yaounde University based PROPELCA, which started in 1978. The objective of the programme was to promote selected national languages through their introduction at primary school level. A bilingual curriculum including a national language (mother tongue) and the first official language (OL1) was advocated, with the ideas that, children would learn to read and write in their MT from class one to three, with a gradual transition from oral practice and writing to mathematics and other subjects.

A bill was passed by parliament in 1998 on the general orientation of education in Cameroon. This bill emphasises on the teaching of indigenous languages and was subsequently promulgated into law N° 98/004 of 14 April 1998 by the Head of State (Mba and Chiatoh⁴, 2000, p. 5). This was to set the stage for eventual action. Nevertheless, after more than 50 years of the development and teaching of indigenous languages, we expect that they should not only be included in the school curricula at all levels of education but that one of them should be used for administration (as one of the official languages). This is what obtains in other African countries; such as Kenya where Swahili is the official language.

Basically, various actions by teachers in the classroom teaching practices are not random or neutral, but rather reflect their personal values and beliefs (Verloop¹⁴ et al., 2001). Hence, teacher ideologies are fundamentally derived from their individual philosophies of teaching. Past research has indicated that teachers’ action in classroom is heavily influenced by their ideologies (Andrews¹⁵, 2003). Kesevan¹⁶ (2016) presents the findings of two different sets of teachers’ classroom ideologies and actual teaching practices. It compares a set of native and non-native English teachers that are distinct in terms of teacher training background, qualifications and experiences. These ideologies have shown to influence teachers’ choices concerning what to teach, how to teach, and how to deal with learners’ behaviours (Borg¹⁷, 2003). The findings of this study reveals that both sets of teachers do share the same classroom ideologies but do not apply those ideologies in a same way.

Paudel¹⁸ (2018) explores the teachers' ideology on the policy (as policy appropriator). Many schools have revealed that teaching in mother tongue in the early grades enhances children's ability to learn better than second or foreign language. UNESCO¹⁹ (1953) clearly articulates the importance of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction to the learner. Psychologically it is the system of meaningful signs that in his mind works automatically for expression and understanding. Sociologically, it is the means of identification among the members of the community to which he belongs. Educationally, he learns more quickly through it than through an unfamiliar linguistic medium, (UNESCO, 1953).

Similar concerns have been widely expressed by researchers across the world. Cummins²⁰ (2001) argues that schools should build on the experience and knowledge that children bring to the classroom and that instruction should promote children's abilities and talents. Thompson²¹ (2003) corroborates that children with more background knowledge and life experiences have more to draw on to help their learning whilst those with limited knowledge of their mother tongue and limited life experience and background have a very weak base for the development of the second language.

On her part, Benson²¹ (2005) concurs that pedagogically, the use of the mother tongue or a strong lingua franca provides the basis for comprehensible content area instruction and literacy skills upon which competence in a second or foreign language can be built. In sum, within research circles, the mother tongue is widely acknowledged as a classroom resource in overall learning in general and in the learning of a second or foreign language in particular, (Chiatoh Blasius A. & Akumbu Pius W¹. 2014). According to these authors, the ideologies of the language teachers have been drawn from the interpretive perspectives where the reality is judged based on the experiences of the research and the researched. The results indicate that the teachers unraveled their strong belief on the use of MLE for language promotion and protection of indigenous knowledge.

In Cameroon, attitudes towards national languages have been shaped the false opinions that national unity is only achievable through foreign languages. Accordingly, the protection of national interest is best guaranteed through the use of English and French. This means that, it is not beneficial to bother about national languages since English and French already help Cameroonians to understand one another. Here the insinuation is that while English and French are integrators or unifiers, national languages are rather disintegrators and should be avoided, (Chiatoh Blasius A. & Akumbu Pius W¹. 2014).

Similarly, Bouba²³ (1995), expressed that, actuellement, que vous soyez Ewondo, Boulou, Bassa, Douala, Toupouri, Maka, etc..., vous pouvez vous déplacer n'importe où au Cameroun ; si vous parlez français, vous serez compris, même au fin fond de nos villages. Pourquoi alors revenir en arrière au moment où les Camerounais commencent déjà à s'entendre ?

Bouba is of the opinion that national languages are irrelevant in the Cameroonian context since even in the most remote corners of our villages, people speak and understand French and that advocating for national languages means taking the country backwards at a moment when Cameroonians are beginning to understand one another. Misleading as these views are, though, they have come to represent an ideal position within educated and non-educated circles. In fact, during a discussion with a colleague (linguist) not long ago on whether or not Cameroon Pidgin should be included into the educational system, he was emphatic in his dismissal of any such eventuality because according to him, Pidgin English is doing enormous disservice to the English language by negatively influencing the oral and written use of English. As can be seen from all

these views, going straight for English or French seems to be the ideal for many Cameroonians, (Chiatoh Blasius A. & Akumbu Pius W¹. 2014).

Obanya²⁴ (2004, p. 16) encapsulates the insufficiency quality inherent in an educational model that uses an unfamiliar language as medium of instruction as is the case in Cameroon today. According to this scholar, the prevailing situation has resulted in a linguistic dilemma, a situation in which the learner (at least at the end of the basic education cycle) is proficient neither in the first language nor in the official language. The learner's linguistic failure has also given rise to academic failure. Even in cases in which official examinations have been passed, learning has been mainly by rote. Deep learning has not taken place, and consequently there can be no qualitative improvements in learner behaviour. Worse still, learning becomes not a pleasure but drudgery. The habit of learning how to learn that the knowledge economy demands thus becomes difficult to inculcate, (Obanya (2004, p. 16).

In line with the above, it is clear that in a multilingual society such as Cameroon, an educational system that ignores the use of the learner's mother tongue in the teaching-learning process is inherently deficient and is bound to be plagued by insufficiencies in standards. It means that the foundation on which the system is built is weak and that it cannot guarantee quality standards, (Chiatoh Blasius A. & Akumbu Pius W¹. 2014). This means that, such a system is fundamentally flawed because it is founded on a wrong premise. In such a context, the teaching and learning of English as a second language is also bound to suffer. This is the type of system that has been promoted in Cameroon over the past five decades. Wolff²⁵ (2000, p. 23) warns us of the dangers of reliance on such a system when he writes:

This view greatly contrasts with current practices in the country that seem to suggest that the quality of the English that children learn is determined principally by the number of contact hours and by the teacher's methods and strategies in the classroom. Contrary to popular opinion, therefore, the use of an unfamiliar language of instruction rather than enhance learning, instead hinders it as aptly articulated by Kioko et al²⁶ (2008, pp. 18-19). However, mother tongue education in Cameroon remains a dream because it has no future in an age of rapid globalization where world languages have a clear advantage over minority mother tongues.

3. METHODOLOGY

The purposive sample was drawn from class 1 teachers and pupils in selected primary schools in Bafut, in Mezam Division of the North West Region of Cameroon, in September 2015 during the first three weeks of schooling. Six of these schools; 3 public and 3 mission schools were purposively sampled for the study. These 6 schools provided the actual sample population used in the study. The sampled schools were purposively selected from villages found at the suburbs, away from Bafut town. As such, most of the class 1 pupils do not have the opportunity to acquire English to the level necessary for effective engagement with the curriculum. Therefore the class 1 pupils of these selected schools will probably face more challenges learning in English, a foreign language for the first time than pupils of the upper classes who are already exposed to the foreign language. The teachers that were included in the study population were obtained through simple random sampling from the sampled schools; this eased the interview exercise. Four teachers from each of the 6 schools were purposively selected. This provided a total of 24 teachers.

The researcher used data triangulation, involving a variety of data sources such as classroom observation, interview, focus group discussion and documentation. This study was conducted in

September 2015, during the first few weeks of schooling. The population observed included class I pupils from the 6 schools on the assumption that many of them had not had the opportunity to acquire English to the level necessary for effective engagement with the curriculum. Twelve classroom observations were conducted and video recorded, while twenty four semi-structured interviews and two focus group discussions were audio-recorded. The researcher also collected data from studies carried out on mother tongue education.

Classroom communication and interactions between the teachers and the pupils and amongst the pupils themselves was the focus of the observation. The questions designed for the interviews focused on the teachers' experiences in teaching using English as a medium of instruction as well as their attitude towards using an indigenous language, Bafut, as a medium of instruction. Focus group discussions revisited the issue of language of instruction in the early years of primary schools in Bafut after many years of mother tongue implementation.

4. FINDINGS

The data gathered through video recordings during classroom observations, was later transcribed, and content analysed using themes that emerged from the data. Observations were analysed for pupil-teacher interactions, pupil-pupil interactions and the language used for instruction. Interviews and group discussions with teachers were analysed for, views, value or attitude toward the use of English and Mother Tongue (the Bafut language) for instruction.

RQ 1 What is your view towards the use of English alongside the Bafut language for instruction? Classroom observation was supplemented by teachers' interviews and results indicated that:

1. Classroom Interaction

The first lesson I observed was on "numbers". The teacher asked the class: *Who can count from one to ten?* One of the pupils immediately stood up and counted from 1 to 10 in the mother tongue as follows: *Mo'o (one), baa (two), ... kwali'i (nine), tawum (ten)*. The teacher was furious, and asked the pupil to sit down. The whole class burst out laughing. Disappointed, the pupil burst out crying. The following morning, this pupil was escorted to school by the mother given that she did not want to continue learning in a language that was culturally distant from her mother tongue, the Bafut language.

The second lesson I observed was on "types of fruits." As teaching aid, the teacher actually brought different types of fruits to class. The first fruit he presented to the class was an orange. He asked the class: *What is the name of this fruit?* Some of the pupils knew the name in English, whereas others did not know. However, one of the pupils responded in the mother tongue, "*Lamshi*", a loan adaptation of English "*lime*". The teacher was astonished and retorted in a sarcastic tone: *Is "lamshi" English?* As if this was not enough humiliation for this pupil, the other pupils burst out laughing. "*Say it in English,*" said the teacher. Shocked, the pupil who answered the question in Bafut burst out crying. Then the teacher shouted "*orange*", say "*orange*" you stupid child. The whole class repeated after him.

In the next class, another teacher; different from the first, exclaimed when a pupil responded to a question in Bafut. This teacher asked the pupil if she could count from one to ten. The pupil said: "yes" and started counting in Bafut. The teacher echoed the same sentiment. "*Oh no!*" he exclaimed. *Always try to answer questions in English because in school, we read and write in*

English not in Bafut. You are going to write the examination in English not in Bafut. Now go on and count in English. The pupil counted: *One (1), two (2)*, and sat down as she could not count well in English. This was embarrassing to the other children who could not count as well.

Nevertheless, many pupils answered questions in English. Meanwhile those who answered questions in Bafut were constantly being humiliated by the teachers' unfriendly attitude towards the Bafut language, and the unsympathetic laughter from class mates. The children who did not understand and speak English faced difficulties expressing their ideas in a foreign language. In everyday classroom interactions, many teachers were unfriendly to the pupils who could not speak the English language, forcing them to withdraw from participating in class discussions. This promotes the foreign language at the expense of national languages. Instead of facilitating learning, the English language frustrates many children and "kills" classroom interactions. This is consistent with UNESCO's⁸ (1953) evidence which shows that children who start education with a foreign medium of instruction produce long term poorer academic performance than children who use their mother tongue in education.

4.1. Lack of Encouragement from Teachers

Teachers do not encourage pupils to learn. Rather, they intimidate those who speak the mother tongue in class. These unequal treatment teachers give to pupils who cannot express themselves in English results to frustration and lack of interest in lessons taught. This creates a tense and uncaring classroom atmosphere. This results to the pupils' lack of interest in classroom participation. One teacher blamed the victims for their lack of interest in classroom participation by stating that: *Some of the children do not make an effort to express themselves in English. It is a good thing that they are laughed at by class mates, as the laughter helps them to work harder.*

It is obvious that this type of situation described above does not provide equal opportunity to all pupils in the classroom. From the teacher's explanation some pupils take control of the class interactions while those who are still learning to speak English are treated as outsiders. This unfortunate classroom situation is created by some teachers who are unwilling to encourage the pupils to take part in classroom interaction using the mother tongue.

4.2. The Official Bilingual Language Policy

Because school subjects are taught in English or French it denies indigenous Cameroonian children the opportunity to study in a language that is familiar to them and meaningful to their everyday experiences. Children are forced to speak a foreign language they know very little about. The teachers blame this on the official bilingual language policy. One teacher complained that: *The language policy requires that all teaching in Cameroon be done in English or French.* Other teachers expressed the same sentiments acknowledging that: *the language policy says, we should use English because this is the English subsystem of education. That is why we use English for instruction not Bafut.*

The language policy raises English and French to an official status that is not accorded to indigenous languages. In addition, some teachers argued, that: *the school system in Cameroon is geared towards passing national examinations. Children have to pass them before proceeding to secondary school. At the end of the primary 6, children write both the Common Entrance*

Examination and the First School Living Certificate Examination in English. Therefore, children are prepared for these examinations both in terms of content and language use. The system of education in Cameroon is thus characteristically colonial, upholding English and French at the expense of promoting indigenous languages.

4.3 Teacher's Attitudes toward the Use of Indigenous Languages

When asked about their views towards the use of English alongside the Bafut language for instruction, 18 out of 24 teachers were in favour of the use of English only in the classroom. One of the teachers indicated that: *English is a tool for national and international communication, while indigenous languages are yet to be sufficiently developed for instruction at all levels of education.* According to him; *the Bafut language is culture specific with no international significance.* When asked about the language he thinks is best for education, one teacher replied: *I do not agree with using indigenous languages such as Bafut for instruction. English is a global language spoken everywhere in the world, so if I teach in Bafut, it will be detrimental to children who would like to study or work in other countries in future. Therefore indigenous languages should not be used for instruction. Besides, we do not have pedagogical materials in indigenous languages. Where do we get the books that we need, written in the mother tongue? The most serious problem is the lack of scientific terminologies to express new knowledge in indigenous languages.*

This information indicates that these teachers are ignorant as far as the level of development of the Bafut language is concern. Bafut has attended an advanced stage of developments. In effect, the use of the foreign language in education means a rejection of the Bafut language.

4.4 Support for Indigenous Language Education

However, 6 out of 24 teachers were in support of the use of indigenous languages in education. They confessed that: *A foreign language disrupts the children's socio-cultural realities.* One teacher argued that: *I think it is better for children to be taught in Bafut first because they think in Bafut; they identify with Bafut and it is the language they know best. So it is better for them to be taught in Bafut, first even if the language is not well developed, as the Bafut language would be better for their understanding, while it is gradually being developed.* Another teacher who agreed that children be taught in their mother tongues argued that: *I would appreciate it very much, if steps are taken to teach children in the mother tongue. I think that for children to understand better, they need to be taught in the language they understand better.*

4.5 Code-switching

Some teachers promoted language integration by code-switching from English to Bafut and back to English. This was observed in the following teacher-pupil interaction during a lesson on "Domestic Animals". The teacher asked the pupils: *Name some domestic animals that you know. I think there are many of them in Bafut.* One of the pupils answered this question and said: *Mbi [goat].* Unlike those against the use of indigenous languages, the teacher said: *Well, "mbi" in Bafut is a domestic animal. How do we call it in English?* The pupils did not respond. The teacher said: *Goat ... Repeat after me.* The children repeated "goat". *"Don't you know goats? Many people in this village have goats".* The teacher continued. *"Name another domestic animal".* Another pupil shouted: *"Mbu [dog]".* The teacher said: *"Good, mbu is another domestic animal in Bafut, but how*

do we call it in English?" Another pupil raised the hand and said: *"It is called dog". "That's excellent. Clap for her!"* The teacher responded and said; the class was so interesting and stress free. All the children were eager to participate in the lesson.

This demonstrates how code-switching can be used to facilitate learning. The teacher helped the children to overcome the language barrier by code-switching from English language to Bafut and back to English, thereby giving the pupils the opportunity to communicate freely, using the language they understand better. The classroom atmosphere was warm and welcoming. The pupils were eager to communicate their ideas in the Bafut language since it is the language they are comfortable with. Code-switching, is thus an effective resource for establishing meaning in the classroom. The teacher and the pupils communicate with ease by switching to the mother language.

5. CONCLUSION

Despite the research, which highlights the usefulness of African languages as medium of instruction, the use of these languages in education, in general, remains a contentious issue (cf, 1993; Benson¹⁰, 2004; Obanya¹¹, 1998 among others).

For children to understand curriculum content, and communicate effectively they need to, first, understand the language of instruction. Many teachers do not support the idea of using indigenous languages for instruction. The fight against imperialism at various levels must be extended to include the use of Cameroon indigenous languages so that they will be accorded the same status as English and French. However, teachers who code-switch, from English to the child's mother tongue and back, encourage children to take part in classroom activities.

The study therefore demonstrates that despite the inclusion of national languages in the 1996 constitution, legislation with regard to status and corpus planning is still missing. The potential to use the home language and the official language in the classroom in a structured and systematic manner to support learning has not been fully recognized or developed. That is why Obanya, (1998) argues that several programmes of mother tongue education, including those publicized as highly successful, have not gone beyond the experimental phase with other even more compellingly publicized programs being terminated soon after. Mother tongue bilingual education in Cameroon should therefore be reconsidered, with implementation modalities clearly articulated and given more serious consideration. If steps are taken in implementing the language policy as stipulated by the Constitution, laws and decrees, language experts will continue to develop these languages. However, mother tongue education in Cameroon remains a dream because it has no future in an age of rapid globalization where world languages have a clear advantage over minority mother tongues.

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