

English Language Teaching and Learning in Francophone Rural Secondary Schools of Cameroon

Njwe Eyovi

(University of Bamenda, Cameroon)

Abstract: This paper investigates challenges encountered in teaching English as well as learning the language by francophone secondary school students in the rural areas of Cameroon. In this study, thirteen rural secondary schools located in six francophone regions were investigated, whereby attempts have been made to high light the problems faced by teachers and students alike. In this work, Schumann’s Acculturation Model and Krashen’s Acquisition-Learning hypothesis are presented and both are related to the process of learning English by the subjects in this investigation. Furthermore, there is an investigation of the communicative Language Teaching approach prescribed by the government to be used to facilitate learning and address pedagogic anomalies. Findings reveal amongst others that these students’ poor performances in English examinations and low proficiencies in the use of English, derive from poor teaching and learning processes, socio cultural, linguistic and context related issues. Proposals and recommendations are made in a bid to ameliorate the situation.

Key words: English language learning, English language teaching, francophone, rural areas, official bilingualism

1. Introduction

Cameroon has been rightly described by Linguists, Sociologists and Geographers, just to name these as Africa in miniature. From the Linguistic perspective, she boasts of about 286 languages spoken within the national territory, Grimes (2000). Biloa (2003) states that out of the four major languages of Africa, three are found in Cameroon. These are the Afro-Asiatic, Nilo-Saharan, and Niger Congo.

With this highly diverse linguistic background, the government of Cameroon is implementing an official policy of Exoglossic Bilingualism. French and English are used as official tools of communication. Historical factors are responsible for this position. This began during the colonial period, whereby, between 1919 and 1946, partitioned Cameroon seized from Germany was governed by France as “French Cameroon” and by Britain as “British Cameroon” respectively, under the League of Nations. On February 11, 1961, British Cameroon was submitted to a plebiscite to opt for independence joined to Nigeria or reunite with the newly independent Republic of Cameroon, former French Cameroon. While the Northern part of British Cameroon decided to remain with Nigeria the Southern part joined the Republic of Cameroon and both territories became the Federal Republic of Cameroon on October 1, 1961. It was at this point where English and French were first introduced as official

Njwe Eyovi, Ph.D., The University of Bamenda; research areas/interests: English language teaching, applied and sociolinguistics, phonology. E-mail: eyovinjwe@yahoo.com.

languages in the Federated state whereby English was used in the former British Southern Cameroon then West Cameroon and French in the former French Cameroon then East Cameroon. Following a referendum which transformed the country from a federated state to a unitary state on the 20th of May 1972 official bilingualism in French and English was institutionalized by the government. Article 1, paragraph 3 of the constitution of 18th January 1996 revising the constitution of February 1996, revising the constitution of 2nd June 1972 of the United Republic of Cameroon makes it clear; “The official languages of the Republic of Cameroon shall be English and French, both languages having the same status. The state shall guarantee the promotion of Bilingualism throughout the country. It shall endeavor to protect and promote national languages”.

On the 4th of February 1984, under law No 846-1, the United Republic of Cameroon became the Republic of Cameroon. The policy of official bilingualism in Cameroon has had great implication on the educational policy of Cameroon. Law No 98/004 of April 1998, Part 1, Section 2 which lays guidelines for education in Cameroon, states that “The State shall institute bilingualism at all levels of education as a factor of national unity and integration”.

The educational system in Cameroon comprises the Anglophone subsystem and the Francophone subsystem. Both subsystems coexist but each with its specificities, for example they each differ in their assessment methods at the primary and secondary levels. In the Anglophone schools, English is the medium of instruction while French is taught as a compulsory curricular subject. On the other hand, in the Francophone schools, French is the medium of instruction and English is a compulsory curricular subject. This is the situation at the level of secondary education. However, at the university and higher tertiary levels, both languages are used as media of instruction in most of the institutions. It should be noted that, despite the existence of the two subsystems the government has always encouraged bilingualism in the educational system. This is evidenced with the creation of many Bilingual schools. The first bilingual school was created in 1965 in Man O War Bay and the major objective was to foster bilingualism. Both Francophone and Anglophone students were admitted to the same class. The students used both French and English as media of instruction. Half of the courses were taught in French and the other half were in English. This first experience was long abandoned. The bilingual schools today host the students of the two different subsystems in the same premises. However the government has as objectives of bilingual schools as stated in the “Final Report on the Reinforcement of Bilingualism in the Cameroon Education System” as follows (MINEDUC 2000:11):

- a) To consolidate national unity and integration through mutual self-respect by understanding each other’s cultural background. Cultural background here meaning, Anglophone or Francophone background.
- b) To provide opportunities for Cameroonian children irrespective of their ancestral villages or places of birth to evolve educationally in the cultural system of their parents’ choice.
- c) To recreate, as it were, a microcosm of the Cameroonian society, in which students would live together and interact and thereby, hopefully breaking down some of the walls of prejudice and ignorance about each other’s language group.
- d) To produce highly bilingual Cameroonians who would be models to other Cameroonians.
- e) To produce a core of highly bilingual citizens to prop up the bilingual machinery of the state in areas such as education, translation and the civil service.
- f) To eventually produce core of cadres who would be suited for eventual training as translators and interpreters.

From the foregoing, it is obvious that the position of English and French in the educational system as well as

tools of communication in Cameroon cannot be overemphasized. In the global picture, bilingual education is becoming more and more popular (Oller, 1984; Wei, 2000; Hamers & Blanc, 2000 etc). Furthermore, with the world emerging into a global village, and English language becoming the main language of communication in the global village world, the need for the acquisition and proficiency in English is so much desired. However, over the years the system has witnessed with great dismay the relative grave decline in the proficiency and performance in English by students at all levels both in the urban and rural areas of both subsystems in Cameroon. In this paper our focus is on the appalling situation of English in the rural areas of the francophone subsystem where the problem of teaching and learning of English is acute.

2. Theoretical Framework

At this point, a study of some theoretical models describing and accounting for the process of language acquisition and learning will be undertaken. In this regard it is important to acknowledge the fact that a good number of theories have been developed to explain the process of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and learning. In this study, a presentation of the Schumann's Acculturation model and the Krashen's Acquisition Learning approach are presented to appreciate the gap the students investigated in this study face as they grapple with the task of learning English in a bid to meet the demand of national policies as well as the possibility of grabbing opportunities which may come because of the knowledge of English. Furthermore, due the fact that this work deals with teaching and learning, the Communicative Language Teaching Model prescribed for teaching English by educationist for this level will be examined.

3. Schumann's Acculturation Model

Schumann's Acculturation Model was established to account for the acquisition of second Language which "is the social and psychological taxonomy of factors which are believed to be important in the process of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) in natural contexts".

Brown (1980a, p. 129) defines acculturation as the process of becoming adapted to a new culture. Acculturation is seen as an important aspect of SLA because language is one of the most observable expression of culture and because in second language (as opposed to first Language) settings, the acquisition of a new language is seen as tied to the way in which the learner's community and the target language community view each other. The central premise of the Acculturation model is,

"....second language acquisition is just one aspect of acculturation and the degree to which a learner acculturates to the target languages group will control the degree to which he acquires the second language."

The theory involves the modification of one's attitudes and behaviour; new aspects are added to an individual's cultural background, other aspects are wiped off and others are restructured. According to Redfield et al. (1936), as cited by Navas et al. (2005), acculturation is a process that comprises,

"those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups."

Schumann's acculturation model holds that SLA is determined by the degree of two factors — social and psychological distance between the learner and the target language culture. Social distance is the result of a

number of factors which affect the learner as a member of a social group in contact with the target language group. In the case of the francophone students in the rural areas of the French speaking regions of Cameroon, the contact is almost non-existent. The target language is only encountered in the classroom during the English periods. The processes provided by Schumann do not apply and so can't possibly help this group of learners. Psychological distance is the result of many affective factors that concern the learner as an individual, such as language shock, culture stress etc.

Schumann (1978) further identifies various factors which determine social and psychological distance. These factors are represented in the table below.

Social Distance	
Social dominance	The L2 group can be politically, socially, economically, culturally and technically dominant or subordinate, social contact will not be enough to optimize language acquisition. Equal status foster effective language acquisition.
Integration pattern	The L2 learners want to assimilate (give up their own lifestyle and values in favour of those of target language group) and adapt to the culture of the target language. They also wish to preserve their culture by remaining separated linguistically and culturally form the target language group.
Enclosure	L2 acquisition is more favourable when L2 group shares the same facilities like schools, clubs, churches with target language group (low enclosure) and less favourable when social facilities are not shared (high enclosure)
Cohesiveness and size	The smaller and less unified L2 group is, the contact with the target language group and condition of L2 acquisition becomes more favourable
Congruence and similarity	The more similar the culture of the two groups, especially in language, the easier it is for L2 acquisition
Attitude	L2 acquisition is hindered when L2 group has negative views towards the culture of the target language
Length of residence	The length of time the L2 learner stays in a target language area influence L2 acquisition.
Psychological Distance	
Language	The L2 learner experiences doubt and possible confusion when using the L2
Culture shock	The L2 learner experiences disorientation, stress, fear etc. as a result of difference between his or her own culture and that of the target language community
Motivation	L2 learners' level of integration (which is very important) or motivation is very important in is acquisition of L2
Ego boundaries	The L2 learners perceive their L1 to have fixed and rigid or flexible boundaries and therefore the extent to which they are inhabited.

4. Factors Affecting Acculturation

The psychological factors have more influence than the social factors. Norton Pierce (1995) highlights the strengths of Schumann's model in the sociocultural context of language learning. He also looks at the role an individual plays in the language learning process. He further brings out the importance of regular contact between language learners and speakers of the targets language for successful language learning to take place. Schumann (1986) posits that acculturation, as a dynamic process, takes place over time. Learner's social and psychological distance profile may change while he is in a target language environment. Berry (1997) affirms this by saying that when people move into an area dominated by another culture, there are bound to be changes and adaptations made by the people of both cultures.

5. Acquisition Learning Hypothesis

The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis is one of the five main hypotheses which make use of Krashen's theory of Second Language Acquisition. The Acquisition-Learning distinction is the most fundamental of all the hypotheses in Krashen's theory and the most widely known among linguists and language practitioners. According to Krashen (1988) there are two independent systems of second language performance; "the acquired system" and "the learned system". The "acquired system" in acquisition results from a subconscious process very similar to the process children undergo when they acquire L1. It requires meaningful interaction in the target language — natural communication, in which speakers are concentrated not in the form of their utterance but in the communicative act.

The "learned system" or "learning" results from formal instruction and it entails a conscious process which results in conscious knowledge "about" the language, for example rules. According to Krashen "learning is less important than 'acquisition'". In this study, the francophone children in the rural areas have very insignificant or no contact with English language or the Anglophone community. Knowledge of English through acquisition is not possible for them because there is no meaningful interaction in the target language. The learning process that they undertake which is already deficient, is characterized by all types of challenges resulting in very low performances.

In connection with teaching approaches, the Communicative Language Teaching approach will be examined here. There is the need to talk about this approach here, because in principle this is the approach recommended for teaching English. Incidentally it is being replaced by the Competence Based Approach since 2013 because the CBA is considered more effective. Furthermore, mention will be made of the Grammar Translation Method widely observed in application in various degrees on the field. Owodave (2013) in an article entitled "Methodologies in ESL: A challenge to Nigerian Teachers" indicated that Grammar Translation Method was first used in the early years of learning foreign languages such as Latin and Greek. The method involves studying a second language called the target language, in this instance English by francophone students through a detailed analysis of its grammar rules, followed by the application of this knowledge to the task of translating sentences and texts into and out of the language. The teacher's role is central and emphasis is on the mastery of grammatical rules, vocabulary through translation and little or no room is provided for practice. The students at the end are not able to express themselves in the target language. This situation was very common amongst the subject on the field. The Communicative Language Teaching approach on its part, is an approach developed to redress the gaps found in Grammar Translation and Audio Lingual Approaches to SLA. According to Hall (2011), CLT emerged in Europe and the USA in the 1970s and in the late twentieth century, it became the dominant paradigm within ELT and applied linguistics. Developed in the UK, CLT is an approach to language teaching that emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goals of study. Emphasis was to teach learners to apply the skills learnt in communicating in real life situations out of the classroom. Essossomo (2013) opines that, this method to language teaching, advocates the teaching of a language for communicative purposes, not just for the purposes of passing examinations. The method is student centred where by students are expected to work in small groups carrying out exchanges guided by the teachers. The overcrowded situation of the classrooms and excessive work load of the teachers and the lack of knowledge of this method makes its practice difficult and ineffective in the secondary schools under investigation.

6. Method

This study was carried out in thirteen secondary schools selected using the purposive sampling technique from six out of the eight francophone regions of Cameroon. The data was collected within the last five years in collaboration with various research students supervised for post graduate programmes during this time. The information is very applicable to the current situation today. The schools comprised seven high schools with a seven year programme (Lycee) and six junior secondary schools with a four year programme (CES). Twelve out of the thirteen schools studied are found in the typical rural areas. However, the thirteenth school reported in this study is found in a divisional headquarters but enclaved and far from the other towns of Cameroon. It is a border village sharing many features of the other localities studied but different in the population size. This is the ‘Lycee Bilingue’ Ambam” located only thirty eight km to the border of Congo and Equatorial Guinea with Cameroon. It was chosen because it was more readily available and represented a school from the South region. There were also cursory study (observation) of the Lycee de Balessing found in Menoua division and the Lycee the Bangoua found in the Nde division of the West Region. These observations helped in comparing and confirming the findings of the schools studied and reported in this work.

The schools engaged therefore included, Lycee de Galim, CES de Kieneghang and CES de Menfoung of Bamboutos Division of the West region. There were also Lycee de Lomie, CES de Mindourou and CES de Messock of the Upper Nyong division of the East region. In the Sanaga Maritime division of the Littoral region were Lycee de Ndobian, CES de Bangope and Lycee de Songmbog. In the South region, there was Lycee Bilingue’ Ambam of the Ntem valley division. There were the Lycee de Nkolondom of Mfoundi division and the CES de Nyomo of the Mefou-Akono division of the centre region. Finally, in the Far North region, there was the Lycee de Moulvadaye in the Mayo-Kani division. Information from this school is representative of the schools of the three Northern regions. Findings drawn from these case studies represent what obtains in the nation. The total number of students in all the thirteen schools was 6,365. The number used for this study was 2,958 students from the thirteen schools, in the four levels under study; while the population of all those teaching English Language in all of the thirteen schools was thirty eight teachers. All the teachers were used in the study. The distribution is presented on Table 1 below.

Table 1 Total Number of Students in the Schools, Total Number of Students in 3eme, 2nde, 1ere and Tle and The Total Number of Teachers in the Various Schools Who Teach English Language in the Entire School

Part 1

	Lycee Bilingue de Galim Total pop. of students:808 Students studied:522 Total pop.of Eng. Teachers:09	CES Kieneghang Total pop. of students:200 students studied:60 Total pop. of Eng. teachers:01	CES Menfoung Total pop. of students:178 students studied:56 Total pop. of Eng. teachers:01	Lycee de LOMIE: total pop. of students:318 Students studied:122 Total pop. of Eng. teachers:02	CES de MINDOUROU total pop. of students:68 students studied:26 Total pop. of Eng. Teachers:02	CES de MESSOCK Total pop. of Students:96 Students Studied:30 Total Pop. of Eng. Teachers:01
3eme	185	60	56	47	26	30
2nde	116	00	00	36	00	00
1ere	136	00	00	27	00	00
Tle	85	00	00	12	00	00

Part2:

	Lycee Bilingue D'Ambam Total pop. of students:2500 Students studied:1229 Total pop. of Eng. teachers:08	Lycee de Nkolondom; Total pop of students:1267 Students studied:567 Total pop. of Eng. teachers:05	CES de Nyomo Total pop. of Students:65 Students studied:30 Total pop. of Eng. teachers:01	Lycee de Ndobian Total pop. of students:183 Students studied:83 Total pop. of Eng. teachers:03	CES Bangope Total pop. of students:57 Students studied:17 Total pop. of Eng. teachers:02	Lycee de Songmbog Total Pop. of Students:325 Students Studied:120 Total Pop. of Eng. Teachers:02	Lycee de Moulvoudaye Total pop. of Students:300 Students Studied:96 Total Pop. of Eng. Teachers:02
3eme	450	129	30	21	17	32	36
2nde	210	140	00	30	00	47	27
1ere	324	130	00	25	00	22	20
Tle	245	68	00	07	00	19	13

Table 1 shows the total number of students in the various schools considered in this study on the one hand, then the total number of the students in the four levels considered in this study and the total number of teachers teaching English language in the schools studied. The information from the tables (6,365 students for 38 teachers) is already indicative of the fact that the total number of teachers teaching English language in the various schools is very small compared to the total number of students entrusted to their care.

7. Procedure

There were two sets of questionnaires from which data were collected. The first set was for the 38 teachers of English language found in the various schools investigated. The second set of questionnaire was administered to all the students of “troisieme”, “seconde”, “premiere”, and “terminale” of the schools investigated.

The research questions were grouped into Pre-closed, open ended and closed ended questions. Adequate explanations and instructions were given to both the teachers and students on how to complete the questionnaire. The teachers' questionnaire examined the following aspects: It sought to identify the teacher whereby information on sex, age, teaching experience and qualifications were gotten. There were questions on number of teaching periods, teaching strategies, evaluation techniques and styles and possession of relevant teaching material and teaching aids. The Students' questionnaire on its part dealt with aspects of identification where questions on age, sex, level, school and language(s) of the respondents were enquired.

There were also questions on family background, dealing with languages used at home with siblings, parents and peers. Furthermore on language use, questions on languages used with peers in school during break, on play grounds were asked. Again, there were questions on language acquisition investigating when, where and how languages especially English was learnt/acquired. Questions on possession of learning materials, attitudes towards English and opinion on the teacher were asked.

The interview techniques which were also employed took the form of unstructured dialogue with open-ended questions asked to the teachers and some parents. Through this method there was dialogue with some randomly selected students to establish their levels of proficiencies in English.

There were also observation in schools with focus on learning habits and teaching. Teaching methods observation checklists were employed for both teachers and students. These constituted some acts which showed how teachers taught and handled problems of classroom indiscipline or lack of interest during lessons. The checklist for students consisted of some forms of students' misbehaviour in class during English language lessons.

There was also the use of test as an investigative tool. In this regard, basic essay topics including; “my best friend”, “How I spent the Christmas holiday” and “A journey I made”, were given to the students and they were asked to write essays of 250 to 300 words on one of the topics. This was to test vocabulary, expression, tense, concord and spelling. The statistical and descriptive methods were used in analyzing the findings.

8. Findings

In this section there will be the presentation of data and results of findings.

Table 2 Age Range of Teachers

AGE	LB GALIM 09	CES KIENEGHANG 01	CES MENFOUNG 01	L LOMIE 02	CES MINDOUROU 01	CES MESSOCK 01	LB AMBAM 08
20–25	03	00	01	01	00	01	01
26–30	05	01	00	01	01	00	03
31–35	02	00	00	00	00	00	02
36–40	00	00	00	00	00	00	01
41+	00	00	00	00	00	00	01
L NKOLONDON 05	CES NYOMO 01	L NDOBIAN 03	CES BANG 02	L SONG 02	L MOUL 02	TOTAL 38	
01	00	02	01	01	01	13	
02	01	00	01	01	01	16	
01	00	01	00	00	00	6	
01	00	00	00	00	00	2	
00	00	00	00	00	00	1	

A majority of the teachers teaching English in the rural areas are young. From the data of the schools studied reflected on Table 2 above there are 35 out 38 teachers within the age range of 20 to 35 years representing about 92% of the total. This is indicative of the fact that upon graduation from the college of education, (HTTC Bambili, ENS Yaounde and Maroua) the graduates are posted to rural areas. As a result of the fact that they have little influence during this time, they get there and within a short while, look for transfer to the cities. They do not stay to work and master the situation in those environments; consequently, they generally lack the experience and tact to manage the subject and the students because they have just left school. Furthermore, there is lack of interest and enthusiasm in the work because of a general dislike of the environment. The teachers complain of remoteness, bad roads to the towns and cities, lack of basic amenities like electricity, good drinking water and good health facilities.

Table 3 Sex Distribution of the Teachers

SEX	LB GALIM 09	CES KIENEGHANG 01	CES MENFOUNG 01	L LOMIE 02	CES MENDOUROU 01	CES MESSOCK 01	LB AMBANO 08
MALE	06	00	01	02	01	01	05
FEMALE	03	01	00	00	00	00	03
L NKOLONDON 05	CES NYOMO 01	L NDOBIAN 03	CES BANG 02	L SONG 02	L MOUL 02	TOTAL 38	
04	00	02	02	01	01	26	
01	01	01	00	01	01	12	

Table 3 above is indicative of the fact that there are more male teachers, 26 out of 38 representing (68.4%) who teach English language and just 12 out of 38 representing (31.6%) of female teachers in the rural areas. The female teachers generally stay in town with their families (Husbands) who influence their transfer to the township. From my experience in the teacher training college in the past ten years, an overwhelming majority of students admitted for training each year to the Modern and Bilingual Letters departments (the departments which train the English language teachers) at least 90% are female students. Upon graduation, an insignificant percentage of this number is available for posting to the periphery. This results to the acute shortage of teachers in this subject in those environments.

The next question deals with the academic or professional profile of the teachers.

Table 4 Academic/Professional Profile of Teachers

Qualification	LB GALIM 09	CES KIENEGHANG 01	CES MENFOUNG 01	L LOMIE 02	CES MENDOUROU 01	CES MESSOCK 01	LB AMBANO 08
A'L/BACC	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
DIPES I	04	01	01	01	01	01	04
DIPES II	01	00	00	00	00	00	02
1 ST DEGREE	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
OTHER	04	00	00	01	00	00	02
L NKOLONDON 05	CES NYOMO 01		L NDOBIAN 03	CES BANG 02	L SONG 02	L MOUL 02	TOTAL 38
01	00		00	00	01	00	2
02	00		01	00	01	02	19
01	01		00	00	00	00	5
00	00		00	00	00	00	0
01	00		02	02	00	00	12

From Table 4, 24 out of 38 teachers who teach English language are holders of the DIPES I or II certificate in English. This is good enough. However, 12 out 38 are holders of other certificates and 02 are holders of Baccalaureate Certificate. From our findings, 06 of them are holders of ENIEG (the primary school teacher's training certificate) 04 others were history and geography teachers made to teach English while 02 were from CENAJES (the school of sports) also engaged to teach English. From this statistics, it is very obvious that 14 out of 38 teachers were not trained to teach English and as result, cannot adequately handle students' language problems at this level.

Table 5 Teaching Experience of Teachers

	LB GALIM 09	CES KIENEGHANG 01	CES MENFOUNG 01	L LOMIE 02	CES MENDOUROU 01	CES MESSOCK 01	LB AMBANO 08
<2	03	01	01	01	01	01	03
3-5	05	00	00	01	00	00	02
6-8	00	00	00	00	00	00	01
9-11	01	00	00	00	00	00	01
12-15	00	00	00	00	00	00	01
L NKOLONDON 05	CES NYOMO 01		L NDOBIAN 03	CES BANG 02	L SONG 02	L MOUL 02	TOTAL 38
01	00		00	00	01	01	14
02	01		01	00	01	01	14
01	00		00	00	00	00	2
00	00		00	00	00	00	2
01	00		02	02	00	00	6

Table 5 shows that, 14 teachers out of 38 have been teaching for less than two years and 14 other teachers have been teaching for three to five years. Altogether, 28 teachers out of 38 representing (73.68%) of the total number of teachers considered in this study, have been teaching for less than six years. This is indicative of the fact that many teachers in the rural areas are not comparatively experienced teachers therefore are not comparatively skilled to handle language teaching problems.

Table 6 Number of Hours Teachers Teach per Week

HRS	LB GALIM 09	CES KIENEGHANG 01	CES MENFONG 01	L LOMIE 02	CES MENDOUROU 01	CES MESSOCK 01	LB AMBANO 08
18	03	00	00	01	00	00	03
19-21	02	00	00	00	00	01	02
22-28	04	01	01	01	01	00	03
29+	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
L NKOLONDON 05	CES NYOMO 01	L NDOBIAN 03	CES BANG 02	L SONG 02	L MOUL 02	TOTAL 38	
01	00	00	02	01	00	11	
02	01	00	00	01	01	10	
02	00	03	00	00	01	17	
00	00	00	00	00	00	00	

From Table 6, 17 teachers out of 38 teach 22 to 28 hours a week. This is about double the required number of teaching hours per teacher per week. 10 out 38 (26.31%) teachers teach between 19 to 21 hours per week, this again is very high. 11 out of 38 teachers, teach 18 hours a week, once more, this is too much. From these figures, it is evidenced that these teachers are over loaded with work. This has negative effects on their performances. They can't possibly put forth their best under such working conditions. Some of the teachers are engaged to teach more hours in neighbouring schools to earn extra income to make ends meet. This makes the situation more cumbersome and in the long run, the students suffer.

Table 7 Language Used to Teach English

LANGS.	LB GALIM 09	CES KIENEGHANG 01	CES MENFONG 01	L LOMIE 02	CES MINDOUROU 01	CES MESSOCK 01	LB AMBAM 08
MT	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
FRENCH	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
ENGLISH	02	00	00	00	00	00	01
ENGLISH AND FRENCH	07	01	01	02	01	01	07
L NKOLONDON 05	CES NYOMO 01	L NDOBIAN 03	CES BANG. 02	L SONG. 02	L MOUL. 02	TOTAL 38	
00	00	00	00	00	00	00	
00	00	00	00	00	00	00	
01	00	02	00	00	00	06	
04	01	01	02	02	02	32	

Table 7 shows the language(s) which teachers use to teach in class. 32 teachers indicated that they used both English and French and just 06 used only English to teach. Those who used English and French advanced the

following reasons for using both languages. They explained that the students do not participate when only English is used and some of them become distracted and less attentive. In fact, they expressed the fact that, some of the students stay away from class on grounds that they do not understand anything in English language. The teachers who use only English to teach said that, they do so because they don't know French. They complained that they face a lot of problems ranging from indiscipline and unruly classrooms to subject content issues.

Table 8 Age Range of Students

AGE	LB GALIM 522	CES KIENEGHANG 60	CES MENFOUNG 56	L LOMIE 122	CES MINDOUROU 26	CES MESSOCK 30	LB AMBANO 1229
15–18	131	12	10	24	5	8	249
19–21	221	35	25	73	15	18	711
22–24	165	12	20	21	5	4	258
25+	05	01	01	04	1	00	11
L NKOLONDON 567	CES NYOMO30		L NDOBIAN 83	CES BANG 17	L SONG 120	L MOUL 96	Total
50	6		12	5	15	21	548
453	18		42	7	80	54	1911
51	5		19	4	15	19	700
13	1		10	1	10	2	60

Table8 above indicates that the highest number of students that is 1,911 of them have ages ranging between 19–21 years representing 59% this is followed by those whose age range between 22–24years, 700 of them representing (21.7%), this is again followed by those whose age range between 15–18 years 548 of them, representing (19.0%) and lastly 25 years and above occupying the last position with just 60 students showing (2%). This is indicative of the fact that many Francophone students in the rural areas get into secondary school at an advanced age. This results to lack of focus as their minds are preoccupied with other things. They have farm work and other domestic chores and many of the girls are getting set for early marriages.

Table 9 Sex Distribution of Students

SEX	LB GALIM 522	CES KIENEGHANG 60	CES MENFOUNG 56	L LOMIE 122	CES MINDOUROU 26	CES MESSOCK 30
MALE	271	38	36	78	19	17
FEMALE	251	22	20	44	07	13
LB AMBANO 1229	L NKOLONDON 567	CES NYOMO30	L NDOBIAN 83	CES BANG 17	L SONG 120	L MOUL 96
527	308	12	53	11	71	26
702	259	18	30	06	49	70

From the statistics above, except for Lyceed' Ambam, with a female population of 702 students as against a male population of 527 and which is located in a divisional Head Quarters as mentioned earlier, we realize that in all the other schools studied a majority of the students are male. The low number of female students in secondary schools in rural areas can be explained by the fact that most of them do not get into high schools after the BEPC exams. The few who even get to high school eventually drop out due to early marriages and unwanted pregnancies.

8. Students' Exposure to Language

Table 10 Languages Used at Home with Siblings

LANGUAGES	LB GALIM 522	CES KIENEGHANG 60	CES MENFOUNG 56	L LOMIE 122	CES MINDOUROU 26	CES MESSOCK 30
MT+FRENCH	402	46	43	101	24	27
MT	120	14	12	21	02	03
FRENCH	00	00	00	00	00	00
ENGLISH	00	00	00	00	00	00
PIDGIN ENGLISH	00	00	00	00	00	00
LB AMBANO 1229	L NKOLONDON 567	CES NYOMO 30	L NDOBIAN 83	CES BANG 17	L SONG 120	L MOUL 96
998	376	28	55	10	78	90
231	191	02	28	07	42	06
00	00	00	00	00	00	00
00	00	00	00	00	00	00
00	00	00	00	00	00	00

Table 10 above which looked at languages used at home with siblings, shows that the mother tongue and French are the languages predominantly used, 2278 students representing 77% indicated that they use the mother tongue and French when talking with their siblings. This is followed by the use of only the mother tongue alone with a total of 679 indications, representing 23% in the home setting. English is never used at home by the students and their siblings therefore, the use of English is very restricted.

Table 11 Language Used at Home with Parents

LANGUAGES	LB GALIM 522	CES KIENEGHANG 60	CES MENFOUNG 56	L LOMIE 122	CES MINDOUROU 26	CES MESSOCK 30
MT + FRENCH	141	22	30	40	10	11
MT	381	38	26	82	16	19
FRENCH	00	00	00	00	00	00
ENGLISH	00	00	00	00	00	00
PIDGIN ENGLISH	00	00	00	00	00	00
LB AMBANO 1229	L NKOLONDON 567	CES NYOMO 30	L NDOBIAN 83	CES BANG 17	L SONG 120	L MOUL 96
517	367	13	23	04	34	71
712	200	17	60	13	86	25
00	00	00	00	00	00	00
00	00	00	00	00	00	00
00	00	00	00	00	00	00

The Figures in Table 11 above show that the Mother tongue is the most used language when the students communicate with their parents at home indicated by 1675 students representing 57%. This is followed by the use of Mother tongue plus French indicated by 1283 students representing 43%. The students never use English to communicate with their parents. This again portrays the fact that English use is highly restricted in the setting.

Table 12 Languages Most Frequently Used with Friends

LANGUAGES	LB GALIM 522	CES KIENEGHANG 60	CES MENFOUNG 56	L LOMIE 122	CES MINDOUROU 26	CES MESSOCK 30
MT+FRENCH	340	43	37	103	15	17
MT	145	15	16	17	10	12
FRENCH	37	02	03	02	01	01
ENGLISH	00	00	00	00	00	00
PIDGIN ENGLISH	00	00	00	00	00	00
LB AMBANO 1229	L NKOLONDON 567	CES NYOMO 30	L NDOBIAN 83	CES BANG 17	L SONG 120	L MOUL 96
871	437	17	47	11	64	73
249	31	09	34	05	54	22
109	99	04	02	01	02	01
00	00	00	00	00	00	00
00	00	00	00	00	00	00

Table 12 above shows that the students mostly employ the usage of the mother tongue together with French when speaking with their friends indicated by 2075 students representing 70%. Then, a total of 619 students indicated the use of the mother tongue only; this is most common amongst friends who do not go to school and who do not speak French; representing 21%. This is followed by those who indicated the use of French alone by a total of 264 students representing 9%. It is interesting once more to note the absence of the use of English among peers.

Table 13 Starting Point for Learning English

LANGUAGES	LB GALIM 522	CES KIENEGHANG 60	CES MENFOUNG 56	L LOMIE 122	CES MINDOUROU 26	CES MESSOCK 30
NURSERY	16	03	04	09	00	01
PRIMARY	193	12	10	30	02	05
SECONDARY	313	45	42	83	24	24
LB AMBANO 1229	L NKOLONDON 567	CES NYOMO 30	L NDOBIAN 83	CES BANG 17	L SONG 120	L MOUL 96
43	18	02	09	02	13	00
251	152	06	25	05	27	09
935	397	22	49	10	80	87

Table 13 above shows that a majority of the students start learning English only in the secondary schools (6eme). As indicated by 2111 students representing 71%. It is only a small proportion of students who indicated that, they start off with English at the basic levels (727 at the primary representing 25% and 120 at the nursery, representing 4%). When asked why the timid start of learning at the basic levels; the response from some of the parents was that, they do not have money to send their children to nursery schools while others do not see the need. Also, many of the nursery and primary schools lack personnel and infrastructure. Some of the students admitted that, they only met an English teacher in the secondary school.

Table 14 Languages Mostly Used by Students during Certain School Situations

	LB GALIM 522				CES KIENEGHANG 60				CES MENFOUNG 56			
Situation	MT	FRENCH	ENGLISH	PIDGIN	MT	FRENCH	ENGLISH	PIDGIN	MT	FRENCH	ENGLISH	PIDGIN
Going to School	435	97	00	00	52	08	00	00	49	07	00	00
In class with the Teacher	07	515	00	00	04	56	00	00	02	54	00	00
In class without teacher	263	259	00	00	41	19	00	00	36	20	00	00
Out of class; breaktime, manual labour etc.	401	121	00	00	54	06	00	00	48	08	00	00
Going back home from school	435	97	00	00	53	08	00	00	50	06	00	00
	CES MESSOCK 30				LB AMBAM 1229				LNKOLONDOM 567			
Situation	MT	FRENCH	ENGLISH	PIDGIN	MT	FRENCH	ENGLISH	PIDGIN	MT	FRENCH	ENGLISH	PIDGIN
Going to School	28	02	00	00	893	336	00	00	487	80	00	00
In class with the Teacher	01	29	00	00	00	1229	00	00	193	374	00	00
In class without teacher	26	04	00	00	673	556	00	00	253	314	00	00
Out of class; breaktime, manual labour etc.	28	02	00	00	801	428	00	00	299	268	00	00
Going back home from school	28	02	00	00	892	337	00	00	487	80	00	00
	CES BANG 17				L SONG 120				L MOUL 96			
Situation	MT	FRENCH	ENGLISH	PIDGIN	MT	FRENCH	ENGLISH	PIDGIN	MT	FRENCH	ENGLISH	PIDGIN
Going to School	10	07	00	00	99	21	00	00	90	06	00	00
In class with the Teacher	04	13	00	00	36	84	00	00	08	88	00	00
In class without teacher	08	09	00	00	113	07	00	00	89	07	00	00
Out of class; breaktime, manual labour etc.	09	08	00	00	73	47	00	00	87	09	00	00
Going back home from school	10	07	00	00	99	21	00	00	91	05	00	00
L LOMIE 122				CES MINDOUROU 26								
MT	FRENCH	ENGLISH	PIDGIN	MT	FRENCH	ENGLISH	PIDGIN					
98	24	00	00	23	03	00	00					
06	108	00	00	02	24	00	00					
97	25	00	00	22	04	00	00					
92	30	00	00	24	02	00	00					
98	24	00	00	23	03	00	00					
CES NYOMO 30				LNDOBIAN 83								
MT	FRENCH	ENGLISH	PIDGIN	MT	FRENCH	ENGLISH	PIDGIN					
28	02	00	00	63	20	00	00					
09	21	00	00	07	76	00	00					
12	18	00	00	68	15	00	00					
22	08	00	00	51	32	00	00					
28	02	00	00	63	20	00	00					

Table 14 above shows that, on the whole, the students use the mother tongue a lot in communicating within the school premises and even in class. When going to school, 2355 students, representing 80% make use of the mother tongue most of the time and when returning home from school, about the same number, 2357 students representing 80% still make use of the mother tongue most of the time. The rest of the students mostly use French on their way to school and on their way back representing 20%. When the teacher is in class 83% of the students use French and the rest use the mother tongue. And during break, 61.8% use the mother tongue while the rest use French. Once more, English language is not used during these activities.

It is quite unfortunate that English is not used in any of the situations. From the figures on this table it is quite glaring that the students are more exposed to mother tongue and French usage than English.

In fact, English never feature; implying that the contact with English is only during the English lessons.

9. Attitude towards English Language

Table 15 Students' Interest in English

Question: Do you love/(have) ----?		LB GALIM 522		CES KIENEGHANG 60		CES MENFOUNG 56		L LOMIE 122		CES MINDOUROU 26		CES MESSOCK 30		
Response		YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	
English as a Language		501	21	58	02	53	03	96	26	24	02	26	04	
English as a Subject		208	314	23	27	21	35	27	95	09	17	12	18	
Interest in Learning English		472	50	44	16	43	13	106	16	23	03	27	03	
LB AMBAM 1229		L NKOLONDON 567			CES NYOMO30		L NDOBIAN 83		CES BANG 17		L SONG 120		L MOUL 96	
YES	NO	YES		NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
1206	23	476		91	28	02	67	16	11	06	97	23	91	05
472	757	237		330	08	22	32	51	09	08	51	69	20	76
987	342	487		80	21	09	69	14	14	03	107	13	83	13

On the students' attitude towards English, figures in Table 15 above show that the students love English and also have interest in learning the language. This is indicated by 2734 students, representing 94% for those who love the language and 2483 student representing 84% of those interested in learning the language. However, many students 1819 of them representing 62% indicated that, they didn't cherish English as a subject. They advanced the following reasons for their position. First, they claimed that, they perform poorly in English language as a subject. Then, they do not understand the lessons when the teachers teach in English. Furthermore, they complained that the lessons are sometimes very boring and they are unable to read and understand English texts. Finally, they reported that they lacked didactic materials especially the English text books to permit them study and understand the subject.

Table 16 Number of Students Who Attend Classes Regularly

RESPONSE	LB GALIM 522	CES KIENEGHANG 60	CES MENFOUNG 56	L LOMIE 122	CES MINDOUROU 26	CES MESSOCK 30
YES	506	56	49	106	24	28
NO	16	04	07	16	02	02
LB AMBANO 1229	L NKOLONDON 567	CES NYOMO 30	L NDOBIAN 83	CES BANG 17	L SONG 120	L MOUL 96
1210	501	27	78	15	107	87
19	66	03	05	02	13	09

From the figures in Table 16, it is evident that students' irregularity in English classes is not a major cause of their poor performance in English. As indicated many of the students about 2794 representing 95% are regular. Those who are irregular complained that they are generally dissatisfied with the way the language is taught. They also indicated that, they are sometimes busy with farm work while in other instances, they are away because of fee drive.

Table 17 Students' Possession of Didactic Materials in English

RESPONSE	LB GALIM 522	CES KIENEGHANG 60	CES MENFOUNG 56	L LOMIE 122	CES MINDOUROU 26	CES MESSOCK 30
YES	186	09	10	23	07	06
NO	336	51	46	99	19	24
LB AMBANO 1229	L NKOLONDON 567	CES NYOMO30	L NDOBIAN 83	CES BANG 17	L SONG 120	L MOUL 96
472	252	13	73	05	34	26
757	315	17	10	12	86	70

The materials which the students used in class and out of class to do their assignments include;

- Stay Tuned
- Go for English
- Bilingual dictionary
- Moving On

From the figures in Table 17 above, we realize that only 1116 students representing 38% of the students possess didactic materials required for their study of English. Many of the students lacked such materials. This is a great handicap to the learning of English.

Table 18 Language in Which Students Love to be Taught English

Age	LB GALIM 522	CES KIENEGHANG 60	CES MENFOUNG 56	L LOMIE 122	CES MENDOUROU 26	CES MESSOCK 30
ENGLISH	101	12	09	38	07	08
FRENCH	43	10	08	24	03	04
Mother Tongue	17	05	04	11	03	02
English and French	361	33	35	49	13	16
LB AMBANO 1229	L NKOLONDON 567	CES NYOMO30	L NDOBIAN 83	CES BANG 17	L SONG 120	L MOUL 96
183	132	09	30	07	37	07
133	102	02	10	03	24	12
17	21	03	30	02	10	08
896	312	16	40	05	49	69

The data presented on table 19 above shows that, 1894 students love to be taught English through the media of both French and English, representing 64% and 580 students prefer only the use of English in teaching English representing 20%. 11% of the students wish to be taught English through the medium of French while 133 students prefer the use of the mother tongue representing 5%. These statistics are indicative of the fact that, a majority of the students prefer the Grammar Translation Method of teaching. This method has a major short coming in that students taught using it hardly acquire the skills of Speaking. They will generally exhibit good writing skills but will lack the ability to efficiently express themselves through speech. It is important to note that this will only happen (that is, the learners will develop the writing skills) when the method is well employed. In

this instance a majority of the teachers do not possess the skills to employ the method as many of them are deficient in the use of French. The students who preferred only English; gave the following reasons:

English should be taught in English because:

- I would never understand English if I am taught in French
- It will enable me to avoid a mix up and confusion
- It will also encourage me to study more.

English should be taught in French or mother tongue because;

- It would permit me understand English better.
- I do not like English as a subject.

Table 19 Students' Levels in the Four Skills

W = Writing S = Speaking R = Reading L = Listening	LB GALIM 522				CES KIENEGHANG 60				CES MENFOUNG 56				L LOMIE 122				CES MINDOUROU 26			
LEVEL/SKILL	W	S	R	L	W	S	R	L	W	S	R	L	W	S	R	L	W	S	R	L
Poor	400	398	232	373	22	26	09	26	17	20	13	20	66	71	36	69	10	09	03	11
Below Average	100	101	185	90	19	21	16	23	15	16	11	18	24	29	19	34	05	09	02	07
Average	18	20	71	50	12	07	24	06	13	13	16	12	18	18	38	12	06	06	13	05
Good	04	03	29	07	06	06	08	04	08	05	12	04	12	03	13	05	04	02	04	02
Very Good	00	00	05	02	01	00	03	01	03	02	04	02	02	01	06	02	01	00	02	01
	CES MESSOCK 30				LB AMBAM 1229				L NKOLONDOM 567				CES NYOMO 30				L NDOBIAN 83			
LEVEL/SKILL	W	S	R	L	W	S	R	L	W	S	R	L	W	S	R	L	W	S	R	L
Poor	11	14	06	12	790	760	302	801	193	268	98	273	12	14	06	13	23	41	12	51
Below Average	07	08	06	08	229	258	358	238	206	232	147	223	08	09	08	10	33	27	21	22
Average	06	06	10	06	133	134	294	130	109	37	154	47	06	06	09	06	18	12	37	09
Good	05	02	07	03	68	70	198	55	59	30	109	24	03	01	05	01	06	03	11	01
Very Good	01	00	01	01	09	07	77	05	00	00	59	00	01	00	02	00	00	00	02	00
	CES BANG 17				L SONG 120				L MOUL 96											
LEVEL/SKILL	W	S	R	L	W	S	R	L	W	S	R	L								
Poor	04	07	02	07	18	66	22	57	27	46	14	45								
Below Average	06	05	04	06	42	32	32	37	38	36	22	37								
Average	06	04	06	03	37	15	37	19	21	12	43	11								
Good	01	01	04	01	23	07	27	07	10	02	14	03								
Very Good	00	00	01	00	00	00	02	00	00	00	03	00								

Statistics from Table19 above show that the students have problems with all the language skills. Listening skills top the list where 1758 students representing 59% indicate that they would perform poorly in listening skills. Writing skills closely follow the listening skills whereby 1593 students representing 54% indicate that their performance in writing is poor. 1177 students, representing 40% indicated that they would rank their performance in speaking English as poor. In the reading skill, 25% of the students would read averagely.

The next investigative activity, was observation. The teacher did most of the talking in the different schools observed and the students' participation was generally very poor. Indiscipline and rowdiness characterized many of the classes observed in the different schools. The teachers had to strain to maintain some order in the classes. Many teachers did not use teaching Aids and the students generally looked bored. The teaching approach approved for use is the CLT. However, it was clear that many teachers did not use it. Many of the teachers

complained about the large number of students and small space which would not permit such a method. More over the time allocated for English was not sufficient to teach using the method.

An essay test was given to the students. They were all required to write an essay of 250 to 300 words on one of the following topics: My Best Friend, How I Spent the Christmas Holiday and A Journey I Made. They were all required to use at most one hour thirty minutes to write the essay. After the test, there was a systematic selection of some of the papers in the schools having more than 50 students for marking. This selection was done in such a way that only about a quarter of the total number of papers from the big schools were marked. The performance of the students is presented on Table 20 below:

Table 20 The Performance of the Students

SCORE RANGE OUT OF 20 AND PERCENTAGE	LB GALIM 120	CES KIEN 50	CES MENFOUNG 50	L LOMI 50	CES MINDOUROU 26	CES MESSOCK 30	L AMBAM 300	L NKOLONDOM 120
15+ (75%)	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
12-14 (60%-70%)	03	01	02	00	01	02	09	06
10-11 (50%-55%)	12	02	03	03	02	01	12	08
8-9 (40%-45%)	14	04	05	02	02	03	98	12
6-7 (30%-35%)	18	05	04	04	05	03	86	24
4-5 (20%-25%)	16	13	12	10	03	05	40	22
2-3 (10%-15%)	20	11	12	11	07	12	21	28
1-2 (5%-10%)	18	04	03	06	02	01	13	12
0 (0%)	19	10	09	14	02	03	21	08
	CES NYOMO 30	L NDOBIAN 50	CES MBANG 17	L SONG 50	L MOUL 50	TOTAL 943		
15+ (75%)	00	00	00	00	00	00		
12-14 (60%-70%)	02	00	00	00	02	28		
10-11 (50%-55%)	03	02	03	04	04	59		
8-9 (40%-45%)	06	03	04	06	08	167		
6-7 (30%-35%)	08	15	02	04	05	183		
4-5 (20%-25%)	03	09	03	12	07	155		
2-3 (10%-15%)	03	11	01	08	08	153		
1-2 (5%-10%)	03	02	01	09	07	81		
0 (0%)	02	08	03	07	09	115		

The marking took into consideration expression with 8 marks, vocabulary 3 marks, tense usage 3 marks, concord 3 marks and spelling 3 marks giving a total of 20 marks. There were considerations given to the various levels of the students in the marking. The higher levels of “Premiere” and “Terminale” were rated higher than “Troisieme” and “Seconde”. The results were generally poor as can be observed from Table 20 above with 115 students scoring a zero and no one scoring up to 15 marks. 87 out of 943 scored between 10 to 14 marks representing only a 9% pass. There were problems with all the areas of testing. Expression was appalling and

many of the scripts had French mixed with English. Some of the students wrote in French. A good number of them, wrote the title and submitted the papers with no attempts at writing.

During the interviews, the situation was equally bad. One could hardly find students who could sustain a simple discussion in English. The teachers complained about too much work and poor working conditions. A good number were not yet receiving salaries and it was difficult coping in the villages with no money.

10. Conclusion and Recommendation

From the findings derived in this study, it is clear that teaching and learning English in the rural areas of the French speaking regions of Cameroon is a very complex matter. The standards are appalling and this is evidenced in examination results and inability to use the language in the community and at the tertiary level of education. A case in point is in connection with problems encountered by the students when they gain admission to the Anglo-Saxon universities of Bamenda and Buea which employ English as the medium of instruction. In fact the objective of the government for official bilingualism is far-fetched. So many problems account for this sorry situation. There is acute shortage of teachers in the rural areas and the few who happen to be posted there are young graduates fresh from school. They are usually over laden, resulting to inefficiencies and poor performances. This calls for a dire need to dis-enclave many of these areas by constructing roads to link these places to the towns. With a good communication road network, teachers could stay where ever they choose and effectively carry out their work in the rural areas. The students will have access to the English speaking areas of the country and this will improve their attitudes and also provide the environment to practice using English. There is also the need to provide good health facilities, pipe borne water and electricity to attract teachers to the rural areas. There is need for regular seminars to orient teachers on new methods and strategies to help the students through making livelier and more practical classrooms situations. This is very essential in the rural areas because the Inspectors charged with this responsibility find it difficult to travel to the villages to carry out the task. It is lack of awareness on the part of the students as well as their parents for the necessity of English Language. This contributes to a great extent to the problems. The importance of English, first and foremost as a factor of national integration and unity emphasized by the government also, in the advancement of the career of these students especially in the university where it is one of the medium of instruction and as an asset for external learning and great job avenues must be emphasized to these students and their parents alike. With sufficient motivation the students will make greater efforts. The parents on their part will get the relevant didactic materials required by their children for learning. This should go a long way to ameliorate the situation.

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