

## Linguistic Coexistence and Hegemony Resistance by Secondary School Teachers in the Anglophone Regions of Cameroon

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### ABSTRACT

*This quantitative study set out to investigate resistance to linguistic hegemony (domination) of French over English and hegemony of French and English over national languages in Cameroon. Using a well-structured questionnaire, the survey investigated 100 secondary school teachers (both Anglophone and Francophone) purposively sampled from the Buea and Bamenda the headquarters of the Southwest and Northwest regions of Cameroon. The generated data were analysed using IBM SPSS 20.0 for the descriptive frequency analysis presented in tables and figures in the results section. Through the lens of linguistic imperialism theory, the study examined two levels of linguistic domination that demonstrate a significant language policy crisis in the country. Findings reveal that French hegemony is caused by its majority status and its imposition on Anglophones as a colonial language, while Cameroonian national languages are marginalised because of minority status and lack of institutional development. Findings equally show that linguistic hegemony is resisted through the media, literature and education. To achieve linguistic equality, the study recommends that all information of general interest in the country be documented in English and French. It equally recommends that citizens be guaranteed the freedom to use their preferred language(s) in official settings and that each language be made official in its respective territorial space. The study advocates for the development and standardisation of national languages, such that they can enjoy the same prestige as the foreign official languages. All these require strong commitment from the government and relentless efforts from policy makers.*

**Key words:** hegemony resistance, linguistic coexistence, official languages, national languages/mother tongues

## 1 Introduction

At the reunification of the two Cameroons in 1961, the need for communication at the national level, for purposes of education, administration, mass media and diplomacy became urgent. Regrettably, the founding fathers of the new nation saw the use of national languages as a threat to national unity and so adopted English and French as the sole official languages (Chiatoh, 2014, p. 322). Since then, the different versions of the country's Constitution have provided for the coexistence of the two languages with emphasis on their equal status. Recently, there has also been a provision for the promotion of national languages. However, these provisions and the rest of what has come to be considered as the country's language policy is today largely agreed to have been founded on the wrong basis. For instance, it is now clear that two culturally opposing people like the Anglophones and Francophones in Cameroon have never successfully coexisted on such feeble terms as equality of status of their respective languages. This partly explains why French enjoys absolute prominence, prestige, authority and dominance over English, on grounds of its majority status. This dominance is strengthened by government policy and influence and leads to socio-cultural, political and economic injustices. There is an obvious imbalance in the use of the two languages as "French continues to be the dominant means of communication while English is relegated to second place within the State", (Pütz's (2020, p. 303). Resistance to these injustices has taken different forms that have since November 2016 resulted in an identity conflict tagged as the '*Anglophone problem*' characterised by armed rebellion and human rights violations of many sorts.

Coexistence between the official languages and national languages in the country has not also been any different. The effect of the official bilingualism policy on national languages has been deprecating and unprecedented. Pioneer texts that constitute Cameroon's language policy forbade the use of indigenous languages in the educational system and clearly outlined the French colonial goal to assimilate the Cameroonian people (Bitja'a, 2001, p. 3-4). As a follow-up to this, policy makers have been reluctant to promote mother tongue-based multilingual educational programmes (programmes that focus on teaching children in their first language as primary medium of instruction). Even with official endorsement, implementation of these programmes has been marked by continuous feet dragging. National languages, which before colonisation were

vibrant and powerful tools of administration, communication, identification, socialisation, unification and appeasement among the people have gradually lost their significance to the prestigious official languages. Many families now perceive them as inferior and primitive. They have been reduced to casual minority languages with their emblematic function nullified as they are excluded from formal education, national television, publicity, written media and government administration (Bitja'a, 2001, p.1). In fact, national languages have been reduced to oral use within rural family circles while in urban centres, English and French are gradually but steadily replacing them as home language. In many families, parents increasingly crave for official-language-only education thus imposing on indigenous languages a seriously disconcerting situation of endangerment. More and more, these languages are despised because they are inadequate in fulfilling educational and developmental functions (Iwara, 2015, p.124). Hegemonic policies and practices have thus ensured that less politically-backed groups stay permanently unsecured and victimised in the hands of those that wield power (Achimbe, 2005, p. 7).

The analysis of Cameroon's linguistic situation draws on Phillipson's (2002) theory of linguistic imperialism, which examines how societies privilege certain languages through mechanisms parallel to racism, sexism, and class oppression. The theory posits that linguistic imperialism thrives in structural contexts where dominant languages receive superior material resources and infrastructure. Ideologically, it promotes beliefs and attitudes that valorise the dominant language while marginalising others, creating hierarchies of exploitation, inequality, and injustice that privilege dominant language speakers. Linguistic imperialism intersects with imperial structures in cultural, educational, media, economic, political, and military spheres, and manifests through unequal linguistic rights that invariably provoke resistance and contest. Linguistic imperialism provides an apt framework for analysing Cameroon's language situation in which French enjoys a superior function over English on the one hand, and the two official languages are systematically imposed and maintained at the expense of the indigenous languages on the other.

## **2 Methodology**

Data for this quantitative study were collected with the help of a structured questionnaire prepared in English and translated into French since

both English-speaking and French-speaking teachers were targeted. The sample size was 100 but a total of 200 questionnaires were administered in each town, 100 per town within a period of one week when the GCE (General Certificate of Education) marking was going on. Questionnaires were distributed in marking centres in the two towns - Government Bilingual High School (GBHS) Bamenda and Bilingual Grammar School (BGS) Buea – where teachers assembled for the GCE marking exercise. Of the 200 questionnaires administered, 100 were returned, indicating a 50% return rate. This average return rate was anticipated because the teachers focused more on the marking exercise and paid little attention to other activities. However, the period was the most convenient for the researchers because it was convenient to reach a large number of teachers and to have them fill and return the questionnaire without much delay. Data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 20.0 for descriptive frequencies on participant demographics, including gender, linguistic and educational background (tables 1-4 and figure 1), level of awareness and resistance to linguistic hegemony (tables 5-7 and figure 2) and suggested method to achieve linguistic equality (table 8).

### **3 Results and Analysis**

The findings of this study are presented under three main rubrics corresponding to the different sections of the questionnaire, notably, the background (demographic) section, a section on French language dominance over English and another on official language dominance over Cameroonian national languages.

#### **3.1 Background Information**

This section presents the socio-demographic background of the participants in the study. It states their distribution by gender, linguistic and educational background, level of mother tongue competence and the level of individual bilingualism.

##### **3.1.1 Gender and Linguistic Background**

According to the findings, 53 (53%) of the respondents were male while 47 of them (47%) were female. Secondly, (80) respondents (80%) were Anglophones while only 20 (20%) were Francophones as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Respondents' Sex and Linguistic Background*

Sex	Frequency	Percentage	Linguistic background	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	53	53	Anglophone	80	80
Female	47	47	Francophone	20	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 shows that more males than females participated in the study; this is because female teachers were more reluctant to collect the questionnaires, and most of those who collected the questionnaire never returned the filled sheets. The small number of French-speaking respondents is explained by the fact that there were few francophone teachers in the English-speaking regions, where the English subsystem of education is predominant.

### 3.1.2 Education

We also examined respondents' educational backgrounds as an indicator of their exposure to the problem under investigation, thereby, validating opinions expressed, especially with regards to suggested strategies for obtaining linguistic equality. Correspondingly, data revealed that 22 (22%) respondents had the First Cycle Secondary School Teachers' Diplomas (SSTD1) while 20 (20%) had the Second Cycle Secondary School Teachers' Diplomas (SSTD2). Apart from their teacher's diplomas, 41 (41%) of them had a Bachelor's degree while 17 (17%) had a Master Degrees as Table 2 below shows.

**Table 2**

*Respondents' Level of Education*

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage (%)
SSTD I	22	22
SSTD II	20	20
Bachelor's degree (BA)	41	41
Master's degree	17	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

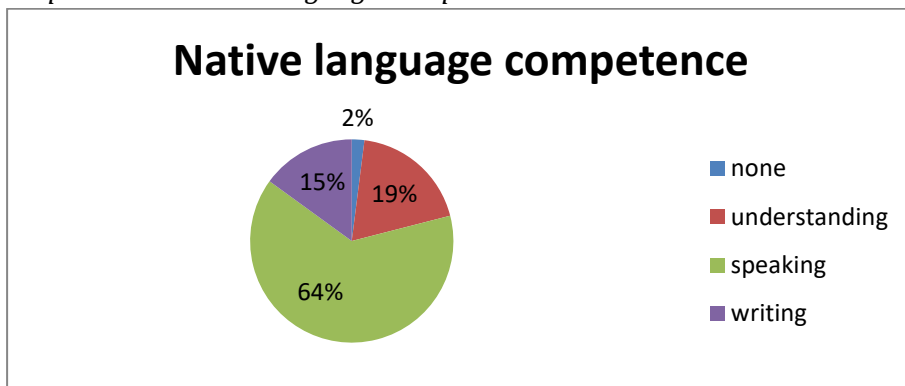
As observed in Table 2, a majority of the teachers sampled had a university degree in addition to their professional training.

### 3.1.3 National Language Competence

In this section, respondents were asked their level of national language competence as an indicator of the importance they attach to their indigenous languages. This question also helped to validate the first question in section three on intergenerational transfer of the indigenous language, given that they cannot implement a mother tongue home language policy if they do not master it themselves. We, therefore, asked the respondents if they could understand, speak and write their native languages. In this light, 19 (19%) respondents understood their mother tongues but could neither speak nor write it. 64 (64%) respondents said they understood and spoke it while 15 (15%) said that besides understanding and speaking, they could write it. Only 2 respondents (2%) did not have any mastery of their native languages as seen in Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1**

*Respondents' Native Language Competence*



The above results imply that most respondents mastered their native language to a certain extent. So there is the possibility of intergenerational transfer, since up to 64 (64%) of them speak their native languages.

### 3.1.4 Individual Bilingualism

This section sought to know whether or not respondents were bilingual with the aim of finding out the position individuals reserved for their native languages given their minority status. The respondents were asked if they considered themselves bilingual and told to list the languages that made them bilingual. Here, 83 (83%) respondents said they were bilingual while 17 (17%) said they were not, as shown on Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Respondents' Bilingual Status*

Are you bilingual?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	83	83
No	17	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

As indicated, the majority of the respondents were bilingual. However, 60 (72%) of the bilingual respondents who also acknowledged competence in their native languages, considered bilingualism as involving only English and French. Only 23 (28%) of them listed their native language among their languages of bilingualism as Table 4 shows.

**Table 4**

*Respondents' Languages of Bilingualism*

Languages of bilingualism	Frequency (out of 83)	Valid Percentage (%)
English and French	60	72.3
English, French, Mother tongue	15	18.1
English and MT or French and MT	8	9.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100</b>

As observed, most respondents (72%) perceived the concept of bilingualism as pertaining only to English and French. That is why 60 (72.3%) of those with native language competence did not consider this as one of the languages of bilingualism.

### 3.2 Linguistic Hegemony: Awareness, Reasons and Resistance

This section reports the rate of awareness of linguistic domination, its causes and the resistance strategies employed with regard to official languages and with regard to Cameroonian national.

#### 3.2.1 French Versus English

Respondents were asked whether they thought French and English were treated as having equal status as stipulated by the constitution, and if not, which of the languages was dominant. In response, 98 respondents (98%) said English and French do not have equal statuses, while 2 respondents said they have, as shown on Table 5.

**Table 5**

*Respondents' Perception of status of English and French*

<b>Are English and French of equal status?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Yes	98	98
No	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

As the above table shows, 98 (98%) of the respondents were conscious that English and French do not enjoy equal status as stipulated by the constitution. All 98 (100%) respondents considered French as the dominant language while only 2 (2%) thought they are equal in status. It is vital to note that these two respondents were francophones. The high level of awareness of inequality between the two official languages clearly contradicts the 1996 constitution that provides for equality in status.

##### 3.2.1.1 Reasons for French Dominance

From our data, 60 (58.8%) of the respondents indicated that the main reason for French dominance is its majority status; 53 (51.9%) thought the domination is due to the imposition of the language in official domain while 47 (46.06%) respondents thought it is the language of political leadership and administration.

Respondents also enumerated reasons not previewed by the questionnaire. For instance, one Francophone respondent stated that it is an intentional policy designed to dominate Anglophones. One Anglophone insisted that “Anglophones perceive French as a language of colonisation” while another said “our leaders do not promote English”, and “the head of state is not interested in English”. Some respondents perceived this problem at the level of documentation as one Anglophone respondent asserted: “Official documents are in French and those working in public offices out of the Anglophone zone despise English”. As for other respondents, French dominance comes about because “Anglophones are being marginalised”. It is noteworthy that none of the opinions suggests negligence as a cause of the linguistic marginalisation. This shows that both Anglophones and francophones think that French dominance is deliberate.

### **3.2.1.2 Resistance to French Dominance**

This section was meant to find out whether there is any resistance to French domination over English and how this is manifested. Respondents were asked whether they noticed any resistance to French domination over English. In response, 87 (87%) agreed while 13 (13%) disagreed. One of those who disagreed explained that there is no resistance because “when public documents appear only in French, Anglophones stay quiet”.

Concerning the various ways in which the resistance to French domination is manifested, 43 (43%) respondents indicated that the issue is decried in the public media (newspapers, radio and television programmes as well as social media networks). 21 (21%) respondents said linguistic marginalisation is resisted through protest literature, while 34 (34%) maintained that awareness is raised through education. One French-speaking respondent said that Anglophones manifest resistance by responding in English when addressed in French. In his own words, “*Beaucoup de Camerounais d’expression anglaise répondent plutôt en Anglais quand on leurs parle en Français, surtout en zone anglophone bien qu’ils puissent bien s’exprimer dans cette langue*”.

### **3.2.2 Official Languages Versus National Languages**

This study equally sought to determine respondents’ awareness of the marginalisation of their native languages by English and French. First, it was important to find out the importance of native languages in their homes.

Respondents were asked if they actually implemented the native home-language policy. In response, 47 (47%) respondents said they used their native language as home language especially in raising their kids, while 47 (47%) others said they did not. A 6% non-response rate was recorded here as indicated on Table 6.

**Table 6: Home Language Policy**

*Respondents' Home Language Policy*

Is your native language your home language?	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Valid percentage (%)
Yes	47	47	50
No	47	47	50
Missing	6	6	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

From the table, 50% of the respondents were actively involved in intergenerational transfer of the national languages while 50% were not. Although the majority of teachers sampled mastered their mother tongue, just about half of them used it as home language. Therefore, just half of the population was effectively involved in intergenerational transmission of the national language. The other half had English and/or French as their home language. Thus, the official languages were promoted at the detriment of national languages. When asked whether official languages dominated their native languages, 61 (61%) agreed while 39 (39%) disagreed as Table 7 shows.

**Table 7: Official Languages Domination over Indigenous Languages**

Do the official languages dominate your native language?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	66	66
No	34	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Notice that the 64% who acknowledged official languages domination is 14% higher than the 47% who did not use their native language as home language. This shows that there is a significantly high level of awareness of the dominant effect of the official languages given that even those who implement

the native-language-home-language policy were conscious that their native languages were dominated.

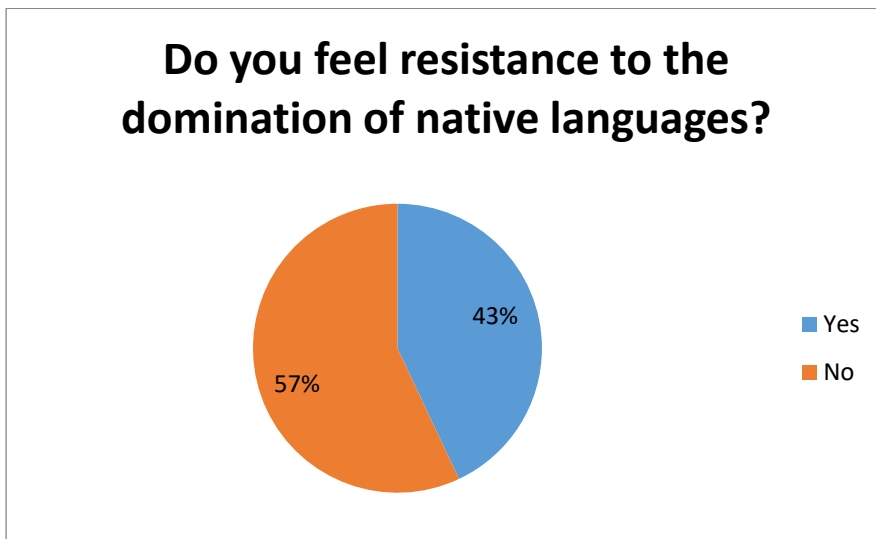
### 3.2.2.1 Reasons for the Marginalisation of National Languages

We sampled respondents' opinions about the causes of the marginalisation of native languages. Regrettably, most respondents who indicated that the official languages dominate their native languages did not give any reasons. However, 17 (10.4%) of them explained that official languages dominance is due to inter-tribal marriage where husband and wife do not speak the same native language. Two others (1.2%) maintained that the dominance of official languages comes about because they use them more to enhance their children's academic performances while 4 (2.4) felt that domination was due to negligence of the native languages.

### 3.2.2.2 Resistance to Marginalisation of National Languages

They were further asked if there was any resistance to the official languages domination over native languages. The majority 43 (43%) respondents agreed while 57 (57%) did not as seen on the Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Resistance to National Languages Domination**



### **3.3 Suggested Measures to Ensure Linguistic Equality**

Finally, it was important to know how the teachers thought the problem of linguistic hegemony can be solved as discussed below.

#### **3.3.1 Between English and French**

Regarding official languages, 75 (75%) of respondents agreed that equal access to information through the production of official documents in English and French can contribute to ensuring equality in status of the two official languages while 18 (18%) did not agree and 7 (7%) did not respond. This indicates that most respondents see documentation as a major area in which linguistic equality can be guaranteed. Moreover, 45 (45%) respondents agreed that legalising respondents' rights to preferred languages in all official communication and holding to account all defaulters can help balance the language status equation. One Francophone indicated that it requires good will on the part of policy makers while another said Anglophones need to be included in administration. They said: *"Les Anglophones doivent être intégrés dans l'administration"*. Some respondents thought that establishing bilingual education in schools right from the primary can help while others suggested that promoting bilingualism at all levels particularly in administration is imperative. One respondent said that priority should be given to Anglophones in commonwealth scholarships and in professional schools such as Higher Teacher Training Colleges in Anglophone regions while another suggested that Anglophones should stop speaking Pidgin. Finally, some respondents insisted that a revolt is the only solution to the problem of French domination.

#### **3.3.2 Between Official Languages and National Languages**

Concerning national languages, out of the 66 respondents were questioned, 44 (66.7%) agreed that native languages domination can be reversed by implementing the native language as home language and by sending their children to the villages during holidays to live with their grandparents. 38 (57.6%) respondents agreed that teaching their children indigenous languages and educating them on their importance will help to lessen their domination. 30 (45.4%) respondents agreed that exclusive use of the native language during encounters involving tribesmen can help to raise visibility of these languages

while 27 (40.9%) agreed that using them in home communication and in schools are effective strategies against their domination.

**Table 8: Preventing Native Language Marginalisation**

Prevent native language marginalisation by:	Frequency (on 66)	Percentage %
Exposing children to the native language through its exclusive use at home and sending children to the villages during holidays to live with grandparents	44	66.7
Encouraging relatives and friends to speak and teach their children	38	57.6
Educating students on the importance of indigenous language	38	57.6
Speaking only indigenous languages with tribesmen	30	45.4
Teaching indigenous languages in schools	27	40.9

These data show that the most effective strategy for promoting equality between the official and national languages is the implementation of the indigenous language home-language policy and increasing children’s exposure to these languages by making them spend holidays with their grandparents in the villages.

#### **4 Discussion**

This paper sought to investigate linguistic coexistence and hegemony resistance in Cameroon. In this light, Suarez (2002, p. 512) emphasizes on “individuals’ awareness of, and resistance towards linguistic hegemony as major steps in heritage language maintenance.” This awareness typically characterises participants of the study who overwhelmingly agree that French dominates over English and that English and French as official languages dominate over national languages. This corroborates Wolf (2001) who thinks that French has a de facto dominance over English in administration, education and the media although both languages are considered as equal languages in Cameroon. Similarly, (Echu, 2004, p. 26) holds that it is not an exaggeration to say that French influence, as

expressed in language, culture and political policy prevails in all domains. According to the findings of this study, linguistic marginalisation leads to social marginalisation, whereby Anglophones are deprived from access to certain positions of responsibility. This situation has intensified tensions between the two linguistic communities over the years and remains a threat to national cohesion. This is consistent with Pütz's (2020) assertion that the linguistic imbalance whereby French serves as the dominant language while English occupies a subordinate position has bred discontent among Anglophones, contributing to the rise of Anglophone nationalism in recent years.

A major explanation for French dominance is the absence of an effective language policy that guarantees the welfare of all the languages in the country. According to Vakunta (2012, p. 1), Cameroon lacks a language policy that prevents the marginalisation of linguistic minorities or that guarantees the protection of indigenous languages. The 1996 constitutional which serves as the reference document in this regard is not implemented in a way that ensures equality among the country's languages thus its failure to contribute to national integration through linguistic fusion (Ayafor, 2005, p. 140). This highlights one of our findings that Cameroon's language policy is intentionally designed to dominate Anglophones.

According to our study, French is the language of political leadership and is spoken across a larger territorial area than of English, making English a minority language. This endorses the popular assertions that English-speaking Cameroonians are a minority and occupy only 20% of the total national landmass (Yuka, 2010, p. 222); an assertion widely contested within the English-speaking community that estimates its population at 8 million (30% of the country's population). Put differently, French is the language of power and prestige in Cameroon because of a numerical imbalance between Francophones and Anglophones (Abongdia & Williams, 2013, p. 58). Contrary to these assertions is the opinion that French dominance is favoured by francophone monopolisation of influential administrative roles and horrendous disregard for English by francophone members of government (Vakunta, 2006, p. 6). Another view is that French is the only language that guarantees upward social mobility and employment in formal domains (Rosendal, 2008, p. 29).

Our findings reveal that one way of achieving equality between the official languages is to ensure that all official documents and notices are

published simultaneously in English and French. This seems to align with the 1996 Constitution, that requires the State to promote nationwide bilingualism. Yet linguists are almost unanimous that such statements about language do not constitute language policy because they lack implementation frameworks (Ayafor, 2005, p. 126). The failure of this policy to guarantee linguistic equality stems from disregard for the nation's indigenous languages and because it lays emphasis on laws while despising other important official information concerning administration, education, health care, the media, etc. that affect the lives of citizens. For instance, when the Cameroon General Certificate of Education Board issues a certificate called "*Brévet de Tehnicien*" to an English-speaking candidate who wrote the technical GCE in English, the latter is faced with the odious task of translating his certificate into English if he has to present it to an English-speaking institution such as the American Embassy.

The study equally suggests that linguistic equality can be achieved if more Anglophones are integrated into the public administration and if people are assured of the freedom to use their preferred official language for communication in official settings. This will be reinforced by spelled out sanctions for defaulters, such as those who compel others to speak a particular language before they can benefit from certain public services. This is the case in Canada, whose French-speaking minority (Quebec) for so long suffered domination from the English-speaking majority (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997, p. 169), with Quebec tagged a "*French island in an ocean of English*". The Official Languages Act of 1969 (reformed in 1988 and 2005), besides declaring the two languages official, required that the services of all federal institutions be offered in French or English at the customer's choice" and concerning public service recruitment, provided for an increase in the number of French-speaking Canadians. This not only increased the number of French-speaking personnel in government administration, but also ensured that they received services in their preferred official languages (Makarenko, 2007).

Regarding Cameroonian national languages, findings reveal that they are highly marginalised by the official languages. This finding corroborates Pütz's (2020) observation that the two official languages of colonial heritage dominate public life in education, administration, politics, mass media, publicity, and literature, whereas indigenous languages are relegated to the background. The need for their redemption, development and empowerment is no longer

debatable given that their exclusion has slowed down the country's development significantly. In this light, Achanga and Teko (2024) declare that preserving these endangered languages will enable Cameroon to build an inclusive society that values linguistic diversity and strengthens national unity. The use of official languages in socio-economic and political domains has diminished the visibility of national languages, thereby, making them look like a stumbling block to the nation's growth and maturity (Iwara, 2015, p. 121). Participants in the study agree that English and French not only dominate over their native languages, but also constitute a threat to their existence. As a result, a majority (70%) of respondents resist the said domination in various ways including advocating for their implementation in the educational system. Such a measure has been applied with remarkable success by several communities like the French-lexicon Creole speakers in the United Kingdom (Erikson, 1992) and Spanish speakers in the United States (Mrak, 2011, p. 161), that were dominated by majority linguistic communities. Expounding on this strategy, Erikson (1992, p. 323) declares that "a high degree of integration into the institutions of the nation-state seems a prerogative for the preservation of a minority language". However, not everybody reacts to national language domination with measures to revive the languages. Some people remain indifferent to the situation. This group, represented by 43 (43%) respondents aptly conforms to the description of linguistic minorities who "believe in and participate in the subjugation of the minority language to the dominant, to the point where just the dominant language remains" (Suarez, 2002, p. 514).

Apart from inter-tribal marriages, a major explanation for English and French dominance over national languages is that they are languages of education and national integration. At this level, the marginalisation of indigenous languages can be blamed on the vagueness of government policy, its lack of implementation strategies and its failure to upgrade the status of national languages (Rosendal, 2008, p. 44). By prioritising borrowed robes, the policy undermines the importance of cultivating national cultural identities that foster cooperation and growth (Vakunta, 2012, p. 179). Aware of the damaging effect of foreign official languages on national languages, some Cameroonians have taken active measures to protect and revitalise their languages. According to this study, a majority (70%) of the population resist the domination of the official languages by implementing their native language as home language and

increasingly exposing children to its usage by sending them to spend holidays in the villages. This significantly contributes to intergenerational transmission considered as the first major evaluative factor of language vitality (UNESCO, 2003). One can say that the vitality of Cameroonian national languages is viewed as primordial, since close to half (47%) of the study population use them as home languages.

This study has important theoretical, practical, and policy implications. Theoretically, it validates the theory of linguistic imperialism by demonstrating how French dominates English at the official level and how the two official languages dominate indigenous languages, thereby threatening the survival of minority linguistic resources in the country. Practically, the study illustrates that linguistic hegemony is actively resisted through education, media, and literature, suggesting that local communities can be institutionally supported to promote linguistic justice. For language policy, the findings highlight the need for constitutional reforms that ensure equal statuses for English and French, systematic development of national languages, and equitable resource allocation to marginalised linguistic communities. It equally highlights the need to include speakers of minority, marginalised languages in the decision making process so that they can defend the rights of their respective languages.

Based on the findings of the study, some recommendations can be proposed to promote linguistic equality and address the problem of linguistic hegemony in Cameroon. First, the government should enact and implement language policies that guarantee equal official status for English and French in all public domains, including mandatory bilingual documentation of government information, legal proceedings, and information of general interest. These policies should also protect the linguistic rights of all citizens by allowing them to use their preferred official language in any administrative or judicial setting. Secondly, national languages should be systematically developed and standardised, such that they can be taught and used in school. This can be enhanced through adequate funding for linguistic research, teacher training, and production of pedagogical materials in indigenous languages. Finally, educational institutions should include indigenous language instruction in early years of schooling and promote additive multilingualism that values linguistic diversity while maintaining proficiency in official languages, thereby fostering an inclusive national identity that respects both official and indigenous

languages. Implementing these recommendations will help to achieve significant linguistic integrity and national cohesion. However, it will require political will, sustained financial commitment, and collaborative efforts among government authorities, educational institutions, and linguistic communities.

From the data collection and analysis procedures in this study some limitations were identified. Firstly, the reliance on self-reported questionnaire data may have introduced response and social desirability biases, given that participants' perceptions and experiences of linguistic hegemony may be influenced by their subjective interpretations rather than objective realities. Secondly, there was no triangulation through interviews, observations, or document analysis, which limits the depth and validity of the findings. Although the sample of 100 teachers was adequate for descriptive purposes, it restricts generalisability to the broader Cameroonian context and other multilingual settings. In addition, the geographical focus on Buea and Bamenda in the Anglophone regions may not fully capture the linguistic dynamics in Francophone-dominated regions or rural areas where indigenous languages are more prevalent. The descriptive design also prevents analysis of changes over time, and the use of descriptive statistics alone limits deeper exploration of relationships among variables. Future research should address these limitations through mixed-methods approaches, larger and more diverse samples, longitudinal designs, and advanced statistical analyses to enhance the robustness and generalisability of findings on linguistic domination in multilingual contexts.

## **5 Conclusion**

We have attempted an investigation of linguistic coexistence and hegemony resistance in Cameroon based on the theory of linguistic imperialism. We have discussed the relationship between the official languages (English and French) on the one hand and the relationship between the official languages and Cameroonian indigenous languages on the other. This analyses have established that at both levels, linguistic coexistence is marked by majority language domination over minority languages. Our investigation reveals that although linguistic hegemony has persisted for long, appropriate language policy measures have not been taken to address the situation. Consequently, French language dominance remains a serious threat not only to the English language

but also to the identity and systems of Anglophone Cameroonians in the study. Similarly, the dominance of English and French remains a threat to the several national languages, which risk disappearing in the future if not deliberately revitalised. The findings establish that literature, the media and education constitute prominent means of raising awareness about linguistic marginalisation in the country. We conclude that government needs to develop a workable language policy that ensures equality between English and French while at the same time prioritising the written development of national languages and their generalised use in the public sphere.

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