

Language Conflict, Attitude and Language Choice in a Bilingual Academic Environment

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Received: April 30, 2022 Accepted: June 2, 2022 Published: June 22, 2022

doi:10.5296/elr.v8i2.19840 URL: <https://doi.org/10.5296/elr.v8i2.19840>

Abstract

This paper examines language attitude and factors that determine the language choice of students of the Special Bilingual Classes of the English Department of Government Bilingual High School (G.B.H.S) Bayelle Nkwen Bamenda. This was done by examining the factors, which determine the Francophone students' rising interest in their choice of studying English. Students of the Special Bilingual Classes were chosen to be the focus of this research based on their bilingual learning setting. The data was collected through questionnaires and interviews. Questionnaire and interview guides were designed to capture the Francophone students' attitude and their choice of studying English, when they already have French that they can use in all circumstances. The results revealed that the Francophone students of the Special Bilingual Classes of the English Department hold a positive attitude toward English. Both teachers and students of the Special Bilingual Classes of the English Department of G.B.H.S Bayelle did indicate some kind of shift from French to English that reflects the latter's position as a global lingua franca, associated with western style of life, prosperity and economic development, scholarship, career opportunity, science and technology, to name just a few. The results also showed preponderant influence or authority over students from English speaking background which prevents them from having a sound education.

Keywords: language, conflict, attitude, choice, motivation, foreign language, bilingual learning environment

1. Introduction

Cameroon is a multilingual country with two official languages English and French; the heritage of Franco-British rule between 1916 after the defeat of Germany by allied forces and 1961 when Cameroon became independent. There is unequal distribution in the usage of English and French as official languages. This has negative effects on the policy of official bilingualism. The education system in postcolonial Cameroon is a colonial legacy of the British and French systems. Despite decolonisation, the policy of official bilingualism, which originally aimed at guaranteeing political integration and unity of the nation, constitutes a source of disunity. It does not provide appropriate implementation of official bilingualism.

Cameroon is multilingual with over 250 indigenous languages, mostly mutually unintelligible, a dominant English-based Pidgin used as a language of wider communication throughout the country, and French and English, functioning as official languages (Atechi & Fonka, 2007). Ethnologue lists 286 languages for Cameroon. Six of these are extinct and 280 are living. Among the living languages, 24 are dying, 43 are in trouble, 106 are vigorous, 96 are developing, and 11 are institutional.

Geographically, there are ten regions in Cameroon; with eight Francophone regions characterized by the predominance of French and two Anglophone regions, with English as the dominant language. According to the Oxford English Dictionary (2019), an Anglophone simply means ‘An English-speaking person. Likewise, Francophone is used in English speaking communities to refer to the French-speaking population. It is also used in French-speaking areas to refer to French speakers.

In this article, I adopt Simo Bobda (2002), definition of the term Anglophone, as it is understood in Cameroon. The term Anglophone in Cameroon, has mostly an ethnic connotation. It refers to a member of an ethnic group in the North West and South West regions, which were formerly part of British Cameroons. Consequently, it has a political connotation since in Cameroon, access to public service jobs and appointments to high positions are ethnically planned. The term Anglophone has very little to do with knowledge of the English language. Indeed, an Anglophone in the Cameroon sense does not need to know a word of English (Simo Bobda, 2002, p. 6). By implication, an Anglophone Cameroonian from North West and South West origin may not necessarily have a good command of the English language.

In Cameroon, contact between Francophones from French speaking origin and Anglophones from North West and South West origin exhibits varying degrees of resentment, disagreement, tension and language behaviour which include language choice and language attitude. These differences of opinion create feelings of incertitude, which often result to conflict, with and sanctions in which the interest of Anglophones is in jeopardy.

Linguistically and numerically, being the majority group in the country, many French-speaking Cameroonians did not see the necessity of English as they did not need it in their daily transactions. As Modjo (2020) puts it, “Many Francophone learners even considered it as a hurdle.” However, following the admission of Cameroon into the

commonwealth in 1995, the attitudes of French-speaking Cameroonians towards English changed exceedingly from negative to positive. This has resulted to an exaggerated rise in the number of children from French speaking background rushing for enrolment in English-medium schools. While the Anglophone subsystem of education is literally invaded by children of Francophone background (Safotso, 2017a), Anchimbe (2007) describes this rush for English by Francophones as an identity opportunism, whereby speakers choose an identity or a language according to the advantages they are likely to benefit. Meanwhile, Cameroon has restated its responsibility to promote bilingualism in the educational system. Various forms of bilingual education models have been implemented across the national territory.

1.1 Objectives of Study

This study explores factors which determine Francophone students' (*of the special bilingual classes of G.B.H.S Bayelle Nkwen Bamenda*) rising interest in the choice of English-medium instruction and their attitudes towards English and French and its speakers. These students are chosen to be the focus of this research based on their bilingual learning setting. To achieve the objectives mentioned above, the study attempted to answer the following questions.

1.2 Research Questions

- 1) What are the factors that determine the linguistic choices among the students of the Special Bilingual Classes of G.B.H.S Bayelle Nkwen Bamenda?
- 2) What are the attitudes of the students of the Special Bilingual Classes of GBHS Bayelle Bamenda towards English and French in Cameroon?

1.3 Literature Review

Review of related literature covers the conceptual, theoretical and empirical framework. The following concepts were reviewed: language conflict, language attitude, language choice and motivation.

1.3.1 Language Conflict

Conflict plays a significant role in social sciences. Language contact often results to conflict between different ethnic groups. Political, economic or sociocultural problems are often rooted in linguistic conflict. Nevertheless, contact has overshadowed conflict in the literature. Language contact and conflict are interdependently related and applicable to individuals and to language communities. However, these phenomena do not occur between languages but only between speakers of languages.

Literature on societal language conflict emphasizes that language conflict at the societal level comes about in situations of societal language contact (Haugen, 1980). These situations, according to (Nelde et al., 1996), are characterized by asymmetrical rather than symmetrical multilingualism. The differences in prestige, status, power, social organization, values and beliefs as they exist between a speech community A, and a speech community B, are reflected in the prestige, status, legitimization and institutionalization of language (or language variety) A, vis-à-vis language (variety) B. Defoort (1998) argues that, in some cases,

language conflict has indeed been accompanied by or has given cause to language riots or violent actions. Belgium is known for its language riots, for example those in the 1970s when Flemish people protested in Schaerbeek (a suburb of Brussels) because the mayor refused to treat Dutch-speaking inhabitants on equal footing with the French-speaking inhabitants in the town hall.

1.3.2 Language Attitude and Motivation

As Gardner (1985) puts it, attitude is a set of beliefs and psychological predispositions to evaluate behaviour. He described language attitude as part of the existential competences, but also as a dynamic structure of learner attitudes. Attitudes towards a language may indicate what people feel about the speakers of that language. A language may be of interest to speakers who have positive attitude towards it and prefer to use it in many circumstances. Meanwhile, if speakers have negative attitudes towards a language, they develop resistance in using it. Sadanand (1993, p. 124) maintains that “attitudes towards the use of different languages are motivated by people’s perception of the role of each language and the functions it performs in relation to each other”. Petty and Cacioppo (1981) use the term attitude to refer to a general and enduring positive or negative feeling about some person, object, or issue” (p. 6). Correspondingly, Crystal (1997, p. 215) believes that, language attitudes deal with the speakers’ feelings towards language (i.e., rich, poor, beautiful, ugly, sweet sounding, etc.) and language maintenance and planning. In other words, language attitudes are actually “the feelings people have about their own language or the language of others.”

According to Holmes (2008), people classify different languages or varieties as elegant, expressive, vulgar, musical, polite, impolite, pleasing or unpleasing. This categorization has influenced the users’ attitudes towards the language because it reflects who they are and represents the social groupings they belong to. Consequently, people develop either a positive or negative attitude to other languages based on how the community identifies and labels them.

Motivation according to Gardner (1985), is the reason for doing something, the combination of desire and effort in order to attain a goal. In his motivational model, Dörnyei (2005) includes general and situation-specific learning motivations. Instrumental and integrative motivations in foreign language learning are the outcomes of learners’ specific linguistic needs and their attitudes towards the language and its culture. This motivational background highly influences learners’ attitudes towards language learning and their capability in learning the language.

Motivation is measured by examining language learners’ attitudes towards learning the language. This shows that attitude and motivation are interconnected. If the learners’ attitude towards the language and its speakers is positive, this can lead to increased motivation. This results in better learning outcome and a positive attitude towards learning the target language. Nevertheless, neither attitude nor motivation is stable. They might change over time and are closely related to the actual social, political, and socio-historical context and power relationship (Pavlenko, 2005, p. 31).

Whereas learners might have instrumental (external) or integrative (internal) motivations for learning the target language, they can also have different reasons for using the language. That is why House (2002), differentiates between “language for communication” and “language for identification”. Multilinguals can choose a language and adjust it to their needs. Thus, speakers can choose their mother tongue to express their cultural identity and chose another language only as an instrument to communicate and to understand each other (Dégi, 2012). In the light of this theory, the increased demand for English as an international, high prestige language should not be treated as a threat to multilingual diversity, but it should be considered as a development towards a so-called “multilingualism with English” (Hoffman 2000, p. 3).

1.3.3 Language Choice

In sociolinguistic research, the study of language choice in multilingual contexts remains a crucial endeavour. According to Dweik Bader and QawarHanadi (2015), the speaker’s ability to choose the appropriate variety for any particular purpose is part of his or her communicative competence; the choice is not random, but has been shown to be determined by aspects of the social organization of the community and the social situation where the discourse takes place. In this case the bilingual or the multilingual is not strikingly different from the monolingual; it is simply that a speaker has to choose not only between different varieties of the same language, but also between two or more different languages. Theoretically refined tools are needed to explain why language X is used in situation x, and why language Y is used in situation y. Contrary to the widely assumed belief that language use is unsystematic, sociolinguistics has held an axiomatic that “A speaker’s choice between varieties is also structured. It is systematically linked to social relationships, events or situations.” (Gal, 1987, p. 287). Therefore, one of the fundamental issues in sociolinguistics is why a given linguistic variety is chosen to be used in a particular array of situations, while another variety is preferred in other circumstances.

Fasold (1990), argues that language choice is triggered by factors such as social status, gender, educational attainment, ethnicity, age, occupation, rural and urban origin, speakers, topic, place, media and formality of the situation. These findings are supported by David (2006). On his part, Coulmas (1997) explains that people make linguistic choices for various purposes. Individuals and groups choose words, registers, styles, and languages to suit their various needs concerning the communication of ideas, the association with and separation from others, the establishment or defense of dominance. People are endowed with the ability to adjust their linguistic repertoires to ever new circumstances and construct their languages for certain purposes. Correspondingly Ferrer and Sankoff (2004), believe that language preference of a speaker is influenced by dominant languages. Therefore, most bilinguals and multilinguals may choose a dominant language as a medium of communication because it provides them greater advantage, economic benefits, social networks expansion and better opportunities. The choice of a dominant language can be triggered by the wider acceptance and functions of that language. Dominant language influences the language choice of a speaker. More prestigious language is usually favoured as the medium of communication in various domains because of its wider social functions. Pillai (2006) corroborates this that;

dominant languages can be used in formal and informal domains of communication and help to gain prestige, better economic access in the community, authority and power.

Piller (2004) believes that in multilingual society, the language spoken by a large community can be considered superior than those spoken by the minority. The community language is spoken by the majority and has a wider social function. Therefore, using the community language serves more benefits to the speakers and it can be influential on their language choice because it helps in expanding their social network. Managan (2004) adds that the choice of a dominant language provides people the prestige and the chance to socialize more with other people the thing that leads to a possibility of expanding the social network and gaining more economic success. Once a person becomes a member of a certain language group, this group becomes his or her social network and develops a sense of identity which can be revealed through language choice and manner of speaking. Holmes (2008) argues that, the use of dominant language expresses impersonal messages which create social distance between speakers. On the other hand, the choice of a less dominant language is useful to express personal messages because it helps the speakers to establish solidarity in interactions.

1.3.4 Theoretical Framework

This study is done within the framework of the **Affective Filter** hypothesis. Research over the years has confirmed that a variety of affective variables relate to success in second language acquisition (reviewed in Krashen, 1981). Most of these studies can be placed into one of these three categories: Many students from French speaking background enroll in the Special Bilingual Classes to study English and French. For this reason, observation of these students' language attitude and choice is important as it provides a context in designing effective learning processes to encourage students in practicing these languages.

2. Methodology of Data Collection

Data was collected through classroom observation, interviews and questionnaires where 60 students and 6 teachers were asked questions related to language choice and language attitude. Questionnaires were administered to 60 students of G.B.H.S Bayelle, Nkwen Bamenda and 6 teachers in March 2020 during teaching practice exercise. The questionnaires explored the students' language attitude, and how it affects their choice and motivation to learn the English language. The students' attitude towards the English language will reflect the factors that determine their choice of this language. The proportion of language choice stated in the questionnaire will indicate the students' attitude towards English language.

The questionnaire was piloted and pretested before being administration to the sample. It was written in English, with a covering letter that explained the objectives of the questionnaire and how to fill it. The questionnaire comprised two sections.

The first section included questions on factors that support the students' choice of English language for different purposes, when they already have French that they can use to function with in all circumstances. This was aimed at identifying the students' attitude towards the English language. On the questionnaire, respondents were asked to choose from a variety of options that describe their choice of, and attitude towards English language. Among these

options, students were to indicate whether English was: A global language, Language of opportunity, language of international relation, one of the world leading languages, a world lingua franca, and language of scholarship, science and technology etc. The students were also given the opportunity to state other reasons, if any, for choosing to study English language. This was intended to capture the attitude of the students towards English. The motivation for learning English will indicate whether the respondents' attitude towards this language is positive or negative.

The second section of the questionnaire included questions on the students' attitude towards English and French in Cameroon. This aimed to explore whether the respondents' attitude towards a particular language, plays a role in the process of language choice. The respondents were asked to report if they think a given language namely English or French is useful, dominant, important to be used in all circumstances, expresses their ethnic and linguistic identity and so on.

3. Findings and Discussion

This segment of the study deals with the analysis and discussion of the research results. A preliminary analysis was conducted to obtain quantitative information on the demography of Francophone and Anglophone students according to class and the distribution of subjects taught according to language. This was followed by a discussion of the results, with reference to the objectives of the study.

3.1 Demography of Francophone and Anglophone Students According to Class

This sought to investigate the number of students from French speaking background and the number of students from English speaking background represented in the Bilingual Classes. Demographic statistics are essential in making generalizations about the research population as they include factors that have explanatory value in this research.

This study involved the special bilingual classes (the E forms), from Form One E to Form Five E, distributed as follows; Form One E 14 students, 12 (85.71%) Francophone students and 2 (14.28%) Anglophone students; Form Two E 24 students, 19 (79.16%) Francophone students, 5 (20.83%) Anglophone students, Form Three E 16 students, with 14 (87.5%) Francophone students, 2 (12.5%) Anglophone students, Form Four E 10 students, 9 (90%) Francophones, 1 (10%) Anglophones, and Form Five E 9 students, 8 (88.88%) Francophones and 1(11.11%) Anglophones, giving a total of 73 (100%) students as distributed on Table 1 below.

Table 1. Demography of students according to class

Level	No. of Students per class	No. of Students from French Speaking Background	Percent	No. of students from English Speaking Background	Percent
Form One E	14	12	85.71%	2	14.28%
Form Two E	24	19	79.16%	5	20.83%
FormThree E	16	14	87.5%	2	12.5%
Form Four E	10	9	90%	1	10%
Form Five E	9	8	88.88%	1	11.11%
TOTAL	73	62	84.931%	11	16.068%

Source: Field Data, 2020.

Table 1 above provides an overview of the growing presence of Francophone students in Anglophone schools. The total number of Francophone background students in G.B.H.S Bayelle Nkwen Bamenda outweighs the number of Anglophone background students. The lowest percentage of Francophone students from Form One E to Form Five E is 79.16% and the highest is 90%. Moreover, this bias which is observed in the Special Bilingual Classes in G.B.H.S Bayelle Nkwen Bamenda reflects the reality in Special Bilingual Classes in other Government Bilingual Secondary Schools in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon.

The Special Bilingual Classes is a secret weapon of stigmatization owned and applied by the government against Cameroonians from English speaking background. This Francophones' craving for the English language is of course due to the opportunities attached to it as the language of globalization and new technologies, besides the commonwealth scholarship that is being taken away from students of English-speaking background. According to Dewi, Udiana and Setiadi (2018), the assumptions of English as an international language and career opportunities are clearly related with the idea of English as a commodity in the globalized world. By possessing the commodity, in this case, English as the economic benefit will be gained. The benefit the English offers have motivated the students to learn the language. This preponderant influence or authority over students from English speaking background prevents them from having a sound education due to linguistic, pedagogical, psychological barriers. This retards the development of the students' abilities and violates their rights for education. The number of Francophone students in Anglophone schools in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon can be justified by the Anglophone crisis currently going on in Cameroon.

Table 2. Distribution of subjects taught according to language

S/N	Subjects taught in French	Status	Subjects taught in English	Status
1.	LIT. in French	Compulsory	LIT. in English	Not compulsory
2.	French language	Compulsory	English language	Compulsory
3.	History	Compulsory	History	Not compulsory
4.	Citizenship	Compulsory	Citizenship	Not compulsory
5.	Geography	Compulsory	Geography	Not compulsory

Source: Field Data 2020

Special Bilingual Classes suggests that subjects are taught both in English and French. This is true from the descriptive statistics in Table 2 above. But in reality, compulsory subjects are delivered almost entirely in French. It is expected that if Literature in French is compulsory, Literature in English should also be compulsory, as this will result to high level of bilingualism and increase learner's performance in schools. But the reverse is true. Most of the subjects taught in English are not compulsory. This hegemonic control of all facets of the society, including education is unfair to the minority students from English-speaking background. The Anglophone minority students graduate from immersion programs with little or no proficiency/competency, neither in English nor in French. This only served to intensify Anglophone sentiments, as they feel they are losing their language and culture. This causes a lot of psychological and physical damage, discourages integration, and promotes linguistic conflicts.

As a consequence, these French majority students of the bilingual series of high school from the English sub-system of education are recruited into the Bilingual Letters Department of HTTC Yaounde1 as "Anglophones" with GCE/AL, although almost all are Francophones by birth. In the same vein, Francophone students from French speaking background are recruited into the Bilingual Letters Department of HTTC Bambili with Baccalaureate. Apparently, Francophone Cameroonians are gradually replacing Anglophone Cameroonians by taking away the English language, the commonwealth scholarship, carrier opportunities, etc. This is a deliberate effort by leaders of nation-states to linguistically and culturally sideline the English-speaking minority from North West and South West Regions of Cameroon. In accordance with Ayafor (2005), instrumental instead of integrative orientation is adopted by learners from French speaking background, a choice that was counterproductive to the main objectives of the official bilingualism policy. The dignity and statehood of Anglophones is silently destroyed by the government led and dominated by Francophones. On the other hand, satisfying the children's linguistic rights promotes integration, popularizes positive state policy towards bilingualism and prevents conflicts. Atechi (2015) argues that, this recent development is very significant with regard to the future of English in Cameroon, especially given the pace at which this variety is growing and the numerical strength of Francophones in this postcolonial linguistic ecology.

The commonwealth scholarship is snatched away from Cameroonians of English-speaking background in favour of students from French background although the variety of English they speak (CamFE); as Safotso (2012) puts it, is the ‘frenchified’ variety, which is so distant from both British English and Cameroonian English. On the contrary, satisfying the children’s linguistic rights promotes integration, popularizes positive state policy towards bilingualism and prevents conflicts.

In GBHS Bayelle, there are two bilingual classes; one under the French Department; referred to as Bilingual Classes and the other under the English Department, referred to as Special Bilingual Classes. The Bilingual Classes under the French department is solely for students from French speaking background; meanwhile the Special Bilingual Classes under the English department is still for Francophone students, given that 84% of the students are from French speaking background. Thus, both immersion programs are for students from French speaking background given the insignificant number of English-speaking students enrolled in the Special Bilingual Classes. Therefore, the Special Bilingual Classes under the English department do not favour the Anglophone or English-speaking students. This linguistic bloodbath has escalated to a violent internal conflict that has claimed hundreds of lives.

We expect that there should be a bilingual department, “special” or not, to take care of students’ needs, and foster educational equity and human rights. Unfortunately, these immersion programs are disguised with the intension of taking away the linguistic right of English-speaking Cameroonians from North West and South West Regions.

3.2 Research Question One: What Are the Factors that Determine the Linguistic Choices Among Francophone Students of the Special Bilingual Classes of GBHS Bayelle Nkwen Bamenda?

Results reported in Table 3 below show the students’ responses to the factors that support their choice of studying English when they already have French that they can use to function with in all circumstances. In answering this question, the respondents selected more than one option for some questions.

Table 3. What are the factors that determine your choices of English Language?

S/N	Reasons	Yes	No
1.	It is a global language	-	60
2.	Language of opportunity/international relation	60	-
3.	One of the world leading languages	-	60
4.	A world lingua franca	55	-
5.	Language of scholarship, science and technology	-	60
6.	Any other reason? Explain		

Source: Field Data, 2020.

In this study, the reasons for Francophone students’ choice of English language were elicited

via questionnaires and interviews. A total of 6 teachers and 60 students were surveyed. The excerpts representative of the questionnaire data were used to examine the extent to which English is increasingly valued by Francophone students from French speaking background. Although French has been the language of power since reunification because of its vast majority of speakers, both teachers and students of GBHS Bayelle did indicate some kind of shift from French to English that reflects the latter's position as a global lingua franca of opportunity.

3.2.1 Responses from Students

From the descriptive statistics above, the students from French speaking background had the following to say concerning their choice of English language in addition to French;

“English is a world language that is spoken in almost all countries. One cannot succeed in the world today without English, as it is the most influential language in the world. Besides, English is the language of education, scholarship, opportunity, science and technology. It is the language of international relation and scholarship. English is a very important language with countless advantages.”

3.2.2 Responses from Teachers

The questionnaire administered to teachers was not different from the students' questionnaires; the reason being that, the teachers who taught students of the Special Bilingual Classes were bilingual and all of them were from French speaking background. This is not accidental, but a calculated attempt to conceal the governments' plan to frustrate the Anglophones. Thus, the study sought to investigate whether they had the same opinion and attitude towards English language. They had the following to say in relation to the students' choice of English language.

“English has become the global lingua franca. It is a global language, a language of scholarship, science, technology and so forth. English has become the language of scholarship, opportunity and international relation. First, it is an official language, and one of the world leading languages.”

The teachers' and students' responses above are very similar, suggesting that, the students choose to study English because of its expanded domain of use as a global language, associated with western style of life, prosperity and economic development, needed in all circumstances including scholarship, carrier opportunity, science and technology, to name just a few. As mentioned by Padwick (2010), the nature of learning does not only depend on intellectual ability but also on the learners' attitude toward the target language. Attitude, in this case, refers to what Gardner (1985) defines as a person's values and beliefs, which encourage or discourage the language choice they make.

This positive attitude portrayed by both teachers and students, is the reason for Francophone students craving for the English language. Dewi, Udiana and Setiadi (2018), argue that, the value of language is measured based on the way it serves the economic demand from society. The students assume that studying English will give them the opportunity to get a good job

and access to the global community. Knowledge of the English language is thus, a precondition for success almost everywhere in the world. French speaking Cameroonians value English in terms of global involvement. English is no longer seen as the language of the outvoted Anglophone but as an indispensable tool for survival in a world that science and technology has reduced to a global village with English as the main *lingua franca*, a language on which the sun never sets (Crystal, 1997). Thus, radical change in attitude towards English by French speaking Cameroonians is instrumentally motivated. This attitude towards the language is not symmetrical to the English-speaking population.

3.3 Research Question Two: What Are the Attitudes Among Francophone Students of the Special Bilingual Classes of GBHS Bayelle Nkwon Bamenda Towards English and French in Cameroon?

Regarding attitudes towards English and French in Cameroon, respondents were asked a set of four questions, which examined students' choice of the more useful language, the language used in all circumstances; the language used to express their ethnic and linguistic identity and the arguments that support their choice of one language over the other. They reported positive attitudes towards these languages. Yet a sense of negative attitude was indicated concerning English.

Table 4. Responses on language attitudes towards English and French

S/N	Questions	English	Percent	French	Percent
1.	Which language is more useful in Cameroon	3	5%	57	95%
2.	Which language is dominant in Cameroon	12	20%	48	80%
3.	Which language is important to be used in all circumstances	6	10%	54	90%
4.	Which language expresses your ethnic and linguistic identity	00	00%	60	100%

Source: Field Data, 2020.

Results on Table 4 reveal that out of 60 respondents, 57 (95%) gave positive attitudes towards French for being the most useful language, while 6 respondents thought that English was useful. French enjoys great prestige as a language of power and security. Competence in French gives one the power to exercise authority. Strong positive attitude towards French is evident in all four cases. Whereas English is used almost everywhere in the world, French is more conspicuous in internal communication and tend to be ranked high. This corroborates with Simo Bobda's (2013, p. 290) argument that "the French language overwhelmingly dominates the sociolinguistic landscape in Cameroon." The degree of usage determines the prestige and status accorded these languages in the national territory. Several other factors such as population of the speakers, the domain of use, affected the students' attitude towards these languages. Thus, the prominence of French is determined by attitude of the respondents towards it. Apparently, more than 80% of the respondents gave positive attitudes towards

French in Cameroon.

Of the 60 students examined, 54 (90%) respondents indicated that French was important to be used in all circumstances whereas 6 (10%) respondents thought otherwise. To be secured in Cameroon, French is needed as an indispensable requirement for employment or advancement in several domains. Meanwhile, all 60 (100%) students went for French, as the language that symbolized their ethnic and linguistic identity. Therefore, to the French speaking students, French is the language for identification and self-expression. As for the dominant language, 48 (80%) students agreed that French is dominant meanwhile the remaining 12 (20%) students thought that English is the more dominant language. The minority Anglophones feel threatened by the predominant influence exercised by French and Francophones over English and Anglophones.

4. Recommendations

From the results above, the following recommendations were made:

- 1) The government should design effective learning programmes to encourage both Anglophone and Francophone students in practicing these languages.
- 2) To avoid linguistic crisis, the policy of bilingualism should be well implemented as far as the Special Bilingual Classes in Government Bilingual Secondary Schools in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon are concerned, with equal representation of students from both English and French speaking backgrounds.
- 3) There should be a bilingual department, “special” or not, to take care of students’ needs, and foster educational equity and human rights.
- 4) Teachers who teach in the Special Bilingual Classes should come from both English and French speaking background.
- 5) Subjects that are compulsory in French should also be compulsory in English, as this will result to high level of bilingualism and increase learner’s performance at schools.

5. Conclusion

Francophone students of the Special Bilingual Classes of the English Department hold a positive attitude toward English. Although French has been the language of power since reunification because of its vast majority of speakers, both teachers and students of the Special Bilingual Classes of the English Department of G.B.H.S Bayelle did indicate some kind of shift from French to English that reflects the latter’s position as a global lingua franca of opportunity. Their choice and attitude towards English language is triggered by several factors including its expanded domain of use as a global language, its association with western style of life, prosperity and economic development, scholarship, carrier opportunity, science and technology, to name just a few.

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