

Current English Language Practice and Sustainable Development Goals in Cameroon

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ABSTRACT

In this research work, the researcher sought to investigate the propensity to which the current practice of the English Language in Cameroon's formal space could advance sustainable development (SD) in the country. The questionnaire and observation methods were the data collection tools used. The data comprised one hundred (100) copies of the questionnaire administered to journalists of Francophone and bilingual media institutions in Yaounde, and five (05) observation forms filled after observation sessions conducted on the noticeboards of five (05) ministerial departments in Yaounde. Governmentality is the theoretical framework adopted in this work. Analysis focused on investigating the effectiveness and adequacy of the currently scanty English Language tools and timid practices in Cameroon, and their impact on the attainment of the sustainable development goals (SDGs). In so doing, it equally investigated the dominance of French in official communications, and above all, the magnitude of development information (theme) from which English-speaking Cameroonians are left out. From the analysis, it was found that the current English Language practice in the francophone and bilingual media, local councils and ministries is inadequate, therefore, insignificant and unproductive. Cognizant that English is the lingua franca for international cooperation and communication (in the domains of education, politics, trade, and the media) and above all, the default language of modern science and technology, it was observed that the ineffective practice and/or marginalisation of English in Cameroon hampers national development in the sense that Cameroonians are being shaded from [inter]national development opportunities; worse still, they are deprived of scientific and technological knowledge and opportunities in English.

Keywords: *English Language; sustainable development; sustainable development goals; governmentality; language practice*

INTRODUCTION

No human society can survive without language, and so, this corroborates Chomsky's (1957) analogy that language is the oil lubricating human activities in a given society. In addition to language being a conduit of information, it is a powerful tool used to realise "socialization, cultural transmission, sharing knowledge, power and politics, status, and so on" (Bohara, 2018, p. 90). Languages parallel one another in their communicative functions, nonetheless, they shift from one another in relation to their respective scopes of influence (in science, information, technology and entertainment), cultures, [inter]national status [as a standardised or unstandardised (official, second or foreign) language], popularity, and extra-linguistic components, and many others. The more a language culture carries and expresses a global virtue or need, the faster it becomes popular, powerful, and therefore, adopted by alien cultural groups. A language that exhibits potentials for the socio-political and economic advancement of individuals and nations, like is the case with English, gains international recognition and adaptation.

Every national structure is composed of people from heterogeneous ethnic backgrounds; that implicate incongruities in socio-linguistic, religious, economic and political practices and/or beliefs. In such multicultural scenarios, language [policy] is the instrument used by policy makers to bridge the communication gap among ethnic groups and nations (Obiegbu, 2015). The choice of a common (official) language takes into consideration the socio-cultural, economic and political privileges welded to the adoption, acquisition and use of such a language. This is in cognizance of the fact that language is a vector of development at the level of individuals, states and nations. On motives connected to the above, many non-English speaking countries have not hesitated to adopt the English Language as their most

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favoured foreign language. The increasing global interest in English as an international lingua franca, thus, takes manifest and adduces the ever-widening 'expanding circle' of Kachru's (1985) concentric circles of the English model.

For English to attain today's universal status, it is thanks to technology. At the sidelines of the physical contacts that galvanised its spread during the colonial period, technology and its resultant internet, a wireless, global communication circuit, has facilitated the spread of English the world over. As Lestari and Setiyawan (2020) indicate, English is the default language of [modern information and communication] technology, so, using this instrument means adapting to and using English Language as well. The strength of English Language as a key technological resource, thus, justifies the different global statuses of English today: English as Second Language (ESL); English as Foreign Language (EFL); and English as Global Lingua Franca (EGLF) (Mansfield & Poppy, 2012; Bohara, 2018), *inter alia*. Cross-cultural communication online is a great booster to the continuum of English varieties around the world; which are commodious to the socio-cultural needs of their speakers. The use of English in these contexts focuses on the functional aspect of the language, and so gives no premium to the grammatical and structural purity of its use.

The English Language is the world's dominant language of the 21st Century that has 1.75 billion (which is one in every four) speakers on the globe (British Council, 2013). The international character of the English Language does not only emanate from the number of speakers she has amassed, but rather, apropos of the number of countries across the globe that continue to adopt and use it. This language, thus, globalises when it gets a new "special status" vis-à-vis novel roles that it assumes in the entire world (Crystal, 2003, p.4). English Language has been adopted internationally as either an official (second) language (for communication in government business, judiciary, the media and education) or a foreign language that is taught as a subject in contexts (schools) where learners have a Mother Tongue (MT) that is not English. In addition to being an official language (OL) to its native countries (Britain, USA, Canada, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa), it is the main foreign language taught in over 100 hundred non-native countries in the world. Countries, thus, make English the favoured foreign language for strategic political motives, and also, the desire to enhance and sustain technological, cultural and commercial contacts.

The growing interest in and pressure on English as a language for international communications in IT, science, education, policy, business and entertainment (Crystal, 1997) has propelled adjustments in language policies among nation-states. The implementation of pro-English language policies has gone a long way to expedite globalisation; with many countries using English Language to create global citizens (international relations) that impact sustainable national development. As an agent of globalisation, Hamid and Nguyen (2016, p. 28) conceptualise that "English provides the linguistic and communicative infrastructure to globalization", with the latter promoting "the cause of English by making the language imperative for participation in globalized networks, markets and resources". The globalisation catalyst that English is, therefore, legitimises its privileged, dominant position in international conferences on science and technology, education, business, tourism, international politics, and global warming and climate change. When nations embrace globalisation, the natural tendency is to embrace English Language in the formal fabric of the country as it is a gateway for international opportunities in employment and cooperation (Hashimoto, 2013).

In line with the globalisation trends above, the status of English in Cameroon is that of an official language; in tandem with French, the majority and more dominant OL. English is, therefore, a second language (L2) to English-speaking Cameroonians and a foreign language (FL) to the French-speaking counterparts. Coupled with its privileged international status, it is expected that English be the most preferred language of Cameroon government communication and cooperation with [inter]national stakeholders of sustainable development (SD). The current stakes welded to the practice of this global language evoke the question as to whether it could enhance the attainment of the sustainable development goals in all spheres of national life; as is the trend in other country. It is on the basis of the age-old lapses linked to the use of the English Language in Cameroon that this research paper studies the propensity to which the current practice[s] of the English Language in the francophone-dominated administration in Cameroon could enhance the achievement of the SDGs.

CAMEROON'S OFFICIAL LANGUAGE POLICY AND STAKES

The dynamics characterising European history, most especially after the end of World War I (WW1), thus, left a sociolinguistic landmark of Cameroon. English and French were the languages used in the administration, education and courts in the respective British and French Cameroon territories. When French Cameroon was granted independence in 1960, French was adopted as her OL, and when British Southern Cameroons was granted independence in 1961 by joining the latter to form the United Republic of Cameroon, both entities took constitutional

dispositions and/or engagements to retain their colonial heritages. In this direction, English and French were legislated as the OLs of Cameroon and accorded an equal status throughout the new unified structure (Kouega, 2009).

It is a usual occurrence that when two or more languages are in contact, a code or two exercise dominance over others. The Cameroon OL experience is similar to the situation in other post-colonial African countries. In line with Essomba (2013, p. 23), Cameroonian authorities chose English and French because these exogenous languages would be cultural assets that “may give more opportunities to the country to the open world”. The cultural plurality characteristic of this bicultural and bilingual entity is a source of connection between [bilingual] Cameroon[ians] and English and French communities in The Commonwealth and The Francophonie respectively. To give more meaning and credibility to these affinities, these cultural communities have been granting scholarships to Cameroonian scholars; sponsoring projects; and organising exchange programmes from which Cameroonians continue to benefit. In a nutshell, it is factual that official bilingualism is a gem for the educational, professional and diplomatic development of Cameroon[ians]. Complementary to the discussions above, Essomba (ibid) affirms that with this English-French LP, Cameroon[ians] ‘have and maintain external partnerships guaranteeing exchanges, dialogue and cooperation, and communication’ with other countries of the same linguistic character.

Cameroon’s LP expresses the political agenda of her government. The bilingual LP of Cameroon is legislated in République du Cameroun’s (1996) constitution, and this binding instrument accords an equal status for English and French in the whole territory, and in all facets of national life. In the inaugural speeches of Ahmadou Ahidjo, Cameroon’s pioneer president, cited in Ayafor (2005, p. 127), he reiterates that Cameroon’s official bilingual policy aims to guarantee i) “practical usage of [...] English and French throughout the national territory”; and ii) the training and upbringing of citizens that can use English and French interchangeably and perfectly. The latter goal, as Acha (2021) analogises, aligns with Bloomfield’s (1933) traditional definition of bilingualism: the possession of native-like proficiency in two languages. The perfect use of French and English in Cameroon, as sanctioned by law no. 98/004 of April 1998 of the République du Cameroun (1998b), is designed to weave “national unity and integration” between the bicultural and bilingual [Anglophone and Francophone] communities in Cameroon; and above all, to consolidate the cultural heritage of the minority OL (Anglophone) in Cameroon.

The bicultural and bilingual content of the OL of Cameroon, in fact, legitimises official bilingualism in Cameroon. Citing Cameroon’s pioneer President Ahmadou Ahidjo, Gonondo and Djiraro Mangué (2016, p. 38), indicates that French and English are the two OLs, and so, would practically be used throughout the national territory, in all aspects of formal life of the nation. The reinforcement and institutionalisation of English and French as Cameroon’s OLs, and with an equal status, is enshrined in her constitution. In essence, to respect the linguistic rights of the minority OL (English) community especially and the majority French-speaking community at large, the use of both languages in the country’s administration, parliament, judiciary and education, etcetera, is mandatory.

The enactment of an English-French bilingual policy in Cameroon was driven by the philosophy of national unity and integration between the minority Anglophone and majority Francophone linguistic and cultural groups in the new unified structure, Cameroon. In furtherance of national unity and integration, Ahmadou Ahidjo cautioned that the institutionalisation of the two exogenous languages, English and French, is political expedient. The officialisation of English and French guards that the plethora of indigenous Cameroonian grouping in Cameroon

[...] must in fact refrain from any blind and narrow nationalism and avoid any complex when absorbing the learning of other countries. When we consider the English language and culture and the French language and culture, we must regard them not as the property of such and such a race, but as an acquirement of the universal civilisation to which we belong. [...] it offers us the means to develop this new culture ... and which could transform our country into the catalyst of African unity. (Anchimbe, 2011, p. 36).

In the spirit of the cautionary statement above, scholars, cf. Fonlon (1969); Essambe (1999; 2008); Echu (2001; 2003; 2004); Kouega (2001); Ayafor (2005), have acknowledged that an official bilingual policy was sanctioned to forge and protect national unity and integration between the British and French heterogeneous institutions and/or cultural identities in bilingual Cameroon: administration, parliament, judiciary, education and the media.

In spite of the present of policy instruments enacting official English-French bilingualism in Cameroon, scholars still find many lapses in Cameroon’s bilingual policy vis-à-vis the use of and/or attitudes towards the minority OL and, by implication, her Anglophone community. It is with disgust that Acha (2021, p. 27) opines that “the meaning and extent of true bilingualism still remains contestable, its effective practice/ implementation is still a subject of wide sociolinguistic debate in Cameroon”. Drawing from the latter, discussions on the disproportionate nature of

Cameroon's OL policy focuses on the biased implementation, thus, marginalisation of the minority OL (English) and community in Cameroon.

Criticisms against the practice of bilingualism in Cameroon pertain to the fact that policymakers, and by extension, the Francophone majority government in Yaounde disfavours the English (Anglophone) community in Cameroon in all facets of national life (Fonlon, 1963; Echu, 2001; 2004; Esambe, 1999; 2008). This sociolinguistic bias is eroding Ahidjo's (1965) vision of national cohesion and integration. The discriminatory use of the English Language in official business, for Essomba (op. cit.), is a sharp pointer to the failure of Cameroon's LP to wield national unity between the two dominant language and cultural groups in the country, thus a breeding ground for rancour between the two OL groups. The official language policy has received wide criticisms for its engrained indifference towards Francophone biased and overbearing attitudes that continue to stigmatise and frustrate English-speaking Cameroonians in all domains of national life. Ineffectiveness in Cameroon's English-French LP manifests itself in what Fon (2019, p. 59) considers the "francophonisation of the Cameroonian administration" in which most and/or important information is transmitted in French. The English Language is continuously being marginalised in most domains of national life, considering that most Francophones override the country's bilingual policy and/or constitution via a conscious and consistent exhibition of individual bilingualism; that challenges national bilingualism.

Moreover, it is commonplace to find the dominance of French over English in the central administration (Echu, 2004a). Investigating the language of administrative communication in Cameroon, Echu (ibid) finds out that most official documents (presidential decrees, laws, circulars, communiqués, banknotes and coins) are prepared and published in the majority OL, French. It has been observed that the persistent marginalisation of English in the Cameroonian formal space has, in fact, legitimised French monolingualism as a tacit language policy in bilingual Cameroon. Even in scenarios where the administration attempts to translate the French version of official documents, Ngefac (2010) is disgusted by the fact that such [translated] versions are fraught with language (grammatical) errors that misrepresent the meaning(s) constructed in the original French document. This relentless discrimination has been frustrating to the English-speaking minority Cameroonians. Consequently, this has been the basis of Anglophone radicalism against the Francophone-dominated administration, and eventually, nationalism. The infringement of the minority [official] language rights of Anglophone Cameroonians orchestrated via the non-translation of the OHADA law, and Francophone infiltration and/or erosion of the English sub-system was the immediate cause of the 2016 Common Law (Anglophone) lawyers' and teachers' strike that has mutated into the Anglophone nationalism (armed conflict) that is on-going in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon. Anglophones have judged French monolingualism as constitutional, considering that it is a mark of gross disrespect of their language rights, which is intended to impose French on Anglophones. These discriminatory practices are in violation and endangerment of the linguistic, cultural and intellectual rights and identity of Anglophones, who consider this as attempts to assimilate them (Simo Bobda, 2001 as cited in Ngefac, 2010).

Studies have proven that education in one of the most outstanding sectors in which Cameroon's English-French LP has gone dysfunctional (Kouega, 2001; Echu, 2004b; Esambe, 2008). The practice of official bilingualism in education, most especially in the supposed bilingual universities, has been ridiculed as 'theoretical' by Rosendal (2008, p. 29). The results of Kouega's (2008) sociolinguistic study on the practice of bilingualism in tertiary education in Cameroon reveal a biased scenario in which 80 % to 100% of courses offered in the [bilingual] state University of Soa are taught in French. This hegemonic practice is what Atindogbe and Dissake (2019) have termed "Jungle Bilingual Education" (JBE), and is characterised by a chaotic scenario in which "Students are 'thrown' in classrooms and compelled to take lessons in a language they may not understand, and answer questions in their language with the risk that the evaluator does not understand" (Atindogbe, 2019, p. 9). This sad experience concords with the one presented by Echu (2004b) in which 80 % of university lectures in Cameroonian state universities are dispensed in French. This French dominance in pseudo-bilingual universities leaves a damaging effect on the academic performances of Anglophone students. As Atindogbe (ibid, p. 12) puts it, the adoption and use of two exogenous (foreign) languages plus jungle bilingualism (marked by the dominance of minority English speakers) has degenerated into "education insecurity"; which is a blend of linguistic, learning and knowledge 'insecurities' for the English minority language [speaker] and/or culture.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Governmentality is the framework adopted in this research work. As its name suggests, governmentality is a politics-oriented theory used to analyse, understand and justify a government policy action(s). This theory was propounded by the French linguist, Michel Foucault. The term governmentality is Foucault's (1991) coinage involving a blend of the words 'government' and 'rationality', although 'mentality' is equally considered as a constituent in this neologism. Government[ality] is for Michel Foucault "the conduct of conduct": that is to say, a form of activity

aiming to shape, guide or affect the conduct of some person or persons” (Burchell et al., 1991, p. 2). Foucault (ibid) also describes [government] rationality as an “art of government” (Burchell et al., ibid). By “art of government” consideration is given to government as an activity or practice that is carried out in a particular manner (involving tools and institutions).

In studying power relations between a government and the governed, this theory prescribes that citizens and whole nations can only attain developmental goals if they are governed via positive means (techniques): administrative, parliamentary or judiciary. With recourse to the governmentality theory, the researcher seeks to investigate the adequacy of the “array of technologies of government” (Rose, 1996, p. 42) that are implemented to empower the English Language in Cameroon, and in another direction, evaluate the impact of these ‘technologies of government’ on SD.

This theory is appealing to this work in that it guides the researcher on identifying and appraising the [d]efficiency of Cameroon government policy actions towards the empowerment of the English Language in all spheres of national life. In this analysis, attention will equally be paid to the bearings or fallouts of such [d]efficient policies on the socio-political, economic and cultural development of Cameroonian citizens especially and the national entity at large.

In all, this framework explores government use(s) of non-coercive powers (legislation, decrees, institutions, memoranda, communique and notices, et cetera), not brute or military force, to govern and bring about socio-political, economic and cultural change(s) in a national entity. In effect, this approach studies the patterns in which government policy actions conduct the conducts of the governed towards individual and national development.

METHODOLOGY

It is worth recalling that this research work has as its goal, the investigation of how capable Cameroon’s English Language policy could enhance the attainment of the sustainable development goals (SDGs). The data for this study was collected using the questionnaire and observation methods. The data collection was collected from three core sectors (government ministries, local council, and the media) that play frontline roles in the implementation and propagation of development-driven policies in Cameroon, notably English Language policies, as is the scope of this work. In this regard, questionnaire copies were administered to eighty (80) journalists of sixteen (16) public and private French and purportedly bilingual media in the political capital [city] of Yaounde, as presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Questionnaire Administered in Media Institutions

Media Organ	Mode of Transmission	Publication Language	No. Interviewed
<i>Cameroon Tribune</i>	Print	English and French	05
<i>Cameroon Business Today</i>	Print	English and French	05
<i>La Nouvelle Expression</i>	Print	French	05
<i>Mutations</i>	Print	French	05
<i>Le Quotidien</i>	Print	French	05
<i>L’Anecdote</i>	Print	French	05
<i>Infomatin</i>	Print	French	05
<i>Le Massager</i>	Print	French	05
<i>Le Jour</i>	Print	French	05
<i>L’Economie Quotidien</i>	Print	French	05
<i>Crtv-Radio</i>	Audiovisual	English and French	05
<i>Equinox</i>	Audiovisual	English and French	05
<i>Vision 4</i>	Audiovisual	English and French	05
<i>Canal 2</i>	Audiovisual	English and French	05
<i>Spectrum Television (STV)</i>	Audiovisual	English and French	05
<i>LTM</i>	Audiovisual	English and French	05
Total			80

The print, audio and audiovisual [news] organs in Table 1 above were because of their large following (audience) throughout the national territory, so, their consistencies in English Language broadcasts are capable of creating developmental impacts in all the ten regions of Cameroon.

The second group to which the questionnaire was administered constituted twenty (20) senior staff drawn from four (04) local (municipal) councils, still in the capital city of Yaounde. Considering that these authorities conceive and

implement programmes, and manage affairs in the local councils, the essence of this questionnaire was to verify the language(s) used in official meetings, seminars, official documents and public notices. This was meant to verify and/or confirm the information observed on their respective notice boards. This is quantified in the follows table:

Table 2: Questionnaire Administered in Municipal Councils

Municipal Council	Council Area	No. of Personnel Interviewed
Yaounde I Council	Nlongkak	05
Yaounde II Council	Tsinga	05
Yaounde III Council	Efoulan	05
Yaounde VI Council	Biyem-Assi	05
Total		20

These councils were chosen because they administer local populations that have considerable concentration of Anglophone Cameroonians living among and interacting with their Francophone counterparts in all facets of the society; notably schools, markets, sports and even politics. It is important to state that these local councils render services to these populations, and so, their language of communication is of great importance as it affects the lives of the local population in varied patterns.

As stated hitherto, the observation method was necessary, as it justified and/or complemented the information gathered in the questionnaire, most especially at the councils. These observation exercise was carried out to verify whether all public notices are in English and French, if not, which of the two official languages is dominant and/or marginalised in public notices. In a scenario whereby a public notice is in one language, the content or subject that is suppressed in or from which the other bilingual language [group] is deprived is under enquiry. This is critical to the researcher, given that the socio-political or economic domain from which a language group is deprived, no doubt, marks an impediment of SD in related field(s). The number of noticeboards observed in the respective institution is given in Table 3.

Table 3: Noticeboards Observed

Institutions Observed	No. of Notices
Ministry of the Economy, Planning and Regional Dev't (MINEPAD)	11
Ministry of Higher Education (MINESUP)	13
Ministry of Public Health (MINSANTE)	10
Ministry of the Env't, Nature Protection and Sustainable Dev't (MINEPDED)	10
Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation (MINRESI)	13
Total	57

In all, the data types above were invested with observable and attributable, and quantifiable and classifiable phenomena. Imbued with these variables, it, thus, necessitates that the researcher use both qualitative and quantitative methods to be able to analyse these data categories and/or meaning exhibited by them. By the qualitative method, the focus will be on the description and attribution of development-related phenomena found in the data, at the end of which some inferences would be made vis-à-vis the significance of English Language use(s) or practice(s) on SD in the country. The quantitative method, on the other hand, impinges on the aggregates of occurrences of phenomena emanating from classification. These aggregate frequencies, as in the foregone method, pertain to responses or English Language practices that catalyse SD in Cameroon.

CONCEPTUALISING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

As Mensah (2019) opines, the concept of SD has been of great relevance in human development for a significant period of time. Its significance in the contemporary world is linked to the fact that the world's population continues to experience an increase that is not accompanied by a proportionate increase in the natural resources that are meant to improve the lives of human beings. Global concern for this need resulted in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that later evolved into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Failure to achieve all the goals (social priorities) of the Millennium Development agenda within the fifteen years of its existence led to the introduction of the SDGs; to continue the global development agenda in different communities in the world (Breuer et al. 2019). The SDGs, Taylor (2016) explains, are the 2030 development roadmap that calls on policymakers to take actions to enforce the protection of the planet, reduction of poverty and improve the wellbeing of citizens (Taylor, 2016).

After its adoption by 193 member countries, the SDGs started in January 2016 (Mensah, *ibid*). At the point of its enactment, this global development agenda aimed to promote economic growth, guarantee the [social] inclusion of minority groups and ensure the protection of the biophysical environment. Alternatively, Breuer et al. (*ibid*) think that this development agenda was initiated to promote cooperation among national governments, the private sector, civil society organisations, academia and research, with the United Nations acting as manager of these partnerships.

Hylton (2019) indicates that this 2030 development agenda, the SDGs, has five superordinate themes, otherwise known as the five Ps: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships. These themes are spread across the seventeen (17) SDGs that are related to solving the main causes of poverty and including other aspects such as “hunger, health, education, gender equality, water and sanitation, energy, economic growth, industry, innovation & infrastructure, inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, consumption & production, climate change, natural resources, and peace and justice” (Mensah, 2019, pp. 11-12).

Moreover, assessing the uniqueness of the 2030 development agenda, Tosun and Leininger (2017) aver that the development objectives and targets of the SDGs are not only interdependent, but equally interrelated. By this, countries are free to prioritise different strategies to achieve these goals; nonetheless, they must complement one another’s action(s) via cooperation. To add, complementarity in this case also means that some goals are solved through others. To exemplify this, Le Blanc (2015) explains that co-benefits for health, biodiversity, energy security and oceans may accrue if climate change-related problems are remedied. In tune with the foregoing, Hylton (*op. cit*) states that the seventeen SDGs seek to attain a broad range of objectives that include the eradication of poverty; universalised access to basic services (water, sanitation and sustainable energy); support the generation of development opportunities; foster innovation and resilient infrastructure; reduction of [social] inequalities; and environmental protection.

There are three approaches to SD, which are economic, social and environmental. The objectives outlined above cut across these three approaches. In the same manner, these approaches are spread across the seventeen SDGs that Ezeh and Obiageli (2020: 56-8) present as follows:

- i. End Poverty: End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- ii. Zero Hunger: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture
- iii. Good Health and Well-being: Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages
- iv. Quality Education: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- v. Gender Equality: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- vi. Clean Water and Sanitation: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- vii. Affordable and Clean Energy: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- viii. Decent Work and Economic Growth: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all
- ix. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, and foster innovation
- x. Reduced Inequalities: Reduce inequality within and among countries
- xi. Sustainable Cities and Communities: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- xii. Responsible Consumption and Production: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- xiii. Climate Action: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- xiv. Life below Water: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- xv. Life on Land: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss
- xvi. Peace and Justice, Strong Institutions: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- xvii. Partnership for the Goals: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development

In the context of this work, using the English Language to advance SD is a social approach. All the SDGs are important in improving the wellbeing of people and their communities, nonetheless, this research work shall focus on goals that are attainable with recourse to language. In effect, consideration will be given to the correlation between language versus the reduction of poverty and hunger, and other aspects like quality education, good health, industrial, technological and cultural evolution, social equality and justice, and environmental care and protection. This justifies the source and choice of data for this study.

LANGUAGE AND THE ATTAINMENT OF THE SDGs

Language is one of the productive tools available for governments and citizens to achieve the SDGs. In line with Ezeh and Obiageli (2020, p. 59), the functional attributes of language (cf. Leech, 1974) could be exploited to achieve the SDGs in diverse patterns, as presented below:

- Creating the goals:

It is through language that the human mind is informed and expressed, and so, language is a productive tool with which the SDGs are conceived, expressed, directed and assessed. After the conception of the SDGs, different actions ensue to realise them and, thus, improve the wellbeing of people in different communities.

- Stating the goals:

The seventeen SDGs can only be known to the communities when they are expressed using language. Without language, the seventeen SDGs will remain mental perceptions. Language, thus, plays the role of transferring these SDGs from the mind of its conceivers to different communities in the world.

- Interpretation and understanding of the seventeen SDGs:

This function is closer to actions taken to realise these goals. A successful interpretation and understanding of these goals is attributed to language-related aspects, notably clarity, coherence and organisation. With these, community members would interact, engage and partner with governments to realise the SDGs. In essence, interpretation and its resultant understanding lead to the participation of persons and the unification of varied ideas that, in unique patterns, foster the achievement of this 2030 agenda.

- Executing the goals:

Language also plays a prominent role in the execution of each SDG, and this explains why a symposium was organised at the United Complex in New York on the 21-22 April, to review linguistic factors that could delay the execution and accomplishment of the SDGs. In a keynote address at the symposium, Suzanne Romaine stated that for the SDGs to be achieved, the role and/or importance of language should be specified. This role pertains to the importance of advocacies for SD.

- Evaluating the developmental process and making amendments:

As indicated in the foregoing, language is very useful in the assessment of the execution of the 2030 agenda in communities, and related proposals to restore order and implement good practices. It is with recourse to language that setbacks are expressed and new or more desirable developmental directions are taken.

In the quest for development in African countries, Chumbow (2009) considers linguistic diversity and pluralism as a powerful nation-building tool that should be developed and preserved. It is opined here that the stratification of languages in African states into public and private domains (usage) would be a guiding principle for language planning that maintains and consolidates the linguistic and cultural identities of the diverse ethnic groups in African countries. The implication of the aforementioned public-private planning is that the states would valorise national languages by assigning unique functions to them. In essence, these social functions endow these languages with “functions that procure economic, social, and political advantages, thereby contributing to elevating the status of the ethno-linguistic communities” (p. 21). The claim here is that the constant use of a foreign (colonial) language(s) [spoken by a small fraction of the population] in education would reinforce the marginalisation and/or exclusion of non-speakers of the official language(s), who are the majority, from the development agenda of African states. The planning of African languages, including linguistic minority language(s), in fact, ensures the reduction of ethno-linguistic dominance and democratised access to development-driven knowledge, thus inclusive national development.

The socio-economic development of national communities is the strategic role Mkwinda-Nyasulu (2014) attributes to language. Expressing consciousness of the fact that the main function of language is communication, the research, thus, thinks that “Where there is no language there is no development”, considering that “effective communication facilitates development. [And] Communication is an important prerequisite of development and this is manifested through language.” (p. 213). The statement above buttresses the fact that communication is, itself, development and an aspect of development because transmitted information is developmental in one way or the other. The developmental information, also termed ‘goals’, that is communicated using language includes education, national unity and/or identity, and socio-economic development. Mkwinda-Nyasulu’s (ibid) point here is that a unifying language(s), better still a lingua franca, is instrumental in the advancement of socio-economic development: education, multiparty politics, national unity, millennium development goals, and gender and business in communities like his, Malawi.

Investigating the developmental factor of one of Cameroon’s lingua francas, Ubanako (2015) credits Cameroon Pidgin English (CPE) (like its West African counterparts) for adapting itself continuously to the socio-cultural, scientific and technological evolutions in the country especially, and in the world at large. In these changing and adapting

circumstances, attributed to its autonomy and maturity, Ubanako (ibid) reveals that CPE has the potentials to express the local culture, scientific and technological knowledge in education and the media, and so, calling for its official recognition. If the stigmatisation and social exclusion of CPE prevail in Cameroon's formal space, the danger is that most speakers of CPE would be deprived of cultural, scientific and technical knowledge that is continually being accommodated in the two official languages, English and French.

Chibaka (2018) has been preoccupied with the role of languages in community (national) development. In this research work, the researcher discusses what she terms the "aggregate advantages of individual bilingualism" (p. 25) and societal multilingualism comprehensively. These advantages are evocative and/or representative of the ideal role that languages play in the attainment of the SDGs. These four advantages raised relate to the five domains of economic and business; sociocultural; education and academia; national security; and health sensitisation. As concerns the importance of individual and societal bi/multilingualism in economic and business issues, it is stated that languages have the strength "... of promoting mobility of the labour force in a single marketplace, thereby fostering employment heights and subsequent economic growth in the society" (p. 26). This ideal, in fact, falls in line with European Commission's (2008a) explanation that language skills are an ability type that enhances economic growth in society. To add, this paper equally evokes the fact that individual and societal bi/multilingualism facilitates sociocultural integration (and adaptation) in the current era of globalisation, modernisation and technological advancement in which global culture contact and interact. In the field of education and academia, which reaps most from multilingualism, it is revealed that multilingualism enables FL speakers to engage in learning and conduct research in foreign communities using the indigenous language(s) of those communities. Also, multilingualism guarantees national security as defence and security personnel can liaise and collaborate with diverse communities on the globe on security issues. Lastly, multilingualism promotes the rapid and effective dissemination of essential and critical health information to targeted language and/or cultural groups. In effect, though related, the findings of Chibaka (ibid) are different in that discussions focus on the advantages of individual and societal bi/multilingualism, whereas the goal here is to investigate the extent to which the current LP of Cameroon can promote the attainment of the SDGs.

Sekar (2018) stipulates that English plays a vital role in the socio-economic upliftment of millions of Indians. English is a tool of economic empowerment in the lives of many, thus, justifying the exceptionally positive attitudes Indian parents display towards English, and so, desirous of their children's learning. English is a medium of instruction, not just in Madurai district (India), but in many school systems across the globe. With this, these parents consider English a carrier of educational opportunities for their children, and therefore, a catalyst of SD.

As far as the developmental potential of the English Language is concerned, Obiegbu (2015) believes that the English Language plays a significant political role in Nigeria. In a multicultural and multilinguistic national entity like Nigeria, it has been found that the English Language is a language that is free from indigenous cultural sentiments, and so, it is the primordial tool binding the heterogeneous cultural groups in Nigeria. It is strongly believed that Nigerian indigenous languages, most especially Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo, are breeders of indigenous nationalism. The government of Nigeria rather prefers English as the country's OL and by extension, the medium of instruction in schools because it has succeeded to weave national unity and integration among Nigerian, thus, leading to long and/or sustainable peace in Nigeria. In a meeting between Nigerians from foreign linguistic backgrounds, English is the chosen language of communication, therefore, endowing English with attributes of national integration and unity.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

Confirming the interdependence between language, information and SD, Mkwinda-Nyasulu's (2014, p. 2013) opines that "Where there is no language, there is no development". This crystallises the thought that language is the circuit of information; which facilitates the accomplishment of citizens' desired goals: education, national unity and/or identity, and socio-economic development. In tune with the above, this section is dedicated to the analysis of the data realising the mutual relationship between English Language practice and SD in Cameroon. As indicated hitherto, this data comprises information obtained from the questionnaire administered to Francophone media outlets and local (municipal) council staff, and the observations conducted in five (05) ministerial departments in Yaounde.

Analysis of Council Staff Questionnaire

It is worth stating that the first category of questionnaire was administered to twenty (20) local council senior staff. From the aggregate of responses obtained, it was found that most of the respondents have served as senior staff (deputy mayors and unit heads) in the respective councils for up to ten (10) years. As a senior staff with this remarkable longevity, they have amassed enriching experiences convening and cheering staff meetings and council sessions, seminars/ capacity-building workshops, agro-pastoral shows and health campaigns, among others. Their responses

are reckoned credible because they are considered as having a good mastery of administrative proceedings in the economic, social and political activities of the local council, and the language(s) used.

Among the twenty senior council personnel chosen, fifteen (15) responded that they are not minimally bilingual in English and French, with only five (05) confirming average bilingualism in the two official languages. By implication, the ratio of French-monolingual is to English-French bilingual senior staff in these councils is 75 % to 25 %. In addition, the performance of the five (05) bilingual senior workers is between average and good. From these statistics, there are clear indications that the dominance of French-monolingual officials will greatly affect the English Language practice in these councils.

Language(s) Used in Meetings, Seminars or Public Information

This questionnaire item was meant to verify whether the council authorities make any conscious effort to use the English Language in official activities at their respective councils. Out of the twenty (20) questionnaire respondents here, the majority, fifteen (75 %) indicated that most council proceedings, notably, meetings, seminars and public campaigns are mostly carried out, and above all, public information is published in French.

On the other hand, only five (05 interviewees, constituting 25 % affirmed that public activities like meetings, seminars and public campaigns are conducted in both official languages (OLs), English and French, and public notices are equally posted in both languages. This figure could be considered insignificant because these four officials revealed that the use of both English and French in one activity or information is very rare. These statistics are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Language(s) of Meetings, Seminars or Public Information

Language(s)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
English Language	00	00
French Language	15	75
Both Languages	05	25
Total	20	100

What is peculiar in the presentation above is the fact that no respondent revealed or stated that English is the only language used in the above-mentioned activities. This, in essence, is indicative of the reservation or bias that council officials exhibit against the use of the global language in different activities in their respective local councils. Going by this situation, English is marginalised in local councils.

Regulation of the Use of English Language in the Local Council

This interview item sought to verify the instrument or rule governing the choice and/or use of the English Language in each council. This item is an extension of the latter, and sought to investigate the availability and effectiveness of a policy instrument(s) regulating and/or enforcing the use of English Language in each local council. The purpose was to verify whether it was lawful (obligatory) to use both languages, thus, English; it was the discretion of each authority to use English or not; or the use of English depended on the sociolinguistic composition of the audience (population). The responses and statistics pertaining to this are tabulated below.

Table 5: Rule Governing Use of English Language in the Local Council

Language(s)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lawful/ Obligatory	00	00
Choice of Official	17	85
Sociolinguistic Composition of Audience	03	15
Total	20	100

The statistics in the table above attest to the fact that the use of the English Language, one of the country's OLs, is discretionary. Seventeen (17), that is 85 %, of the interviewees state that there is no rule or law enforcing the use of English in the local council, and so, it is the discretion of each local council official to conduct official (council) business in English or not. Moreover, a meagre three (03) interviewees, 15 % of the twenty disclosed that the choice and use of English Language in the local council greatly depends on the sociolinguistic composition of the audience (target population) of each activity or information.

By implication, English is used only when Anglophones constitute a significant proportion of a given population (audience) at an event. This poses a problem as officials may not be able to identify these Anglophones. The preponderance of responses pertaining to the volition of officials to use English, in fact, implies that there is no instrument regulating the practice, thus empowerment, of the English Language in local councils. Inasmuch as the choice of English is not regulated, worse still, remains a choice, the language will continue to suffer from incognizance and insignificance in local councils.

Circumstances of the Use of English Language is the Local council

The essence of this item was to verify the circumstances or contexts in which the English Language is used to communicate in local councils. This was a follow-up question to respondents who confirm the marginal use of English, thus, timid English-French bilingualism in local councils. Respondents were given options from which they could choose more than one, and so, twenty (20) responses were got vis-à-vis these contexts, as presented in the diagram that follows.

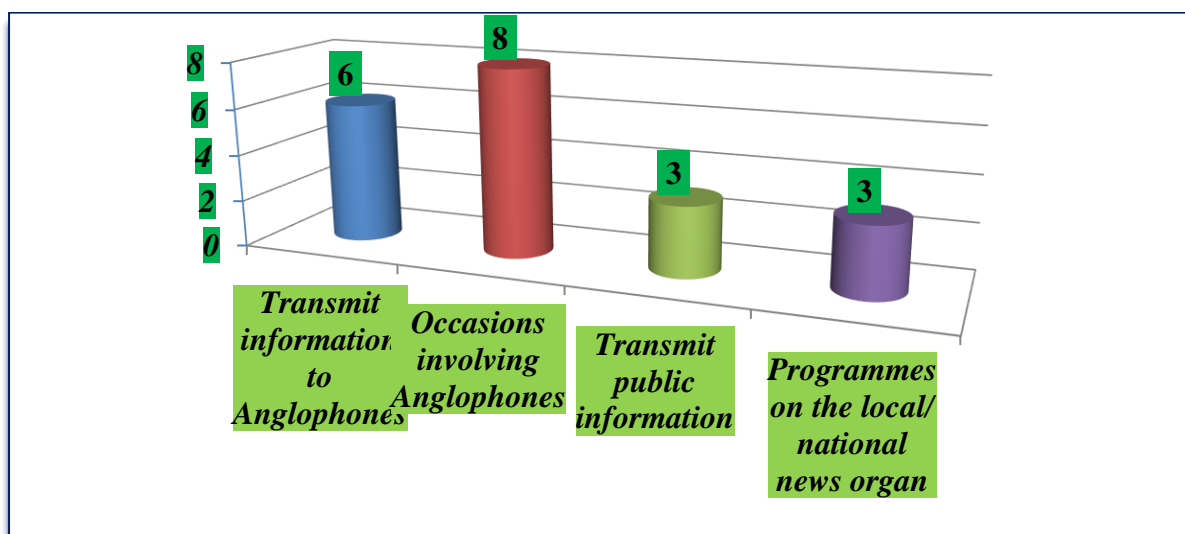


Figure 1: Contexts of Use of English Language is the Local council

As seen in Figure 1 above, the most dominant context in which English Language is used in local councils is in occasions involving Anglophones, with a frequency of eight (08), equivalent to 40 %. The more recurrent situation in which council authorities also confirmed the use of English Language, though timid, is to transmit information to Anglophones. This situation has six (06) occurrences, making up 30 %. The use of English to transmit public information and use in programmes in the local and national news organs were the least with a frequency of three (03), that is 15 % each.

Taking cognizance of the statistics above, it is clear that the English Language is used in the local council in events involving Anglophone Cameroon, not to empower this official language that is a global lingua franca. In the absence of a significant number of Anglophones in council activities, English would not be used. The English Language is marginalised when it gets to transmit general information on the local and national news media. This discrimination, therefore, deprives Anglophones of vital developmental information.

Conviction that Effective Use of English Can Empower Development

The researcher sought to find out from local council authorities if more and frequent use of the English Language in local council documents (and public notices), procedures and events could impact the lives of citizens in local council areas where the language is effectively used. All the twenty (20) senior staff affirmed that more and effective use of the global language, which is one of the OLs of Cameroon, has the prospect of initiating and advancing sustainable development in local councils and their vicinities. The justifications of the local council authorities were grouped into three, and frequencies were assigned to them, as presented in the table below.

Table 6: Justification that Effective Use of English Can Empower Development

Justification Advanced	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Opens citizens to global dev'tal information & opportunities	10	50
Develops Cameroon's bilingual culture	07	35
Enhances national integration & unity	03	15
Total	20	100

Among the reasons advanced by council authorities for having the conviction that the effective use of the English Language in local councils could spark SD, the belief that continuous and effective use of English opens citizens to global developmental information and opportunities is more recurrent with ten (10) responses, thus 50 %. The conviction that more and effective use of English in local councils in Cameroon could develop and promote the country's English-French bilingual culture ranks second with seven (07) responses, making 35 %. The least justification with the frequency of three (15 %) is that the effective use of the English Language in local councils could enhance national unity and integration among English-speaking and French-speaking Cameroonians.

The fact that most interviewees stated that the English Language opens Cameroonian citizens to developmental information and opportunities in the world, in essence, implies they are conscious about the worth of English, not just between Anglophone and Francophone Cameroonians, but equally, pertaining to interactions with nationals from and educational and professional opportunities in English-speaking and English-friendly countries on the globe.

More Communication in English Would Attract Many Development Partners

This information solicited here is meant to confirm the information obtained in the latter item. The purpose was to confirm whether local council authorities are aware that frequent and effective use of the English language in their councils not only opens citizens to international opportunities, but also, opens doors of international cooperation (partnership) with other countries, considering that international business is conducted in English. On this aspect, all the council authorities interviewed were unanimous on the fact that the regular and effective use of the English Language in all council communications would attract international developmental (funding) partners (countries, organisations and NGOs) to their local councils. This thought was justified with just two categories of responses, as quantified in the table that follows.

Table 7: Justifications that English Would Attract Development Partners

Justification Advanced	Frequency	Percentage (%)
English is medium of international business and diplomacy	11	55
English is medium of international educational & technology	09	45
Total	20	100

The key responses got were in recognition of the fact that English is the medium of international business and diplomacy that was explained by eleven (11) senior council staff, and that English is a medium of international education and technology as given by nine (09) respondents. What is salient in and common to the two responses is the recognition that English is a global language. The global lingua franca that the English Language is means that it is the language that local council authorities should use to scout for development partners (for projects, training, commerce, internships) and funding. Going by this, English is the [potential] language of international interaction and cooperation, thus, the gem of development (construction, trade, professionalisation and employment) in Cameroonian localities.

The Creation of English Cultural Centres and Libraries Empowers the Youth

The researcher intended to investigate whether council authorities are aware that the English Language could be valorised and/or taken closer to the youths of rural and semi-urban areas by creating English Language cultural centres and libraries. Creating and equipping English Language cultural centres and libraries would mean that the youth would have access to English Language resources, and this would go a long way to enhance their acquisition (learning) of English, and thus more contacts with and access to a plethora of developmental opportunities in the world wherein English is the global lingua franca. As concerns the responses got from the council authorities, statistics attest to the fact that all the interviewees confirmed that the creation of English Language cultural centres and libraries is a potential source of empowerment for youths in their respective local council areas. The explanations advanced by these authorities to justify their answers were classified into three main categories, as given in Figure 2 below.

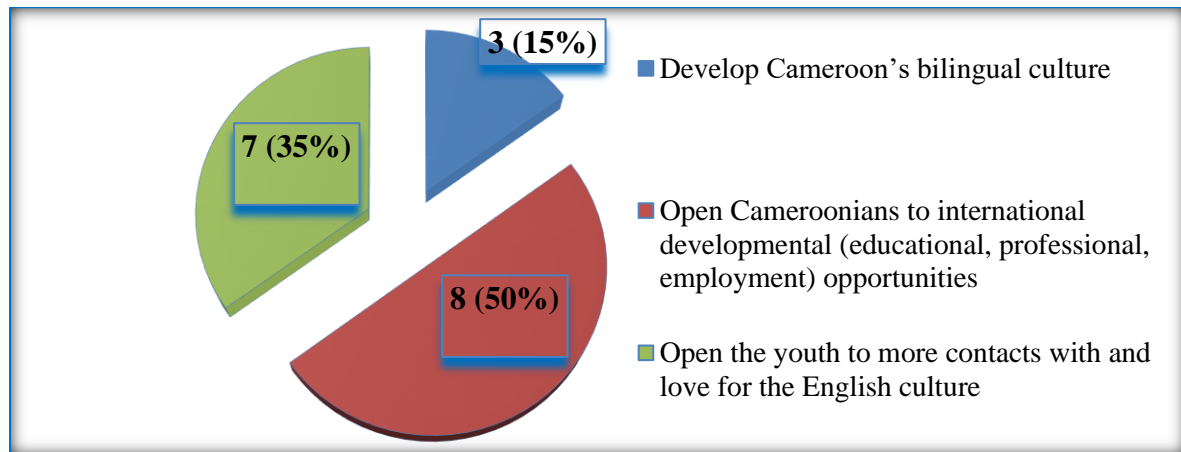


Figure 2: Justification for the Creation of English Cultural Centres and Libraries

Considering the statistics in Figure 2 above, it could be confirmed that eight (10), that is 50 % of the aggregate interviewees revealed that the creation of well-equipped English Language centres and libraries in council areas would go a long way to open the rural and semi-urban Cameroonian youth to more international opportunities (educational, professional, employment and funding) opportunities. Guaranteed access to English Language resources, thus, empowers the youth to participate in competitions and even apply for scholarships, training and funding programmes that would enhance development in themselves and/or their country, Cameroon. The second dominant response is that the creation of English Language cultural centres in council areas would endow the rural and semi-urban Cameroonian youth with more contacts with and love for the English culture. It is worth stating that more contact with the English culture would mean more contact with and opportunities for youth empowerment and development schemes, and this category of response was given by seven (35 %) of the interviewed population. The least of the responses, advanced by three (03), thus 15 % of the population, is that creating and equipping English Language cultural centres and libraries in council areas would promote effective bilingualism and, above all, develop the country's English-French bilingual culture. The dominance of response that the creation of modern English Language centres and libraries in council areas would open the rural and semi-urban Cameroonian youth to more international educational, professional, employment and funding opportunities, in effect, points to the fact that council authorities are aware of the global worth of the English Language. This makes English a developmental tool for Cameroonian youth.

Conviction that Consistent Refusal to Effectively Use English Hinders SD

This item reverberates with the determination of the researcher to confirm whether council authorities are aware of the fact that consistent refusal to effectively use the English Language in their respective councils poses a serious threat to sustainable development. English is a language of international cooperation, communication, business and diplomacy, and so, suppressing the use of this global language in local councils is akin to cutting the youth, men and women of these council areas from all international [developmental] opportunities that accompany this global language. All the twenty (20) local council senior staff confirmed that the consistent, reserved use of this global language in local councils endangers diverse facets of SD in local council areas. As in the latter items, the justifications given by these senior workers to sustain their thoughts were in four main categories, as presented in Figure 3 below.

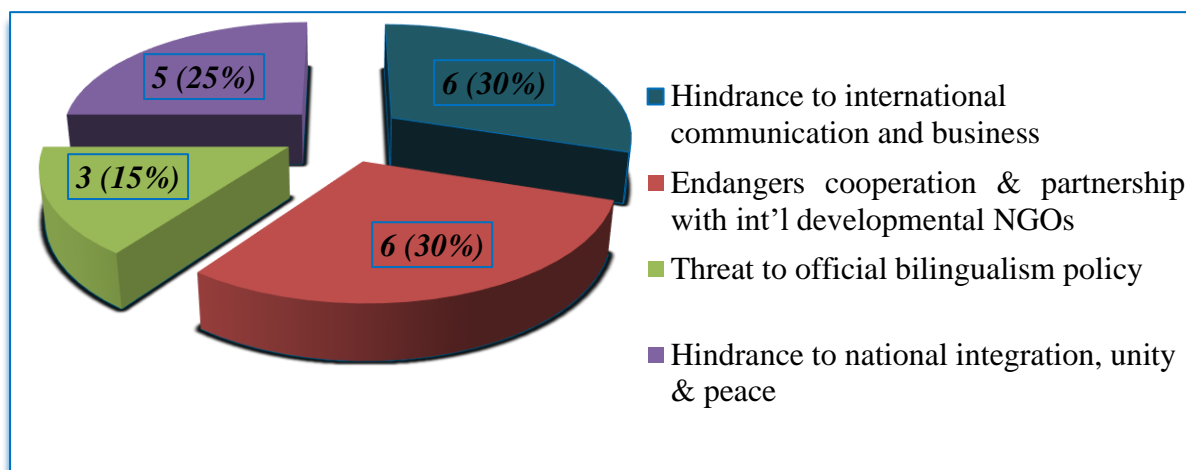


Figure 3: Justifications that Effectively Use of English Hinders SD

Information on the figure above reveals that the majority, with a frequency of six (06) and a rate of 30 %, consider the consistent ineffective and/or timid use of the English Language in local councils as a hindrance to SD because this would, firstly, pose enormous undesirable consequences on international communication and business, and secondly, it would endanger cooperation and partnerships with international developmental NGOs. From the tie recorded in the majority justifications above, it is indicative that the ineffective use of the English Language in local councils would go a long way to limit the international developmental opportunities that are open to local councils, with their respective populations (men, women and the youth). The second significant justification obtained is that the consistently ineffective use of the English Language in local councils would pose a real problem to the achievement of national integration, unity and peace in the country, with five (05) occurrences, that is 25 %. This response considers the fact that the timid practice of the English Language in these councils is a concrete marker of Anglophone marginalisation, thus a breeding ground for discontent and protests which, in turn, hamper government policy of national integration, harmony and peace between the two sociolinguistic and/or cultural groups in the country. The least of the responses, with three (03) occurrences of 15 % are marginal justifications that consistent refusal to use the English Language in local councils handicaps the country's official bilingual policy, and by implication, culture. From these perspectives, it could be said that responses acknowledging the global potential of the English Language are the most recurrent, meanwhile, those about the ineffectiveness of official bilingualism are sparse because of the consciousness and/or importance that council authorities attribute to English as an international language, thus a tool of SD in Cameroon.

From a general standpoint, the conduct of analysis on the twenty (20) Council Staff Questionnaire points to the fact that the English Language is not a frequent code in local council documents (and notices), meetings, seminars and other activities. Even in the few instances where the language is used, it is used reservedly and unregulated by an official document. This timid use of this global language affects the attainment of SD negatively in the respective local council areas in the country.

Analysis of Observation Forms

Observations were also conducted by the researcher to confirm the data responses obtained from the councils. It is in this regard that five (05) observation sessions were carried out on the noticeboards of five government ministries. Observation was, in fact, designed to confirm and/or complement the data (responses) got from the questionnaires. It was a good opportunity for the research to have a face-to-face experience with the realities of English Language use in the Cameroonian administration, and to gauge its significance vis-à-vis the enhancement of SD in the country. These notices constitute what Foucault (1991) terms tools of governance; meant to influence and/or advance the lives of the governed. The flow, availability and accessibility of information factor the speed of development in a country. Bearing in mind that information is a powerful developmental resource, those uniquely produced and published in French point to developmental spheres (areas) from which the English-speaking Cameroonian may not benefit. To do an effective evaluation of the situation, the researcher focused on observing and analysing the number [of signed and unsigned], subjects and types of documents and notices posted in English only, French only and in both English and French.

Analysis of Noticeboard Data from MINEPAD

On the aggregate, eleven (11) notices were found posted on the noticeboard in the Ministry of the Economy, Planning and Regional Development (MINEPAD). Among these notices, it was observed that some were signed and others were not. Nonetheless, the unsigned notices had official stamps appended on them, and this implied the information contained in them was official, thus authorised for publication on the noticeboard of this ministry. In the ensuing analysis, discussions will focus on the number of documents posted in the English Language as compared to those of her French Language counterpart, the subjects published in them and the significance of all these vis-à-vis the enhancement of SD in Cameroon.

Publication Language(s) of Notices in MINEPAD

First-hand information got from this first phase of this observation revealed that the authorities of MINEPAD produce and publish public information in the two official languages. A major linguistic peculiarity of these notices is there were French-only notices, English-only and marginal English-French bilingual notices. The statistics of the notices posted in the different official language is given in Figure 4 below.

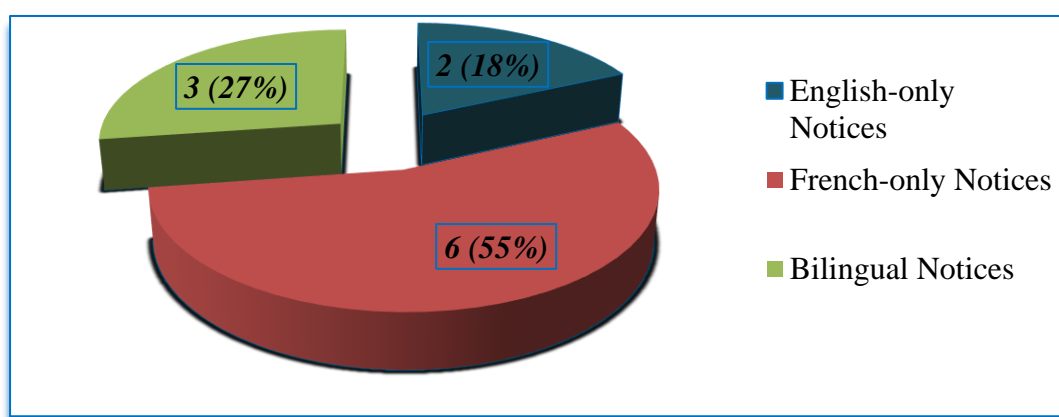


Figure 4: Publication Language(s) of Notices Observed in MINEPAD

From the figure above, it was observed that out of the eleven (11) notices on the noticeboard in MINEPAD, the majority of six (06), constituting 55 %, were produced and posted only in the French Language, implying they had no translated versions. The information published in French-only notices, indeed, failed to also cater for the developmental needs of English-speaking Cameroonians. Moreover, three (03) English-French notices were observed on the MINEPAD noticeboard. This number still went a long way to swell the number of French notices on this noticeboard vis-à-vis those in the English Language. Lastly, it was found that English is the less language in which official notices were produced and published. In this regard, out of the eleven notices posted on this board, only two (02) were English monolingual, thus, 18 %. Even when the three English versions of the bilingual notices are added to this number, it will still give an insignificant cumulative of five (05) notices in English. The preponderance of notices in the French Language is suggestive of the carefree attitude that authorities of this ministry have towards SD in the country, given that the English Language, being a language of international communication, cooperation and opportunities, is a vector of [inter]national and individual development.

Types and/or Themes of English Notice in MINEPAD

On the aggregate, there were five (05) notices in the English Language on this board. In fact, this number was made up of the two (02) English-only notices and the three English versions of bilingual notices. The purpose of checking the contents (themes) of these notices is to take a record of the types of developmental information of which English-speaking Cameroonians are deprived. The five notices in English had three (03) main themes, as given in the table that ensues.

Table 8: Types and/or Themes of English Notice in MINEPAD

Notice Type and/or Theme	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Communiqués	03	60
COVID-19 Control Measures	01	20
Educational/ training/ seminar/ scholarship opportunity	01	20
Total	05	100

From the table above, it can be seen that the majority of the English notices on the board were communiqués, having three (03) occurrences, which is 60 %. In these communiqués was information related to policy actions and official proceedings in the ministry. Furthermore, English notices or information about COVID-19 and educational (seminars and professional) opportunities had a parity of one (01), that is 20 % each. In effect, the insignificant nature of these figures is telling of the types of development information and opportunities that are hidden from English-speaking Cameroonians; worse still, they may not benefit from them.

Themes in French-only Notices in MINEPAD

Unlike the latter, the six French-only notices found covered seven (07) main themes that have a total of twenty-four (24) occurrences. Worthy of notice is the fact that some of these posts (notices) bore more than one subject, for instance, the notice on good governance likewise evoked youth and gender empowerment. The themes developed in these notices are linked to different aspects of development in Cameroon especially and the CEMAC sub-regional at large. For the reason stated before now, the aggregate occurrence of these themes will not tally with the number of French-only notices. These themes are quantified in the following table:

Table 9: Information on French-only Notices English in MINEPAD

Type and/or Theme	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Youth and Economic empowerment	03	13
Public Announcement (call for tender)	01	04
Professional Training/ seminar)	04	17
Job advert/ Opportunities in the Ministry	02	08
Gender Empowerment & Economic Development	04	17
Good Governance	07	29
Nature Conservation & SD	03	13
Total	24	100

As contained in Table 9 above, the development-driven subjects published in French-only notices include youth and economic empowerment; public announcement (call for tender); professional training/ seminar); job advert/ opportunities in the ministry; gender empowerment & economic development; good governance; and nature conservation and SD. Results have it that good governance is the most dominant of these themes, with seven (29 %) occurrences. It is followed by professional training and gender empowerment with 04 (17 %) occurrences each. The third recurrent themes developed uniquely in French are youth empowerment and nature conservation, which have a tie of three (13 %) occurrences each. As stated hitherto, these themes are representative of the varied forms of developmental information that Anglophone Cameroonians may not have access to in MINEPAD. The occurrences of each of the themes may not be of any import to the researcher, but rather, the fact that the English versions of these developmental subjects are non-existent. The fact that the information on nature conservation and job adverts has no English versions, for instance, implies that Anglophone Cameroonians are deprived of vital information on SD and employment opportunities respectively.

Analysis of Noticeboard Data from MINESUP

MINESUP is a French acronym that means Ministry of Higher Education. This ministry is the place where [inter]national educational and professional programmes and opportunities for the Cameroonian youth are conceived and transmitted to the public. MINESUP is commissioned to adopt a language policy, better still effective bilingualism, that is capable of responding to the developmental needs and/or challenges of every Cameroonian youth. Its ability to carry out this mission will be assessed in relation to the use of English in this ministerial department.

Publication Language(s) of Notices in MINESUP

In this observation session (in MINESUP), it was realised that the OL language practice was minimally bilingual. This ministerial department practices minimal bilingualism in the sense that a certain marginal effort is being made

by authorities to produce and publish official notices in the minority OL, along with its French versions and/or counterparts. The statistics of MINESUP notices in the two OLs is presented in the figure that follows.

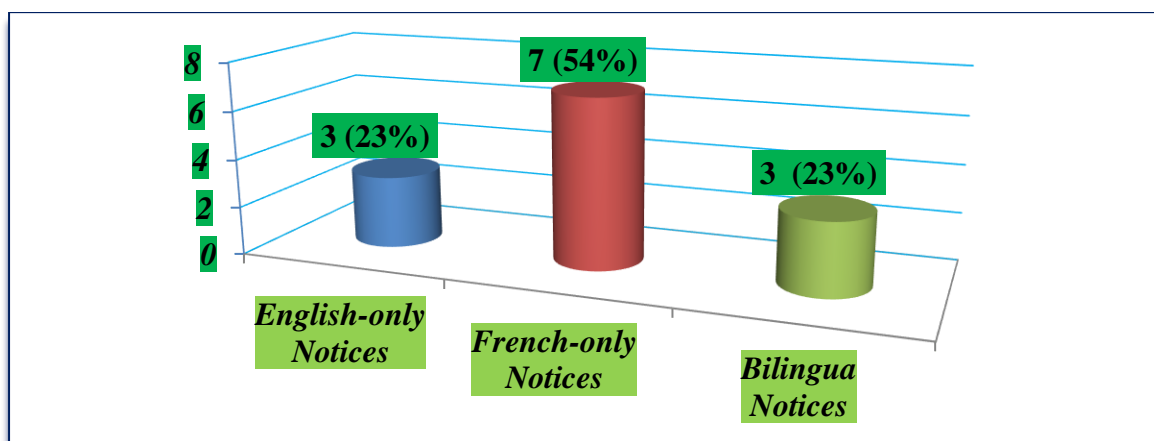


Figure 5: Publication Language(s) of Notices Observed in MINESUP

The trend in MINEPAD wherein French-only notices are alarming dominant still continues in MINESUP. It was observed that officials in this ministerial department have bias for French, but against the minority OL, English. Out of the thirteen (13) notices observed in MINESUP, most of them, with seven (07) occurrences, that represent 54 %, are produced and published in the French Language only. Moreover, notices produced and published in the English Language only and in the two OLs have three (03) occurrences each.

The dominance of French-only notices implies that Anglophone Cameroonians are deprived of some vital developmental information published in MINESUP. Bearing in mind that MINESUP is charged with nurturing and directing the academic (intellectual) and academic growth of the Cameroonian youth, the information published here is that which advances students (youths) individually. The type of developmental content in which the English-speaking Cameroonian is not considered is quantified and discussed in the segment that follows.

Types and Themes of English Notices in MINESUP

The notices under consideration in this segment are the three English-only notices, coupled with the three (03) English versions of those produced in both OLs. Four (04) main types of notices were observed on the MINESUP noticeboard, and they include a university brochure, announcements, communiqué and a conference call. These notices bore six (06) main themes (subjects), some of which overlap in the different notices. The subjects identified are admission requirements; scholarship opportunities; launch of entrance examinations into professional schools; university staff recruitment; and professional seminar/ workshop, as presented below.

Table 10: Content of English Notices in MINESUP

Type of Notice	Theme
University brochure	Admission requirements
Announcement	Scholarship opportunity
Announcement	Launch of entrance examination into professional schools
Communiqués	Universities staff recruitment
Conference & Seminar Calls	Professional seminar/ workshop
Total	05

From the input in the table above, it can be seen that some little developmental information is made available in the English Language. Though insufficient, English-speaking Cameroonians are, to a limited extent, availed information on academic development and professional [training] opportunities. From the dominant figures that pertain to the number of French-only notices, it is certain that English-speaking Cameroonians miss out on many developmental subjects in MINESUP, as will be discussed subsequently.

Themes of French-only Notices in MINESUP

The MINESUP noticeboard had seven (07) notices produced and published in French only, without their English (translated) versions. These notices that comprised a policy document, university brochure, a conference call,

communiqués and announcements, centred on six (06) main subjects: university exchange programmes; national integration and peace; scholarship opportunity; entrance examination into professional schools; recruitment/ job opportunity; and professional seminar/ workshop. It should be noted that the notices in MINESUP have some similarities with the experience in MINEPAD; whereby some notices, for instance, announcements, contained more than one subject. The occurrences of these themes are given in Table 11.

Table 11: Themes of French-only Notices in MINESUP

Type of Notice	Theme	Frequency
University brochure	University exchange programmes	02
Policy document	National integration and Peace	01
Communiqués	Scholarship opportunity	03
Communiqués	Entrance exams into professional schools	02
Announcement	Recruitment/ Job opportunity	03
Conference & Seminar Calls	Professional seminar/ workshop	01
Announcement	Tree-planting	01
Total	07	13

As seen above, the seven French-only notices in MINESUP have seven themes, and were found in an aggregate of thirteen (13) instances. Information meant to enhance the educational and professional development of the Cameroonian student (youth) was the most dominant. Information related to scholarship programmes and job (employment) opportunities open to the Cameroonian youth was found in three notices each. Information on university exchange (partnership) and scholarship programmes had two (02) occurrences each. Other vital developmental information, though with one occurrence each, includes tree-planting, capacity-building, and national unity and peace. The disparity between French-only and English-only and bilingual notices combined suggests that the English-speaking Cameroonian student may not be informed about a very substantial amount of important developmental information on the MINESUP information board; that is produced and published uniquely in French. The absence of the English versions of this developmental information has retards the educational (intellectual) and professional growth of the English-speaking Cameroonian youth.

Analysis of Noticeboard Data from MINSANTE

MINSANTE is a French acronym that means [Cameroon's] Ministry of Public Health. Taking cognizance of the important role this ministerial department plays in transmitting vital up-to-date information about sicknesses and their control measures, analysis here focuses on appraising the language policy adopted in this ministry to make sure that important health information and/or directives are read, understood and followed (implemented) by speakers of Cameroon's minority OL, English.

Languages of Notices Observed in MINSANTE

In all, ten (10) notices were found on the noticeboard in MINSANTE, and information was produced and published minimally and maximally in English and French respectively, as represented in the table below. The data pertaining to the frequency of languages used is quantified in Table 12 which follows.

Table 12: Languages of Notices Observed in MINSANTE

Official Language(s)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
English-only Notices	00	00
French-only Notices	08	20
Bilingual Notices	02	80
Total	10	100

The statistics presented in the table indicate that eight (08) out of the ten (10) notices were produced and published only in French, without their translated versions (in English). Furthermore, only two (02) notices are published in both English and French. Unfortunately, there is no notice published only in English. The two bilingual notices introduce two (02) English notices which are translated versions of two more notices in French. The bilingual notices, in essence, still increase the number of notices in French to ten (10). From this observation, it is clear that notices in MINSANTE are almost entirely in French as there are no English-only notices as is the case with the French counterpart. The existence of more notices in French means that 20 % of developmental-driven information in this ministerial department is in French.

Themes of French-only Notices in MINSANTE

Out of the eleven (11) notices observed on the MINSANTE noticeboard, nine (09) of them were produced and published only in the majority OL (French). This preponderance, in fact, means more developmental details (information) from which English-speaking Cameroonians are alienated. The eight notices observed here developed nine (09) themes; that are meant to foster good public health practices in the country. Most of these subjects overlapped and/or cut across the varied notices, and their occurrences are given thus:

Table 13: Information in French-only Notices in MINSANTE

Subject	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Recruitment of health workers	03	17
Pandemic control	03	17
Youth empowerment	02	11
Employment	02	11
Health seminar/ workshop	01	06
Scholarship opportunity	02	11
Ideal feeding practices	01	06
Immunisation/ vaccination campaign	03	17
Environmental protection	01	06
Total	18	100

The nine (09) themes identified in French-only notices occurred in eighteen (18) instances. Among the themes (information) observed in these notices, the most preponderant are those related to the recruitment of health personnel; pandemic control; and immunisation and/or vaccination campaign, each with a frequency of three (17 %). The second recurrent themes, with two (11 %) occurrences each are information related to youth empowerment; employment; and scholarship opportunity (professional growth). Other important themes observed include health seminars/workshops; ideal feeding practices; and environmental protection which have one (06 %) occurrence each. The number and occurrences of the themes in French-only posts on the MINSANTE information board are telling of the magnitude of health information to which English-speaking Cameroonians are not privy. The rarity experienced with and related to this information in English, thus, hampers SD in the sphere of [individual and] public health in Cameroon.

Analysis of Noticeboard Data from MINRESI

MINRESI is another French acronym which refers to the Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation. This ministerial department is charged with initiating and coordinating different research ventures and/or procedures aimed at giving practical remedies to different problems (pandemics and flus) plaguing the country.

Language(s) of Public Notices in MINRESI

Bearing in mind that the default language of science and technology is the English Language, the researcher, in this analysis, seeks to verify the extent to which scientific proceedings and results are published in English; which is capable of attracting foreign sponsors or partners. Thirteen (13) notices were observed in MINRESI, and minimally bilingual in content. Record related to the use of the use of English and French is presented in the figure below.

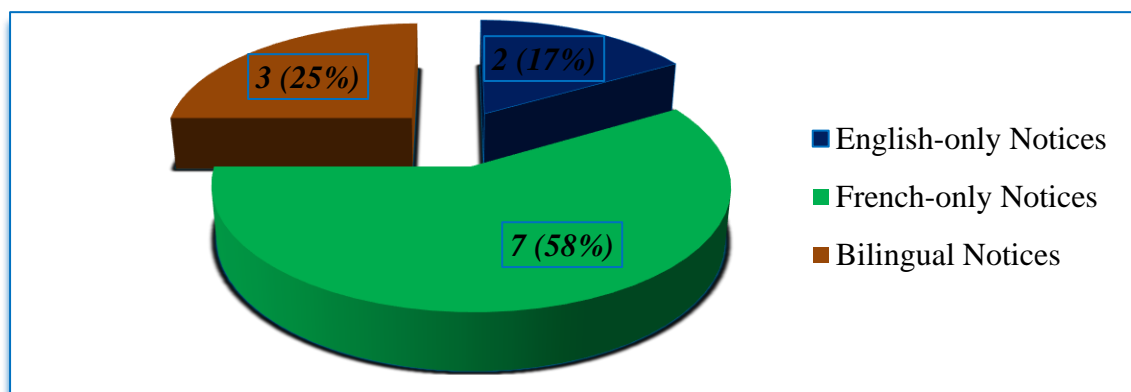


Figure 6: Language(s) of Public Notices in MINRESI

Information obtained from Figure 6 confirms that most notices found on the noticeboard in MINRESI were published in French only. To this effect, out of the eleven (11) notices observed, seven (58 %) were in French (without their respective translated versions in English). Secondly, three (25 %) notices were produced and published in English and French. Lastly, there were only two (02) English-only notices. This marked difference is indicative of the reserved preferences made towards the use of the minority OL in this ministerial department. In effect, this sparing use has bearings on the attainment of different aspects of SD in the country.

Information in French-only Notices in MINRESI

The French notices under consideration in this segment do not include the three (03) bilingual notices observed. Rather, these notices are those that were produced and published in French, the majority official language. Nine (09) main themes were developed in these nine notices, and some themes were overlapping; meaning that some themes featured or were developed in more than one notice. Unlike the English themes discussed above, some of those published only in French have more than one occurrence. The information in French-only posts on the MINRESI noticeboard is quantified in the following table:

Table 14: Themes in French-only Notices in MINRESI

Subject	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies	03	17
Creation, Protection and Importance of Community Forests	01	06
Research Grants for research projects	04	22
Ideal Food Production Techniques	01	06
Discovery of the COVID-19 Vaccine	03	17
Disease and Pesticide Control Method	02	11
Women's Empowerment in Scientific Research	01	06
Good Farming Practices	01	06
Seminar on Digital Research Method	02	11
Total	18	100

As contained in the table above, the nine subjects in French-only posts on the MINRESI noticeboard have an aggregate of eighteen (18) occurrences. Among these themes, information related to research grants for research projects ranked highest with four (04) occurrences, which is equivalent to 22 %. This preponderance was succeeded by two (02) themes, climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies; and the discovery of the covid-19 vaccine, with a frequency of three (17 %) each. The third recurrent information also had two themes: those related to disease and pesticide control methods; and seminar on digital research method, each having two occurrences, that is 11 %. These French-only notices also had four other themes that featured just once, for instance, information pertaining to the creation, protection and importance of community forests; ideal food production techniques; women's empowerment in scientific research; and good farming practices had only one (06 %) frequency each. The preponderance of developmental information related to the funding of research projects is not a coincidence in MINRESI, given that it is the prime mission of this ministerial department. The great disparity between English and French notices, worse still, the production and publication of very vital developmental information in French only, coupled with others, is a strong pointer to the elimination and/or exclusion of English-speaking Cameroonians from the SD plans and/or mission of this important ministerial department.

Analysis of Noticeboard Information from MINEPDED

MINEPDED is another French acronym that means Ministry of the Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development. As its name suggests, this is the ministerial department charged with the conception, coordination (control) and assessment of environment-related projects that galvanise SD in the country. As the conceiver and transmitter of SD opportunities, and their ecological repercussions, it is expected that communications in MINEPDED should be dominantly in English, considering that environmentalism is a subject that continues to gain international currency, thus, attention and funding from foreign nations, international organisations and NGOs. A total of ten (10) notices were observed on the MINEPDED information board.

Language(s) of Public Notices in MINEPDED

As stated in the aforementioned, it was observed that the notices in MINEPDED were produced and published under some minimal bilingual conditions. It was found that some notices were published only in French, others in English only and some others in both OLs. The official language representation of these notices is given in the figure that follows.

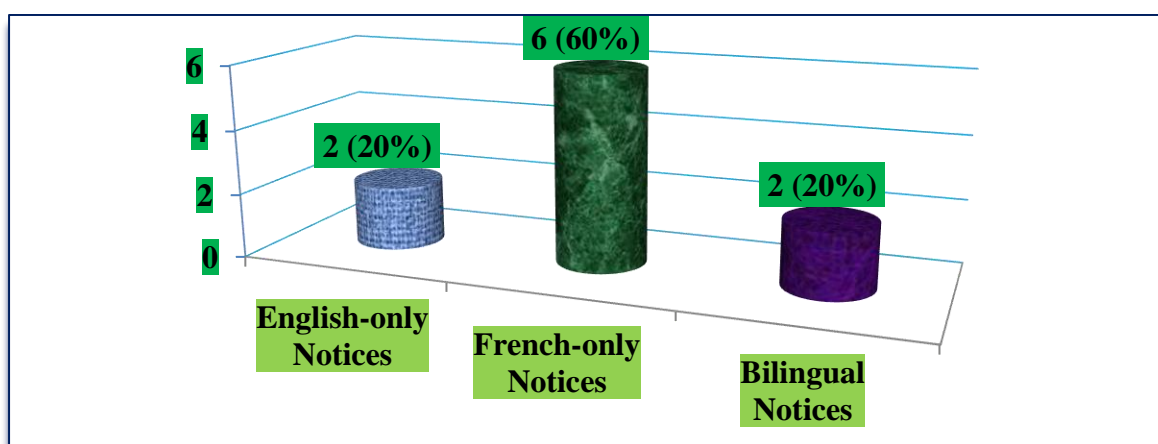


Figure 7: Language(s) of Public Notices in MINEPDED

Figure 7, thus, attests to the fact that the disparity between notices produced and published in English and those in French was quite significant. It was, in fact, observed that six (06) out of the ten (10) notices posted on the MINEPDED information were produced and published only in French, rating French-only notices at 60 %. To add, notices produced and published in English only and those in both OLs were at par with two (02) occurrences, culminating to 20 % each. In essence, this gap is a signal that English-speaking Cameroonians (with the global English community) are either not privy to or considered in development-activating information in this ministerial department. The types of SD information the English-speaking communities in Cameroon and abroad have missed out on is quantified in the following sub-sections.

Themes in English Notices in MINEPDED

As seen in Figure 7 (above), four English notices had been produced and posted on this noticeboard at the time of this observation exercise. In all, five (05) eco-themes were observed in these English notices. It is worth stating that some of these themes are overlapping in some notices. The frequencies of these themes are presented in the table below.

Table 15: Information in English Notices in MINEPDED

Subject	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Global warming and climate change adaptation	02	29
Convention on Ozone Layer protection	01	14
Importance of community forests	01	14
Conservation of pangolins and biodiversity	02	29
Competition on environmental awareness	01	14
Total	07	100

The five environmental themes in Table 15 galvanise different aspects of SD, and in different patterns. It was observed that information pertaining to Global warming and climate change adaptation and conservation of pangolins and biodiversity were the most recurrent, having two (29 %) each. Other development-driven information in the likes of the convention on ozone layer protection; the importance of community forests; and competition on environmental awareness respectively feature once. What is of import here is not their frequencies, rather, it is the fact that their production and publication in English makes it possible for related developments, funding, partnership, awareness or job and research opportunities.

Themes in French-only Notices in MINEPDED

Discussions here will not consider the French versions of the bilingual notices observed on this noticeboard. Nonetheless, analysis takes into account, only the six (06) notices that were produced and posted in the majority OL, French, only. Like in a similar analysis conducted above, the enquiry of themes in French-only notices in MINEPDED is consciously done to assess the developmental information of which English-speaking Cameroonians are deprived, worse still, potential development partners (promoters) are not aware of. An aggregate of ten (10) developmental themes was communicated in French Language only, as seen in the table below.

Table 16: Information in French-only Notices in MINEPDED

Information	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Climate Change summit	02	10
Solar energy as alternative for wood energy	01	05
Creation and care for game reserves	03	15
Importance of eco-conservation in SD	03	15
Recycling of non-biodegradables	02	10
Urbanisation and Tree-planting	02	10
Funding of environmental projects	01	05
Nature conservation versus COVID-19 prevention	03	15
Donation and importance of dust bins	01	05
Locally made materials and SD	02	10
Total	20	100

As seen in Table 16 above, some themes featured in more than one notice, and so, had twenty (20) occurrences. Among the ten (10) themes developed in the notices, those related to creation and care for game reserves; the importance of eco-conservation in SD; and nature conservation versus covid-19 prevention were more preponderant with three (15 %) occurrences each. This was closely succeeded by information concerning Climate Change summit; urbanisation and tree-planting; recycling of non-biodegradables; and locally made materials and SD having two (10 %) frequencies each. Other important information, with just one occurrence (5 %) each include solar energy as an alternative to wood energy; donation and importance of dust bins; and funding of environmental projects. Every information evoked here factors SD in varied ways, and so, their number in French only renders English-speaking Cameroonians uninformed. This bespeaks the retardation of SD among English-speaking Cameroonians.

CONCLUSION

It is founded that the English Language is a vector of [inter]national development in diverse domains. In the conduct of analysis of the questionnaire and observation data, it was found that the English Language is practised quite sparingly in ministerial departments and Francophone local councils in the nation's capital. In addition to respondents' acknowledgement of the developmental potentials of the English Language, though marginal in implementation in the country, analysis of the observation data revealed that the current practice of English in core government departments is still seemingly optional and/or timid, as most ministerial and local council communication is conducted in French Language only. This official French monolingualism serves as a great deterrent to socio-political and economic development and partners that could have been attracted, better still, spurred by effective implementation of this international Language in all domains of Cameroonian life.

The results ascertain the fact that the effective implementation of the English Language in Cameroon would go a long way to enhance SD in varied domains of national life. The responses manifested cognizance of the fact that the globalising potential of the English Language plus its default use in science and technology make it a tool of international development. This concretises the fact that English is an international language; with the potentials to initiate and speed-up development in varied domains in Cameroon.

In an expression of their consciousness that English is a language of international business and diplomacy, it was found the frequent and effective practice of this international language in local council communications would attract many development partners (countries, organisations and NGOs) from the global English community. To add, all the senior council staff agreed that the creation of English Language cultural centres and libraries would help to empower the English Language in their respective local council areas. The development this would possibly bring to citizens in local communities, as explained by the respondents, is that it would empower and open them to global development in educational, professional training and job opportunities around the globe. The creation of English Language cultural centres and libraries in local council areas would enable the Cameroonian rural youth to participate in competitions and also apply for scholarships, training and funding programmes that would develop themselves and their communities.

As concerns the information obtained from the observations conducted on noticeboards in the core administrative services (ministerial departments and local councils) chosen, it was realised that the majority of notices observed were published uniquely in the French Language. This dominance of French bespeaks the marginalisation of English in Cameroon. This institutionalised inequality between French and English transcends to an imbalance in the development of OL cultures and institutions in Cameroon; as profound attention is given to French affiliates in Cameroon. In addition, the production of more notices in French, in essence, meant more developmental information in French as well. The publication of important developmental information in French only threatens SD, not only in Anglophone regions, but throughout the national territory. The developmental information borne by French-only notices, in fact, points to the developmental domains of which English-speaking Cameroonians are deprived. If this lukewarm attitude towards the use of this code of international cooperation, communication and development persists in Cameroon's formal space, the attainment of the SDGs will remain a dream.

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