

A Traditional Dance Lesson as Approach to the Teaching of National Languages and Cultures in Cameroonian Secondary Schools

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Abstract

Although the teaching of some National Languages and Cultures (Henceforth, NLC) was overlooked over the years in Cameroon, a ministerial circular in September 2012 authorized the teaching of NLC in some pilot schools in Cameroon. After identifying the major problem faced by teachers in pilot schools notably the designing of appropriate NLC lesson plans, this article proposes a traditional dance lesson plan which could act as a source of inspiration not only for teachers in the NLC pilot schools, but also to student-teachers who generally find difficulties in designing lesson plans while on internship. The article reviews different approaches proposed to be used in the teaching of NLC, after analyzing government's measures in favour of NLC and the objectives of teaching NLC in Cameroon.

Key words: *National Language, Lesson, teaching, cultures, approaches.*

Introduction

Over the years, some researchers have been advocating the teaching of indigenous languages as media of instruction in school. For example, Bamgbose (2005) correctly observes that outside Africa, no one questions why the languages of countries with smaller populations in Europe should be used as mediums of instruction, from secondary even up to the university level. What seems to be lacking in many African countries is the political will to break away from the colonial policy and practice of limiting Mother Tongue (MT) education to lower primary classes. Where such a will exists, much can be done in a short period of time. In virtually all cases, the conclusion arrived at has been that learning through indigenous languages has greater educational, cultural and social advantages UNESCO (1953). However, the enthusiasm of language experts is often dampened by what is usually referred to as practical demands which necessitate the maintenance of foreign languages in education. Although governments attach relative importance to NLC in education, there is in reality, the absence of a political will to enforce policy application. Fortunately, the growing legislation in favour of NLC in secondary schools is irreversible and salutary.

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In Cameroon, before the department of NLC was created in the Higher Teacher-Training College (HTTC) of the University of Yaounde¹, it was generally observed that teachers particularly those who used to teach local languages in schools were either untrained or had received only basic training through the Operational Research Program for Language Education (PROPELCA) developed since 1981. The methodology for Mother Tongue (Henceforth MT) teaching seemed to have been neglected by some of those who were trained by the program. Following the Ministry of Secondary Education's extension of the teaching of NLC in some selected schools without enough trained teachers in 2012, some of the national languages native speakers of the respective communities were recruited on a temporary basis to teach, probably with the assumption that if one can speak their MT well, they should be able to teach it. This scenario might have resulted in ineffective lesson planning and teaching of NLC when the PROPELCA program started. Since the introduction of NLC is still in its experimental phase in some of the pilot schools nationwide, the teaching and learning processes are replete with a number of problems such as untrained and insufficient teachers of NLC, inadequate supply of learning and teaching materials, low developmental status of national languages, negative attitude of some teachers and even speakers of these languages amongst other challenges.

This paper presents a traditional dance lesson as an approach to the teaching and learning of NLC in some pilot schools in Cameroon. The work is divided into five sections. The first examines government's measures in favour of NLC, the rationale and the objectives of teaching NLC. The aims of teaching NLC in secondary schools is the focus of 1.3. Section 2 looks at the teaching and learning approaches that have been adopted. An adapted model lesson is presented in section 3 followed by some alternative techniques and themes in the teaching of NLC. The paper ends with an analysis of some challenges inherent in the teaching and learning of NLC as well as perspectives. Section 2 examines the conceptual framework which is followed by a presentation of a lesson plan based on participatory and interactive methods.

Government Measures in Favour of National Languages

The Cameroon Government, through the Ministry of Secondary Education, has taken some legislative measures in favour of the

teaching and learning of NLC in schools. In the first phase of implementation, seven pilot languages and schools were selected for experimentation as follows distributed as follows (Table I):

Table 1: Distribution of NL and Selected Schools of the NCL Program

National Language	School	Region
Dii	Lycée Classique	Adamawa
Ewondo and Basaa	Lycée Général Leclerc de Yaounde	Centre
Ewondo and Basaa	Lycée d'Akwa de Douala	Littoral
Fulfulde	Lycée Classique et Moderne de Garoua	North
Kom	Government High School Njinikom	North West
Bulu	Lycée Classique d'Ebolowa	South
Fe'efe'e	Lycée Classique de Bafang	West.

In addition, a Circular Letter No.234/12/MINSEC/IGE/IP-LAL of 24 September 2012 authorized the extension of the teaching of NLCs in some secondary schools. Article 1 of this circular stated that from the date of signature, the following institutions were authorized to teach NLCs in Form ONE and Form TWO (Table 2).

Table 2: Authorized Institutions for the Teaching of NLC in Secondary Schools in Cameroon in 2012

Region	Division	Institution
Adamaoua	Vina	Lycée classique et modern de Ngaoundéré
Centre	Mfoundi	Lycée Général Leclerc
		Lycée de Nkolbison
		Lycée Bilingue d'Etoug-Ebé
	Lékié	Lycée d'Obala
		Lycée de Monatélé
		Lycée de Sa'a
	Mefou et Afamba	Lycée d'Awae
	Nyong et Kelle	Lycée d'Eséka
Est		Lycée de Makak
	Boumba et Ngoko	CES de Ngolla 20
	Lom et Djerem	Lycée de Mandjou
		Lycée Bilingue de Kaélé

Extrême-Nord	Mayo-Kani	Lycée de Lara
		Lycée de Boboyo
		Lycée classique et moderne de Kaélé
		Lycée de Garey
		Lycée de Gaban-Lara
	Mayo-Tsanaga	Lycée classique de Mokolo
	Mayo-Danay	Lycée classique de Yagoua
	Diamaré	Lycée de Maroua Domayo
Littoral	Wouri	Lycée d'Akwa
		Lycée de Ndom
		Collège Agape de Douala
		Collège Libermann de Douala
		Collège Evangélique de Douala
		Collège Libermann de Douala
		Collège de la Maturité de Douala
		Collège Saint Pierre et Paul de Loum
		Collège Jeanne d'Arc de Nkongsamba
Nord	Bénoué	Lycée classique et moderne de Garoua
Nord-Ouest	Mezam	GBHS Mankon
	Boyo	GHS Njinikom
		GBHS Belo
		GHS Anyajua
		GHS Aduk
		GHS Abuh
		GSS NgwahEbosing
		GSS Yang
	DongaMantung	GBHS Nkambe
	Menchum	GHS Wum
	Momo	GHS Batibo
	Bamboutos	Lycée de Mbouda Rural
		Lycée de Bangang
		Lycée de Batcham

Ouest	Haut-Nkam	Lycée Classique de Baham
		Lycée de Bamendjou
		Lycée de Bameka
	Haut-Plateaux	Lycée Bilingue de Baham
		Lycée de Bamendjou
		Lycée de Bameka
	Nkounk Khi	Lycée Bilingue de Yom III
		Lycée de Tsela
	Menoua	Lycée Bilingue de Dschang
		Lycée Bilingue de Dzih
	Mifi	CES de Tocket II
		Lycée classique de Bafoussam
		Lycée classique de Bangangté
		Lycée de Balengou
Sud	Ndé	COETHONOU
	Mvila	Lycée d'Ebolowa
		Lycée classique et moderne d'Ebolowa
	Dja et Lobo	Lycée de Mvomeka'a
		Collège Notre Dame du Sacré Chœur de Sangmélina
Sud-ouest	Fako	GHS Buea-Rural
		GBHS Muea
	Kupe Muanenguba	GBHS Bangem
	Kupe Muanenguba	GHS Eyumodjock
	Ndian	GHS Mundemba
	Meme	CCAST Kumba
	Meme	GHS Kake
	Manyu	GBHS Mamfe
	Lebialem	GBHS Fontem

Sources: Circular Letter No.234/12/MINSEC/IGE/IP-LAL of 24 September 2012

The table above clearly presents the institutions that were authorized to run the NLC program in the ten Regions of the Cameroon. The selection was done based on a minimum number of requirements that each language had to meet in order to be selected.

Djiafeua and Guigno (n. d) outline some requirements for the selection of a national language:

- Such a language should already have the necessary materials that can be used for the experimentation phase of teaching NLC in education (1);
- The languages must have already been taught at the primary level before it is introduced at the secondary level (2);
- The human resources such as teachers to teach the language should be available (3);
- The ready support of the language community through awareness creation and participation should also be available. For example, the existence of a language Committee or Language Academy already functioning with a high percentage of local activities and involvement) (4) would be an advantage;
- The languages to be taught were selected in all the administrative Regions of the country in order to allow a certain degree of national representation and equity.
- The selected languages should be taught generally based on the PROPELCA methodology (*Projet Pilote Pour l'Enseignement des Langues Camerounaises*) that was developed in Cameroon since 1981²⁰

Rationale for Teaching Indigenous Cameroonian Languages

According to Tadadjeu (2004), a language expresses a people's culture. It expresses the principles that make up the social model of the community. It is the means for passing the social model from one generation to the other. African languages traditionally played these cultural and educational functions. In this connection, the teaching of local languages has to be rooted in the different traditions and cultures so that students should not be cut off from their languages and cultures particularly in this era of globalization where the media is seemingly imposing foreign cultures to a growing youthful generation. As a result, students will have a strong sense of their own identity and would certainly grow up with a better understanding of their languages and cultures. Tadadjeu (ibid) also

²⁰ It is important to note that it is was in Mbalmayo during the seminar with the inspectors and other stakeholders of the Ministry of Secondary Education (MINSEC) in September 2014 that the methodology was modified from PROPELCA to the model of approach adopted in the presentation of the Lesson plan in this study

thinks that an education system cannot improve without promoting an improved vision of the society. Thus, the teaching of NLC will promote their cultures and accelerate the development of some of the languages that are not yet sufficiently developed so that they can become pillars of development. It is by teaching them either orally or those that are already developed that students' mental capacities will be strengthened and a strong foundation laid for studying other languages and cultures.

According to Awoniyi (1982), the teaching of NLC can improve on a people's culture and prevent them from becoming cultural hybrids. This can enable them to love and be proud of their own culture. It is important to note that every culture is rich in cultural and moral values especially contained in proverbs, folktales and euphemisms. Students' knowledge in some of these issues will help in building a bridge between experiences of learning at home and at school since they will become reasonably knowledgeable in their languages and cultures. This is in line with UNESCO's educational philosophy (1960) which holds that, "Education should be a means to empower children and adults alike to become active participants in the transformation of their societies. Learning should also focus on the values, attitudes and behaviours which enable individuals to learn to live together in a world characterized by diversity and pluralism". Thus, it creates an educational environment that values - diversity - in the country.

The importance of NLCs is also crucial for the creation of a true learning society, a society in which education is more responsive to the immediate realities of the home societies of learners, as well as those of a globalizing and changing world. Teaching NLC in schools is critically important because it can encourage some parents to participate in the educational process thereby creating a link between the school and home environment. Consequently, their participation would encourage their children to feel a deeper sense of cultural pride and self-awareness when they know that their MT is valued both at home and in school.

It also helps students to be rooted in their languages and cultures before being open to other cultures. This is critically important because students in the 21st Century do not seem to be learning their MT and cultures effectively like their parents and ancestors because of their ever increasing exposure to foreign languages and the

harmful effects of the media. The impact on their identity and sense of belonging is significant, and this may probably be a cause for concern to parents, local leaders, teachers, linguists etc. The affirmation of children's cultural identity through the use of indigenous languages also has a significant impact on the way they see the relevance of school to their lives. MT is therefore the best vehicle for teaching learners' cultures because children's cultures can be best expressed in the language of their environment. In this connection, the teaching of NLCs is complementary to other types of education that students are exposed to outside their school environment.

The teaching of NLCs is also important because it enables students, particularly those in the Department of Language and cultures in the University of Yaounde 1 to teach and learn skills and techniques that are appropriate for their career as future teachers of NLCs.

Since some Cameroonian languages have been experimented as media of instruction only in lower primary levels, an extension to secondary level is also necessary for a better evaluation of the relevance of multilingual education. For instance, the Kom Education Project (KEP) demonstrated that a full six-year primary education in the MT with the L2 showed that pupils in the KEP program performed better than those in the Standard English in all subjects (Walter and Chuo, 2011). The findings of the KEP also revealed that the students were doing very well in secondary school.

1.3. Objectives of Teaching National Languages and Cultures in Secondary schools

The major objective of formal secondary education should be to help students develop their natural abilities by creating the necessary environment that will stimulate, challenge, and involve them socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually in the art of learning and doing (source). It is therefore the duty of teachers of language and cultures to facilitate learning by creating ideal situations for students to discover things for themselves. Thus, the objective of secondary education should be to develop students through a variety of activities such as, language art, mathematical processes, science exploration, manipulative activities, social studies and citizenship, physical exercises, creative thinking etc.

Formal secondary education should enable students not only to be firmly rooted in their languages and cultures, but also to be open up to other cultures in order to learn to think and to act globally and locally, respectively. The teaching of NLCs was formerly based on the PROPELCA's method that was designed with a goal to "develop a complete educational structure for the teaching and maintenance of [minority] languages in the school system ... and to ensure that this system is completely state-financed and/or community-supported in terms of infrastructural aid and funding" (Tadadjeu 1997:20). During a seminar organized by MINESEC in Kribi, in the Ocean Division of the South Region, some approaches to the teaching of NLC were adopted notably participatory, interactive, thematic and intercultural, documentary and community methods. These methods were designed with a view to improving the overall teaching and learning processes.

The following section looks at the teaching and learning approaches that were developed and adopted in 2014 by the MINSEC's Inspectorate General of Education for the teaching of NLCs in secondary schools.

Conceptual Framework

Home Language and Education

The theoretical framework for this study is based on the long-acknowledged observation that educational outcomes may be negatively affected if there is a difference between the languages which children speak at home and the languages used in the educational system. Empirical studies for both developed and developing countries show that pupils who have another home language than the language of instruction experience higher dropout rates (Bamgbose, 2005; Walter & Chuo, 2011). However, the teaching of NLC is based on MINSEC's (2014) teaching methodology developed for the teaching of NLC in Form ONE and Form TWO. The approaches adopted for this purpose are the participatory and interactive, thematic and intercultural, documentary and community approaches.

Participatory and Interactive Approach

The participatory and interactive approach according to MINSEC (2014:6) requires the students' active participation and feedback in the course of a lesson. To acquire any particular cultural event, they are called upon to participate actively in the construction of their

knowledge. The teacher mainly guides them through step-by-step interaction with a view to building up the targeted competence using available cultural resources. However, learners are expected to interact with their peers or trainers.

Thematic and Intercultural Approach

This approach was proposed by MINSEC (2014) to allow learners to develop skills on cultural topics through comparison, identification of similarities and differences in cross-cultural and intercultural themes. The NLC teacher leads the learners to compare and contrast local culture with other cultures.

Documentary Approach

This method as established by MINSEC (2014:6), essentially helps students develop their knowledge and skills through stored and archival documents in order to build their competence. They do this individually or in groups through tutorials.

Community Approach

This approach (MINSEC, 2014) essentially involves the recruitment of local community members to teach some cultural elements in the classroom. Learners also have to draw rich experiences from stakeholders, and should acquire cultural skills of some community members through field trips and visits. From the four approaches, this paper proposes the participatory and interactive methods because they are in line with the current trends of teaching where students are considered to be key players in the teaching process while teachers are essentially supposed to guide them.

Cultural Realization

This deals with the integration of activities that offer the students an example of a situation of a given context for an expected output. Learning in this type of context is perceived in three stages following MINSEC's 2014 proposal:

- A model presentation by teachers and students or any other resource person;
- An observation of the model;
- Practice enacted by students.

A demonstration of a lesson plan will be used below to show how students can acquire competence through “learning by doing”.

Toward a Participatory Approach to the Teaching of NLC: The Use of Traditional Dance

This section presents an alternative approach to the teaching and learning of NLC based on a traditional dance. It equally presents a sample traditional dance lesson plan.

Class: Form Four

Enrolment:

No of Boys:

No. of Girls

Module: Cameron Cultural Practices

Title: A traditional Dance.

Expected competence: Simulation of dance and identification of cultural significance

Context: Family and society

Previous knowledge: Some basic Knowledge of culture

Didactic Materials: Text books, reference books, musical instruments and allure.

Table 3 : A Traditionnel Dance Lesson Plan

SN	Stages for the Lesson	Teacher's Activity	Students' Activity	Aims and Objectives	Duration
1	Discovery Phase	The teacher presents a text on the board and asks the students to read and reflect on the situation.	Students read and reflect	To identify different dances and discovery of their cultural importance	5 Minutes
2	Dealing with the situation and presentation of results	Teacher supervises the students' work by moving round the class. He asks them questions like <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What should students do in such situations? • Why are traditional 	Students respond to questions	Objective not adequately stated Family and society Leisure Talk about dances	5mins

		dances classified as leisure?			
3	Confrontation of results and discovery of obstacles	The teacher receives students' responses and writes the best ones on the board	The students copy in their books	To synthesises - and analyses the situation	5mins
4	- Resource Mobilisation Phase	Guides the students in the mobilization of resources by asking questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What type of dance is selected? • Who are the participant s? • When and where is it executed? • The singers and drummers • Attire, steps and styles • Cultural significance 	Students answer the questions and participate in the mobilization of resources	This is not an objective Different answers from students (individuals or groups)	20Mins
5	Knowledge Consolidation phase	The teacher facilitates the copying of notes based on the mobilization of resources for the consolidation of knowledge by students	The students take down notes in their note books	Is this an aim or objective? Submission of exercises and corrections	5Mins

6	Evaluation Phase	The teacher sets some questions to evaluate the day's tasks	Students answer the questions asked on traditional dance in their area	as above Assignments submitted to the teacher or oral responses/gestures to questions	10Mins
7	Remedial work	Marking and indicating corrections	The students copy the corrections	as above Corrections of assignments	5Mins

Sources: Our Fieldwork (a lesson adapted from MINSEC Inspectors in 2014)

As presented in the table above, the different stages of the lesson show both teacher's and students' activities and aims. The lesson has been designed following the participatory approach methodology presented earlier. It is one of the lessons that students-teachers in the Department of NLC in Yaounde and Bertoua in particular or researchers and linguists in general can use as a source of inspiration to design and teach a lesson on NLC or MT depending on the level and topic and the approach used. In addition to this sample lesson, NLC teachers can use the proposed approach because it is pertinent to the sample lesson presented.

Alternative Techniques and Themes in Teaching National Languages and Cultures

One of the best methods in teaching NLCs is modeling. Teachers should serve as a perfect model of language and culture to the students. In this connection, the teacher's personal example speaks louder than words. Unless the teacher serves as the best example in his/her language and culture in both words and deeds, the students may not take their lessons seriously. A teacher who perspires under thick European clothes and is always in a three-piece suit in the sun for instance in Douala, Garoua, and Maroua will have little or no clear cultural message to pass on in a lesson in which he /she has to talk about the value of Cameroonian dressing. The model teacher should be dedicated to and be interested in the culture of his/her community. The model teacher should not be too arrogant to talk with and learn from the traditional elders. He/she should let students know the distinction between knowing about language and culture and living that culture. Students should be assisted by NLC teachers to practice the best in their culture within and outside school.

Furthermore, students should be encouraged to adopt the following teaching principles: simple greeting etiquettes and regulatory behaviour in human relationships such as the use of correct and acceptable language appropriate to the situation and people; adopt dressing habits that are appropriate to their respective communities; the origin and history of the particular communities in which they live; social norms, beliefs, taboos and people's ways of life etc., important personalities whether dead or alive in the community. In order to help students, become rooted in their languages and cultures, the model teacher may need to facilitate their learning by inviting traditional elders sufficiently knowledgeable in language and culture to share various aspects of their culture with the students whenever the need arises.

Lastly, the model teacher should:

- occasionally take the students out for excursions to places of cultural interest at local and regional levels, (museums, historical sites, etc.)
- create community cultural spots or “museums” where students can place artefacts of their people (e.g. works of art, clothing, equipment building plans, food items etc.)
- encourage the formation of “cultural groups” or associations in their schools to consolidate their culture through songs, dances, plays, the different indigenous languages, etc.;
- collecting all available published works on the community's language and culture written both by local authors and non-natives;
- encourage students to collect all available materials on language and culture of their community on diverse areas of interest such as, local geographical and personal names (origin and meanings, relevance etc.), historical data on the villages, town and community; the chronology of all reigning Chiefs or Fons in their villages or tribes; child-rearing practices of their community; dressing habits including traditional beautification; community religious beliefs - (origins, mode of worship etc.); oral literature (stories, poems, etc., traditional cure for illnesses; conflicts and warfare; building patterns and equipment; occupations including equipment; social behavior and responsibility, the impact of foreign culture on the languages and cultures of the community etc. Wherever the need arises, the teacher should also encourage the students to

keep learning about their language and culture and also exhibit practically what they can do in their community on days organized for cultural fares.

- They should organize weekly cultural activities that lead to the celebration of the International Mother Tongue Day so that different cultural groups can come and perform on such events. They can also use the media, especially community radios if these do exist to promote and disseminate all vital information that would project cultural activities and language of that community.

Professional Qualities Required of a NLC Teachers

The teachers involved in the teaching of NLC should be interested in the particular language, the people, culture and history and should also be learners since no one can claim to be an encyclopedia even of their languages and cultures. The teachers of NLCs should devote themselves to scholarly efforts such as gathering relevant knowledge on languages and cultures not only in their communities of origin, but, also in neighboring communities by asking questions, reading and reporting the findings of their research. Such teachers have to be efficient speakers of their languages and should reasonably be deeply knowledgeable in their communities' language and cultural activities. They should be actively involved in all activities and projects that are geared towards the promotion and development of their languages, cultures and communities.

Such teachers should also be active in any association that is formed to foster the growth of languages and cultures, or form one wherever they are sent to teach if none exists. They should be resourceful, adaptable and prepared to work very hard in the interest of the language and community in which they are sent to teach because they are like ambassadors and an embodiment of the values of language and cultural promotion that the country needs in order to fully emerge in 2035. Therefore, they must like the languages and cultures they teach to convince others who may be opposing the values that linguists in general and the department of language and culture in particular are promoting.

In the same vein, teachers of NLC should ignore those who stigmatize the teaching of NLC and rather become flag bearers both in school and in the communities where they teach. They should be prepared to work with colleagues who teach other language subjects

such as English, French, Spanish, Italian, Chinese, and History, Social studies, Religious knowledge, Home Economics, Agriculture, General science etc. in order to exchange and share knowledge and experiences.

They should also be creative enough because it is the quality of teaching that largely determines the quality of language and cultural education that students receive. Therefore, they should consider themselves as the best teaching resources before looking for some teaching aids such as diagrams, charts, film strips, textbooks, resource persons, the blackboard, pictures, broadcasts, museums, exhibitions etc.

The following section looks at some of the difficulties that may be encountered in teaching NLC in some of the selected schools.

4. Challenges Inherent in the Teaching /Learning of National Languages and Cultures

Inadequate Materials Provision

The teaching of NLC in Cameroon is plagued by some problems such as inadequate materials provision for the students in the selected languages, insufficient and competent NLC teachers to be posted in all the schools and even those that will be created in future and stigmatization coming from other teachers and even the public.

The Presence of more than one MT Represented in the Classroom

Another very practical obstacle to local language use in the authorized schools is the presence of more than one MT represented in the classroom. This occurs in urban and other settings where students have heterogeneous ethnic backgrounds. The presence of more than one MT is not an insurmountable problem, but it requires that careful thought and additional resources be considered under the process of program implementation.

Untrained and Insufficient Teachers of Cameroon Languages and Cultures

Teachers play a key role in the delivery of education and the quality of instruction is to a large extent a function of whether classrooms are staffed with competent and well-trained teachers (UNESCO, 2000). It is therefore important for teachers of NLCs to be properly trained, well-motivated and equipped to ensure that the students

they teach also learn effectively. However, one of the major barriers in the teaching of NLCs in Cameroonian schools is that of lack of adequately trained.

Some observers erroneously think that not much preparation is required to teach in the MT once they are native speakers. However, some case studies like PROPELCA and KEP etc. have shown that this attitude is unjustified as there are as many factors which militate against effective teaching by such untrained teachers. For instance, the methodology for teaching NLCs needs to be imparted to all MT teachers before they start effective teaching. The teachers should also be equipped with the structure of the language and care must be taken to see that they master the standard language selected in a situation where the language has dialects.

In a survey conducted in some schools where these languages started, it was observed that while some were using a few PROPELCA trained teachers, other schools did not start for lack of trained teachers. Real transformation of potential teachers, begins during the initial training phase which puts emphasis on classroom practices among other skills that enable teachers to become competent teachers of NLCs. Although there is a growing need of NLC teachers, the critical mass of teachers needs to be trained in the Higher Teacher-Training Colleges of the University of Yaounde¹ and Bertoua while other Departments of NLC should be created in the University of Bamenda²¹ and Maroua²².

In addition, efforts should be made to produce more teachers of NLCs, especially in communities where many schools have been authorized to teach NLCs by building up local autonomous community-based training centers to train personnel on various methodological aspects of the in teaching the discipline through short refresher courses, particularly to former PROPELCA trained teachers.

Teaching and Learning Materials

The quality of education depends to a large extent on the availability of textbooks. In Cameroon, the scarcity of curriculum and instructional materials for selected languages is thus one of the key

²¹ In the North-West Region of Cameroon.

²² Far North Region of Cameroon.

obstacles to effective teaching/learning of NLCs. According to Matsinhe (2011), the development of books in African languages is neither informed nor inspired by the socio-cultural reality suggested by the African linguistic mosaic. It is rather inspired by business interests. There is lack of clear policies on the promotion of book publishing in African languages. The content of reading materials produced in Cameroonian languages has little bearing on the life experience of the people, particularly the students. There is lack of trained writers who should develop books in Cameroonian languages, particularly for students. This therefore makes it difficult to instill the culture of reading into the children.

The key to overcome the problem of inadequate educational materials in the teaching of NLCs in school is the adoption of a bottom-up approach that aims at equipping and empowering the local community to produce their own elementary reading and instructional materials that are culturally appropriate and relevant. That is a task that local authors may not easily embark on within a short time.

Nevertheless, modern competent technology can now provide dramatic assistance in language development, particularly in the domain of vocabulary expansion. For instance, Bernard (1998) maintains that dictionaries constitute an early strategy for standardizing a previously written language. One hears arguments like books have to be developed and published and new terminology created. Sometimes, these arguments are irrelevant. In Tanzania, a project based at the Institute for Kiswahili Research managed to develop textbooks for the whole secondary school system (Mulokozi et al., 2008). It is therefore a question of getting them published in large quantities and making them available to the intended users in different schools. With desktop printing facilities, books and teaching materials in local languages can also be produced cheaply (Heugh, 2006; Kosonen, 2010).

Absence of a Vibrant Literate Environment

It is observed that, possibly, the teaching of NLCs cannot be effective in the absence of a viable literate environment. Thus, the growing production of diversified appropriate reading and writing materials in the recommended subjects is highly needed within the communities concerned. NACALCO and Summer Institute of

Linguistics (SIL) can remedy the situation by providing short or long-term refresher courses to the respective personnel in the communities concerned on the production techniques of teaching materials or adapt materials from the relevant literature and also subsidize the printing of such materials for all languages used in the country. Teachers in some selected schools are affected by a poor literate environment in terms of lack of educational materials (teachers' guides, textbooks and reference books in the respective languages of instruction). This has created serious information gaps because teachers with little training are especially reliant on such guides.

Low Status of National Languages

Another challenge is the fact that some languages are not sufficiently developed and therefore are not capable of communicating the complex meanings that are part of formal education. The low status accorded to national languages is often based on the requirement that they need to be sufficiently developed to cope with domains in which they are hitherto not used, particularly in education and other domains. That some of these languages are not yet adequately developed to be used in the modern economic, technological and educational processes as indicated by Kioko et al. (2008, p. 19):

Languages grow and change in response to changes in the physical, social, political, spiritual and economic environments in which they are used. When new objects and concepts become part of the meanings that a people have to communicate, their language will adapt to this change and incorporate expressions appropriate to the new function. Languages are able to do this through the process of borrowing lexical items or idiomatic expressions, or coining words and expressions. This is a characteristic of human language

In this vein, all Cameroonian languages are capable of contributing to development. The misconception that African languages are lexically poor or incapable of expressing abstract ideas is a mere fallacy. Every language is equally endowed with an infinite capacity to meet the demands of its users (Alexander, 1972).

Negative Perceptions towards National Languages

The low status of national languages and their limited use in wider domains sometimes generates a feeling of negative attitudes by some speakers who refer to them as dialects rather than languages. These ideologies and perceptions are views that sometimes lead speakers not only to have negative attitudes but also to view their languages as unnecessary and irrelevant in education.

Such attitudes by some Cameroonians can be changed through the use of the Proclaimer (audio Scriptures) in some communities, (Tasah, 2012). The speakers of some of the selected languages also need to appreciate the simple fact that the languages their children should learn in their first years of life and subsequently in their secondary education are not garments that can be seen when they don their school uniform. They embody the ideas and attitudes they gain from their environment. They also need to be educated on the fact that it is through the first languages that children think, dream, love, cherish, scold and learn (Awoniyi, 1982). Although attitudes of people are seemingly changing, many of today's Cameroonian youths seem to be products of two cultures-both Cameroonian and foreign, but are citizens of none of these.

Perspectives

Considering that Cameroonian languages are a resource that needs to be adequately harnessed for the development of reading materials with appropriate content that can impart relevant skills for potential of teachers and students of NLCs, it is also crucial to develop culturally relevant reading materials in these languages as part of the search for viable strategies to bring about endogenous and sustainable development to change the attitudes of some Cameroonian students for the better. It is also important to offer excellent prizes to the best students in NLCs in order to motivate others to be interested in NLCs. The training of trainers on L1 methodologies and the organization of refresher courses need to be programmed annually in order to cope with the challenge of lack of critical mass of NLC teachers needed to implement effective teaching of NLCs in Cameroonian schools. Effective teacher education should combine subject knowledge with pedagogical skills. It is also important to admit only suitably qualified students who have the passion of teaching the discipline in the NLC Departments so that after graduation, they should promote the teaching of these

languages in spite of the negative mindset by some of their colleagues.

The selected languages need to be revitalized and revalorized in all spheres of life because they are “our languages, our culture, our gift and pillar for Cameroon’s development” (Zombe, 2008). Intensifying the teaching of NLCs in the pilot schools will greatly help in bringing up a new breed of Cameroonians who are skilled, creative, and great problem-solvers. Indeed, young Cameroonians should be ready to use their diverse languages in education to tell their stories and explain themselves to the world in this era of globalization.

Efforts should also be made to add economic value to these languages. For instance, there is an increasing demand for language skills that involve African languages, particularly in the areas of translation and interpretation for public administration as well as for working in community development organizations. Most advertisements for jobs in community development should be made not only to appear in print media but also to include “knowledge of the local language as an added advantage”. This implies that authors of materials for NLC should also be informed by the market dynamics in designing such materials so that some of the native speakers who are literate in their MTs can pick up jobs in their local communities.

In a nutshell, the implementation of strategies in the teaching of NLCs would significantly contribute to the effective teaching and learning of NLCs in terms of relevant development of reading of materials, the restoration of self-esteem and self-confidence, sharing and recording of collective experiences as well as the cross-fertilization of ideas which are very important to the acquisition of life-long competencies.

The teaching of NLC in secondary schools seemingly has a bright future following concrete actions already achieved. For instance, in the 2010 and 2011 State budgets, a total amount of 21 million CFA was provided to implement the teaching of NLCs in secondary education. Amongst other things, the money was used to organize workshops that brought together Regional Pedagogic Inspectors and NLC teachers. The above teachers were selected from the renowned NLC pilot schools which are authorized to teach NLCs. Three professors of Centre for Applied Linguistics (NACALCO) and the

University of Yaoundé I served as facilitators for a five-day training seminar.

According to Djiafeua and Guigno (n.d), some officials in the Ministry of Secondary Education proposed that in the near future, a paper on NLCs should be introduced in Cameroon's BEPC or GCE O/L examinations.

Conclusion

This paper presented a traditional dance lesson as an alternative approach to the teaching of NLC pilot secondary schools in Cameroon using participatory and interactive approaches. It looked at government's measures in favour of NLC, the rationale of teaching NLC, the objectives of teaching NLC in secondary schools and the different approaches proposed to be used in teaching NLC. The proposed lesson plan presented in the paper would surely act as a source of inspiration not only for the authorized schools, but also to student teachers who generally find difficulties in designing lesson plans while on internship. Some alternative techniques and themes in the teaching of NLC have also been proposed and some challenges in teaching and learning NLC have been discussed. Although much still has to be done for the effective teaching and learning of NLC in Cameroon, it is important for all stakeholders involved at every stage to play their roles effectively. For example, much institutional support in the promotion of the teaching of NLC is expected from the National Commission for Bilingualism and Multiculturalism (NCBM). Created by the Presidential Decree No: 2017/013 of the 23rd January 2017, NCBM is charged with the promotion of official and national languages and cultures in Cameroon. The teaching of NLC is irreversible in Cameroon considering Cummins's (2001:4) observation that "children's cultural and linguistic experience in the home is the foundation of their future learning and we must build on that foundation rather than undermine it".

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