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# ***Contemporary Cameroon English: Just Another Fad?***

## **Introduction**

The English language is a sort of living organism that changes in time and in space. A diachronic survey of this language shows that it never was the most dominant (in terms of users' status or population) but by a combination of forces has become the most widely spoken language today. Still from this diachronic perspective, it has grown from Old English, through Middle English to Modern English and today, World Englishes, of which efforts are being made to isolate the Cameroonian, Nigerian, West African, and Kenyan, etc. varieties. These new Englishes are the result of the English language migrating to new settlements and colonies, where there began to emerge such different dialects as American English, Australian English, Canadian English, New Zealand English, West African, East African, and South African English among others. Indeed, there is not a single language that has spread over most parts of the world as English has done, through the migration of its speakers.

The present form of the English language in Cameroon – hereafter CamE – is the upshot of several factors briefly discussed (Koenig et al. 1983; Kouega 2003; Wolf 2001; and Anchimbe 2006). CamE's vitality is seen as the consequence of its being in contact with over two hundred and forty (240) indigenous languages, (Breton et al. 1991), and French, the other official language in Cameroon. Nguéfac and Sala (2006) show CamE's relationship with Cameroon Pidgin English, (CPE), Kouega (2003) sees Camfranglais resulting from English and French interference, while Mforteh (2007) discusses the creation of new identities through the use of the official as well as national languages. Even though English has been used in Cameroon since

the 17<sup>th</sup> century (initially introduced through trade, then entrenched through colonialism, and finally adopted as official language) it has not attained the status of an indigenous language, as some of its users still aspire for the British and American standards, judging CamE as an inferior or deviant form. However, there are strong arguments in favor of considering English and French (the actual official languages) as national languages in Cameroon (Alobwede and Kouega: 2006) rather than replicas of their European models. It however brings to mind one key consideration: the fact that two provinces of Cameroon are identified as Anglophone because they have English as a distinctive linguistic marker and are considered as *de facto* original owners/users of CamE. In the view of this paper, CamE is a domesticated, indigenized, or nativized variety of English which reflects the Cameroonian socio-cultural, economic, political and intellectual context in which it is used.

### **The Evolution of CamE**

Considering the historical/political events that since 1960 have caused some inhabitants of the North West (NW) and South West Provinces (SW) of Cameroon (these original owners/users of the language) to adulterate, cohabit or replace it with French, and the recent upsurge in the world value of English which has forced hitherto speakers of French to want to wrench/grab English, it is now doubtful whether English can still be considered the “distinctive marker and property” of these provinces. This doubt is accentuated by the new identities that are being built around the use of English in Cameroon, (Mforteh: 2006), to the extent that “anglophonism” and “francophonism” hitherto established categories of identification in Cameroon, (Anchimbe: 2005), are progressively being called into question. Preliminary studies on CamE are geared towards establishing its phonology (Simo and Mbangwana: 2000); CamE’s evolution Wolf (2001), its authenticity (Anchimbe: 2006) and its syntax (Sala: 2005), and basically its lexicon. At this level, discussions related to whether English has been domesticated, or indigenized, or nativized in Cameroon like

elsewhere on the continent (Bamgbose: 1982, 1995; Adegbija: 1998, 2004; Wolf: 2001) no longer attract intense scholarly discussion. It is rather the extent to which such nativization has reached that seems a challenge to us. My focus in this paper is on two major questions:

- i) What is the multicultural influence on English as it is used in Cameroon?
- ii) What thirst is the hitherto linguistically comfortable Francophone trying to quench when he diverts his children towards an English medium educational system?

I assume that these Francophone Cameroonians have not gone beyond the precinct of seeing English merely as one of the two official languages in Cameroon and consequently not taken time to understand the culture into which they are sending their progeny. This paper seeks to answer these questions, considering that a few years ago, English was considered inadequate for survival in Cameroon; but today this very medium of instruction seems to bear a magic wand for successful academic pursuits. I also intend to explicate what advantages and disadvantages can be gained if the current trend in the domestication of English by the Anglophone and use of English by the Francophone persists.

### **From English to New (World) Englishes and Cameroon English**

To illustrate the point pertaining to the vitality and change of English, I will take the case of the NW and SW provinces of Cameroon, identified as Anglophone because they have English as a distinctive linguistic marker and are the *de facto* original "owners" of it. At its inception, *i.e.* when the British used it as a medium of instruction in the colony, the number of speakers was small, and although the population grew numerically, it did not alter the character of an essentially single and homogeneous community. However, in the words of Adamo (2007), any such homogeneity in the English language today "belongs to the womb of history" because as this linguistic community has not stopped expanding spatially, English has become greatly

diversified. However, in the two provinces cited above, considered the bedrock of English in Cameroon, a form of nativization has been in progress since its institutionalization as an official language. This means that in this new environment, the language underwent the process of nativization, whereby the language was and continues to be enriched with socio-cultural elements which reflect the worldview of the respective users. Over the years, the so-called CamE becomes increasingly identifiable and distinguishable from the traditional native varieties, yet entirely legitimate in its own right. In contemporary discussions therefore, the new Englishes (Indian English, Ghanaian English, Nigerian English, etc.) are neither inferior nor entirely independent varieties.

It is within such a framework that I want to discuss English and its transformation in the Cameroonian sociolinguistic and socio-cultural environments. It is the new usage resulting from the interaction between English and French, English and Pidgin English, and English and the Home languages in a distinctively Cameroonian environment, that is the basis on which scholars argue for the existence of a variety of world Englishes that helps her Cameroonian users fulfill certain functions (cf. leadership discourse in Mforteh: 2006), hedging as a leadership tool (Mforteh 2006); lexical repetition in literary works (Fomukong and Mforteh, forthcoming).

## **Cameroonization of English**

CamE, although sometimes pejoratively considered as a "deviation" from native-speaker norms and the creation of new norms, however attempts to reflect the socio-cultural requirements of the new environment. This reflection of the socio-cultural elements found in the users' environment in the English language is the foundation of nativization, where the French-English, English-Home Language, or English-Pidgin and English bilingual Cameroonian make efforts to express cultural artefacts in this all embracing language, (see the use of *na, isn't it, brother*, etc. in Anchimbe: 2007). As Peter had earlier noted, "in order for the non-native culture to make the new language a part of the culture, it must nativize it" (1998 389). This means that if we take

the aboriginal Anglophones of the NW and SW provinces of Cameroon, they first of all nativized the English language, *i.e.*, adapted it to depict and talk about themselves while still retaining many of the original features, as used by its native speakers. As this Anglophone community spread out/opened to the other eight provinces, there was an intensification of the process of integrating English into the cultures of the wider community, or integrating the culture of the wider community into English for the expression of the experience and worldview of the expanding community.

This implicitly suggests that the variety in vogue has features (see treatment of *camfranglais* by Echu: 2001; Kouega: 2003) that could not be traced in earlier versions of CamE – and are easily distinguishable from both the native variety and all other varieties. This results from the fact that language and culture are closely intertwined and, since the languages and cultures of Cameroon are different from others in the world, it is hardly out of place to say that Cameroonians have created their own variety of the language to express their values, their worldview, and their distinctive orientation and experience. In this process, the influence of French, the second official language, and the indigenous languages and cultures on English have been profound, as very many innovations in language form and use have emerged. These tokens of nativization will be illustrated and described in this paper only in terms of their lexico-semantic and pragmatic trends. I may just hasten to add that these are more susceptible to cultural influence than other linguistic elements.

Some of the lexical items that will be used to illustrate the domestication of English are partly culled from earlier authors (Mbangwana: 2002 and Anchimbe: 2007) as the rest comes from recent surveys aimed at establishing lexes that set aside this variety of world Englishes. These illustrations will shed light on trends in the CamE variety, and help build up the latter part of this paper which seeks to probe into the advantages and disadvantages of the current trend.

## **Cultural Influence at the Lexico-semantic Level**

The use of certain lexical items with meanings that are understood within the Cameroonian context has been identified as characterizing CamE, and generally, such usage is a hallmark of nativization where the user allows the language to seep into his intellectual, social, political, and economic life. Put differently, these aspects are brought to bear on English as medium of communication and as a warehouse of cultural, ideological and intellectual property. Here I shall consider three sources of the register of CamE: loanwords, coinages, and semantic shifts.

### **Loaning/Borrowing Words**

In our context, this phenomenon involves the indiscriminate transfer (or borrowing) of lexical items from other languages, (French, Home languages, etc.) with which the user of English is in contact. Some samples isolated elsewhere (Adamo: 2007) include:

*agbada*: a kind of flowing dress for men, especially among the Yoruba: "Chief Ogini wore *agbada* to the wedding ceremony."

*Akara*: an item of food also referred to as "bean cake." In Cameroon, *akara* is also made from manioc (cassava).

*Okada*: a mode of transportation by motor bike: "You either go by *danfo* or you take an *okada*."

Other tokens found in current use within CamE:

*Chef de bloc*: this is the head of an administrative unit in a residential area.

*Fufu and Eru*. *Fufu* is a paste from manioc or corn served and eaten with the latter, a vegetable.

*Fufu and Jama jama*. *Jama jama*: is another vegetable that is served with *fufu*.

*Matricule*: registration number given to students as they register into the university: "My *matricule* number, 07F111 is easy to retain."

*Module*: a group of related teaching units wherein compensation can be done.

*Ordonnance*: medical prescription: "I was given a long *ordonnance* by the doctor. Some of these medical doctors think we pick money from the dustbins."

*Procès verbal*: proceedings of a meeting, report or details of results or of an interview.

*Unité de valeur*: a teaching unit (credit course) within the module

*Validate*: to obtain a pass mark in a credit course: "I had 11 on 20. I have validated that module."

Although communities of users of English everywhere have their distinctive vocabularies, the above selected tokens have been upgraded or transferred into CamE which now has the status of a national variety. These borrowed words and expressions bridge a gap that English could not easily handle without such a straightforward process of absorption, a process which has enlarged and enriched the lexicon of English for centuries, irrespective of their being (eventually) internationalized, as with *le week-end* from English to French. All such borrowed words serve to fill inevitable gaps in all languages, particularly CamE. As seen in this instance, where English is originally unable to handle distinctively Cameroonian, and related phenomena or concepts, the user domesticates the language, thus rendering it capable of doing so. In this domestication process, English becomes a language of Cameroon, Africa and of the world.

## **Coinage**

Lexical items are often coined to suit the context, and their use signals certain peculiarities of Cameroon's multilingual setting and the worldview of the users. Often, however, local words are not adopted but the forms and meanings of everyday English words are extended, and perhaps adapted, to cover particular local phenomena and situations. This means that with a few exceptions, the Home Language (HL) equivalent is often not the preferred form because it may not go beyond the ethnic precinct. Some of these have been isolated else-



where (Adamo: 2007) and I will like to replicate these here before making additions:

*Been-to*: a person who has returned to Cameroon after a long stay overseas: "The way he speaks, everybody knows that he is a *been-to*."

*Chewing-stick*: a piece of wood which can be softened by chewing and moistening and which serves the purpose of teeth-cleaning: "Give me a *chewing stick*. I need to clean my teeth."

*Ghana-must-go*: a bribe, as in: "*Ghana-must-go* bags exchanged hands."

*Overload*: an excess number of passengers or goods carried by a vehicle: "The lorry has bad tyres, yet it is carrying *overload*."

*Scale through*: move easily through the solving of a problem: "At last, I have *scaled through* the hurdles of exams."

### Tokens found in CamE

*Bitter cola*: a nut from the kola nut family, this one is yellowish and really bitter as the name indicates. It is said to go well with beer and/or palm wine.

*Born house*: from indigenous Cameroonian cultures where the birth of a baby into a family calls for feasting, and in some cases, naming of the baby: "My grandson's *born house* is slated for Saturday. You better come round if you want to have a good time and meet my family and friends."

*Bush faller*: someone who, after some months/years abroad returns home with a huge fortune and is ready to spend it lavishly: "Let's go and have some free drinks, don't you know he is a *bush faller*?"

*Cassava farm*: part-time job. Generally, people who have regular employment do look for part-time jobs. Since these often violate the contract of the full-time job, people disguise this, saying, "I am in my cassava farm" suggesting it is a non-profit hobby or exercise with little material gain.

*Cry die*: like born house, the dead are remembered sometime after they have been buried. This calls for a celebration, hence the other word closely related to this, *death celebration*, when the family and friends reunite in the home of the deceased to pay their last respects to the memory of the departed. Characterized by expensive

and heavy feasting, the *cry die* is often accompanied by all night rituals and dancing: "I can now rest and do other things because I have done the *cry die/death celebrations* of my parents."

*Faroteur*: faroter (from the French, someone who throws his money out for fame: "Eto'o threw out large sums of money to the crowds that thronged the streets through which he passed."

*Great man/wise man*: swindler; crook who deceives people saying he can manufacture new bank notes from existing ones, and once he lays hands on the original notes, he disappears.

*Maguida*: pejorative reference to someone from the Moslem, Northern Cameroon.

*Small thing*: from CPE, a mistress: "I am taking my small thing out of town next week."

*Meat or chicken soya*: a form of barbecue done for commercial purposes. It is served hot and consumed with a lot of pepper. "To have received *soya*" could be an insinuation that one has received a bribe or has been bought over by the opponent.

### **Semantic shifts or extensions**

Some lexical items have had their conceptual meanings shifted, restricted, or extended. This is a common word forming process, not only with CamE but with other varieties and other languages. Discussing similar phenomena on Nigerian English, Adamo (2007) brings out the following tokens:

*Trek*: walk a short distance: "Are you going to *trek* to your house?"

*Machine*: a motor cycle: "I will climb *machine* to the junction. I cannot *trek*."

*Station*: the place where one works: "I will go back to my *station* on Monday morning."

*Settle*: offer gratification of one form or another in order to win favor; bribe: "I have *settled* all the members of the House of Representatives."

*Big/senior boys*: men who are rich and influential: "That hotel is for *big boys* only."

*Four-one-nine* ("419"): a fraudster or cheat: "Jerry is a *four-one-nine*. He has duped me!"

*Father, mother/mummy, sister, brother, and uncle* are being extended to cover someone with no biological relationship to the person concerned. The term *brother* may have an extended meaning that includes a man of the same tribe or denomination, and *uncle* may be used to refer not only to one's mother's or father's brother (or even one's sister's husband), but also to any man much older than the user or a man whose name is not known.

From CamE, the following can be added:

*Ashia*: A lexical item whose semantic extension results in the confused use of *ashia* on occasions requiring sympathy as well as those necessitating appreciation.

*Ashia*: for "thank you" like in "I have received the parcel you sent to me, *ashia*."

*Ashia*: for "well done/ congratulations" like in "Your results are excellent, *ashia*."

*Ashia*: for "accept my sympathy" like in "I hear your father is no more, *ashia*."

*Feynman* (see great man/ wise man above): swindler.

*God-father*: a patron, benefactor who enables you to pick up undue advantages like appointments, and bailing you out of trouble: "This rector will remain in office for as long his *godfather*, the Minister of Higher Education, is not changed." "Just look at the way he squanders money, if you have a *godfather* as his, you can give yourself such liberties."

*Masa/sar*: from the perspective of master-servant relationship, we have "Masa Paul" and when called, some women answer *sar* "sir" to their husbands. It is however more common for apprentices and servants to answer "masa/sar" or "*madam*" when summoned or ordered by their masters.

*Patron*: boss, employer: "I've lost my job. My *patron* has been relieved of his ministerial seat." or "Work has stopped because our *patron* has travelled."

*Umbrella*: patron or benefactor: "Nothing can happen to him in that service. The GM is his *umbrella*".

*Wife*: a new acquisition especially a car: "This/your\* new wife is wonderful. Is it a Toyota or did you say, a Mazda?"

*Wife/Woman*: one's sister-in-law. In most cultures, the family of the husband receives enormous respect from the family of the wife. To show some intimacy, the husband's family refers to the lady as "their wife." *Wife/woman* has the connotation of servant, weaker member where the man is considered the superior partner in the relationship: "Cameroon is France's *wife*. Whatever we do is decided by the French."

### **Cultural Influence on CamE at the Pragmatic Level**

At the more complex level where English is expected to function as a link among multilingual communities, some distinctive pragmatic usages characterize CamE. As a result, Cameroonians have modified many norms of greeting in a manner that corresponds to their culture, where the status of an interlocutor influences the other. Mforteh (2000) sees the cupping of hands to greet the local traditional leader, *fon*, as a non-verbal act which shows respect. Sometimes, it corresponds to the culture prevalent in the locality where the interlocutors are found, irrespective of whether that is the norm in their own languages.

*Handshakes* seem to accompany all greetings in Cameroon. We find people who do not hesitate to shake hands even with strangers who may be inquiring for things as trivial as the time of the day, or the way to a building. Especially among the Ngemba of the NW Province, there is a tendency for the lower in status person, here considered the subordinate, to support his right hand with the left when he receives the hand of his superior in a handshake (whether as a greeting, or congratulation).

Another significant area of cultural influence on CamE usage relates to honorifics and politeness markers. Cultural titles inscribed in the home or national languages occasionally interfere with those found in the English language. English does not have all the various gradations that the cultures of the CamE users carry. Age is respected, and despite the intimacy, some cultures do not allow a "subordinate" to call the "superior" by name as one finds with the English. The junior or subordinate will obligatorily attach "ni, ndia, ba, ma, tah,

etc." before calling out the name of a senior person: "Ni John Fru Ndi." Where the addressee is a title holder, this often comes before the honorific in English as in the following combinations:

*Ni/ba/ndia*: male elder/senior as in "Ni John Fru Ndi."

*Ma/ndia*: female elder/senior.

*Tah*: father/papa.

*Ma/ndia*: mother/mama.

*Chief Doctor ...; Chief Professor Abangma; Chief Honourable Ambe; Reverend Pastor Ezekiel; Reverend Professor Anyambod; Reverend Doctor Tasa*, etc.

In some cases, the title is used for the person, as shown in the following examples from Adamo (2007): "Good morning, *chief*"; "Good morning, Professor." As mentioned above, and confirmed by the data from Nigerian English (Adamo 2007), "it is considered rude or impolite to address people in positions of authority, or people who are older than oneself, by their actual names." As the discussion shows, the problem is not inherent in the language but it is one of social acceptability. As Anchimbe (2006: 184) has pointed out, the use of *daddy*, *mummy*, *uncle*, and *auntie* goes beyond family ties. It essentially borders on politeness and intimacy phenomena (Adamo: 2007). In a recent TV broadcast, there was the case where an approximately 60 year-old militant of the ruling party, the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) addressed the head of state's approximately 30-year-old wife as "*Mama Chantal Biya*," technically referring to the latter as the "mother of the nation."

### **The Domestication of English: Filling a Socio-cultural and Linguistic Vacuum in Cameroon?**

In the preceding pages, I have tried to bring out elements which support the role of language in the culture of the user and the cultural elements which get co-opted into the language. From the few tokens cited above, it is evident that one of the cardinal roles of language is seen in its portrayal of the culture of any given people, although there

are varied views about culture itself. I will mention just three of these views, in order to answer the question pertaining to CamE filling a vacuum. From Bodley's (1994) contemporary anthropological view, culture relates to "socially patterned human thought and behaviour." Secondly, the UNESCO Declaration (2002) in Mexico considers culture in its entirety as the sum total of distinctive traits, be they spiritual and material, intellectual or affectionate which characterize a society or a social group.

Culture does not only relate to arts and letters, but also to life styles, fundamental human rights, a system of values, and tradition and beliefs. Lastly, in a kind of forerunner to the UNESCO point of view, Ngugi wa Thiongo (1968: 14) considered culture as "a way of life fashioned by a people in their collective endeavour to live and come to terms with their total environment. It [culture] is the sum of their art, their science and all their social institutes including their system of beliefs and rituals."

All the above views point to the fact that culture is shared, learned, symbolic, transmitted across generations, adaptive and integrated. Culture is most visible through verbal or non-verbal language. The features highlighted in this paper are indelible markers of a cultural domestication of English. Given the lexical, cultural and syntactic loans, and coinages that English freely receives, it is obvious that CamE may soon be considered as one of the national languages, (Alobwede and Kouega: 2006) given the rate at which it is being nativized at the lexical, semantic, and pragmatic levels. It is however, unlikely that CamE will become an indigenous language in the near future wherein one may see it as helping the users in the seminal exploration, documentation, and exposition of their "art, their science and all their social institutes including their system of beliefs and rituals." Language encompasses several things about the user: his thoughts, actions, and visions. This makes language a warehouse of achievements and failures, a tool for leadership and discipleship, a medium through which subtle things like love and hatred are negotiated and concretized, and the identity of the user revealed.

Returning to the assertion made at the beginning of this section, *i.e.* does CamE fill a gap? The answer is yes, particularly for the An-

glophone who sees this language as the unifying element for the two provinces, over and above the several national languages that make Cameroon distinct. For the Francophone, the answer is not obviously in the affirmative. This is couched in several considerations. Firstly, the invasion of the Anglophone academic culture by Francophone Cameroonians is motivated by both ignorance and foresight. Ignorance in the sense that most francophone Cameroonians believe(d) that the Anglo-Saxon academic ladder is less stiff, *i.e.* Anglophone (Bachelor-Masters-PhD) versus Francophone (Licence-Maîtrise-Diplôme d'Etudes Approfondies-Doctorat de 3eme Cycle-Doctorat d'Etat). Foresight is perceived in Francophone exploiting to his advantage the higher propensity to employ a bilingual than a monolingual in Cameroon. This means that if they can succeed in obtaining English medium certificates while retaining their francophone identity, they would not only compete with the Anglophone in scholarships and appointments but equally retain the Francophonie openings to which the Anglophone is linguistically handicapped.

Simple statistics pertaining to the teaching staff of the Departments of English and French of the Higher Teachers' Training School (HTTS), *i.e.* Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS), and the Faculty of Arts, University of Yaoundé can support this argument.

School	French Department	English Department	Total
HTTS (ENS)	Anglo= 0 Franco= 18	Anglo= 8 Franco =2	8 to 20
Faculty of Arts	Anglo= 1 Franco= 18	Anglo =13 Franco= 3	14 to 21
Total	1 Anglo and 36 Francos	21 Anglos and 5 Francos	22 to 41

Source: Annuaire statistique de l'Université de Yaoundé 1, 2006.

These two elements serve as a basis to assert that while the Anglophone domesticates English because he sees it as an integral part of his culture and identity, the Francophone who adopts English purely for instrumental motives does not need to domesticate it. For the Francophone, he rather seeks the BrE or AmE varieties that can

open a window not only to facilities in Cameroon but also beyond Cameroon. Furthermore, as time goes on, it is more evident that English as a cultural trait of the two Anglophone provinces of Cameroon, is politically no longer a very dependable bargaining factor because “anglophone” no longer refers exclusively to these provinces.

In spite of the aforementioned, the domestication of English remains a strong signal not only of the users’ desire to give outward expression to their emotions, experiences, creativity, but also of euphemism and invective. CamE therefore enables its users to transmit what they capture, by putting it into verbal and non-verbal symbols. CamE speakers tend to identify with one another, suggesting that through language, one can build up and enhance a socio-cultural identity (Mforteh: 2006). This is in line with the view upheld by Tadadjeu (2006), essentially that development can be easily enhanced through the national languages because every user will feel concerned. Unfortunately for Cameroonians, it has not been possible for them to develop one or more of the national languages (as it has been the case elsewhere, for instance in Nigeria) to fulfil – even partially – the role that CamE now plays. Rather, since independence, the HLs are relegated to the background, while English and French were developed to replace these indigenous languages. The domestication of English may be a long-term solution to it.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has sought to show how at the lexico-semantic level, Cameroonians have over years tried to nativize English, making it flexible and adaptable to their needs by enriching the English language with such cultural elements through coinages, borrowings from indigenous languages, and extensions of meaning, in a bid to fill the gap or vacuum created by the lack of an indigenous language in spite of the 240 identified (Breton: 1991). While upholding the advantages that adopting official languages have brought to Cameroonians, one may still signal here that these have shown their limitations because, as mentioned elsewhere (Mforteh, forthcoming), the adoption of Eng-



lish and French as languages of education have impeded the development of phenomena available in the indigenous languages.

The domestication of English has been influenced by linguistic and cultural elements found not only in the indigenous/home or national languages and cultures but also the foreign ones that English has come into contact with in Cameroon. Since learning and using English is mandatory, users have made the best they could with it, the Anglophone domesticating it for use in all domains of national life, while the Francophone sees beyond it, aiming at international openings. The English identity sought for by the Francophone is not the same as the one desired by the Anglophone who domesticates in an effort to vent his social, cultural and regional identity. In fact, for the Anglophone, the endeavour seems to enhance the efforts towards official recognition of Cameroon Pidgin English as a national medium, although this can only come close but not replace the indigenous languages considered as icons of our identity, national pride, and self-reliance (Tadadjeu: 2006). Some negative effects of empowering the national languages have been observed, notably where empire building based on ethnicity has been perpetuated to the detriment of other nationals. While the adoption of the colonial languages as official languages seems to have been influenced by this consideration, the domestication of English is an unconscious, natural response of the users to staying on the burning rig or jumping into the open sea. Pending the completion of a constitutional/linguistic framework that will enable Cameroonians to use the HLs with pride and ease, CamE will continue to flourish and assert itself.

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