

Research Article

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A Linguistic Awareness of Usage in Bi-multilingual Classrooms: Language Awareness for Improved Teaching-learning and Social Inclusion

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ABSTRACT

Learners chuckle or comment "She/ He is a Francophone/ an Anglophone" in reaction to another's lexical or syntactic usage, or phonological realisation; a stereotypical practice that elicits learners' extent of language awareness. The aim of this paper therefore, is to identify and analyse some linguistic and social variables that influence language awareness in a bi-multilingual classroom, and propose strategies for improved teaching-learning and social inclusion. The objectives are to identify the variables that influence linguistic awareness of usage in a bi-multilingual classroom; analyse the extent to which these variables influence language awareness; and explore the outcomes for pedagogic and social enhancement. The dynamics of social and linguistic stereotyping are highlighted in the context of Cameroon's bi-multilingualism, language (un)awareness and learner centred learning. The sample population comprises 43 students from two faculties and one school of The University of Bamenda. A serially coded open-ended

questionnaire focused on the micro (linguistic) and macro (social) aspects of language awareness is administered; part self-completion and part face-to-face as an interview. The descriptive statistical method and the qualitative method are used to analyse the data. Findings prove these varieties of English include sociolects with linguistic processes such as alveolar plosives substitution for inter-dental fricatives; English rolling /r/ vs. French uvular /ʀ/; recurrence of a Cameroon Pidgin English syntactic feature in place of the English interrogative close; the *Wh* inversion in questions; literal translation, use of pejorative adjectives and adjectival phrases. Learners' awareness of the variation triggers social and linguistic stereotyping, but there is unawareness of the negative impact of stereotyping, one of them, social exclusion. As a proposal for enhanced teaching-learning and social inclusion or tolerance in bi-multilingual classrooms, language teaching could include integrated modules of language awareness and contrastive linguistics to enhance learners' analytical language skills and critical awareness of the social realities that interconnect with language use.

Keywords: *Bi-multilingual, Language awareness, Linguistic, social stereotyping*

1. INTRODUCTION

Language awareness incorporates micro and macro aspects of linguistic and social variables, hence, the linguistic awareness of usage in this paper focuses on lexis, syntax, and phonology. Cameroon's bi-multilinguals, are the Anglophone and the Francophone whose interlingual outcomes range from individual idiolects to regional group dialects with shared features of lexical, syntactic, and phonological usage in English, French and other Cameroon languages. The language aware learners are sensitive to the linguistic variation, perceive them variedly and act or react depending on what is perceived and on their abilities in the language(s).

The Association for Language Awareness (ALA) (1996), in its Publicity Sheet, states "Language Awareness can be defined as explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language

learning, language teaching and language use". In the context of this write-up "conscious perception and sensitivity" are to an extent deprived when the language aware learners are insensitive, unaware of the bearing of negative stereotypes or negative reactions toward users of a variety of a language, specifically, English. When the impact is negative, it is challenging, but a language aware teacher, learner, or citizen critical of this challenge could determine how to transform this challenge into strategies, approaches or models that improve teaching-learning and social inclusion.

The background for this paper includes an explanation of bi-multilingualism in the context of Cameroon; a complex linguistic ecology that generates the research problem, the aim and objectives and an attempt to categorise Cameroon's bi-multilinguals.

1.1 Bi-multilingualism in the context of Cameroon

Bi-multilingualism in the context of Cameroon is the use of English and French as official languages of education and administration alongside 279 Cameroon indigenous languages, regional lingua franca (Pidgin English in the North West and South West regions, Fulfulde and Arabic in the Northern regions, Basaa in the Littoral Region, Ewondo in the Centre Region) and other emerging language varieties such as Camfranglais. It is noteworthy that over the years, the global economic and sociolinguistic trends keep influencing language choices, as Cameroonian children are increasingly speaking one of the two official languages as a first language, while more foreign languages such as German, Spanish, Chinese, Italia, etc., are taught and learnt in some schools and specialised language centres for specific purposes (see Mbassi-Manga 1973, Todd 1982, Echu & Grundstrom 1999, Mbangwana 2004, Baker 2006, Kouega 2006, Ngefac 2008, Anchimbe 2012, Simo Bobda & Fasse 2014, Fonyuy 2016, etc).

In spite of this surplus of languages, the local nuances of the first language, as well as the more used official languages recur in the learners or speakers' language usage, subsequently revealing to a language aware listener, the region from which speaker X or speaker Y comes. It is within

this complex sociolinguistic background that one finds Cameroonians who are bilingual in English and French, yet simultaneously use other language varieties and indigenous languages for daily communication (bi-multilingual Cameroonians). The mixed uses of home and foreign languages generate interlingual interferences. The outcomes of these interferences are speakers of regional dialects and ethnolects of the more used official languages.

Predominantly, Cameroonians speak regional dialects and ethnolects of Cameroon English and French. The linguistic peculiarities of these sociolects could be heard in bi-multilingual classrooms and the learners are aware of the nuances. These nuances are significantly stereotyped, correlating linguistic aspects of lexis, syntax, and phonology to social variables of region and ethnicity. The complexity that emanates from this language awareness, manifested in linguistic and social stereotyping is the unawareness of the impact. This unawareness has consequences, one of them social exclusion, a challenge which could be transformed to remedial solutions.

The aim of this paper therefore, is to identify and analyse some linguistic and social variables that influence language awareness in a bi-multilingual classroom, and propose possibilities for improved teaching-learning and social inclusion. The objectives are to identify the linguistic and social variables that influence language awareness and usage in a bi-multilingual classroom; analyse the extent to which these variables influence language awareness; and explore the outcomes of the (un)awareness for pedagogic and social enhancement. The research questions include: What are the linguistic and social variables that influence language awareness and usage in a bi-multilingual classroom? To what extent do these variables influence language awareness and usage? How can the outcomes of language (un)awareness and usage be explored for pedagogic enhancement and social inclusion?

1.2 Categorising Cameroon's bi-multilinguals

Within Cameroon's multilingual, multiethnic backgrounds, are the main categories of Cameroonians of English official language background and

French official language background, that is, those who have French, or English as their 1st official language; alternatively, Anglophone and Francophone Cameroonians. These bi-multilinguals have different competences and performance rate in the different languages. The competence and performance are synonymous to what Baker (2006, p. 2) observes as the essential distinction between "language ability and language use", sometimes referred to as "the difference between degree and function". Valdés and Figueroa (1994) (cited in Baker 2006, p. 3) suggest that bilinguals are classified by: (1) Age (simultaneous/sequential/late); (2) Ability (incipient/receptive/productive); (3) Balance of two languages; (4) Development (ascendant– second language is developing; recessive– one language is decreasing); (5) Contexts where each language is acquired and used (e.g. home, school).

Dash (2011) includes scale in these categories in order to describe bilinguals and multilinguals. If these are applied to the Cameroon context, those with a basic knowledge of both official languages are low proficient bilinguals; those with a basic knowledge in their 2nd official language and near-native competence in speaking and writing in their 1st official language are unbalanced proficient bilinguals; and those with near native competence in speaking and writing of both official languages are balanced proficient bilinguals. Dash's first two categories could also be tagged partial bilinguals with varying proficiency levels. Her last category is the top-on-the-scale ideal bilinguals. As the name implies, this category is an outlier in the case of contemporary Cameroon. Multilinguals are incorporated in this categorisation, as most of these bilinguals have an added language, which could be an indigenous language, Cameroon Pidgin English, Camfranglais; and some more foreign languages such as German, Chinese, Spanish, Latin, Italian, etc., which are taught and learnt for diverse purposes. Being bilingual or multilingual is not necessarily being competent in all languages within the multilingual's language inventory. Sridhar (1996) (cited in Wardhaugh & Fuller 2015, p. 84) illustrates degree and function in multilinguals' as follows:

Multilingualism involving balanced, native-like command of all the languages in the repertoire is rather uncommon. Typically, multilinguals have varying degrees of command of the different repertoires. The differences in competence in the various languages might range from command of a few lexical items, formulaic expressions such as greetings, and rudimentary conversational skills all the way to excellent command of the grammar and vocabulary and specialised register and styles.

Thus, amidst Cameroon's multifarious abilities of bi-multilinguals, interlingual outcomes and language awareness are definite. The latter is determined not just by linguistic and social variables, but also by some cognitive and behavioural dispositions, which learners of diverse sociolinguistic backgrounds exhibit toward a language, language variety and the users.

2. Review of literature

Some literature is reviewed on language (un)awareness to gain insights on existing research, and on learner-centred learning for pedagogic relevance.

2.1 Language (un)awareness

A review of some studies on language awareness elicits some shared, as well as unique experiences, the latter which generates some degree of language unawareness, and subsequently locates the niche for this paper. Before the ALA in 1996, the term Language Awareness (LA) was extensively used in the United Kingdom in the early 1980s by working groups on LA and in academia. Donmall (1985) (cited in Donmall-Hicks 1997, p. 21) defines LA as "a person's sensitivity to and conscious awareness of the nature of language and its role in human life". The aspect of LA as "conscious awareness" is applicable to an extent in the case of Cameroon, where the language aware learners and speakers are aware of the linguistic variables that signal differences in usage. Albeit, when these linguistic variables are correlated to social stereotypes, the outcomes could be negative. It is the impact of these negative outcomes

that Cameroonians are unconsciously unaware of, an instance of language unawareness.

Deutschmann and Steinvall (2020, p. 651) give an overview of the methods used in teaching university courses. Using two case studies in Sweden and Seychelles, one of the response patterns indicate that "the accent (native vs. non-native) does affect respondents' judgement of performance". The aspect of language awareness that prompts stereotyping is a shared practice, but there is a contextual dichotomy between this finding and the case of Cameroon. The "native vs. non-native" accent, here the "regional vs. mainstream" affects respondents' judgement of performance in identifying social and linguistic stereotypes.

Language awareness is defined by Karl and Dönszelmann (2020, p. 197) with prominence to language aware citizenship.

Language aware citizens are people who are able to perceive the effect language has on themselves and on others, and who are able to critically engage with and use language accordingly in today's (multicultural) society: at work, at home, at school, within their communities, et cetera. They are conscious of attitudes and assumptions that may lie within language used to describe the past, the present as well as the future and they understand the value of society's linguistic and cultural diversity.

Cameroon's bi-multilinguals are to an extent, unaware, do not perceive the effect of language use in linguistic and social stereotyping. Therefore towards language aware citizenship for Cameroon will need language aware teachers, learners, and citizens who can create strategies for language teaching-learning that will gradually reverse that tinge of unawareness to awareness.

Citing some researchers on language awareness in a multicultural Europe, Maad (2019, p.61) reports the *raison d'être* behind approaches to learning (ATL) in Europe's mainstream education as "the willingness to preach the values of tolerance and pluralism in its increasing multicultural cities". In the ATL, "Youngsters are regularly exposed to a number of FLs, language varieties (e.g. regional dialects of English), indigenous languages, and

migrant languages (e.g. Berber and Arabic being associated with some ethnic minorities in France and Belgium) ". Due to this exposure to numerous languages, "they typically engage in activities trying sound, taste, touch, smell, and doing to experience foreign languages" (Dryden & Vos 1997). The didactic materials and plan include learn-by-doing activities of "discovery and 'engagement with language' (Svalberg 2007) whereby these youngsters explore, compare, and experience linguistic and cultural differences beyond the constraints of standard assessment-driven-classes."

In the case of language awareness in Tunisia, Maad (2019, p. 74) uses an experimental course to analyse the role of ATL in promoting children's critical thinking by encouraging them to challenge stereotypes from an early age. The findings prove that "through ATL-focused pedagogy, students were able to reduce, or at least challenge stereotypes within their culture and/ or across cultures". Language aware based approaches to teaching-learning are indispensable, as practices of linguistic, social and cultural stereotyping are general, albeit at different degrees and contexts. Language aware teachers are in effect, obliged to adopt or initiate teaching-learning approaches for specific bi-multilingual, multicultural spaces. For instance, Dávila's (2008) study analyses the goals and realities of four educated working adult Latina ESL students living in North Carolina and "conceptually frames adjustment issues confronted by these Latina immigrants in terms of gender, language, geography, their educational and professional backgrounds, and current experiences and expectations. It concludes by offering social justice-oriented approaches to teaching English to Latina adults."

2.2 Learner-centred learning

One of the objectives of this paper is to explore the outcomes of the language awareness for pedagogic and social enhancement. This could be attained through learner-centred learning, which gives learners the opportunity to decide what material they learn and how they learn it. For learners of a bi-multilingual background, the affordance theory of Gibson (1977), which basically states that "perception of the environment

inevitably leads to some course of action", could guide learner-centred learning, teaching-learning, or using languages in multilingual spaces. Perception and subsequently action are inspired by the environment, which can be positively explored. This is expatiated in Aronin & Singleton (2012, p. 311):

The theory of affordances can actually provide a valuable, supplementary, up-to-date framework within which a clearer, sharper description and explication of the intriguing range of attributes of multilingual communities, educational institutions and individuals, as well as teaching, practices, become feasible.

Adopting it in this paper, the diversity of Cameroon's cultures, languages and bi-multilingual study environment are resources that could be positively explored for pedagogic, socialising and other purposes. The bi-multilinguals are learners, they are Anglophone or Francophone, as well as individuals with diverse potentials to perceive and act, propose; or influence ideas, decisions that will improve their learning. It is worthy of notice that the bi-multilingual classroom environment, where perception of variation in language use compels action such as social and linguistic stereotyping is challenging, yet rewarding. Rewarding in the sense that a language aware teacher could adopt a learner-centred approach wherein learners are engaged in finding dynamic strategies for improved teaching learning and social inclusion.

Placing students at the centre of teaching-learning is parallel to insights of researchers such as McMahon et al., (2011, p.3) who reiterate that "Seeking the view of students is seen as an essential element in the teacher's critical reflection, where the teacher checks in with the learner about their perception about the quality of the learning in the classroom". This "quality of learning in the classroom" could go beyond academics, where learner-centred learning rekindles an awareness that encompasses acceptance of the other and moral tolerance (see 3.2.4). On inclusion, Cook et al. (2008) (cited in McMahon et al., 2011, p. 92) observe that "Inclusion, like learning, is a journey, not an arrival. Nurture groups may

provide a solution and they have seen a revival in the last decade". Learners' social and learning environments thus influence what they perceive, perception influences action which could have positive or negative repercussions.

Whatever the context of a specific model for better teaching learning and social inclusion, Cummins in Karl and Dönszelmann (2020, p. 198) reminds us that "in the context of promoting academic success among multilingual immigrant-background students, LA [language awareness] teaching and learning is an essential (i.e., non-optional) ingredient in reversing educational inequities", and social inequities included. To the "educational opportunity gaps", this paper includes social opportunity gaps, especially as the effectiveness of language awareness teaching-learning "depends on conceptualizing and implementing it as a part of a broader set of interventions designed to respond to educational opportunity gaps" (ibid). In addition to the essentials, there is the one style does not fit all, just as Gage in Karl and Dönszelmann (2020, p. 198) "stresses that in order for teachers to be 'arbiters' of language awareness and for schools to be critical sites for learning with and about others, teachers need to develop their own 'praxis' of language awareness". One's own "praxis" could be a creative, solution-oriented language aware teacher that engages learners in conceptualising and implementing a language awareness project with remedial outcomes for the teaching-learning process.

3. RESOURCES

The sample population in this study is Cameroonian university students of English and French official languages expression at the Department of English, Department of Linguistics and African Languages, and the Higher Institute of Transport and Logistics (HITL), The University of Bamenda. In common parlance they are Anglophones and Francophones who alongside English and French also use different indigenous languages, other emergent varieties, and some more foreign languages.

3.1 Procedure

A serially coded open-ended questionnaire focused on the micro (linguistic) and macro (social) aspects of language awareness is administered; part self-completion and part face to face as an interview. During the administering process respondents are asked to note their codes, which are later on used to link the recorded responses of those who responded during the group interview. At the end, 43 respondents participated in the activity; the descriptive statistical method and the qualitative method are used to analyse the data.

3.2 Data analysis, findings and discussion

The open-ended questionnaire/interview is structured in four parts to elicit information on: Biographical data and language background, Language awareness and usage, Language attitudes, and Pedagogic concerns. In total, 43 respondents responded to the questionnaire including a handful that responded during the group interview.

3.2.1. Biographical and linguistic background

1. How old are you?
2. Are you Male or Female?
3. Are you francophone or anglophoneCameroonian?
4. What was the first language you spoke?
5. Apart from the first language you spoke, what other language(s) do you speak?

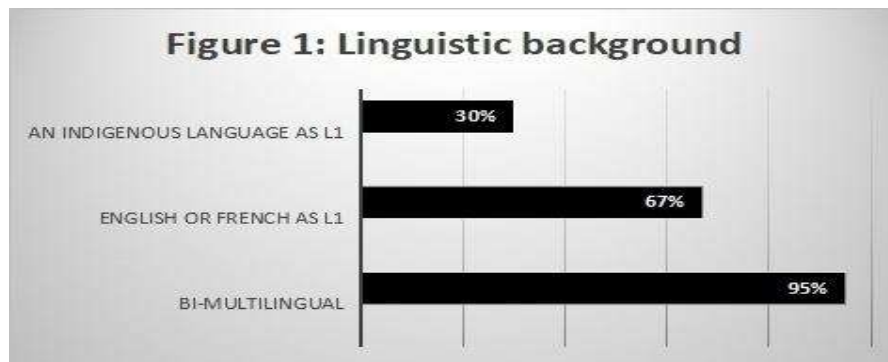
Resp	Gender		Age			Official Lg expression		L1	L1	Other
43	M	F	17-25	26-34	35+	Angl	Fran	Ind Lg	Eng or Fr	Ind Lgs, CPE+
	20	23	37	5	1	36	7	13	29	41
%	47%	53%	86%	12%	2%	84%	16%	30%	67%	95%

Gloss

Angl	Fran	Ind Lg	Eng or Fr	CPE	L1	Lg(s)
Anglophone	Francophone	Indigenous language	English or French	Cameroon Pidgin	First language	Language(s)

		e		English	e	
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In Table 3.2.1, apart from English-French bilingualism practiced by Anglophones and Francophones with varying competences, 67% of respondents has English or French as L1, and just 30% has an indigenous language as L1. Apart from an L1, 95% speaks another language(s), which include other indigenous languages, CPE, Camfranglais and other foreign languages. With this evident bi-multilingualism, interlingual interferences and outcomes are eminent at micro, as well as macro levels. For instance, the following statistics in Figure 1 show a shift as one of the language contact outcomes.



Just 30% speak indigenous languages as L1 with preference for the two foreign official languages spoken by 67% of the respondents. This is language shift from indigenous languages to foreign languages, other languages and language varieties, leaving the indigenous languages at risk of attrition. Some language aware learners and citizens are insensitive, unaware of the impact of this trend.

The following statistics in Table 3.2.2 elicits language awareness and usage at micro and macro levels.

3.2.2 Language awareness and usage

6. Can you tell if someone is anglophone Cameroonian, or francophone Cameroonian when the person speaks English?

7. State some features you use to identify an anglophone Cameroonian when s/he speaks English. Give examples on the following:

i) pronunciation of sounds or words

ii) construction of sentences

8. State some features you use to identify a francophone Cameroonian when s/he speaks English. Give examples on the following:

i) pronunciation of sounds or words

ii) construction of sentences

9. Give reasons that motivate you to study English

10. Why do you laugh sometimes when an anglophone Cameroonian speaks English?

11. Why do you laugh sometimes when a francophone Cameroonian speaks English?

Resp	Q6		Q7		Q8		Q9	Q10		Q11	
43	Yes	+-	i	ii	i	ii	----	ling	other	ling	other
	40	3	22	22	29	26	35	35	2	35	8
%	93%	7%	51%	51%	67%	60%	81%	81%	5%	81%	19%

Respondents illustrate lexical, syntactic, and phonological variables, as well as challenges in the language awareness process. The *Other* category includes predominantly negative adjectives, adjectival phrases and short sentence structures such as "funny, boring, non-standard, I don't laugh" that illustrate linguistic awareness of usage in bi-multilingual classrooms. Although just 5% and 19%, it shows a category of language aware learners who have preconceived, stereotypical as well as neutral attitudes toward the phonology and syntax of others' language, language variety, and official language background. The 93% that agrees it can distinguish Anglophone from Francophone Cameroon English validates learners' linguistic awareness of usage in a bi-multilingual classroom. On average, 81% gives illustrations on language awareness and usage at linguistic levels of syntax, phonetics, and phonology. Generally, there is a linguistic awareness of ethnolectal influence; of the 1st official language dialectal influence; CPE influence; and other language contact outcomes, such as translanguaging in the varieties of English spoken by the sample population.

In spite of this awareness, there is some unawareness on the science or legitimacy of the usage, thereby creating a state of linguistic (un)awareness, that is., aware of the linguistic divergences, but unaware

of the science that explains the divergent usage. For instance, "I don't know why their *Wh* always comes at the end of the question. You are going where? You are doing what? " [028]. From a syntactic analysis, these are structured after the syntactic structure of most indigenous languages, as well as French in which most questions end in the *Wh* structure. This syntactic usage has stabilised in mainstream Cameroon English (CamE) and sometimes extended to the classroom. Learners are intuitively aware of the syntactic differences, but unaware of the linguistic reasons for the syntactic difference in usage. More excerpts on awareness of syntactic usage include:

"Construct sentences according to format in indigenous languages." [007]

"They mix English with Pidgin. They often use certain expressions like 'na' at the end of sentences." [021]

These structures reiterate respondents' awareness of more syntactic usage typical of CamE. For instance, the recurrence of CamE *na?/ noh?*, a CPE feature that has stabilised in spoken CamE in place of the interrogative close in English *isn't it?* (to seek approval). From syntactic to phonological usage, the respondents are aware, but as already observed, there is unawareness on the legitimacy of the usages.

On phonological realisation, linguistic awareness is illustrated as follows:

"I just know that their R is different and they also do not pronounce the TH well." [003]

"Their pronunciation of 'r' is different like in room, rinse, rice." [029]

"They don't observe the 'th' sound in words like 'the' and 'them'." [029]

In all, there is linguistic awareness of phonological variation, but unaware of the linguistic justification that English inter-dental fricatives /ð/ and /θ/ are not sounds of French, most Cameroon indigenous languages, and Cameroon Pidgin English. Except with linguistic sensitivity and constant practice, it is inevitable that most Anglophone and Francophone Cameroonians do not realise English inter-dental

fricatives. Similarly, French uvular /ɹ/ is not a sound of English, therefore Francophones who learn English as a second official language are likely to replace English rolling /r/ with French uvular /ɹ/ and vice versa for Anglophones who learn French.

On phonology, Antilla (2004, p. 211) observes that if we want to explain and understand language-specific phonologies, "One common sense intuition is that optionality / variation arises in environments where the regularities of the language are somehow 'relaxed' or where they 'conflict'". In this study, learners are aware others are unable to pronounce the consonant cluster *th*. Inter-dental fricatives are not sounds of French and neither are they sounds of CamE or CPE or most Cameroon ethnic languages. In the languages, variation arises where the alveolar plosives conflict with English inter-dental fricatives and the latter relaxed to alveolar plosives. English *th* [θ] ~ /t/ as in *thin* ~ *tin*, and [ð] ~ /d/ as in *them* ~ *dem*. There is phonological constraint here, where some English sounds are restricted from easy realisation because they are absent from other languages in the learners' linguistic repertoire. Their substitutes stabilised in CamE, the variety of English spoken in the learners' immediate environment. The constraint illustrates the observation that in phonological theory in particular, "There has been a gradual shift away from rule-based theories to constraint-based theories" (Antilla 2004:213). These are some of the linguistic details and realities that influence the extent of language awareness. Learners or speakers are aware of the variation, but often unaware of the science that justifies the variation.

The fact that these respondents are awareness of what is conventional and unconventional English is an indicator they have formally learnt English grammar, as well as intuitively aware of the syntactic rules of English. For instance,

"He/ She constructs simple and understandable sentences." [037]

"They respect grammatical and syntactic rules." [005]

"I love observing and applying syntaxes and semantics." [029]

"Generally because of poor pronunciation and funny because of a French accent or code mixing." [042]

Statistics further show that awareness is not just linguistic, but instrumental as well. For instance, the awareness of the global economic prowess of English, and the awareness of the home advantage of being an English-French bilingual Cameroonian are seen in the responses on motivations for studying English:

"Because Cameroon is a bilingual country" [011]

"I want to study abroad in English speaking countries." [015]

"It is the world lingua franca. It is needed in every domain in life." [005]

These responses reflect the awareness of motivational forces of learning another language. They illustrate Gardner and Lambert's (1972) observation that "Instrumental motivation references the desire that language learners have to learn a second language for utilitarian purposes, such as employment, while integrative motivation references the desire to learn a language to integrate successfully with the target language community" (cited in Norton 2000, p. 10). If learners are trained to perceive accent for instance, as different and not deficient, there will be more motivated learners of English, French and other languages for both instrumental and integrative reasons. Similarly, if learners are motivated by these reasons, social and linguistic stereotyping will not deter the language learning process.

The awareness of language contact outcomes is seen in identifying features of translanguaging such as direct translation, code mixing and code switching, they may not be able to give a technical description of some of the language contact outcomes. Examples of translanguaging are from the following responses:

"J'aime le riz sauté. 'I like jumping rice.' That is direct translation" [001];

"They use French words within sentences" [005]; "Come ont va chop le eru" [008]. Code mixing is emblematic of Camfranglais.

Gloss

English	French	English gloss	CPE	English gloss	French /Indigeno us language	English gloss
<i>Come</i>	<i>ont va ~</i>	let's go	<i>chop ~</i>	eat	<i>le~ eru ~</i>	definite article 'the' a forest leafy green vegetable

Statistics in Table 3.2.3 elicits language aware learners, who show acceptance of variation in language use; with 63% and 60% admiration for Anglophone and Francophone English respectively. The 23% and 33% disapproval of the varieties are comparatively low, but their impact is strong in intimidating, slighting and excluding others.

3.2.3 Language attitudes

12. What do you admire in the English of an anglophone Cameroonian?

13. What do you admire in the English of a francophone Cameroonian?

14. Anglophone English may have a positive or negative influence on your English. Choose positive or negative and say why

15. Francophone English may have a positive or negative influence on your English. Choose positive or negative and say why

Resp	Q12			Q13			Q14			Q15		
43	P	N	+-	P	N	+-	P	N	Ø	P	N	Ø
	27	11	00	26	14	3	23	4	12	12	17	10
%	63%	26%	----	60%	33%	7%	53%	9%	28%	28%	40%	32%

Gloss

P	positive	N	negative	+-	positive & negative	Ø	Neutral
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The statistics also reveal that there is an implicit or explicit correlation of linguistic variables to social stereotypes. For instance, 53% of the learners

has positive attitudes toward the Anglophone variety of English as opposed to just 28% of the Francophone variety of English. This practice is similar to what Freed describes as "Despite our knowledge base, the stereotypes, the ideas that we might call folk linguistic beliefs, remain strong", while Talbot prompts us that "Stereotyping as a representational practice is at the centre of the notion of folk-linguistics" (cited in Freed 2003, p. 705). For instance, the practice of stereotyping Francophone English and vice versa is common practice, it is attributed to fun: "I don't know why. We just listen to them and have fun. If we were to collect them, we will have a whole book" [025]. This is folk-linguistics, yet comprises of the perceptions and attitudes that breed social or linguistic group exclusion. The negative impact of stereotypical practices is illustrated in "I dislike it because the students laugh at your English and it is very discouraging" [005]. Folk-linguistic beliefs and practices characterise language unawareness, often insensitive to the psychosocial impact of the practices on the victims.

These folk-linguistic beliefs and practices of language unawareness could be analysed in relation to social categorisation that social constructionism problematises. Linked to the social theorist Simone de Beauvoir (1949) and resumed by scholars of the postmodern turn such as Freed (2003), Cameron and Panović (2014), Cameron (2015), social constructionism emphasises on daily interactions between people and how they use language to construct their reality or identity. This theory problematises generalisations and categorisation, analysing a concept or practice not as a category, "... but as a highly contextualised process of identification - something that is 'done' in particular ways in particular contexts" (Cameron, D. & Panović, I. (2014). For instance, a response to Q.7. II in 3.2.2 is "The Francophones keep saying I want, I want, I want this, I want that. I don't know why they don't even say please." [023]

This respondent, a microcosm of other folk minds insinuates this category of speakers of English is not polite; but unaware that within the student-student context, communication is less formal, more casual. Noteworthy is, when generalisation and categorisation are made, stereotyping and exclusion are certain, but if the speech style of a certain

group contextualised, what is perceived and judged as impolite, not acceptable could be acceptable. However, in the human consciousness is the intuition or ability to feel a language and be able to tell what is (un)acceptable in the language, but social constructionism cautions against stereolinguistic or folk-linguistic practices of preconceived categorisation, generalisation and judgement irrespective of context.

The awareness of what linguistic usage is (non)standard could just be intuitive, but with diverse outcomes. For example, objective judgment and tolerant attitudes are shown in "I admire their courage in trying to speak English despite mistakes" [017]; "The fact that they try to speak the English even though they can't pronounce the words correctly" [003]; "Generally, the 'effort' they make to speak English" [030]; "Good but with errors of conjugation" [020] (see 3.2.3). Apart from linguistic awareness of usage, there is an aspect of moral growth shown in objective judgment by both groups of learners. Both Francophones and Anglophones are sensitive to right /wrong linguistic usage, but exercise some degree of objectivity and moral tolerance of the other. These are some of the attributes that a language aware teacher could identify and encourage for better teaching-learning and social inclusion.

Table 3.2.4 elicits challenging pedagogic concerns, but with the inclusion of learner-centred solutions the challenges could be transformed into possibilities for improved teaching-learning and social inclusion. These challenges include teaching language to a big and diverse population of learners with different linguistic abilities, ethnicities, first and second official language backgrounds, cultural and multilingual backgrounds. Learners' perceptions and attitudes toward variation in the other's first official or second language, toward Francophone or Anglophone; including postulations on the (im)proper acquisition of English by Francophones and Anglophones are equally challenging.

3.2.4 Pedagogic concerns

16. Give reasons why you, a francophone Cameroonian like and dislike studying English in the same class with anglophone Cameroonians.

17. Give reasons why you, an anglophone Cameroonian like and dislike studying English in the same class with francophone Cameroonians.

18. Suggest one way in which English could be better taught to Francophones.

19. Suggest one way in which English could be better taught to Anglophones.

20. Describe the classroom space for your English lessons

Resp	Q16			Q17			Q18		Q19		Q20	
43	♥	X	∅	♥	X	∅	Res	∅	Res	∅	Res	∅
	17	17	22	28	28	11	31	8	28	11	20	19
%	40%	40%	51%	65%	65%	26%	72%	19%	65%	26%	46%	44%

A highly contested study space is a challenge to the teaching-learning process: "The class is too tight and insufficient because English is a compulsory course which is supposed to be studied by all the students" [022]. "We have bad luck with some courses. They keep driving us out from one place to another" [040]. Overall, 46% describes a challenging classroom space and 44% are neutral about it. The latter insinuates that crowded study spaces are a normalcy in most schools in Cameroon. Yet, the bi-multilingual classroom could be a resource that promotes social inclusion, healthy competition, innovation, peer learning, as well as exclusion as seen in 40% *like* and 65% *dislike* reasons to questions 16 and 17. This means both positive and negative trends happen in the same classroom. While the positive is encouraging, the negative should be a yardstick to identify and evaluate more negative practices and find solutions that will mitigate the practices and their effects.

On strategies for enhanced teaching-learning and social inclusion in bi-multilingual classrooms, learners' experiences and proposals highlight the learner-centred contribution to what should be implemented. For instance, "They should be taught the sound chart" [008]; "Start with the differences between English and French" [002]; "Start with the differences

between English and the mother tongue" [019]; "by discouraging Pidgin English" [024]; "asking Francophone boys to date Anglophone girls and vice versa" [035]; "Bilingual teachers should teach English to Francophones so that they can code-switch" [001]. These are bottom-up strategies, or learners' contributions in informing educational policy on improved language teaching-learning and social integration. The strategies advocate the teaching of contrastive linguistics, English-French bilingualism and social integration. It means they are aware of alternative beneficial strategies found by learners for learners rather than what is imposed from the top.

4. CONCLUSION

Teaching English to Cameroonians of English and French official languages expression in a joint space poses pedagogic challenges, yet an asset in influencing language awareness. In language awareness and language teaching-learning, highlighting some aspects of linguistic awareness of usage could be a corrective learning strategy. Albeit, with social and linguistic stereotyping as components of the awareness and learning, social exclusion sets in, and with repercussions. The aim of this paper was to identify and analyse some linguistic and social variables that influence language awareness in a bi-multilingual classroom, and propose strategies for improved teaching-learning and social inclusion, in summary as follows:

Firstly, the analysis, findings and discussion identify some linguistic and social variables that influence language awareness in bi-multilingual classrooms in Cameroon. Respondents use pejorative adjectives, adjectival phrases and short sentence structures to describe two regional varieties of Cameroon English. An average of 81% illustrates lexical, syntactic, and phonological usage distinguishing Anglophone from Francophone Cameroon English, hence validating learners' linguistic awareness of usage in bi-multilingual classrooms (see Table 3.2.1). The English varieties are characterised by ethnolectal influence, 1st official language dialectal influence, and pidginisation. Examples include the substitution of inter-dental fricatives with alveolar plosives; the

recurrence of Cameroon Pidgin English syntactic features such as *na?/noh?* In the place of English interrogative close *isn't it?*; the *Wh* inversion in questions; and literal translation. As well, linguistic variables are correlated to social variables of Anglophone and Francophone, where 93% agrees it can distinguish Anglophone from Francophone Cameroon English (Table 3.2.2). This correlation validates learners' sociolinguistic awareness of usage.

Secondly, it is concluded from the analysis, findings and discussion that social and linguistic variables influence language awareness to an extent: In spite of learners' awareness of the linguistic variables that influence language awareness, there is some unawareness of the science or legitimacy of the usage, thereby creating a state of linguistic (un)awareness. That is, learners are aware of the linguistic divergences, but are unaware, and barely skilled in analysing the science that explains the legitimacy of divergent usage (see Table 3.2.2). On another language contact outcomes unawareness, there is language shift from indigenous languages to foreign languages, other languages and language varieties thus, shifting the indigenous languages to attrition. Only 30% of respondents speaks and indigenous language as L1 (see Fig 1). A majority of language aware learners and citizens are insensitive, unaware of the impact of this trend. Instituting the use of indigenous languages in empowering domains could gradually reverse the shift.

Incorporated in language (un)awareness are language attitudes with repercussions: There is linguistic awareness of usage and acceptance of language variation as 63% and 60% show positive attitudes toward Anglophone and Francophone English respectively. Albeit, the 23% Francophone and 33% Anglophone that disapprove of the Anglophone and Francophone varieties of usage are comparatively low, but their impact is high. The impact is strong in intimidating, slighting and excluding others. Likewise, in correlating linguistic variables to social stereotypes, 53% has positive attitudes toward the Anglophone variety of English as opposed to just 28% for the Francophone variety of English (Table 3.2.3). This attitudinal disposition may be implicit or explicit, but from experience and observation the negative attitude impact is stronger,

despite some degree of moral tolerance. Language users who practice the stereotyping are unaware of the psychosocial implications of their practice on the victims, some who become the stereotype threat.

Thirdly, the analysis, findings and discussion on the outcomes of language (un)awareness are explored for improved teaching-learning and social inclusion. The proposal is an integrated approach in language teaching-learning comprising of language awareness and contrastive linguistics modules. The latter does in-depth analysis of linguistic processes in each linguistic unit of the target languages in order to justify the legitimacy of variation in linguistic usage. Advocating valued diversity and justification of variation in linguistic usage will gradually minimise the practice and negative impact of linguistic and social stereotyping. In the multiplier effect of this proposal, if learners are trained to perceive and analyse lexical, syntactic and phonological variation as different and not deficient, more citizens will be motivated to learn English, French and other languages for both instrumental and integrative purposes.

Conclusively, although linguistic and social stereotyping are universal practices that simultaneously deter and promote language awareness in bilingual and multilingual classrooms, the degrees of these language (un)wareness vary in specific contexts of languages and cultures. Therefore the approaches to mitigate linguistic and social stereotyping for improved learning, moral tolerance or social inclusion also vary. It could be the ATL for a multilingual, multicultural Europe; a social-justice oriented approach for the United States of America; but it is an integrative approach of contrastive linguistics and language awareness modules, both encompassing the creativity of the bi-multilingual language aware teachers, learners, and citizens in the case of Cameroon.

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