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Focus on Cameroon Pidgin English

THE POLITICS OF PIDGIN ENGLISH IN CAMEROON

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1. Introduction

Cameroon is a notoriously multilingual country in which 279 indigenous languages belonging to three different African language families (the Nilo-Saharan, the Afro-Asiatic and theNiger-Congo) are spoken. To this already complex linguistic situation have been superimposed English and French, the two official languages of colonial heritage, and Cameroon Pidgin English.

Cameroon Pidgin English (CPE) is the name given to the variety of Atlantic English-based pidgin widely spoken and used in this West African country made up of 16,184,748 inhabitants (July 2002 estimate). As the leading lingua franca in the country, it competes favorably with two other leading lingua francas – Fulfulde (spoken in the northern part of the country) and Cameroon Popular French (spoken in the Frenchspeaking area). Although CPE is the most widespread lingua franca in Cameroon, this language is yet to attract proper attention as a major Cameroonian language. When Cameroon indigenous languages were raised to the level of national languages during the meeting of the National Council for Cultural Affairs that took place in Yaounde in December 1974, CPE was not affected by this measure of recognition. More recently, both the revised Constitution of 1996 and the Orientation Law on Education of 1998, which advocate English-French official language bilingualism and recommend the promotion of indigenous languages, are silent on the fate of CPE since it is not an indigenous language per se, a national language, or an official language. This paper examines the politics about CPE, with particular focus on its scope, the attitudes of Cameroonians towards the language, its place withinthe language policy, as well as the issues pertaining to language planning and corpus planning, and the possible role it can play as a national and/or official language in Cameroon.

2. Historical Overview and Scope of CPE

What is today generally referred to in the literature as

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In This Issue

Cameroon Pidgin English has been variously termed "Cameroon Creole" (Schneider, 1960a), "Wes- Kos" (Schneider, 1963), "West African Pidgin English"1 (Schneider, 1960b), "Cameroon Pidgin (CamP)" (Todd, 1982), and "Kamtok" (from "Cameroon talk") (Ngome, 1986, Todd and Jumbam, 1992). Other non-scholarly appellations such as "bush English", "broken English", "bad English" and "bastard English" (Krieger, 1991: 5) have equally been used to describe this language. The latter appellations were-based on the widespread belief that Pidgin English, be it of the Cameroonian variety or other existing varieties such as Nigerian Pidgin English and Ghanaian Pidgin English, is a simplified form of English used mostly by non educated people in former British colonies of West Africa.

The term "Cameroon Pidgin English" (Féral, 1978; Menang, 1979) has so far gained currency at the level of scholarship and consequently outmatched other appellations. Most linguists carrying out research on Cameroon today have adopted it. The adoption of this terminology makes it relatively easier to define this language as the Pidgin English used in Cameroon, as against variants used in other countries.

According to Schneider (1974: 22) Pidgin English began to develop during the 17th century when it competed with Pidgin Portuguese2, but "by the 18th century it had gained the greater part of the West Coast as its arena of communication" following the presence of English traders and missionaries on the coast of West Africa. Pidgin English did develop to guarantee effective communication in the area of trade and evangelization. The new pidgin then incorporated words from the existing Portuguese Pidgin that had been in use for some time in the area.

In spite of the abolition of the slave trade at the beginning of the 19th century, this language continued to expand all over the coastal region. The newly freed slaves who lived in Fernando Po, Liberia and Sierra Leone used Pidgin English to communicate with the local population. Simo Bobda (2001) reports that Sierra Leonean Krio contributed to the spread of some forms of English on the Cameroonian Coast and even in the hinterland through missionary work3. This Missionary work was done mostly in an early variety of West African Pidgin English called 'Wes-Kos' (Schneider, 1963) a variety largely influenced by Krio, the Sierra Leonean lingua franca. The missionaries eventually picked up this pidgin language and used it for their evangelical crusade. Much later, some of them settled in the Cameroonian coastal town of Victoria where they worked for the Cameroon Development Corporation (an agro-industrial complex) created by the Germans in July 1884. The numerous road and railway construction projects where the colonialists practiced forced labor also served as a fertile ground for the growth and development of CPE. Given that these work sites brought together people from diversified ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, Pidgin English was the only language that could facilitate communication. Thus throughout the German colonial period in Cameroon (1884-1916), Pidgin English continued to be widely used although it was originally declared illegal by the German administration (Kouega, 2001). The Germans later on realized that it was difficult for them to communicate readily with the natives in any other language apart from Pidgin English, which they referred to as "Neger Englisch" (Nigger English)(Simo Bobda, 2001). As the numerous workers returned to their homes, so did Pidgin English gradually move from the Coast to the hinterland, covering not only the Anglophone territory but also substantial areas in the Francophone territory (Krieger, 1991: 1). Therefore since the 19th century, Pidgin English has been the leading lingua franca in Cameroon, Fulfulde assuming lesser influence in the Northern provinces where it has from time immemorial been used for the spread of Islam.

Following the Franco-British occupation of Cameroon as from 1916, CPE witnessed a new period of its history. Simo Bobda (2001) argues that because the British were not particularly very interested in promoting English on a wide scale among the indigenous population in Cameroon, Pidgin English thus developed alongside the indigenous languages.

In British Cameroon, where it was mostly spoken, English and the

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What's Happening to Cameroon Pidgin?

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ABSTRACT
Cameroon Pidgin English today shows various phonological, lexico-semantic and grammatical restructurings. This paper demonstrates that most of the processes that marked pidginisation in the 1960s (vowel epenthesis, heavy consonant cluster simplification, a high frequency of the [a] sound, syllable deletion, use of local lexical items etc) have disappeared. It is seen that the language is getting closer to Cameroon English, thereby losing the peculiarity it had in the yesteryears. This state of things raises a fresh problem of whether Cameroon Pidgin English is creolising or decreolising.

Today, an attempt to compare the Pidgin that was used in the 1960s and that in use in 2005 glaringly shows marked differences, and yet there is a lot of controversy as to whether Cameroon Pidgin English (henceforth CPE) is creolising or decreolising. As early as 1971, Kerkvliet (1971:19) could declare that "Pidgin in West Cameroon, because of its daily contact with grammatical English, has grown considerably out of its original form." Recent statements on CPE suggest that it has now achieved the status of a Creole. Crystal (1987:338) defines CPE as "An English-based pidgin, creolised in some urban areas, used in Cameroon as a second language by some 2 million speakers." Shroeder (2003:85) also refers to CPE as an "expanded pidgin," and argues that "Although still denominated as 'Pidgin' by its speakers, CPE has in many areas acquired the status of a Creole." Mackenzie (2002:1) declares that "Kamtok" is not a pidgin but rather a Creole "since it is a fully-fledged language learned by children from their mothers." At the same time, if seeing the changes that have occurred in CPE in the last 50 years, we assert that CPE is decreolising, we expose ourselves to the following questions: At what point in its evolution did it become a Creole? If it has never, or has just creolised, then can we talk of decreolisation at all? Can there be decreolisation without creolisation? To avoid the web of such a debate, we prefer to use the word "depidginisation". Note that the genetics of CPE has been indeterminate, probably because of lack of a systematic follow up of its evolution, given that active interest in CPE research started as late as the second half of the 20th century.

Whether CPE is creolising or decreolising, one fact is evident: it has been seriously restructured if we compare its situation in the 60s (see Schneider 1960) to what is observable in this new millennium. This has been the focus of some recent works on CPE (see Simo Bobda and Wolf (2003:101)). Sala (2003:402ff) equally postulates that pidginisation and indigenisation of English in Cameroon are moving towards a common language. According to him, CPE is being upgraded towards the status language, which is English, and CamE is witnessing a downward trend in what he calls Grafting. The next thing is a meeting point. He argues that both idioms have the same underlying structure, which makes their future marriage very possible. This is why nobody teaches any of the idioms, but they are acquired with ease. He calls this common underlying structure in existence in Cameroon as the Pan-Ethnic Language Structure (PELS).

The above postulates have one simple point to make: CPE is moving towards English, the status language. This means that CPE is becoming more and more intelligible to the speaker of BrE, thereby losing its idiosyncrasies and identity. Our purpose in this paper is to evaluate the degree of phonological, structural and lexico-semantic change that has occurred in CPE between 1960 and 2005 (a period of half a century).

Some Social Considerations

Formerly, CPE was born out of the necessity to facilitate communication between ethnic groups that had something in common (trade, business, evangelisation, and other inter-personal intents), but spoke mutually unintelligible languages. The master also learnt it in order to communicate with his slaves. This is why CPE sprouted along the Cameroonian coast, where trade, plantation and religion attracted a multi-ethnic community before being transported inland during the German 25-year rule, spanning from 1884. This is also why most of the non-English vocabulary items used in CPE came from coastal indigenous languages such as Douala, Bakweri, Yoruba and Hausa as stated in Schneider (1960).

By that time, education, either in French or English, was still the preserve of a chosen few or "the punishment" of those who accepted their status as slaves. English could be spoken only by a few. The indigenous trader, labourer, and evangelist had recourse to pidgin to communicate. Because of the low exposure to English, even English words that infiltrated into CPE were greatly restructured phonologically and morphologically. Some even witnessed semantic expansion or contraction, or took entirely different meanings. This was the process of pidginisation. Hence, Pidgin was introduced in a desperate attempt to establish communication. Let us call this the desperation factor.

Today, the situation is different. The level of education of Cameroonians has risen relatively, compared to what obtained in the late fifties. Few are Cameroonians who have not been, at least, to primary school. Many more Cameroonians understand and use English. Even the uneducated ones are rather exposed to a pro-English model of CPE spoken in the streets, in the churches and on the media (see Awah (n.d.:3)). An increased rate of education, which directly correlates with more exposure to English, has changed the face of CPE. Hence, the desperation factor that ushered in pidgin is no more very significant. It is no

more just a language of cross-ethnic communication. It is more a language of intimacy and familiarity because it is cherished and selected amongst other languages in use in the country. We can dare say that, with the lifting of the desperation factor, CPE is used ostentatiously. This means that without it, Cameroonians can still communicate using other media, CamE, for example. CPE is under the threat of its status language, English, and the consequence is phonological, morphological and grammatical restructuring.

1- Phonological Changes

The CPE used today has lost many phonological features that were attested in the 60s. The processes analysed below are christened with the understanding that what obtained in the 60s was pidginisation and what is observed today is depidginisation.

a- *[r] is no more in alternation with [l]*

1960	2005	Gloss
akala	akara	pastry
akwala	akwara	prostitute
alata	arata	mouse
gilikotʃ□	agrikotʃ□	agriculture
baklu	bakru	fried cake from groundnut chaff
plays	prays	price
layt	rayt	right, write
ledy	redy	ready
lop	rop	rope
lula	rula	ruler
sofli-sofli	sofri-sofri	gently
soli	sori	sorry
toli	tori	story

The list in (a) shows that the 1960 uneducated [l] has been replaced in current usage by [r]. It is important to note that the use of [l], instead of [r], is associated with Kom English, a sub-variety of English in Cameroon, which is still strongly influenced by the indigenous language. This is a pro-English change.

b. *Vowel* "de-epenthesisation"

The Pidgin spoken in the 1960s was characterized by heavy consonant cluster simplification. One way of doing this was by inserting vowel sounds to ease the articulation of some clusters. This is captured in the following data:

1960	2005	GLOSS
sitik	stik	stick
simol	smol	small
animul	animu	animal
milik	mik	milk
baybul	baybl	bible
basiket	basket	basket
silip	slip	sleep
bilak	blak	black
dilai	drai	dry
dilak	drak	drag
pilanti	planti	plantains
pilanti	plenti	plenty
sikin	skin	skin
sikul	skul	school
sinek	snek	snake
sipol	spol	spoil
sipun	spun	spoon
siton	ston	stone
helep	hep	help

c- The replacement of [ʃ] by [s]

The replacement of [ʃ] by [s] at word-initial position in current CPE usage is another way through which depidginisation is taking place.

1960	2005	Gloss
ʃimen	simen	cement
ʃawa	sawa	stale
ʃik	sik	sick
ʃlak	slak	slack
ʃmel	smel	smel
ʃup	sup	soup
ʃwe	swe	swear

d- Low frequency of the **[a]** vowel

Another sound that was recurrent in CPE around the 1960s is [□]. In the process of pidginising English-based lexical loans, the CPE of the 60s used the [a] sound indiscriminately to replace some English vocalic segments. But today, it is substantially less frequent. Consider the following pairs:

1960	2005	Gloss
tʃap	tʃ□p	food
ma	mai	my
savis	sevis	service
babi	b□bi	breast
ʃap	ʃ□p	shop
falabak	folobak	younger brother or sister
marasi	meresin	medicine
pata-pata	p□t□-p□t□	mud
stap-am	st□p-am	stop it
tela	tel□	tailor
tamak□	tobak□	tobacco
tamato	tomato	tomato
tumar□	tumor□	tomorrow

e- [b] no more replaces [p]

Another phonological feature of the yesteryears that is disappearing is the replacement of [p] by [b]. The following data display this phenomenon:

1960	2005	Gloss
blaba	palava	palaver/problem
ba:ti	pa:ti	party
bawa	pawa	power
beni	peni	penny
bensi	pensel	pencil
bebe	pepe	pepper
bia	pia	pear
bikin	pikin	child

bima	pima	vagina
bibu	pipu	people
bles	ples	place
busi	pusi	pussy

f- Loss of the intrusive [h] in the initial position of some nouns beginning with a vowel

Some words that begin with a vowel had [h] attached to them in initial position either for emphasis or to ease their pronunciation. Consider the list below:

6-

1960	2005	Gloss
haks	aks	axe
hansa	ansa	answer
hants	ants	ants
hantelop	antelop	antelope
heni	eni	any
hinsai	insait	inside
hopam	opam/open-am	open it

g- *The disappearance of* **[i]** *at word-final position:*

Some CPE words ending with consonants had [i] attached to them word-finally.

7-

1960	2005	Gloss
ifi	if	if
witi	wit	with
blaki	blackman	black person
shorti	shortman	short person
paapi	x	pet name for male child
maami	x	pet name for female child
jacki	jackass	ass
tabili	tebel	table
fiti	fit	to be able

h- *initial [s] is no more deleted to simplify some consonant clusters*

In typical CPE spoken around the 1960s, [s] was not frequently inserted at word-initial positions to yield consonant clusters, as is the case in current CPE usage. Consonant-deletion was one way of simplifying some difficult clusters. Consider the following data:

1960	2005	Gloss
tori	stori	story
trong	strong	strong
trenja	strenja	stranger
cratch	scratch	scratch

i- *Miscellaneous cases include*:

1960	2005	Gloss
dan/daa	dat	that
famblu	famili	family
mindru	midel	middle
tam	taim	time
kan/kana	kain	kind
nyamas	yams	yams

The situation of CPE phonology in the 60s, as presented in Schneider (1960), shows that there was a tendency to use natural sounds such as [a], [l], [ʃ] and simple forms such as monophthongs. There was also the simplification of consonant clusters. Since the idiom had no pontificators or a written tradition, words had many variants; for example, "hospital" had the following variants: "watapita", "wasapita", "wasafita", "hosfita", "hospita", "hospitu" and "waspita" (Schneider 160:131). Variants that spread became widely used. Those that were idiolects had a shorter life span.

Today, with the rise in the level of education, and exposure to Standard English, educated Cameroonians who do not want to preserve the language consider many of these forms obsolete or inferior. When CPE was born, people of diverse origins and backgrounds used it and introduced idiosyncratic forms into it. What was important was communicative interaction and not correctness. But today in Cameroon, if one speaks Pidgin with the features of the yesteryears, he will be laughed at. Some speak it deliberately to enjoy its humour. Speakers of the CPE of the yesteryears also feel that it is not necessary for their Pidgin to be contaminated by "big English grammar and words".It is in this light that Awah (n.d.:3) regrets the pro-English trends affecting CPE today.

Morphological Changes

Schneider (1960:15) estimates that "About 84-85% of the vocabulary [in CPE] is of English origin..." When words were borrowed from English, they underwent morphological integration processes and syllable simplification, which gave them the peculiarity as CPE words. Since CPE was mostly used by illiterates, the form of the various words was naturally distorted. Today, as it will be seen below, those CPE forms are giving way to pro-English morphological forms. Consider the list below:

1960	2005	Gloss
mitua, matua, motua	moto	motorcar
p□li, kata-b□bi	breast-wear	brassiere
gomna	governor, government	govermment
lebla	labourer	labourer, hired hand
do-mof	door	door
brickla	bricklayer	bricklayer
lanaboy/lanboy	apprentice	apprentice
poblik	main road	main road
bamis	barman	barmaid
yesade	yesterday	yesterday
frubay	forget, miss	forget
mop, mot, muf	mouth	mouth
nyamas	yams	yams
oya	oye, oil	oil
tchapia	clear	clear
lantiri	electric, light	electricity
terview	interview	interview
dentite	identity (card)	identity
move	(re)move	remove
nof	enough	enough

t□us	excuse	excuse
gri	accept, agree	accept, agree

The pidginisaton of English forms through the extension, deletion and replacement of morphemes to yield CPE forms as seen in the 60s is no more attested in CPE, as illustrated above.

By 1960, a number of CPE lexical items were loans from local, coastal languages, but most of these loans are being systematically replaced by English loans, as illustrated below:

1960	2005	Gloss
mintori	intestine	intestines/hernia
baba	pah, papa	father
badjili	stranger	stranger
fo banje	for bad	to be/get bad
kwa-nkanda	bachelor	bachelor
kara□gwa	louse, lice	louse, lice
kasengu	cane	whip
kotleri	carpenter	carpenter
kundu	bribe	bribe
laski	wayo, trick	tricks
masanga	beads	beads
kwa	bag	bag
ngundu	work for no pay	free labour
jabu	bad money	counterfeit
nyamankudu	soldier moto, sans-paye	military truck
for tut	for carry	to carry

Some semantic connotations are no more attested. Consider the following:

1960	2005	Gloss
mun (moon)	time, mbra	menstruation
pramis (promise)	fiancé	an affianced/intended person
praivet (private)	las	genitals
rayt (write)	writing	handwriting
sikri (secret)	las	private parts
shap (sharp)	file	file
poblik (public)	big road	main road
flawa (flower)	time	menstration

There has also been a remarkable change in the verb derivation modes/processes. In the 1960s, it was possible to derive a verb from any noun, in ways that were un-English. Today, most processes that conform to the English way are maintained. Hence, the arbitrary derivation of CPE verbs from English nouns through the process of conversion is almost obsolete. Consider the list below:

1960	2005	Gloss
for glass-am	for put glass	to embellish with glass
for kup-am	for put cup	to fill with cups
For mo-am	for add-am	to add/increase

GRAMMATICAL CHANGES

Depidginisation is also being observed at the grammatical level. Naturally, the grammars of languages evolve more slowly. But as seen below, the grammar of CPE is being restructured towards its status language.

1 a. Dis na ma basiku (Schneider, 1960:45)
This it is my bicycle
"This is my bicycle."
b. Dis wan na ma bicycle.
"This is my bicycle."

In (1) above, it should be noted that (1a) is no more heard. Rather (1b), which has the introduction of "wan" after "dis" is a grammatical innovation.

2a. E bin bait-am-bait-am sote e ket. (Schneider, 1960:46)
he ASP bite it – bite it until it cut
"He bit it so that it got cut."
b. E bin bite-bite-am sote e ket.
He ASP bite bite it till it cut
"He bit so that it got cut."

In (2a), we find "-am" being repeated after each word of the reduplicated transform. In (2b), "-am" is no more repeated in that manner. It comes after the reduplicated transform. Here, the reduplicated transform is now being considered to be a lexical unit. No grammatical matter is inserted in it anymore.

3a. dem bin keri-am for bak-bak. (ibid., p.48)
they ASP carry it on back back
"They carried it on their backs."
b. dem bin carry-am for dem back-dem.
They ASP carry it on their back PL marker
"They carried it on their backs."

In (3a), the grammatical representation "their backs" is done through reduplication. This means that reduplication marked plurality in those days. The possessive adjective "their" is recovered through context. In (3b), we see a more English-oriented phenomenon, in "dem back-dem". The first "them" marks possession and the second marks plurality. The separation of these grammatical categories is done towards the English tradition, rather than being allowed to context.

4a. ai no go dig-am beri□gro□.
I Neg will dig it grave
"I will not dig the grave."
b. ha yu di soso beg-am ol taym.
Why you ASP keep on beg it all time
"Why do you keep on begging all the time?"

In (4a) and (4b) we see "-am" used in a context that looks like intrusive. There, it is not a resumptive pronoun, because no movement is involved. Today, these constructs are no more attested.

5a. ai don hala-am plenty.
I ASP scold him much
"I spoke very harshly to him."
b. ai don hala yi plenty."
I ASP scold him much
"I spoke very harshly to him."

6a. Cow weh e no get tail na God di driv-am fly.
cow that it NEG have tail it is God PROG drive it fly
" The flies of a tailless cow are driven by God."
b. Cow weh e no get tail na God di driv yi fly.
cow that it NEG have tail it is God PROG drive it fly
"The flies of a tailless cow are driven by God."

In (5a) and (6a), we see "-am" replacing an objective person. In (5b) and (6b), it is "yi" that replaces "him". Today, "-am" is no more heard for persons in objective positions, except for cases in which it is a resumptive pronoun. It is used mostly for non-person nouns. Hence, the concept, "animacy," is getting into CPE.

Some 1960-collocates are also disappearing:

7-

1960	2005	Gloss
for wash cold water	for was wit cold water	to bathe with cold water
for sell bar	for sell for bar	to serve in a bar
Yaounde don come?	you don come for Yaounde?	Have you come back from Yaounde?
For go church	for go for church	to go to church

In (7) above we notice the systematic introduction of the prepositions, "wit" and "for" to introduce instrumental and locative adjuncts. This is a more pro-English phenomenon.
The level of evolution of CPE can be better perceived in the sentences below:

8 a. Hop domot mik dem hinta nwain-nwain. (1960)
b. Open door make dem enter one-one. (2005)
c. Open the door so that they can come in one after the other. (standard English)

(8) shows how removed the 1960 version of CPE was from standard English, compared to the 2005-version. In (8a), we see the introduction of consonants in the initial position in "hop" (open), "hinta" (enter) and "nwain" (one). We also see the addition of a syllable at "domot" (door). The only aspects of CPE remaining in (8b) are article-deletion seen in "open door" (open the door), the use of "make" (so that) to introduce a purpose clause, and the use of reduplication to mean "one after the other".

On the whole, there has been an evolution in CPE at the structural level, as well as at the sociolinguistic level. With the increase in the level of education, English words that were simplified and integrated, are now being anglicized to something closer to what is attested in CamE phonology. Morphologically, many words that were born in those days from indigenous languages are now obsolete and being replaced by their English equivalents. Those words that were pidginised in those days are observing some degree of Anglicization. Semantically, some meanings that were attached to some words, irrespective of their English meanings, are now embracing the English meanings. Syntactically, CPE word order seems to be respecting English canons. Some collocations that were peculiar to CPE are also disappearing. Hence, the postulate in Simo Bobda and Wolf (2003) and in Sala (2003) that the gap between CPE and Standard English is systematically reducing is largely a truism.

Yet, as suggested above, what can be said to be happening to this pro-English medium called CPE? Is it creolisation or depidginisation? If from the look of things, we assert that it is both, then does the creolisation process in CPE also mean its depidginisation? If we take creolisation to mean the achievement of native speakers, the assertion of a distinctive personality and a wider sphere of use (see Ayafor, 2005 and Menang, 2005), then to what interfaces do depidginisation and creolisation belong in the CPE debate? Can a pidgin be depidginising and creolising at the same time? If so, what will be its decreolisation process in future? These are questions that must be borne in mind when christening CPE phenomena, and above all, it is the task of future research.

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Looking for a superstrate finding the substrate

a note by Brigitte Weber-Loets

My interest in the variety of West African Pidgin English spoken in Cameroon, also called Kamtok, was aroused by a Cameroonian student who worked as an au-pair in my household and enjoyed cooking African food – whenever the proper ingredients were available! I recorded the recipies in pidgin as she talked me through the procedure. *A go tok hau fo kuk pepe sup* is one example.

Some time ago I attended an introductory course on Tok Pisin, at the University of Klagenfurt. I could recognise immediately the similar historical background of the two countries and soon became aware of the similar social conditions that existed during the elaboration of the two pidgins:

- Each country was a German Protectorate from 1884 to World War I
- The same language policy was used for both protectorates by the German Colonial Office
- An English-based pidgin had already existed and was used as a lingua franca by both the multilingual indigenous population and by the Germans
- Indigenous languages were not suppressed
- German was introduced in schools mainly by missionaries
- In both pidgins there are the same two lexical items, which do not occur in other West African pidgins or creoles. These items are kanaka/ganako (unpleasant term for a worker, possibly from 'canehacker' and meri ('woman' from Mary):

1) God damn! work belong kanaka he no good!
(Friederici,Pidgin English in Neuguinea p.101)
Dem tok laik sei mi a bi ganako (Recording of Mary Mb***, Leeds, 1992)

2) meri (attested as early as 1815 in Maori-pidgin English of New Zealand); used in Papua New Guinea:
Pasin bilong ol meri! (That's just like women!) (Mihalic, 1971: 134)
Dat meri i fain na dai! (That young woman was unbelievably beautiful.) (Recorded in storytelling session, Djottin, Cameroon, 1967)

A great deal of research has been carried out on different aspects of Tok Pisin. The influence of the German administration on New Guinea Pidgin, for example, has been studied by Peter Mühlhäusler in several works (Journal of Pacific History,1976, P.94-111;Growth and Structure of the Lexicon of New Guinea Pidgin, p.70 ff.;Tok Pisin Texts: Varieties of English around the world,p.26/27). He traced German lexical items in the domains of:
religious life:
beten (to pray),pater (priest) , segen (blessing),
carpentry:
bang (bench), hobel (plane), bogen (arch), borim (to drill)
cooking:
ananas (pineapple),esik (vinegar), kese (cheese),malsait (mealtime)
and swearwords:
raus (get lost), *sapkop* (sheep's brain), *rinfi* (dumb ox),*haltmunt* (shut up)

Mihalic's dictionary: *The Jacaranda Dictionary and Grammar of Melanesian Pidgin*, 1971 is an even more exhaustive source of information.

With regard to Kamtok the research has tended to focus on sociolinguistic issues mainly and the possible German legacy has not been pursued. Linguistic descriptions and a glossary by G.D.Schneider have focussed on West Africa in general; a case study of Cameroon Pidgin English by Loreto Todd in *Modern Englishes* briefly considers German sources in the lexicon but does not explore the link comprehensively. In view of the success in recovering German influence in Tok Pisin, it seemed worthwhile to me to look for possible relics of German at all levels of Kamtok, including lexical and grammatical.

In an attempt to do this thoroughly, I have studied the earliest available descriptions of the vocabulary in, for example, Günther von Hagen (Kurzes Handbuch *für Negerenglisch an der Westküste Afrikas*) where the terms 'hobel'(plane) p.17 and 'ananas' (pineapple) p.5 are mentioned. With regard to persons I could find the German word 'dolmetsch' (interpreter) p.20, 'posten' (guard) p.22, 'wachhetmann' (officer of the watch) p.23
Grade's article in Anglia VII ('Negerenglisch an der Westküste von Afrika') shows parallels to Tok Pisin in the use of 'belong' and 'catch':

them knife blan for me p.43
cold catch me p.42

Schuchardt's *Creole Study X: On the Negro English of West Africa* gives mainly examples of 'Krio', the variety spoken in Sierra Leone. I am hopeful that future study of his correspondence with missionaries may shed additional light on Kamtok, especially since Krios played a considerable role in the early missionary work in Cameroon.

My initial study encourages me to believe that a deeper linguistic analysis of Kamtok – especially with regard to German times – will prove worthwhile.

In the meantime, I have sought to collect linguistic material on Kamtok from all sources and have gleaned material from, for example, *An Introduction to Westafrican Pidgin English* by David Dwyer, Michigan State University, 1960)This PhD thesis then was included into my collection of sources for my intended investigation. My intention is to study all the vocabulary in-depth by analyzing both form and meaning andby comparing word-formation processes both with English and German.

While examining the vocabulary, I was struck by an interesting pattern that appeared in words beginning with plosives and especially with /b/ /d/ /g/. I found numerous examples of the occurrence of homorganic nasals in the writings of all authors. There were numerous examples, such as:

mbombo (namesake)
mbanja (ribcage)

mbanya (co-wife)
(m)broda,mbra,mblala (brother, sister, relative and friend)
mbonga (fish)
mbanja (bamboo or ribs)
mbanga (palm nut)
(m)blod (blood)

ngombi (spirit, god)
njamanjama (vegetables of all kinds)
njanga (crayfish)
nfon (paramount chief)
nchinda (servant)
njanggi (cooperative society)
njumba (lover)
ndole (a vegetable)
ngambi (witchdoctor)
(n)doti (dirt)
(n)gong(n)gong (tin container)

However, I noticed something that none of the other researchers drew attention to. The homorganic nasals were prefixed to nouns only:

bad	*mbad
blo	*mblo
daun	*ndaun
dinai	*ndinai
gud	*ngud
grab	*ngrab

The nouns that could take the homorganic nasals denote human and supernatural beings, parts of the body, animals, plants and inanimate objects. Many of the words are derived from indigenous African languages of the Niger-Congo group (Ethnologue:www.sil.org),in particular from Douala, although this is not an absolute rule as 'brother' and 'blood' receive the homorganic treatment. The Niger-Congo group has been classified as 'Narrow Bantu' or 'Southern Bantoid' (Bendor-Samuel, John, 1989).

Welmers (*African language structures,* 1973), has demonstrated that, in all branches of Niger Congo group, the noun can be analyzed as consisting of stem and affix, normally a prefix. Indeed, many nouns are grouped into classes on the basis of the prefixes that they take.
It is possible that the homorganic nasal that is still so apparent in Kamtok nouns is a morphological prefix and thus constitutes a relic of the African base.

A similar relic has been pointed out by Alleyne (*Comparative Afro-American*,1980) This is the complementary distribution of /l/ and /r/ as in:

broda/mblala (brother, one of same age group)
botru/botul (bottle)
bondru/bondul (bundle)
arata/alata (rat)
sampru/sampul (sample)
loba/roba (rubber)

This feature is, as my examples show, also a feature of Kamtok.

I am still confident that I can illustrate an influence from German on Kamtok in terms of phonology, lexis, syntax and semantics. However, in my search of German relics, it seems that I have also discovered a trace of the African substrate.

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Telephone openings and goodbyes in Cameroon Pidgin English (CPE)

Abstract

This study looks into one type of discourse in Cameroon Pidgin English, namely telephone conversations. The findings highlight the telephone discourse features shared by telephone users in the global context and contrast them with those features which are specific to the Cameroon cultural and linguistic context. The study shows that some of these features permeate into L2 English in Cameroon and they therefore need to be addressed by course designers.

Introduction

This study examines telephone beginnings and closings in CPE, with a view to identifying the linguistic features that users exploit to realise these communicative functions. The level of language analysis considered here is discourse, a collection of related sentences that form what Halliday and Hasan (1976) call "a unified whole". Previous works on CPE are mainly sociolinguistic in nature (Mbassi-Manga 1973; Féral 1978, 1980; Mbangwana 1983, 2004; Todd 1984a, Ngome 1986; Alobwede 1998; Kouega 2001). Purely linguistic works on the variety are rare (Schneider 1960, 1963, 1966, 1967; Menang 1979). Todd (1984b) devoted a book chapter to the description of aspects of its phonology, lexis and syntax. Recent works are scarce: Mbakong Tsende (1993) discussed some aspects of Pidgin verb phrase constituents, Leoue (1996) examined the nominal group and Anchimbe (2004) looked into one specific type of verb inflection. The present study, which focuses on a higher level of language patterning, is broken into five sections, labelled the state of CPE (1), methodology (2), analysis of the data collected (3) and discussion of the results and implications for education (4).

1. The state of Cameroon Pidgin English

Cameroon is a Central African country sharing a long border with Nigeria to the east. Other neighbouring countries include Chad, the Central African Republic, Congo and Gabon. CPE came into being in the 15th century when the Slave Trade started (1400-1800). The first Europeans who had contacts with Cameroonians where the Portuguese, who traded mainly with the coastal aborigines, and English people, who carried out transactions with these same coastal aborigines on behalf of Portuguese traders. In fact, the Portuguese tended to enlist the services of English privateers in their boats which came to the West Coast (Mbassi-Manga, 1973, 1976). As a result, Cameroonians were exposed, right from the start, to two major European languages, namely that of the slave traders (Portuguese) and that of the privateers (English), to which were added the various indigenous languages of the coast. Traces of the resulting mixture still exist in CPE: words such as "pas", "sabi", kaka", "pikin" are of Portuguese origin; they derive from the words "passar", "saber", "caca" and "piqueno", which mean "pass", "know", dung" and "kid". The prints of English in the mixture are grammatical in nature, as witnesses this sentence from Todd (1984: 8), adapted by the present researcher thus:

CPE: Dis pikin sabi book
Literal translation: This child know book
English: This child is educated

When the Portuguese started trading with India in 1498, the Cape Verde Islands became a focal point, and trade with Cameroon slackened off. In the meantime, the British people continued the transaction in slaves and even extended it to the hinterland. As Todd (ibid., p. 91) notes, John Hawkins sold Africans into slavery in 1563, and in 1823, a British team discovered and explored Lake Chad in the north of Cameroon. When trade in slaves slowed down, trade in goods started up, with several batches of traders from Liverpool and Bristol setting up trading posts in the coastal towns. They were followed as from 1827 by the British Baptist Missionary Society, who employed some Jamaicans and Krios as catechists. Besides teaching the Gospel, they created schools, which added a formal variety of English to the Pidgin one that was used in its oral form in churches and market places.

When German traders visited the country and set up trading posts in the coastal areas in 1861, Pidgin English was so well established that these Germans had to learn it and use it in their transactions with the indigenes. In 1884, Cameroon became a German colony (called Kamerun), with German as its official language. Plantations were set up, and as labourers were needed, people speaking different languages were brought from the hinterland. These newcomers swelled the number of Pidgin English users and made it the most vital language in the colony. With Germany's defeat in the First World War, the German Empire was shared between France and England, with England taking that part of the colony where the plantations and missions were set up and where Pidgin English was established. The area was called Southern British Cameroon1. In 1961, Southern British Cameroon decided to join French Cameroon, which had obtained its independence from France in 1960. The two territories re-united as they were in the German era and in 1984, they fused into one unitary country which is called the Republic of Cameroon and is today divided into ten provinces2. Two of these provinces make up what was formerly known as Southern British Cameroon; these are the Northwest and Southwest provinces.

Today a total of four major lingua francas are identified in Cameroon (Koenig 1983), namely Ewondo Populaire spoken in the big cities of the southern part of the country, Fulfulde spoken in the northern provinces, Arab Choa spoken in the Far North, and finally Pidgin English which is used even in the regions where these other link languages are dominant. In Anglophone Cameroon in particular, CPE is the most frequently used language in the home, the neighbourhood, the schoolyard and most importantly, in religion (Mbangwana 1983). Actually the Catholic Church has adopted it as the language of preaching in rural areas, and has been publishing prayer books and extracts

of the Gospel in it (Catholic Mission 1974, 1981). Despite its widespread use, both educated and non-educated Anglophone Cameroonians have a negative attitude to it (Todd 1984a). Secondary school regulations punish pupils who use it in the school premises. On the campus of the University of Buea in the Southwest province, there are postings mandating students to keep Pidgin English out of the gate. Worse, parents put forward the claim that they would unanimously vote against its introduction in the school system as the medium of instruction in the early years of primary education (Kouega 2001), as they strongly believe it would interfere with their children's acquisition of English (Munang 1996, Anchimbe 1998).

In Cameroon today, CPE and Standard English form a continuum, with illiterates having only CPE, the basilectal variety, as their out-group language and educated people being capable of using English as well. In-betwwen these two extremes are semi-education people, who can hardly keep the two varieties apart, as will be shown below in the section dealing with the educational implications of the present study.

2. Methodology

The data for this study are drawn from a corpus of oral CPE under construction. The telephone component comprises some 500 texts of 30 to 120 seconds in length. The pool of participants involved includes some 300 first year university students residing in Yaounde, the capital city of Cameroon, and the type of interaction targeted is their private communications with parents and relatives. The students are holders of the GCE A'level, the certificate required for admission into a university, while the callees are educated or illiterate people living in rural and urban parts of the country. These students were asked to tape-record their own contribution in a telephone conversation in Pidgin, and then to draw from this contribution to reconstruct the full conversation. Next, they were asked to transcribe3 the full conversation thus obtained, leaving out any segment they felt contained personal details. Lastly, each conversation received was translated into "plain English" by other students drawn from this pool.

Below is reproduced a sample text, which is an interaction between a female student (A) and her uncle4 (B). Note that there is a literal translation of this same text in Appendix 1 as well as a translation of it in plain "Cameroon English" in Appendix 2. The text contains a total of 18 speaking turns:

0 "Gring, gring, gring"
1 A Allo, Uncle.
2 B Allo.
3 A Uncle, Good afternoon.
4 B Good afternoon. Na who di call?
5 A Na me Susan, Uncle!
6 B Ah! Susan. How for you na?
7 A Uncle, fine oooh! Thank you.
8 B Na weti my dear? Problem dey?
9 A Uncle, no bi na really some big problem. Na just sey school don start back and school list for pikin them wey dey don gree sey make them enter this university don comot and I don see ma name for the list.
10 B So weti you want sey make I do?
11 A The people them say make we pay school fees and say the last day na 15 for November month.
12 B OK Susan I don hear. I go send the money for you for Wednesday. I mean sey make you go for Express Union go take-am. You don hear?
13 A Yes Uncle. Uncle thank you plenti.
14 B No worry ya self.
15 A Uncle, I got for leave you now because I no get plenti money for call you. Salute all man for house for me.
16 B They go hear.
17 A Bye!
18 B Bye, dear!

These 18 speaking turns can be broken into three sections, namely beginning, middle and closing, which are described below.

The beginning
What is regarded in this work as the beginning of the conversation includes Turns 1 to 7, as Turn 8 takes up the purpose of the call (8 B Na weti my dear? Problem dey?):

1 A Allo, Uncle.
2 B Allo.
3 A Uncle, Good afternoon.
4 B Good afternoon. Na who di call?
5 A Na me Susan, Uncle!
6 B Ah! Susan. How for you na?
7 A Uncle, fine oooh! Thank you.

The middle
It includes the purpose of the call (Turn 8) and excludes the goodbye section, which starts with Turn 15 (A Uncle, I got for leave you now ...)

8 B Na weti my dear? Problem dey?
9 A Uncle, no bi na really some big problem. Na just sey school don start back and school list for pikin them wey dey don gree sey make them enter this university don comot and I don see ma name for the list.
10 B So weti you want sey make I do?
11 A The people them say make we pay school fees and say the last day na 15 for November month.
12 B OK Susan I don hear. I go send the money for you for Wednesday. I mean sey make you go for Express Union go take-am. You don hear?
13 A Yes Uncle. Uncle thank you plenti.
14 B No worry ya self.

The closing
It comprises the last words that lead to the termination of the conversation, from Turn 15 (Uncle I got for leave you now ...) to Turn 18 (Bye, dear.):

15 A Uncle, I got for leave you now because I no get plenti money for call you. Salute all man for house for me.

16 B They go hear.
17 A Bye
18 B Bye, dear.

3. Analysis

This section describes the opening of telephone calls (3.1) and then their closings (3.2), using the sample text reproduced above for illustration.

3.1. Openings

Telephone openings usually comprise four speaking turns performing related functions which can be labelled: checking the channel, greeting, checking the caller's identity and, lastly greeting. To check the channel, the caller uses the interjection "Allo" and he/she expects the callee to respond by saying "Allo", as shown below:
1 A Allo, Uncle!
2 B Allo!

Once the channel is set, the caller moves on to greeting:
3 A Uncle, Good afternoon
4 B Good afternoon

Then the callee checks the caller's identity, as in this example:
4 B Na who di call?
5 A Na me, Susan, Uncle!

Finally, the callee acknowledges recognition of the caller and greets him/her:
6 Ah! Susan. How for you na?
7 Uncle, fine ooh! Thank you.

In interactions between friends and equals, this extended sequence tends to be shortened, as in the illustration below:
1 A Allo! Na who di call? (Who is calling?)
2 B Na me Blanche. Sally good morning! (it's me Blanche. Sally Good morning)
3 A Good morning.

3.2. Closings

Conversation closings usually contain two types of sequences, which Schegloff and Sacks (1973) had labelled pre-closing and closing. The pre-closing sequence indicates that one party wants to terminate the interaction as in: "Well, my bus is coming", while the closing sequence actually closes the conversation as in: "OK See you!". Here is an illustration:

A Well, my bus is coming.
B OK See you!
A See you!

In CPE, the pre-closing sequence is attested in most interactions, as in Turn 15 below: "Uncle, I got for leave you now …". The closing sequence is also attested, as in Turn 17: "Bye". What characterises CPE is the fact that these two sequences are usually separated by a series of regards to family members as in Turn 15 below: "Salute all man for house for me."; Here is an illustration:

15 A Uncle, I got for leave you now because I no get plenti money for call you. Salute all man for house for me.
16 B They go hear.
17 A Bye
18 B Bye, dear.

These series of regards may in turn be followed by a series of prayers to God, as this example shows:

A Mum, a bi just want hear na your voice Salute all family!
(Mum, it was just to say hi! Give my regards to the family)
B Thank God for you. Oh! God bless you!
(Thank God. God bless you!)
A Bye, Mami!
(Bye, Mummy)
B Bye oooh!
(Bye b-y-e-e!)

Occasionally, when the closing sequence is about to be uttered, a new topic may be introduced, as Coronel-Molina (1998) observed in an analysis of conversations in Spanish:

B. Uuuum! Ma pikin learn book well oooh! I wish you the best and may God bless you. Take care of yourself ooh! Uhemm! Before I forget, lookot the type of food you eat so dat you no fall sick eenh!
(Uuum! My dear, do not joke with your studies. I wish you the best. May God bless you. Take care of yourself. Uhemm! Before I forget, check what you eat, lest you would fall sick.)
A Mama! I will and stay well.
(Mummy, I will. Bye bye!)

4. Discussion and implications for education

The text analysed above shows that users of CPE share some features of telephone discourse with speakers of other languages including native English. Telephone beginnings usually contain specific utterances which are used to check the channel, greet the parties and check the callers' identity. The first of these functions is rare in the Anglo-Saxon world though common in continental Europe, as Coronel-Molina (1998) shows. Telephone closings also contain universal features such as the pre-closing and closing sequences. In CPE, closings in addition, include a series of regards to family members as well as requests and prayers to God which are inserted between the pre-closing sequence and the closing one.

These cultural features tend to permeate into telephone conversations in L2 English in Cameroon, as the illustrations below show. The specific places where such features occur are taken up in turn.

- Checking the channel

The term "Allo", which is obviously borrowed from French, is

used in all interactions. Some people render it in English with the word "Hello", which is hardly used for this purpose:

1 A Allo, Uncle
(Hello, Uncle)
2 B Allo.
(Hello)

- Checking the caller's identity

One common expression used to realise this function is: "Na who dey for line?". This utterance is systematically rendered in CamE as "Who is on the line?" instead of "Who is speaking, please?"

CPE	Na who dey for line?
CamE	Who is on the line?
Gloss	Who is speaking?, (Who is calling?)

Occasionally, the person speaking may also be the person the caller intended to speak to. In this case, the callee declines his/her identity by saying "speaking", as in:

A Can I speak to the manager, please?
B Speaking!
A Well …

In both CPE and CamE, B's utterance above is meaningless. It can make sense to most people only if it is replaced by an utterance like: "Na me di boss" or "You di talk na for yi" in CPE which is rendered in CamE by "It is me the Manager" or "You are talking to him", as shown below:

CPE	CamE
A I fi talk for Manager?	A Can I talk to the Manager, please?
B Na me di Manager?	B It is me the Manager!
A Well …	A Well …

The Pidgin word "small" in "small sister, "small brother" has supplanted the term "junior" in the English of some educated people, as this illustration shows:

I sey eeh! Your small sister dey house? I be wan chat with hi. (Oh! Is your junior sister in? I wish to speak with her.)

The same can be said of "big brother", "big sister", which are used in place of "elder brother", "elder sister".

- Closing sequence

First, this sequence is introduced in CPE by a variety of features including interjections like:

- Take care of yourself ooh! (Take care!)
- My pikin, learn book well ooh! (My child, make sure you read your books well!)

Such interjections signal that the interaction is about to end. Very often, they permeate into CamE speech.

Secondly, pre-closing sequences are lengthened by a series of wishes to family members (some tribes include even family belongings such as pigs and dogs to the list) and of prayers to God. Usually, these features are found in CamE discourse, even in interactions with foreigners. Another feature which permeates into CamE is observed in the following interaction extracted from the illustrative passage above:

15 A Uncle, I got for leave you now because I no get plenti money for call you. Salute all man for house for me. (Uncle, I have to leave you now, as I haven't got much airtime left. Please give my regards to the family.)
16 B They go hear. (They will hear = Of course I will)

The CPE utterance "They go hear" means "Of course I will". Its equivalent in CamE, namely "They will hear" is so widespread in the variety that it has supplanted its standard counterpart.

Thirdly, a common expression occurring in closing sequences in CPE is "small time!", which is rendered in CamE by "shortly". Because of this equivalence, "shortly" now functions as a closing sequence utterance in CamE, as shown in the two instances below:

CPE	CamE
A. So we go di meet small time.	A. So we will see shortly.
B. Small time.	B. OK. Shortly.

CPE	CamE
B. OK I go leave you now.	B. OK I have to leave you now.
A Small time!	A. See you shortly!

Another valediction utterance is "catch you!" which is now integrated into Cameroon English (Kouega 2000):

Zeng massa we go di catch nooh! Bye! (Zeng, my friend. We will be seeing soon. Bye!

- The middle of conversations

In conversations, the need to express gratitude may occasionally arise. The most frequent expression used in CPE is "No worry ya self!" and in CamE "Don't mention!".

CPE	CamE
A Yes, Uncle. Uncle, thank you plenti!	B No worry ya self!
A Yes, Uncle. Uncle, thank you very much!	B Don't mention!

Common expressions such as "Don't mention it!", "You're welcome!", "It was my pleasure!" are, to say the least, non-existent.

Notes

1. The part of British Cameroons which united in 1961 with French Cameroon was called "Southern British Cameroons" (see map at: http://www.southerncameroons.org)

2. Today, Cameroon is divided into ten administrative units called provinces (see map at: http://www.tlfq.ulaval.ca/axl/afrique/Cameroun-prov.htm)

3. The spelling adopted by the 300 informants, who were GCE A'level holders, is mainly English-based, not phonetically based as in Todd (1979). However, doublets and triplets such as those listed below were not uncommon, occasionally within the same text:

dat ma work/that my work
Faine, broda/fine, brother
ma name/my name
na hu?/na who?
neva/noba/never
plenti/plenty
tin/think

4. In purely traditional African societies, a child in need can contact his/her father, uncle or aunt irrespectively. A child is a family gift and every member must take care of him or her. It is in light of this that the caller in the text is asking her uncle to pay her school fees. (see Kouega 2000 for details).

Appendix 1. A literal translation of the telephone conversation

0 "Gring, gring, gring"

1 A Allo, Uncle!
(Uncle!)

2 B Allo.
(Yes!)

3 A Uncle, Good afternoon.
(Uncle, good afternoon)

4 B Good afternoon. Na who di call?
(Good afternoon. It is who calling?

5 A Na me Susan, Uncle!
(It is me Susan, Uncle!)

6 B Ah! Susan. How for you na?
(Ah! Susan. How are you?)

7 A Uncle, fine oooh! Thank you.
(Uncle, f-i-n-e! Thank you.)

8 B Na waiti my dear, problem dey?
(It is what my dear, problem is there?)

9 A Uncle no bi na really some big problem. Na just sey school don start back and school list for pikin them wey dey don gree say mak them enter this university don comot and I don see ma name for the list.
(Uncle not that it is really some big problem. It is just that school has started back and school list of children who they have agree that make they enter this university has come out and I have not seen my name on the list)

10 B So weti you want sey make I do?
(So what you want that make I do?)

11 A The people them say make we pay school fees and say the last day na 15 for November month.
(The people them that make we pay school fees and that the last day it is 15 of November month)

12 B OK Susan I don hear. I go send the money for you for Wednesday. I mean sey make you go for Express Union go take-am. You don hear?
(OK Susan I have hear. I will send the money to you on Wednesday. I mean that make you go to Express Union go take. You have hear?)

13 A Yes Uncle. Uncle thank you plenti.
(Yes Uncle. Uncle thank you plenty)

14 B No worry ya self.
(No worry yourself.)

15 A Uncle, I got for leave you now because I no get plenti money for call you. Salute all man for house for me.
(Uncle I got to leave you now because I no get plenty money to call you. Greet all people in house for me)

16 B They go hear.
(They will hear.)

17 A Bye!
(Bye!)

18 B Bye, dear!
(Bye, dear!)

Appendix 2. A translation of the telephone conversation by an informant in plain "Cameroon English".

0 "Gring, gring, gring"
1 A Hello, Uncle
2 B Hello
3 A Uncle, Good afternoon.
4 B Good afternoon. Who is on the line?
5 A It is me Susan, Uncle.
6 B Ah! Susan. How are you?
7 A Uncle, fine oooh! Thank you.
8 B What is it? Any problem?
9 A Uncle, it is not really a big problem. It is just that school has begun and the list for those registered is out and I have not seen my name.
10 B So what should I do now?
11 AThey say we should pay our school fees and the latest date is the 15th of November.
12 B OK Susan. I have heard. I will send the money on Wednesday through Express Union, so that you can go and collect it. Is

that OK?
13 A Yes, Uncle. Uncle, thank you very much!
14 B Don't mention.
15 A Uncle, I will have to drop now because I do not have much money. Greet everybody in the house for me.
16 B They shall hear.
17 A Bye
18 B Bye, dear.

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indigenous languages enriched its vocabulary. Then with the birth of the Federal Republic of Cameroon on October 1, 1961, CPE further experienced French influences, as well as influences from the local languages of French speaking Cameroon. Thus in the mid sixties, 85% of CPE terms came from English, 13% from indigenous languages and 2% from other languages, including French and Portuguese (Schneider, 1966: 5). By the early seventies, this situation had changed significantly: 80% of CPE lexicon was English-based, 14% came from indigenous languages, 5% from French and 1% from other languages (Mbassi Manga, 1973). Such a drastic change can be attributed to the political evolution of the country, since Cameroon moved from a federation to a unitary state in which both Anglophones and Francophones could move freely from one part of the country to another4.

Today, CPE is used in everyday situations: the home, social gatherings, hospitals and health centers, the market place, the neighborhood, churches, motor parks, popular music (it is one of the preferred languages of popular music), comic and humorous situations, the law courts, and is exploited for electoral purposes. It is used in the urban as well as in the rural areas, especially in informal contexts.

CPE is also used by Anglophones to express group identity. It is the language of intimacy and solidarity, especially among students, pupils and other Cameroonians of Anglophone origin when they move from formal to informal situations or when they find themselves together. As the most widely used language of wider communication in Cameroon, it is the language of daily interaction in informal situations: street, market place, bars, bus and railway stations, work place, religious gatherings and many other contexts where people of varying ethnic groups converge. CPE is widely spoken in the two Anglophone provinces of Cameroon (South West and North West Province) as well as in the West and Littoral provinces5, which are two neighboring Francophone provinces to the Anglophone ones. It is equally spoken in most commercial towns of Francophone Cameroon (Féral, 1980: 46) and serves as a bridge between Cameroonians of various walks of life. According to the 1983 sociolinguistic survey (cf. Koenig et al., 1983), CPE is the most widespread language in Cameroon, and the most preferred language in urban centers, towns and villages.

Féral (1980: 5) distinguishes two main varieties of CPE: one spoken by Anglophones and the other spoken by Francophones. Such a division is rather too simplistic and fails to take cognizance of the linguistic realities of the language as it exists today in Cameroon. Todd (1982) distinguishes five varieties of the language: the Bamenda variety, the Bororo variety, the Coastal variety, the Francophone variety and the Liturgical variety. Todd's distinction is quite insightful, especially when one considers the regional parameter. However, we do disagree with her classification of Liturgical Cameroon Pidgin as a distinct variety. It should be considered as a register peculiar to the religious context, not as a variety of the language. Our opinion is that there are basically four distinct varieties of CPE: the Grassland variety spoken in the North-West province, the Bororo variety spoken by the Bororo, the Coastal variety spoken in the South-West province, and the Francophone variety spoken by Francophones. The functional load of CPE is so important that the American Peace Corps who are sent to Cameroon are obliged to learn the language so as to communicate easily with the indigenous population.

As regards the number of CPE speakers in Cameroon, the exact number is uncertain. Most of the figures advanced so far are based on rough estimates. Féral (1980: 49) maintains that there are more than 1.8 million speakers. This figure is based on the April 1976 population census when the total population of Cameroon was 7,663,246 inhabitants. Of course the danger here is that of simply considering the Anglophone population from the North-West and South-West provinces as pidginophones, whereas in reality not all of them are capable of expressing themselves in the language. More recently, Ethnologue (2002) maintains that 2 million people speak CPE. This number is rather very conservative when one takes into consideration the numerous potential Francophone speakers spread all over the national territory and at least 2.5 million Nigerian residents in the country6. Povey (1983: 15) considers CPE the most widely spoken and used language in Cameroon, and Todd and Jumbam (1992: 4) contend that an estimated six million Cameroonians speak

it.

3. Attitudes towards CPE

Cameroonians generally adopt varying attitudes towards CPE. While the Anglophone masses who reside in urban centers and Francophone pidginophones tend to hold it in high esteem, Anglophone intellectuals as well as the majority of Francophones instead have negative attitudes towards the language. The following utterance made by a Bamiléké Pidgin English speaker is quite revealing: "Le pidgin-english c'est un peu notre langue nationale" (Pidgin English is somewhat our national language) (cf. Féral, 1980: 57). Such an utterance does not only reveal that CPE is assuming a national dimension, but also points to the fact that it is gradually being adopted by speakers who are not traditionally pidginophones. It is common practice that while Standard English (otherwise known as 'grammar') is associated with the educated elite, CPE is largely perceived as the language of the uneducated Anglophone population or masses. Very often educated parents prohibit their children from using this language at home, just because they want to promote Standard English. Thus CPE, like the indigenous languages, is not only combated against in official circles such as the classroom and administrative contexts, but also in unofficial circles such as the home. In Anglophone schools, for instance, it is very common to come across notices posted on billboards carrying messages such as: "Pidgin English is strictly prohibited on campus" and "Don't speak Pidgin English". In Anglophone secondary schools, those who break the law are severely punished. Krieger (1991: 5) reports that for reasons of status, some educated Anglophone Cameroonians often deny their knowledge of CPE. This group of people is certainly of the opinion that it is degrading to be identified with Pidgin English in certain official circumstances since this is a language for low status people. Following a survey carried out by Kouega (2001), the author observes that 79.8% of Cameroonians would not tolerate the use of CPE in the classroom since it would interfere with the pupils' acquisition of English. His conclusion is that if a referendum were organized in the country on the issue, such Cameroonians would overwhelmingly vote against its introduction as a medium of instruction in the early years of primary education. Therefore, if the most widely used lingua franca is rejected, what more of the smaller indigenous languages, the author contends.

Many Cameroonian intellectuals and educators consider CPE as a debased type of English spoken by Anglophones 'who are incapable of speaking real standard English'. They are convinced that CPE is a major handicap to the acquisition of Standard English and, in some cases, Standard French by Cameroonians (cf. Ekane, 1987: 10). Such a vision has been undoubtedly encouraged by the general belief that CPE exerts significant influence in terms of loans, calques and interference on Cameroon English. While this is true to some extent, it should be noted that other languages like French and indigenous languages also exert varying degrees of influence on the English spoken in Cameroon.

From a sociolinguistic point of view, there is evidence that the presence of CPE in Cameroon has a negative impact on the growth and development of CamE. While French is used as a lingua franca in the French-speaking provinces of Cameroon, in the English-speaking provinces English is supplanted in this function by CPE. Thus unlike Francophones who speak French both in formal and informal contexts, Anglophones often tend to speak English in formal contexts and CPE in informal contexts. And of course it is important to add here that among Anglophones the use of English is often limited to intellectuals. In short, while French is widely used among Francophones, only a minority of Anglophones uses English.

Francophone Cameroonians generally have negative attitudes towards CPE and its users. They believe that Pidgin English is the worst enemy of English. I remember traveling in a public transport bus from Limbe to Douala on 14 July 2001 when I overheard a conversation7 between two Francophone Cameroonians on the bus (one male and one female) who lived in Douala but worked for the National Oil Refinery in Limbe. The male conversant complained that he has deliberately decided not to live in Limbe because of the fact that if his children attended school in Limbe they were bound to acquire CPE in school. In his bitterness, he emphatically stated that what he hates about Anglophone children is that they speak Pidgin English all the time instead of Standard English. It is interesting to note that the two Francophone interlocutors were very bitter about the use of CPE by Anglophone Cameroonians, as though this language were an idiom to be banished. There is no doubt that such Francophone Cameroonians have developed a repugnant attitude towards Anglophones on grounds of their language use, and would not like their children to associate with them. This behavior does in no way help develop the spirit of national unity that the policy of official language bilingualism was meant to foster between Anglophones and Francophones. Thus, so long as CPE continues to be strongly associated with the Anglophone community, it will always be disregarded by the majority Francophone ruling government. In fact, CPE is suffering from some form of 'double marginalization' in that unlike the indigenous languages that have of late attracted some attention and sympathy from official circles and the Cameroonian elite, this language continues to be given no real attention by policy makers and little or no consideration by the society.

4. Language Policy, Language Planning and the Status Question with Regards to CPE

Although CPE is widely used in the country, it is confronted with aserious problem of status in thateven its own users tend to undermine it. It is disheartening to know that in spite of the fact that Cameroon is proud of about six million speakers of this language (Todd & Jumbam, 1992), it continues to be relegated to the background like the 279 indigenous languages; whereas in Papua New Guinea, Pidgin English has

been given official status, though spoken and understood, with varying degrees of proficiency by only an estimated 300 to 400,000 people. Thus CPE badly needs to be given official recognition and standardized if it has to play its role as a leading language of wider communication in the country.

More than anything else, its orthography needs to be harmonized or better still standardized. Presently, there is a high degree of orthographic variation observed. This can be understood, since CPE is generally an oral rather than a written language. Consequently, written data does not follow any standard or normative practice. Individual writers and linguists therefore barely transcribe what they hear or see. And since there is a high degree of variation when one goes from one variety to another or from one speaker to another, the orthography also varies (for example arata, aratha (rat); bad luck, balok, barlok (ill luck); bita cola, bitter cola, mbita cola (a specie of sour kola nut fruit); sista, sita (sister)). This lexical standardization effort will inevitably promote a standard variety of the language that will be used in newspapers, on radio and television, for literature and other written forms of expression8. In this regard, some form of corpus planning is necessary, the most important item on the agenda being the establishment of a comprehensive dictionary of CPE.

In the meantime, CPE continues to be used in various situations. Kilo (1994) reveals that playwrights such as Kenjo Jumbam, John T. Menget and Peter Tangyi who create a type of participatory theater use CPE. It is important to point out that the liturgical register of CPE, as noted by Todd, has been used for the purposes of religious education since the time of German colonization, the Catholic Church playing a leading role in the use of this language as a medium of communication and as a written language through the Catholic Catechism and other such manuals. Although one may however regret that the use of this language in its written form has declined in recent years, there is still evidence of some serious writing in the language whether through creative works or translations. CPE needs to be increasingly used in its written form if it has to play a leading role within the linguistic landscape and gain acceptability. Many Cameroonian speakers of the language are not literate in it, since they cannot read and write in the language.

CPE is looked upon by users as a "no man's language", a kind of neutral language, since it does not belong to any of the other language families represented in Cameroon, and therefore to any particular group of people. No wonder Kisob (1963), Todd (1969) and Mbangwana (1983) have advanced this neutrality factor as a strong argument in favor of CPE playing the role of a national language and/or official language. Kisob (1963) recommends that Pidgin English be adopted and recognized as an official language. Todd (1982: 25) evokes the possibility of CPE being used as a language of education:

... CamP may, in the future, be considered as a possible language of education...There are many strong reasons which can be given in support of the use of CamP as a medium of instruction. It is the most widely understood language in the region; it is structurally close to the vernaculars which are also reflected in its calques and idioms and it is not specifically associated with one tribe or one religion. It is also being used as a vehicle for Cameroon culture and for Christian doctrine and is, in addition, mutually intelligible with Nigerian Pidgin English. There would thus be few linguistic or financial difficulties associated with its adoption as a medium of education.

In Todd's opinion, CPE is not just a national lingua franca but also a regional and international lingua franca, given its intelligibility with Nigerian Pidgin English and Ghanaian Pidgin English. Chumbow and Simo Bobda (1996: 419) who argue along the same lines with Todd contend that the recognition of CPE as a national language in Cameroon could certainly bridge the Anglophone/Francophone divide in the country. They state: In addition to solving the communication needs of Cameroonians, more easily than with any other language, the recognition of Pidgin English could solve a political situation, that of the eternal conflict between English and French speakers; Pidgin English is still very much associated with Anglophones, but it is definitely the most neutral language in Cameroon. And the fact that it is known and used by most urban Francophones increases its acceptability index as a national lingua franca.

However, some scholars are not of this opinion arguing that CPE is not neutral, given its closeness to English in terms of lexical structure. Therefore, while it may be easily hailed by Anglophones as a national language, Francophones would react differently. But what is amazingly interesting is that outside Cameroon there are some voices in favor of its promotion. Ken Campbell, who translated Shakespeare's Macbeth into Pidgin English for performance at venues such as Piccadilly Theatre in London9, wants everyone to adopt this simple language as a second language. He argues that Pidgin English can serve as a world language ('Wol Wantok')10, given that it will be easier to learn than Esperanto.

But apart from just being neutral, the fact that it is widely spoken and used in Cameroon is in its favor. Kouega (2001) asserts that it is the only lingua franca spoken across provincial boundaries, some of the other major lingua francas being more or less ethnic-based and limited to specific regions. In each of these provinces, CPE, he argues, has superimposed itself and shares the out-group function with the local lingua francas. In the same token, Mbangwana (1983: 90) claims that CPE has a national character in view of the fact that it is a "nonethnic language" spoken throughout the country for outgroup communications between people of different origins and levels, and is fast becoming the mother tongue of several Cameroonians in the urban communities.

In spite of its widespread use, CPE has been subject to a lot of controversy as far as its status is concerned. Is it a language of its own or a variety of English? Some researchers (Mbassi Manga, 1976; Todd, 1982) are of the

opinion thatCPE is a variety of English. In this regard, Todd (1982: 18) has this to say:

Of all the varieties of English occurring in Cameroon, CamP is undoubtedly the most widely used. It is still an almost exclusively oral language, and thus we find a wide spectrum of pidgins, some sub varieties being virtually unintelligible to a speaker of English ... and others being fairly comprehensible because they are close to SCE.

Many others do not share this point of view. What is perhaps contradictory is the fact that while considering CPE a variety of English, Todd still believes that it should be given official recognition. Is it therefore a question of simply replacing one dialect of the English language (Standard Cameroon English) with another dialect of the same language (CPE) or adopting the two? If that is the case, what will be the rationale behind using both as some have advocated, one for mother tongue education and the other in the later years of instruction? Is it not logical in such a situation to adopt one of the varieties for educational purposes? In other words, if Standard Cameroon English and CPE are varieties of the same language, then we should suppose that they share a diglossic relationship within the Cameroonian context, one being the high variety and the other the low variety. Such an assumption justifies the use of the high variety for education. And here, the case for Standard Cameroon English will obviously be stronger since it equally serves as a link with the outside world and guarantees international communication. We are of the opinion that CPE is a language of its own, given that in most cases intelligibility between Standard English and CPE is almost inexistent, especially as far as some varieties of the latter are concerned. Although an English based pidgin which developed as a contact language, CPE has gradually forged its way as an independent language that structurally resembles the indigenous languages but is lexically dominated by words of English origin. It is this argument recognizing CPE as a language in its own right that should be used by those advocating some national or official status for the language.

In this light, the language ought to be promoted both at the oral level and in the written media. At the oral medium, more Pidgin English programs should be encouraged on provincial, rural and local radio stations where this language can be effectively used in sensitization campaigns in areas such as health, the fight against HIV-AIDS, legal issues, agricultural techniques and use of fertilizers, use of pesticides and insecticides, vaccination and public hygiene, as well as in news casts and the dissemination of Christian doctrine. At the written level, the establishment of a standard CPE orthography will enable it to be used for various literacy programs such as for adult education in urban and semi-urban areas. To successfully achieve such an objective, written literature of all sorts should be encouraged.

Already, there exist some interesting literature as the Pidgin English Catechism by Pius Awa (1972), Pidgin English Prayer Book (1981), and literary works such as the collection of Pidgin English tales by Schneider (1974) and Todd (1979). Of course this literature cannot serve literacy programs without the existence of language manuals that should effectively serve as study guides. In this light, the works of Aubry (1954), Dwyer (1969), Akombi et al. (1988) and Todd (1991)11 are pacesetters in the establishment of CPE manuals. The publication of monolingual and bilingual dictionaries will also go a long way in promoting CPE in the area of literacy and formal education. Furthermore, newspapers that publish either partially or totally in CPE are strongly welcome today, as was the case in the 1970s when Tataw Obenson's Cameroon Outlook became very popular among Anglophones thanks to its satirical Pidgin English column "Ako-aya".

5. Conclusion

CPE is a dynamic language that has successfully imposed itself as the most widespread lingua franca in Cameroon. As a language of wider communication, it transcends ethnic and linguistic barriers. It is used in varying informal situations and a few formal situations where the official languages fail to play the desired goal such as the courtrooms, government offices, sensitization campaigns, etc. Seen in this light, CPE remains an indispensable linguistic partner in a highly complex heterogeneous language situation. Unfortunately, it is not only combated against in official circles but lacks the necessary standardization required to give it its rightful place in the Cameroonian society. For now, it remains marginalized, though used by an important cross section of the population.

However, so long as CPE continues to be a leading Cameroonian language and so long as Pidgin English continues to be widely used in several Sub- Saharan African countries both by indigenous speakers and also by pockets of pidginophones largely of French-speaking origin, it will continue to facilitate communication not only at the national level but also at the regional level. This regional dynamics more than anything else will continue to favor the growth of West African Pidgin English in its various varieties across the subcontinent where it facilitates commercial interaction in the informal sector of the economy. For Cameroon in particular and West Africa in general, the arguments to promote Pidgin English not only at the regional but also at the international level are too strong to be waved with the back of the hand, more so since other voices are already lending support to the language. With admirers and supporters spread all over the globe, there is every indication that Pidgin English has all the potentials of emerging as a strong lingua franca for West Africa while at the same time serving the needs of global communication.

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Notes

1 West African Pidgin English (WAPE) is a cover term forseveral related pidgins spoken over a wide area of West Africa including Ghana, Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Togo, Gambia, Equatorial Guinea and Cameroon.

2 According to Mbassi Manga (1973), a Portuguese Pidgin developed in the early 17th century in Cameroon and was later replaced by Pidgin English. It is important to note that the Portuguese arrived on the coast of West Africa circa 1472, and established trading links with the local population in the area of spices, gold and slave trade.

3 Between 1845 and 1887 there were 75 Protestant missionaries in Southern Cameroon. Of these, 27 were British, 18 were Krios from Sierra Leone, 4 were Kriospeakers from Fernando Po, 6 were directly connected with Jamaica and the West Indies and the remaining 20 were Cameroonians (Todd, 1982: 6). These Missionaries played an important part in the rapid expansion of Pidgin English in Cameroon.

4 It should be pointed out that during the federal period that lasted from 1961 to 1972, Cameroonians could not move from one federated state to another without a laissez-passer. But with the abolition of the federation, this administrative restriction came to an end.

5 The West province is made up of Bamileke people who are mainly traders and therefore interact with people of diversified origin, and the Littoral province which harbors the economic headquarters Douala, is also a cosmopolitan region in which are found people of varying ethnic and linguistic origins.

6 According to information obtained from Consular officials of the Nigerian Embassy in Yaounde in 2001, the number of Nigerian residents in Cameroon ranges from 2.5 to 3 million. Most of these immigrants are clandestine and they are all potential speakers of Pidgin English, the main language used for interaction with Cameroonians.

7 The conversion between the couple took place entirely in French, a language all the other passengers of Anglophone background did not apparently understand. I listened to the conversation keenly, but in an uninterested manner so as not to embarrass the interlocutors who did not know that I understood French since I occasionally spoke Pidgin English to some of the passengers.

8 Today, the general tendency is that due to the lack of a harmonized orthography varying spellings are adopted by various writers who incorporate Pidgin English lexical items into their works or in existing Pidgin English literature. This problem is equally observed in works of researchers who have analyzed CPE structure or have studied the influence of CPE on other languages in the Cameroonian situation.

9 This project won the Communications Social Innovations Award in 1999 (cf. http://www.globalideasbank.org/SD/SD-133.HTML).

10 Translated literally into English, Wol Wantok means 'world one talk' (one language for the world).

11 Although Todd's textbook covers West African Pidgin English as a whole, she dwells more precisely on the CPE variety, a domain in which she has become one of the leading authorities.

Book Review

Anne Schröder, *Status, Functions, and Prospects of Pidgin English in Cameroon*. Doctoral Dissertation, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität, Freiburg (Germany), 2002, pp. 436.

Reviewed by Loreto Todd, University of Ulster

Anne Schröder's doctoral dissertation is a comprehensive piece of work, involving 260 pages of text, 176 pages of appendices and a CD-Rom of the interviews on which the thesis is based. The appendices include questionnaires in both English and French, 84 tables of findings, lists of participants, transcriptions of interviews, five exemplary Cameroon Pidgin English1 (Kamtok) texts and ten maps. If one could only have access to one book on the current status of Kamtok's role in Cameroon, it would be hard to do better than this.

Schröder aims to describe the status and the functions of Kamtok and to offer an evaluation of its future prospects. One objective of the research is to explain the apparent discrepancy between the widespread use of this language, as documented in other studies (e.g. Todd 1982, Povey 1983, Chumbow and Simo Bobda 1996, Ayafor 2000), and its official neglect by governmental authorities. In addition, she hopes to provide empirical data on the sociolinguistic situation in Cameroon in general and on Kamtok in particular. The data collected can thus be seen as complementary to earlier surveys and descriptions.

Schröder acknowledges the wide range of books and articles currently available in and on Kamtok and describes her growing interest in a language that seems ideally placed to play an officially-sanctioned role in a country with approximately 300 vernacular mother tongues and two official languages, namely French and English. To her surprise, she discovered when she began her study in 1995, that virtually no attempts had been made by government bodies to exploit the usefulness of a language that was not linked to a particular ethnic group, region, religion, class or colonial power. Instead of sanctioning its role as an inter-group lingua franca, the authorities either ignored its potential or banned its use in schools. Schröder found that although the structures of Kamtok had been examined in numerous papers, theses and dissertations, there was a dearth of empirical data on language use in the country that might permit her to assess its present status, roles and functions. She set out to provide at least some evidence from which valid, verifiable conclusions could be drawn. The key purpose for such an undertaking was to uncover the reasons behind the apparent paradox of Kamtok's widespread use and its official neglect.

Her research sets out to be multi-methodological, interactive and flexible in design because it is her contention that such a technique is particularly well suited in multilingual Cameroon. Her approach is based on the concept of Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967). It combines qualitative research methods with quantitative analytic tools, a process referred to as triangulation (Jick 1983). The former involved sustained interaction with people selected as representing distinct groups in Cameroon. Although some use was made of both participant and non-participant observation, most of the qualitative data was gathered by means of specially designed interviews, involving a range of topics and a set of questions. The questions and topics were tested on Cameroonians in Germany before being refined and applied in the field. In the course of two field trips, 13 educational establishments were visited and 66 qualitative interviews held. Of these, 51 were included in the study and these were representative of a variety of ages, levels of education and geographical provenance. The interviews were conducted in English with anglophones and in French with francophones. The quantitative section of her work involved almost 2000 questionnaires. (She gave out 1968 of these.) The research was conducted in 8 urban centres in 8 of Cameroon's 10 provinces. The two provinces excluded were in the North, where Kamtok is not a useful or necessary lingua franca.

The elicited information was analyzed and, in spite of difficulties with the questionnaires, in particular, Schröder's investigation provides us with the most comprehensive research results to date on the status, roles and functions of Kamtok. It establishes that Kamtok does, in fact, fulfil a variety of functions in Cameroon. However it seems to show that it is still primarily used in the provinces and in the domains where it has traditionally been strong. Indeed, she claims that Kamtok is essentially an anglophone medium of communication, and that it is currently losing ground to French in francophone areas in such traditional spheres of usage as trade, work, and religion.

No one who reads this thesis will fail to be impressed by the industry or the sincerity of the researcher and it may serve as a corrective to the writings that describe the range and scope of Kamtok as 'one of the most useful languages in the country' I applaud the effort made and I respect the scholarship that it evinces, and yet I wonder if the same results would have been achieved if the interviews had been conducted in Kamtok. In electing to do the research on Kamtok via the standard official languages, French and English, Schröder may well have influenced the results. For the moment, however, this is the best quantitative study available and everyone interested in Kamtok will be glad to have it. My hope is that it stimulates research by Cameroonians fluent in Kamtok, English and French. Such a parallel study would certainly provide fascinating insights into the influence on results of the interrogating language. I cannot prove it, but my hunch is that the informants would have provided markedly different responses if the research had been carried out using Kamtok.2

Notes

1. There is still no official name for the pidginised English

in Cameroon but there is a tendency by writers and broadcasters to use Kamtok. Since this name appears to give status to the language, it is used here.

2. The only evidence I can offer in support of my suggestion is anecdotal. Several Cameroonians who have initially criticized the language to me when I spoke English have reacted much more positively to it when I used Kamtok. Indeed, they have often gone on to comment on the nuances, especially in the area of human relationships, that can be expressed in Kamtok and not in English or French.

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