



Situation of the Practice of Mother Tongues in Cameroon and Proposal of Methods Aimed at Facilitating Their Learning

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Author's contribution

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to highlight the situation of the practice of mother tongue in Cameroon in order to provide the community with a relevant technique capable of facilitating its teaching-learning in the neediest areas. For this, the work was jointly carried out in the field and indoors. Indoors, it was a question of refining the approaches as well as the means of their application, of processing the results obtained, then of writing the final report. In the field, it was a matter of communicating about the project and carrying out the tests. Many facts emerge from this study. Thus, the closer you get to rural areas, the more the mother tongue is used, and vice versa. In both rural and urban areas, the mother tongue is used much more in families with low purchasing power. In detail, however, people from the Northern part of Cameroon (Adamaoua, Far North, and North), regardless of their area of residence (in their Region of origin or not), are those who speak the maternal language the most. Many endogenous and exogenous factors can disturb the expected results; here we can cite education, the consideration attributed to ancestral culture, and the motivation of children. The most appropriate technique in urban areas to improve the practice of

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the mother tongue within families is that based on the alphabet (APAA); this approach can be beneficially combined with that based on the repetition of sentences and words by children without bonuses (AARPSB). It is all the more relevant as it also offers parents the opportunity to improve while supporting their children. Overall, the vast majority of parents were flattered by this project.

Keywords: Cameroon; mother tongue; teaching; learning; rural area; urban area; family; purchasing power.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is the major tool of communication within the human community [1]. It is also one of the elements that define belonging or the link with a given culture [2].

In the 15th century, the technically and economically strong states embarked on the relentless popularization of their culture through the submission of weak peoples [3]. Along the way, they gradually imposed their languages of communication on the various subject countries [4]. This cultural nuisance has led to the loss of cultural identity in the vast majority of ex-colonies on a planetary scale today; the entire Central African sub-region is a clear evidence [5]. It has also separated many peoples who once lived into a peaceful community, gathered around a common ideal, in particular the safeguarding of hunting grounds for the perpetuation of the group [6]. In the particularity of Cameroon, the dominators, in defiance of common linguistic radicals [7], used local languages, despite their complete ignorance of the structuring of this major tool of communication, to break up the country into 240 ethnic groups [8]. The consequences of this awkward segmentation imposed by colonization are innumerable; indeed, many border conflicts are detectable everywhere in Cameroon between the formerly united tribes [9]. On the other hand, if the initial community was stronger, this despicable fragmentation contributed to weakening it through the channel of the small groups formed, thus becoming an unparalleled springboard for the rise of social plagues such as xenophobia, tribalism, nepotism, favoritism, corruption, and any other form of animosities which, before the arrival of the white man in Africa, were absent [10]. Indeed, before the arrival of the white man in Africa, the foreigner was a blessing [11]. To support this statement, we read for example from the pen of [12] that in the setting sun area in Cameroon, a bunch of ripe bananas was hung at each crossroads, this in order to relieve the passer-by. In addition, in many Cameroonian markets today, many traders apply prices that

vary according to tribal affiliation; such cases are legion [13].

The identification of the individual in relation to a culture has become a very delicate enterprise in Cameroon today. Indeed, in many families, the practice of French and English has completely replaced the mother tongue. Thus, the first word heard by children who are born is either from the French language or from the English language; this reality is permanent in the majority of the big cities of Cameroon. Also, the first words that children will hear are from French or English. This situation is reinforced by the fact that even many parents do not more know how to express themselves in their mother tongue [14]. In such a context, children can only sporadically come into contact with their mother tongue, and this at random meetings with their grandparents, aunts, etc., passing through. This situation is aggravated by the fact that few parents still dare to send their children to the village for the holiday period. They justify this reluctance by brandishing the security situation of children in the village because of the practice of witchcraft that prevails there [15]. The village being the last rampart that can guarantee the restoration of culture [4], it is easy to realize that the situation of mother tongues today in Cameroon is more than worrying.

It therefore becomes important to think of a way that can allow each family, where they feel safe, to try to remedy the situation. This is the reason why this study is set up.

Two major objectives stand out here:

- Identifying the areas (village and/or city) where the practice of the mother tongue is increasingly declining;
- Finding the most appropriate method to henceforth facilitate the learning of mother tongues in areas with difficulties.

Specifically, it will be about:

- Taking stock of the practice of the mother tongue in both village and urban areas in Cameroon;

- Raising in turn the level of difficulty in practicing the mother tongue in families with high purchasing power and then in families with low purchasing power;
- Comparing the level of difficulty in practicing the mother tongue as noted in families with high purchasing power and in families with low purchasing power;
- Checking language practice with parents and children;
- Constituting a control sample and test samples of children;
- Choosing and equip the work environment;
- Refining the methods designed for this purpose;
- Carrying out the tests;
- Processing the results collected;
- Writing the final report.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Materials

The Cameroonian population is organized into Bantu, semi-Bantu, and Sahelo-Sudanian peoples [8]. The Bantu peoples originate from the Centre, South, East, Littoral and South-West Regions. The semi-Bantu peoples originate from the North-West and West Regions. Regarding the Sahelo-Sudanian peoples, they are from the North, Far North, and Adamaoua Regions. Right next to it, we have the Pygmy settlement, which constitutes a separate settlement [16].

Administratively, Cameroon has 10 Regions, 58 Departments, and 360 Districts [17]. In detail, it has 249 tribes, each speaking in a specific mother tongue. With the advent of colonization, Cameroonians were imposed so-called languages of communication; today it is French and English [18]. In the courses included in the teaching programs, we can note the appearance of other foreign languages; we can mention among others: German, Chinese, Spanish, among others [19]. These languages from elsewhere have even become for a very long time the basis of the guidance of young Cameroonians in general education who present themselves at the entrance to the orientation sub-cycle [20]. The curiosity at this level always lies in the indecision of the decision-makers to choose, even at the level of each district, a language of the mother tongues most spoken in the sector, so that it is included in the programs of teaching, and as a result, endowed with a large coefficient; the same is true for national culture.

2.2 Methods

To achieve the set objectives, the work was carried out alternately in the field and indoors.

The field work consisted of getting closer to the populations. Here, they were interviewed on the practice of the mother tongue within their family. Also, we insisted during these exchanges on what each other thinks as being obstacles to the practice of the mother tongue by the children. Further on, these people were asked which language or languages were most spoken in their respective families. In the same vein, there was talk in the field of presenting the work to be done to the different families, emphasizing the importance of this work. Through this, many families have allowed their respective children to participate in this program.

Indoors, it was first a question of making a deep bibliographical synthesis. It made it possible to get an idea of the state of advancement of knowledge with regard to the availability of the various tools that can facilitate the learning of the mother tongue. Then, a questionnaire was designed to which the families met had to be submitted. Also, the different techniques to be used with the children registered for the program were prepared indoor. In this sense, different learning techniques have been developed; also, we fixed the size of each group and the duration of work. In addition, the work period has been stopped. We also agreed on the age range to be followed in the context of this study; the children selected were then between 8 and 10 years old. The work was done during holidays, and in particular during the month of July; at this time of the year, the children have completely finished with the various end-of-year exams. The children were regularly monitored from Monday to Saturday, from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., i.e. three hours a day. The work was done in a stress-free environment common in classrooms. The importance of this work has been appreciated by the parents, and they happily provided their children with the necessary materials for the task. This work has been repeated in the Sahelo-Sudanian, Bantu, and Semi-Bantu zones of Cameroon; this is in detail for the Bantu and Semi-Bantu areas, the Centre, South, East, West, South-West, North-West and Littoral Regions. In each of these Regions, only one language was used. Thus, the following languages were retained: Ewondo in the Centre, Bulu in the South, Maka in the East, Duala in the coast, Ghom a la' in the West, Nso'o in the

North-West, and the Mouok in the South-West. Concerning the Sahelo-Sudanian zone, the three representative Regions, that is to say those of the North, the Far North, and Adamaoua, were covered; the language followed here is Fulfulde. A final follow-up consisted of monitoring the implementation of the children's learning within their respective families; in this, a permanent contact has been established with the families to have a permanent feedback, whether in terms of encouragement or criticism.

In the ten Regions, 1000 parents were interviewed, making a total of 100 Aboriginal parents from each of these Regions. In detail, we interviewed 50 parents with strong purchasing power and 50 parents with low purchasing power.

To constitute the control sample of children, diagnostic work was done at the outset. In this sense, 100 indigenous children were interviewed in turn in each of the 10 Regions of Cameroon, making a total of 1000. In detail, we interviewed in each of these Regions 50 children respectively from families with strong purchasing power and 50 children respectively from families with low purchasing power. The exchange with them focused solely on verifying the practice of the mother tongue within their respective families. It was in fact a question here of determining the proportion of children who used to practice the mother tongue regularly, whether in urban areas or in rural areas. The results obtained at this stage have made it possible to identify, on the one hand, the zones and types of categorized families where the practice of the mother tongue is weak, and on the other hand the zones and types of categorized families where the practice of mother tongue was rated as good. We therefore decided to test the different techniques developed in areas where the practice of the mother tongue was considered weak, and more particularly with children from families with high purchasing power. As a result, we focused on the localities of Yaoundé and Douala because of the reasons mentioned above. It was therefore the children regularly speaking the mother tongue in the cities of Yaoundé and Douala, but non-natives, who served as a control sample. In fact, it will be easier from them to identify the impact of targeted techniques on the ability of these young people to be able to practice the mother tongue after a short time. We will then note that if the various tests were carried out on all the children targeted in these two cities, the results obtained on the indigenous children of the Littoral

and Center Regions will be just indicative. In fact, the native children of the Regions whose targeted towns are the capitals were considered to be fluent speakers of the mother tongue. Considering therefore 8 out of 10 case Regions at this level, the Corum is more than achieved according to [21]. Thus, for the various techniques, 600 children from each of the Regions concerned but residing in Yaoundé and Douala were tested, i.e. 100 children tested for each technique, in order to have a better perception of the nuances in children's response to prompts. For each technique, the number of children capable, at the end of the allotted time, of forming a correct sentence in the targeted mother tongue in their Region of origin was recorded during the trial. We then added up all the favorable cases regardless of their origin. The number of favorable cases by technique was regularly compared with the number of favorable control cases. At the end, the favorable cases by technique were compared in order to identify the technique which in a period of time gives the best result.

The Center (Headquarters Yaoundé) and Littoral (Headquarters Douala) Regions in Cameroon are respectively home to the two largest metropolises in the country. These cities welcome many people from other Regions of the country as part of the rural exodus. As part of this work, people from the other Regions targeted here, in particular the South, West, South-West, North-West, and East, North, Far-North, South, and Adamaoua, were also monitored in specific ways in these metropolises. To this end, investigations have made it possible to identify the districts of these cities where they are found preferentially. For each of the Regions, 100 parents and 100 children were also interviewed on the practice of the mother tongue. As before, we insisted on families with high purchasing power and families with low purchasing power.

To keep the children in the effort permanently, they were shown the importance for them of trying every day to build sentences by communicating at home. Also, to get an idea of the feelings of the parents in relation to this work, the children were regularly questioned in a very subtle way, this with the aim that they did not directly suspect the object of the questions, but that in a state of naivety, they deliver elements capable of giving a clear idea of the feelings of the parents. To confirm and then complete the deductions made, an exchange platform has been set up.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 The Regular Practice of the Mother Tongue by the Parents

In the Region of origin of each of the families monitored, the data collected in the field show a relevant reality with regard to the practice of the mother tongue by the parents. Thus, 1000 parents were interviewed, i.e., 500 parents with strong purchasing power and 500 parents with low purchasing power. In detail, there are 100 per Region, with 50 parents having strong purchasing power and 50 parents having low purchasing power (Table 1). From the 500 parents with strong purchasing power, we see that 391 parents (78.2% of all parents) speak the mother tongue at home and that 109 (21.8% of all parents) do not (Fig. 1). Parents with low purchasing power all speak the mother tongue at home. The detail of this reality by region is minutely presented in Table 1.

In the cities of Yaoundé and Douala, a total of 800 parents, i.e. 400 parents with strong purchasing power and 400 parents with low purchasing power, originating from the South, East, West, North-West, and South-West , North, Far North, and Adamaoua were interviewed regarding the practice of the mother tongue at home. In detail, there are 100 per Region, with 50 parents having strong purchasing power and 50 parents having low purchasing power (Table 1). From the 400 parents with strong purchasing power residing in these two large metropolises of Cameroon, we note that 245 of them (61.25% of all parents) practice the mother tongue at home and that 145 (38.75 % of total parents) do not practice it (Fig. 2). From the 400 parents with low purchasing power, 293 (73.25% of all parents) speak the mother tongue at home and 103 (26.75% of all parents) do not. As before, the detail of this reality by Region is minutely presented in Table 1.

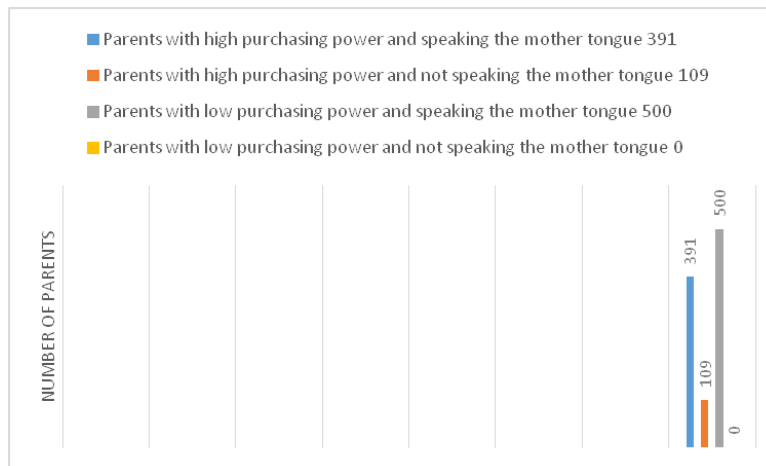


Fig. 1. The use of the mother tongue by parents in their Region of origin

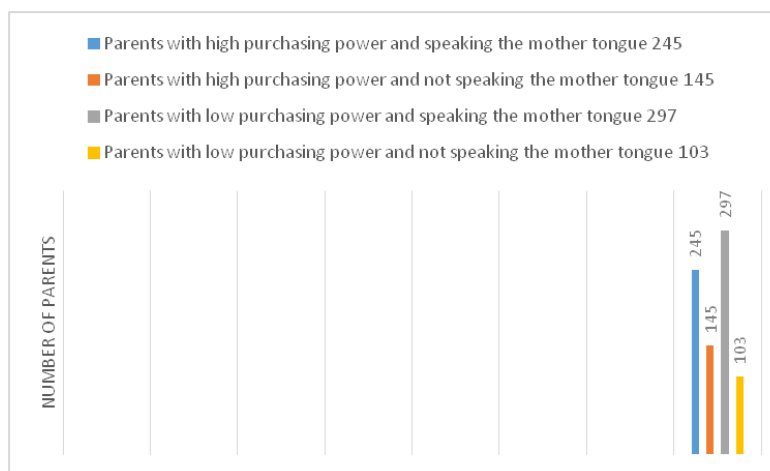


Fig. 2. The use of the mother tongue by parents in the cities of Yaoundé and Douala

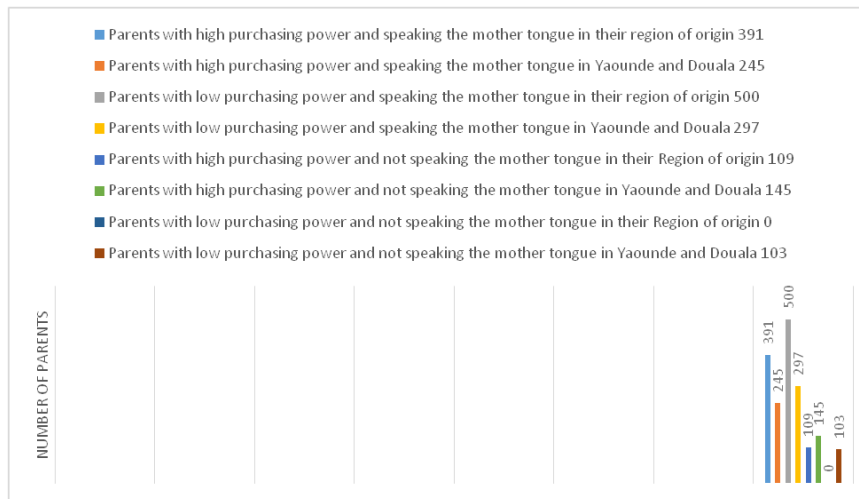


Fig. 3. The impact of proximity to the Region of origin on the practice of the mother tongue by parents

A comparative approach to these two situations shows that in large cities, the practice of the mother tongue is decreasing in the different cases. Thus, as shown in Fig. 3, families with strong purchasing power are less inclined to practice their mother tongue when they are far from their Region of origin (391 against 245 in Yaoundé and Douala). The same reality is observed with families with low purchasing power; indeed, in the Regions of origin, these families are strongly anchored in the practice of the mother tongue (500 against 297 in Yaoundé and Douala). In the same vein, families with high purchasing power and who do not speak their mother tongue at home are more numerous in Yaoundé and Douala (145 against 109 in their region of origin). For families with low purchasing power, no parent moves away from their mother tongue (0 against 103 parents in Yaoundé and Douala).

In the Regions of origin of each of the families followed, we note that the tendency to use the mother tongue is strong; this reality can be explained by the fact that each Region in itself is the cradle of the culture of a given human group. In this sense, we will notice that every weekend, the nationals of the West Region of Cameroon take the road massively for the practice of various ancestral rites. [22] sees in this an unwavering attachment to his roots. We can therefore think with [4] that the hope of a cultural renaissance remains a reality. The tendency to practice the mother tongue is all the stronger for families with low purchasing power. We can think here that the lack of everything that is not of the self facilitates the maintenance of authenticity if

we refer to [23]. Practically, within these families, whether it is a snack or breakfast, it will always be based on local foods such as a cocoyam or a braised plantain accompanied by salted red oil, etc. as noted by [24] et [25].

In the big cities as is the case here for the cities of Yaoundé and Douala, we will notice on the one hand that on the whole, there is a decline in the practice of the mother tongue. We will especially notice that this decline is more marked in families with strong purchasing power. As [26] points out, large cities are meeting places for people from different places. Therefore, to communicate, it becomes important for each of the social components to learn the language of communication most used in the host locality. In this sense, in the cities of Yaoundé and Douala globally, it is the French and English languages, then the pidgin as noted by [27]. We can therefore highlight here the impact of rural exodus on the loss of cultures of peoples south of the Sahara, as [4] seems to point out. Further, learning a language other than their mother tongue acts on the practitioner as a kind of catalyst that pushes them to develop behaviors specific to the place of origin of the said language. Thus, we will see changes in terms of diction, clothing, culinary choices, declarations of love, hairstyle, etc. [4] finds in these subtle marks of the damage caused by colonization in sub-Saharan Africa, which unfortunately now can easily be transmitted from one person to another as soon as one decides to be related to Mister everyone ". As a result, everyone must now be more careful than in the past because everything is now in a position to further distance the

younger generations from their ancestral roots. We can afford to think that this caution seems to be real today. Indeed, in these large metropolises, it is increasingly common to see that the neighborhoods that are born seem to have strong tribal connotations; in this sense, we will now easily find the neighborhoods of people originating either from Menoua in West Cameroon, or from the Far North, or from the North-West and South-West, etc. This agrees with the observations of [28].

Table 1 reveals a major fact. Indeed, whether in the Regions of origin or in the cities of Douala and Yaoundé, the nationals of the Far North (North, Far North, and Adamaoua), are those who practice the mother tongue the most. Thus, in their Regions of origin, all the 300 families (with low then high purchasing power) interviewed speak their mother tongue; in the cities of Yaoundé and Douala, 274 families out of the 300 families monitored speak the mother tongue. This reality can have several explanations. Initially, we can brandish with [29] the particularly low schooling rate in this part of the country. In a second step, we can raise the strong inking of the people of these Regions in their ancestral practices according to [30].

Regardless of place of residence and purchasing power, we will see that from the 1,800 parents monitored, 1,433 (79.61% of all parents) practice the mother tongue at home. According to [31], it is the absolute majority; According to [4], this is a sign that if measures are taken, African culture still has a bright future ahead of it.

3.2 Regular use of the Mother Tongue by Children

1000 children were interviewed in their Regions of origin in relation to the practice of the mother tongue. These were 500 children from families with strong purchasing power and 500 children from families with low purchasing power. In detail, the 100 children followed by Region are made up as follows: 50 children from families with high purchasing power and 50 children from families with low purchasing power (Table 2). From the 500 children from families with strong purchasing power, 328 (65.6% of all children) speak their mother tongue at home compared to 172 (34.4% of all parents) who do not speak it (Fig. 4). With regard to children from families with low purchasing power, we note that from the 500 monitored, 475 (95% of the total number of children) practice the mother tongue at home; 25

children (5% of total children) do not practice it. Table 2 reveals a relevant detail. Indeed, we see that children from families from the Northern part of Cameroon (Adamaoua, North, and Far North), regardless of family purchasing power, all speak their mother tongue at home (Fig. 4).

800 children from families respectively originating from the South, East, West, North-West, and South-West, North, Far-North, and Adamaoua Regions, residing in the cities of Yaoundé and Douala, were interviewed regarding the practice of the mother tongue at home. These were 400 children from families with strong purchasing power and 400 children from families with low purchasing power. From the 100 children from each of these eight Regions in detail, 50 come from families with high purchasing power and 50 from families with low purchasing power (Table 2). From the 400 children from families with strong purchasing power residing in these two major cities of Cameroon, we note that 205 of them (51.25% of the total number of children) practice the mother tongue at home against 195 (48.75% of all children) who do not practice it (Fig. 5). From the 400 children from families with low purchasing power for their part, 277 (69.25% of the total children) practice the mother tongue at home against 103 (30.75% of the total children) who do not speak it. It can be seen that children from families originating from the Far North (Adamaoua, North, and Far North), regardless of family purchasing power, are more likely to speak their mother tongue at home (Fig. 5). In detail, from the 300 children interviewed, 274 practice the mother tongue at home, i.e. 91.33% of children from the Far North monitored and residing in the cities of Yaoundé and Douala.

A comparative approach to these two situations shows that in large cities, the practice of the mother tongue is decreasing in the different cases. Thus, as shown in Fig. 6, children from families with strong purchasing power are less willing to practice their mother tongue when they are far from their respective Regions of origin (328 against 205 in Yaoundé and Douala). The same reality is observed with children from families with low purchasing power; indeed, in the respective Regions of origin, these children are more inclined to use the mother tongue (475 against 277 in Yaoundé and Douala). In the same vein, children from families with high purchasing power and who do not speak the mother tongue at home are more numerous in Yaoundé and Douala (195 against 172 in their region of origin). For children from families with

low purchasing power, 25 children out of 500 do not speak the mother tongue in their respective

Regions of origin compared to 123 in Yaoundé and Douala.

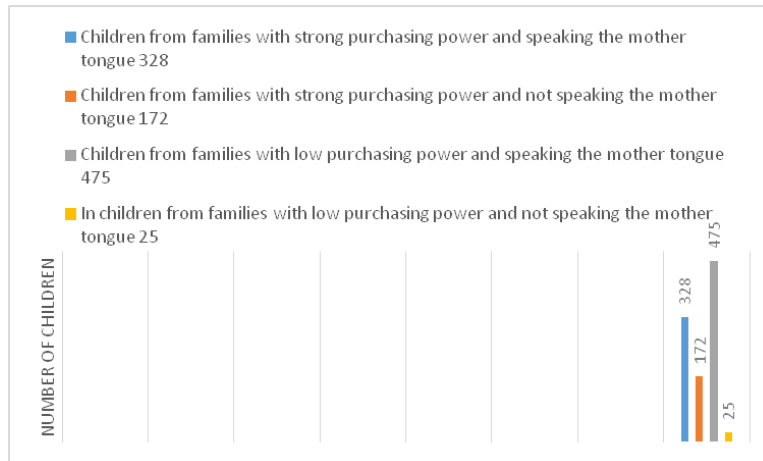


Fig. 4. The use of the mother tongue by children in their region of origin

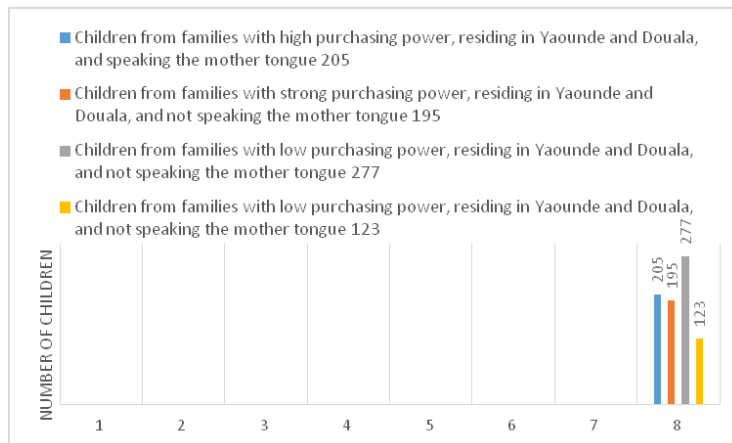


Fig. 5. The use of the mother tongue by children residing in the cities of Yaoundé and Douala

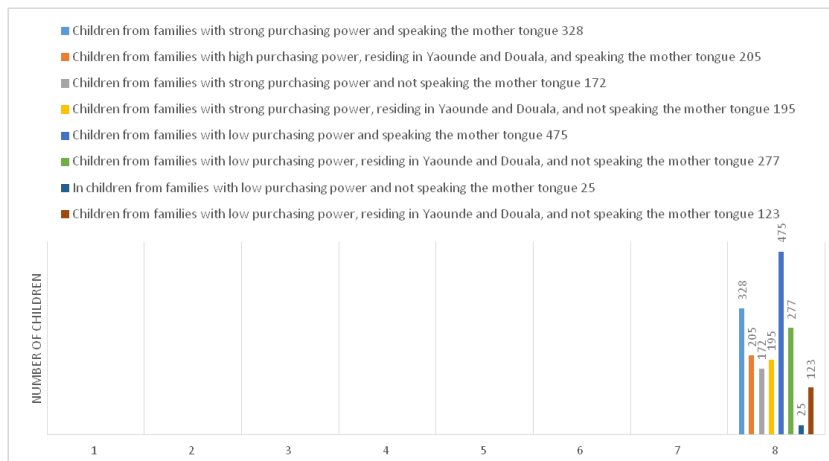


Fig. 6. The impact of proximity to the Region of origin on the practice of the mother tongue by children

Table 1. Evaluation of mother tongue practice by parents

Targeted Regions	Number of parents interviewed in their region of Origin							Number of parents from the South, East, West, North-West, and South-West, North, Far-North, Adamaoua Regions, interviewed in Yaoundé and Douala						
	Total number of parents interviewed	Parents with high purchasing power			Parents with low purchasing power			Total number of parents interviewed	Parents with high purchasing power			Parents with low purchasing power		
		Total	Those who practice	Those who do not practice	Total	Those who practice	Those who do not practice		Total	Those who practice	Those who do not practice	Total	Those who practice	Those who do not practice
Centre	100	50	35	15	50	50	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
South	100	50	36	14	50	50	0	100	50	26	24	50	32	18
West	100	50	34	16	50	50	0	100	50	20	30	50	28	22
East	100	50	37	13	50	50	0	100	50	24	26	50	30	20
Littoral	100	50	36	14	50	50	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
South-West	100	50	31	19	50	50	0	100	50	23	27	50	32	18
North-West	100	50	32	18	50	50	0	100	50	22	28	50	31	19
Nord	100	50	50	0	50	50	0	100	50	43	7	50	48	2
Far-North	100	50	50	0	50	50	0	100	50	45	5	50	49	1
Adamaoua	100	50	50	0	50	50	0	100	50	42	8	50	47	3
Total	1000	500	391	109	500	500	0	800	400	245	155	400	297	103

Table 2. Evaluation of mother tongue practice by children

Targeted Regions	Number of children interviewed in their Region of origin						Number of parents from the South, East, West, North-West, and South-West, North, Far-North, Adamaoua Regions, interviewed in Yaoundé and Douala							
	Total number of children interviewed	Number of children from families with high purchasing power			Number of children from families with low purchasing power			Total number of children interviewed	Number of children from families with high purchasing power			Number of children from families with low purchasing power		
		Total	Those who practice	Those who do not practice	Total	Those who practice	Those who do not practice		Total	Those who practice	Those who do not practice	Total	Those who practice	Those who do not practice
Centre	100	50	26	24	50	47	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
South	100	50	27	23	50	48	2	100	50	18	32	50	28	22
West	100	50	25	25	50	46	4	100	50	12	38	50	24	26
East	100	50	28	22	50	49	1	100	50	16	34	50	26	24
Littoral	100	50	27	23	50	48	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
South-West	100	50	22	28	50	43	7	100	50	15	35	50	28	22
North-West	100	50	23	27	50	44	6	100	50	14	36	50	27	23
Nord	100	50	50	0	50	50	0	100	50	43	7	50	48	2
Far-North	100	50	50	0	50	50	0	100	50	45	5	50	49	1
Adamaoua	100	50	50	0	50	50	0	100	50	42	8	50	47	3
Total	1000	500	328	172	500	475	25	800	400	205	195	400	277	123

Table 3. Evaluation of the ability of children from families with high purchasing power to be able to easily construct simple sentences after one month of work following each approach

	Approach based on the repetition of sentences and words without bonuses			Approach based on the alphabet			Approach based on a dialogue in the form of a theater			Approach based on the insertion of words from the mother tongue in the usual foreign language of communication			approach based on a bonus when a correct sentence in the mother tongue has been constructed			Approach based on a combination of these different approaches		
	Workforce monitored	Success	Failure	Workforce monitored	Success	Failure	Workforce monitored	Success	Failure	Workforce monitored	Success	Failure	Workforce monitored	Success	Failure	Workforce monitored	Success	Failure
Centre*	100	58	42	100	65	35	100	61	39	100	58	42	100	28	72	100	62	38
South	100	62	38	100	58	42	100	65	35	100	61	39	100	27	73	100	65	35
West	100	57	43	100	82	18	100	58	42	100	82	18	100	30	70	100	81	19
East	100	81	19	100	80	20	100	86	14	100	22	78	100	28	72	100	80	20
Littoral*	100	51	49	100	65	35	100	67	33	100	78	22	100	21	79	100	49	51
South-West	100	40	60	100	63	37	100	65	35	100	79	21	100	23	77	100	48	52
North-West	100	42	58	100	65	35	100	66	34	100	80	20	100	24	76	100	49	51
Nord	100	89	11	100	90	10	100	89	11	100	91	9	100	90	10	100	88	12
Far-North	100	94	6	100	95	5	100	92	8	100	95	5	100	93	7	100	89	11
Adamaoua	100	91	9	100	90	10	100	90	10	100	93	7	100	92	8	100	90	10
Total	1000	665	335	1000	753	247	1000	739	261	1000	739	261	1000	456	544	1000	701	299

*Indicative

Table 4. Evaluation of the ability of children from families with low purchasing power to be able to easily construct simple sentences after one month of work following each approach

	Approach based on the repetition of sentences and words without bonuses			Approach based on the alphabet			Approach based on a dialogue in the form of a theater			Approach based on the insertion of words from the mother tongue in the usual foreign language of communication			approach based on a bonus when a correct sentence in the mother tongue has been constructed			Approach based on a combination of these different approaches		
	Workforce monitored	Success	Failure	Workforce monitored	Success	Failure	Workforce monitored	Success	Failure	Workforce monitored	Success	Failure	Workforce monitored	Success	Failure	Workforce monitored	Success	Failure
Centre*	100	94	6	100	93	7	100	93	7	100	95	5	100	100	0	100	100	0
South	100	96	4	100	97	3	100	96	4	100	94	6	100	100	0	100	100	0
West	100	95	5	100	95	5	100	95	5	100	93	7	100	100	0	100	100	0
East	100	100	0	100	100	0	100	100	0	100	100	0	100	100	0	100	100	0
Littoral*	100	96	4	100	98	2	100	94	6	100	95	5	100	100	0	100	100	0
South-West	100	98	2	100	98	2	100	96	4	100	96	4	100	100	0	100	100	0
North-West	100	97	3	100	98	2	100	97	3	100	98	2	100	100	0	100	100	0
Nord	100	100	0	100	100	0	100	100	0	100	100	0	100	100	0	100	100	0
Far-North	100	100	0	100	100	0	100	100	0	100	100	0	100	100	0	100	100	0
Adamaoua	100	100	0	100	100	0	100	100	0	100	100	0	100	100	0	100	100	0
Total	1000	976	24	1000	979	21	1000	971	29	1000	971	29	1000	1000	0	1000	1000	0

In the Regions of origin of each of the children monitored, we find that the tendency to use the mother tongue is strong. The tendency to practice the mother tongue is all the stronger for families with low purchasing power. Observations made in the cities of Yaoundé and Douala show the decline in the practice of the mother tongue by children, especially among those from families with strong purchasing power. In these cities, children from families originating from the Far North (North, Far North, and Adamaoua) are those who speak the mother tongue the most. Thus, in their Regions of origin, all the 300 families (with low then high purchasing power) interviewed practice the mother tongue; in the cities of Yaoundé and Douala, from the 300 children interviewed, 274 practice the mother tongue at home, that is 91.33% of the children originating from the Far North monitored and residing in the cities of Yaoundé and Douala. In the end, regardless of place of residence and purchasing power, we will see that from the 1,800 children monitored, 1,285 (79.61% of all children) practice the mother tongue at home. These various facts agree with the reality noted among the parents. Indeed, the actions of the parents always guide those of the children, as [32] points out. In the particularity of children from the Far North, the slight decline in the practice of the mother tongue (300 against 274 in the cities of Yaoundé and Douala) can be explained in several ways. At first glance, we have the diffuse influence of the relics of colonization in Sub-Saharan Africa if we refer to the reflections of [4]. On the other hand, we want to be able to communicate easily with other young people; this trend has therefore ended up taking over a few imprudent ones who have let themselves be carried away by the devastating tide that is foreign languages in Africa. It is undoubtedly in this vein that [33] specifies that the thread which ties African culture needs to be reinforced.

3.3 The Results Obtained at the End of the Mother Tongue Learning Tests by the Different Approaches Developed

The various tests offered to children from families with low purchasing power in the context of learning mother tongues provide comparable results regardless of the type of test carried out, as shown in Table 3. Indeed, globally, the success rate is greater than or equal to 93%. According to [34], this is an excellent result. In detail, however, if the children from the Far North all pass the test with flying colors (100%

success), it should be noted that the approach that uses the bonus is the one that maximizes success within low-income communities (Table 3). The same result is observed when applying the method which uses the combination of all the techniques. This can be easily explained. Indeed, the practice of the language is common within communities with low purchasing power as shown by the results obtained after interviews with different parents. Thus, this mastery of the mother tongue becomes an asset in such a situation. As a result, regardless of the evaluation approach studied, the simple fact that these children already manipulate the mother tongue on a daily basis is a major asset for success in these exercises.

The real impact of the different methods tested here will therefore be assessed within communities with high purchasing power. Indeed, an analysis of social behavior reveals that in the majority of cases, people with high purchasing power generally assimilate to the white man who for them is the symbol of success as shown by [4]. It is therefore in response to this that we will realize much more the dearth in the practice of the mother tongue within families with strong purchasing power. This reality is further reinforced when one is in an urban area. Further, for these people, expressing oneself in the mother tongue is quite simply the sign that one is, as they say, "villagers". If the word villager, as used by [35], designates just a person living in the village, this is not the case here. Indeed, this word here is much more used to index an ignorant person, someone who does not deserve to be in the environment where he is at the time of speaking; This relates to the analyzes of [4].

3.3.1 The approach based on the alphabet

At the end of a month of teaching-learning session of the mother tongue with the approach based on the alphabet (APAA), we find that from the 800 children subjected to the study, 623 are able to form a correct sentence (Table 3). The success rate is 77.875%. By comparing this result with that obtained on the control sample, we note a strong improvement in the situation of the practice of the mother tongue within families with high purchasing power in urban areas. We then have, compared to the control (482 children capable of forming a correct sentence in their mother tongue), a surplus of 141 children now able to form correct sentences in their mother tongue (see balance sheet in Fig. 7). Such a result is logical in urban areas, and more

particularly with regard to families with high purchasing power. Indeed, the environment is highly educated; in this sense, the method applied here is based on elements that are very similar in the course of grammar, spelling, followed and directed reading, and vocabulary, as studied in foreign language courses (French, English, German, Spanish, etc.) included in the teaching programs in Cameroon in general if we refer to [36].

The different written languages are based on a very specific alphabet as pointed out by [37]. The works of many thinkers like [38] have led to adaptations that have made it possible to set up a collection of simple elements and compound elements whose reading allows us to bring out a little bit the sounds whose combination allows the formation of words and further sentences and paragraphs in Bantu and semi-Bantu languages.

From the outset, it is a question for the guide to be well equipped in terms of these alphabetical elements. In this sense, he/she must be able to reproduce them, to read them, to combine them in the formation of words. Also, he/she must be able to find these alphabetical elements in the words he/she listens to; this is the guarantee of a good writing of what he can listen to. These conditions fulfilled, he/she can then say to be ready to begin the process of his/her literacy. Such an approach is in perfect agreement with the prescriptions of [39] among many others. In detail, it must produce a support highlighting all the alphabetical elements that constitute the alphabet of the language considered according to the results of the latest discoveries in the field. Then he/she must teach the child how to read them, write them, and use them in the formation of syllables and words. In the particularity of this type of alphabet, the guide must place particular emphasis on the different accents. This is to show the child how to read these accents, how to recognize them, and how to make them stand out when writing a word, for example. In the same vein, it is necessary to insist on the fact that for the same word, the different accents can modify its meaning. As an example, let's take the word "ka". By positioning this word for example in the *ghòm á la'* (dominant mother tongue in the Koung Khi Department and part of the "Hauts Plateaux" Department in Western Cameroon), we will see that it can be written in several ways depending of accents. We can then successively obtain « *kà'* » in case of a refusal, « *kâ* » to say what, « *ká* » as to say going around, and « *kà* », to say take it.

Thus, according to the present approach, the child can gradually, as he acquires alphabetical knowledge, try day after day to writing henceforth what he hears, to write what he wants to say, etc. The advantage here is to promote a child who will not only be able to write what he says in his language, but also to speak. In turn, transmitting one's knowledge will be particularly easy according to [40].

3.3.2 Approach based on the repetition of sentences and words by children without bonuses

After one month of practice of the mother tongue with the approach based on the repetition of sentences, expressions, and words by the children without bonus (AARPSB), 556 children out of the 800 children subjected to the study are able to form a correct sentence (Table 3). The success rate is 69.5%. This approach also improves the situation of the practice of the mother tongue compared to the result obtained on the control sample. In detail, compared to the control (482 children able to form a correct sentence in their mother tongue), we have a surplus of 74 children now able to form correct sentences in their mother tongue (see balance sheet in Fig. 8).

Here, it is a question of getting the child to repeat words, sentences, or expressions. This approach relies heavily on the child's ability to memorize, as well as his ability to play with language, as [41] clearly states. Only, it is very easy for the child to make a mistake. Indeed, during the accompaniment and the test, we noticed the recurrence of many deviations during the attempt to pronounce the words and expressions proposed. This is all the more relevant since accents occupy an important place in the practice of the language according to [42]. Thus, we will find ourselves having to pronounce for the child words, expressions, or sentences, many times in the hope that he will finally succeed in pronouncing them properly.

3.3.3 Approach based on the staging of dialogues in the form of a theater

After one month of practice of the mother tongue with the approach based on the staging of dialogues in the form of a theater (AADSFD), 611 children out of the 800 children subjected to the study are able to form a sentence fairly (Table 3). The success rate is 76.375%. The approach used here improves as before the

situation of the practice of the mother tongue compared to the result obtained on the control sample. In detail, compared to the control (482 children able to form a correct sentence in their

mother tongue), we have an excess of 129 children now able to form correct sentences in their mother tongue (see balance sheet in Fig. 9).

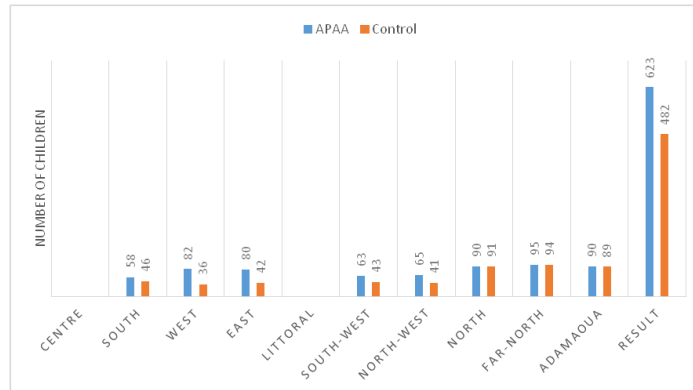


Fig. 7. Children's reaction to the alphabet-based approach

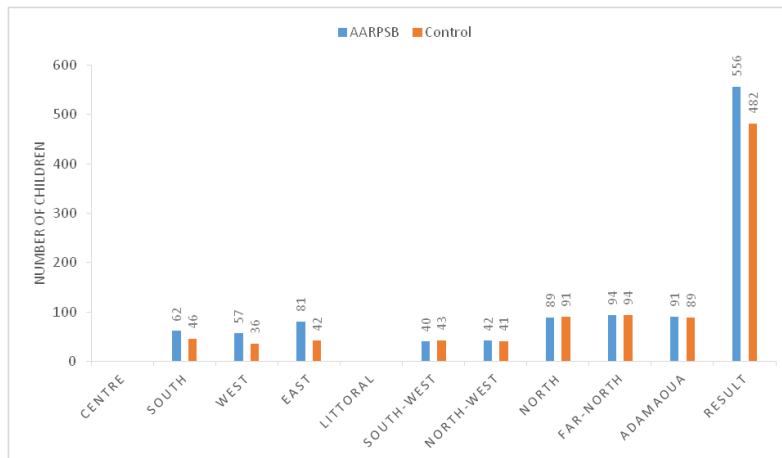


Fig. 8. Reaction of children in response to the approach based on the repetition of sentences and words by children without bonuses

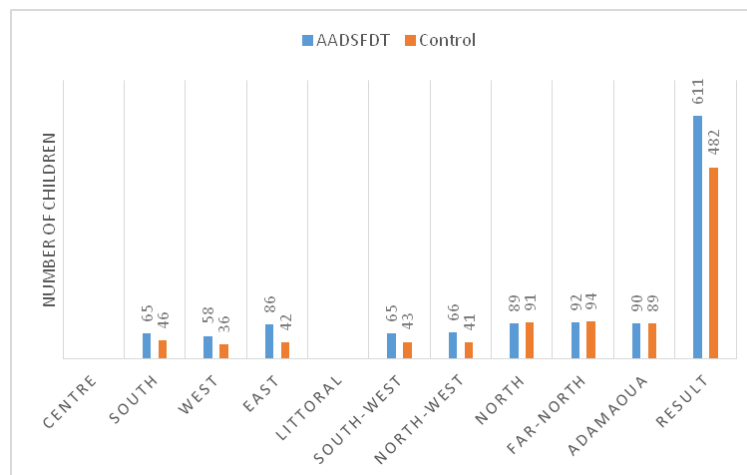


Fig. 9. Reaction of children in response to approach based on dramatized dialogue

In general, as can be seen following [43], children love acting games. In this sense, during group games, many children will mimic the attitudes of the artists who have managed to hold their attention. In the same vein, we will also see boys miming the role of their dad, or girls miming the role of their mom at home. Further on, we will even see others decide to call themselves now by the name of a specific actor. Such enthusiasm for this approach is therefore in perfect harmony with the daily life of children, whether they are villagers or city dwellers, from families with strong or weak purchasing power.

3.3.4 Approach based on a bonus when a correct sentence in the mother tongue has been constructed

One month after having initiated the practice of the mother tongue with the approach based on a bonus when a correct sentence in the mother tongue has been constructed (AABLPJLMC), 407 children out of the 800 children subjected to the study are able to form a correct sentence (Table 3). The success rate is 50.875%. By comparing this result with that obtained on the control sample, it can be seen that the number of subjects who passed the test is lower than the number obtained with the control sample. We could then allow ourselves to think that the present approach is ineffective (see balance sheet in Fig. 10). However, let us reconsider the detail of the situation. Indeed, for each of the Regions targeted at this level of the study, 600 children were tested, i.e. 100 children per approach. We can from this moment think that the composition of the groups submitted for each of the Regions to this approach may have something to do with this result. In fact, if by an unfortunate coincidence the groups indexed here would have been made up of a majority of subjects who were casual and disinterested in the need to return to their ancestral culture, as [44] fears, the failure observed is then normal if we based on the results of [45]. Secondly, we can question the impact of the bonus on the subjects. In this sense, we must remember that the children present come from families with strong purchasing power. However, [46] shows that this variety of children is sometimes very capricious and always quick to devalue what one might want to give them; [47] speaks of badly brought up children about them. In the same vein, we can say that the object of the bonus would have been badly chosen. In fact, for any good sentence constructed, the winner received a packet of biscuits purchased for 25 FCFA.

Therefore, if these children, because of their social status, are accustomed to receiving biscuits of higher value, then the present suspected reaction on their part should be justified with great bitterness. Indeed, we should have the obligation to admit that the parents of these children would not have yet taken time to make their children understand that they should learn to be content with what they may be led to receive at a specific moment in life, since life is made of surprises which can sometimes be unpleasant for some people, as [48] puts it so well. Moreover, one can also think that the majority of these children did not agree to participate in this trial willingly, but under pressure from the parents; in this sense, [49] emphasize motivation as a major factor of success in a company. But, when we look at the results obtained by children from the global Northern part (Adamaoua, Far North, North) of the country living in Yaoundé and Douala (275 winners out of the 300 children tested), we are forced to remain interrogative, and remember with [50] that man is an undulating and diverse being.

3.3.5 Approach based on the introduction of words in the mother tongue in the common language of communication in the environment

After one month of practice in the mother tongue with the approach based on the introduction of words in the mother tongue in the language of everyday communication in the milieu (AAIMLMDLE), 603 children out of the 800 children subjected to the study are able to form a correct sentence (Table 3). The success rate is 75.375%. The approach used here also improves the situation of the practice of the mother tongue compared to the result obtained on the control sample. In detail, compared to the control (482 children able to form a correct sentence in their mother tongue), there is an excess of 121 children now able to form correct sentences in their mother tongue (see balance sheet in Fig. 11).

It is a question here of starting from the foreign language of communication most used in the environment. In general, it will be either English or French. To succeed in such an approach, it is advisable at first glance to take enough time to bring the child to integrate the names of the parts of the body (animals and plants), the house, the kitchen utensils, at least as much as possible things that furnish his daily life. To go further, we

can make a phonetic approach to these words and expressions, a question of allowing the child to visualize the place of phonatory accents intervening in the pronunciation of the names and other words which will have been taught to them. It will then be a question here of insisting until you realize that when you say words to the child, that he can tell if it is a rǎ' guì (sound that rises), or a fəŋ guì (sound on which one insists), or a səŋ guì (sound which neither rises nor falls), or a fi' guì (sound which descends). These are indeed the types of sounds that recur in the majority of Bantu and semi-Bantu languages in Cameroon, as highlighted by [51], [38], among others. Once this stage is over, the child will then have to be led to gradually incorporate the words from the mother tongue, such as gradually integrate, into the

sentences constructed in their foreign language of communication.

In detail, the child can be asked to first integrate a single word; over time, he can then add the word count. The ideal is that within a reasonable time, the child can say sentences entirely made up of words from his tribal language. Such a method then has the advantage of allowing the child to establish a close link between the foreign language which serves as his first language of usual communication and which he masters well, and the language of his parents. In detail, it is expected that the child can start from grammatical approaches to analyze the sentences constructed in his mother tongue and/or father.

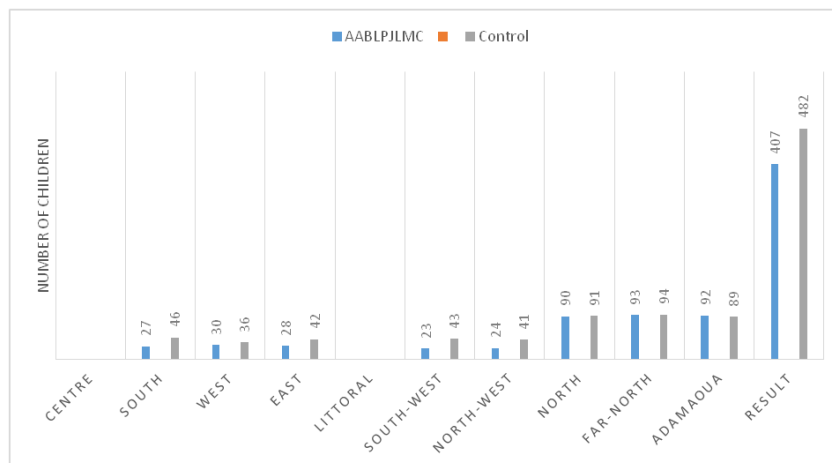


Fig. 10. Reaction of children in response to an approach based on a bonus when a correct sentence in the mother tongue has been constructed

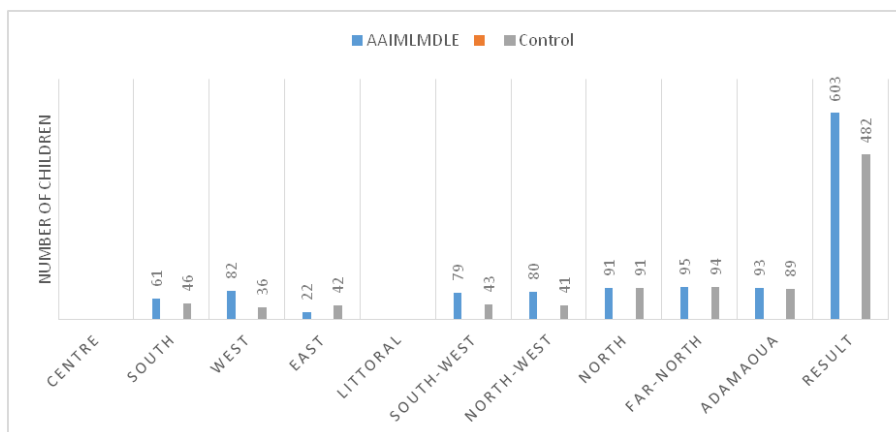


Fig. 11. Reaction of children in response to an approach based on the introduction of words in the mother tongue in the foreign language of common communication in the environment

Table 5. management of bonuses earned by the child during his learning to practice the language

Oranges due to the child		Oranges given to the child	
Number of oranges	Date	Number of oranges	Date
X		X	

To motivate the child to go further and faster in acquiring the language of his parents, we can set up a bonus system. In this sense, we can first list the different little things that the child likes. For example, we can take oranges. Here, the child can be told that as many different words from his mother tongue in his sentences, as many oranges as he will have to receive. Thus, with it, one can open a notebook. We would then draw a table like the one below. In fact, each time he would win the right to have an orange, a red cross would be marked in the column of oranges due to the child, and in the sub-column of the number of oranges; at the same time, the date of the win would be noted in the sub-column of dates as shown in Table 5. In the same way, when he would receive his bonus, the number of oranges given to him would be noted in the sub-column indicating the number of oranges, and the date in the sub-column indicating the date of receipt of the bonus, both belonging to the column indicating the oranges given to the child.

3.3.6 Approach based on a combination of these different approaches tested in isolation

By subjecting the children to the practice of the mother tongue over a period of one month using the combination of the different approaches tested in isolation (AACDA), we note that at the

end of this period, 590 children out of the 800 children submitted under study are able to form a correct sentence (Table 3), for a success rate of 73.75%. There is an improvement in the situation of the practice of the mother tongue compared to the control situation. In detail, compared to the control (482 children able to form a correct sentence in their mother tongue), we have an additional 108 children now able to form correct sentences in their mother tongue (see balance sheet in Fig. 12). Such a result is not surprising. Indeed, the method used here takes advantage of the strengths and weaknesses of the different approaches put together. [52] speak here of the phenomenon of aggregation. In a normal situation, we should indeed expect to have as many winners as possible here. But, daily life seems to show two underlying facts. At first glance, it suggests that the accumulation of the weaknesses of the different approaches put together constitutes a major sprain because, to succeed, either the means used is totally good, or it is questionable. This situation is reminiscent of the all or nothing condition as developed by [53]. Secondly, we can say that by applying all these approaches for training, the targets would be scattered and tired, resulting in a high probability of poor performance. It is undoubtedly in this sense that [54] insists on the concentration and refinement of approaches in the context of carrying out a task.

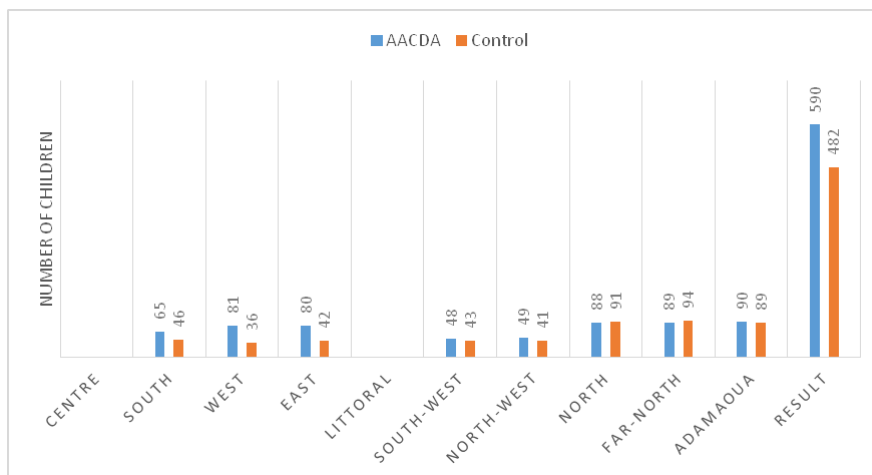


Fig. 12. Reaction of children in response to an approach based on a combination of the different approaches tested in isolation

3.3.7 Classification of methods and choice of the most appropriate approach

At the end of the application of the different approaches developed with a view to improving the practice of the mother tongue within families with strong purchasing power in urban areas, major facts can be identified. Thus, from the 800 children subjected to the test in the different cases, the method based on a combination of these different approaches tested in isolation (AACDA) made it possible to record 590 children capable of constructing a correct sentence in their mother tongue after one month; the approach based on the introduction of words from the mother tongue in the foreign language of current communication in the environment (AAIMLMDLE) for its part made it possible to record 603; the approach based on a bonus when a correct sentence in the mother tongue has been constructed (AABLPJLMC) with regard to it made it possible to record 407; the approach based on the staging of dialogues in the form of a theater (AADSFDT) made it possible to record 611 children capable to build up a correct sentence after a month of training; the approach based on the repetition of sentences and words by children without bonuses (AARPSB) in its sense made it possible to record 556; the approach based on the alphabet (APAA) moreover made it possible to record 623 children capable of constructing a correct sentence in their mother tongue after one month (Fig. 13). Thus, in increasing order of effectiveness, these methods can be classified as follows: AABLPJLMC (407) << AARPSB (556) < AACDA (590) < AAIMLMDLE (603) < AADSFDT (611) < APAA (623).

3.4 Verb Tenses

This work aims to equip children so that they can easily communicate with the nationals of their respective tribes while maintaining a certain intimacy when the need arises. According to [55], speaking amounts to saying things that have happened, are happening, or will happen. Thus, as is the case for the foreign languages that we handle daily, conjugation occupies a central place in the practice of mother tongues in Bantu and Semi-Bantu areas. By relying on the moments when the events take place, we will have past events, present events, and future events. Based on the conjugation of the verb to pick up as shown in the figure (Fig. 14), the analysis of the practice of the conjugation here

makes it possible to highlight the following five situations:

- 1) I'm picking up;
- 2) I have already picked up;
- 3) I had already picked up;
- 4) I will pick up;
- 5) I'll pick up later;
- 6) I picked up.

The analysis of the first case (1) shows that the action takes place at the moment when one speaks; according to [56], this tense is similar to the "present progressive tense" regularly used in the Anglo-Saxon educational system to show that the action is happening at the time of speaking. The analysis of the second case (2) shows that the action has just taken place; it can be noticed that the auxiliary verb used here is conjugated in the present tense. According to [57] and [58], it is the present perfect tense, very well known in the French-speaking subsystem of education in Cameroon; The analysis of the third case (3) shows that the act was committed in a slightly more distant past. Also, an attempt at translation shows that the verb to pick up here is in the past participle, and that the auxiliary verb that accompanies it is in the past tense. According to [59], it is the past perfect tense, well known in the French-speaking subsystem of education in Cameroon too. The analysis of the fourth case (4) shows that the act will be performed in a very short time. We can therefore visualize here the near future according to [60]; this time is well specified in the French-speaking subsystem of education in Cameroon. The analysis of the fifth case (5) shows that the act will be performed within a long time. We can therefore think here of the distant future according to [60]; this time is just as well specified in the French-speaking subsystem of education in Cameroon. The analysis of the sixth case (6) shows that the act took place long time ago. We can therefore think here of the distant past tense according to [61]; this time is just as well specified in the French-speaking subsystem of education in Cameroon.

It therefore emerges that in the Bantu and semi-Bantu languages in Cameroon, the recurring verb tenses would be the present continuous according to the name derived from the Anglo-Saxon system, the present perfect tense, the past perfect, the near future, the future far away, the past tense.

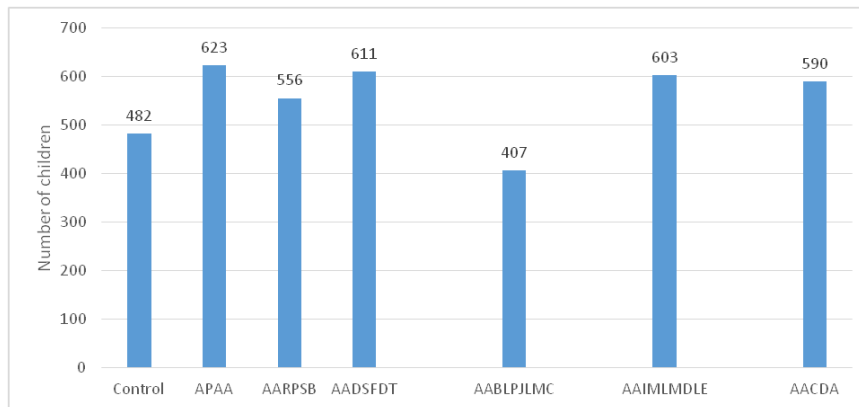


Fig. 13. Classification of the different approaches tested according to their efficiency

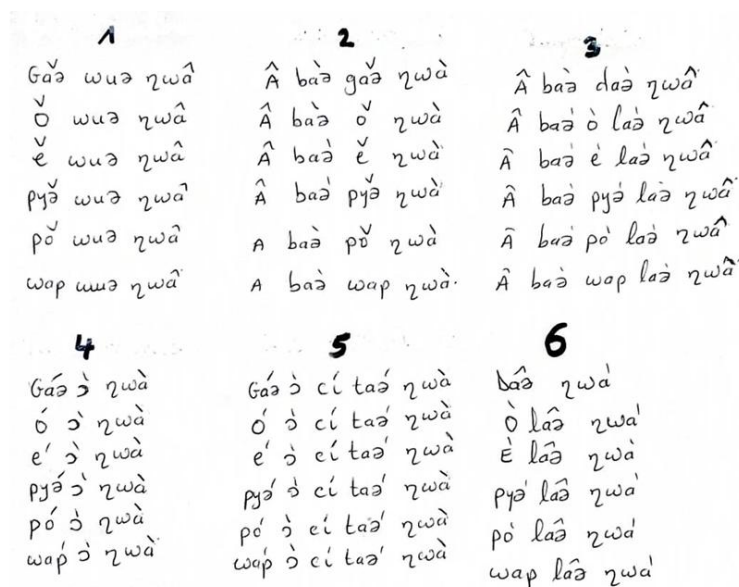


Fig. 14. The verb to pick up conjugate in ghom á la' according to the five tenses situations

3.7 The Impressions of the Parents during the Tests

As soon as the announcement of the occurrence of the present work, the parents as a whole instantly showed their enthusiasm for such an idea. Indeed, they immediately saw in this project a major solution for the difficulty they have today in teaching their mother tongues to their children. Subsequently, it was noted in the discussion forum set up for the occasion to the satisfaction of the parents who, with great emotion, regularly saw their children trying to form sentences in their respective mother tongues by communicating either with themselves or with other family members. Some of the parents let their joy explode when they saw that their children were already trying their hand at parables and tales told in their mother tongue. In

the same vein, still other parents realized that their children were increasingly asking that they make a phone call with extended family members residing in the village; indeed, their desire to show the whole family that they already know a little of the mother tongue was overwhelming, as [62] point out. The approaches involved have greatly aroused the attention of parents as a whole. In this sense, they particularly liked the approach based on the alphabet (APAA). Indeed, they declare that this means allows them to already identify at their level the fundamental elements necessary for a better mastery and writing of the language. One can therefore understand by the reason why this method gave the best result. Indeed, parents have relied on their children to equip themselves. In this sense, according to [63], by explaining a concept, we are more equipped with it. To

complete this method, other parents use the approach based on the repetition of sentences and words by children without bonuses (AARPSB). In view of these facts, we can say that the parents' impressions are positive.

4. CONCLUSION

At the end of this study, many facts can be identified. Thus, the closer you get to rural areas, the more the mother tongue is used, and vice versa. In both rural and urban areas, the mother tongue is used much more in families with low purchasing power. In detail, however, people globally from the Northern part of Cameroon (Adamaoua, Far North, and North), regardless of their area of residence (in their Region of origin or not), are those who speak their mother tongue the most. Many endogenous and exogenous factors can disturb the expected results; here we can cite education, the value attributed to ancestral culture, and the motivation of children. The most appropriate technique in urban areas to improve the practice of the mother tongue within families is that based on the alphabet (APAA); this approach can be beneficially combined with that based on the repetition of sentences and words by children without bonuses (AARPSB). It is all the more relevant as it also offers parents the opportunity to improve while supporting their children. Overall, the vast majority of parents were flattered by this project.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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