ATTESTATION DE PUBLICATION
Akofena HS°19, Vol.2 | Soumission : 17-07-2026 | Évaluation : 12-09-2026 | Publication : 15-11-2026

LANGUAGE VS. ENDANGERMENT IN A BI-MULTILINGUAL MILIEU (CAMEROON): PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

Njoya IBIRAHIM
Department of African Languages and Linguistics
University of Yaoundé 1, Cameroon
ORCID iD: 0000-0002-0059-086X
njoya.ibirahim@univ-yaounde1.cm

Abstract: Cameroon has more than 270 living indigenous languages, yet its language policy has favoured English and French since independence. This article investigates how far that policy has left the national languages exposed to loss. It first applies the vitality criteria of UNESCO to the Cameroonian evidence, which shows languages confined to the home and nearly a third of young people aged 10 to 17 in Yaoundé speaking none of them. It then reviews colonial practice under German, British and French rule and the legal texts adopted since independence, including the 1996 Constitution and Decree No. 2017/013. Article 1(3) of the Constitution guarantees the promotion of bilingualism but only commits the State to endeavour to protect and promote national languages, and later texts, such as the 1998 general instruction and the 2017 decree creating a commission for bilingualism and multiculturalism, point the same way. The author reads this record as a laissez-faire policy, and its effects can be seen in the negative labels Cameroonians use for one another. The article ends with recommendations addressed to policy stakeholders, university departments, non-governmental organisations, linguists and the general public, and concludes that institutional measures alone are unlikely to reverse the loss unless attitudes towards mother languages change.

Keywords*:* language endangerment, language policy, official bilingualism, national languages, Cameroon

LA VULNERABILITE DES LANGUES DANS LE CONTEXTE BILINGUE ET MULTILINGUE CAMEROUNAIS : DEFIS ET PERSPECTIVES

Résumé : Le Cameroun compte plus de 270 langues autochtones vivantes, mais sa politique linguistique privilégie l'anglais et le français depuis l'indépendance. Cet article examine dans quelle mesure cette politique laisse les langues nationales exposées à la disparition. Il applique d'abord les critères de vitalité de l'UNESCO aux données camerounaises, qui montrent des langues confinées au foyer et près d'un tiers des jeunes de 10 à 17 ans à Yaoundé qui n'en parlent aucune. Il passe ensuite en revue les pratiques coloniales allemande, britannique et française, puis les textes adoptés depuis l'indépendance, dont la Constitution de 1996 et le décret n° 2017/013. L'article 1(3) de la Constitution garantit la promotion du bilinguisme, mais engage seulement l'État à s'efforcer de protéger et de promouvoir les langues nationales, et des textes ultérieurs, comme l'instruction générale de 1998 ou le décret de 2017 portant création d'une commission pour le bilinguisme et le multiculturalisme, vont dans le même sens. L'auteur y voit une politique de laisser-faire, dont les effets se lisent dans les appellations négatives que les Camerounais s'appliquent entre eux. L'article s'achève sur des recommandations adressées aux décideurs, aux départements universitaires, aux organisations non gouvernementales, aux linguistes et au grand public, et conclut que des mesures institutionnelles ne suffiront pas à enrayer la perte des langues sans un changement d'attitude envers les langues maternelles.

Mots-clés *:* mise en danger des langues, politique linguistique, bilinguisme officiel, langues nationales, Cameroun

Introduction

Cameroon has a complex sociolinguistic make-up. The online edition of *Ethnologue* lists 273 living indigenous languages and 9 that are now extinct, together with 6 living non-indigenous languages, two of which, English and French, are the official languages of the country (Eberhard et al., 2026). Counts differ between sources. Echu (2004) reports 247 indigenous languages in the atlas of Breton and Fohtung, and 279 in the 2002 *Ethnologue*, and he adds that Wolf questions the higher figure because dialects of one language are sometimes counted as separate languages (Breton & Fohtung, 1991; Wolf, 2001). In a multilingual society of this kind, valorising and promoting local languages is a difficult and demanding task. French Cameroon became independent on 1 January 1960, and the Southern Cameroons joined it on 1 October 1961 (section 3.1). Since then, SIL, which has worked in Cameroon since 1969 (SIL Cameroon, n.d.), CABTAL, NACALCO (known in French as ANACLAC) and CERDOTOLA have worked to promote and standardise local languages. Some state institutions have drawn up teaching plans in which local languages are taught together with English and French, the two languages that colonial history left to the country. Results remain limited. *Ethnologue* records only five indigenous languages used as languages of instruction in formal education (Eberhard et al., 2026). Many communities have been marginalised and pushed to look down on their own cultural identity and to assimilate to neighbouring groups for socio-economic reasons. Their languages are threatened and exposed to extinction. The objective of this article is to assess the extent to which Cameroon's language policy has exposed its national languages to the risk of loss, and to propose institutional and attitudinal responses. The study addresses three questions. First, how endangered are the indigenous languages of Cameroon in light of UNESCO's vitality criteria? Second, what place do colonial and post-colonial language policies give to these languages compared with English and French? Third, what attitudes towards mother languages shape current practice, and how can these attitudes be changed? Three hypotheses guide the investigation. First, the exclusive promotion of English and French as official languages has weakened the social position of national languages and contributed to their decline. Second, the legal texts adopted since 1996 give national languages a secondary status in their very wording, and this difference of treatment hinders their protection. Third, institutional measures alone will not reverse language loss unless Cameroonians change the way they view and speak about one another's mother languages. Section 1 sets out the degree of endangerment of Cameroonian languages. Section 2 examines the colonial and post-colonial language policy, points out its weaknesses and proposes solutions. Section 3 closes the article with a comment on attitudes towards mother languages.

Revue Scientifique des Sciences du Langage
Lettres, Langues & Communication

1. Degree of endangerment

This section defines endangerment, sets out the criteria used to assess it and applies them to the Cameroonian evidence. A language is endangered when it is at risk of falling out of use because its speakers are dying or shifting to another language. A language is extinct when its community no longer counts any native speaker. Audio recordings and written archives may still allow scholars to study it, though the language has ceased to live. UNESCO's Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages (2003) identifies several causes of language loss. Some come from outside the community: military conquest, economic pressure, religious conversion, cultural domination by larger groups, and the use of another language in schools. Others come from within the community itself, where the main factor is a negative attitude of speakers towards their own language. The group proposes nine factors

ISSN-L 2706-6312/ E-ISSN 2708-0633 CC BY 4.0

for assessing vitality, among them intergenerational transmission, the number of speakers and their share of the population, and the attitudes of governments, institutions and speakers themselves. Two questions are central in practice: how many people use the language, and for what purposes.

The Cameroonian evidence fits these factors. Indigenous languages are described as largely confined to oral, rural and family use, and 32 per cent of young people aged 10 to 17 in Yaounde speak none of them (Bitja'a Kody, 2001). Many Cameroonian languages are still under-described, and the linguistic and anthropological features of most of them have received little study. Counts of languages already lost also differ. Four languages are on the verge of extinction, Duli, Gey, Nagumi and Yeni (Boum Ndongo-Semengue & Sadembouo, 1999), the 1996 *Ethnologue* version listed fourteen others as extinct (Echu 2004), whereas the current *Ethnologue* lists nine (Eberhard et al., 2026). In the Greater North, Fulfulde, Kanuri and Arab Choa (Shuwa Arabic) are languages of wider communication (Breton & Fohtung, 1991, cited by Echu, 2003), and smaller languages such as Laka are spoken alongside them. Observations among the Laka show how modern life and religion narrow the places where a local language is used. Under the strong influence of modernisation, Christianity and Islam, many Cameroonian languages are now limited to the home, the market, the family circle and religious celebrations. Many are no longer used for traditional events that have come to be prohibited, such as the Laka celebration of the first appearance of the moon, Náykəbə́. As a result, the cultural values and the specialised vocabulary tied to initiation ceremonies and rituals are no longer cherished or passed on to the younger generation.

2. Language policy in Cameroon: colonial and post-colonial practices, consequences and proposals

This section traces how successive administrations have treated Cameroonian languages, assesses the legal texts adopted since 1996 and ends with recommendations addressed to five groups of actors.

Revue Scientifique des Sciences du Langage, Lettres, Langues & Communication

2.1. Colonial practices

The German, "British and French administrations followed different language policies, and none of them favoured the emergence of an indigenous language that could serve as a national language at independence" (Echu, 2004). Germany colonised Cameroon in 1884, and the German colonial period lasted until 1916. The administration encouraged the use of German, but German missionaries and "American Presbyterian missionaries preferred indigenous languages, among them Basaa, Bulu, Duala, Ewondo and Mungaka, for teaching and evangelisation" (Mbuagbaw, 2000:135, as cited in Echu, 2003). Sultan Njoya promoted Bamum in the Bamum sultanate, and Fulfulde had been used in the north for the spread of Islam since the 17th century (Echu, 2003). Throughout the German period indigenous languages kept "a somewhat comfortable position" as far as linguistic communication is concerned (Echu, 2003, "Multilingualism and Language Policy in Cameroon," para. 3). After German forces were defeated in 1916, Britain and France divided the territory between them. Each part was administered first under a League of Nations mandate and later as a United Nations trust territory (Echu, 2004). The British applied indirect rule, governing through traditional authorities, which made the use of indigenous languages almost a necessity. The French applied a policy of assimilation, which left little or no room for them (Echu, 2003; Rosendal, 2008). French measures were severe. In 1917

the French administration introduced a subsidy for schools that used French as the language of instruction. Decisions made public on 1 October and 28 December 1920 led to the closure of schools teaching in indigenous languages, among them the 47 schools opened by King Njoya in the Bamum region, and from 1922 the 1,800 schools run by American Presbyterian missionaries, where Bulu was taught, met the same fate (Stumpf, 1979, as cited in Echu, 2004). "In the British-administered territory, languages such as Bafut, Duala, Kenyang and Mungaka remained in use alongside English in schools" (Bitja'a Kody, 1999:82, as cited in Echu, 2004).

French Cameroon became independent on 1 January 1960 as the Republic of Cameroon, with French as its official language. In a plebiscite in February 1961 the Southern Cameroons voted for union with it, while the Northern Cameroons chose to join Nigeria. The Federal Republic of Cameroon was born on 1 October 1961, with English and French as official languages (Echu, 2004). The federation lasted until 20 May 1972, when a referendum replaced it with a unitary state, the United Republic of Cameroon. In 1984 the country took back the name Republic of Cameroon under Law No. 84-1 of 4 February 1984 (Republic of Cameroon, 1996, Art. 1(1)). Official bilingualism was adopted as the route to nation-building, and English and French were chosen as unifying instruments (Echu, 2004; Rosendal, 2008). Echu (2004) relates the choice to a wish to avoid language conflict and the cost of developing indigenous languages.

2.2. Post-colonial practices

Cameroon's constitutions said nothing about indigenous languages until 1996, and the legal texts adopted since then give a firmer place to official bilingualism than to national languages. For the first years after independence the indigenous languages had virtually no place in public policy (Echu, 2004). Fearing that speakers of the languages left out would revolt, the authorities dropped a proposal of the mid-1960s to teach six indigenous languages at the federal university (Chumbow, 1996, as cited in Echu, 2003). At its meeting of 18 to 22 December 1974 "the National Council for Cultural Affairs adopted the term "national languages" for all Cameroonian indigenous languages, a label meant to give the impression of equal status and to comfort their speakers" (Echu, 2003). Practical support came from outside the state. PROPELCA, the Operational Research Project for the Teaching of Languages in Cameroon (Projet de Recherche Opérationnelle pour l'Enseignement des Langues au Cameroun), was started by researchers of the University of Yaoundé in the late 1970s, in 1977 according to Echu (2004) and in 1978 according to the Observatoire des Langues Camerounaises (n.d.-a). The writing systems of Cameroonian languages were harmonised in the General Alphabet of Cameroon Languages in 1979 (Echu, 2004; Observatoire des Langues Camerounaises, n.d.-a).

Law No. 96/06 of 18 January 1996, which revised the Constitution of 2 June 1972 and was itself amended by Law No. 2008/001 of 14 April 2008, is the first constitutional text to mention indigenous languages. The constitutions of 1961, 1972 and 1984 were silent on them (Echu, 2004). Article 1(3) states that English and French are the official languages of the Republic, with the same status. The State commits itself to guarantee the promotion of bilingualism throughout the country, but only to endeavour to protect and promote national languages (Republic of Cameroon, 1996, Art. 1(3)). The Preamble, for its part, presents linguistic and cultural diversity as an enriching feature of national identity (Republic of Cameroon, 1996, Preamble).

Revue Scientifique des Sciences du Langage, Lettres, Langues & Communication

ISSN-L 2706-6312/ E-ISSN 2708-0633 CC BY 4.0

Further texts followed. Law No. 98/004 of 14 April 1998 on the orientation of education states in Article 3 that the State establishes bilingualism at every level of education as a factor of national unity and integration. Article 5(4) lists the promotion of national languages among the aims of education, and Article 11 requires the State to adapt the education system to national realities, notably through the teaching of national languages (Observatoire des Langues Camerounaises, n.d.-b; Republic of Cameroon, 1998b). Echu (2004) observed that the Ministry of National Education had still to define the practical modalities of this law. Law No. 2001/005 of 16 April 2001 on the orientation of higher education establishes bilingualism at that level too (Republic of Cameroon, 2001) and, according to the Observatoire des Langues Camerounaises (n.d.-b), assigns higher education the promotion of bilingualism, cultures and national languages in its Article 6. The same source lists Law No. 2023/007 of 25 July 2023 on the orientation of higher education, which repeats the provision in its Article 7.

Administrative texts and structures also appeared. Decree No. 2004/066 of 31 March "2004 on the organisation of the Ministry of National Education created, in Article 101(3), a pedagogic inspectorate at provincial level in charge of letters, arts, foreign languages and national languages" (Republic of Cameroon, 2004). Laws No. 2004/018 and No. 2004/019 of 22 July 2004, on communes and regions, gave these local authorities powers in education and in the promotion and publication of national languages, and Decrees No. 2012/267 and No. 2012/268 of 11 June 2012 set up bodies for national languages in the Ministry of Secondary Education and the Ministry of Basic Education (Observatoire des Langues Camerounaises, n.d.-b). In higher education, a letter of 9 November 2007 from the Ministry of Higher Education asked for a study of the possibility of opening a training domain in Cameroonian languages and cultures at the universities of Yaoundé I, Buea, Douala, Dschang and Ngaoundéré, and Order No. 08/023/MINESUP/DDES of 13 September 2008 created a "Department and Laboratory of Cameroonian Languages and Cultures at the Higher Teacher Training College of the University of Yaoundé I" (Observatoire des Langues Camerounaises, n.d.-b).

These texts show goodwill, but they have not shifted practice towards national languages. The general instruction No. 002 of 4 June 1998 on the organisation of government work makes the Secretary General at the Presidency responsible, in its Article 38, for promoting bilingualism, and requires that laws, decrees and other official acts be prepared, signed and published in French and English (Republic of Cameroon, 1998a). When Echu (2004) wrote, indigenous languages were still absent from the school curriculum and most parents seemed hostile to the idea of early schooling in them. Rosendal (2008) judges that the mention of national languages in official texts has so far been a gesture without practical effect, and Anchimbe (2013) gives his chapter on the policy towards indigenous languages the title "Many decrees and laws but less practice".

The author reads this record as a laissez-faire policy. Out of attachment to peace and unity, politicians and other stakeholders chose to promote bilingualism almost exclusively, although the Constitution also commits the State to endeavour to protect and promote national languages. The choice has favoured assimilation to English and French and has hindered the efforts of past decades. Valorising home languages is made harder by their number, and policy makers have preferred to present bilingualism as the way to nation-building, unity and integration rather than to draw up a multilingual policy that takes local languages into account (Echu, 2004; Rosendal, 2008).

Revue Scientifique des Sciences du Langage, Lettres, Langues & Communication

The events that began in the Northwest and Southwest Regions in October 2016, when English-speaking lawyers and then teachers went on strike against the growing use of French in courts and schools (Minority Rights Group International, 2017), show that the exclusive promotion of French and English has not made Cameroon "one and indivisible", the words of Article 1(2) of the Constitution (Republic of Cameroon, 1996). Echu (2004) had already warned that the unequal use of the two official languages weakened the policy of official bilingualism and fed Anglophone nationalism. A policy that promotes only the two official languages for the sake of national unity also leaves aside the 273 living indigenous languages that *Ethnologue* lists (Eberhard et al., 2026).

Decree No. 2017/013 of 23 January 2017 "created the National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism (NCPBM), a consultative body placed under the authority of the President of the Republic". Its task, according to Article 3, is to promote bilingualism and multiculturalism with the aim of maintaining peace and consolidating national unity, and of strengthening the will and the daily practice of living together (Republic of Cameroon, 2017). The author doubts that a commission with this title does justice to the indigenous languages. How can bilingualism, which here means the use of French and English only, be promoted in a multilingual country? How will the Commission promote multiculturalism while leaving aside the indigenous languages, which carry the rich cultural heritage of Cameroon?

On Wednesday 8 February 2017, three days after Cameroon beat Egypt 2-1 in the final of the Africa Cup of Nations in Gabon, President Paul Biya received the Indomitable Lions at the Unity Palace. In his speech he told the players that, whether they came from the North, the South, the East or the West, they were Cameroonians first, and he repeated the formula "*d'abord et avant tout des Camerounais*" after naming seven of them: Moukandjo, Ondoa, Ngadeu, Aboubakar, Fai, Bassogog and Ndip Tambe (Biya, 2017, para. 15). The names can be read as pointing to different parts of the country: Sawa (Moukandjo), Beti-Fang (Ondoa), Bamileke (Ngadeu), the North (Aboubakar), the Northwest (Fai), Bassa (Bassogog) and the Southwest (Ndip Tambe). The President's point was that the team won because it was united: its members put aside their cultural, linguistic and tribal differences and defended the national colours. Football may be the only activity that unites Cameroonians of all origins, and it does so when the national team wins. Does this suffice to proclaim national unity?

Revue Scientifique des Sciences du Langage
Lettres, Langues & Communication

The labels Cameroonians use for one another point the other way. (1) The Laka are labelled "Chadian". (2) In the north, non-Muslims are called "Kirdi", and (3) people from the West, East, South, Northwest, Southwest, Littoral and Centre Regions are called "Gadamayo". (4) In the Northwest and Southwest, people from the Centre, East and South are called "Chop broke pot", and (5) those from the French-speaking regions "frogs" or "francofools". (6) In the West, northerners are called "Nkessa" or "Nkessang", depending on the language. (7) In the East, Makaa speakers call people from the West "Wademegouela", literally "banana eaters", because they eat cooked green plantain. (8) In the Centre and South, people from elsewhere are called by the onomatopoeia "Belobolobo", because they speak a language the natives do not understand. (9) In the French-speaking regions, people from the Northwest and Southwest are called "Bemenda", "les gens qui pensent à gauche", "anglofous" and "anglocons", and, since the Anglophone crisis, "Ambazoniens", "Ambazozos" and "ambazizis". (10) People from the Greater North are called "moutons" or "moutons du Nord". Not all of these names are pejorative, but some reveal negative attitudes and preconceptions about other groups' cultures and languages. Such attitudes have produced interethnic tensions and have strengthened negative feelings about Cameroonian indigenous

ISSN-L 2706-6312/ E-ISSN 2708-0633 CC BY 4.0

languages and cultures. In case (1), for example, some Laka youths have denied their origins and their language and have assimilated to the Fulani and the Mbum.

2.3. Recommendations

The proposals that follow are addressed to five groups, because no single actor can reverse the loss of languages: policy makers and stakeholders, university departments, non-governmental organisations, linguists and researchers, and the general public.

-Policy-makers and stakeholders

The state holds the legal and institutional levers, so most of the recommendations concern it. It should take the diversity of Cameroon's ethnic, cultural and linguistic heritage into account, as the Preamble of its own Constitution does (Republic of Cameroon, 1996). It should create a National Institute of Cameroonian Languages and Cultures (NICLC) to safeguard, promote, revitalise, develop and document the national languages. It should adopt a broad multilingual approach along the lines proposed by Migge and Léglise (2007). These authors examine colonial and post-colonial language policy with a focus on creole communities in the Caribbean and South America, and they argue for a multi-model approach, because the communities concerned are not homogeneous and blanket solutions do not fit them. Such an approach would be an effective first step against inequalities tied to languages and cultures. New educational policy should rest on a careful sociolinguistic analysis of Cameroonian society and use several models, as PROPELCA did, in order to address existing language-based social inequalities. The laws and decrees on indigenous languages should be revised, because their wording gives these languages a secondary status. Article 1(3) of the Constitution shows the pattern: the State guarantees the promotion of bilingualism but only endeavours to protect and promote national languages (Republic of Cameroon, 1996). Wording of this kind keeps local languages from competing with foreign languages on equal terms and can reinforce Cameroonians' negative attitudes towards one another's languages and cultures. Finally, on the basis of careful sociolinguistic surveys, the state should give institutional status to some languages of wider distribution, following the PROPELCA proposals.

Revue Scientifique des Sciences du Langage, Lettres, Langues & Communication

-African linguistics departments

University departments are the natural places for training and research on national languages. The Department of African Studies of the University of Dschang; the Departments of African Languages and Linguistics of the Universities of Yaoundé 1, Douala, Buea and Bamenda; the Department of Linguistics and Communication of the University of Maroua; and the Departments of Cameroonian Languages and Cultures of the Higher Teacher Training College (ENS), University of Yaoundé 1, University of Bertoua, and University of Maroua should take part effectively in developing a multilingual educational system and help policy makers implement it. They should set up basic programmes of linguistic and cultural training and take an active part in training members of the different indigenous communities, so that competence passes to people who may later teach in their communities or work on language documentation. They should organise national and international forums, conferences, workshops, seminars or colloquia on a regular basis, where linguists, researchers and stakeholders can present results and exchange ideas on new trends and questions about the peoples and language families of Cameroon. They should keep track of the work of foreign and local researchers and of national and international NGOs on

Cameroonian languages, which students and scholars in Cameroon often do not know, because no manuscript or copy is left in the country or made available. They should also revive the university-based PROPELCA project, started in the late 1970s to promote selected regional languages by introducing them into the school system, and reported by Etienne Sadembouo (personal communication) to be no longer active in the universities.

- Non-governmental organisations

Non-governmental organisations have carried much of the practical work on national languages, often through experimental projects run on private initiative with the silent approval of the government (Echu, 2004). Local NGOs and institutions that work for the promotion of Cameroonian national languages, among them NACALCO (ANACLAC), CABTAL, SIL and the Alliance Biblique du Cameroun, should establish a good and mutually beneficial cooperation with universities, local communities and established scholars.

-Linguists and researchers

The way linguists describe a language affects how its speakers see themselves. In their analyses, linguists and researchers should take into account both the common and the specific features of the dialects of the language they study, because dialects sometimes differ significantly in phonology, morphology and syntax. Reducing the study of a language to its standard variant and imposing the results on the whole group, as has happened in some communities of the Greater North, has proved dangerous. Such attitudes have irritated communities that felt marginalised, and some of them decided to stand on their own to preserve their linguistic and cultural heritage. The Marva, who separated from the Giziga, are an example, and they strongly resent being called Giziga. Sociolinguists, sociologists and anthropologists also need to intensify research on social, cultural and linguistic diversity in Cameroon. Their work should help educate Cameroonians of every social stratum about one another's cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

-The general public

Individual Cameroonians can also act. They can say no to hatred, stigmatisation and discrimination, to biases and stereotypes, to social, tribal and ethnic exclusion, to tribalism, and to negative attitudes towards mother languages. They can say yes to using their own mother tongue, passing it on to their children and learning about the languages of others.

Revue Scientifique des Sciences du Langage, Lettres, Langues & Communication

Conclusion

Cameroon's legal texts since 1996 mention national languages, and ministries, universities and non-governmental bodies have produced results, yet the firmest commitments of the State concern English and French. The difference of wording in Article 1(3) of the Constitution, the instruction of 4 June 1998 on bilingualism and the title of the Commission created in 2017 all point the same way. The evidence on endangerment agrees with this reading. Where a language is confined to the home and young people no longer learn it, as in the Yaoundé figures reported by Echu (2004) and in the Laka example, institutions alone are unlikely to reverse the loss. The recommendations in section 2.3 therefore combine institutional measures, such as a national institute and revised legislation, with the work of universities, non-governmental bodies and researchers, and with a change in how Cameroonians speak about one another's languages. Attitudes towards mother

 ISSN-L 2706-6312/ E-ISSN 2708-0633 CC BY 4.0

languages matter most here: a law can open the door of the school, yet speakers decide whether a language reaches the next generation.

References

Al Jazeera. (2017). *AFCON: Cameroon beats Egypt to lift African title*. https://www.aljazeera.com/sports/2017/2/5/afcon-cameroon-beats-egypt-to-lift-african-title

Anchimbe, E. A. (2013). Language policy towards indigenous languages: Many decrees and laws but less practice. In *Language policy and identity construction: The dynamics of Cameroon's multilingualism* (pp. 51-66). John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/impact.32.02lan

Biya, P. (2017). *Discours de S.E. Paul Biya à l'occasion de la réception offerte au Palais de l'Unité en l'honneur des Lions Indomptables* [Speech by H.E. Paul Biya on the occasion of the reception given at the Unity Palace in honour of the Indomitable Lions] [Speech transcript]. Presidency of the Republic of Cameroon. https://www.prc.cm/fr/actualites/discours/2143-discours-de-s-e-paul-biya-a-l-occasion-de-la-reception-offerte-au-palais-de-l-unite-en-l-honneur-des-lions-indomptables

Eberhard, D. M. & al. . (2025). Cameroon. In *Ethnologue: Languages of the world* (28th ed.). SIL International. Retrieved October 17, 2026, from https://www.ethnologue.com/country/CM

Echu, G. (2003). Multilingualism as a resource: The lexical appropriation of Cameroon indigenous languages by English and French. *TRANS: Internet-Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften*, (13). https://www.inst.at/trans/13Nr/echu13.htm

Echu, G. (2004). The language question in Cameroon. *Linguistik Online*, *18*(1), 19-33. https://bop.unibe.ch/linguistik-online/article/download/765/1310/0

Migge, B., & Léglise, I. (2007). Language and colonialism: Applied linguistics in the context of creole communities. In M. Hellinger & A. Pauwels (Eds.), *Language and communication: Diversity and change* (pp. 297-338). Mouton de Gruyter.

Minority Rights Group International. (2017, October). *Cameroon: Anglophones*. World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples. https://minorityrights.org/minorities/anglophones

Observatoire des Langues Camerounaises. (n.d.-a). *Language policy*. https://observatoiredeslangues.com/en/language-policy/

Observatoire des Langues Camerounaises. (n.d.-b). *Legislation on Cameroonian languages*. https://observatoiredeslangues.com/en/legislation-on-cameroonian-languages/

Presidency of the Republic of Cameroon. (n.d.). *AFCON 2017: President Paul BIYA decorates the Indomitable Lions*. https://prc.cm/en/news/2144-afcon-2017-president-paul-biya-decorates-the-indomitable-lions

Republic of Cameroon. (1996). Loi n° 96/06 du 18 janvier 1996 portant révision de la Constitution du 2 juin 1972, modifiée par la loi n° 2008/001 du 14 avril 2008 [Law No. 96/06 of 18 January 1996 to amend the Constitution of 2 June 1972, as amended by Law No. 2008/001 of 14 April 2008]. https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Cameroon_2008

Republic of Cameroon. (1998a). Instruction générale n° 002 du 4 juin 1998 relative à l'organisation du travail gouvernemental : communication, publications, promotion

Revue Scientifique des Sciences du Langage, Lettres, Langues & Communication

du bilinguisme [General instruction No. 002 of 4 June 1998 on the organisation of government work: Communication, publications, promotion of bilingualism].

Republic of Cameroon. (1998b). Loi n° 98/004 du 14 avril 1998 d'orientation de l'éducation au Cameroun [Law No. 98/004 of 14 April 1998 on the orientation of education in Cameroon].

Republic of Cameroon. (2001). Loi n° 2001/005 du 16 avril 2001 portant orientation de l'enseignement supérieur [Law No. 2001/005 of 16 April 2001 on the orientation of higher education].

Republic of Cameroon. (2004). Décret n° 2004/066 du 31 mars 2004 portant organisation du Ministère de l'Éducation nationale [Decree No. 2004/066 of 31 March 2004 on the organisation of the Ministry of National Education].

Republic of Cameroon. (2017). Décret n° 2017/013 du 23 janvier 2017 portant création, organisation et fonctionnement de la Commission nationale pour la promotion du bilinguisme et du multiculturalisme [Decree No. 2017/013 of 23 January 2017 on the creation, organisation and functioning of the National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism]. https://www.prc.cm/files/cb/ab/f3/056aee31dd545bf1786e7c2952f98596.pdf

Rosendal, T. (2008). *Multilingual Cameroon: Policy, practice, problems and solutions* (Gothenburg Africana Informal Series 7). University of Gothenburg, Department of Oriental and African Languages.

SIL Cameroon. (n.d.). *Vision and strategy*. https://www.silcam.org/about

UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages. (2003). *Language vitality and endangerment* [Document adopted by the International Expert Meeting on UNESCO Programme "Safeguarding of Endangered Languages," Paris, 10-12 March 2003] (CLT/CEI/DCE/ELP/PI/2003/1). UNESCO

Revue Scientifique des Sciences du Langage, Lettres, Langues & Communication

ISSN-L 2706-6312/ E-ISSN 2708-0633 CC BY 4.0