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*Melvis Njualement Ngum, Tangie Evani &
Ayu'nwi N. Neba*



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 Melvis Njualet Ngum^{1*}, Tangie Evani² & Ayu'nwi N. Neba³

¹The University of Bamenda, Cameroon

ngumjovis@gmail.com

²University of Dschang, Cameroon

tansevani@justice.com

³University of Buea, Cameroon

anfusi@yahoo.com



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Abstract

Purpose: This paper reports findings of an investigation of the effects of intergroup contact in a bilingual language teaching context on stereotypes of each group towards each other. The pre and post intergroup contact attitudes of Cameroonian Anglophone Bilingual Teachers (ABT) and those of Francophone Bilingual Teachers (FBT) towards each other were determined and compared.

Methodology: A mixed method research design that relied on a two-phase explanatory sequential strategy was employed to collect the data. It comprised an anonymous self-report survey of 97 bilingual teachers and a follow-up interview of 6 of these teachers. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data and content analysis was used to explore the textual data.

Findings: The study revealed that while ABT indicated negative attitudes towards

FBT, prior to starting their training, FBT on their part, expressed positive considerations of Anglophones (they saw them as polite, hospitable and hardworking people). In the end, ABT moved from seeing FBT as arrogant to calling them simple and assiduous learners. Nevertheless, they scorned the FBT's insolence. The contact reinforced FBT's prior training positive attitudes towards ABT whom they found to be friendly, convivial and courteous.

Recommendations: The study concludes that intergroup contact positively influenced ABT attitudes towards FBT, while FBT maintained their pre-training positive attitudes towards ABT. Intergroup contact in an official bilingual teacher training classroom, therefore, can be a fertile ground for the elimination of stereotypes and promotion of the spirit of living together.

Keywords: *Intergroup Contact, Language Attitudes, Prejudice, Stereotype, Bilingual, Anglophone, Francophone*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Dominance of French and Emergence of Stereotypes

There is *prima facie* evidence that since Cameroon's independence, the French language has enjoyed a 'de facto' dominance over the English language in the dispensation of public services, in education, in the media as well as in day-to-day contact situations (Echu, 2003; Biloa, 2012; Chiatoh, 2012). The status quo birthed a number of mutual stereotyping of Anglophone and Francophone Cameroonians.

Given that eight out of the ten regions, amongst which is the nation's capital, are predominantly French-speaking, the Anglophone minority feel the weight of marginalisation much more. The ordeals of Anglophones include being expected to express themselves in the French language, irrespective of their knowledge of the language in public offices (Mforteh, 2005). Even attempts at using the language ends in betrayal, usually by the accent, thereby causing such Anglophones to be referred to as 'Anglo-fou'. This term is a contraction of Anglophone and the French word 'fou' meaning an idiot or a senseless person, indexing the uselessness of Anglophones' habitual difference in opinions about political issues (Mallet, 2016). Of course, this must be traumatizing for the Anglophone Cameroonian.

Conversely, Anglophones manifest their antipathy for Francophone Cameroonians by typecasting their manners (Nkoum-Me-Ntseny, n.d.). Anglophones perceive their Francophone counterparts as lazy, tribalistic and arrogant, summarized in the appellation 'Franco-frog' (Aroga Bessong, 1997). This appellation, used alternatively with 'francofools' 'franco-fous', is used to collectively refer to French-speaking Cameroonians (Mallet, 2016). The latter finds this language offensive as it connotes arrogance, talkativeness, arguing aimlessly, empty-headedness and arrogance.

It can be deduced that as far as Anglophone and Francophone relationships is concerned, the policy of bilingualism has created a cultural identity issue (Echu, 2004). Anglophones cling to the English language as a 'symbol of in-group solidarity' (Echu 2004:25). This attachment arises from the use of the same official language. Smith (1996, cited in Arjun and Jelte, 2015) relates this attachment to the 'Anglophone culture' to a coping strategy in the face of marginalization. Ngome (1993: 28 cited in Anchimbe 2005) provides a plausible justification for the Anglophone and Francophone typecasting. To Anglophones, Francophones are fraudulent and good at bending rules. This can be seen in their cheating in exams, jumping queues and rigging elections. It is the reason why they are referred to as 'frogs'. The Francophones, on their part, criticize the Anglophone air of self-righteousness and intellectual superiority. It can thus be inferred that the Anglophone-Francophone cultural rivalry is an ethical one.

Problem Statement

From the foregoing, it can clearly be seen that the 'de facto' dominance of French over the English language in the dispensation of public services, in education, in the media as well as in day-to-day contact situations in Cameroon (Echu, 2003; Biloa, 2012; Chiatoh, 2012) has birthed a number of mutual stereotyping between Anglophone and Francophone Cameroonians, thereby threatening Cameroon's dream for national unity.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The Nature of Prejudice and Stereotypes: Definition of Terms

In the study of intergroup attitudes, researchers in the field usually distinguish between an in-group, which is described as the group that one associates with or aspires to join, and an out-

group, which refers to all the other groups outside the in-group. Focus, in this field of study is usually on social bias, precisely: prejudice and stereotypes. Prejudice has to do with affective evaluations of a group or its members, while stereotypes are cognitive evaluations, that is, mental representations of an out-group member. Both biases are formed through personal experiences, one's own emotional needs and by what one is told by others. An ongoing debate rests on which of these two biases come first. In an intergroup context, Yzerbyt & Demoulin (2022) argue that stereotypes are an originator of affective responses and discriminatory tendencies. People start by ascribing traits to out-group members, from this point certain feelings proceed and these feelings show up in the peoples' behaviour. In essence, stereotypes precede prejudices and both biases influence behaviour. Dovidio, Schellhaas & Pearson (2018) rather see prejudice as the forerunner to stereotyping that results in discriminatory behaviour. Whichever is the case, a consensus remains that prejudice and stereotypes give birth to positive or negative behaviour.

Dovidio, Schellhaas & Pearson (2018) argue that prejudice is not always antipathy. On the contrary, it can elicit both positive and negative responses. Like prejudice, stereotypes were earlier thought to be only negative, but this is no longer the case. Lammers and colleagues (2008, cited in Yzerbyt & Demoulin, 2022) purport that in an intergroup context, both groups tend to stereotype each other positively and negatively. However, those in a minority status tend to do so more. The latter does so in a bid to protect themselves against exploitation. Stereotypes amongst in-groups or people aspiring to belong to that group are in most cases biased towards positive stereotypes. In recent times, it has become trendy to consider stereotypes as a framework for confirming or refuting a held position towards a group. Stereotypes, thus, play the role of an attitude marker. It tells if a person is evaluatively positive, neutral, or negative towards the target group.

Another bone of contention rests on subjective as opposed to generalized evaluations. This can be seen in Dovidio, Hewstone, Glick, and Esses (2010:9) definition of prejudice as "an individual-level attitude (whether subjectively positive or negative) toward groups and their members that creates or maintains hierarchical status relations between groups". Two interesting aspects come up from this definition: prejudices are subjective and are connected to the wielding of power. Individuals' responses to group members can vary. This can be seen in situations where (in cases of negative evaluations) people who deviate from the held group evaluations arouse positive reactions, whereas those who exhibit the preconceived behaviours reinforce the negative response. This further confirms the stance of prejudice and stereotype as an evaluative frame that permits us to assess conformity with intergroup bias, not necessarily to generalize the bias, rather to understand it.

In classroom contexts, stereotypes and prejudices are reported to be automatic and unconscious at the beginning of contact situations. No sooner than later, they become explicit and conscious. It is like at first instances of interaction, some feelings and images are created of the out-group. These created images and feelings are then verified and validated as contact increases. Cluver (2000) posits that prejudices and stereotypes are usually directed both at the language and at the members of a different speech community. The attitudes, Cluver (2000) argues, are usually inherited, and had been held in the long-term, such that they have become more specific over generation. The longer these attitudes exist, the more resistant they become to change. Negative attitudes are particularly dangerous for language learning. They "become obstacles in the way of language learning" (Ross 1990: 26). Like prejudice, they were earlier thought to be negative, but in recent times they are considered to be a framework for confirming or refuting a held position towards the group. Stereotypes and prejudices, thus, play the role of attitude markers. They tell if a person is evaluatively positive, neutral, or negative towards the target group.

For the purposes of this study, we shall retain that attitude is a combination of a person's cognitive, affective and behavioural evaluations. Stereotypes shall refer to any held beliefs, associations or attributions of specific characteristics to a group. It shall involve labelling or categorizing out-group members, be it in a positive or negative way, according to preconceived ideas or broad generalisations about them. Affective evaluations shall relate to prejudices and conative evaluations to discrimination.

Theoretical Framework

The analytical framework adopted for this study is informed by the following theories.

Intergroup Contact Hypothesis

The intergroup contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954) states that interpersonal contact between groups, in appropriate conditions, maximally reduces prejudices. The quest for the effects of intergroup contact on the relationships of the groups in contact began since 1903 on a very negative note (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2005). Contact at this time was seen as a breeding ground for conflict and hostility. It was not until 1940 that the possibilities of contact to result in improved relationships began to be thinkable. This was first brought to light by Williams (1947) monograph, *The Reduction of Intergroup Tensions*.

It is worth noting that these prior studies were in the light of racial issues at the time. Studies within this framework indicated that sometimes prejudice was reduced but at other times it was exacerbated. Drawing from this groundwork, Allport (1954), taking an optimistic stance, held that reduced prejudice was a result of four positive features of a contact situation: (a) equal status between the groups, (b) common goals, (c) intergroup cooperation, and (d) the support of authorities, law or custom.

Allport's four conditions helped determine the choice of the population of this study: bilingual teachers. These teachers, be they Anglophones or Francophone, share a common goal, that is, to gain professional training. Their courses are structured in such a way that those learnt in one language are taken up in the other language. As such, the learners are interdependent. They get to carry out group activities and other learning exercises that keep them journeying towards a common goal. Competition is minimal as each person's job is guaranteed at the end of the training. What's more? Official language bilingualism enjoys a pride of place in the country's language policy. All these make their choice very strategic.

Nevertheless, Allport's hypothesis is highly acclaimed, and it has generated much research works with positive results on reduction of negative intergroup attitudes and stereotypes. As noted by Pettigrew (1998), it was however found wanting on two counts: it did not address the processes underlying contact effects nor specify how the effects generalize to other situations, the entire out-group or uninvolved out-groups. Pettigrew (1998) took this up and developed four interrelated processes through which a contact operates and mediates attitude change: learning about the out-group, changing behaviour, generating affective ties, and in-group reappraisal.

Three of Pettigrew's (1998) four interconnected processes of intergroup contact are linked to the three dimensions of attitude. Learning about the out-group, or reappraising how one thinks about one's own in-group relates to cognitive attitudes; changing one's behaviour owing to new knowledge of the out-group relates to behavioural attitudes and generating affective ties and friendships as a product of reduced anxiety towards the out-group touches on the affective component of attitudes. This yields the premise on which the relationship between intergroup contact and attitude are explored in this study.

In all, intergroup contact hypothesis offers conditions for enhancing favourable contact experiences and the processes through which these experiences transform negative attitudes into friendships. This makes it a suitable approach to examine bilingual teachers' experiences in the light of groups in contact.

Stereotype Reduction in Bilingual Classrooms

The primordial potential of Bilingual classrooms in enhancing intergroup relationships is seen through the way it fosters the optimal conditions under which intergroup attitudes prosper. Wright and Tropp (2005) expatiate on this by contrasting the perceived status of the language of instruction in an English-only class and in a bilingual class. In an English-only instruction class, the English language and those who speak it are placed in a higher status position than other languages and those who speak them. This is because the learners are made, either directly or subtly, to see that access to knowledge is tied to English language proficiency and so they may side-line other languages.

On the other hand, bilingual instruction highlights the value and status of the co-language in the sense that it equalizes access to classroom resources for both language groups. Also, in bilingual classrooms, cross - group friendships are facilitated. Both language groups share the experience of struggling to learn in a language that they do not fully understand. As such there is a perceived similarity that may breed pleasant relationships. These friendships lead to one-to-one interactions that result in generalized attitudes towards the whole group.

In the same light, unlike in monolingual language of instruction classrooms where cooperative activities (like group works) are likely to be dominated by speakers of the language of instruction, in bilingual classrooms these activities require interdependent cooperation. In the latter scenario, both language groups exchange dominance, in the light of command of the language, thereby minimizing any ethno-linguistic status inequalities. Lastly, in bilingual classrooms, instructional use of both languages is a clear statement that the authority is sanctioning positive, equal-status in both group interactions. Unfortunately, research on intergroup contact with focus on language learning is scant. Studies of intergroup attitudes mostly focus on anthropological concerns like racism and migration. Wright and Bougie (2007) explain that this little attention is owing to little recognition of language as a key distinction between social groups. They contend that bilingual language learning contexts offer favourable conditions that have been shown to facilitate positive intergroup relations. Therefore, the question this study raises is:

Does contact between Anglophone bilingual teachers and Francophone bilingual teachers in an official bilingual language learning context positively or negatively influence their relationships?

Specifically, what is the nature of Anglophone and Francophone bilingual teachers' out-group stereotypes at the beginning of training? What are the outcomes of intergroup contact between Anglophone and Francophone bilingual teachers on their out-group perceptions at the end of their training?

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed method research design. It relied on a two-phase explanatory sequential strategy (Cresswell and Cresswell, 2018) to gather data on the attitudinal changes that occur when Anglophone and Francophone Cameroonians come into contact in an official language learning context. The first phase consisted of a survey of the sample. This was aimed at getting the pre and post contact effect trends that cut across the total population under study.

The quantitative data was analysed and significant intriguing areas constituted items that the researcher used to elaborate, clarify and expand on the findings of the quantitative phase.

Population

The consultants for this study were graduate bilingual teachers of the Higher Teacher's training colleges (HTTC) of Cameroon. Three state universities produce these graduates: University of Yaounde I, University of Maroua and The University of Bamenda. These colleges have both first and second cycles. Graduates from both cycles are posted to work in different locations across the nation. It is worth noting that bilingual teachers were thought appropriate for this study because they represent a group of Cameroonians who have undergone at least three years of learning in an English and French bilingual classroom setting. Thus, they have had sufficient contact to be able to talk about their experiences.

Methods

This section presents the sampling, instruments and administration process. It should be recalled here that the data collection was done in two phases: quantitative and qualitative.

The first phase of the study focused on providing a numerical description of participants' pre and post contact experiences. It also manipulated the relationship between variables and gathered information on the respondent's backgrounds. Phase two of this study involved exploring further, understanding and clarifying the information gathered from the quantitative phase of this study. Since the concepts of prejudice and stereotypes are multidimensional and fluid, this phase sought to get a fuller picture of these variables under study.

Sampling and Sample

The multistage sample design was used for the quantitative phase of this study. This design was chosen since it was impractical to compile a list of the teachers composing the population. The first stage entailed mapping out a group of graduate bilingual teachers to include in the study. Considering the key role of contact in this study, it was imperative to get participants from the same batches. With this in mind, the researcher estimated that each class shall have at least three Anglophones who were willing to take part in the study. As such, the target sample was six teachers per batch, that is, three Anglophones and three Francophones of the same batch.

Unfortunately, because of an on-going socio-political crisis in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon, and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, physical contact in classroom settings was restricted. Hence, it was only possible to select the last batches before the crisis for this study. As such, the first and second cycle graduates of the 2015 to 2017 batches made up the target sample population of the study. This gave a total target sample population of 108 teachers (six per class for each of the schools).

Seeing how dispersed the population was, the researcher decided it was best to get to the respondents through their various social media fora. Group members received a link to complete the questionnaires via Survey Monkey. Every first three Anglophone and Francophone respondent per batch were selected.

The second phase of the study employed voluntary and then criterion sampling to get participants. Volunteers were selected based on stated criterion. A common criterion was those who have lived the official language bilingual class experience. They, however, varied in terms of their individual characteristics and experiences (educational, linguistic background, gender and context of study). Of the 97 participants of the study, six took part in the qualitative phase. They were selected through voluntary indication to participate. The survey (both online and

face-to-face) yielded 97 responses. This gives an 89.9% return rate. Table 1 summarises the sample and their demographics.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

	ANGLO N=55		FRANCO N=42		TOTAL N=97	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
GENDER						
Male	10	10.3	8	8.2	18	18.5
Female	45	46.4	34	35.1	79	81.5
BATCH						
2015	17	17.5	16	16.5	33	34.0
2016	26	26.8	14	14.4	40	41.2
2017	12	12.4	12	12.4	24	24.7
SECONDARY SCHOOL SYSTEM ATTENDED						
Anglosaxon	22	22.7	15	15.5	37	38.1
Francophone	10	10.3	35	36.1	45	46.4
Both	4	4.1	11	11.3	15	15.4
PREVIOUS CONTACT						
Yes	22	22.7	2	2.1	24	24.7
No	9	9.3	64	65.9	73	75.2
HTTC						
HTTC BAMBILI	26	26.8	21	21.6	47	48.5
HTTC MAROUA	21	21.6	15	15.5	36	37.1
HTTC YAOUNDE	8	8.2	6	6.2	14	14.4

Table 1 shows that 55 Anglophone bilingual teachers (ABT) and 42 Francophone bilingual teachers (FBT) took part in this phase of the study. Most of the respondents (48.5%) had their training in HTTC Bamenda, most of whom were Anglophones (26.8%). This meant an imbalance in the ratio of Anglophones to Francophones. A close look at the secondary school background shows that fewer of the respondents studied in a purely Anglo-Saxon system of education (22.7%). The same percentage attested to having Francophones in their high school classes.

Usually, it is the Anglo-Saxon system that allows for mixed Anglophone and Francophone students in a high school class. This suggests that more of the respondents identified as Anglophones even though English was not their first official language. As such, the envisaged sample plan of six per batch cannot be claimed to have been realized. Also, some batches had more participants and others less. Most respondents (41.2%) were of the 2016 batch, majority being Anglophones (26.8%). HTTC Maroua had the best distribution with a ratio of 15:15. However, all batches had at least two Anglophones and two Francophones per class. This gave a 2:2 ratio of direct contact experiences. So, for every item analysis at least four people shared some degree of similar lived experiences. The higher number of Anglophones, is explained by the fact that HTTC Bambili had more participants, most of whom identified as Anglophones. More probing will be required to clarify the identity positioning of the participants.

In all, the participants' linguistic background was quite varied. The population predominantly identified as Anglophone, female, first cycle. This population had a strong pre-training

intergroup contact. Hence, a good premise on which to study language learning experiences in an intergroup contact context.

Instruments

As has already been highlighted, data for the quantitative phase of this study was collected using a closed-ended self-reported questionnaire. As noted by Macinnis and Page-Gould (2005), literature on intergroup contact studies focuses on long term contacts with out-group members, where the participants provide a retrospective self-report about their interactions. The questionnaire items were drawn from the Generalized Group Attitude Scale (Duckitt, Callaghan & Wagner, 2005). This scale is used to assess out-group attitudes. It usually consists of eight five-level Likert-type items, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Data, for the qualitative phase of the study, was elicited using a semi-structured interview protocol. The researcher opted for interviews given that the participants were no more in school and so could not be observed. Also, the target information was to be provided in retrospect and from long-term memory. Besides, experiences can be quite emergent, so the researcher needed to keep track on the line of questioning.

Data Collection Methods

The process of data collection for the quantitative phase took place over a period of approximately four months (September 2021 to January 2022). The collection was initially done online using survey monkey. First the researcher contacted colleagues of the target batches within the Bamenda municipality. These colleagues introduced the researcher to the WhatsApp group administrators. She issued the questionnaire to them first. Then, got their permission to administer the survey to the whole group. Unfortunately, this yielded only 35 responses as opposed to the 108-target sample. The researcher thus had to resort to face-to-face administration. The questionnaires were administered to the teachers in various schools in the North West, South West, Centre and Extreme North regions.

The researcher adopted the phenomenological design of inquiry (Cresswell and Cresswell, 2018) in the qualitative phase of the research. It enabled the researcher to explore the participants' description of their lived experiences about intergroup contact as they perceived them. The focus was to make meaning of the participant's experiences, which are rather subjective and do not lend themselves to direct generalization. This study proceeded in the four steps of phenomenological research, that is, bracketing (identifying and putting aside trends in the quantitative study; to inform what the researcher expected to discover), intuiting (harmonizing the variance in the data to obtain a common understanding of the trend, analyzing (categorizing and making sense of the significant meanings) and describing; capturing the themes that run across the data.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

Quantitative Data

This section presents results obtained from the analysis of the questionnaire data. The researcher analysed the questionnaire data using IBM SPSS statistics package version 20. Given that the data was ordinal (ranked Likert scale responses), the researcher used descriptive statistics and cross tabulations to analyse the data and opted for frequency distributions to capture the results.

Anglophone and Francophone Bilingual Teachers Official Language Out-group Attitude at Enrolment

This section presents attitudes of ABT and FBT towards their out-group, before they came in contact in a common language learning environment. We shall begin with the attitudes of the ABT before presenting those of FBT.

Table 2a: ABT Pre - Enrolment Perceptions of Francophone Cameroonians

Variable N = 55	Negative		Positive		Neutral	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
This country will be better off without Francophones	28	28.9	15	14.4	12	13.4
Anglophones should get more recognition.	18	18.6	10	10.3	27	26.8
I understand people's negative thoughts about Francophones.	20	20.6	15	15.4	20	20.6
Francophones have very bad characteristics.	21	19.6	17	17.5	17	17.5
Francophones have done much to make the country successful.	6	7.3	23	23.7	26	25.8
There is little to admire about Francophones.	19	19.5	18	18.6	18	18.6
I get upset on negative talks about Francophones.	27	27.9	7	7.2	21	21.6
I visited Francophones.	10	10.3	44	43.9	1	1.0

The results in Table 2a reveals that, prior to their training ABT's attitudes towards Francophone Cameroonians was negative. This is attested by the higher percentages registered by the negative categories. The only component that stood out in a positive direction was the affective component (I get upset on negative talks about Francophones.). These results indicate that, at the onset of their training, ABT conformed to the prevailing negative stereotypes of Francophones. The results resonate with the findings of previous studies (Aroga Besong, 1997; Messaanga, 2014) in relation to negative stereotyping of Francophone Cameroonians by Anglophone Cameroonians. The stereotypes are both ethnocentric (favouring in-groups and castigating out-groups) and ethical (expressing dislike for Francophone manners). However, the results also underscore that the ABT did not hold any antipathy against Francophones. Thus, the prejudice levels were not so high and so the context was favourable enough for a positive intergroup experience.

Table 2b: FBT's Pre-Enrolment Perceptions of Anglophone Cameroonians

Variable N = 42	Positive		Negative		Neutral	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
This country will be better off without Anglophones.	14	14.4	14	14.4	13	13.4
Anglophones should get more recognition	12	12.3	11	11.3	19	19.6
I understand people's negative thoughts about Anglophones.	12	12.4	15	15.4	15	15.5
Anglophones have very bad characteristics.	17	17.5	13	13.4	12	12.4
Anglophones have done much to make this country successful.	21	21.6	7	7.2	14	4.4
There was little to admire about Anglophones	10	10.3	22	22.7	10	10.3
Get upset on negative talks about Anglophones	24	24.7	5	5.2	13	13.4
Visited Anglophone classmates	11	11.3	30	30.9	1	1.0

The results in Table 2b indicate that overall, prior to direct contact, FBT perceived Anglophone Cameroonians positively. This can be seen in the higher scores registered in the positive category. However, there was a clear manifestation of antipathy towards the FBT's out-group as can be seen in the high percentage registered in the negative category for the item 'There was little to admire about Anglophones'. This told of negative prejudices towards Anglophones. What this meant was that the FBT did not conform to the negative stereotyping of Anglophones, but didn't admire them neither. This is rather contradictory, given that prejudice and stereotypes tend to move in the same direction.

Table 3: Relationship between Contact Rate and Contact Experience with Classmates

	GOOD	VERY GOOD	NEUTRAL	BAD	VERY BAD
All the time	13.40	20.60	0.00	1.00	0.00
Often	13.40	11.30	19.60	1.00	0.00
Rarely	0.00	3.10	4.10	0.00	1.00
Sometimes	3.10	4.10	4.10	0.00	0.00

Source: Computed by Researcher Using SPSS 20

Table 4a: ABT Post Training Perceptions of Francophones

Variable N = 42	Positive		Negative		Neutral	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
This country will be better off without Francophones	21	21.7	23	23.7	15	15.5
Anglophones should get more recognition	14	14.4	17	17.5	24	24.7
I understand people's negative thoughts about Francophones.	16	16.5	15	15.4	24	24.7
Francophones have very bad characteristics	17	17.5	19	19.6	17	17.5
Francophones have done much to make this country successful	24	24.8	8	8.2	23	23.7
There was little to admire about Francophones	22	22.7	16	16.4	17	17.5
Get upset on negative talks about Francophones	23	23.7	10	10.4	22	22.7
Visited Francophones classmates	42	42.3	13	13.4	1	1.0

As seen in Table 3 above, the intergroup contact relationship between ABT and FBT was a positive one. The respondents who reported that they met most regularly equally consented to having very good relationships with their classmates (20.6%). This implied that the greater the quantity of contact, the better the relationship between ABT and FBT. This echoes Pettigrew (1998) stance that repeated positive contacts enhance positive relationships. This is thanks to knowledge of the out-group, changes in behaviour, affective ties and in-group reassessment. We shall now explore the extent the direction to which this positive contact.

The results in Table 4a indicate an overall positive tilt in ABT perceptions of their Francophone classmates at the end of their training. Although their evaluations were still globally negative, comparatively, there was an average 5% drop for each component. One item that stood out positively was that on 'I visited my Francophone classmates'. This tells of a significant growth in friendships between the group members, thereby reaffirming the claim of Pettigrew (1998) that in the course of favourable intergroup contacts, friendships are birthed, resulting in reduced

prejudice. Unfortunately, the neutral category registered the highest percentages. This made it difficult to draw a conclusion. So, the respondent's dispositions towards the other official language group remained uncertain. This suggested that a good number of the respondents did not want to open up on their opinions. Hence, further inquiry is required to confirm these results.

Table 4b: FBT Post-Training Perceptions of Anglophones

Variable N = 42	Positive		Negative		Neutral	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
This country will be better off without Anglophones	21	21.6	15	15.5	6	6.2
Anglophones should get more recognition	14	14.5	14	14.4	14	14.4
I understand people's negative thoughts about Anglophones.	8	8.2	20	20.6	14	14.4
Anglophones have very bad characteristics	17	17.5	13	13.4	12	12.4
Anglophones have done much to make this country successful	19	19.6	4	4.1	19	19.6
There was little to admire about Anglophones	16	16.5	7	7.2	19	19.6
Get upset on negative talks about Anglophones	22	22.7	10	10.3	10	10.3
Visited Anglophone classmates	30	30.9	1	1.0	11	11.3

The results in Table 4b indicate that, at the end of their training, FBT maintained positive evaluations of their Anglophone classmates. This is evident in the higher percentages registered in the positive categories. These percentages also recorded an average 4% increase per component as compared with their pre-training scores. As with the results for ABT, there was a significant increase of 20% in the item 'I visited my Anglophone classmates. This means that contact in an official bilingual classroom yielded a good number of intergroup friendships. These results rhyme with those of Wright & Tropp (2005). Thus, intergroup contact does not only bring about prejudice-reduction, but also increases positive perceptions.

Results of the Qualitative Data Analysis

This section presents a description of the textual data collected. It aims at shedding light on confusing, contradictory or unusual responses found in the survey results. Before getting to the results, it is important to understand the background of the respondents, given that this background information proved to be crucial in fully grasping the perspectives of the respondents. The background is used to draw correlations for a better understanding of the results.

At the end of the quantitative data analysis, the following perplexity remained:

1. Why were the attitudes of a good number of both groups of respondents towards their official language out-group imprecise at the beginning and at the end of their study?
2. Why did the FBT express positive opinions of Anglophones as well as negative feelings towards them?

The qualitative data elicited and presented here answers these questions.

Pre-Training Out-Group Attitudes

Given the challenge in determining the attitudes of both ABT and FBT towards each other both at the beginning and at the end of their training, this analysis set out to shed more light on this area. The following results were obtained.

Anglophones are Hospitable and Committed French Language Learners

Firstly, the data revealed that the attitudes of FBT towards Anglophones, prior to training in an OL learning context were positive. The intention was to elicit FBT attitudes towards Anglophones prior to contact, but the respondent chose to talk about the contact experiences before training and at their early days in contact instead. Nevertheless, this revelation painted a positive image of Francophones' attitude towards Anglophones; one that is characterized by admiration for their steadfastness in the learning process and hospitality. For example:

I love Anglophones because they are not shy. When they are studying and having difficulties, they are not shy like Francophones. (Bil 2)

I loved Anglophones because they are very welcoming and when you have difficulties and you approach them, they welcome you (Bil 2)

It indicated that FBT admired the ABT's openness to them. It gives an image of a humble, polite Anglophone people. This attitude has always been evoked in the literature (Nfi, 2014). It is depicted as a culture that transcended from the colonial masters. Though a tough language to them, Anglophones remained dedicated to learning the French language. These results, therefore, clarify the contradiction in the quantitative results, which gave the impression that FBT thought positively of Anglophones, but had negative feelings about them. As such, it can be confidently concluded that, overall, FBT's attitude towards Anglophones at the beginning of their training was positive.

Stereotyped Mind-Set about Francophones

A second revelation from the data was that ABT brought with them preconceived mentalities about Francophones. They held that Francophones were troublemakers who looked down on Anglophones:

Before meeting them as classmates, I thought they were proud people, like a proud set of people and they feel like English means nothing to them; that they are enough with their French; that they wouldn't need English, like they wouldn't need us. (Bil 3).

This position was held by those ABT who had not have contacts with Francophones. It is worth recalling that two of the interviewees had not come in contact with Francophones before enrolment. This suggests that their views were thus picked up from their environment. Unfortunately, even for those who had had contact with them, the picture was not painted favourably. They were presented as stubborn and disrespectful. This clearly indicates that ABT's attitudes towards Francophones at enrolment were negative. It resonates the position of the literature on Anglophone/Francophone Cameroonian relationship that the Anglophone Cameroonian majority feel marginalised (Echu, 2003; Anchimbe, 2005; Arjun and Jelte, 2015)

Limited French language Competence: An Intimidation to Anglophones

Thirdly, a look at the ABT affective responses to Francophones at the onset of their training indicated that the respondents had negative feelings towards Francophones. It is worth recalling that ABT displayed high rates of negative prejudicial feelings towards Francophones. So these results confirm those of the quantitative phase and also provide justifications for those feelings. It indicated that ABT felt lacking in linguistic competence in the presence of Francophones:

I felt Francophones were kind of superior because they could manipulate the English language better than we the Anglophones could use French.(Bil 5)

We are the ones with the problem, because I thought my English was small and their French is big, just because I did not know the language. (Bil 3)

The limitation made the ABT to feel minor and insecure. It goes without saying that Anglophones linked their feelings about the language to the people and all that they represented; political leadership. Thus, a glaring example of the interplay between attitude towards a language and its speakers. Both are intricately interwoven. These results confirm the position of Musumpa (n.d.) that the official English / French bilingualism in Cameroon is not the main source of conflict between the two groups. Rather, it is the competition for resources that creates an asymmetric relationship that is displayed by the stereotypes. This highlights the need for official bilingual intergroup contexts, where such prejudices can be minimized.

Positive Stereotyping of ABT

As regards perceptions of the behaviours of ABT after three years of contact, the FBT ascribed positive traits to the ABT. These included friendliness, conviviality and courteousness. So desirable are these attributes that Bil 6 expressed a desire for all of Cameroon to become an English-speaking nation:

Anglophones are well-mannered. Their system of life is easy-going. I would rather like Cameroon to turn into an English-speaking country. (Bil 6)

He also underscores that these qualities originated from contact with the British. Thus, relating their characteristics not to African ethnicity, but to the Anglo-Saxon culture. It is worth noting that this position is constant. It resonates with the opinion of the pre-training phase. This goes to say that intergroup contact augmented positive characterizations of Anglophones. These results resonate with Zingora, Vezzali and Graf (2020) findings that in the case of negatively stereotyped groups, positive contacts do not have any attitude-improving effect. However, this study goes a step further to show that stereotype-inconsistent contacts actually augment the positive stereotypes. Hence, it improves attitudes positively.

Insolent but Humble FBT

The analysis of ABT perceptions of FBT at the end of training revealed that ABT considered FBT to be cheeky and not watchful with their words:

To a larger extent, they are arrogant; they just speak without minding if somebody feels hurt. (Bil 1)

This must be a shock to ABT who have grown up to be polite in their ways, as have been seen above. This notwithstanding, thanks to their contact experiences, ABT saw a positive side to these people. The FBT were said to be simple in dressing and assiduous learners:

After I came in contact with Francophones, well, there were some things I admired about them: their simplicity in the way they dress, I admired their zealotry, the way they study. They could use the whole night just to study. (Bil 5)

Initially, mingling was not easy, but eventually, Francophones turned out to be friendly. They were good. I even had friends and even after that, we remained friends. We have good relationships. (Bil 5)

As such, these results confirm that of the quantitative phase of this study that mingling had a positive outcome on the attitude of ABT towards FBT. As stipulated by Pettigrew (1998) the attitudes of the ABT changed thanks to learning about the out-group that is the FBT, in everyday interactions. At the end, the ABT deviated from the institutionalized stereotypes that

Francophone Cameroonians are lazy and arrogant (Nkoum-Me-Ntseny, 1996; Arroga Bessong, 1997; Massanga, 2014; Mallet, 2016). Thus, this finding underscores the importance of official bilingual intergroup contexts.

Discussion

The aim of this paper was to examine the effects of intergroup contact in an official bilingual language learning context on stereotypes of Anglophone and Francophone Cameroonians towards each other. The results of the study indicated that bilingual contexts are favourable spaces for positive intergroup contacts with a great potential of building friendships and thereby reducing negative prejudice and stereotypes. For both groups under study, friendship ties increased by up to 20% after the groups came in contact. These results are similar to those of Messanga (2014), who found bilingual universities to be more favourable in building friendship ties than monolingual universities, thanks to more frequency of contact. Thus, official language bilingual contexts are suitable environments, where positive relationships between the two groups are fostered.

Also, pre-training attitudes towards out-group members varied between the groups. While ABT evaluated Francophones negatively both cognitively and affectively, FBT evaluations were cognitively positive, and affectively negative. For ABT, negative affective evaluations and labelling of Francophones were stronger at the beginning of their training. This goes to say that ABT attitudes were prejudice and stereotype-consistent, contrary to that of FBT. For those with indirect contact with Francophones, (who had studied French, but had not had face-to-face interactions with Francophone) the stereotypes emanated from negative prejudice towards Francophones. Francophones were judged based on what the ABT had heard about them. This group held that Francophones were arrogant and they looked down on Anglophones. Those who had come in direct contact with Francophones (mostly family members and classmates) described Francophones as rude, stubborn and disrespectful. Thus, ABT conformed to negative attitudes towards Francophones at the beginning of training while FBT went contrary to the established negative dispositions.

On the contrary, at pre-training, FBT's affective and cognitive evaluations of Anglophone Cameroonians were positive. FBT thought that Anglophones were polite, hospitable, humble and hardworking. These results resonate with those of previous studies (Arroga Bessong, 1997). The FBT conformity with positive stereotypes was accounted for by the source of their motivations to learn the English language. A look at the background information of these groups of participants revealed that most FBT were either from official language bilingual homes, in an official language intermarriage context or had lived with relatives of an English-speaking background. What's more most of these relatives or their values were the ones who oriented them. All the interviewees attested to have been encouraged by their parents or relatives to take up bilingual studies. This underscores the relationship between motivation and attitude in language learning. In this case, motivation birthed favourable attitude towards the language which mirrored into attitudes towards users of the language.

Another interesting finding was that the source of Anglophone prejudice towards Francophones lied in lack of competence in using the French language. The respondents found the French language to be difficult to learn. The challenges they faced in using the language evoked anxieties. When Francophones stereotyped instead of being sympathetic with Anglophones, this only led the Anglophones to be negatively judgemental about them. Here, we see the interplay between attitudes towards a language and the speakers of a language. The former mirrors into the latter. Hence, the need for bilingual programs to take intergroup contexts into consideration. As championed by Allport (1954), such contact situations allows

for cooperation as both group serve as resource and support for each other in the quest of a common goal, which in this case is learning the second language.

At post training, both ABT and FBT's attitudes towards the other group had improved. For ABT, negative prejudices as well as stereotypes reduced considerably, while for FBT their admiration and positive evaluations increased. ABT moved from seeing FBT as arrogant to describing them as assiduous in studies, simple in dressing, but still disrespectful and disputatious. FBT, on their part, increasingly appreciated their ABT classmates for their friendliness, conviviality and courteousness. Both findings go contrary to existing literature on Anglophone and Francophone stereotypes. Anglophone stereotypes are mostly negative criticisms of their tendency to oppose in political matters. Mallet (2016) found that traits like 'Anglofools' connotes foolishness, mainly referring to the fact that, when it comes to politics, Anglophones reason differently from Francophones. This is glaring in the expression 'vous les Anglo-fou, vous raisonnez a gauche' [you Anglophones look at things from the left side]. In other words, Francophones saw Anglophones claims to marginalisation as senseless. In recent times, 'un(e) anglo' connotes one who behaves stupidly, with stupid retaining its denotative meaning (Tchouanmou Henang, 2011). Such a pejorative expression evokes the Francophone air of superiority. But, FBT, as revealed in this study, do not share this view. Rather, they positively appreciate Anglophone resourcefulness, social and moral values. This confirms the findings of Arroga Bessong (1997) that Francophones admire Anglophones for being hardworking, polite and honest. Negative labels like 'les ennemis de la nation' [the nation's enemies], referring to Anglophones as secessionists or 'opposants' [opponents] did not come up in this study. This makes it indisputable that both direct and indirect contact with their second official language group reduces Francophone prejudices and stereotyping.

Francophone stereotypes, on their part, has always been a moral critic. A term like 'frogs' is an offensive language in Cameroon used by Anglophone Cameroonians in response to their typecast as 'anglofools' by their counterpart. Mallet (2016) links the term 'Franco frogs' to arrogance, talkativeness and empty-headedness. This is new, as opposed to previous scholars who identified Cameroon Francophone stereotypes to include arrogance, laziness and tribalism. Nevertheless, a feature that cuts across both studies is arrogance. Unlike, anglophone stereotypes that are mostly political, Francophone stereotypes are both political and ethical. In this study, ABT only castigate Francophones along the lines of ethical values. This suggests that direct, as well as indirect contact with official languages significantly reduces political stereotypes directed at Francophone Cameroonians, but has little effect on negative moral evaluations.

4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our discussion so far has made it clear that intergroup contact between members of the official language groups in Cameroon, be it direct or indirect, positively reduces negative prejudice, positively transforms negative political stereotypes (secessionists, tribalism), minimizes negative moral judgements (arrogance, disrespect, verbosity) and increases favourable categorizations (hospitality, politeness and humility). Therefore, bilingual official language learning contexts, one in which Anglophones and Francophones share the same classroom, is a potential space to engender peaceful coexistence in Cameroon. The Cameroon educational authorities may want to consider this option as an alternative to monolingual special bilingual classes, private bilingual primary educationists, especially those in cosmopolitan cities could take up this approach in their schools. Also, adds its voice to that of many others to call for the incorporation of intercultural aspects in existing school curricular. More specifically to our context, Anglophone and Francophone Cameroonian intercultural topics should be included in

school programmes across all levels of education. In this way, school could serve as a melting pot for both cultures, thereby making tiny strides towards national integration.

Also, negative stereotypes are nourishments to conflicts in communities. They have been identified by scholars of hate speech as a global threat to peace and security (Nwenfor, N.D). It is high time the perpetrators of derogatory remarks start being held accountable for their actions. The powers that be might have to begin meting out sanctions on the promoters of hate speech. This study focused on face-to-face contact situations only. It would be interesting to also find out what obtains in indirect contact situations

This study has highlighted the potential of intergroup official bilingual classrooms in facilitating peaceful co-existence between Anglophone and Francophone Cameroonians. The state could engage in a pilot study, especially to find out the attitudes of Cameroonians towards intergroup study spaces.

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