

Rescuing Endangered Cameroonian Languages through the Documentation and Publication of Digital Audio Materials

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Abstract

The majority of materials published in Cameroon are mainly on English and French even though most Cameroonians particularly those living in the rural areas speak local languages. In this era of globalization and multi-media platforms where information on sound and video gradually seems to be replacing books, this paper argues that the increased publication of materials in different audio formats and a strong government's legislation for the introduction of all unwritten languages in education will greatly rescue endangered Cameroonian languages. The argument for publishing in endangered languages is proposed on the bases of some speakers' increased involvement and participation in their communities' literacy activities as a result of the ongoing use of the Proclaimer (audio Scriptures) in Mofu-Gudur, Bafut and Kako among others. Its use has not only enhanced and revalorized the statuses of these languages, but also shaped entrenched attitudes. This paper briefly presents the situation of endangered languages in Cameroon, and examines some challenges in publishing in indigenous languages. It also provides some reasons for publishing in these languages and the progressive publication of Scriptural materials in different gadgets and ends with some perspectives.

Keywords: endangered language, documentation, publishing, Proclaimer, Scriptures

Introduction

One of the clearest causes of language endangerment is the dominance of official languages over local languages and the fact that they take secondary positions in status and domains of use. As Batibo (2005, p. vii) notes, language endangerment and death are phenomena that have recently "become matters of great concern not only to linguists but also to politicians, ethnographers, language planners and decision makers all over the world". He further maintains that the outcry is becoming louder and louder, particularly after the release of some alarming statistics such as those of Krauss (1992), which predict that by the end of the twenty-first century, only 600 languages will remain on the face of the earth; meaning that 90% of the world's languages will have perished. Similarly, Skutnabb-Kangas (2000: xx) observes that 'languages, and with them, cultures, are dying today at a pace faster than ever before in human history'.

In the case of Cameroon, the low developmental status and the restricted use of local languages in wider domains probably trigger both negative attitude and language shift in the different communities. Ultimately, the subordinate status of Cameroonian languages in relation to official languages is a phenomenon that characterizes practically most African languages. If, according to Chumbow (2009, p. 5), languages that are functionally vibrant and full of vitality may become endangered by losing their vitality and go through varying phases of attrition resulting in language death, then, to prevent the target languages from dying, appropriate measures must be taken to ensure their maintenance by way of revitalization or the process of re-enforcing their vitality (UNESCO, 2003a). One of these strategies is not only to document and publish diverse materials in all endangered languages, but also to record such materials in audio visual format, particularly the translated version of the NT in these languages, for wider community dissemination and participation.

This paper argues that the progressive publication of materials through the use of digital audio players in endangered languages in Cameroon is one of the strategies for their revitalization and maintenance. To do this, it briefly presents the situation of endangered languages in Cameroon and examines some challenges in publishing in the country's endangered languages before highlighting why it is important to publish in these languages. It presents some illuminating examples not only of some audio players, but also speakers of three different communities listening to the Proclaimer.

The Situation of Local Languages in Cameroon

As indicated above, Cameroonian languages are endangered in varying degrees of vitality depending on their levels of standardization and development. While some are relatively vital, others are less or more endangered, while some are already extinct as presented in tables 1 and 2 below.

Tables 1 and 2 present extinct and nearly extinct languages in Cameroon.

Table 1: Extinct languages in Cameroon

	Languages	Region
1	Duru	Adamawa
2	Gueve	Adamawa
3	Mbu	Adamawa
4	Nimberi	Adamawa
5	Sama	Adamawa
6	Yeni	Adamawa

Table 2: Nearly Extinct Languages in Cameroon

	Languages	Region
1	Bikya	North West
2	Busuu	North West
3	Bushuo	North West
4	Bung	North West
5	Ndai	North
6	Ngong	North
7	Luo	North
8	Oblo	North
9	Pam	North
10	Zumaya	Far North
11	Twendi	Adamawa

Tables 1 and 2 above respectively present extinct and nearly extinct languages in Cameroon. If six languages are already extinct as shown in table 1 while 11 are nearly extinct as presented in table 2, then it is crucial for the 11 languages among others to be documented as soon as possible and the New Testament (NT) translated and its audio format recorded progressively as it is already being done in some communities. In fact, the development of a standard writing system of a language is found to be significant in promoting its wider use, particularly when the vernacular NT is partially or entirely published with its audio version. The Jesus film which can be watched based on Luke's Gospel and the audio NT translated version of the Bible, among others, are greatly enhancing the statuses of some of the Cameroonian languages and thereby widening their domains for survival and vitality (Tasah 2012). Since indigenous languages are endangered in different degrees, the challenge for linguists, community authors, and artists is to keep producing and publishing diverse audio materials in all forms in these languages. But is it easy to document and publish materials in endangered and extinct languages? The

following section examines some difficulties that may be encountered by some of those who want to publish in endangered and nearly extinct languages.

Some Challenges in Publishing Materials in Cameroonian endangered Languages

Following independence, the focus was on developing indigenous written literature, with leading figures such as Chinua Achebe appealing to African authors and illustrators to save African children from the 'beautifully packaged poison imported from Europe (Gregorio, 2001, p. 15). Views on the languages in which materials were to be written were highly polarized. However, Achebe (1975) acknowledges that abandoning one's mother tongue is a 'dreadful betrayal' that produces 'guilty feeling'. He contends that there was no other choice: *'I have been given a language and I intend to use it'*. On the contrary, Ngugi WaThiong'o (1988) describes his decision to start writing in Gikuyu after seventeen years of involvement in Afro-English literature as *'part and parcel of the anti-imperialist struggles of Kenyan and African peoples'*. Nonetheless, growing numbers of multilingual and indigenous publications are helping to create a clearly African identity in the post-independence period.

Ouane and Glanz (2011) also believe that many countries on the continent have neglected the most important tools in the trade of African language publishing in favour of the official languages, which more often than not are the languages of the former colonial powers. This neglect is not a recent development, particularly in the context of Cameroon where English and French continue to be the dominant official languages, while national languages are relegated to the background as they take secondary and restrictive positions in status and domains of use. This is quite true since over the years, writing and publishing in indigenous languages seem to be faced with some challenges. These challenges were orchestrated by the imposition of English and French over local languages. This led to many decades of exclusion and undermining the importance of indigenous languages and as a result, very little material have been written in these languages. Cameroonian languages even today are not seen as languages of economy. This therefore implies that speakers of these languages, especially those in the rural areas, are deprived of socio-economic empowerment.

According to Bamgbose (1991, p. 49), the production of books in African languages represents only 16 % of total book production and similarly, Krolak (2005, p. 3) maintains that Africa produces a mere 2% of the world's books, despite having 12% of the world's population. He also estimates that sub-Saharan Africa imports close to 70% of its books. If the main market for books on Cameroonian languages is education and they are not yet sufficiently used in schools and most families do not have disposable income to spend on books, then authors will certainly not risk publishing materials in these languages.

Another major obstacle to the expansion of publishing in national languages in Cameroon in particular and African countries in general is due to the slow implementation of language-in-education policy. While the drive to produce more titles in Cameroonian languages offers new opportunities for local writers, it also creates new challenges. Very few Cameroonian authors write in their first languages and manuscripts submitted to publishers are usually in

foreign languages since most of the books published are in official languages. Therefore, it appears that most publishers tend to target the literate audience (English and French) and also publish books on topical issues that can easily attract readers' attention to buy. The challenge for publishers who want to publish in Cameroonian languages is to overcome the difficulties that they may be facing by applying for funding from appropriate sources and to publish materials that can be recommended both for multilingual education in primary school and for national languages and cultures in secondary schools. Thus, Heugh (2007, p. 209) outlines two important consequences for education:

Publishers cannot and (will not) risk producing educational materials in African languages without guaranteed sales. Teachers cannot risk teaching more effectively through African languages because there is no material support for this. Publishers want to know whether there is market out there for their books that's how they make their money. Government hasn't said, 'We will buy those books for those schools so the ones that have published have taken a huge risk.

In this connection, the failure to firmly establish Cameroonian languages as the main medium of instruction both at the primary and secondary levels nationwide has far reaching implications for publishing because the few competent authors that can publish in national languages may prepare materials and wait to publish them only when government's policy will legislate for an official introduction of all minority languages in the nursery through to primary and secondary schools.

However, new technologies have made access to publishing in local languages quite possible in this era of growing technological development. Such access has provided alternative approaches to publishing and has facilitated publishing possibilities. On the basis of this observation, it can be stated that fundamental human and societal values are being undermined, and the mass of Cameroonian people are being disempowered when there is failure or lack of published materials in endangered languages. Therefore, all those who are capable of publishing in national languages need to be encouraged so that they can also take advantage of the availability of new technology to publish materials in these languages easily. The fact that publishers are producing far fewer titles for speakers of less widely spoken languages has repercussions for equality of opportunity for the speakers from the different languages. It is essential that translations should be undertaken in all languages, especially those that are more endangered so that they can be revitalized. If publishers seemingly face some challenges in publishing different materials in less endangered languages in Cameroon, then why publish in languages that are relatively more endangered?

Why Publish in Cameroonian Endangered Languages?

Publishing remains practically impossible in any language until it is functionally committed to writing. Many of the Cameroonian languages are still to be written. In an era of growing globalization, publishing in Cameroonian endangered languages is critically important for the cultural and linguistic maintenance of these languages. Publishing in any language essentially helps in its development and preservation. Essien (1983) underscores the

importance of written language when he states: *'Without a written language, people cannot preserve their history, their ethos, their philosophies, their heroic deeds and exploit their myths and legends;*

Thus, the undeveloped state of some endangered and extinct languages especially with respect to writing may have contributed to the gradual disappearance of some whose speakers might have shifted to more dominant languages.

Publishing in indigenous languages will greatly help in developing and promoting a sense of community ownership and participation in linguistic activities. It also helps not only in the creation of new employment opportunities (in the area of translation, development of literacy materials and teaching the language to different categories of people in the community), but also in the production of a larger pool of suitably qualified human resources through a better understanding of learning materials.

It also shows respect for the cultural heritage of the communities concerned and stimulates self-pride to future readers and writers of these languages. Materials that have been published in minority languages through any form greatly shape entrenched attitudes and enables the speakers to develop greater interest in their language which is so crucial for language revitalization. Publishing also reduces the inequalities associated with the privileged status of official languages vis-à-vis local languages. It preserves the cultural identity of the indigenous people and makes them avoid the cultural difficulties associated with using other people's languages.

The existence of published materials in a language also increases and improves the flow of information between government structures and the indigenous people if increased efforts are made to translate relevant information on government business into those languages. Development cannot be attained in a situation where the national communication network is "based exclusively on non-indigenous languages" (Chakava 1996, p. 26). Put differently, a people that lose their language or languages are a people that lose their words, and when a people lose their words, they lose their soul and vision of the world. When this happens the community in question becomes lodged in dependence that lasts until it recovers its words and begins to articulate its past, present and future, nationally and internationally (Kum'a Ndumbe III 2007, p. 39).

By and large, the need to publish in endangered languages can be summed up in the following six postulates by Crystal (2000, pp.130-41):

1. An endangered language will progress if its speakers increase their prestige within the dominant community.
2. An endangered language will progress if its speakers increase their wealth relative to the dominant community.
3. An endangered language will progress if its speakers increase their legitimate power in the eyes of the dominant community.
4. An endangered language will progress if its speakers have a strong presence in the educational system.

5. An endangered language will progress if its speakers can write their language down.
6. An endangered language will progress if its speakers can make use of electronic technology.

It is obvious that language documentation which is the foundational stage for publishing materials in local languages is at the base of Crystal's postulates.

Thus, the documentation of all Cameroonian endangered languages should become every linguist's concern so that these languages can later be published progressively, particularly the translated NT, following the emergence of new technologies today.

2. Progressive Publication of the Translated New Testament into Cameroonian languages
According to Wendy (1997), African countries still suffer from high levels of illiteracy. In addition to the paucity of school textbooks, there is the further problem of the wide spread unavailability outside the classroom of supplementary readers, fiction and general books, especially in the rural areas. Moreover, the onslaught of television and other media have undermined the habit and culture of reading, even among the more privileged and educated sectors of society. For the vast majority of people, reading is an activity to be endured during a short period at school and then abandoned.

Although reading has been an enduring activity particularly in rural areas where the majority of the population are illiterate, the translation of the NT Bibles into local languages for the speakers' spiritual empowerment often takes fifteen or more years before it is completed. Some literacy activities are usually organized simultaneously in the community concerned so that the translated version will be read by the speakers both at home and in their churches. However, after the publication of the NT which is often both expensive and time consuming, it would appear that over the years, very few people could read the 'Vernacular NT Bible' successfully. As a response to this growing concern, The Seed Company (TSC) and others decided to introduce some innovative techniques to significantly reduce the duration of Bible translation. Its vision is for many TSC projects to produce usable Scripture long before there is a completed NT. Traditionally, translation projects often could not publish one or a few books of the Bible until a finished NT or Old Testament(OT) was completed. But now, it encourages progressive publication as soon as there is a completed work product (typically one or more books of the Bible). (TSC, 2013, Progressive Publication – Seed Connect).

Progressive publication gets portions of the Scripture into the hands of churches as quickly as they become available, rather than making people wait many years for a completed NT. The primary requirement is that a portion of the Scripture has been through all of the Forum of Bible Agencies International (FOBAI) steps, such as consultant checking to ensure that it is a quality translation, and that it may stand on its own (FOBAI, Basic Principles and Procedures for Bible Translation, 2006). When considering progressive publication, the two main issues are format and distribution mechanism.

Formats for progressive publication include MP3 audio, digital book (EPUB & PDF), video, and traditional booklets. Distribution mechanisms include websites, SD cards, and Bluetooth. (TSC, 2013, Progressive Publication – Seed Connect). MP3 audio recordings of Scripture represent the most popular format for progressive publication. This is because the speakers

of some of the Cameroonian languages that already have audio recordings of Scriptures can download them from the internet, the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) and the Cameroon Association for Bible Translation and Literacy (CABTAL). Video formats are commonly used for displaying the Jesus Film in some of the languages, a faithful retelling of the Gospel of Luke. They have proven extremely popular and useful in the 34 languages that already have the films or the CDs. According to Dr. Larry Jones, Senior Vice President of Bible Translation of The Seed Company, VAST has “produced a full rendering of the Jesus Film script (comprising about 1/3 of the Gospel of Luke) in the space of a month”.

According to Fierbaugh (2013), SD cards are small storage chips about the size of a fingernail. Most phones and many computers will read them similar to a USB drive. Since they are used in most phones (both feature phones and smart phones), SD cards are seemingly becoming popular in rural communities in Cameroon. In creative access areas, SD cards are an ideal distribution mechanism because they are easy to conceal. SD cards such as the one inserted near the bottom of the radio below are already being used in some Cameroonian communities.

Fig 1. An SD card inserted in a radio set.



This radio presents one of the techniques through which any carefully recorded information from an endangered or extinct language can be published and used for community sensitization. Memory cards such as the one inserted in the radio above is also easy to duplicate locally in small quantities. Since these radios and memory cards are sold in the market in all the country’s regions, it is possible for any socio-cultural or Scriptural audio materials to be recorded in any of the endangered or extinct languages for preservation and transmission. This era can therefore be considered as a golden age for information dissemination in different domains as the illiterates population can easily be reached out with Scriptural or any form of socio-cultural information recorded in different gadgets such as audio players.

Publishing through audio digital Players

The following gadgets clearly represent some different new digital audio players that have been produced and they are quite easy to learn and use. They include Mega Voice, Davar,

Audible, GRN Saber, Papyrus, Shofar and Story Teller as presented below. Fig 2: **Multi-purpose audio players – Envoy S, Audible, Saber, Papyrus, Shofar, Story Teller.**



The above gadgets are adapted from Margetts' (2014) digital audio players. It is certain that endangered and nearly extinct languages can easily be preserved and revitalized for intergenerational transmission once they are documented and recorded in whatever form in any of the audio players. For example, the Mega Voice as presented above is a pocket sized audio recorder that is solar powered and can store the entire text of Scripture. It also has rooms to store hundreds of hours of extra data (<http://megavoice.com>). This means numerous languages can be stored in it. Thus, indigenous language speakers can listen and re-listen to stories for personal use or turn up the volume and use it in large and small group settings. They are small enough to pass unnoticed by the gatekeepers of countries that seek to suppress the message of Christianity.

Apart from the gadgets presented above that can be used in recoding language material is the Proclaimer which is being used in more than 70 of the Cameroonian communities.

Fig 3. The Proclaimer



sound recording of the Audio-Bible is built into a device that looks similar to a cassette player. The device, known as the Proclaimer, is powered by solar energy, batteries or electricity. It requires no maintenance and is virtually indestructible because it has no moving parts.

It is a digital player dedicated to playing the Scriptures in a local language. It was developed primarily as a playback device for poor and illiterate people who may not have any other source to hear the Scriptures. It is a self-powered audio player that is designed to be used in remote and rugged locations. Its embedded microchip is pre-loaded with the NT in local languages. The

How does it work?

It works by an installed microchip that contains Scriptures in the local language; the chip will not erase or wear out from frequent playing. The battery can play for 15 hours and can be recharged enough times to play the entire NT more than 1000 times. It has an in-built generator and solar panel to charge the battery. The solar panel in addition to charging the battery will run the Proclaimer even without battery power as long as there is sunlight.

The sound is digital quality and loud enough to be heard clearly by groups as large as 300. Thus, preliterate Christians and non-Christians are gathering in listening groups weekly to listen to Scriptures in the Proclaimer such as the Mofu-Gudur, Bafut, and the Kako languages in the following pictures below.



the Far North Region



in the Far North Region



in the East Region

When speakers of languages such as those presented in the pictures above receive the translated and audio versions of their NT (the Proclaimer) from the SIL Cameroon, they form different groups and start listening immediately either in churches or in different neighborhoods in their communities. It usually takes over five to seven months of listening systematically from the Book of Matthew through to Revelation and providing reports to the SIL coordinator in charge of the programme before the Proclaimer becomes the group's or the church's property.

These are players which come with fixed Scriptural content rather than being multi-purpose players that can be used for any kind of content. The organizations that make them are involved in organizing the recording and editing of the audio content. In most cases, this is done when there is a significant body of translated Scripture available, such as the whole NT. Radio programmes, podcasts, audio recorders, and visual aids are being used all over the world to support the teaching of stories, songs, and other oral ways of processing information in the languages of the least reached people groups (Chiang et al., 2004).

The work of Bible translation by mission organizations such as Wycliffe has produced accurate versions of the biblical text that can be captured in audio form (Swarr & Koch, 2013). For example, Faith Comes by Hearing Ministry has recorded audio versions of the Bible in over seven hundred national languages in general and more than 70 NT translated versions of the Bible in Cameroon. Their long held strategy has been to send a team into a

community and recruit locals to provide voices. Also, they have taken advantage of new technologies steadily such as MP3 players and Bible Sticks. They claim to have the largest catalog of audio recordings of Scripture in the world. They make these versions available for free on their website: <http://www.faithcomesbyhearing.com/what-we-do>. They have recently added a new element by using Virtual recordings (<http://www.virtualrecording.com/default.aspx>), which allows anyone who has a computer with a microphone and Internet access to record podcasts and web streaming. The implications for these rapid, inexpensive technological opportunities are not yet fully understood.

The advent of the cell phone cannot be underestimated for its potential in local communities. The spread of cell phones usage among the poor in rural areas, particularly among non-literate villagers in remote localities in Cameroon and the world at large provide excellent opportunities for those who value to listen to the Scriptures in those languages that are already translated and recorded to download. It is estimated that 5.5 billion of the world's population now have access to a cell phone (Swarr & Koch, 2013). In most local communities where the NT has been translated, the speaker can download the Scriptures in their mother tongue if they have smart phones such as those presented below.

The following are Smart Phones that also use SD cards in local communities.



The use of technology ensures that what they are listening to, is an accurate version, providing a sustainable, high quality exposure to the Word that is reproducible (Swarr & Koch, 2013). There are stories all over the mission world of believers who were empowered to understand themselves as teachers and evangelists once these tools were made available to them (Swarr & Koch, 2013; Koehler, 2010). The recording of NT Scriptures in the different digital audio players as presented above is timely and appropriate not only for the illiterate rural masses who may not have enough time or electricity to read but also for those in urban areas who seem to be much busier. That is why Ansre (1995, p. 68) observes that:

There is another growing audience for audio Scriptures. At the close of the 20th century, we are witnessing the coming of a new age that we could call the “post-Literacy Age”, in which even those who can read and write well are not doing so. The epoch of the audio-visual termed by some of the “Multi-media Era”, has set in. Information on sound and video cassettes are replacing books. People receive the day's news by radio or Television rather than by reading newspapers. It appears that some highly sophisticated people prefer to hear the day's Scripture passage on their car sound system as they drive to and from work rather than reading it at home in the printed Bible. That is the direction in which modern man appears to be moving, and little can be done to stop it.

Ansre's observation is aptly pertinent following the growing production of digital audio players such as those presented above. Since the culture of reading seems to be dwindling over the years both in official and local languages, the majority of people certainly embrace these audio players, especially the Proclaimer in order to enjoy listening to dramatized recorded Scriptures in their languages without the pains and efforts used while reading in their respective languages.

Although this paper strongly advocates for different materials to be published in audio digital Players especially for endangered and nearly extinct languages, the government's policy on minority languages need to be intensified at all levels so that there should be effective intergenerational transmission from the older generation to the youths and children. This could be done through the constitution raising all indigenous language into "official status" locally referred to as "Local Official Language"; and not only introducing all of them into the educational system, but including them in the official examinations such as, the First school Leaving Certificate (FSLC), the General Certificate of Education Ordinary (GCE 'O') and Advanced levels (GCE 'A') for the Anglophone and their equivalence for the Francophone system of education. If such a measure is taken, most of the endangered and nearly extinct languages will be revitalized and many publishers will further enhance their statuses by publishing diverse course books that will be prescribed for the different classes in primary, secondary and high schools in both systems.

Perspectives

The unwritten Cameroonian languages that are at the verge of extinction basically need to go through different steps before their publication. Once any language is identified as referenced and documented, it needs to go through different steps that according to Tadjieu (2000) that include: Carrying out a brief phonological analysis of the language; Publishing a small bilingual dictionary of at least 2000 words in the language concerned and the official language; Publishing an initial literacy manual primer for those not literate in any language; Publishing a transition manual for native speakers already literate in the official language; Training and putting in place of a local training team to pursue the task of developing the language and the local literate environment.

Exposing these languages to the citizenry will also help in cultivating a linguistic and cultural consciousness in the people, who are skilled, creative, and great problem solvers; consequently, bringing up development in Cameroon. Indeed, Cameroon must be ready to use her diverse tongues to tell her story and explain herself to the world. Consequently, for speakers of indigenous languages to participate in their community development, they must first of all be able to tell their story in their own tongues. To do this, the elites of the different communities in particular and the government in general need to contribute financially for the development, both of written and audio visual materials that can enhance the lives of the indigenes socio-economically, politically, and spiritually.

Although publishing in less endangered Cameroonian languages is still in a developing stage, it can be improved and developed by the following strategies:

- Encouraging the adoption of local literary works in school curricula;
- Strengthening the administrative capacity of writers' associations through the provision of grants to both individual writers and representative bodies;
- The establishment of writing clubs in schools and in local communities;
- The provision of incentives to the publishing industry to reduce printing cost by reducing tax and duty on imported components;
- The establishment of a book writing and publishing fund to assist budding writers;
- Organizing competitions and awards aimed at encouraging creative writing and publishing;
- Establishing training facilities through literary associations for skills development;
- Conducting Book Fairs as a means of encouraging book writing and reading;
- Stakeholders need to collaborate on the creation of a larger body of literature in Cameroonian languages for use in school and other domains;
- The government should create an enabling environment for Cameroonian publishers, particularly those specialized in indigenous languages as well as bilingual publishers so that they can publish easily;
- Developing school and community libraries and register books of literature in local languages on official reading lists;
- Developing cultural activities for the promotion of books in local languages through writing contests, festivals, book signings, writing and illustration workshops, debates and radio and television programmes;
- Creating a fund to support publishing in local languages;

If all or most of these steps are effectively implemented among others, they will boost publishing in Cameroonian languages and speed development of a literate cultural environment, and most speakers of endangered and nearly extinct languages will regain pride in their languages and be strongly involved in their development and promotion.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has briefly examined the state of endangered languages in Cameroon and has proposed the publication of diverse materials, particularly the audio – visual scriptural material because of the availability of digital audio visual gadgets in different forms. This proposal is pertinent because unless diverse relevant materials are published in endangered languages and particularly in audio format, they may keep declining and being endangered in this era of globalization. It was also proposed that the government's policy on minority languages need to be intensified through a serious legislation, by raising their statuses, and using them as media of instruction at different educational levels so that linguists, researchers and publishers will be more motivated to document and publish materials in some of the endangered and nearly extinct languages in the country. It is appropriate to conclude this paper by acknowledging the fact that developed countries like Japan, China, among other Asian countries have developed on the basis of their national languages as they creatively adapted and integrated technology within their cultural and social values, thus reaching all the people in their countries. This can also be done in Cameroon if the government promotes literacy programmes that integrate these gadgets nationwide with a view to ensuring that every citizen is basically able to read and write in their language in this era of modern technology.

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