



## HOW CRUCIAL IS ATTITUDE IN SELECTING STANDARD FEATURES IN CAMEROON ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION?

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### **Abstract:**

This investigation is about the attitudes of Cameroonians toward the standardisation of educationally acquired features of the postcolonial variety of English. In this light, the paper was set out to determine whether Cameroon English is the preferred language variety that its speakers would like to project pedagogically. That is why respondents were carefully selected: those with little formal education, known as holders of less than GCE Advanced A certificate; and well-educated CamE speakers, respondents with A-level education or above. The research made use of a match-guise technique, participant observation method, and questionnaire. There abound many English varieties in Cameroon, in general, and in Bamenda, in particular. However, the respondents based their choice on Cameroon English pronunciation features achieved through formal education, with a strong positive attitude. By the same token, they unanimously rejected L1-induced pronunciation forms. It was equally found that only 22 (42.31%) would like to change their local accent for foreign lects like British or American, as opposed to 30 (57.69%) who preferred the local accent. The most important finding is the consequence of the coexistence of both educated and mother-tongue influenced features that leads some respondents to exhibit a negative attitude toward CamE and long for exonormative accents: 22 (42.31%). All these results reveal one thing: the postcolonial variety of English needs standardising to quench the thirst of its users. Hastening the standardisation of CamE could, therefore, not only provide a salutary effect on users' attitudes and promote greater linguistic consistency, but also, mainly, offer a viable solution to current linguistic and attitudinal challenges.

**Keywords:** attitude, L1-induced feature, mother tongue, postcolonial, prefer

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## 1. Introduction

The inventory of Cameroon English pronunciation has been a concern for many scholars such as Masanga (1983), Mbangwana (1987), Simo Bobda (1994), Kouega (1999), and Anchimbe (2006). Thanks to these laudable works, CamE pronunciation characteristic features are revealed. These include substitutions, mergers, deyodisation, consonant cluster simplification, and stabilised intelligible sounds. Yet, none has ever classified the features into linguistic categories along its continuum, notably acceptable and unacceptable CamE forms of pronunciation.

Additionally, Anchimbe's (2006) findings have demonstrated that CamE pronunciation features are not random mistakes. They are rather predictable phonological processes affected by multilingualism. In other words, CamE features are, of course, different from exonormative norms but are far from being erroneous. Anchimbe argues that the locally developed forms of pronunciation are instead typical of CamE's own ecological and historical context. His study gives CamE features recognition as well as legitimacy, which are prerequisite elements a variety needs in order to be considered on its own right. However, the work, just like those preceding it, has not categorised the features into acceptable and unacceptable.

Simo Bobda (1994), on the contrary, classified CamE features into different categories. But the categorisation was done in comparison to other varieties such as RP or BrE, other New Englishes, and native speaker norms. To put it differently, Simo Bobda compared CamE pronunciation forms to different pronunciation features such as RP, BrE, other New Englishes, and native speaker norms. Still, the study did not show which features CamE speakers are in favour of. What is meant is that he did not propose any as the most favourable to the users. Ngefac (2008) is the first scholar to relate speakers to their preferred pronunciation features. He shows that social factors combine with linguistic behaviour to ultimately determine the choice or rejection of a language variety's pronunciation features. The investigation has shown that attitudes toward varieties of a language are impacted by social factors comprising education, prestige, and class. Ngefac argues that these are not only internal feelings but also observable and noticeable preferences as well. Similarly, Atechi and Angwa (2016) have found some features as identity markers, while others are seen as erroneous or substandard. They have revealed something paradoxical in that CamE speakers favour BrE for prestige and turn to CamE features for identity purposes. Both works, Ngefac's and Atechi and Angwa's, study speakers' attitudes toward CamE norms in relation to exonormative features.

This investigation was guided by the following research question:

What are the phonological features that should be included in, and excluded from, the spectrum of standard Cameroon English pronunciation? This question was subdivided into the following:

- 1) What are the attitudes of the speakers toward the features of Cameroon English pronunciation?
- 2) Would the speakers feel comfortable using the variety in public?

- 3) Are CamE features of pronunciation appropriate for formal settings such as school, work, and media?

This investigation, contrary to those preceding it, is going to delve into CamE pronunciation features without comparing them to the sounds of any other English varieties. The aim of the study is to classify CamE features into acceptable and unacceptable ones. The acceptable forms fulfil the right to be included from the spectrum of standard Cameroon English pronunciation; the unacceptable ones, on the contrary, forfeit that right. The classification has to be influenced by Cameroonian users' attitudes towards the features. In other words, attitude not only plays a vital role, but also a decisive one.

This study is significant in many ways.

First, it is an attempt to hasten the recognition, acceptability, and promotion of an indigenised postcolonial English, which differs significantly, at all linguistic levels, from older Englishes (e.g. BrE, GenAm and AuE). It should be noted that Braj Kachru's seminal works published in the 80s and 90s were some of the early attempts to demonstrate that the English language has acquired different statuses in different postcolonial contexts due to the processes of indigenisation, acculturation, and nativisation which the language has undergone in such contexts. But, since then, most of the new Englishes are treated as haphazard and monstrous errors that need to be discouraged at all costs. Such an attitude ignores the fact that features of the new Englishes are simply the unavoidable linguistic outcomes of the sociocultural, ecological, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic realities of postcolonial multilingual contexts. The attitude also ignores the fact that not all the features of the new Englishes are erroneous; some of the features are, in fact, basilects and do not show significant formal educational attainment. But many of the features of the new Englishes are mesolects and acrolects, and are found in the speech of very educated speakers of English, though such educated features are very different from those of Inner Circle Englishes. This explains why it is important for this work to investigate acceptable and unacceptable features of Cameroon English pronunciation, given that only acceptable features of this new English should be projected and brandished for national identification.

Second, this study will draw a demarcation line between what should be encouraged and discouraged in the ELT classroom in Cameroon. One of the reasons for the promotion of only British and American English in Cameroon is the fact that Cameroon English has not yet been standardised and, as a consequence, educational stakeholders involved in the promotion of good and intelligible English in Cameroon do not know what should constitute standard and nonstandard features of this new English. Using speakers' attitudes to select the features that can be included in the spectrum of Cameroon standard English is an opportunity to provide the English Language teacher WHAT TO TEACH and what to discourage through pedagogic efforts in order to achieve the best practices.

Third, the work is a further attempt to codify Cameroon English pronunciation. Many previous works have already provided a detailed description of the phonology of

the postcolonial variety of English (e.g. Masanga 1983, Mbangwana 1987, Kouega 1991, Simo Bobda 1994, and Ngefacs 2008), but none of these have provided a hierarchical grading of the features, except Simo Bobda, who has made some attempts. This work is going to investigate CamE features in relation to the speakers' attitudes. In most previous works, features of Cameroon English pronunciation have been treated and displayed as a monolith, and are, most often, contrasted with those of BrE and GenAm. The description of features of Cameroon English pronunciation and their hierarchical categorisation in terms of acceptable and unacceptable lects significantly paves the way for the standardisation of this new English. If similar studies are carried out at other linguistic levels to determine the scope of standard features, this will go a long way to enhance the codification of the variety and its eventual standardisation.

Fourth, the study is sociolinguistically significant. Many sociolinguistic aspects of Cameroon English are revealed, as this study investigates the attitudes of Cameroonian speakers of English toward the features.

### **1.1 The Concept of Standardisation**

A language or a variety of a language is a set of conventional norms. It takes time for linguistic norms or rules to be set up and shared among users of the language. When a language develops naturally into a standard, acceptable and unacceptable features emerge. With the emergence of correct and incorrect forms, pre-emptive measures have to be taken. These measures consist of selecting the correct and acceptable forms that express the cultural values and views of the speakers, and electing them as standard features. The process of selecting correct features and rejecting the incorrect ones leads to establishing rules and regulations of the language variety. This is known as codification. And it is a very determining factor in the process of standardisation. That is why D'Sousa (1999: 271) recognizes that for New Englishes to achieve successful standardisation, codification has to be considered seriously because it is "*the crux of the matter*".

In addition, standardisation can be understood as a natural process that a language undergoes as it records, throughout the setting, the cultural values and meanings that express the cosmology, ecology, sociology, religions and beliefs of the speech community in order to shape and mould the culture and identity of the speakers. That is why every language variety is a tool to express the cultural identity of its speakers (see Kirkpatrick 2007; Mufwene, 2001; Ngefacs 2010 and Anchimbe, 2006). The shaping and moulding of the speakers' cultural identity through cultural norms gives the variety a sociocultural and pragmatic-ecological dimension. This is another determinant standardisation factor. It is, therefore, a natural development of tacit conventions of linguistic norms that manifestly express the sociolinguistic and sociocultural identity of the members of the speech community.

### **1.2 The Concept of Standard Language**

A standard variety of a language is one that is characterised by uniformity. The uniformity stems from scrupulous respect for the norms of that variety by minority users.

This is because the standard variety is used in education, where the speakers learn the norms. The fact that these norms are achieved through formal learning makes the variety prestigious and its speakers proud of using it. Jenkins' (2003:29) definition illustrates this point in the following terms:

*"Standard language is the term used for that variety of a language which is considered to be the norm. It is the variety held up as the optimum for educational purposes and used as a yardstick against which other varieties of the language are measured. Being a prestige variety, a standard language is spoken by a minority of people within a society, typically those occupying positions of power."*

The issue of education in the above definition is fundamental because it restricts the number of speakers of the standard variety to educated members of the speech community. But a disagreement comes in when it links a standard language to *"those occupying positions of power"* because, in the context of New Englishes, some of these are people who have been privileged with a trip abroad. The pronunciation features of some of those fortunate people who have lived or studied abroad are neither reflective of their local origin nor the place where they have been to (Ngefac, 2010). Their accent is a further deviation that requires another investigation, which is not the concern of this study.

When a language variety completes its standardisation process and reaches the standard level, it is used effectively by its speakers. Having completed the process of standardisation prepares the elected variety to be sufficiently wide in expressive tools of communication, as the variety has already recorded all the local and cultural values needed by the speech community. These speakers rely on it for effective communication because this standard variety is capable of providing them with the requirements they need to express themselves effectively. This falls in line with Garvin's (1993:41) definition of standard language, which, according to him, is the one that *"serves the multiple and complex communication needs of a speech community that has either achieved modernization or has the desire of achieving it."* This definition is interesting in that it recognizes the centrality of the communication needs of the standard language, whose primary role is to serve those who use it. That is why those who use a language are the ones who are qualified to determine the acceptability and unacceptability of the language forms. This is because they are the users of the language, which provides them with the communication needs to enable them to express themselves effectively. Following this definition, every speech community is free to have a standard variety of the language they speak. Purists seem to see it differently.

### **1.3 The Purists' Definition**

Purists are traditionalists who believe that language should enjoy its originality. This is an illustration of the fact that the issue of standard language is not new. Purists have always worked on language maintenance in order to preserve it intact. Their objective is to maintain the pure and traditional form of a language. In this logic, speech variations

that cut across speech communities are not seen in terms of difference. They are usually called errors only because they have deviated from the standard of a particular speech community. Traditionally inclined intellectuals and purists stick to “*the cultivation of good language in general and the issue of language correctness in particular*” (Garvin, 1993, p. 46). Still, from Garvin’s (1993) work, the main arguments that purists put forth in the 1930s consisted first in rejecting foreign loans and then in conditioning correctness and good usage only on historical continuity. This is what Milroy (2001) calls “*language ideology*”. The two definitions below can be illustrative in this sense. With regard to the first definition, Standard English is simply understood as:

*“The dialect of educated people throughout the British Isles. It is the dialect normally used in writing, for teaching in schools and universities, and heard on radio and television”* (Hughes and Trudgill, 1979 quoted in Jenkins 2003: 30).

As concerns the second definition:

*“Standard English can be characterised by saying that it is that set of grammatical and lexical forms, which is typically used in speech and writing by educated native speakers. It ... includes the use of colloquial and slang vocabulary as well as swear-words and taboo expressions.”* (Trudgill, 1984 quoted in Jenkins, 2003: 31).

These two definitions of Standard English are fundamentally linked to a geographical region and the people of the region, notably, “the British Isles” and “native speakers”. The native speakers, in the definition above, are an inference to British people and those associated with them as well as with their culture. These attitudes of traditionalism ignore the dynamic nature of language. More importantly, they ignore other context-specific standards. These views are also held by other linguists (Prator, 1968 and Quirk, 1990) who oppose the idea of standardising New Englishes. They argue that there should be only one international standard for purposes of international intelligibility. This claim has been challenged by World Englishes scholars such as Kachru (1991) and Modiano (2001), who argue that the real aim of these purists is just “*to control, own and teach English according to native-speaker norms*”. This is so because the plurality of standards has never been a problem, given the fact that standards abound in the Inner Circle itself. In addition, some Englishes of the Outer Circle such as Singaporean English, Indian English, and Nigerian English have already established their standards. With the traditional framework of standardisation, this could not happen. Following this new paradigmatic axis of standardisation, relating Standard English to a region and its population is not problematic because it is incumbent on each speech community to determine the standard of their choice.

#### 1.4 Non-purist Definition

Many other linguists think that objective criteria can be used to qualify a language variety as standard. They appreciate linguistic creativity and innovation because these linguists are conversant with the dynamic nature of language, which essentially evolves with the culture of its users, and when it settles in a new environment, it quickly loses its initial cultural aspects and readily accommodates new ones. This is known as a process of deculturation and acculturation (Kachru 1985, 1986, 1992; Mufwene, 1997, 2001; Kirkpatrick, 2007; Schneider, 2007). A language variety is designated standard when it fulfils scientific objectivity, that is, on the basis of scientific requirements. They are scientific because they belong to the universal law of nature and can, therefore, be verified scientifically.

#### 1.5 The Debate in the Cameroonian Context

The concept of standardisation is a controversial issue among scholars. In the context of Cameroon, not everybody addresses the issue directly. Many of them are rather hesitant and maybe dubitative. Paul Mbangwana (1987) is the first linguist to see in CamE features a possibility of standardisation. He is the pioneer for being the first to delve into the features and draw attention to their numerous internal characteristics consisting of elimination of vowel contrasts, monophthongisation of diphthongs, replacement of dental fricatives, and final consonant simplification. Mbangwana addresses the matter directly by calling the spade a spade. He finds features emanating from processes of this type systematic and calls them standard sounds of Cameroon English pronunciation. The study is meant to pave the way to more investigations about the possibility of standardising CamE pronunciation features.

Simo Bobda (1994) is not perceived as being in favour of the standardisation of Cameroon English. This is so because he does not openly approach the subject matter. However, he is often read as backing and hastening its recognition as a legitimate variety and advocating that its codification be based on educated usage only. In one way or the other, it is evident that educated features of a legitimate variety make it a standard variety. Just like Simo Bobda (1994), Anchimbe (2006) considers standardisation indirectly. In fact, his description of CamE features makes up a systematic inventory of Cameroon English phonological variants that may significantly contribute to the structural basis for an internally driven process of standardisation. With this contribution to the debate, Anchimbe goes a step further by asking the following rhetorical question: should Cameroon English continue following exonormative norms or develop endonormative stabilisation?

Ngefack (2010) boldly addresses and militates for the standardisation of CamE pronunciation features. He argues that exonormative varieties like BrE and GenAm are not only far-fetched varieties to Cameroonians; they are also, and mainly, unrealistic in a setting of a postcolonial variety of English like CamE because, as he puts it, "*the blind are leading the blind*" given the fact that those supposed to teach the foreign varieties have but

little knowledge of them. It is exactly for this good reason that Ngefac, persistently, insists on the standardisation and teaching of CamE.

The major investigation that makes a considerable attempt is Hamadou's (forthcoming) *Towards the Standardisation of Cameroon English*. The focus is on pronunciation features of the variety as the work groups CamE forms into acceptable and unacceptable features, looking into their possible standardisation. The parameters of selection are six in total. These criteria of selection examine and sift acceptable forms, on the one hand, and unacceptable forms, on the other. Acceptable forms fulfil the right to be included in the spectrum of standard Cameroon English Pronunciation (henceforth SCamEP). SCamEP features are selected by the majority of CamE speakers who have a favourable attitude toward them. Unacceptable forms, on the contrary, forfeit that right, because they are the impurities of the language and, more significantly, because they are not prioritised by speakers.

## **2. Language Attitude Theory**

According to Ayman Tawalbeh (2019), many factors such as linguistic, social, situational and attitudinal factors, as well as dependent and independent variables, participate in influencing language choices significantly (see Dorian, 1981; Ervin-Tripp, 1968; Fishman, 1964, 2000; Gal, 1979; Holmes, 2001; Ngefac, 2008). In fact, researchers can identify language or variety preferences and study language attitudes. Two things need to be considered: individual behaviour and social patterns. The fact is, attitudinal studies show both *"individual behaviour and social patterns (which) can be distinguished from each other and yet related to each other"* (Fishman, 2000, p. 94). Actually, Fishman's assertion maintains that an individual's preference can spread to more people in a society. It simply means that it all starts from an individual's attitude. A person's preference, for example, can be adopted by another and so on until it is extended to a group or community. It ultimately becomes a social norm or rule. Its influence comes from the fact that individuals make every effort to conform to the new rule. This is known as attitude change. This conceptual relationship of individual behaviour and social patterns is supported by both the framework of behaviourist and mentalist theory.

### **2.1 Behaviourist Theory**

The theory revolves around observable behaviour and the influence of the social environment. It, particularly, emphasises the important role of conditioning in shaping behaviour and conceptualises it as a response to environmental stimuli. The theory is said to focus on observable behaviours because it deals with stimulus, response, reinforcement and experience, which are all observable phenomena. The propounders include Hull (1974) and Watson (1919). The theory underpins the idea that language choices are viewed as a reaction or response, and they are visible outside effects that influence the choices directly (see Maitz, 2011). This type of behaviour which is visible or observable, is also termed overt behaviour, and it is easy to observe since self-reports or

indirect inferences are not required with this theory (Fasold, 1984; Ayman Tawalbeh, 2019).

Individual behaviour and social patterns are two distinct entities that are closely related. From the behaviourist theoretical perspective, the pronunciation features associated with approval or social prestige, for instance, are more likely to be prioritised and produced than those that lack approval or prestige. This is due to reinforcement, the approval or social prestige; response: the priority shift. This situation leads to attitude change as individuals make every effort to follow the new pattern or rule.

## **2.2 Mentalist Theory**

The theory is made up of three constituents: the cognitive, affective and conative components. The first component consists of thoughts and knowledge. This is known as cognition, which refers to the beliefs held about the attitude object (Rosenberg & Hovland, 1960; Baker, 1992; Garrett, 2010). The meaning of cognition is what the individual thinks is true, and the attitude object simply refers to the thing the individual is thinking about. The second component is about the feelings toward the attitude object. The third, on its part, is about actions toward the attitude object. The three can be summed up as think, feel and act (Breckler, 1984).

The mentalist theory approaches the relationship between individual behaviour and social patterns differently. The approach considers language attitudes as fundamentally internal psychological states rather than observable behaviour. It capitalises on the psychological processes that underlie individuals' linguistic choices. In fact, at the individual level, the theory focuses on what the person thinks or feels. At the social level, on the contrary, the sum of individual thinking or feeling is transformed into shared attitudes that can produce patterns. If an individual develops a feeling that particular CamE pronunciation features, for example, receive approval or are more prestigious, the feeling is now at the individual level. When many individuals share the same feeling or thinking, the attitude may influence their pronunciation choices. A recognisable social pattern may derive from these choices as the community as a whole strives to conform to the newly created rule or pattern.

## **3. Methodology**

This investigation uses the method of matched-guise technique, which consists of two tape-recorded voices but with different guises. The purpose of the technique is to prepare the respondents to believe that the voices emanate from two different individuals (see Gaies and Beebe, 1991, p. 157). The first voice the respondents listened to, in this study, is called Reading 1 or R1 for short. The second voice is also termed Reading 2, and the short form is R2.

The researcher read the text purposefully. In R1, the reading activity highlighted strongly marked local accents which the respondents apparently identified and

associated with ethnic groups in their region. Specific words under investigation were realised with locally deviant phonological forms relative to those acquired educationally. In R2, a typical Cameroonian educated accent was emphasised. In this reading exercise, deviant CamE forms of pronunciation were discarded. Alternating between the two readings, R1 and R2, helped elicit the opinions of CamE speakers toward authentic educationally acquired features and their deviant counterparts. After listening, the informants responded to the questionnaire items immediately. The items can be found in the appendix. Educated Cameroon English sounds, CamE sound; and Cameroon English deviant sound, Dev. form, can be found in the appendix below.

The questionnaire is constituted of two fundamental parts: a rigorous evaluation of Cameroon English pronunciation features, made up of ten items and respondents' knowledge and their attitudes toward CamE pronunciation and accent, consisting of seven items.

The participant observation method was also used as the researcher is Cameroonian by nationality. As a matter of fact, he is a speaker of Cameroonian English.

### **3.1 The Informants' Opinions about CamE Sounds**

The data presentation is concerned with the opinions of the informants who can distinguish the educated variety of English they use on a daily basis from deviant features, as both CamE variants share a common setting. The informants were required to state their opinions clearly about the mainstream CamE and deviant CamE forms. These data were collected in Bamenda, in the North West Region in former British-occupied Cameroon.

### **3.2 The Questionnaire Derived Data**

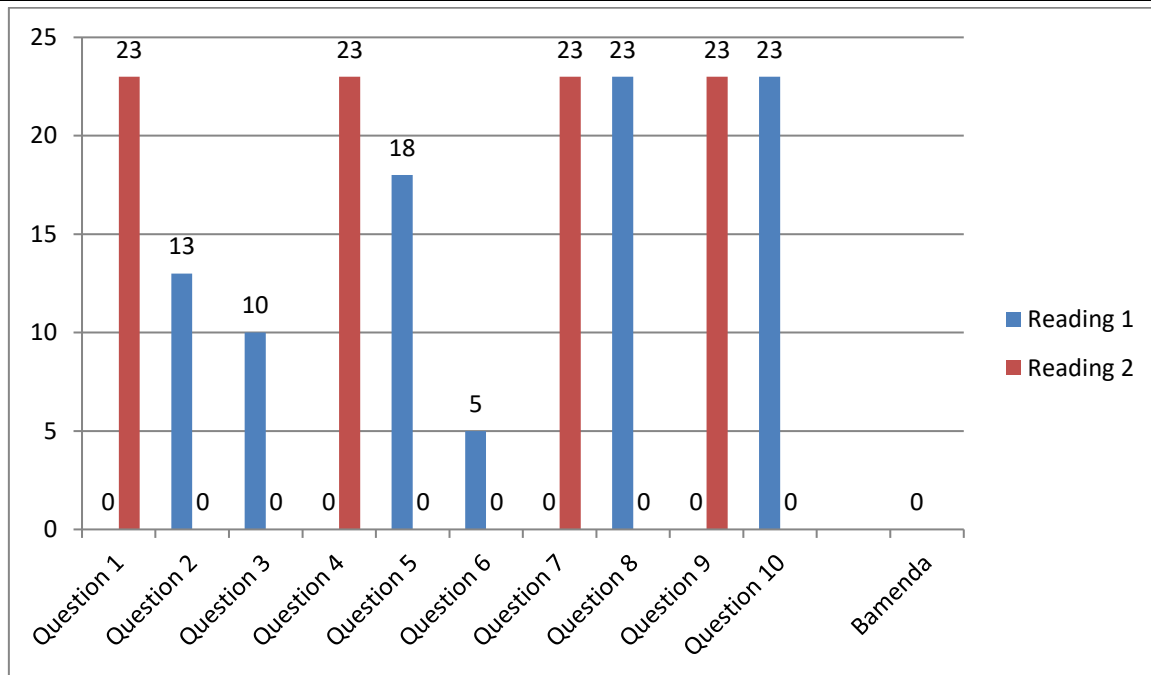
These data are twofold: A considerable part was collected from respondents whose level of education was inferior to the GCE Advanced Level, while the second part of the data was collected from holders of GCE A Level and above. The opinions of the two types of respondents are presented and analysed below, one after the other.

## **4. Data Presentation**

Questionnaire-derived data come from two different sources, notably, respondents whose level of education is inferior to the GCE A Level and those who are holders of it and possibly above.

### **4.1 Level of Education under the GCE A Level**

The first reading is called Reading I (or R1 for short). For more clarification, see 4 above, the methodology section. These opinions, which are about strong locally loaded accent and soft, purely educated CamE accent, are displayed in Figure 1. The figure, as can be observed below, summarises the respondents' points of view.



**Figure 1:** Attitudes towards CamE users < A/L

Item 1: it aimed at determining which reading contained good pronunciation features that should be promoted through formal education. Figure 1 above shows that all 23 informants were of the opinion that the forms in R2 are very good and should be promoted in schools. This is true for the answer to question 1. This unanimous agreement is illustrative of a strongly shared positive attitude toward refined, educationally acquired Cameroon English pronunciation features.

Item 2: it sought to identify which reading is made up of very intelligible features of pronunciation. The answer to question 4 says the forms in R2 are very intelligible. Observing Figure 1 above, the informants reached a consensus. This is indicative of a unanimous agreement among the informants. The finding suggests that educated CamE pronunciation features are very intelligible. In this view, these are the features which deserve to be included from the spectrum of standard Cameroon English pronunciation, as they can serve as the emblems of Cameroonian culture and identity. This numerical result provides strong support for choosing the features.

Item 3: the item was to discover the reading which was characterised by pronunciation forms that should be encouraged. The answer to question 7 indicates that these forms are in R2. As can be seen from the figure above, the totality of the respondents agree to encourage the pronunciation features in the second reading. This demonstrates yet another very strong acceptance among the informants. In light of this, CamE pronunciation features achieved through formal learning should be encouraged and promoted because they are prestigious and are emblematic of the Cameroonian culture and identity.

Item 4: it was concerned with which reading the pronunciation forms should be standardised. From Figure 1, the answer to question 9, a consensus, says these forms in R2 should be standardised. This unanimous agreement is suggestive of strong support of

the respondents to project educated Cameroon English pronunciation features legitimately as standard in their own right. These are CamE speakers whose level of education is less than GCE A/L, yet they appreciate and hold the variety in great esteem and prestige. In sum, they have given it a place of choice. In this view, they have a very positive attitude toward educated features of Cameroon English pronunciation. This attitude of the respondents is the parameter used in this research for the selection and promotion of either educated or uneducated features of Cameroon English pronunciation. Looking at the figure, all the converging opinions, notably 1, 4, 7 and 9, the verdict was a unanimity. In other words, it is the totality of the respondents (23) who unanimously made the declarations above. By this, the features are selected because they are deemed capable of serving as the emblems of Cameroonian culture and identity. Consequently, they should be included in the spectrum of the standard CamE forms of pronunciation.

The six blue columns describe the forms in R1. This means six items constitute this subsection that deserves to be examined closely.

Item 1: the item sought to determine which readings the forms are acceptable and should neither be encouraged nor discouraged pedagogically. Looking at question 2 of Figure 1, it is the forms in R1 that are acceptable and should neither be encouraged nor discouraged through educational efforts. This was the view of 13 (56.52%) of them. This result is illustrative of three things. First, tolerance of the features which have become familiar to the respondents. Second, tolerance for the features of producers who are their fellow citizens. Third, tolerance for themselves, for most of them are, seemingly, producers of the underprivileged CamE pronunciation forms.

Item 2: this item set out to determine which reading the pronunciation features are unappealing and consequently should be discouraged. Question 3 of Figure 1 clearly indicates that the forms in reading 1 are unpleasant and should be discouraged. This was the opinion of the other remaining 10 (43.47%) of them. There appears to be an implication binding the finding to the first item's result. In fact, 43.47% of the respondents find the mother-tongue influence features unappealing and should be discouraged, whereas more than half per cent (56.52%) opt for tolerance. Obviously, tolerance seems to be the better option.

Item 3: the item sought to ascertain the pronunciation forms that are not very intelligible. From the above figure, question 5 reveals that in R1 the features are not very intelligible. This was the decision of 18 (78.26%) of them. This is suggestive of pedagogic concerns that need to be addressed accordingly.

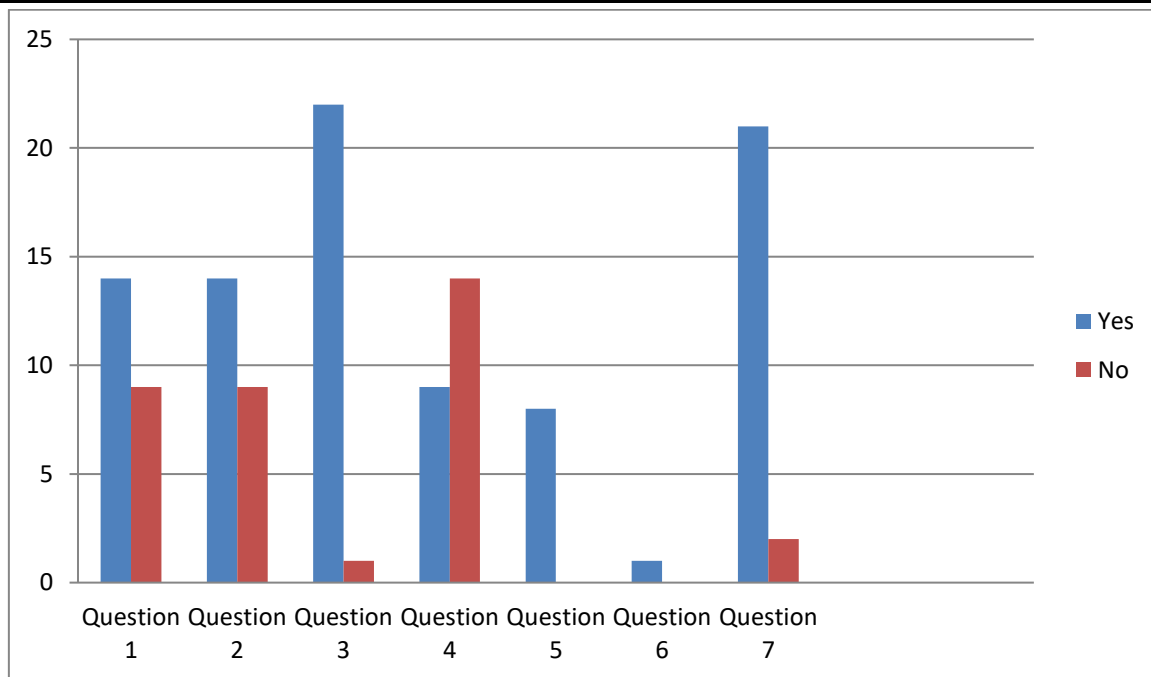
Item 4: the concern of the item was centred on which reading the pronunciation forms are not intelligible at all. What question 6 of the figure indicates is that the features in R1 are not intelligible at all. This was the judgment of 5 (21.74%) of them. Notice that the sum of 18 and 5 is equal to 23: this is exactly the total number of the respondents. The binding relationship between items 3 and 4 is *not intelligible*, and the direct implication is that the basilectal features in R1 are subject to impair intelligibility.

Item 5: it was to establish which reading the forms should be discouraged due to their stigmatisation and inability to serve as the emblems of the national culture and identity. Figure 1 indicates that those in R1 should be discouraged because these features are stigmatised and cannot serve as the emblems of the Cameroonian culture and identity. This was the opinion of all the respondents. What does this mean? In fact, when it comes to the emblematic nature of Cameroonian culture and identity, they prefer very intelligible, prestige-associated, and high-status linguistic forms that they hold in high esteem and that should be encouraged through pedagogical efforts. In this view, this numerical finding also provides strong support for selecting Cameroon English pronunciation features acquired through formal education.

Item 6: this item was designed to determine the pronunciation forms that should not be standardized. An examination of the figure reveals that the variant sounds in R1 are the features that should not be standardised. This is yet another opinion where the totality of the respondents disapproves of the features in R1. In fact, Cameroonians have been familiar with the basilectal or deviant forms of CamE. That is why tolerance comes into play with regard to the uneducated features of pronunciation. Yet, they do not want to be identified by the forms that lack esteem and prestige, which are often associated with standard features of languages or a language variety. It is in this view that the respondents said the forms should be discouraged because these features are stigmatised and cannot serve as the emblems of Cameroonian culture and identity. This can be seen in 8 of the above figures (confer item 5). The totality of the respondents also denied the standardisation of the deviant forms, as they said the features should not be standardised. The implication is that every basilectal form forfeits the right to be standardised, as such features are not capable of serving as the emblems of the Cameroonian culture and identity. Consequently, they should not be included in the spectrum of the standard CamE pronunciation forms.

Among the 10 questions, the respondents gave a unanimous verdict in six of them. These are questions 1, 4, 7, 8, 9 and 10. That is why the columns meant for these are all as high as 23. This shows the favourable attitude that some present-day Cameroonians may have for locally developed forms of English. This means they unanimously accept educated Cameroonian English forms and unanimously reject the uneducated ones as well.

Another part of the questionnaire is classified in the table with yes/no questions, as can be seen in the appendix. The respondents were enthusiastic and gave their opinions in a very friendly way. The results were distributed in the following histogram.



**Figure 2:** CamE Competing with BrE and AmE from Bamenda < A/L

Seven items were designed for the purpose of this subsection. The items are correlated to the seven questions from Figure 2.

Item 1: the item sought to investigate if the respondents had a good command of Inner Circle varieties such as British or American English. It can be observed from the figure that in Question One, or Q1 for short, 14 (60.87%) respondents admitted to having a good knowledge of such foreign varieties as British English or American English by ticking *yes*. 9, however, confessed to lacking that ability. This aimed to confirm their positive attitudes toward educated features of CamE. Their inclination for CamE is not in a vacuum. This is so because the fierce competition between the postcolonial English and the exonormative varieties in question is common knowledge. Yet, the respondents opt for the support of the educated endonormative variety.

Item 2: the designation of the item was to establish if the respondents had a command of CamE pronunciation features. Expectedly, their response was a confirmation. In the next question, or Q2, for example, 14 (60.87%) admitted to have a good mastery of educated Cameroon English pronunciation forms, while 9 (39.13%) did not. Observing well, the 14 informants in Q1 and Q2 are the same and the 9 in Q1 and Q2 are similar people. In this case, the 14 respondents are knowledgeable about their cultural and linguistic values and, at the same time, they are open to the world. The 9 respondents are neither concerned with their immediate environment nor are they open to the external world. Another possible and plausible implication is that the majority of Cameroonian citizens are cognisant of the foreign English varieties that are promoted to the detriment of the local one.

Item 3: the item sought to determine if the respondents admired a typical Cameroonian English accent. Surprisingly, up to 22 (95.6%) respondents admired those who speak English with a typical Cameroonian accent. This finding goes a long way just

to show the place of choice the educated mainstream Cameroon English is enjoying in the minds of younger Cameroonians. However, only 1 (4.4%) did not admire them. This is confirmed by the third question of the figure. Five reasons were advanced by the respondents to justify their admiration for the accent. These reasons comprise intelligibility, 5; identity, 5; good English, 9; love for the accent, 2; and the will to copy the speakers, 1 respondent. The percentage gleaned for the admiration of the CamE accent and the motivation for holding this postcolonial variety to such a high esteem are a proof that Cameroonians want to consume the Cameroonian variety of English they have been using on a daily basis, not foreign varieties miles apart. The reasons advanced for the admiration are very selective and make CamE a prestigious variety. According to the study's respondents, the educated forms of CamE are described first as having *intelligibility*. Every language is made up of a number of functions. The first one is communication and communication breakthrough is made possible through intelligibility. *Identity* is what links the speakers to the speech community they belong to. That is why labels such as Nigerian English, Kenyan English, and Cameroonian English abound in present-day literature. It is, obviously, in this opinion that the respondents admired CamE pronunciation forms over the identity issue. In short, they would like to be identified with these local features achieved through pedagogical efforts. The descriptive term *good English* really depicts CamE as a language variety that CamE speakers, in general, and the respondents, in particular, hold with esteem and prestige. On the basis of this finding, we can declare with confidence that Cameroon mainstream English is constituted of prestige-associated linguistic features whose users hold with great esteem and admiration. More importantly, the expression *love for the accent* is an indication that the educated Cameroon English pronunciation features are absolutely loved. The implication is that the love for CamE is beyond all possible estimations. This can be proven by the fact that despite the official promotion of some varieties of English, CamE still defeats them because it dwells in the minds of its speakers. And finally, *the will to copy the speakers* expresses the youngsters' ardent desire and complete admiration for typical CamE users who they would like to emulate. They see typical CamE speakers like shining stars that constantly illumine their surroundings.

Item 4: this was designed to find out if the respondents would like to change their local accent. The fourth question shows 9 and 14 which are their positive and negative responses, respectively. The 9 and 14 represent the respective percentages of 39.13% and 60.87%. The former, 39.13% of the respondents, would like to change their accent but the latter, 60.87%, would not. Only less than 40% of the respondents would like to change the local accent. This goes a long way to show that all the media hype by the BBC, CNN and the like has failed. More significantly, these results come from people with low educational background. This is a testimony that shows clearly how the mindset of Cameroon English users is changing. It is absolutely true that this is positive change that ushers a brighter future for Cameroon English pronunciation forms achieved educationally.

Item 5: the designation of the item was to establish if the respondents would like to change CamE to British accent. Figure 2 question 5 reveals that 08 (34%) respondents, would like to change their accent from a local one to British English. This is a fundamental element, in that, British English is becoming less influential in the perception of Cameroonian speakers of English (34%). Conversely, Cameroon English pronunciation features acquired educationally are becoming more dominant in the linguistic attitudes of Cameroonian English users (60.87%). These features are gradually gaining ground and favourable perception among its consumers.

Item 6: it was set out to determine if the respondents would like to change their local accent for American. The figure indicates only 01(4%) respondent who prefers American English. The wind of change is blowing in the minds of Cameroonians. The mindset, itself, gets changing in favour of local pronunciation forms acquired pedagogically. More considerably, this change in mentality emanates from youth. That is why as many as 60% of the speakers find educated features of CamE the variety of their choice. This percentage is also meaningful, in that, it is a numerical weight which is a powerful impetus that can drive the undecided individuals to join the group. This is to illustrate Fishman's theory concerning the impact of a group in individual behaviour and social patterns. From this theory, the strong positive attitude toward educated CamE pronunciation features (60.87%) is clearly indicative of acceptance. These prestigious features are not only increasing in perceived status; they are also gradually becoming more and more dominant in the linguistic attitudes of Cameroonian speakers.

Previously, however, features of postcolonial varieties of English were considered wrong and had to be replaced by RP, British English, or American English at all cost. In this view, it can be affirmed that previous works denied Cameroonians the right to speak their minds about the variety of English they would use. Such scholars were prescriptivists like Say (1973) and Simo Bobda (1994) who warned speakers of New Englishes to be on their guard not to use these features because they were not correct and were produced by speakers of little or no formal education. By the same token, they encouraged features from traditional Englishes to the detriment of the local forms. Sey (1973: 7) said that "*the educated Ghanaian would not 'accept' anything other than educated British Standard English*" (cited in Richmond Sadick, 2014). Those studies used to compare and contrast CamE with foreign lectal tongues like RP, British English and American English. Meanwhile, they were condescending toward postcolonial varieties of English such as Ghanaian English, Nigerian English, Singaporean English, Indian English and Cameroonian English. As this investigation has provided the opportunity to this sample population to speak their minds about their own variety, many of the respondents say nice things about CamE. That is why a sizeable number of them (60%) yearn for the postcolonial variety they use on a daily basis. The fact that few respondents (39%) long for foreign accents like British and American varieties of English also means that the pronunciation features of these varieties do not reflect the sociocultural and pragmatico-ecological dimension of the nation. As such, the pronunciation forms of these varieties of English do not quench the thirst and desire of CamE speakers, nor do they accommodate

their preferences. In contrast, CamE pronunciation forms do satisfy its users, as it does with the respondents, because they are spoken by Cameroonians and are influenced by the sociolinguistic landscape of the country. The forms reflect the sociocultural and pragmatic-ecological dimension of the local habitat with active contribution of the surrounding environment to the shaping of the pronunciation variants. Furthermore, all the codification evidence done in Cameroon was about CamE not foreign varieties.

Item 7: the purpose of the item was to find out whether the postcolonial variety developed educationally could be called “Standard CamE accent”. With regard to question 7, up to 21 (91.3%) respondents answered “yes” to the question. But 2 (8.7%) answered *no*. Those who said yes put forth six reasons for their choices. These included good pronunciation, 3; intelligibility, 2; autonomy, 2; identity, 7; good English, 5; and Cameroon English is standard, 2 respondents. These reasons show that the respondents are full of praise for Cameroon English pronunciation features. Interestingly, some reasons for the admiration have come to be in favour of CamE standardisation. These include good English, intelligibility and identity. These have been discussed above about the admiration of typical speakers of Cameroon English. This is clear evidence that it is these praiseworthy forms of pronunciation that can serve as the emblems of the Cameroonian culture and identity. Other praiseworthy diction was selected this time for the standardisation of Cameroon English pronunciation. It is *good pronunciation*, *autonomy*, and *Cameroon English is standard*. Good pronunciation implies that Cameroonians, in general, and the respondents, in particular, are cognisant of the fact that users of educated CamE forms do not envy any features of pronunciation alien to the variety of their speech community. That is why, it is hoped, CamE has developed endonormative rules as well as norms that prepare it to be linguistically autonomous. This brings us to the second reason which is autonomy. Standardisation is both linguistic and state autonomy. The first autonomy involves teaching materials which are lucrative and profitable business enterprises that have become the prerogative of Inner Circle Englishes. In this way, these nations are not ready to encourage CamE speakers, in particular, and New Englishes, in general, to long for their linguistic autonomy. It is, therefore, only through standardisation that this autonomy can be “granted”. The fact of the matter is that standardisation, itself, requires deliberate, locally driven decisions rather than external permission. As concerns the second, with the number of publishing houses that abound in Cameroon, the nation will produce books and sell them in the sub-region instead of buying them from abroad. Finally, Cameroon English is *standard* means Cameroonian citizens can deliberately avoid the basilectal forms of CamE and speak only educated features. In fact, standardisation itself does just that.

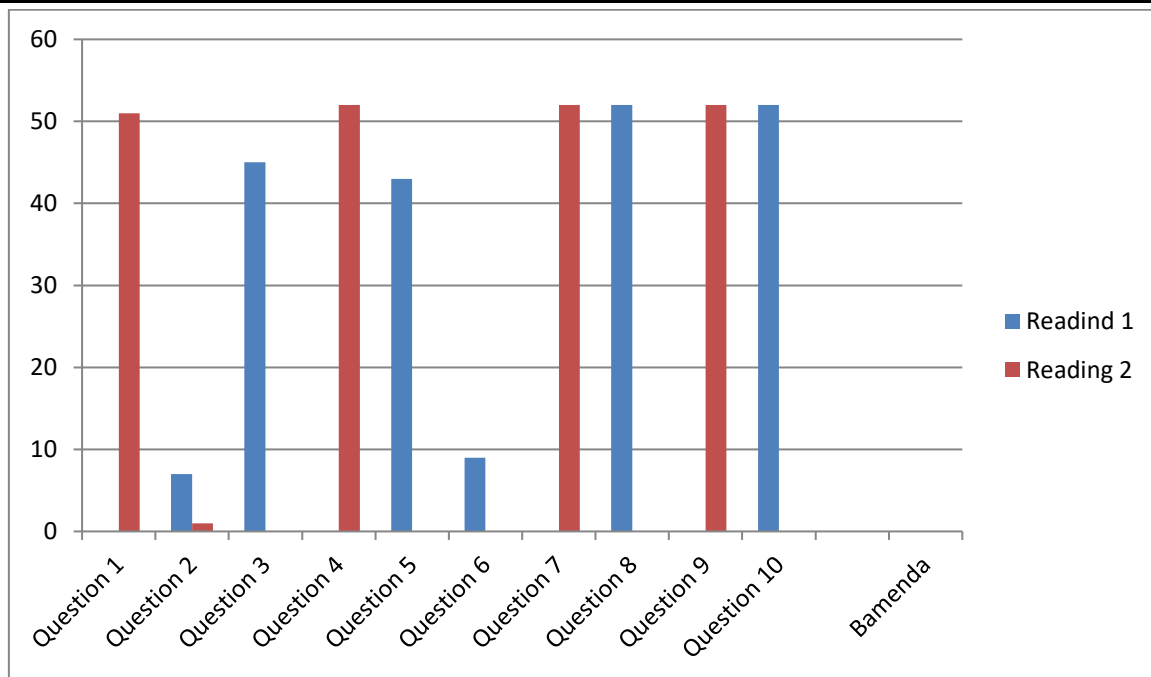
The self-referential, stand-alone questionnaire item queried respondents on the following question: “Do you also produce these pronunciation features in R1”? Among the 23 respondents, 5 ticked the always box; 11 ticked sometimes; 5 again ticked rarely whereas only 2 ticked never. In terms of percentages, these scores represented 21.73%, 47.82%, 21.73% and 8.69%, respectively. The fact that only few (less than 9%) of the respondents do not produce the basilectal forms of pronunciation is a pedagogic concern

that has to be reckoned with. This is an indication that almost none of the respondents felt exempted from producing these pronunciation features. The fact of the matter is that the 81% that use the uneducated features of pronunciation constitutes a real problem. In this view, the linguistic pressure exerted (81%) as opposed to the one released by the speakers of the educated CamE features of pronunciation (only 9%) is far from reaching balance. This leads directly to a situation of linguistic imbalance where the basilectal forms are found in a position of force. Yet, the respondents unanimously condemn them so vehemently. It is this negative attitude toward these features that promises a brighter future for the educated CamE forms of pronunciation. This means that although they produce the forms, Cameroonians do not like them. The implication is that the informants, in particular, and by extension Cameroonians, in general, are found to be using the unwanted pronunciation forms due to the linguistic pressure exerted (81%). These pronunciation features are apparently unwanted companions. This concluding section leads us to ask a fundamental question: these uneducated CamE pronunciation forms that are seemingly unwanted can they be called unavoidable companions? It is too early to answer this question at this level. But with the examination of the data from the other sample populations, viz GCE A level holders and above, in the coming subsection, we may come up with a possible answer to the question.

#### **4.2 GCE A Level and Above**

This group consists of GCE A level holders and above. They were required to answer 10 questions from the questionnaire (see the appendix). The respondents' answers to the questions are to display their attitude with regard to both Cameroon English educated and uneducated features.

With the help of the questions, the respondents voiced their concern. The figure below summarises succinctly their opinions. That is why the figure merits to be examined closely.



**Figure 3:** Attitudes towards CamE from Bamenda  $\geq$  A/L

Item 1: its aim was to determine which reading contained good pronunciation features that should be fostered with formal teaching and learning. Observing the figure above, the column meant for R2 in question 1 out of 52 informants, 51 (98.08%) found the forms in this reading good and likely to be promoted in schools. This finding reveals a unanimous agreement which is suggestive of a strongly shared positive attitude toward Cameroon pronunciation features acquired educationally.

Item 2: the item sought to identify which reading comprises very intelligible pronunciation features. Scrutinising question 4, a consensus, in favour of the R2 forms, has emerged to support them. The unanimous agreement is, thus, suggestive of strong attitude in support for educated CamE pronunciation features. It, therefore, follows that these variants merit to be included in the spectrum of standard Cameroon English pronunciation. Features of this type deserve more consideration because they can serve as emblems of Cameroonian culture and identity.

Item 3: the purpose of the item was to determine the reading which was characterised by pronunciation forms that should be encouraged. The response to question 7 reveals they are in R2. The figure shows that it is the totality of the informants who decide to support and encourage CamE pronunciation forms acquired educationally. The strong unanimous agreements are indicative of a strong favourable attitude toward the variants. By the same token, this is a proof that they have strong acceptance among the respondents. The sample population is the opinion that Cameroon English pronunciation features acquired pedagogically are deservedly the ones that should be prioritized and encouraged because they are prestigious and can serve as the emblems of Cameroonian culture and identity.

Item 4: it aimed at investigating which reading the pronunciation forms should be standardised. Figure 3 in question 9 indicates that only reading 2 contains the features to

project as standard. This was a consensus which is suggestive of a strong agreement indicating a strong support of the informants to project educated Cameroon English pronunciation features as legitimate standard on their own right. These are CamE users whose level of education is GCE Advanced level and beyond. Just like holders of less than this certificate (5.1 above), they consider educated CamE as a variety consisting of prestige-associated pronunciation features. In fact, all the respondents, be they young or adults, with or without education, hold a very strong positive attitude toward Cameroon English pronunciation achieved pedagogically. A strong unanimous agreement is reached to say the features are good and should be promoted pedagogically; they are very intelligible; they should be encouraged; the last and the most significant is: they should be projected as standard Cameroon English pronunciation features. All this can be inferred as the respondents are hastening the standardisation of the postcolonial variety, in general, and its educated pronunciation features, in particular. This is where ends the items concerned with R2. The other items below were found to be associated with R1 which, also, deserve a close examination.

Item 1: it was designed to determine which reading the features are acceptable and should neither be encouraged nor discouraged through the means of formal teaching and learning. In question 2, the column of R1 scored 07. The 7 (13.46%) informants agreed that the forms in R1 are acceptable, but they should neither be encouraged nor discouraged through pedagogical efforts. The meaning behind this little tolerance, 7 (13.46%), is that the majority of the informants do not approve of the basilectal forms of CamE. This is because they are considered like the impurities of the language variety. It should, however, be noted that 01 (1.92%) informant opined that these variants are in R2. The percentage 1.92% is also meaningful. The likelihood here is that it must be a producer of these less prestigious forms who said the educated features of CamE are acceptable, but should neither be encouraged nor discouraged pedagogically. Another implication is that the percentage is for those who long for exonormative varieties. If so, it is trivial.

Item 2: it aimed at determining which reading the pronunciation features are unappealing and should be discouraged. Referring to question 3 of figure 3, the forms in R1 are not appealing and should be discouraged. This is not the totality of the respondents as 7 (13.46%) were tolerant (see the above item) and also 01 (1.92%) thought the variants that are acceptable and should neither be encouraged nor discouraged educationally are in R2. Nevertheless, up to 45 (86.54%) respondents found the features in R1 should not be encouraged because they are unappealing. They should rather be resisted and challenged since they cannot serve as the emblems of Cameroonian culture and identity, more importantly, under-privileged features of this type are denied a place in the spectrum of standard Cameroon English pronunciation. It can be noticed that respondents, with little formal education, are 56.53% tolerant of L1-induced pronunciation features and only 43.47% are categorically resistant. Conversely, with well-educated respondents' responses showing rejection (86.54%) significantly outnumbered those indicating acceptance (13.46%). This demonstrates the fact that respondents with good educational attainment, just like those with little education, are

for the standardisation of Cameroon English pronunciation features. The difference between both is that the former are more determined and eager to see the projection of educated Cameroon English pronunciation features occur. This explains and justifies the resistance to basilectal CamE pronunciation forms (86.54%).

Item 3: the item sought to ascertain which reading the pronunciation forms are not very intelligible. In question 5, 43 (82.70%) respondents found the forms in R1 not very intelligible. Consequently, the situation is indicative of pedagogic concern that needs to be handled appropriately. It is worth noting that respondents, with little formal education, see Figure 1 in 5.1, the answer to the question scored the percentage of 78.26%. This indicates the result in this section, 82.70%, is marginally higher than that in section 5.1 above, 78.26%. Both findings, being broadly similar, are suggestive of respondents' disapproval of the features in R1 which are L1-induced CamE pronunciation variants.

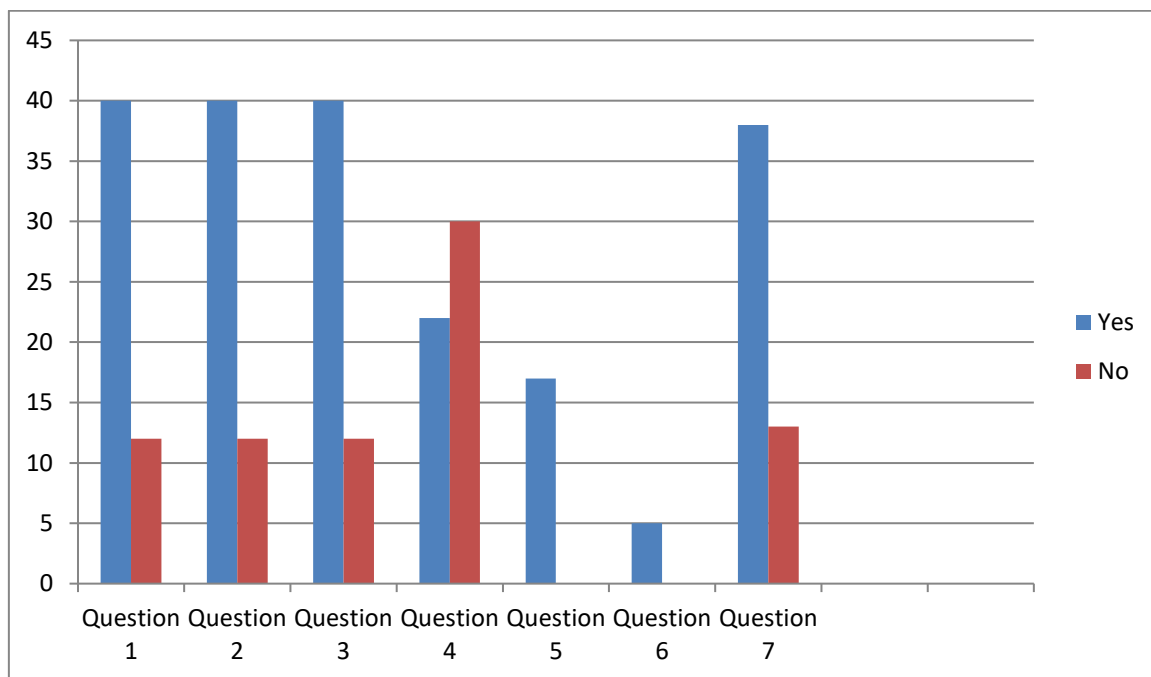
Item 4: the item was preoccupied with which reading the pronunciation features are not intelligible at all. In item 3, 43 (82.70%) respondents voiced their concern about the intelligibility of the pronunciation forms in R1. The remaining 9 (17.30%) did not respond to that item because they found the forms not intelligible at all. While 43 (82.70%) voiced a mild concern, the other remaining 9 (17.30%) opted for abstention at that level to strongly question the intelligibility of the forms in the first reading. In fact, all of them said the same thing: the basilectal forms are unintelligible. The implication of the assertion is that as the uneducated forms of CamE impair intelligibility, they cause communication breakdown. This information is in question 6.

Item 5: the item was designed to establish which reading the pronunciation features should be discouraged. The response lets bear a unanimity discrediting the features in R1 in question 8 as they all resolved to condemn these forms which, they opined, should be discouraged because such features are stigmatised and cannot serve as the emblems of the Cameroonian culture and identity. Like in 5.1, this section shows the condemnation of the pronunciation variants in R1 by the totality of the respondents. The implication is that the pronunciation forms are void of esteem and value. They should be discouraged because they are stigmatised and cannot serve as the emblems of the Cameroonian culture and identity. The same attitude was first expressed by the young users of CamE with little education above. Similarly, these well-educated CamE speakers unanimously advocate promoting educated CamE pronunciation features, on the one hand, and condemn the uneducated pronunciation variants, on the other. The condemnation of the basilectal forms is a clear indication that the respondents have a strong negative attitude toward the forms. It is, by the same token, a proof of their ardent love, authentic admiration and total passion for Cameroon English pronunciation features acquired pedagogically.

Item 6: the designation of the item was to determine which reading the features should not be standardise. Figure 3 reveals that the pronunciation variants that should not be standardised are in R1. The opinion was expressed by all the respondents. Similarly, the same attitude was echoed by the totality of the respondent in section 5.1. This is a clear indication that the features in R1 are rejected because they are associated

with frowning. In this view, they are considered unacceptable Cameroon English pronunciation variants as they are not prestige-associated forms. Educated CamE features of pronunciation, however, elicit strong positive attitudes among the respondents as they unanimously and resolutely declare that the forms are good and likely to be promoted through pedagogical efforts; the forms are very intelligible; they should be encouraged and standardised. All these nice things said in favour of educated CamE features are an indication that they are chosen and preferred to the uneducated ones. These results are suggestive of acceptability of Cameroon English features acquired educationally. All these numerical findings basically provide a strong support for choosing the features. Another issue that deserves to be examined closely is the resilience of CamE pronunciation features in relation to its battle against forms of foreign varieties notably British English and American English.

CamE forms have always been resilient and resistant to exonormative norms. This can be seen from the results (of the questions see the appendix) that are presented in the figure below.



**Figure 4:** CamE Competing with BrE and AmE from Bamenda ≥ A/L

Like the subsection in 5.1, this is also composed of seven items, which are deservedly examined closely below.

Item 1: it sought to determine if the respondents had good knowledge of foreign varieties like British English and American English. Figure 4, question 1 shows that up to 40 (76.92%) respondents answered positively to the question. The other 12 (23.07%) of the respondents, however, responded negatively. This is indicative of the fact that although the sample population has a good knowledge of exonymic varieties such as British English and American English, Cameroon English pronunciation features achieved educationally elicit positive attitudes among them. Decades ago, this was impossible. The

mindset has changed, and new and favourable attitudes toward Cameroon English pronunciation features acquired through formal education have emerged. New air is blowing in the minds of individual behaviour is heavily influenced by social patterns (see Fishman, 2000: 94). In section 5.1, *affirmative* responses recorded 14 (60.87%) as opposed to 9 (39.13%) *negative* responses. In this section, on the contrary, 40 (76.92%) and 12 (23.07%) were recorded for *yes* and *no*, respectively. This substantial difference is illustrative of the fact that well-educated respondents are more knowledgeable than those with little formal education.

Item 2: the designation of the item was to establish whether the respondents had a command of CamE pronunciation features. Positive and negative responses yielded the respective scores of 40 (76.92%) and 12 (23.07%). The findings are indicative of the respondents' high proficiency in Cameroon English pronunciation features (76.92%). These are confident and highly proficient CamE speakers. The other respondents (12), by contrast, may have fallen into the trap of believing that they are less proficient CamE users. The highly proficient in CamE pronunciation features acquired educationally are quite knowledgeable about their cultural and linguistic values. More importantly, they are also engaged with the wider world. The latter, in contrast, are neither concerned with their immediate environment nor are they globally minded. From Fishman's theory about individual behaviour and social patterns, the majority of the respondents have a command of Cameroon English pronunciation features achieved through formal teaching and learning processes. Following their numerical weight and strength (76.92%), they are likely to influence the minority (23.07%), who will, individually, make every effort to conform to the majority use.

Item 3: it sought to determine if the respondents admired a typical Cameroonian accent. Scrutinising Figure 4, question 3 reveals that 40 (76.92%) answered favourably. Concerning the admiration issue, ten reasons were provided, thanks to the inspiration of the respondents. These were fluency, 4; sounding great to the ear and intelligibility, 6; love for the variety, 1; good English and good pronunciation, 7; clarity, 3; and originality, 4. This was said by 23 (44.23%) of the respondents. The 17 (32.69%) others admired Cameroon English for the culture it embodies, 3; the accent and identity it carries, 10; the cultural identity of its speakers it reveals, 2; and love for the Cameroon English variety, 2. This constituted 76.9%. These reasons are recurring although they were given by different people from different regions. This is clear evidence that these respondents, though they live separately, have many things in common with those having little or no formal education. They share the same feelings, preferences, likes, dislikes, tastes, including whims and caprices. That is why they were able to choose a category of pronunciation features, the educated ones, and were able to discard others, the uneducated ones. It is, in this view, a tacit convention shared among the speakers of educated CamE at a national level.

Only 12 (23.07%) of respondents answered negatively to question 3. This can be seen from Figure 4 above, where up to 40 responded positively. Others, on the contrary, did have reasons for saying no. These reasons were poor and ethnic forms of

pronunciation, as advanced by 10 respondents. The percentage represented by this is 23.1%. Only 2 respondents did not provide any reasons for not admiring speakers of a typical Cameroonian English accent. This is likely to hide a deeper meaning. In effect, presumably the absence of any explanations means the respondents said they did not admire typical CamE speakers just for the sake of saying it. Yet, to understand the deeper meaning of the reasons advanced by both, those who admired and those who did not should be examined closely. In fact, in the opinion of the typical CamE speakers' admirers, the educated forms of pronunciation like the ones in R2 were admired for their *fluency, sounding great to the ear and intelligibility, love for the variety, good English and good pronunciation, clarity, and originality*. It should be noted that this diction was not suggested in the questionnaire forms. The choice of wording is the respondents' pure emanation. The diction shows that the informants found the forms praiseworthy and, because of this, were filled with admiration of the features. Indeed, typical speakers of CamE are admired for who they are: they are admired for their *fluency*. CamE itself is admired for what it is: *sounding great to the ear and intelligibility, love for the variety, good English and good pronunciation, clarity, and originality*. The admiration for the speakers is intimately linked to the variety of English they use. That is, it is because of their fluency in the educated Cameroon English variety that the users are admired. It is important to note that the question was oriented to the language variety. It was not focused on speakers. That is why the question was formulated as: Do you admire a typical Cameroonian English accent? Not only do they admire the variety that they depict as what is said above, but they also admire those who are the incarnation of educated CamE.

The non-admirers, possessing reasons for not admiring, on the other hand, condemned the educated features of Cameroonian English for being *poor and ethnic forms of pronunciation*. Scrutinising the condemnation carefully, it can be understood that their understanding of CamE is a mixture of educated and uneducated features of pronunciation. The implication is that if uneducated forms are removed from the educated ones, they also admire the features. This therefore implies that what the respondents actually condemn is not CamE made up of educated forms. It is rather CamE with its uneducated forms. In other words, they condemn the basilectal features of Cameroon English pronunciation. Mathematically speaking, by removing *poor and ethnic forms of pronunciation* from CamE they will be the first to admire the variety. This simply means these respondents are stringent and demanding with regard to the educated Cameroon English they use. In this view, nobody hates the educated forms of CamE. The condemnation is only of the uneducated features of Cameroon English pronunciation. That is why it can be said at this level that all the respondents admire educated CamE pronunciation forms. It is, actually, the formulation of the question that made them hesitant. It was: Do you admire a typical Cameroonian English accent? Here, it is not clear about typical Cameroonian accent. Those respondents who understood by typical Cameroonian accent as the educated Cameroonian English variety ticked *Yes, they did*. On the contrary, those who thought it was the basilectal forms of CamE or the mixture of both the educated and ethnic forms of the local variety ticked No, they did not.

Item 4: it aimed to find out whether the respondents would like to change their local accent or not. By observing the above figure, 22 (42%) respondents would like to change their local accent to a foreign variety, while 30 (60%) would not. Like those with little education in 3.1.1.1 above, these educated speakers have cast their choice on the educated variety of CamE with approximately the same percentage score. Furthermore, only 40% of the respondents opted for changing the local accent to a foreign one. This result is significant in that about 40% of the respondents would like to change CamE accent to other accents, notably British and American accents. This could not be imagined decades ago. This is tangible proof of a change in mindset. The finding, therefore, supports the view that these imperial accents, such as British and American, are gradually becoming less dominant in the linguistic attitudes of Cameroonian English speakers.

Item 5: the item was designed to establish whether the respondents would like to change CamE to a British accent. It is found from the figure above that 17 (32%) of the respondents would prefer British. This is indicative of a fundamental aspect: British English pronunciation features are considerably declining in perceived status among Outer Circle speakers, in general, and CamE users, in particular. Not a significant number of Cameroonians yearn for the accent (32%). Contrarily, up to 60% of the respondents long for the postcolonial variety. This ushers in a new paradigm where the totality of Cameroonians yearns for educated Cameroonian English pronunciation features to the detriment of foreign accents.

Item 6: this item was designed to determine if the respondents would like to change their local accent to American. 5 (9%) would prefer the American variety. The explanations provided in 3.1.1.1 above can also hold here.

Item 7: the purpose of item 7 was to find out whether the local variety developed and acquired educationally could be called “Standard CamE accent”. For the standardisation of Cameroon English, 38 (73.07%) answered positively, but 13 (25%) did not, as can be seen from column 7 of the figure above. Scrutinising the questionnaire forms, it appears that the 38 respondents think that the Cameroonian accent can be called “Standard Cameroonian English” for the following reasons: easy identification, 10; patriotism, 5; prestige, 3; similarity with British English, 1; autonomy, 3; job opportunity, 2; good accent, 4; thought booster, 1; personal love or attachment, 1; cultural identity, 5; and intelligibility, 4. Like in 3.1.1.1 above, these informants praise CamE educated pronunciation features for cultural identity, good accent and intelligibility. More importantly, these educated features are praiseworthy for personal love or attachment, patriotism and prestige. Not only were they passionate about CamE educated features, but these ones create bonds of patriotism and prestige. These are often associated with standard languages or varieties of a language. This indicates that the respondents, in particular Cameroonians, in general, admire, cherish and love educated CamE pronunciation forms, for which they select praiseworthy vocabulary to describe, as evident in the descriptions provided above.

Among the 13 respondents who answered negatively, 02 refused to call the Cameroon English accent “Standard Cameroonian English” because of the presence of the ill-forms in R1. Only 02 said *it is not prestigious like British or American English*; 02 others said *English should be a monolith with only one model for all*; 07 said *because it is a borrowed language variety its speakers should respect the norms of the source language*. This yielded 25%. It is not very clear what the first 02 informants meant. It is possible that CamE accent is not prestigious for them because of the presence of the basilectal forms in it. If this is the case, then the accent will be prestigious in the absence of these forms. If not, then they are both conservative and pro-Western respondents. The second 02 and 07 informants, however, appear to be too conservative. In their opinion, English should be a monolith with only one model for all because it is a borrowed language variety. As a consequence, its speakers should respect the norms of the source language. These respondents are yearning for something that is unrealistic and impossible and, particularly, something against nature. This is so because the English language community has given birth to different speech communities that are shared out into two broad categories: traditional Englishes and New Englishes. Each category is split into different speech communities. Every speech community is endowed with forms related to sociocultural and pragmatic-ecological characteristics of its peculiar environment to express the linguistic needs, tastes, whims and caprices of its users. That is why every community is unique in its linguistic as well as sociolinguistic aspects of the language variety. Bearing in mind this consideration, it is quite counter-productive to long for any variety, be it RP, British English or American English, for example.

The fifth question of the questionnaire is a self-referential, stand-alone item which queried respondents on the following question: “Do you also produce these pronunciation features in R1?” The answers ticked from the boxes were *always*, *sometimes*, *rarely* and *never*, and the scores obtained were 6, 15, 17 and 12, respectively. The sum of 6, 15 and 17 is equal to 38 and represents 73% of the overall respondents. The 12 respondents who said they never produce the basilectal forms represent 23% only. The only respondent who was hesitant (2% of the informants) finally did not tick any of the boxes. What can be understood here is that this respondent is also a producer of the uneducated forms. The hesitation is to tick among *always*, *sometimes* and *rarely*. In this view, it is 39 (75%) of the respondents who were producers of the basilectal features. If this is the case, then there appears to be a pedagogic concern here. This calls for change in English Language Teaching (ELT). Better still, it calls for a change in teaching paradigm. The pedagogue in Cameroon, from now on, is supposed to be preoccupied with identifying the learning difficulties of local students and addressing the needs of these learners. The teacher in the Outer Circle varieties, in normal circumstances, therefore, should not be concerned with Inner Circle varieties' pedagogic problems. The fact is the Outer Circle varieties themselves have inherent problems peculiar to them that need solving. This is what this investigation has come up with in pronunciation alone. Similar studies could find many more learning difficulties in other fields like lexicology, syntax and pragmatics. In this light, it is unfair to ignore these learning impediments that

are faced daily as a setback and target pedagogic concerns miles away from Britain or America, for example.

## **5. Conclusion**

The concluding part of this essay is made up of answers to the research questions, summary, and recommendations. These are taken up in turn.

### **5.1 Answers to the Research Questions**

The first question was: What are the attitudes of the speakers toward the features of Cameroon English pronunciation? The investigation reveals that the educated forms of CamE pronunciation should be encouraged and promoted because they are prestigious and are emblems of the Cameroonian culture and identity. Additionally, the choice of diction for the description of typical Cameroonian accent and its possible standardisation is indicative of favourable attitudes toward CamE educated forms.

The second research question sought to find out whether the speakers feel comfortable using the educated CamE pronunciation forms in public or the uneducated ones. Prestige is a fundamental factor that makes features of pronunciation appealing in public. Interestingly, the findings revealed that the educated forms should be encouraged and promoted because they are prestigious and are emblems of the Cameroonian culture and identity. Additionally, owing to the prestige and high esteem CamE educated features are privileged with, participants recommended these forms for standardisation. More importantly, up to 22 (95.6%) respondents admired those who speak English with a typical Cameroonian accent. This finding goes a long way to show the place of choice that educated mainstream Cameroon English is enjoying in the minds of younger Cameroonians as well as professional adult CamE speakers.

The third research question was: Which CamE features of pronunciation are appropriate for formal settings such as school, work, and media? The answer is obviously those achieved through educational attainment because they are very intelligible. In addition, these features are not only prestigious, but they are also held in high esteem by Cameroonians who are proud to use them in any setting, including school, work and media.

### **5.2 Summary**

The selection of the educated features of CamE pronunciation is due to the fact that they are privileged with a favourable attitude, which provides them with a place of choice in the minds of the speakers. This situation de facto warrants them being capable of serving as the emblems of Cameroonian culture and identity. Consequently, they should be included in the spectrum of the standard CamE pronunciation features.

The uneducated forms of CamE are unappealing and do not exhibit any signs of esteem or prestige from the respondents. In this view, they cannot serve as the emblems of Cameroonian culture and identity because they are not prioritised by Cameroonians.

Logically, they should not be included in the spectrum of the standard CamE pronunciation forms.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

It is found that educated features of Cameroon English pronunciation are the best candidates to be included in the spectrum of standard CamE. These features should be encouraged, promoted and projected over the basilectal forms of CamE and exonormative varieties in the nation. From this viewpoint, policy makers and language planners should consider educated features of Cameroon English pronunciation as the target in the English language teaching and learning industry in the country.

Studies of this type are recommended to hasten the standardisation of CamE. More works about standardisation are needed. In fact, scholars have already invested in developing a more comprehensive and systematic description of CamE in diverse linguistic aspects, including phonology, lexicology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics. Besides the standardisation issue, what is lacking is designing teaching materials for primary, secondary, as well as tertiary education.

In fact, designing local teaching materials must be among the top priorities. In this view, educational stakeholders, such as policymakers and language planners, should work with CamE norm-setters who are local English language teachers, lecturers and researchers whose field of interest makes CamE local teaching materials their target and priority. These experts should then be tasked to come up with tangible and sustainable solutions for the teaching and learning of educated features of Cameroon English pronunciation.

Teachers should be trained to impart mastery of the educated local variety of English. As norm-setters, they are the ones who implement, disseminate and foster the use of educated features of CamE nationwide. His constant contact with the language and the learners gives the teacher a prerogative role to be the educator, the monitor, the guide, and even the facilitator in the English language teaching industry. A teacher is therefore a model learners are bound to follow. That is why training teachers is a prerequisite to impart to learners the educated features of Cameroon English pronunciation. It is also worth mentioning that teachers play a central role in shaping the learners' attitudes in the classroom. In a classroom situation, teachers alone identify, determine, and define correct usage. The language forms they encourage are accepted, and those they scorn are rejected automatically by learners. As was found in the course of the above analysis, speakers of a typical Cameroon English accent are admired. Obviously, so are teachers. The fact of the matter is that their contribution cannot be underestimated.

### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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## Appendix

**Table 3: Bamenda < A/L**

| No | Questions                                                                                                               | Reading I | Reading II |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1  | In which reading the forms are good and should be promoted in schools?                                                  | 00        | 23         |
| 2  | In which reading the forms are acceptable and should neither be encouraged nor discouraged through educational efforts? | 13        | 00         |
| 3  | In which reading the forms are unappealing and should be discouraged?                                                   | 10        | 00         |
| 4  | In which reading the forms are very intelligible?                                                                       | 23        | 00         |
| 5  | In which reading the forms are not very intelligible?                                                                   | 5         | 00         |
| 6  | In which reading the forms are not intelligible at all?                                                                 | 23        | 00         |
| 7  | In which reading the forms should be encouraged                                                                         | 23        | 00         |
| 8  | In which reading the forms should be discouraged                                                                        | 00        | 23         |
| 9  | In which reading the forms should be standardised?                                                                      | 23        | 00         |
| 10 | In which reading the forms should not be standardised?                                                                  | 00        | 23         |

**Table 4: Bamenda < A/L**

| No | Questions                                                                           | Yes | No |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| 1  | Do you have a good knowledge of foreign varieties like British or American English? | 14  | 9  |
| 2  | Do you have a good mastery of CamE pronunciation?                                   | 14  | 9  |
| 3  | Do you admire a typical Cameroonian English accent?                                 | 22  | 1  |
| 4  | Would you like to change your Cameroonian accent?                                   | 9   | 14 |
| 5  | If yes, would you like to change it to British accent?                              | 8   |    |
| 6  | Or, would you like to change it to American accent?                                 | 1   |    |
| 7  | Can we call CamE "Standard CamE accent"?                                            | 21  | 2  |

**Table 5: Bamenda ≥ A/L**

| No | Questions                                                                                                               | Reading I | Reading II |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1  | In which reading the forms are good and should be promoted in schools?                                                  | 0         | 51         |
| 2  | In which reading the forms are acceptable and should neither be encouraged nor discouraged through educational efforts? | 7         | 1          |
| 3  | In which reading the forms are unappealing and should be discouraged?                                                   | 45        | 00         |
| 4  | In which reading the forms are very intelligible?                                                                       | 00        | 52         |
| 5  | In which reading the forms are not very intelligible?                                                                   | 43        | 00         |
| 6  | In which reading the forms are not intelligible at all?                                                                 | 9         | 00         |
| 7  | In which reading the forms should be encouraged                                                                         | 00        | 52         |
| 8  | In which reading the forms should be discouraged                                                                        | 52        | 00         |
| 9  | In which reading the forms should be standardised?                                                                      | 00        | 52         |
| 10 | In which reading the forms should not be standardised?                                                                  | 00        | 52         |

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**Table 6:** Bamenda  $\geq$  A/L

| No | Questions                                                                           | Yes | No |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| 1  | Do you have a good knowledge of foreign varieties like British or American English? | 40  | 12 |
| 2  | Do you have a good mastery of CamE pronunciation?                                   | 40  | 12 |
| 3  | Do you admire a typical Cameroonian English accent?                                 | 40  | 12 |
| 4  | Would you like to change your Cameroonian accent?                                   | 22  | 30 |
| 5  | If yes, would you like to change it to British accent?                              | 17  |    |
| 6  | Or, would you like to change it to American accent?                                 | 5   |    |
| 7  | Can we call CamE "Standard CamE accent"?                                            | 38  | 13 |

**Table 7:** Acceptable and Unacceptable Vowel Sounds from Bamenda

| No | CamE sound | Deviant sound | Example | CamE rend. | Occu. | Perc. | Dev. form | Occ. | Perc. |
|----|------------|---------------|---------|------------|-------|-------|-----------|------|-------|
| 1  | e          | i             | name    | nem        | 30    | 75%   | nim       | 10   | 25%   |
| 2  | e          | a             | learn   | len        | 37    | 92.5% | lan       | 03   | 7.5%  |
| 3  | ɔ          | u             | boat    | bɔt        | 32    | 80%   | but       | 08   | 20%   |
| 4  | I          | e             | mean    | min        | 38    | 95%   | men       | 02   | 05%   |
| 5  | ua         | ɔ             | Joan    | dʒuan      | 39    | 97.5% | dʒɔn      | 01   | 2.5%  |

**Table 8:** Acceptable and Unacceptable Consonant Sounds from Bamenda

| No | CamE sound | Dev. form | Example    | CamE rend. | Occ. | Perc. | Dev. form | Occ. | Perc. |
|----|------------|-----------|------------|------------|------|-------|-----------|------|-------|
| 1  | p          | b         | peter      | pita       | 38   | 95%   | bita      | 02   | 05%   |
| 2  | b          | p         | bitter     | bita       | 38   | 95%   | pita      | 02   | 05%   |
| 3  | dʒ         | tʃ        | George     | dʒɔdʒ      | 39   | 97.5% | tʃɔtʃ     | 01   | 2.5%  |
| 4  | n          | l         | mini       | mini       | 40   | 100%  | mili      | 00   | 00%   |
| 5  | t          | tʃ        | teacher    | titʃa      | 40   | 100%  | tʃitʃa    | 00   | 00%   |
| 6  | ʃ          | tʃ        | crash      | kraʃ       | 40   | 100%  | kratʃ     | 00   | 00%   |
| 7  | tʃ         | dʒ        | church     | tʃɔtʃ      | 38   | 95%   | dʒɔdʒ     | 02   | 05%   |
| 8  | mb         | m         | plumber    | plɔmba     | 34   | 85%   | plɔma     | 06   | 15%   |
| 9  | z          | s         | assume     | azjum      | 38   | 95%   | asjum     | 02   | 05%   |
| 10 | z          | s         | comparison | kɔmparizɪ  | 38   | 95%   | kɔmparizɪ | 02   | 05%   |
| 11 | s          | z         | goes       | gɔs        | 40   | 100%  | gɔz       |      |       |
| 12 | z          | s         | December   | dizemba    | 35   | 87.5% | disemba   | 05   | 12.5% |
| 13 | j          | hʃ        | huge       | judʒ       | 34   | 85%   | hjudʒ     | 06   | 15%   |
| 14 | sl         | sil       | slaps      | slaps      | 40   | 100%  | silaps    | 00   | 00%   |