

## **Research Methodology for the teaching of National Languages through national culture in a plurilingual setting**

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*Cameroon is a plurilingual society. Bitjaa Kody (2006) refers to 268 national languages for only two official languages (French and English). Even the rural milieu is now plurilingual. In the classroom, we find at least four national languages for forty pupils. In urban milieu, the rate is twenty national languages for seventy pupils. In this area, children have as their mother tongue, French or English. They are acculturated or hybrid, they don't know even the name of their mother tongue.*

*This situation of national languages was examined in the world in general and in Cameroon in particular. The results show that currently, languages seem to be promoted more than cultures. Language development or the methods of teaching them have not been clearly mentioned. Where culture is mentioned by a researcher, reference is to culture in general or better still civic education and not national culture in a rural milieu. That is why the syllabuses of the Ministry of Basic Education are innovative and require analysis and evaluation of contents, teaching aid, and the efficiency of the teaching in order to bring out their strengths and weaknesses. Based on findings from a series of surveys, this study attempts solutions to the absence of teaching national culture in Cameroon since 2002.*

*Knowing that, culture is better taught through the mother tongue, this study targets the following objectives: propose a teaching method of national culture; produce a bilingual/multilingual teaching aid of national culture; guide the pupil towards a socio-cultural and linguistic community; assess and validate the methods and approaches implemented; teach national languages in primary schools in a multilingual context through national culture. The research tools were conceived according to the hypothesis that, only the national languages can vehiculate national languages and be the best mean for the teaching of national culture in a plurilingual area.*

*The research tools included: direct classroom observation in primary schools in Yaounde and Douala; questionnaire for parents, teachers and pupils in Yaounde and Douala; achievement tests.*

*The sociolinguistic technique was used to assess the quantitative and qualitative aptitudes and attitudes of people living in a plurilingual area as concerns culture and language. In sociolinguistics, data collection is imperative in field surveys.*

*The survey was divided into the following four phases for adequate management of the languages in class: the situation, context of usage of the languages, environment, and linguistic attitudes; experiment; preparation of a teaching aid; and assessment, validation, and remarks.*

*At the end of the survey, a 17 points syllabus on national culture was proposed. It was drawn up after examination of elements proposed by researchers like Mba and Tadadjeu (2000), Gfeller (2000), MINEDUB (2002) as well as cultural practices relating to education. Cultural elements like songs, dance, initiation to the use of some local musical instruments, music, proverbs, tales, riddles, genealogy, poetry or recitation, theatre, taboos, dress, cookery, drawn, hand work, customs and traditions will be taught in African languages.*

*The following two approaches will be used in teaching the syllabus: teacher-centred and pupil-centred approaches.*

*Both approaches focus on the use of national languages and official languages.*