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Language Problems in Demographic Field Work in Africa: The Case of the Cameroon Fertility Survey

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The World Fertility Survey is an international research programme whose purpose is to assess the current state of human fertility throughout the world. This is being done principally through promoting and supporting nationally representative, internationally comparable, and scientifically designed and conducted sample surveys of fertility behaviour in as many countries as possible.

The WFS is being undertaken, with the collaboration of the United Nations, by the International Statistical Institute in cooperation with the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population. Financial support is provided principally by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities and the United States Agency for International Development.

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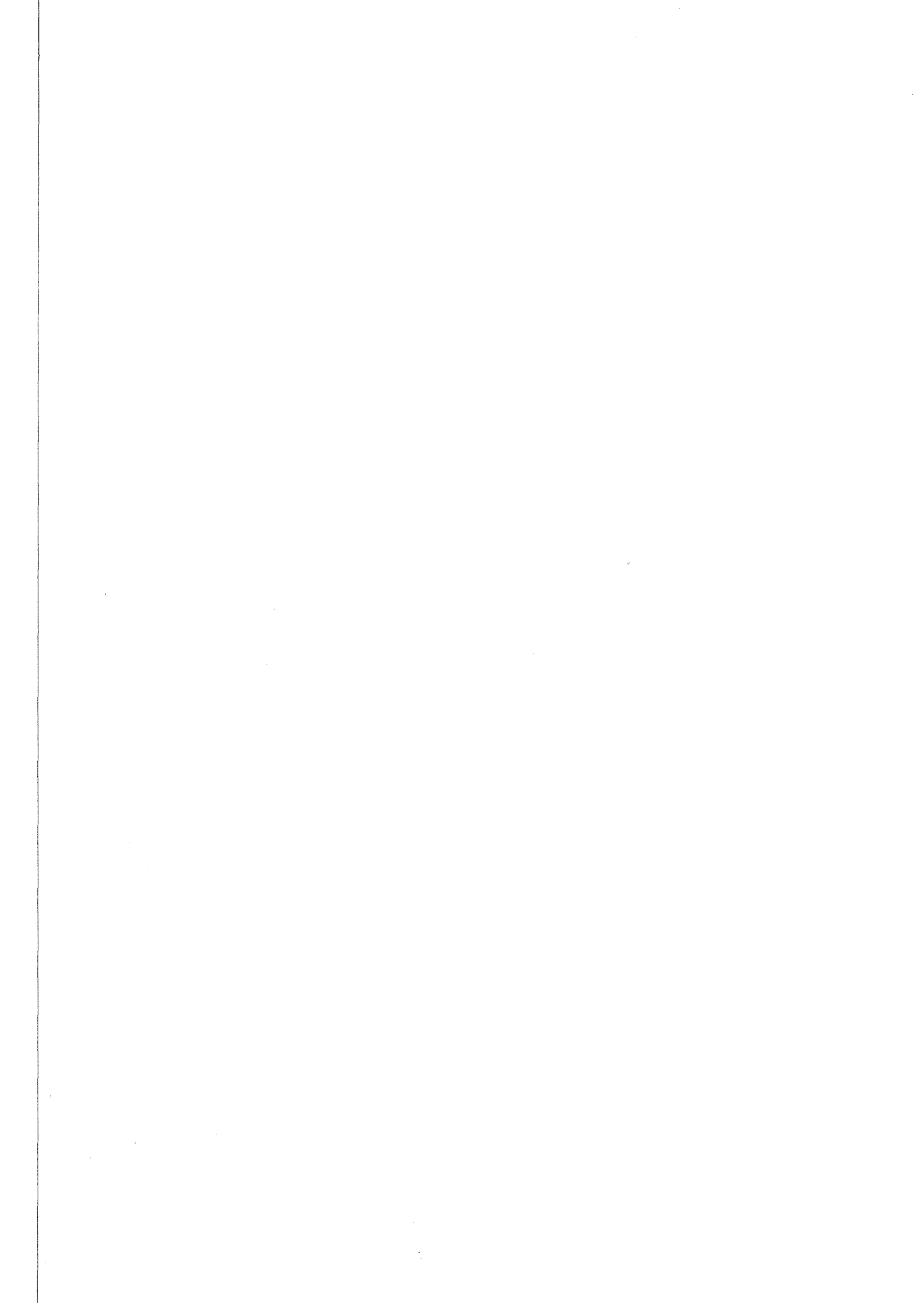
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FOREWORD

At the request of the Cameroon Government, a visit was made to Cameroon in March 1976 by Dr. C. Scott, WFS Deputy Director for Data Collection and Co-ordination, to discuss the possibility of Cameroonian participation in the WFS programme.

This initial visit indicated that the number of languages spoken in Cameroon might prove to be the biggest obstacle to a WFS-type survey there. It was therefore decided to commission a two-month study to examine this problem and to recommend a strategy which would uphold the WFS standards for translation.

Consequently, Dr. Helen Ware from the Australian National University was asked to make this linguistic reconnaissance. The report which follows results from her study during the period 10 June to 10 August 1976.

Subsequent to this, a project proposal for the Cameroon Fertility Survey (CFS) was drawn up in London in consultation with Mr. A.E.N. Nkougourou, Head, Division de la Conception, Bureau du Recensement, Direction de la Statistique. The main recommendations made by Dr. Ware were accepted; details of the strategy adopted will be included in the Country Report No. 1 for the CFS.

1 Introduction

1.1 THE COUNTRY

Cameroon presents a microcosmic representation of tropical Africa as a whole within an area of less than half a million square kilometers. It is a beautiful country with scenery ranging from cloud-topped mountains rising from dense equatorial forests, to intensively cultivated highland plateaux and characteristically desert areas.

The latest population estimate, from the 1976 census, gives a total of 7,500,000 persons, a quarter of whom live in urban centres. The annual growth rate of the population is some 2.3 per cent.

The ethnic diversity of the population reflects the scenic and climatic variations and the sometimes turbulent history of the region. Demographic studies of individual ethnic groups made to date have revealed great variations even within a single region of the country. Thus, for example, in the North Fulbé and other groups who have been under Islamic influence have low growth rates in striking contrast to the more traditional groups who have maintained their customary way of life. Similar contrasts can be found throughout the country.

Averaged overall, the population density of the country appears low, but in some of the more fertile areas of the South West and on the infertile mountain slopes of the North population pressure is very evident. Conversely, the Eastern region is extremely sparsely populated. The two major cities: Yaoundé, the capital, and Douala, the commercial centre and port, are heavily urbanized.

Demographic diversity is reflected in birth and death rates alike. The national birth rate is 45 per thousand but in the Eastern region this falls to 30 per thousand. Whilst women in some ethnic groups average no more than three children at the close of their reproductive lives, those from other groups average seven or more. Crude death rates range from 14 per thousand in major urban areas to 26 per thousand in rural areas. Regional and ethnic group rates range between 20 and 40 per thousand.

In summary, the complex diversity of Cameroon demands an especial attention to demographic methodology. The strata are numerous and complex and are both superimposed and interlaced. Rural urban differentials can cut across the extensive geographic and ethnic differences. It is necessary not only to demonstrate that differentials are real and not merely artefacts of the methods of data collection and analysis, but also to endeavour to find the causes of

such differences. Such diversity poses a challenge which can only be met by a full recognition of the problems involved, which will not go away simply because they are ignored; a flexible study design and form of implementation must be evolved.

1.2 THE STUDY

The study was carried out by the author with the cooperation of Abel Nkougourou, of the Direction de la Statistique, Cameroon. Its purpose was to advise upon a linguistic strategy for the Cameroon Fertility Survey.

From the start, it was plain that the study must be a practical one; that translation problems only emerge as one endeavours to translate; and that problems of inter-dialect intelligibility can only be resolved in the field. Thus, whilst the study began with extensive and intensive discussions with many of those involved in communication and linguistic studies in Yaoundé, from then on lessons were drawn from trying out the ideas in the field (see Time-Table Below). As it was not possible to find someone with experience in administering a single questionnaire in a range of local languages sufficient to cover the country (the Census was translated from French or English by each individual enumerator), this was a task to be undertaken during the study. For this purpose, thirty-three questions were selected from the World Fertility Survey Core Questionnaire to represent the basic demographic areas and those where special difficulties in translation of the questions, or in the delicacy of the subject matter, were anticipated (see Appendix I). It was then determined to translate these questions into four of the major languages of Cameroon: Ewondo, Doula, Fulfulde, Pidgin and to test these both with native speakers and with those believed to use these languages as lingua francas. At the same time, in travelling round the country to work on these pre-test, it was possible to continue discussions with a wide range of people concerned with the problems in using local languages.

This report then represents the lessons learnt in the field in Cameroon and from the Author's previous experience, and the distilled advice of those who have toiled long in this area. The methodology suggested may not always be the optimal one, but the suggestions are based on practical experience gained sitting in village huts, sarés and churches talking with women.

TIME-TABLE OF THE STUDY

DATE	PLACE	OPERATION
June 10 – July 1, 1976	Yaoundé	Study of background, familiarization with problem, discussion with resource persons: linguists, University, Office National de la Recherche Scientifique et Technique, Radio, Société International des Linguistes, medical authorities, Census staff, church officials, National Programme of Civil Service, geographers, sociologists, adult education bodies, Ghanaian WFS member, UNESCO, UNDP, USAID.
		Translation and testing of Ewondo questionnaire.

July 2–13	Douala – Buea – Victoria – Bafoussam	Translation and testing of questionnaire in Douala and Pidgin English. Discussions with local authorities and experts in the area (notably Collège Libermann, the Cameroon Development Corporation Fertility Survey and the Gomala Adult Education Group).
July 14–18	Yaoundé	Follow up, discussion with ALCAM group.
July 19–20	Bertoua	Discussions with local authorities, church officials and medical workers.
July 21–25	Yaoundé	Further discussions, setting-up of testing of Ewondo questionnaire in non-Ewondo areas.
July 26 – August 1	Garoua – Gashiga	Translation and testing of Fulfulde questionnaire, discussions with local authorities.
August 2–3	Maroua – Meri – Maguivele	Testing of Fulfulde questionnaire in non-Fulbé area, discussions with local authorities.
August 4–10	Yaoundé	Redaction of report, debriefing meetings with Census Bureau and Direction de la Statistique.

2 The Linguistic Problem and its Solution

A basic tenet of scientific sociology is that in any study of differentials the data to be compared must have been collected by means of a single instrument or set of instruments. Where this rule is not observed it is impossible to determine whether apparent differentials reflect real differences or artefacts of variations in methodology. Variations in the wording of the questions posed can introduce biases quite as disastrous as those occasioned by the selection of a consistently biased sample.¹

It is for this reason that, to date, the World Fertility Survey has employed a single, written version of the survey questionnaire for each and every language employed in the field. Given the noted linguistic diversity to be found within Cameroon, it was considered to be essential to commission a specific study of:

- 1) The extent to which this policy could be maintained in the proposed Cameroon Fertility Survey (CFS); and
- 2) The most effective alternatives in the case of necessary deviations from this policy.

2.1 THE LINGUISTIC DATA

Linguistic data relating to Cameroon are far from lacking.² The problem is however twofold, as outlined below.

2.1.1 LACK OF OVERALL SCIENTIFIC COMPILATION AND CODIFICATION OF THE AVAILABLE DATA³

The best modern survey of the available linguistic information concerning Cameroon is to be found in "Linguistics in Sub-Saharan Africa", Volume 7 of *Current Trends in Linguistics*, editor: T. Sebeok, published by Mouton, The Hague, 1971.⁴ This monumental work includes a 140-page "Check-list of African Language and Dialect Names" compiled by W.E. Welmers. This check-list endeavours to classify the African languages concerned (regrouping dialects and cross-referencing multiple names for single languages); and gives some indication of the areas in which they are spoken and a very rough estimate of the sizes of the groups speaking the languages.

In Yaoundé, the Société Internationale de Linguistique (which is mainly concerned with biblical translations) has abstracted the information relating to Cameroon from the Check-list and added precisions obtained from missionaries and other translators working in the field. Unfortunately, however, the utility of this list is gravely impaired:

- 1) By the failure to indicate the mutual intelligibility or otherwise of the various dialects;⁵
- 2) By the total imprecision of the estimates of the population size of the individual linguistic groups. (Knowledge of the original sources of at least some of these estimates shows that they are based on more or less informed guesses, and upon administrative censuses ranging in date from the 1940's to the 1960's). Totalling all of the estimates given for Cameroon, the sum is less than half that obtained by the administrative censuses of the late 1960's, even if category "very small group" is estimated to average 5,000 souls.

For the future, the Atlas Linguistique du Cameroon currently being prepared by ALCAM, a group of Cameroonian and French linguists based in Yaoundé, will fill this grave lacuna, but their mapping publications are unlikely to begin to appear before the 1980's.

For the present, the principal sources remain two documents published under the auspices of the Office de la Recherche Scientifique et Technique Outre-Mer (ORSTOM) and the Cameroon Government:

a) The Map, "Localisation des Groupes Humains", based on the 1964 Administrative Census

By a system of symbols of different colours, sizes and shapes, this gives an immediate impression of the distribution, density and close relations of the various ethnic groups represented.

b) The Village Dictionaries

These dictionaries give an extremely detailed picture of the ethnic distribution by and even within villages.⁶ For the survey planner, it is somewhat disheartening to learn that even a village as small as Magdémé in Margui-Wandala Department (population 114 at time of compilation) may be divided between four different ethnic groups.⁷ Although the information given in these dictionaries is now somewhat dated, there is no reason to believe that in broad terms of proportions there have been many significant changes in ethnic distribution. In any case, as since their compilation, both administrative and demographic censuses have ceased to register ethnic affiliation, the dictionaries represent the latest available statistical information in this area.⁸

¹ Compare "Do you approve of the therapeutic termination of pregnancy within the first semester?" with "Do you approve of killing three-month-old babies in the womb?"

² Doke (1945) quotes some thirty works on the Bantu languages of Cameroon alone, published prior to the First World War. Since then the rate of publication of such studies has been growing exponentially.

³ There is not even a single library where all the relevant materials can be consulted.

⁴ Especially "The Benue-Congo Languages and Ijo" by K. Williamson, Adamwa-Eastern by W. Samarin and "The Western Bantu Languages" by M. Guthrie and their respective bibliographies.

⁵ In a considerable number of cases, two names for the same language or even the same dialect are listed as individual languages.

⁶ If the World Fertility Survey in Cameroon is to use community questionnaires, these dictionaries will provide an invaluable point of departure, for, apart from ethnic data, they also provide information on road access, customary courts, missions, schools, co-operatives, medical facilities, markets, credit unions and development projects, etc. Although the detail in which this information is given varies very considerably from Department to Department, updating the existing information would certainly be more effective than endeavouring to start again from scratch.

⁷ As a number of the 43 Departmental/Divisional Dictionaries are already out of print it should be a matter of priority for the CFS to acquire those which are still available and to photocopy those which are not.

⁸ Other ethnic/linguistic maps of Cameroon include those to be found in Bryan, 1959; Greenberg, 1955; Guthrie, 1953; Guthrie and Tucker, 1956; Tucker and Bryan, 1956; Westermann and Bryan, 1952; and the map *Volksstamme Kameruns* by G. Tessmann at ALCAM.

Both the map and the village dictionaries are concerned with ethnic rather than linguistic groups. The correlation between ethnic group and language spoken is not perfect, but it is possible, with adjustments, to move from one to the other. The ALCAM group of linguists have already offered their aid in affecting this transition as accurately as possible.

The really intractable problems relate to the distribution and nature of bilingualism and multilingualism in Cameroon. In Africa, "all language maps up to the present seem to be maps of the areas in which a particular language is used as a first language" and Cameroon is no exception to this rule.⁹ Thus, whilst it is known that something in the order of 2,000 persons in western Bemanda speak Ngwa, there is no available evidence concerning other, more widespread languages understood or spoken by Ngwa speakers; nor, indeed, as to how they manage to communicate with the wider world at all.

Educational statistics, if cautiously interpreted, should give some indication of the coverage provided by French and English, by geographic area if not by ethnic group. However, Cameroon remains a preponderantly rural country and there is no evidence that French or English is of any great utility in interviewing any but the very youngest women in the villages. (Rural-urban migration shows a very strong tendency to cream off the better educated, who in any case can only pursue their education in the urban centres; the result is that the only educated women in the rural areas tend to be some of the wives of local administrators.) The only published figures relating to the extent of bilingualism in Cameroonian languages which it was possible to obtain during the Study relate to the spread of Fulfulde in the North.¹⁰

2.1.2 SHORTCOMINGS OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES

The linguistic data on Cameroon were essentially gathered by those interested in studying the formal structure and interrelations of the languages themselves rather than by persons interested in using them for the communication of ideas.

Asking a linguist how to communicate in the local languages is rather like asking a theoretical chemist how to bake a cake, or a nuclear physicist how to build a bridge: that is not where their interests lie. As Nida, the major linguist most concerned with problems of communication through translation, argues, that branch of cybernetics known as "Information Theory" has more to offer the translator than pure linguistics as such.¹¹

In contrast to the linguists, there are people whose work necessarily involves communication through the languages spoken by the people. In the Cameroonian context perhaps the most important examples are the Churches, the Radio, and the medical services. In other countries, educators and administrators would figure prominently in this list, but Cameroon has inherited and continued the French policy of banning local languages from the schools (except in the most minor roles), and has made the conscious choice of using the official languages (French and English) in administration with a view to breaking down ethnic particularism.¹²

2.1.2.1 The Churches

The Churches are essentially concerned with communication and ensuring that their messages are fully understood.¹³ With the exception of the North, where they have made little inroad against the spread of Islam, the Churches are the largest single source of information on communication in the local languages.¹⁴ Of late, the Federal University

of Cameroon at Yaoundé has begun the teaching and study of Cameroonian languages. During a long period, however, the Catholic Collège Libermann at Douala was the centre of local language teaching in Cameroon. The College still publishes a major series of readers: *Langues du Cameroun*, as well as dictionaries and other local language publications.¹⁵

Were it not for the Churches, even fewer Cameroonian languages than is now the case would have had a set orthography or would have appeared in print.¹⁶ The activity of the Churches, although beneficent in many respects, has had the pernicious result of creating linguistic divisions along sectarian lines. Thus, for example, in the Yaoundé region, the Catholic mass is in Ewondo but the Protestant sects have emphasized Boulou; amongst the Bamileke, Banjoun is favoured by the Catholics and Bangante by the Protestants.

In some areas, languages over-actively promoted by the missionaries have become positively unpopular as a result. This has been the case with Bali, Bangante, Banjoun, Boulou and Douala to varying extents. Church attendances in Douala declined when attempts were made to replace Pidgin with more localized Cameroonian languages: "si une langue, au détriment d'une autre, était choisi, certain fidèles cesseraient de venir".¹⁷ Any linguistic reconnaissance in the sample areas would need to make provision for consultations with all religious groups working in the individual areas.

2.1.2.2 The Radio

All radio stations in Cameroon devote a certain amount of time to broadcasting in the local languages. The languages used naturally vary from station to station, the number varying from a simple three at Garoua to over thirty at Buea (the lists are given in Appendix II). The original

⁹ Leverhulme Conference on the Universities and the Language Problems of Tropical Africa, 1963, p. 139.

¹⁰ See the section on Fulfulde below. The ALCAM group has carried out some limited, unpublished studies of multilingualism, mainly amongst captive, non-representative groups such as university students or those attending agricultural college.

¹¹ In *Towards a Science of Translating*, E. Nida, 1964, p.125 ff. "In order to combine efficiency of communication with an effective guarantee against distortion by noise (misunderstanding, mishearing) or other factors, languages tend to be about 50 per cent redundant . . . Any message can be communicated through any channel, but it may be necessary to "lengthen" the message, that is, to take more time to communicate it if the channel is too restricted."

¹² Adult education in Cameroon labours under the terrible burden that before the farmers can be taught to read they must first learn French or English!

¹³ One of the best and most cited works on the practical problems of translation remains Nida's *Bible Translating*. The sections on "Terms for Features of Man's Form" and on "Terms for Features of Social Culture" (birth, with child, know a man, betroth, marriage, etc.) are of special reference to the areas of concern of WFS.

¹⁴ Witness the work of the Société Internationale de Linguistique in Yaoundé.

¹⁵ See Bibliography, p. 47. For teaching the orthography of the local languages to those unaccustomed to it, the fact that the College publishes cassette recordings of the readers is of very special value and of interest to WFS.

¹⁶ There are published New Testaments in at least 15 Cameroonian languages (see Section 2.3, "Orthography"). In the British colonies it was often the early introduction of printed biblical translations which succeeded in making single languages out of what were previously language families, e.g., Yoruba in Nigeria. None of the Cameroonian Bible translations pre-dates 1940, though small portions of the Bible appeared earlier.

¹⁷ De Feral, 1976.

choice of languages was based upon a 1963 UNESCO Report. Since then, a variety of practical and political pressures have led to so many changes that the current policy is closer to "first come, first served". Nevertheless, it remains true that the effect of broadcasts in the local languages is to extend the coverage boundaries of the languages chosen and to give greater comprehension currency to the particular dialects selected. A language spoken on the radio also gains in status and prestige. These factors should certainly be taken into consideration in the selection of languages and dialects by the CFS.

In terms of straight communication, it is doubtful how much radio broadcasts in the local languages achieve. With the exception of the North, where several hours a day are devoted to Fulfulde, the local languages are very much treated as poor relatives in terms of the time and the resources devoted to them. This is all the more unfortunate as the level of comprehension of the official languages demanded even by mass programmes relating to improved farming or nutrition is extremely high. In the villages, someone listening to the radio is usually either a young pop-music fan, or a school-teacher listening to the news. Nevertheless, the eventual radio publicity for the CFS should be in both official and local languages, if only because strange news is more reassuring in a familiar tongue.¹⁸

2.1.2.3 The Medical Services

The medical services provide an excellent example of the lack of formalized provision for communication with those who cannot speak or even understand either of the official languages. Such patients must either take care to be accompanied by a friend with greater experience or linguistic skills, or trust that they will find someone at hand who understands their ills. With time, medical staff, who are frequently transferred, pick up a sufficient knowledge of at least one of the local languages (or more, if they are adequately motivated). Yet it is still standard with minority linguistic groups for the patient to describe a symptom in a language *a* to a friend who transmits the information in more widespread *A* to the nurse, who in turn summarizes for the doctor in French or English.

"Les difficultés tragi-comiques de diagnostic" cited by Pontabry and Weber (1970) in which "le sujet atteint de blennorragie . . . vient consulter le médecin et lui dit qu'il souffre de la tête" are as much the result of linguistic problems as of prudery. A man with a considerable command of French may well be ignorant of any polite terms for the sexual organs.

Public health campaigns are equally left to the skills, or otherwise, of the individual health workers who have to explain the problem to the public in the local languages. The use of Pidgin in radio warnings concerning cholera and leprosy is still considered to be a daring innovation (Todd, 1974, p. 70; De Feral, 1976).

2.2 LANGUAGE DISTRIBUTION AND LINGUISTIC STRATEGY

It is very easy to say that Cameroon has one hundred, three hundred or even seven hundred different languages — there is a certain pride in sheer numbers.¹⁹ The best available listing names a thousand languages for the whole of sub-Saharan Africa of which 183 are to be found in Cameroon, although upon closer investigation, perhaps a quarter of these can be classified as mutually intelligible dialects.²⁰ However, the issue of practical concern is not the total number of languages to be found in Cameroon but their distribution amongst the population.



Source: Le Vine, *The Cameroons from Mandate to Independence*. Copyright © 1964 by The Regents of the University of California; reprinted by permission of the University of California Press.

Many of the minor languages are spoken by no more than ten thousand²¹ persons, which still leaves ample scope for a great many minor languages to be paralleled by a small number of major languages each comprising the first language of more than a quarter of a million persons: Bamileke,²² Fulfulde, Ewondo, Bassa, Douala.

If second and third languages are then taken into account, the picture changes even more radically. Information on second languages is woefully lacking,²³ but Greenburg

¹⁸ Cameroon does not have television or any local language newspapers.

¹⁹ Amongst the more reasoned estimates in Le Vine's 201 ethnic groups (*The Cameroons from Mandate to Independence*, Berkeley, 1964).

²⁰ W. Welmers *Checklist of African Language and Dialect Names*; Welmers himself argues that "it is simply impossible to prepare anything like a 'definitive' index of African language and dialect names".

²¹ Eleven out of the first twenty languages in Welmers' list found in Cameroon are estimated to be spoken by no more than 10,000 persons. One is estimated to have only 500 speakers!

²² The problems associated with treating Bamileke as a single language are discussed in detail in the Bamileke section below.

²³ "We need urgently to know, as a first priority of sociolinguistic research in Africa, the geographical area of a given lingua franca, the extent to which it is known and its distribution in relation to social stratification", J. Berry, "Pidgins and Creoles in Africa", in *Current Trends in Linguistics*, op. cit. p. 519.

postulates that there is now hardly an area in Africa which does not have a dominant lingua franca,²⁴ and certainly Cameroon is no exception. In very broad terms, the Cameroonian lingua francas are distributed as follows:

LINGUA FRANCAS	PROVINCES	COVERAGE
Fulfulde	North	Fair
Ewondo ²⁵	Southern Central	Good
Ewondo Populaire	East	Poor
Pidgin	North West	Good
	South West	Good
Douala	Littoral	Fair
Gomala ²⁶	West	Fair

Bassa is not strictly a lingua franca, being rarely spoken by non-Bassa, but is important because it covers a major part of Maritime Sanaga, and Nyong and Kelle.²⁷

With the exception of some very limited data concerning Fulfulde, there is no scientific information on the coverage of these second languages. Any estimates must inevitably be based on local wisdom and informed guess-work, appropriately weighted to make allowance for the fact that people who speak a given language have a general tendency to be somewhat over-optimistic as to its utility as a second language, and that women are generally less multilingual than men. The table which follows is merely intended to give some indication of the possible coverage to be obtained by the linguistic strategy proposed.

The overall estimation is that, if the proposed strategy is followed, then it will be possible to interview 72 per cent of

the women in the sample in languages for which printed questionnaires are already envisaged. Some 28 per cent of "problem" women who do not have an adequate grasp of any of the nine languages proposed (French, English, Pidgin, Fulfulde, Ewondo, Bamileke, Bassa, Baya, Douala) remain. After the sample has been drawn, the selection of a further three languages (probably two for the North and one for the East) should hopefully reduce the outstanding proportion to 8 per cent.²⁸ Under Cameroonian conditions, 8 per cent of women not interviewed with a printed questionnaire in a language they can understand, would seem to be reasonable. If the East were to be represented by a sample proportionate to its size this proportion would be even further reduced.

For the remaining 8 per cent it would seem reasonable to recruit interpreters on the spot who could go with the interviewers following the practice adopted in so many previous enquiries. It has been suggested that these "problem" women could be dropped from the sample altogether and regarded as non-respondents. This would be most unfortunate from a number of points of view. These women form a well-defined and very special group who are, nonetheless, representative of Cameroon even though they do not speak a widespread language. Non-response in African surveys is very low and it would be unfortunate to raise this level by an artificial exclusion device, and the possibility of relegating difficult cases to this category would raise the level even further. A single woman, who cannot be interviewed for linguistic reasons, in a given locality could possibly be dropped (although there would almost always be someone available who could speak French or English or a lingua franca and her language, and could therefore

ESTIMATE OF COVERAGE PROVIDED BY PROPOSED LINGUISTIC STRATEGY

Zone	Percentage of total interviews	Languages	Percentage of zone covered by the languages	Percentage of total covered	No. of <i>Arrondissements</i> requiring special treatment ¹
North	21	Fulfulde	40 ¹	8	5
North West	11	Pidgin	80	9	1
West	11	Bamileke	75	8	2
South West	6	Pidgin	95	6	0
Littoral (excl. Douala)	6	Douala Bassa	80	5	1
Southern Central (excl. Yaoundé)	14	Ewondo Bassa	95	13	0
East	14 ³	Ewondo- Populaire Gbaya	40	6	3
Yaoundé	6 ³	All above	100	6	—
Douala	11 ³	All above	100	11	—
	100			72	12

¹ On the basis of a sample of 50 rural *Arrondissements*

² On the basis of 100 per cent coverage in the urban areas and 33 per cent coverage in the rural areas (see Fulfulde, Section 4.2.3, page 30).

³ Given special weighting, disproportionate to population, in the sample.

²⁴ Quoted *ibid.* p. 519.

²⁵ In the Southern Central Province Ewondo is not strictly speaking a lingua franca; it is rather that a questionnaire in Ewondo will be widely understood and that responses in Eton, Boulou, etc, will be comprehensible to Ewondo speaking interviewers.

²⁶ Gomala's claims to be considered a lingua franca amongst the

Bamileke is discussed in detail in Section 4.2.4, Gomala (Bamileke) on page 32.

²⁷ See the Section 4.2.6, Bassa page 34.

²⁸ The probable range for this residual population is anywhere between 10 and 5 per cent depending upon the distribution of the sample.

translate) but it is still likely that these women will be found in small groups, as in a Moufou hamlet adjoining a Fulbé village, and in that case the argument for retaining such women is reinforced.

LANGUAGE COVER

Official languages	Vehicular languages	Major languages	Minor languages (not related to the foregoing)
French ¹		Douala ²	Still
		Pidgin ²	problematic
		Bamileke ³	if respondent
		Gbaya ⁴	speaks
English ¹		Ewondo ²	
		Other 1	no
		Other 2	2nd
		Other 3	language
		Fulfulde ²	

1 Translation already provided.

2 Translation already commenced and tested.

3 Dialect(s) of Bamileke can only be chosen after the sample is drawn.

4 Usefulness of Gbaya for the East can only be fully determined after the sample is drawn.

Other: Even the addition of 3 other languages, after a detailed examination of the sample, would only give a total of 10 Cameroonian languages – a burden no greater than that already undertaken in the WFS survey in Kenya.

2.3 ORTHOGRAPHY

“In three moments a labourer will remove an obstructing rock, but three moons will pass without two wise men agreeing on the meaning of a vowel.”

Kai Lung

One of the basic arguments cited against the use of local language questionnaires in Cameroon is that these languages are *parlers*, not written languages, and that, even where orthographies for them do exist, there are very few people who can read and write them. This argument rests upon a number of misconceptions both as to the current situation regarding the orthography of the Cameroonian languages, and as to the specific needs of the CFS.

2.3.1 AVAILABLE ORTHOGRAPHIES

Whilst Bamoun is the only Cameroonian language to have developed an indigenous orthography,²⁹ many other Cameroonian languages are effectively written languages. There are published New Testaments in at least fifteen different Cameroonian languages³⁰ and (not counting specialist works for linguists) dictionaries, catechisms and other assorted texts in at least a further twenty.³¹ Indeed, the problem is often less one of the lack of an orthography than of competition between a multiplicity of different

orthographies for a single language. Fulfulde, although often written as if it were French, is blessed with an official orthography sanctioned for the whole of West Africa by the 1966 UNESCO Linguistic Conference in Bamako.³² On the other hand, for “the languages of the Yaoundé-Fang group of Bantu (Guthrie’s A 70 group) which is very largely a dialect cluster, no fewer than five different orthographies have been introduced by missions of differing religious affiliation and European background” (Leverhulme Conference, 1963, p. 143). Hagege (1968) even provides an amusing description of the difference between Mboum as spoken by Protestants and Mboum as spoken by Moslems, resulting from the fact that Mboum became a written language thanks to Norwegian Protestant Missionaries. The National Commission for Cultural Affairs, the Applied Linguistics Section of the University, the Linguistic and Phonetic Research Unit of the National Office for Scientific and Technical Research, and the Linguistic Circle of Yaoundé all continue to work towards the creation of a unified orthography for the Cameroonian languages. In the meantime, acceptable compromises can be made and are exemplified in the linguistic publications of the University and of Collège Libermann.

Even languages which are not normally written can be transcribed for non-linguistic purposes, by anyone accustomed to writing in English or French, although the representation of tones, where these are likely to cause confusion, does present problems. Radio scripts are prepared in “non-written” languages, educated sons write letters to their mothers at home in the village using semi-French orthography for non-written languages.

2.3.2 LEARNING TO READ THE LOCAL LANGUAGES

It is true that many Cameroonians who are perfectly literate in French or English have never had the opportunity to read their mother tongue. Experience with the Nufi and Gomala *mouvements* amongst the Bamileke shows that it is possible, without strain, to teach someone who is already literate in French to read and write his own Bamileke *parler* in two days, with a week sufficing for the very slowest.³³

The experience with Fulfulde in the Study showed that interviewers, who had never seen the UNESCO script before, could read the questionnaire without difficulty after listening to a taped recording of it and going through the written text two or three times. Even Government officials who had not had the opportunity of hearing the questionnaire read aloud, still managed to read this somewhat unfamiliar script after they had been given some idea of its subject matter. Those who fear the difficulty of reading local languages are, understandably, largely to be found amongst those who have never had the opportunity to try.

²⁹ Based on hieroglyphics for individual syllables and invented by Sultan Njoya towards the close of the nineteenth century.

³⁰ In order of publication Boulou, 1940; Effick, 1952; Douala, 1956; Mundang, 1956; Pidgin, 1960; Mboum, 1961; Beti, 1962; Fulfulde, 1963; Gbaya, 1963; Matakam, 1965; Bamoun, 1967; Bangante, 1967; Mungoba, 1968; Mousgou, 1968; and Fali, 1976.

³¹ If the work of linguists is included then even Bajele, the language of the pygmies is a written language (Renaud, 1976).

³² E. Mohammadou, *Lisez et Ecrivez le Foulfouldé*, (Yaoundé: Direction des Affaires Culturelles, 1971).

³³ The taped discussion on this subject made during this reconnaissance at Bafoussam is available and convincing on this point.

2.3.3 REPRODUCTION OF PHONETICS SYMBOLS

Formerly, a major problem with documents in languages requiring special phonetic symbols such as tone marks was their reproduction with printing equipment designed to meet European needs. The introduction of techniques such as photo-lithography which reproduces documents without the necessity of typesetting has transformed the situation. An original manuscript with the tones marked in can be reproduced *ad infinitum*. Even the production of the original document has been vastly eased by the introduction of electric typewriters with interchangeable golf ball heads for phonetic symbols,³⁴ and of even more elaborate machines for typing phonetic texts.³⁵ In this area, at least, the CFS need fear no special problems.

2.4 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS ON SURVEY DESIGN

2.4.1 CHOICE OF LANGUAGES

Taking into account all the evidence and experience acquired during the Study, the following linguistic strategy is recommended for the field work of the CFS:

- 1) The use of the WFS Questionnaires in French and English, adapted to Cameroonian conditions.³⁶
- 2) The use of full, printed questionnaires in each of the three main vehicular languages³⁷ of Cameroon: Ewondo, Fulfulde and Pidgin.
- 3) The use of full printed questionnaires in the other Cameroonian languages spoken by at least a quarter of a million persons: Bassa, Bamileke (Gomala?), Douala.³⁸
- 4) If the East is to be disproportionately represented in the sample, the use of a full printed questionnaire in an eastern language (possibly Gbaya).
- 5) The use of full printed questionnaires in a maximum of four further Cameroonian languages to be chosen after the sample is drawn on the basis of the following criteria:
 - a) That the language is the majority language in at least one and preferably two of the rural *arrondissements* chosen;
 - b) That the language is spoken by a group, where the majority of the women do not speak or understand another language already to be used within the survey;
 - c) For preference the language should already have an orthography. This however is **not** an essential condition as for the very limited purposes of the questionnaire, it would be possible to make do with a proto-French/proto-English temporary orthography.
- 6) That the ALCAM group should be invited to aid in the selection of the additional languages.

Wherever possible this report has tried to make proposals that should be as flexible as possible partly because so much will depend upon the exact sample drawn and partly because survey design (despite the textbooks) is an ongoing evolutionary process in which new lessons are constantly learnt and put into practice.

2.4.2 SAMPLING

To minimize the language problems associated with the CFS the more the sample can be clustered the better. Given the necessity for a nationally representative sample, there are two ways of increasing the homogeneity of the sample. This can be done either by selecting the sample in two stages with *arrondissements* as the primary sampling units and enumeration districts (*zones de dénombrement*) as the units at the second stage; or by maintaining enumeration districts as the primary sampling units but reducing the number of districts to be selected. *Arrondissements* were originally defined so as to secure the maximum of ethnic homogeneity within their boundaries and thus using them as primary sampling units would certainly help to reduce the linguistic diversity to be found within the sample. (There are 135 *arrondissements* and approximately 8,300 enumeration districts for the country as a whole). A certain degree of clustering of the sample has not only manifold practical advantages for the survey in the field (lowered transport costs, greater ease of supervision and call-backs, etc.) but also for the ultimate analysis of the data. Previous surveys have already shown very marked ethnic differentials in fertility levels in Cameroon; if the CFS is to investigate the nature and causal mechanisms of these differentials³⁹ the advantage of one of the largest samples to be authorized by the WFS should not be squandered by the inclusion of too many, very small ethnic/language groups as would happen if a very large number of dispersed enumeration districts were to be selected randomly with no previous stratification.

The nature and quality of the linguistic data available for Cameroon do not allow any more specific linguistic criteria for optimizing the sample design, from a linguistic point of view, than the very general principle outlined above. Stratification as between linguistically homogeneous areas and less homogeneous areas would theoretically be possible but such a design would not take into account the vital factor of the distribution of lingua francas, for which there is no reasonably detailed information even at the department level.

The disproportionate representation of the two major cities, Douala and Yaoundé, presents no special linguistic problem. Indeed, since knowledge of English and French and the African lingua francas is greatest in these centres, the linguistic problem is thereby eased. On the other hand, the over-representation of the East does emphasize the difficulty of providing adequate linguistic coverage for a sparsely populated area of considerable ethnic and linguistic

³⁴ The ALCAM office possesses such a machine and, perhaps more importantly, a typist accustomed to using it.

³⁵ The UNESCO delegation in Yaoundé has just imported six of these very specialized machines.

³⁶ Most notably in the reduction of the mass of inapplicable fertility control questions (changing the balance, with an increase in the emphasis upon factors other than contraception affecting fertility) and in the alteration of the questions relating to marriage to take account of polygyny and marital fluidity. There are also a few points where apparent conflicts between the English and French versions themselves will need to be sorted out.

³⁷ A vehicular language is a lingua franca which is the native tongue of some of its users but which is also used by non-native speakers for communication between ethnic groups.

³⁸ The rationale for the choice of all the languages mentioned by name is spelt out under the sections on the individual languages in Chapter 4 below.

³⁹ The CFS should offer a unique opportunity to demonstrate that these differentials are real and not merely the artefact of differences in interviewing procedure and questionnaire translations in the field.

diversity where the only lingua franca is Ewondo populaire which certainly does not cover the whole region. Thus, once the sample has been drawn, special attention will have to be devoted to devising an adequate linguistic strategy for the East. This is the more important as it has been argued that the relatively slow population growth of this region (which still averages more than 2 per cent per annum) results from high infant mortality rather than low fertility and that previous surveys in the area have used interviewing techniques too blunt to demonstrate this.

2.4.3. ELABORATING THE LINGUISTIC STRATEGY

It should be evident from this report that the details of the linguistic strategy to be adopted in Cameroon will be much clearer once the actual sample has been drawn and it is known which Bamileke villages, which animist inhabited northern mountain slopes, and which Eastern forest clearings have fallen within the sample. Rough estimates as to the proportions of the major groups likely to be found can be made in advance but more detailed planning must await the sample. Once the sample has been drawn, the serial process of determining the linguistic needs of each enumeration district can begin. The first stage in this process should be the compilation of all the existing, written information on the ethnic and linguistic composition of each district obtained from the village dictionaries, administrative censuses and all other available sources. The next stage will be an actual visit to the area to consult the local administration, schoolteachers, church-members, medical workers and anyone else who is regularly concerned with the need to communicate with the population.

In ascertaining which are the local languages, it must always be stressed that the CFS's special concern is with those which women understand sufficiently to follow a detailed questionnaire in them and which, preferably, have a sufficient emotional content for the women to allow them to discuss intimate personal matters without the strain of constant awareness of a strange language or, even worse, of straining to understand.⁴⁰

This process of determining the linguistic needs of each district should be under the control of a single person (possibly a newly-graduated sociologist from the University of Yaoundé) who will also be responsible for the supervision of all the questionnaire translation groups. This individual should work in very close liaison with the linguists working on the Atlas Linguistique du Cameroun who have already begun to assemble detailed information on certain regions, have contact with all linguists currently working in the field in Cameroon, and also have the expert knowledge needed for linking information on ethnic affiliation with language spoken, where necessary. They also have some knowledge of the interintelligibility of neighbouring dialects and languages, but their information on this subject will always need to be field-checked.

2.4.4 TRANSLATION PROCEDURE AND PERSONNEL REQUIRED

The following translation procedure, worked out in the field for the translation of the four existing questionnaires, is strongly recommended.

Day ⁴¹	Activity	Minimal Personnel Required*
1	Translation of English/French questionnaire into local language – producing LL 1 texts	A
2	Confrontation of LL 1 versions and establishment of LL version 2 in text	A + C
3	Re-translation of LL 2 into English/French	B
4	Confrontation of re-translator(s) and translators: establishment of LL version 3.	A + B + C
5 and 6	Testing of LL3 in the field	A
7	Debriefing meeting; final establishment of definitive LL4	A + C

*A At least two persons prepared to test the questionnaire in the field (1 male, 1 female); preferably 1 male, 2 females.

B One older person with considerable knowledge of the society.

C One co-ordinator with at least a sufficient knowledge of the local language to chair the discussions and at the same time an in-depth knowledge of the translation problems associated with this particular questionnaire and of the aims of the World Fertility Survey.

Obviously it is the co-ordinator who is the linchpin of this process, inasmuch as he/she must have some social science/demographic background. For the languages where no such person is available it is necessary for an extra person C₂ to advise on demographic questions.

2.4.5 ORTHOGRAPHY: SPECIAL NEEDS OF THE CFS

It must not be forgotten that the orthographic needs of the CFS are both extremely specialized and extremely limited. There is no requirement that the interviewers be able to write the Cameroonian languages as the schedule will be almost entirely precoded with the choice of responses and corresponding numbers already listed on the questionnaire in English or French, as most appropriate for the area. Thus all the interviewer will have to record is the appropriate number in the appropriate box. As far as reading is

⁴⁰ In some cases, it has been argued, because of the taboos against the discussion of sexual subjects, women who speak French or English may prefer to discuss "delicate" topics in these languages. If such a group exists its size can ultimately be empirically determined but in any cases it would only comprise women with a very considerable grasp of these European languages.

⁴¹ The days given are simply intended to be indicative, and will depend upon the length of the questionnaire. The Study found that it was possible to work through the translation of 33 questions in one half of a full working day, given that all interruptions were banned.

concerned, the interviewer's task is barely more onerous; all she has to learn is to read the specific hundred questions concerned, which she should in any case know almost off by heart by the completion of the training period. The purpose of the questionnaire written in the local language is simply to serve as an *aide mémoire* and to ensure that the interviewer poses the questions in exactly the same form each time. Experience with interviewers who do not regularly refer to the written questionnaire, as recorded on tape or by stenographers, shows that they regularly omit words or qualifying phrases, if not whole sub-questions, and develop their own individual formulations of the questions. This is especially true with a questionnaire as long as that which the CFS will inevitably have to use.⁴²

2.4.6 FIELD TRIALS AND CHECKS

This report proposes that the Cameroon Fertility Survey should start with a relatively flexible strategy (six local languages already chosen, the choice of dialects to be used, and the possible addition of up to four more languages to be decided upon after the sample is drawn) to be narrowed down as further information becomes available. To ensure that this narrowing down process proceeds upon systematic lines and with a maximum of scientific validity, it will be necessary to conduct a considerable number of very small scale field-tests. Do women of group *a* generally speak lingua franca *B* as claimed? Do women of group *c* all understand neighbouring dialect *D*, or is this only the case where they are actually neighbours to the *d*? Is it possible to use a single version of the questionnaire in language *E* for both native and non-native speakers, or is it necessary to provide a simplified version for non-native speakers (perhaps in brackets under the major version)? These are the kinds of questions which can only be answered by field tests. The planning of the CFS must be sufficiently flexible to allow for such tests which do not need to be large but do need to be rapidly performed on the spot. For example, to determine whether women in village *Y* understand *B*, one of the two Bamileke dialects provisionally selected to have full translations of the questionnaire, it suffices to talk to half a dozen randomly selected women in *Y* in Bamileke *B* about topics related to fertility but it will be necessary to have a system sufficiently flexible to allow for this. Some enumeration districts in the heartlands of major ethnic groups such as the Ewondo and Bassa will need no such field trials, nor should it be necessary to establish in more than a maximum of two widely separated districts whether Boulou women have a full comprehension of Ewondo. Nevertheless, it should be evident that at this stage, as at all stages of the survey, the less the number of districts and the less widely scattered their dispersion, the easier it is from a purely linguistic point of view. This question of dispersion is all the more important because of the very localized nature of the linguistic variations in Cameroon where neighbours do not necessarily understand one another, and where it is certain that the further apart two Bamileke villages are, the less chance they have of understanding each other's dialects.

2.4.7 LANGUAGE GROUP EXERCISES OTHER THAN QUESTIONNAIRE TRANSLATION

For each language group for which there is an individual translation of the questionnaire there should also be, in conjunction, an examination of a number of other culturally determined aspects of life. The three most important of these concern the historical

calendar, the naming customs of the group and other demographically relevant cultural practices.

2.4.7.1 The Historical Calendar

Historical calendars in the Cameroon to date have not proved remarkably successful.⁴³ Although some were prepared for the Census they were not widely used nor very useful. Most people do not appear to associate the dates of birth of their children, or ultimately of themselves, with notable historical events. Births are more commonly associated with times of natural disaster but these are also much more difficult to date (she was born in the year of the great locust plague – but which great locust plague?). Still, given the immense problems of making any estimate of the age of many of the older women, historical calendars should be drawn up for the different ethnic groups with a special effort to find items more salient to illiterate villagers than the distant comings and goings of the colonial powers.

2.4.7.2 Naming customs

Many African groups still practice naming customs which are of very considerable demographic importance. Although the Fulbé practice of giving each child a name indicative of its birth-rank (by sex) is less universal than was formerly the case, where found, it is still an invaluable aid to the ordered establishment of birth histories.⁴⁴ Other naming practices of demographic significance abound: the Bamileke have a special title for the mother of twins. The Douala and many other groups have a special name which indicates that the child was born after a succession of siblings who had died. Names expressive of the great joy of the parents at the birth of the child are often indicative that the child was born after a considerable period of infecundity for the mother. Very perceptive interviewers are sometimes aware that if a child is called "come back again" or "dirt" or something equally unpleasant then it is necessary to be on the lookout for a complex history of infant mortality or spoiled pregnancies.

However, this is a long way from the systematic utilization of such information in interviewing, and the less perceptive interviewers are so accustomed to the daily usage of such names that their demographic utility passes unperceived. Thus for each language group the translation team should establish a list of such demographically significant names to be incorporated into the training manual.⁴⁵ This list can be expanded after discussions with older members of these language communities who are most aware of the range and extent of these naming practices.

2.4.7.3 Other demographically relevant cultural practices

It is not only in respect of translation problems that

⁴² Even the questionnaire used in the translation trials which included only the most basic of the core questions plus a few questions which might be especially difficult to translate comprised 33 questions – the birth history counting therein as a single question!

⁴³ P. Gubry, *Une Confrontation Entre Deux Méthodes de Détermination des Ages au Cameroun*, (Cameroon: ORSTOM, 1976).

⁴⁴ A. Podlewski, *La Dynamique des Principales Populations du Nord-Cameroun*, ORSTOM, 1966, p. 121, for example, gives a list of the names for boys and girls used to indicate the first through tenth birth by the Hina, the Daba and the Kapsiki.

⁴⁵ It is envisaged that the general manual should be followed by appendices relating to problems and suggestions associated with individual language groups.

demographers have often shown themselves to be singularly obtuse to the importance of cultural differences. An awareness of the customs associated with birth, marriage and death can often be extremely useful in both the analysis and the collection of demographic data. For example, where it is the practice to have an outdoor ceremony (when the baby appears out of doors for the first time and is presented to the community), a fixed number of days after the child's birth, mothers who are otherwise disconcertingly vague about the length of time that a dead child survived after birth (which does not seem a necessary question to them) can almost invariably state whether the child survived long enough to be *outdoored*. Once translators and interviewers become aware that demographers are interested in such customs, it is very easy to gather detailed information which can be sifted to determine its demographic utility and then used in the training courses in suggesting helpful probes where chronological data is not immediately forthcoming. Unfortunately, to date demographers have been too impatient to appreciate the utility of such cultural awareness and a very special effort will have to be made to ensure that the CFS does more than merely pay lip service to the full utilization of such aids. For it must be realized that if strongly traditional women do not think in terms of the western frame of time consciousness then, rather than attempting the impossible feat of forcing them to do so, demographers must learn to utilize the timeframes with which the women are familiar to the full.

If anthropologists need to learn to be numerate, demographers need also to learn to be culturally aware. Africa offers many special problems to the demographers of which they are well aware; the special advantages in terms of demographic awareness as shown in names indicative of previous infant mortality and other practices are much less commonly studied and utilized.

2.4.8 PUBLICITY

One of the themes that was repeated in nearly all discussions of the strategy to be adopted for the CFS was the importance of winning over the population by the right form of advance publicity.

It is undoubtedly true that foreknowledge of the existence and general purpose of the survey by administrators, husbands and wives would have been of considerable advantage even for the preliminary pre-testing of the translations. However, many of the forms of publicity suggested in this

context seemed to show an unfortunate misunderstanding of feminine psychology. To tell women, or indeed their husbands, that the questions to be posed are *intimes* or even, as was often suggested, *très intimes* is to raise apprehensions unnecessarily, and to make the women fearful as they try to imagine what can possibly follow such an introduction. Apart from the risk that excessively explicit or exaggerated publicity might lead to adverse public reaction, there is no need to give women a false impression of the overall tenor and import of the questionnaire. Basically, the questionnaire is concerned with issues relating to children and family structure and it is these aspects which should be stressed in the publicity concerning the CFS.

The notion of auto-suggestion is little known in Cameroon (except amongst traditional healers who make much use of it) but it should be evident that if the survey organizers announce that they intend to ask embarrassing questions, women will undoubtedly be embarrassed. It should suffice to state that the survey will cover all aspects of family life. Equally, the interviewers should be screened to ensure that they do not suggest to the respondents (even merely by tone of voice) that the questions are embarrassing. What embarrasses the interviewer will always embarrass the respondent, but if the interviewer has a sympathetic approach she can bring the shyest of respondents to feel that the discussion of such topics is normal, at least within the specific context of the interview.

The publicity campaign for the survey will need to be conceived at two levels: a) informing and winning active support from administrative and traditional authorities to ensure their fullest co-operation in promoting the good of the survey; and b) informing and winning over the women who are to be interviewed. Evidently the form and content of the publicity will have to be very different in the two cases.

Whilst the former will need to concentrate upon the necessity for such a survey at the national level for planning purposes and so forth, the latter will need to emphasize the more personal issues: interest in problems of sterility, infant mortality and women's labour force participation, for example. All such publicity addressed to women should preferably be drawn up by women but should certainly be checked by a panel of women (not all literate) to ensure its suitability.

3 Survey Staff

3.1 THE INTERVIEWERS

The best interviewers often have no formal qualifications for this work. Of the very small sample who worked with the author on the translation and testing of the four translations of the questionnaire, the best were an unmarried woman radio announcer and a male university student who had previously worked on the Census Evaluation Survey.

Their almost only common characteristics were a very great sensitivity to the reactions of respondents and an outstanding ability to turn reverses into successes: to be *débrouillard*. The worst was a woman social worker who blithely ignored the written questionnaire and bullied the respondents. There was also an intermediate and generally somewhat less well-educated group with no previous experience of approaching the public in this way who were very nervous at first, but could have made very good interviewers with further training and experience. Their advantage was that they were still very close to the rural milieu where they would have to work.

3.1.1 CRITERIA

3.1.1.1 Sex

It is ironic but true that where women interviewers are for cultural reasons most needed they are for the same cultural reasons most difficult to find. Our field experiences in the North conclusively demonstrated that, whilst in some circumstances it may be possible for men to ask the questions,⁴⁶ the nature of the interview is so radically altered thereby that there can be no question of employing male interviewers for the main survey. Only women interviewers can enter inside the *sarés* and talk to the women on an equal basis. In the South, the utilization of male interviewers would be possible but not desirable. A Cameroonian woman undoubtedly feels more at ease discussing intimate matters with another woman on condition that the other woman does not put too great a social distance between them. Illiterate village women are sometimes just as intimidated by "high and mighty" and impatient female nurses as by male doctors.

The problems of finding educated women interviewers in the North should not be underestimated. With all the resources at their disposal it took the Mission the best part of a week to find two female interviewers of sufficient education and maturity in Garoua. Education for girls, on any extensive scale, is a relatively new phenomenon in the North, and the great majority of females with sufficient education and comprehension of French to be useful as interviewers are too young to approach middle-aged women without seeming impudent even if they could summon up the courage to do so.

3.1.1.2 Age

Determining the ideal age range for interviewers is a matter of balancing competing claims. Younger interviewers are generally better educated and more available (both in the sense that they are looking for work and that once employed they are less constrained by family responsibilities); older interviewers are more mature and more acceptable to the respondents. Obviously apparent age is more important than chronological age; where young

interviewers are employed they should at least appear to be mature. The ideal interviewer is aged 25-30, childless, and has a very understanding husband – obviously a very rare combination.

3.1.1.3 Marital Status

Respondents certainly prefer to think that those who question them are married. In the field trials, when asking questions about contraception, the young girls were sometimes greeted with the response: "There's the corruption of modern youth for you; they teach unmarried girls these things and then wonder why they get into trouble". In the North, where the distinction is very visible as unmarried women wrap their clothes around them in a different fashion, a different reaction is sometimes met with: "If you are married why aren't you at home looking after your husband" or even simply "What is your husband thinking of to let you wander round like this?" Yet at the same time unmarried women beyond a certain age are suspected of being no better than they should be. Whatever their marital status, interviewers should not dress so well that respondents start wondering what their source of income is.

It should go without saying that prudery should be an absolute disqualification for employment as an interviewer in a fertility survey.⁴⁷ It is still necessary to distinguish between the cultural norm which requires Cameroonian women to appear to be embarrassed when sexual topics are raised in the presence of men and true prudery. Young girls are expected to lower their eyes when a man explains to them what the questionnaire covers (otherwise they would be considered fast); married women with children who react in a similar manner (except in the North) are exaggerating, and are unlikely to make good interviewers.

3.1.1.4. Education and intelligence

The exact level of formal education is of less importance than a true comprehension of French or English, a minimum of arithmetical competence (it is surprising how few girls can calculate the date of birth of someone aged 24 without pencil and paper), a broad cultural background and a great deal of common sense. It is sometimes argued that it is possible to be too educated to make a good interviewer: this is associated with the belief that educated interviewers are more likely to skim their work and feel free to fill in the questionnaires themselves. In reality, highly educated interviewers have the advantage that they can grasp fully the purpose of the survey and why it matters to get the best age estimates possible and how to set about it. Intelligence is never superfluous and especially not in a domain which requires as much initiative as being a good interviewer.

⁴⁶ As a result of the special linguistic problems of interviewing the Mofou women some were actually interviewed through the medium of the Sub-Prefect and a male interpreter. The women responded because of the status of the questioner but were also extremely intimidated and ill-at-ease.

⁴⁷ The majority of all embarrassment in fertility surveys originates with the interviewers, not the respondents.

3.1.1.5 Language Group

Given the suggested linguistic strategy of the CFS, interviewers will have to be selected by language group in approximately the following proportions (to be fixed after the sample is drawn):

Language spoken	%
Fulfulde	20
Ewondo	20
Pidgin	10
Douala	10
Bassa	10
Bamileke	20
Gbaya	5
Other	5

Other things being equal, obviously precedence should be given to those who speak more than one Cameroonian language really proficiently (in this case a little knowledge is probably worse than none at all).

The ideal would be one of the languages from this list plus another from the same region which is not on the list, e.g., Fulfulde and Arab Choa or Pidgin and Lundu. The "other" group and the dialect distribution of the Bamileke speakers can only be determined after the sample has been drawn. However, Bamileke speakers who have mastered more than one dialect of the language would be especially welcome. The selection of interviewers in roughly these proportions should automatically provide a reasonable balance of anglophones and francophones. To make more detailed prescriptions prior to the drawing up of the sample would be unrealistic, especially as any prescription will be subject to severe practical constraints.

3.1.1.6 Linguistic Ability

The section below on the "Selection of Interviewers" will discuss methods of testing for linguistic ability. Necessarily what is required is a very special skill, or rather awareness, that there is no such thing as one word/one meaning. Women who have lived in more than one linguistic community, or whose parents speak different languages are obviously more likely to develop this sensibility. A woman with a Douala father, an Ewondo mother and an Eton husband living in Garoua would be hard put to it not to acquire a certain amount of linguistic awareness.

3.1.1.7 Special Groups

During the Study there was a certain amount of discussion of the possibility of using nurses, midwives, teachers, and social and extension workers as interviewers. Obviously their availability depends upon the Ministries concerned and upon the timing of the CFS. However, a number of reservations should be made. The CFS must reserve the right to select its staff, especially as official bodies like private individuals are sometimes inclined to lend that which they least prize. It must be quite clear from the start for how long they will be required, and that there can be no question of training them specially only to find that they have been affected elsewhere.

The employment of such persons also implies a special case insofar as at the local level they may be public figures whose individual views on the subject of fertility regulation are well known. Anyone with strong and known views on the subject, in either direction, should not be employed as a field worker. Whilst the use of other paramedical personnel, such as public health workers, may well be desirable it is

difficult not to feel that a nurse sent to a village which never sees a nurse from one year to another would be subject to an unfair conflict of interests. Social case-workers are often thought to make good interviewers; in practice they are not accustomed to dealing with people who have not come to them with problems and they are often incapable of keeping to the questionnaire and refraining from giving good advice.⁴⁸

3.1.2 SELECTION OF INTERVIEWERS

Some of the qualities of the good interviewer have been outlined above. Testing for these qualities will not be easy. Some suggestions for the form of a written test are given below.

Examples of a written test

Simple Arithmetic

If a woman falls pregnant in July 1968, delivers the baby at term, breast-feeds for 18 months, is then separated from her husband for two years and falls pregnant immediately upon his return, when should her next child be born?

Simple Coding

Ring the appropriate number for a woman who does dressmaking at home and keeps her earnings for herself.

1. Self-employed, works outside the home
 2. Self-employed, works at home
- etc. . . .

Linguistic Tests

- i) Write a paragraph explaining the difference between abortion and contraception (a) in French or English; and (b) in a Cameroonian language.
- ii) Give a word-by-word French/English translation of a brief passage in a Cameroonian language. (Candidates would have to nominate their language(s) in advance.)
- iii) Give a word-by-word translation in a Cameroonian language of a brief passage in French/English.

Motivation

- i) Write a paragraph explaining why you wish to work for the survey.
- ii) After reading a paragraph explaining the needs of the survey, answer a question on availability to travel.

Cultural Awareness

Write a paragraph describing a Cameroonian custom relating to birth or death.

For candidates who do not know how to write their Cameroonian language (or how to read it) the above test would have to be modified almost certainly by the addition of an oral which would come at a later stage for other candidates. Any candidate who manages to use English or French orthography to write a normally unwritten language should be given a large number of bonus points.

3.1.3 THE TRAINING OF INTERVIEWERS

Obviously, the linguistic diversity of Cameroon and of the strategy suggested for the CFS will involve some additional complexities in the training procedure. For a start, it must

⁴⁸ In one Australian evaluation of interviewer performance, apart from the manifestly incompetent, social workers were the lowest scoring group: Australian Family Formation Project (Australian National University, 1971).

be remembered that even the basic training will have to be divided in two: for francophones and anglophones (although the former will undoubtedly be much more numerous than the latter).⁴⁹ Then there will be the special training associated with the different local language versions of the questionnaire. Some interviewers will have to be taught to read their own languages and all will have to be given a briefing on the special problems associated with the individual version of the questionnaire. They will also need practice in interviewing, using the translations and debriefing sessions in which they can discuss the problems encountered in the practice interviews. Thus it will be necessary to add at least a week to the time normally allotted for the training of interviewers.

There will be special problems associated with finding the personnel necessary to conduct the training. The supervisors will be of very great utility in the local language training sessions, but they themselves will first need to be trained. Also the supervisors are not the most appropriate persons to train the interviewers to read the local languages. Local language literacy should preferably be taught by those who already have considerable experience in giving these short courses, such as the adult education groups associated with the Nufi and Gomala Movements. Failing that, the ALCAM group have contacts with all those teaching the local languages in Cameroon, from church groups to the University.

Church teachers, accustomed to teaching reading within a relatively limited context, would be preferable to university lecturers who are liable to introduce unnecessary complexities. For training in problems associated with the local language questionnaires themselves, the ideal would be to have as many members of the original translation team as possible available to pass on their unique experience, especially as it is envisaged that the translation teams will themselves have carried out small-scale field tests to make absolutely certain that the translations are fully comprehended by the women.

As the training in the basic concepts of the CFS will be in French or English, it will be essential to test the interviewers' comprehension of these concepts in the local languages. This is because functionally bi-lingual persons do not normally translate concepts from one language to another (as the beginner does); they maintain two individual concepts in their heads for use as the occasion demands. Thus it is perfectly possible, and indeed probable, to find different definitions of the same concept within a single person, depending upon the language which she is using. An obvious example from the CFS would be the case of *marriage* which is a different concept in European and African cultures. Equally, even a trained nurse may have a perfectly adequate knowledge of the physiology of reproduction in French, but when she uses her mother tongue she may also revert to folk beliefs as well. This conceptual confusion may be especially important in connection with idioms and metaphors. The Pidgin for "to have an abortion" is to "move belli"; if the interviewer thinks of this as involving an actual physical manipulation she may not include abortifacient drugs within her Pidgin concept of abortion.

A more general problem relates to the failure to regard abstinence as a method of fertility regulation because fertility regulation as such is a European concept and Europeans are not thought of as abstaining the way that Africans do.

Multi-lingual interviewers who speak more than one local language will present very special training problems from an organizational point of view if their skills are ultimately to be used to the full. Perhaps the optimal solution would be to train them in their "main" or most useful local language, but also to let them listen to recordings of the training sessions in the other languages (where they cannot attend these because of simultaneous sessions), and to give them the fullest opportunity to question those leading these sessions.

Sessions teaching the interviewers to read the local languages should be as staggered as possible in their timing, although it is probable that some multilingual interviewers will already know how to read one of their local languages and will only need to learn the secondary one. All training in the local languages should emphasize the value of these languages, for the educational system of Cameroon downplays them to such an extent that it will be necessary to emphasize that there is nothing "better" about interviewing in French or English even though the basic questionnaires and training are in these languages.⁵⁰

3.2 FIELD SUPERVISORY STAFF

Field supervisory staff should have nearly all the qualities of good interviewers, plus considerable talents for organization and methodical through-put of the essential paper work.

If interviewers are to work in groups of four to a supervisor then each supervisor must speak the Cameroonian language of the group and be able to do some interviewing, if only in the case of reluctant respondents and quality control. This raises real problems as to the sex of the supervisors who should preferably be female. Whilst it may not be possible to ensure that all such supervisors, or even a clear majority, are female, very great care should be taken to ensure that a noticeable proportion are.⁵¹ The temptation to promote men debarred from active field work by their sex to be supervisors must be resisted. Such a policy would not only be unjust, it would also be unrewarding. Census experience shows that in Cameroon men are sometimes very lax in supervising women, much to the detriment of the work in hand.

⁴⁹ If the training has to be divided, the anglophone/francophone division is an obvious, if not proportionately neat, solution.

⁵⁰ In Nigeria, better educated interviewers maintained that those who could speak English would, in the overwhelming majority of cases, choose to be interviewed in that language rather than in the local language. In the field, where respondents were offered the choice, the reverse proved to be the case.

⁵¹ If social workers make bad interviewers, on the contrary they often make excellent supervisors with their talents for organizing.

4 Inherent Problems in Using Local Language Questionnaires

4.1 THE CASE FOR AND AGAINST

4.1.1 LANGUAGE REGISTER

There are probably millions of L2 English speakers throughout the world with a high degree of bilingualism, but who could neither make love nor do the washing up in English nor discuss (modern) medicine or space travel in their L1.

Halliday, 1968.⁵²

The term *language register* refers to the different styles of language usage employed by a single individual in different circumstances; for example, by a university professor in speaking to his colleagues, his students, his wife, his girl-friend, his driver, his barber, his illiterate mother and his god.⁵³ One man may use a great many different registers within a single language, but the bilingual individual may also make a language shift as the subject or the person addressed changes even if the listener is as bilingual as himself. There are languages for doing business and languages for making love, and they are not necessarily the same.⁵⁴

One very strong argument for the use of questionnaires in the local languages in Cameroon is simply that even where women are highly proficient in the official languages, they are not accustomed to discussing their private lives and their genetic histories in them.

There is no African study equivalent to Burling's detailed examination of the use of Guarani (the local language) and Spanish (the official language) in Paraguay.⁵⁵ In Paraguay "men first address their sweethearts in Spanish, so as not to appear presumptuous, but when they later switch to Guarani, they are demonstrating the increasing intimacy of their relationship . . . Guarani . . . is used when speaking to friends, with servants, in making love . . . and as the Paraguayans say "between ourselves". A disappointing study of the use of Swahili in Kampala, shows, nevertheless, a similar division of spheres.⁵⁶ For Cameroon, there is only De Feral's discussion of the use of Pidgin based upon interviews with sixty francophones which showed that the overwhelming majority preferred Pidgin to French when discussing sport, marketing, paying compliments, making jokes and discussing problems concerning the opposite sex. She found that "les affaires domestiques, de toutes façons, sont un sujet de conversation favorable à l'utilisation du Pidgin plutôt qu'à celui d'une langue officielle". Pidgin was the language for the expression of shared interests excluding the idea of outside interference.⁵⁷

The above discussion has chiefly concerned those who have the option of speaking the official language but who would choose something less formal for the discussion of their personal and intimate affairs. The great majority of women to be interviewed by the Cameroon Fertility Survey have no such option for they do not have a sufficient grasp of either of the official languages to follow a detailed interview, even where they do have some knowledge of them. Obviously, the ideal would be that each woman would be able to discuss such intimate and personal matters in her mother tongue. (It should never be forgotten that the most sensitive areas covered by the questionnaire are not

necessarily the questions relating to sexual intercourse and fertility regulation: the inability to bring a pregnancy to term, and the deaths of children may well raise far stronger emotions.⁵⁸

Given the language dispersion of Cameroon, the attainment of this ideal is not possible in a national survey. Thus special efforts must be made to reduce the strain for women who are obliged to discuss their intimate affairs in one of the vehicular languages of the survey which, for them, is only a second or even a third language. Fortunately, our own tests around Buea and De Lancey's experience of interviewing some 2,000 women on the Cameroon Development Corporation's estates both show that (in the South West at least) Pidgin is a vehicular language in which women feel at ease even when discussing intimate affairs. It is a language which is indeed sufficiently current to have entered the registers used for affectionate and intimate dialogues, even for those whose maternal language is not Pidgin.⁵⁹

The case is far different for non-Moslem women interviewed in Fulfulde in the North, and for Maka or Kaka women interviewed in Ewondo populaire in the East. The problem is the more acute in that one of the first elements to disappear from any vehicular language is the use of euphemisms. In Fulfulde as spoken by the Fulbé there is a very wide range of polite terms for the discussion of sexual intercourse, largely borrowed from Moslem law. In speaking Fulfulde to a Moufou or a Guiziga, it is much more difficult to be precise without being coarse. The same applies to the terms used in speaking of dead children (equivalent to the English *passed on*, or *gone before*) used by native speakers

⁵² Halliday's article on *The Users and Uses of Language* contains a very clear explanation of the concept of language register.

⁵³ For a discussion of this variation especially with reference to "delicate" subjects see A. Rudskoger, *Fair, Foul, Nice, Proper: a Contribution of the Study of Polsemy*, Stockholm, 1952.

⁵⁴ "There are a thousand things one dares not say in French, a thousand voluptuous images which one can hardly render successfully, which the Creole expresses or renders with infinite grace." Girod-Cjantrans *Voyage d'un Suisse*. . . 1785, pp. 189-90.

⁵⁵ Man's Many Voices, *Language in Its Cultural Context*, p. 101 ff.

⁵⁶ C. Scotton, "Towards a Socio-linguistic Theory of Choosing a Lingua Franca (A System of Costs and Rewards in Kampala Where Swahili is often a 'Best Buy')", *Studies in African Linguistic*, Supplement 2, Oct., 1971.

⁵⁷ C. de Feral, "Le Pidgin English du Cameroun: Présentation Sociolinguistique" *Bulletin de 14 ALCAM*, 2, 1976. "Parler Pidgin donne une note complice au dialogue. Les employés des magasins l'utilisent entre eux tandis qu'ils s'adresseront à leurs clients et à leurs supérieurs en français."

⁵⁸ Male survey planners always lay great stress upon the sensitivity of sexual issues; they appear to be much less conscious of death as a difficult topic. In Europe, where child death is rarer this is less grave, but in Africa, where omitted deaths falsify fertility measures, it is of great importance.

⁵⁹ For Pidgin as a maternal language see Kisob, 1963; Todd, 1970. One of the translators who worked with the Study in Buea spoke Pidgin as her mother tongue, since this was the only means of communication between her parents who spoke different local languages.

of Ewondo but likely to be misunderstood by others. There are no simple solutions to this problem which is in turn aggravated by the fact that a native speaker of a language when addressing a non-native speaker has always a tendency to sound condescending. The training courses for interviewers should lay a very special stress upon the problems of interviewing in the respondent's second language, with tape recordings of good and bad approaches and practice in the field with non-native speakers.

Another aspect of language registers which is of especial relevance to fertility surveys is the alteration which takes place when a woman addresses a man rather than another woman. In strongly sex-hierarchical societies, "the stylistic alternation which occurs when a man speaks to his superior rather than to a peer is similar to the alternation which occurs when a woman speaks to a man rather than to another woman".⁶⁰ Hence the need to employ female interviewers with whom a woman can converse on her own level.

4.1.2 THE CONTRARY VIEW

No balanced report on the Study could omit to state that although the overwhelming majority of persons with whom this issue was discussed were highly favourable to the idea of using questionnaires pre-translated into and printed in the local languages, there was also a very small but significant group who opposed this idea.⁶¹ The opponents of the use of questionnaires in the local languages argued:

- 1) That previous practice (for example during the Census) where French and English questionnaires were translated in the field by the enumerators had proved perfectly satisfactory for the gathering of demographic information.
- 2) That insuperable difficulties would arise in trying to find a sufficient number of interviewers who could read the languages concerned. That equally it would be impossible to teach the interviewers to read the questionnaires within a reasonable time period.
- 3) That the essential problem is one of the comprehension of the basic concepts and that as long as the interviewers are well trained and fully understand these, there is no need for preprepared questionnaires in translation.
- 4) That editors could not check or code questionnaires in languages which they did not know.
- 5) That the sheer number of local languages involved would pose insuperable problems in providing sufficient translations.

Some of these objections are the result of simple misunderstandings. The questionnaires will be pre-coded with the choice of codes in French or English, and the format of all questionnaires will be physically the same (so that the same question will always be found in the same place with the same number). Thus editing (which should in any case be largely at the local level so that queries and omissions can be followed up on the spot) should present no special inter-language problems. Originally, it was argued that writing the local languages would prove to be extremely difficult for the interviewers; it was only with great effort that the opponents could be convinced that a pre-coded questionnaire obviated this problem.

The remaining objections can be divided into two groups: those which are open to factual verification and those

which must remain essentially questions of opinion. Thus the question of how many interviewers would be available who could read the local languages, or alternatively how long it takes to teach someone (who could already read French and speak the local language) to read a hundred questions, is a factual question with which the author already has some field experience.

It was found that Fulfulde speakers who were already literate in French could be shown how to read the Fulfulde questionnaire in the standard UNESCO script in a morning, given the availability of a cassette recording of the questions being read aloud. The experience of the Gomala group shows that to teach literate Gomala speakers to read and write the language requires a one-week intensive course, and that simply to teach reading, even with those of a relatively low educational standard, requires no more than two days of lectures and practical work.⁶²

The estimation of the importance of the errors introduced into the data obtained in previous demographic surveys by the failure to provide written translations must remain a matter of opinion.⁶³ However, it should be noted that in this case the questionnaire of the CFS is both more complex and more intimate than those used previously and that it covers an area – fertility regulation – where many interviewers may well not know the relevant vocabulary in the local language. The Ghanaian Report on the World Fertility Survey's trials in the local languages argues that a good interviewer will provide an adequate translation in any case but that written translations are necessary as aids for the average interviewer who is inclined to make mistakes in translation.⁶⁴ Even if true, this argument simply ignores the whole problem of comparability, which is why it is necessary to have a set questionnaire in the first place, otherwise demographers could work as anthropologists do with a simple list of subject headings (age, birth-place, migration history, etc.).

However for the statistical analysis of demographic data it is necessary to have comparable responses to single questions, and for the study of any kind of data relating to attitudes or knowledge it is out of the question to consider analyzing responses to varying questions. There is a whole area of sociology devoted to the study of how responses vary with variations in the wording of even the most simple questions (and some of the CFS questions are not simple); it is unfortunate that awareness of this work is not transmitted to demographers or, apparently, francophone sociologists.

Perhaps a specific example could make this clearer. If the question in English is: "What is your religion?" the poor interviewer may translate "Which mission do you go

⁶⁰ S. Ervin-Tripp, "Interaction of Language, Topic and Listener", *Readings in the Sociology of Language*, ed. J. Fishman, (The Hague: Mouton, 1968).

⁶¹ Only six of the 250-plus persons with whom this question was discussed during the study were opposed to the use of the questionnaires in the vernacular, but these six were a single group who would be directly concerned in the implementation of survey policy.

⁶² Evidence for this is found in the taped discussions.

⁶³ The more so, as without any record of what was actually asked it is impossible to examine errors or even variations in translation. Thus if some or all interviewers translate "How many pregnancies have you had which did not come to term?" using a word for miscarriage which specifically excludes abortions deliberately induced and miscarriages late in the pregnancy, then the estimate of foetal mortality will be an underestimate because of the very translation – but there will be no means of knowing this.

⁶⁴ S. Gaisie and B. Gyepi-Garbrah, *Report of the 1975 Ghana Pilot Survey The Multilingual Approach*, (unpublished), World Fertility Survey, University of Ghana, February 1976.

to?" or even "Are you a Catholic or a Protestant?". If the latter mistranslation appears to be an unfair and fanciful example it should be noted that this is an actual error taken from a very reputable survey in Southern Cameroon.⁶⁵ The more proficient interviewer may translate "Which God do you pray to?" or "What are your (religious, understood) beliefs?". Neither of these latter translations is incorrect but they differ one from the other and would yield different proportions of persons declaring themselves to be adherents of the traditional religions as they do not think of themselves as "praying to" their gods. In Fulbé areas, the problem would be even more complex if the interviewers were to be left to their own choice of translation for there is no single word meaning religion in general (the faith is necessarily the Moslem faith) whilst there are two words for god, one of which is Allah and the other of which means a pagan deity. One cannot help but wonder to what extent the almost perfect correlation between the ability to speak Fulfulde and adherence to the Moslem faith in previous surveys of Northern Cameroon was influenced by a linguistic formulation of the question which made it very difficult for Fulfulde speakers to say that they were pagans (especially as the Fulfulde word for pagan is extremely pejorative and cannot be used in polite conversation).

Unfortunately, however, it will never be possible to check such hypotheses for there is no record of the questions which were actually posed in Fulfulde in the field. To fail to provide a written version of the questionnaire actively used in the field is not only to create errors at the time of data collection, it is also greatly to diminish the utility of the data gathered to anyone who may need to analyze it after the data bank has been established.

All surveys of more than ten questions, however thoroughly pre-tested, encounter some unforeseen difficulties with particular questions where the responses show that the question has been understood by an important subgroup within the sample in a sense other than that intended by those who drafted the questionnaire. With a set and pre-translated questionnaire it is often possible to make allowance for these misunderstandings or different interpretations in editing and subsequent analysis. But where there is no record of what questions were actually posed to the respondent all such adjustments are ruled out of the question. This problem is all the more grave where the original questionnaire is to be administered in a wide variety of different languages. To give an example, the ultimate analysis shows that group *A* has three miscarriages for every still-birth, whilst group *B* has the reverse proportion; now the immediate query which arises is whether the two groups understood the question in the same way. This can only be resolved if there is a record available of the respective questions posed in languages *A* and *B*.

Interviewing is never an easy task but where the interviewer has, in addition to his normal functions, also to provide an on-the-spot translation it is inevitable that the level of coding and other interviewing errors will rise. It is true that with practice the interviewer will become more proficient and more rapid in providing the on-the-spot translation, but he may become equally set in his errors: for example, omitting a qualifying phrase from a given question each time. The interviewer who, on the contrary, can read the questions direct from the questionnaire has much less opportunity to develop biasing habits. With attitude questions, where the wording may result in a fifty per cent or greater variance in the responses, there is very little point in asking such questions unless they can be defined in advance by a set and unchanging translation. The same thing is effectively true of questions asking women whether they have any knowledge of certain methods of fertility regulation. Unless all women are faced with descriptions of

these methods of equivalent explicitness and detail, it is impossible to compare inter-group differences in the levels of knowledge of such methods.

In one sense the whole of this report is concerned with the problems raised by the **number** of languages with which any nation-wide survey in Cameroon must contend. It is indeed true that this is a serious problem which will require much effort, ingenuity and good-will to overcome. However, those who argue that this problem constitutes an insuperable barrier to the use of questionnaires printed in the local languages generally overestimate the level of time and resources required to provide a translation of the questionnaire into a single language as well as the total number of such translations which would have to be provided. The World Fertility Survey in Kenya is using ten questionnaires in different languages; the use of the same number of languages in Cameroon would largely break the back of the language problem and even the addition of one or two more languages would not necessitate the commitment of much greater additional resources.⁶⁶

The chief cost of the utilization of an additional language version of the questionnaire would be the field-testing of the translation if this is to form part of the full pilot-test. Neither the translation procedure itself nor the provision of photo-lithographic plates for printing another questionnaire is particularly expensive, especially when compared with unavoidable expenses connected with the survey such as the transport costs of the interviewers, even just to come in for the training course.

One of the most difficult problems of translation is to secure equivalence where conceptual divisions do not coincide from one language to another. For example, all languages have some colour terms but the colours distinguished vary very widely, with many South American languages making no distinction between green and blue but having a standardized division of terminology for light and dark grey which are regarded as distinct colours. When translating, the agent is inevitably aware of distinctions made in the original language which are not customary in the language into which he is translating but, conversely, unless he is exceptionally experienced and sensitive he misses the nuances of distinctions customary in the receptor but not in the source language. This very general point is of considerable significance in the context of African demographic surveys precisely because many African languages make demographic distinctions which are not normally found in either French or English. To cite but two examples found in Cameroon: pregnancy and child deaths. Many Cameroonian languages distinguish between two different stages of pregnancy: pregnant — periods have not been seen; and pregnant — having a fat belly. When translating on the spot from French into such languages the interviewer usually tends to ask the respondent whether she is pregnant using the term which is only applicable to the latter months of pregnancy when the woman is visibly "with child".

Hence the apparent finding that African women are only aware of being pregnant from approximately the fourth month: a finding which is the artifact of a linguistic misunderstanding. In fact, African women are more likely to consider themselves "pregnant" whenever a menstrual period fails to appear on time than European women. Or to be more culturally exact, African women tend to divide the

⁶⁵ *Enquête Démographique au Cameroun: Résultats Définitifs pour le Région Sud-Est, 1962-64*, p. 46.

⁶⁶ See Section 2.4.4 on translation procedure for a description of the process involved and a listing of the necessary personnel.

concept of pregnancy status into three equally important zones: definitely not pregnant, probably pregnant, and definitely pregnant. In contrast, the European conceptualization makes a single sharp division between pregnant and not pregnant with a minor sub-category, don't know, may be pregnant.

All translations of questions concerning pregnancy must bear these differences in conceptualization in mind – something which an interviewer translating on the spot cannot be expected to do with any consistency. Culturally, it must also be borne in mind that in many African cultures for a woman to boast of her pregnant state is to invite the possibly malignant jealousy of her co-wives and to run the risk of divine reprisals for wrong-doing within the family.

Infant mortality is an even more sensitive topic than pregnancy. Here, too, African cultures often make distinctions which are not normal in Europe. A child who dies before being named or before the outdooing ceremony (commonly performed a week after birth or later if the child has been sickly) is conceptually considered as the equivalent of a still-birth rather than a live born child who subsequently dies. Given the proportion of babies who die within the first week of birth, this point is of considerable demographic importance. Even when the baby survives for as long as a year before dying, in many African countries it is still not considered to be a dead child, but belongs to a specific category of dead babies for which there is a specific word.

Often also there is a deep-rooted belief that if a woman is unfortunate and has a succession of children who die in early infancy only a single *returning-child* is involved. Thus a woman who has had five children all of whom died before reaching the age of weaning will very often report that she had a single *returning-child*.⁶⁷

Questions about dead children should therefore ask about children who have died but also about pregnancies which did not result in a viable child within the African concept of a child, for in many African cultures the distinction is made not between still-births and infant mortality but between pregnancies which resulted in a child which lived to become old enough to talk and those which did not. Interviewers should not be expected to sort out such tangled differences on the doorstep; the questionnaire should make the necessary distinctions clear in the local language, for example by asking "How many children did you have who are now dead?" and "How many babies did you have who are now dead?" where the local language has distinct terms for dead infants and dead children. It should also be remembered that interviewers who are perfectly familiar with French or English may, nevertheless, understand the European terms in the framework of the African conceptualizations with which they were brought up. Thus one interviewer to whom the importance of measuring infant mortality had been stressed then conscientiously listed all miscarriages and even induced abortions as infant deaths because conceptually for her they were the same. It is often said that older women "forget" dead children and that is why their fertility appears to be lower; it should also be considered that older women are less educated and more traditional and for those reasons less likely to understand or use European conceptualizations of the break-points in the definition of demographic phenomena. It is the older women who are more likely to report five infant deaths as a single *return-birth*; it is the older women who only report children who survived to talk as dead children for they have not been exposed to Western concepts of what constitutes a dead child.

Demography, insofar as it deals with births, marriages and deaths, appears to be concerned with universal phenomena which transcend cultural boundaries. It has already been

observed that the definition of what constitutes a dead child may be culturally determined. Turning to marriage, whole books have been written about the definition of marriage in Africa.⁶⁸ Any fertility survey in Africa needs to decide why it is interested in marriage and thence what is the information needed. Meaningful questions can only be posed once it is known whether the central concern is with the woman's exposure to the risk of pregnancy, the stability of the relationships, or a strict legal definition. Often, it may prove to be simpler and more efficient to work with a negative definition: those who are not married, rather than attempting an original definition of those who are married.

In fact, definitions may be remarkably fluid. The author heard one man within a single conversation describe an individual woman as his girl-friend, his betrothed, and his wife. In fact, she was still living with her parents although he had paid the major part of the bride-price; there had been a traditional betrothal ceremony but no formal marriage; he was having intercourse with her regularly but would have been embarrassed if she had become pregnant, and she felt free to withdraw from the relationship and had in fact threatened to do so whilst he maintained that matters were too far advanced for any withdrawal short of divorce. Such a confused situation is the product of the confrontation between the traditional and the modern but it should serve to point to the fact that a woman may not be able to provide a simple response to the question "are you married?"

4.2 LINGUA FRANCAS AND VEHICULAR LANGUAGES

Although the ruling is not one which is consistently observed (even in this Report), it is useful to distinguish between a lingua franca – a third language used for communication between two speakers whose maternal languages are different – and a vehicular language, which is the maternal language of one party to a dialogue but not of the other. Latin in mediaeval Europe and Pidgin English (before it becomes a creole spoken by some people from childhood) are examples of lingua francas; Ewondo and Fulfulde are Cameroonian examples of languages which serve both as lingua francas and as vehicular languages though more commonly as the latter.⁶⁹ This distinction is of considerable practical importance in the translation of questionnaires for, whilst with a lingua franca both parties to the interview are on an equal level, with a vehicular language there is always the problem that one party has a much greater knowledge of the language of the interview than the other. This is especially important with extremely complex languages such as Fulfulde where the lingua franca form of the language is necessarily so much simplified as almost to constitute a separate pidgin unsuited for vehicular use. Thus, whilst it is true that differences between the dialects of Fali (a language of Northern Cameroon) are so great that many inter-Fali contacts are made in Fulfulde, it is also true

⁶⁷ This belief may even result in the mutilation of the corpses of dead children to ensure that they do not return, or that they will be instantly recognisable if they do.

⁶⁸ A. Phillips, *Survey of African Marriage and Family Life*, London: International African Institute 1953.

⁶⁹ For a discussion of the UNESCO definitions of these terms with some African examples see W. Samarin, "Lingua Francas of the World" in *Readings in the Sociology of Language*, ed. J. Fishman, The Hague: Mouton, 1968.

that the Fulfulde used as a lingua franca between Fali is very distant from the Fulfulde used by the Fulbé themselves.⁷⁰

As a matter of policy, all questionnaire translations which are intended to be used as lingua franca or vehicular language versions should involve at least one non-native speaker in the translation process and should be thoroughly tested with both native speaking and non-native speaking populations. In the Cameroonian context, both French and English are lingua francas, although this fact is often passed over by elite Cameroonians who take great pride in speaking these languages as if they were native speakers. Nevertheless, it will be necessary to check that the English and French versions of the questionnaires to be used in Cameroon are not liable to misinterpretation because of differences between these languages as understood in Cameroon and in their countries of origin. (Just as an English questionnaire is not immediately adopted for use in the United States.) Translations are always liable to be misinterpreted; this risk is all the greater when the translation is destined to be addressed to respondents with very varying levels of competence in the language concerned.

4.2.1 PIDGIN ENGLISH

“bon mi, a fiba yu”⁷¹

Linguistic conditions in Western Cameroon impose the utilization of a questionnaire in Pidgin English in two senses: firstly, because of the ethnic diversity of the region; and, secondly, because of the distance between Pidgin English and the English of the World Fertility Survey's model questionnaires.

4.2.1.1 Ethnic diversity

The South West Province of Cameroon is the province with the greatest ethnic diversity within the smallest area. In their study of the plantation workers of the Cameroon Development Corporation, Ardener and his colleagues found that the ten most heavily represented ethnic groups only accounted for 56 per cent of the labour force in this region. Even the full classification of the seventy-seven major ethnic groups only accounted for 95 per cent of the workers.⁷²

The ORSTOM-Cameroon map *Localization des Groupes Humains* has one somewhat despairing category: *Divers*. Outside of South West Cameroon and the Littoral area surrounding Douala, this indeterminate category is almost exclusively confined to the mixed minority populations of urban areas, but in South West Cameroon it is the most common classification even in the rural areas. Pidgin flourishes in this area precisely because the local languages are so diverse and they are spoken by such small groups.

4.2.1.2 The distance between English and Pidgin

English and Pidgin English are distinct languages in a much more clear sense than many Cameroonian “languages” are distinct from each other (e.g., Ewondo and Eton, or Douala and Pongo). Unless they have been to school, Pidgin speakers do not normally understand “standard” English for both the grammar and the vocabulary vary very greatly. (See Pidgin version of the Core Questionnaire in Appendix I). A written version of the questionnaire translation is especially vital in the case of Pidgin, for without it the interviewer will inevitably slip into English to the bewilderment of the respondent and to the detriment

of the survey. It is much harder to translate into Pidgin from an English text than to move into some totally unrelated Bantu language because the interference from English in the interviewers' minds is so much greater in the former case. The best demonstration of the distance between English and Pidgin is provided by actual examples such as the following translations of questions from the fertility survey:

English: Do you still have your menstrual periods?

Pidgin: Yu de still see yu flowa?

English: Some pregnancies end as a miscarriage, or as a still birth. Have you had any such pregnancies?

Pidgin: Somtaym belli de spoil o somtaym woman de bon die pikin (pikin we i de die fo belli). I bin don happen fo yu?

The above examples have been taken from Virginia DeLancey's questionnaire partly to give some idea (through the semi-phonetic transcription) of what the Pidgin actually sounds like.⁷³

Another reason for the necessity of having a Pidgin questionnaire and to work exclusively in Pidgin during Pidgin interviews is that if Pidgin English is understood as English very great demographic confusion is liable to ensue. To cite but one example from the somewhat Anglicized Bakweri Court Case Records:

Defendant has been my wife for seven years. We had been in a family of three children. One got lost. Two remained. One died again . . . the other remaining is lacking maintenance.⁷⁴

As Pidgin, the original was undoubtedly a clear statement but viewed as English (and without awareness of Pidgin constructions) the account is extremely confused. Interviewers should not be expected to function in two languages simultaneously: the interviews should be firmly fixed in Pidgin.

4.2.1.3 The spread of Pidgin

In the South West, Pidgin is a near universal lingua franca – much more widely known, for example, than Fulfulde in the North. As early as the 1950s, the Plantation Survey was able to interview almost entirely in Pidgin English and Ardener noted that “Kaka workers (from the eastern extremity of Cameroon) could speak no Pidgin

⁷⁰ “The Fali group is located in the Guider and Garoua arrondissements of the Garoua Préfecture and are estimated to number about 50,000 people. Fali may be called one language, but differences in dialect are so great that many inter-Fali contacts are made by use of the Fulani language. There are probably five dialect clusters”. W. Samarin, “Adamawa-Eastern”, in *Current Trends in Linguistics*, Ed. T. Sebeok op. cit., p. 221.

⁷¹ Born me, I favour you – i.e., Like father, like child.

⁷² E. and S. Ardner and W. Warmington, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons, Some Economic and Social Studies*, Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research, London, 1960, Appendix B.

⁷³ Mrs. Delancey is working on a fertility study of women working and living on the Cameroon Development Corporation's plantations. Her questionnaire is based upon extensive preparatory field-conversations with the women in Pidgin.

⁷⁴ E. Ardener, *Divorce and Fertility: An African Study*, London, 1962, p. 107.

English, a very rare thing among workers from the older sources of (labour) supply".⁷⁵ Interviewing women working in the plantations and the wives of men working in the plantations in 1976, Mrs. DeLancey and her co-workers only found half-a-dozen women in a sample of some two thousand who were not capable of following a complex fertility schedule in Pidgin. In very remote non-plantation areas, Pidgin may be slightly less universal than this but it is, nevertheless, true that some ninety per cent of women in South West Cameroon would understand Pidgin.

Outside of South West Cameroon, Pidgin still has considerable currency but the dialect variations in French-speaking Cameroon are sometimes so great as to make intercomprehension impossible. A Douala Pidgin speaker cannot understand the Pidgin of Buea unless he has had considerable experience of listening to the latter. Within anglophone and francophone areas, Pidgin "differs in detail depending on where it is spoken... influenced by local dialects".⁷⁶ Dwyer recognizes — at least as far as vocabulary is concerned — three main regional varieties of Pidgin: that of the forest and coastal areas (C), that of the grasslands (G) and that of East Cameroon (E). The last is characterized, predictably, by the higher incidence of French loans, for example: *kaminyon* (E) and *lori* (C, G) for truck, and *kalifo* (E) and *fokona* (C, G) for a cross-roads, and even *famil* (E) and *famburu* (C, G) for family.⁷⁷ The CFS Pidgin questionnaire should undoubtedly concentrate upon the Pidgin of South West Cameroon where the questionnaire will be used most intensively and where there are no alternative languages for which the CFS intends to provide translations.

4.2.1.4 Pidgin or Creole

Although it is customary to refer to the form of English-related language spoken in West Cameroon as a pidgin it is rapidly becoming a full Creole language. "A *pidgin* is a marginal language which arises to fulfil certain restricted communication needs among people who have no common language. In the initial stages of contact the communication is often limited to transactions where a detailed exchange of ideas is not required and where a small vocabulary, drawn almost exclusively from one language, suffices. The syntactic structure of pidgin is less complex and less flexible than the structures of the language which were in contact... pidgins have disregarded many of the inessential features of the standard variety... All natural languages have some degree of redundancy... A *creole* arises when a pidgin becomes the mother tongue of a speech community. The simple structure that characterized the pidgin is carried over into the creole but since a creole, as a mother tongue, must be capable of expressing the whole range of human experience, the lexicon is expanded and frequently a more elaborate syntactic system evolves... In Cameroon, where, in the multilingual South-Western area, Pidgin has been the most useful lingua franca from at least as far back as 1884 when the German administration of the country began. So entrenched was Pidgin English even then that the Germans had to issue a Pidgin English phrasebook to facilitate communications between their soldiers and the Cameroonians. In this area, as Rudkin indicates, 'there were so many dialects that the various tribes spoke and still do speak Pidgin English, to make themselves understood in their periodic market days'.⁷⁸ Today, Pidgin English is even more widespread in the area and its very usefulness often makes it the language of choice even among speakers of the same mother tongue, and some children now use it as their first language".⁷⁹

4.2.1.5 Opposition to a Pidgin questionnaire

Even amongst those who were generally favourable to the use of local language versions of the questionnaire, the Study found considerable opposition to the use of a Pidgin questionnaire. Objections to Pidgin ranged from the rational argument that this language is not as widely spoken, especially amongst women, as is generally supposed, to the barely articulated cultural snobbishness which insists that it is in some way an inferior language: "Inferiority made half articulate".⁸⁰ Thus it is argued, for example, that Bamileke women, although extremely mobile within their own society, are debarred by a masculine monopoly from participation in trade with the coast and hence from becoming fluent in Pidgin, the language of that trade. Others claim that as a trade language Pidgin is quite unsuited for the discussion of such subjects as infant mortality and sexual intercourse, having neither the vocabulary nor the emotional associations necessary for in-depth discussions of such topics.

The proportion of the population which speaks Pidgin is still a matter for study at least outside the South West,⁸¹ but some of the other objections are open to more immediate clarification. Pidgin is effectively a creole, it has become the mother-tongue of many children (especially the products of ethnically mixed marriages) including one of the women who produced the Study's Pidgin translation of the questionnaire. The scope of Pidgin itself is very wide. Dr. Todd confirms: "I have a larger inventory of Pidgin words relating to anatomy than I command in English, and I don't know them all. It is simply not true that Pidgin is inadequate to the discussion of infant mortality, sexual relations, fears, hopes, aspirations". The technical vocabulary extends to expressions such "pikin i haus fo bele" (placenta).⁸²

Any lingua franca is open to the objection that it lacks emotional range and that the vocabularies of those who speak it are likely to be limited. Those who oppose Pidgin English on these grounds fail to take into account the fact that Fulfulde when spoken by non-Fulbé is equally a pidgin language, as is Ewondo or any other language not fully mastered by non-native speakers. Pidgin English at least has the advantage of being very widely used in a large range of contexts: "Those who are Catholic hear it in Church and

⁷⁵ *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, op. cit. p. 206.

⁷⁶ J. Kisob, "A Live Language: Pidgin English", *Abbia*, 1: pp. 25-31, 1963.

⁷⁷ D. Dwyer, *An Introduction to West African Pidgin English*. Produced for the United States Peace Corps by the African Studies Center, Michigan State University, Lansing, no date. This fat volume contains an invaluable explanation of how to write Pidgin using the English alphabet but without Anglicising the language.

⁷⁸ H. Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons, 1884-1914. A Case Study in Modern Imperialism* Westport Negro University Press: Yale University Press, Newhaven, 1938, p. 355.

⁷⁹ L. Todd, *Pidgins and Creoles*, London, 1974, pp. 1-4. Dr. Todd had long worked in Cameroon upon the study of Pidgin.

⁸⁰ Quoted R. Hall, *Pidgin and Creole Languages*, Ithaca, 1953, p. 106. cf. E. Schultze, "Sklaven- und Dienersprachen...", *Sociologus*, 9:377-418 "idioms which serve to bring about an incomplete understanding between men of different tongues"

⁸¹ "Pidgin is very widely used and understood outside the townships. In Djottin I found that even the least travelled of women had at least a passive knowledge of it." Personal Communication, L. Todd, 24.6.1976.

⁸² *Ibid.*

use it when going to confession.”⁸³ In any case it is amazing how far a limited vocabulary will stretch. The Bell Laboratories Word Count Experiments (motivated by the desire to teach computers to accept verbal commands and to perform automatic translations) showed that, in English, five hundred words represent 77 per cent of all words used in day-to-day writing and 93 per cent of words used in general conversation.⁸⁴

“Pidgins are auxiliary languages which can be characterized as either ‘restricted’ or ‘extended’. A restricted pidgin is one which arises as a result of marginal contact such as for minimal trading, which serves only this limited purpose and which tends to die out as soon as the contact which gave rise to it is withdrawn... An extended pidgin is one which... proves vitally important in a multilingual area, and which, because of its usefulness, is extended and used beyond the original limited function which caused it to come into being. There is reason to believe that the many West African pidgins and creoles attained their present extended range of use because, having come into being as a result of contact between white and black, they were soon used and further developed in multilingual areas between black and black.”⁸⁵ Cameroonian Pidgin English is certainly an extended pidgin in this sense.

Almost all of those who objected to the idea of using a Pidgin translation of the questionnaire were francophones educated within the French tradition. It is a remarkable fact that there is no such language as a Pidgin French in West Africa. *Petit Nègre*, or *Français-tirailou* is simply a simplified form of French commonly spoken by African veterans of the French army; there is no true Pidgin.⁸⁶ French governmental policy at first, and now the beliefs of elite Cameroonians themselves, serve to maintain French as a sacrosanct and untouchable language not to be contaminated by Africanisms. Even in Nigeria “at one time it was drummed into pupils at school that Pidgin was a debased form of English and so many educated people who spoke it nevertheless tended to use it exclusively in familiar and private circles and only apologetically outside.”⁸⁷ This policy, in line with the French tradition, is still followed in West Cameroon. Hence some difficulty in finding translators who are willing to treat Pidgin seriously – at least amongst the more highly educated. Yet for many Pidgin speakers, even when they have learnt to speak “standard” English at school Pidgin remains the comfortable language of the affections, homely and honest. The proponents of French might pause to consider that *palé français* in common speech also means to offer a bribe.

4.2.2 EWONDO

Although Ewondo is not popularly thought of as being a lingua franca and vehicular language in the sense that Fulfulde is, it is nevertheless a very important vehicular language in Cameroon. Ewondo is a major language in three senses: it is the principal language of the capital and its hinterland;⁸⁸ it is a language understood by a number of sizeable neighbouring groups who speak related languages or dialects; and it is a language which persons who come from relatively remote areas learn in order to be able to communicate with the wider world.

If a single African language were to be chosen for communication in Southern Cameroon, it would undoubtedly be wisest to choose Ewondo. As early as 1953, Guthrie estimated that there were 700,000 people who spoke languages in the Yaoundé-Fang group, thus making that group the largest language group in Western equatorial Africa.⁸⁹ Guthrie’s schematization of the relationships within this group was as follows (the population estimates,

it should be remembered, are for the early 1950s):

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| A.71 Eton | Spoken in Cameroon by over 110,000 people in a thickly populated area to the N.W. of Yaoundé. |
| A.72a Ewondo | Spoken in Cameroon by about 95,000 people to the S.W. of Yaoundé in the direction of Lolodorf and of the Coast. The most westerly group of people speaking this are known as Evuzok. |
| A.72b Mvèlè | This dialect is spoken in Cameroon by a very large number of different peoples to the east of Yaoundé, in the direction of Akonolinga and Nanga-Eboko. Altogether, there are nearly 140,000 speakers of this language divided between many different sub-tribes, including Omuang. |
| A.72c Bakja | Spoken to the S.E. of Nanga-Eboko by about 14,000 people, some known as Yekaba. |
| A.72d Yangyafok | Very scattered groups speak this dialect which includes Bafok, mainly in enclaves amongst non-Bantu some 5,000 in total. |
| A.73a Bèbèlè
(Bamvele) | Spoken by some 18,000 people east of Nanga-Eboko. |
| A.73b Bobili
(Gbigbil) | Spoken by some 6,000 persons on the east bank of the River Long near where it joins the River Sanaga. |

⁸³ Ibid cf. R. Hall on “Pidgins and Creoles as standard Languages”; “A pidgin or creole, in addition to questions of simple social standing, has to confront the widespread opinion that it is a ‘debased’ or ‘corrupted’ variety of some other language... As long as no political considerations are involved, pidgins or creoles have little or no chance of achieving recognition on the basis of intrinsic merit, or even usefulness alone” in *Sociolinguistics*, eds. J. Pride and J. Holmes, Penguin, London 1972, p. 151.

⁸⁴ Quoted by E. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating*, op. cit. p. 260.

⁸⁵ L. Todd, *Pidgins and Creoles*, op cit. pp. 5–6.

⁸⁶ cf. J. Berry, “Pidgins and Creoles in Africa” op. cit. p. 5; R. Mauny, *Glossaire des Expressions et Termes Employés dans le Oest Africain*, IFAN, Dakar, 1952; L. Homburger, *The Negro-African Languages*, London, 1949.

⁸⁷ T. Vincent “Pidgin in Nigerian Literature”, Paper UNESCO Conference on Creole Languages and Educational Development Trinidad, July 1972, p. 6. Nigerian authors such as Achebe have made very effective use of Pidgin. The first Pidgin written by a West African dates back to Antera Duke’s *Diary* for 1787. As an Efik, Antera was a close neighbour to Cameroon. Much of the francophone prejudice against Pidgin stems from ignorance of both its antecedents and its current content.

⁸⁸ Indeed the language itself is sometimes called Yaundé spelt without an “o”.

⁸⁹ M. Guthrie, *The Bantu Languages of Western Equatorial Africa*. London 1953: International African Institute, pp. 40–41.

- A.74a Bulu Spoken over a vast area in S. Cameroon between 10°E and 13°E by about 110,000 people. Subtribes include Yengono, Yembamba, Yelinda, and Zamam.
- A.74b Bënë Spoken in Cameroon to the north of the area of the speakers of 74a towards M'Balmayo and Yaoundé by about 60,000 persons.
- A.75 Fang (Pangwe) Spoken over an enormous area of Southern Cameroon, Rio Muni and Gabon, probably by about 200,000 people. To the north sometimes known as Ntum, to the south as Make.

Guthrie's classification has been quoted at some length to give an idea of the information which is available, although it has not been effectively updated. It is also probable that some of the speakers of the languages concerned would not recognize the names of their languages as given by Guthrie; it is always easier to ask neighbouring groups and they will give names from their own language, not their neighbour's. Asked the name of their own language respondents tend to reply with a generic term for speech rather than a specific name. Pidgin distinguishes generally between pidgin itself and *country talk*.

Guthrie divides his Yaoundé-Fang group into a number of smaller languages but does not discuss the problem of interintelligibility. Actually the level of interintelligibility within the group as a whole is very high. During the Study the questionnaire was field-tested in Ewondo in a pure Eton village, Okala, without encountering any problems of comprehension. The cassette recordings of these Ewondo-Eton interviews indicate that a perfectly satisfactory dialogue can be established where the interviewer speaks in Ewondo and the respondent replies in Eton, no information being lost thereby. Indeed, the two "languages" are no further apart than the Yorkshire and West Country dialects of modern English. One of the original translators of the Ewondo questionnaire was the daughter of a village catechist from a Mvëlë village towards Akonolinga, who had lived for some years in Yaoundé.

Where the translation is to be used to interview respondents for whom the language concerned is not their first language there are considerable advantages to be gained in incorporating one skillful non-native speaker into the translation team as this serves to ensure that the expressions used are as universal as possible. Once the sample for the CFS has been drawn, an early priority will be to check how far the full-comprehension of Ewondo extends within the sample areas where Ewondo-related languages (Guthrie's A70's group) are spoken.

Both Bulu and Ewondo serve as natural language lingua francas in Cameroon, resulting in Ewondo vehiculaire, Ewondo populaire (also known as Petit Ewondo) or pidgin Ewondo and Bulu Bediliva or Bulu des chauffeurs.⁹⁰ These are simplified forms of Bulu and Ewondo reflecting non-native speaking performance and strong interlingual interference but still intelligible to native speakers of these languages. In addition there is also a true pidginized form of Bulu-Ewondo, which Alexandre calls Pidgin A70, which has developed in urban centres and along the commercial routes of Southern Cameroon. It serves as a medium of communication for those who cannot, or do not wish to, employ

French or Pidgin English; for migrant workers from the central region such as men from the Vute language group; and, as its name suggests, especially for truck drivers, road-workers, travelling merchants and other highly mobile populations.⁹¹ Ewondo populaire shows all the usual general features of pidginization as well as the special features which often accompany the pidginization of Bantu languages such as the reduction of the concord system of nominal classes to a simple system of singulars and plurals based for the most part, in the case of Ewondo, on classes 1 and 2 respectively. Formerly Bulu had a greater prestige as a trade language than Ewondo but the position is now reversed and Ewondo populaire is the major pidgin language in the area.⁹² Ewondo populaire is a true Pidgin language in that it is not simply an "incorrect" form of the original language, but a new form with its own set rules: "dialectes simplifiés, présentant de fortes interférences de langues en recul, mais reconnaissables et compréhensibles quand même pour des locuteurs indigènes bulu ou ewondo . . . J'ai vu, d'un côté un Bamiléké, ignorant ewondo et bulu, passer à volonté et suivant son interlocuteur du Coast English au pidgin A70 et symétriquement, du nombreux Bulu, Ewondo, Eton, etc. passer même de leur langue à ce pidgin spécial."⁹³

For the purposes of the CFS, Ewondo will undoubtedly be very useful as a lingua franca in the difficult Eastern region where there is no one local Eastern Cameroonian language which is widely understood by non-native speakers. Once the sample is drawn, it will be necessary to test how widely Ewondo or at least Ewondo populaire is understood in the Eastern sample areas, for it will certainly not be possible to find a single Eastern Cameroonian language which will cover all the sample areas in the region. The use of Ewondo populaire as a lingua franca also implies that the Ewondo questionnaire translation should also include (in brackets) simplified versions of some of the more complex phrases which would not be readily understood by non-native Ewondo speakers. The Ewondo questionnaire should also be field-tested both in an area where the local maternal language is Ewondo-related (say a Bulu area) and in an Eastern area where the local maternal language bears no direct relationship to Ewondo but where Ewondo populaire serves as a lingua franca (say a Kaka area). However the basic questionnaire should be in full Ewondo, not in Ewondo populaire, for the majority of those to be interviewed in Ewondo will be either native Ewondo speakers or native speakers of languages so closely related to Ewondo that they are effectively more like dialects than separate languages.

4.2.3 FULFULDE

Fulfulde is one of the great lingua francas of Cameroon,

⁹⁰ J. Berry, "Pidgins and Creoles in Africa", *Current Trends in Linguistics* ed. T. Sebeok, op. cit. pp. 510-536.

⁹¹ It should be noted that all of the groups mentioned are predominantly masculine; like so many other lingua francas Ewondo populaire is more commonly spoken by men than by women, although the position in this respect has improved somewhat to the benefit of women since Alexandre's studies of the early 1960s.

⁹² E. Nida, "Tribal and Trade Languages", *African Studies*, 14:155-158, 1955.

⁹³ P. Alexandre, "Aperçu Sommaire sur le Pidgin A70 du Cameroun", *Symposium on Multilingualism*, Commission for Technical Co-operation in Africa, Scientific Council for African Publications, pp. 251-256, London 1962.

indeed of West Africa as a whole.⁹⁴ “De proche en proche, la langue des Foulbé – le fulfuldé – a gagné tous les marchés, et il ne subsiste que peu de “sarés” païens dans lesquels une personne au moins ne la parle, de telle sorte

qu’elle peut-être désormais considérée comme la langue véhiculaire du Nord-Cameroun”.⁹⁵ It is also the only Cameroonian language for which there are detailed estimates of its distribution as a second language.

Table 1

PERCENTAGE OF SARÉS IN WHICH ALL THE INHABITANTS SPEAK NO OTHER LANGUAGE THAN THAT OF THE ETHNIC GROUP CONCERNED⁹⁵

ETHNIC GROUP						
Fulbé 95	Mandara 40	Daba 40	Guider 32	Hina 18	Moufou 16	Moundang 9

Table 2

PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL POPULATION SPEAKING THE LOCAL LANGUAGE ONLY, THE LOCAL LANGUAGE AND FULFULDE, AND THE LOCAL LANGUAGE AND FRENCH⁹⁵

	Fulbé	Mandara	Daba	Guider	Hina	Moufou	Moundang
Local Language Only	95	80	84	69	77	75	46
Fulfulde	95	16	15	26	22	24	46
French	5	4	1	5	1	1	14
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

As the Podlewski tables show, at the time when they were compiled (i.e., the early 1960’s) the Moundang were the only ethnic group studied where more than half of the population spoke a vehicular language. These figures relate to the total population and therefore include children who would be expected to be less bilingual. But it is also true that women, who have less opportunity to travel and to work amongst other ethnic groups than men, especially in the North, are less often bilingual than their husbands.

The author’s own very limited experience in one Mofou village just outside of Meri (Maguivèle by name) suggests that only women who regularly attend the markets in town learn to speak Fulfulde with any fluency.⁹⁶ Of a sample of thirty-five women (chosen because their farms were close at hand) only two spoke Fulfulde really fluently, whilst a further six had a sufficient grasp of the language to follow the interview schedule when presented very slowly with frequent repetition of questions and some supplementary explanations.⁹⁷ Both of the women who were fluent in Fulfulde had spent a number of years living in town. This field experience served as a very salutary antidote to the optimism of the officials and administrators who tend to argue that Fulfulde is of universal utility. A very common conversational sequence proceeds roughly as follows:

“How useful is Fulfulde as a vehicular language?” – “Everyone speaks Fulfulde” – “Even in the villages?” – “Well, maybe not all villages, but you would always find someone who could translate for you” – “Do women speak Fulfulde?” – “Not so much in the villages, but you could get their husbands to translate for you”. It can thus be seen that whilst Fulfulde is a fully adequate lingua franca for administrative purposes it is less universally useful for interviewing village wives.⁹⁸

Nevertheless, Fulfulde is of very wide utility. The Fulbé themselves comprise approximately a quarter of the population of North Cameroon, whilst Fulfulde speakers

probably comprise some 40 per cent of the adult population. (An estimate based on a proportion of 100 per cent in the towns, and 33 per cent in the rural areas.)⁹⁹ It would be unthinkable to consider survey work in the vernaculars in the North without putting Fulfulde in the first place especially as, in contrast to the South where the native languages are very much in the shade, in the North Fulfulde enjoys a semi-official status in public affairs.

Although very widespread, Fulfulde is not ideally suited to be a lingua franca; it is too grammatically and stylistically complex. As early as 1934, East had noted this problem. In Adamaoua “the Fulani have not learnt the language of their subjects as in the case of the Western (Hausa) districts, but

⁹⁴ “Lingua franca: a language which is used habitually by people whose mother tongues are different in order to facilitate communication between them.” UNESCO 1953, quoted by Samarin, 1968.

⁹⁵ A. Podlewski, *La Dynamique des Principales Populations du Nord Cameroun*, ORSTOM Cahiers série science humaines, vol. III No. 4, 1966. A “saré” is a compound, usually inhabited by a single household, enclosed by a wall or woven fence. The activities of women within the “saré” (pounding grain, etc.) are not visible from the outside.

⁹⁶ Even the market women do not invariably learn Fulfulde. As the subprefect of Meri pointed out, Fulfulde traders who regularly deal with the Mofou learn a variant of trade Mofou sufficient for their purposes.

⁹⁷ Examples of this are found on the Maguivèle taped interviews.

⁹⁸ Given the geographic isolation of many of the Northern villages especially in the mountainous regions this is hardly surprising. Those who stood against a militant Islam are understandably slow to adopt the language of their would-be conquerors.

⁹⁹ Estimates based upon the assumption that the spread of Fulfulde has continued since the early 1960s in proportion with increasing opportunities for travel.

Fulani to a limited extent has become the official language. It is not however suited to be a *lingua franca*, as it is so complex and different from the local vernaculars that no non-Fulani African ever learns to speak it correctly. The result of this is that a bastard type of Fulani has grown up, which has reacted on the original language, and is probably the cause of the slackness in speaking which has crept in. Hence the neglect of the initial consonantal changes, the indiscriminate use of *mo* and *dum* forms in the impersonal classes in the place of the appropriate class pronouns."¹⁰⁰ A language where the noun "forms a set of noun-classes, 16 in the singular, 6 in the plural. Each . . . characterized by a suffix which combines with the noun base in an intricate fashion, by its own demonstrative and possessive particles which resemble the suffix in form, and by the form of the initial consonant in one of the three alternating possibilities"¹⁰¹ is unlikely to be acquired intact by non-native speakers.

Anyone writing or speaking Fulfulde has to decide which style of Fulfulde to adopt.¹⁰² Writing in Maroua Fulfulde, Eguchi chose a "style of expressions . . . between the two extremes: the beautiful and traditional language called *laamde* – laab 'beautiful, clean' and the deteriorated language called *bilkiire* – *wilk-bilk* 'to be stupid'. The former language is spoken by the traditionalists and the latter by the non-Fulbé newcomers. The language in between the two may be considered to be the regional language of the Diamaré department and also the language spoken by most of the inhabitants of Maroua."¹⁰³

As Noye explains: "Cette langue possède un vocabulaire riche de mots et de formes dérivées. Elle est soumise à des règles de grammaire assez difficiles, et il faut reconnaître que ceux qui la parlent, surtout s'ils ne sont pas de race peule (au pluriel: Foulbé), ne les observent pas toujours. Cela ne nous autorisait pas à rédiger une grammaire trop simplifiée, qui aurait défigurée la langue en la réduisant à l'état de 'sabir' ou de 'pidgin', qui servirait peut-être à se faire comprendre de bien des gens, mais qui attirerait le mépris des véritables Fulbé pour ce 'bilkiire'."¹⁰⁴

Given the very specific needs of the CFS for the translation of the questionnaire into Fulfulde, Eldridge Mohammadou very deliberately chose a vehicular form of Fulfulde.¹⁰⁵ He consistently rejected formulations which, whilst classically Fulfulde, would not be readily understood by non-native Fulfulde speakers (for example, correct but irregular and little known plurals). This questionnaire was then tested in two villages: Gashiga, a fully Fulbé village fifteen kilometers from Garoua, and Maguivelle, a Mofou village in the mountains north of Maroua. In the Fulbé village, the questionnaire posed no problems of comprehension whatsoever but there were complaints that it was in "pidgin" Fulfulde, and interviewers tended to shift into a somewhat purer form.¹⁰⁶ In the Mofou village very few women understood Fulfulde (as has been noted above) and for the six women who understood rather than spoke Fulfulde, it was necessary to simplify the questionnaire in parts. The exact level reached by the questionnaire appeared to be that of the two Mofou women who were fluent in Fulfulde, that is, of fluent non-Fulfulde. The question which remains is whether the policy adopted did not effectively fall between two stools in producing a questionnaire which was not sufficiently Fulfulde for the true Fulbé, yet was still too Fulfulde for the non-Fulbé. This is a question which can only be resolved by a Fulbé listening to the recordings of the interviews.

4.2.4 BAMILEKE

If Bamileke were a single language understood by all

Bamileke, there would be no question but that it should figure as one of the main languages of the survey as the Bamileke are arguably the largest single ethnic group in Cameroon, comprising approximately a sixth of the total population.¹⁰⁷ Unfortunately, however, "les populations désignées par les vocables Grass-field et Bamileke, n'ont pas comme les autres peuples d'unité linguistique" (Dongmo, 1973). "Le Bamilike ne se comprennent pas toujours d'une région à l'autre . . . (mais) les structures grammaticales de base sont substantiellement identiques de Dschang à Banganté, de Banjoun à Bafang, de Bamenda à Bamendou . . . (donc) il y a une langue bamilike, unique malgré les variantes dialectiques parfois importantes" (Nissim, 1975).¹⁰⁸

Williamson lists 24 Bamileke "languages"; Welmers provides an even longer list but more cautiously admits that it is not clear whether these constitute "dialects or closely related languages".¹⁰⁹ Although there is some dispute as to whether Bamileke constitutes a language family or cluster of dialects of a single language, the authorities are unanimous in their agreement that all Bamileke do not understand each others' Bamileke: thus the essential criterion of linguistic unity for practical field-work is not fulfilled.

"At the present time there is a great deal of debate concerning which dialect of Bamileke should be selected as the 'standard' dialect to be used, for example, as the written language taught in the school system. The most prominent candidates are Fe? fe? , Bandjoun and Dschang, which are spoken by the greatest number of speakers?"

Fe? fe? has the advantage of being the southernmost dialect, and since the typical migration of Bamilekes seeking work is from North to South (they eventually descend to the Mounjo or to Douala), many non-Fe? fe? Bamilekes speak and/or understand Fe? fe? . It has the additional advantage of having been investigated by Nufi (an indigenous program concerned with literacy in Fe? fe?) as well as other projects for more than a decade, and also of being spoken in the whole of the Haut-Nkam department. On the other hand, Banjoun is not spoken throughout the Mifi department, nor is Dschang spoken throughout the Menoua department. Banjoun has the

¹⁰⁰ R. East, *Stories of Old Adamawa*, Lagos and London, 1934, p. 7.

¹⁰¹ J. Greenberg, *Studies in African Linguistic Classification*, New Haven, 1955, p. 27.

¹⁰² The very status and importance of Fulfulde contributes to the impossibility of regarding it as a language with a single social register, unlike some of the smaller "village" languages of the South.

¹⁰³ P. Eguchi, *Miscellany of Maroua Fulfuldé*, Institute for the Culture and Languages of Africa and Asia, Tokyo, 1973.

¹⁰⁴ R. Noye, *Eléments de Langue Foulfuldé (Foulbé du Nord-Cameroun)* Mission Catholique, B.P. 49, Maroua, 1966.

¹⁰⁵ Without the unstinting help of Eldridge Mohammadou who, apart from his considerable reputation as a Fulbé historian, also has a weekly Fulfulde radio programme, the production of the Fulfulde questionnaire in such a brief time period would not have been possible and it is doubtful whether a translator more sensitive to the issues involved could have been found.

¹⁰⁶ As witnessed in the tape recordings of the interviews.

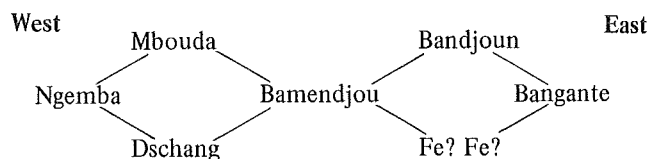
¹⁰⁷ UNESCO Report quoted in Fishman, Ferguson and Das Gupta, *Language Problems of Developing Nations*, 1968, p. 96. See also P. Alexandre *Langues et Language en Afrique Noire*, Paris, 1967, pp. 17–21.

¹⁰⁸ To cite but one example: the word for woman in four parlars

<i>Dschang</i>	<i>Fe? Fe</i>	<i>Gomala</i>	<i>Medumba</i>
ndziwi	nzwie	jwi	nzwi

¹⁰⁹ In *Current Trends in Linguistics* op. cit.

advantage of being the most influential village outside of the Bandjoun area. This is largely due to the fact that many Bandjoun are prominent in trade and commerce. The Dschang dialect, however, was the first Bamileke dialect used in any official function. The Germans adopted Dschang . . . The debate has of late narrowed down to one between Bandjoun and Fe? fe?



Bamendjou's pivotal position is responsible for the fact that Fe? fe? and Bandjoun are related to Dschang and Mbouda through Bamendjou. From a linguistic point of view, it would be the easiest for all Bamilekes, since speakers from Fe? fe? country, Bandjoun, Dschang and Mbouda readily understand the Bamendjou dialect. The more distant dialects to the east (Nda? nda?, Bangante and Bamoum) and west (e.g., Ngemba) would of course find it more difficult than would speakers of closer dialects, but Ngembas from West Cameroon could more readily learn Bamendjou than they could Banjoun or Fe? fe?."¹¹⁰

In the long term, it may well be true that Bamendjou would be the ideal base for the formation of a single Bamileke language. In the short term, and especially as far as the CFS is concerned, it is undoubtedly too ambitious to hope to find a single dialect which can be made comprehensible to all Bamileke. The Mission had prolonged discussions with the group leading a week-long course in Gomala who put forward a very convincing case for the use of this form of Bamileke, arguing that it would be understood by some 70 per cent of the main Eastern Group of Bamileke. (Gomala is a variant of Bandjoun deliberately orientated to be understood by, and acceptable to, the maximum number of Bamileke. Its very name means the *language of the country* and is less weighted with localized connotations than all the other dialect names which have a definite geographical base.) Gomala has a number of other very specific advantages: it is actively promoted by a group who have prolonged experience of teaching adults to read and write the language within a week (given that they already speak the language and are literate in French); a number of trained translators are available; and it is one of the dialects used by the radio and hence has a certain currency because of this fact.¹¹¹

It is certain that the choice of the Bamileke dialect or dialects to be used by the CFS will have to await the definition of the sample. Should all the areas chosen fall within the eastern range of the Bamileke country, then it is possible that Gomala alone might suffice. But if a western Bamileke zone is also chosen then another dialect version will have to be added.

Bamileke can be taken as representative of the problems posed by the language-cluster/dialect-cluster where the languages/dialects are closely related but where all members of the group are incapable of understanding at least some other members.¹¹² Normally, as one moves from west to east or north to south across the geographical area covered by the language, each woman can understand her neighbours but women from the boundaries, or who live some distance apart, cannot necessarily understand each other,

especially if they are not accustomed to travelling and listening to different dialects.

Nida's comments upon the three long term solutions to the problem of competing "geographical dialects" are still of considerable cogency to the aims of the CFS. He suggests that one may:

- 1) Employ the leading dialect of the cultural centre, with the assumption that ultimately the other dialects will gradually conform (this has been the history of almost all national languages);
- 2) Follow primarily the leading dialect, but make concessions from time to time to other dialects, especially if these are known in the leading dialect (this is the usual procedure where a so-called primitive language may consist of a number of related dialects); or
- 3) Construct a composite language by selecting certain features from the different dialects, thus forming a *union dialect*. This last solution is the one often advocated by colonial administrators; for it seems a natural type of "compromise" . . . Essentially, however, this compromise approach to language development is both artificial and ill advised, for "nobody speaks that way".¹¹³

At first the idea of a questionnaire in one Bamileke dialect with key questions also translated into other dialects seems eminently reasonable. However, if one tries to envisage what such an interview would actually sound like, the unnaturalness of such a dialogue becomes evident. (Imagine a questionnaire in which the interviewer is required to shift from Oxford English to an Alabama drawl and back again.)¹¹⁴ There is also the strictly practical problem that very few people can speak more than one Bamileke *parler*.¹¹⁵ The normal pattern is that when a number of Bamileke from different villages meet, each speaks his own *parler*, inter-comprehension being much more common than speech shift.

Given that the CFS is to be based upon a sample of *arrondissements* and given that one of the criteria for the definition of *arrondissement* boundaries is the maintenance of linguistic homogeneity within those boundaries, it would seem wisest to make use of this homogeneity. Thus it is suggested that, if necessary, there should be as many

¹¹⁰ L. Hyman, *A Phonological Study of Fe? fe? Bamileke*, Studies in African Linguistics, Supplement 4, University of California, 1972, pp. 8-11.

¹¹¹ The major part of these discussions were taperecorded and are available for consultation.

¹¹² Though it should be noted that Bamileke meeting together in Yaoundé, where they feel the need to stress their group solidarity, have much less difficulty with differing dialects than Bamileke on their home ground where local rivalries assume far greater importance. For political reasons there are some groups such as the Ngemba who, although speaking a Bamileke language, never refer to themselves as Bamileke.

¹¹³ E. Nida *Towards a Science of Translation*, 1964, Leiden, pp. 180-1.

¹¹⁴ Actually the difference is much greater than that implied by this example. For some comments on the insertion of alternative variants into the questionnaire see the section on Fulfuldé which describes the experience of testing this formula.

¹¹⁵ The more neutral term *parler* is used to avoid the neat distinction between language and dialect which it is almost impossible to make in the case of Bamileke.

Bamileke versions of the questionnaire as there are Bamileke *arrondissements* within the sample.

Thus, for example, if the Bamileke *arrondissements* falling within the sample were Dschang, Bafang and Company, then it would be possible to use two Bamileke questionnaires: one Dschang and the other Fe? fe? The alternative of a base questionnaire in Fe? fe? with crucial questions also in Dschang is not really practicable because Dschang and Fe? fe?-do not share a common orthography and because it is not merely the crucial questions which are not mutually intelligible. There is also the difficulty that for reasons of local pride and politics it is considered impolite or even insulting to address a Dschang in Fe? fe? Since, in any case it would be necessary to have a Dschang team of interviewers and a Fe? fe? team, it seems best that each should work from a questionnaire in the *parler* which they will actually use in the field.

As soon as the sample has been drawn, a meeting should be called to discuss the choice of Bamileke *parler(s)* to be used in translating the questionnaire. Such a meeting should include Bamileke from all of the Bamileke home areas falling within the sample as well as two or three Bamileke from other areas, to give an independent view.

Evidence from discussions to date indicates that such a meeting should be able to come to an agreement as to the translation strategy to be adopted which would be acceptable to all present and which would come close to the optimal approach to the problem in the field. Although there is still very considerable disagreement over the Bamileke *parler* which should be taken to represent the language for general use, faced with a specific problem of communication within a defined geographical area Bamileke speakers do appear to be able to forget their differences and agree upon a common solution. Any such meeting would necessarily have to take into account the availability of orthographies for the Bamileke *parlers* chosen and also of persons capable of carrying out the translations and also of persons capable of reading the orthographies and of teaching others to do so.¹¹⁶

4.2.5 GBAYA AND THE EAST

The choice of a single language to represent the Eastern Province (for no single language could cover the province) raises very grave problems. The administrative censuses of 1965 and 1967 gave a total population of some 274,000 for the East of whom 55,000 were Maka, 39,000 Baya and 35,000 Kaka, with even smaller ethnic groups making up the remainder.¹¹⁷ The suggestion that the language chosen for the East should be Gbaya may seem somewhat unreasonable, given these figures, unless it is realized that whilst both Maka and Kaka women generally have a fair grasp of Ewondo populaire, very few Baya women speak anything other than Gbaya.¹¹⁸

It is also true that the Baya extend beyond the frontiers of the East. In Lom and Djerem and in Meiganga they are the majority ethnic group, whilst as far north as Tchollire they still form an important minority group. "Le group Gbaya-Manja-Ngbaka (numbering a total of 1 million persons in Cameroon and the Central African Republic) est un groupe de dialectes nombreux et divers plutôt qu'un groupe de langues apparantées. Ces dialectes forment une certaine continuité; les locuteurs de dialectes voisins se comprennent assez facilement, tandis que ceux des dialectes lointaines se comprennent avec peine ou pas de tout".¹¹⁹

As to an available orthography: "Plusieurs orthographes ont déjà été utilisées, mais actuellement il n'y en a que deux, celle de la Mission Catholique de Meiganga-Djohung et celle de l'Eglise Evangélique Luthérienne... celle des protes-

tants est un adaptation de l'orthographe française tandis que celle des catholiques est une adaptation de l'alphabet linguistique".¹²⁰ There is even a Centre for Gbaya Translation at Meiganga.¹²¹

4.2.6 BASSA

Everyone with whom the author discussed the choice of languages was agreed that Bassa should figure amongst the chosen; "Le nombre des Bassa varie suivant les auteurs et suivant les classifications. Nous avons en effet les authentiques Bassa et, à côté d'eux les groupes qui ne sont pas bassa mais qui parlent la langue bassa et d'autre part des Bassa qui ne parlent plus la langue bassa. Si l'on fait le compte des gens regroupés dans toutes ces catégories, on verra qu'il y a environ 250,000 Bassa authentiques, 300,000 bassaphones, et le grand groupe bassa pourrait compter au plus 350,000 personnes... c'est un des groupes le plus nombreux du Cameroun parmi ceux qui parlent une langue comprise d'un bout à l'autre du territoire où ils sont situés."¹²² "Leurs villages commencent à 50 kilometres de Yaoundé sur la route de Douala. Ils arrivent aux portes de la capitale économique et remontent jusqu'à Yabassi sur le Wouri."¹²³

As far as the problems of translation and orthography are concerned, Bassa should pose no extraordinary problems. Collège Libermann has published a two-volume Bassa reader with accompanying cassettes, a dictionary and a grammar.¹²⁴ Another strong reason for the utilization of Bassa apart from the size and coherence of this linguistic group is the high proportion of Bassa women who speak nothing else, and the strong group sentiment which makes them notoriously reluctant to confide in persons perceived as strangers.

4.2.7 DOUALA

The Douala language (commonly written as Duala) is an obvious choice for use by the CFS. Although its pre-eminence in the German period has since been eroded, it is still the major language of the country's largest city, where the CFS intends to interview approximately one tenth of the total sample. In contrast to Ewondo in Yaoundé, which remains a language to some degree restricted to the Ewondo and related ethnic groups, Douala is a language which is readily learnt by non-Douala immigrants into the City. Women may live twenty years in Yaoundé without learning

¹¹⁶ Two cassette recordings were made during the Study, with very useful discussions of the Bamileke *parler* problems.

¹¹⁷ ORSTOM, 1971 *Tableau de la Population du Cameroun*.

¹¹⁸ Information upon which the officials of the Statistical Office, of the Church and of the Province were unanimous.

¹¹⁹ P. Noss, *Gbaya: Phonologie et Grammaire Dialecte Yaayuwee*, Dossiers de l'ALCAM 3, 1976. cf. "Gbaya, of course, consists of many dialects some of which are nearly mutually unintelligible with each other" W. Samarin, "Adamawa-Eastern" in *Current Trends in Linguistics*, op. cit., p. 224. Whilst it is common practice to refer to the language as Gbaya and the people as Baya there appears to be no standard form even amongst the Gbaya/Baya themselves.

¹²⁰ Noss, op. cit. He gives a bibliography of 15 items concerning Gbaya.

¹²¹ Address, B.P. 9, Meiganga.

¹²² J. Mboui, "La Société Bassa", *Camelang*, 4, pp. 19-23, 1975.

¹²³ P. Billard, *Le Cameroun Fédéral, Essai de Géographie Humaine et Economique*, Lyon, 1968, p. 20.

¹²⁴ See under Collège Libermann in the Bibliography, page 47.

Ewondo. This is much less likely to be the case with Douala in Douala.

The utility of Douala covers a wider area than Douala itself. It is readily understood by speakers of a number of related languages in the Littoral region (Pongo, Mungo, Oli, etc.)¹²⁵ and is widely spoken throughout the Littoral not only by resident Douala but also by others who have adopted it as a lingua franca. Douala has an established orthography and a

long literary tradition. There are probably more Douala who can read and write their own language than there are similarly gifted members of any other linguistic group in Cameroon.

¹²⁵ cf. Guthrie, *op. cit.*

5 The WFS Core Questionnaire in Translation

"Dr. Pell was wont to say that in the solution of questions, the main matter was the well-stating of them; which requires mother-wit and logick . . . for let the question be but well stated . . . it will work almost of itself."

John Aubrey, *Brief Lives*

Experience in translating thirty-three basic questions drawn from the World Fertility Survey's Core Questionnaire into Douala, Ewondo, Fulfulde¹²⁶ and Pidgin shows that there are certain recurrent problems associated with the transfer of the questionnaire into the Cameroonian languages. Some of these problems, which are common to many other African languages, are discussed below as it is felt that any group working on the translation of the questionnaire should be warned of these particular difficulties.

5.1 MONTH AND YEAR OF BIRTH: QUESTION 1¹²⁷

The immediate linguistic problem is that Fulfulde speaking respondents know the month of their birth, if at all, only according to the Moslem lunar calendar. Interviewers in the North will need to be provided with a conversion table.

The general problem is that to know the year of ones birth is still a sign of very considerable sophistication and educational experience, preferably on the part of ones parents. Not a single one of the 35 Mofou village women assembled for the second Fulfulde field test knew her date of birth. Even the Prefect of Maroua was in the same case except that he, having needed to be nineteen at one stage in his life, had adopted an appropriate date of birth which he still used although he had no idea as to its accuracy within a range of four of five years.

5.2 AGE: QUESTION 2

Most women were prepared to make some estimate of their own ages (even if the estimate was incredible given the alleged ages of their children). In the North, however, even estimates were often wanting. Whatever the translation, the question was essentially meaningless to respondents who had never thought about the subject before.¹²⁸ A not atypical case concerned a childless woman, who by physical appearance was perhaps twenty, who had no concept of her own age (she originally vaguely suggested "Ten?" when pressed by the interviewer), whose parents, still living in her natal village, had told her of no event about the time of her birth and who could not say how old she was at Independence. Later in the interview it transpired that she had been married three times and had spent "a long time" in each marriage. Each translation group should work out an historic calendar for that particular linguistic group,¹²⁹ but serious consideration should also be given to the question as to whether specific probe questions relating to age should be incorporated into the questionnaire or at least into the training manual.¹³⁰

In this context, it should be recognized that previous surveys in Cameroon have fallen within the francophone tradition in the estimation of age. That is to say that where a woman does not know her age the interviewer has been

instructed to take her other demographic characteristics and especially her number of children into account when forming an estimate of her age (sometimes specific instructions are given as to the precise figures to be used in making such calculations).

The anglophone tradition has rather been to use approximate age at marriage (at puberty, before puberty, shortly after puberty, etc.) and the duration of marriage in making such estimates but to regard taking too much account of the number of children as prejudicing the independence of the age and parity data (especially where formulae of the form 1 child = 3 years of married life are employed, as has frequently been the case in ORSTOM surveys). The use of such formulae will produce less age heaping and more even pyramids than reliance upon the women's own estimates but they do not necessarily produce more accurate data.¹³¹

Taking the number of children into account when estimating age is an especially hazardous procedure where secondary sterility is a widespread problem (as in certain regions of Cameroon) and where women of an older generation, principally because of medical problems, have in fact had fewer children. The CFS will need to decide upon a fixed policy relating to the estimating of age and to make sure that such policy is clear to the interviewers, irrespective of which language they are working in.

Cameroon, together with many other African countries, almost invariably produces age pyramids which show a marked deficit of women aged 15-19. It is often argued that this is because women who are married or have children tend to be moved into the 20-24 group whilst the unmarried and the childless fall back into the 10-14 group. However, in the case of Cameroon, a specific linguistic reason for this deficit, which would imply the actual omission of such women (rather than their mere age shift) has been suggested. The claim is that where a young girl is already betrothed outside the household of her birth but has not yet left home and is still resident within it

¹²⁶ Because of practical problems slightly fewer questions were translated into Fulfulde. The whole range of types of question was, nevertheless, still covered.

¹²⁷ The heading numbers refer to questions in the abbreviated questionnaire used in the translation tests. See Appendix I.

¹²⁸ It is sometimes argued that respondents who have no knowledge of contraception should not be questioned about what is to them a meaningless concept. Those who promote this argument fail to realize that such apparently hard data as age must also be drawn from questions which may well be virtually meaningless to respondents who do not even know the date of the current year.

¹²⁹ For experience with the use of historical calendars in Cameroon, cf. P. Gubry *Une Confrontation entre Deux Methodes de Determination des Ages au Cameroun*. Yaoundé: ORSTOM, 1975. Classification by age rank was found to be far superior but is impracticable in a large scale survey.

¹³⁰ The argument against putting them in the manual is that there is no plan to translate the manuals into the local languages.

¹³¹ In Cameroonian Surveys, in contrast to surveys in many developing countries, the age data for women is apparently "better" than that for men, not because women are more likely to know their ages than men (to the contrary) but because of the utilization of such formulae.

according to Western concepts, she is not counted as a household member either by her own parents or by the parents of her betrothed husband. One argument for the translation of the household schedule or at least for the very strict training of the interviewers on this point is that the natural tendency is to ask not "Who lives here?" but "Who belongs to your household?" – hence the omission of betrothed girls and even of young children who equally may not be regarded as full members of the household.

5.3 EDUCATION: QUESTION 3

As the education question can be sensitive it is necessary to have some form of lead in, such as: "Before, everyone did not go to school; have you ever been to school?" However, experience shows that translation of this general form of introduction can be difficult. As long as the overall idea is still clear, exact equivalence in this case is not essential. (However, it should be noted that "previously" or "before", in relation to time, can be concepts very difficult to convey in the local languages.)

It will be necessary in coding the level of education to establish a table equating anglophone and francophone qualifications; possibly an abbreviated form of the Census list could be used.

5.4 LITERACY: QUESTION 4

Ridiculously, for reasons largely peculiar to Cameroon, the question on literacy proved to be the most difficult of all to translate. In the translation sessions, discussions of this one question alone generally lasted more than half an hour.¹³²

There are many problems in translating the question in the form: "Can you read say, for example, a newspaper or a magazine?"

There are no words for "newspaper" or "magazine" in the local languages and, furthermore, there are no newspapers or magazines produced in the local languages; thus the result is that the question, in this form, is necessarily confined to literacy in French or English. If the intent of the question is to measure exposure to ideas from the outside world this may be quite reasonable; if, however, the concern is with literacy irrespective of language then the question will need to be reformulated. "Can you read a letter, in any language, not necessarily French or English?" is a better formulation than asking whether the respondent can read a book. This is both because there are many Cameroonian languages in which there are no books or where the only word for a book implies the Bible, and because there are respondents who would claim to be able to read the Koran, or the Bible, who are not in the ordinary sense of the word literate.

5.5 LANGUAGE NORMALLY SPOKEN IN THE HOME: QUESTION 5

"What language do you normally speak at home?" would appear to be a relatively simple question; nevertheless, it posed considerable problems in translation. It proved difficult to find local words that clearly referred to languages rather than dialects.¹³³ "Normally" was a difficult concept to translate, and "at home" when back-translated came out as "in your home village" which was almost the exact opposite of what was required. A simpler question to translate would have been "What language/talk do you use in your house here (when talking to your husband/parents)?" Here is another example of a question whose formulation will be of considerable importance even at the

household schedule stage, when the aim is to find out which languages can be used for conducting the detailed fertility interviews.

In the case of the Pidgin questionnaire, the most common response to the question: "Na which kind country talk weh una de talk for una house?" was an undifferentiated "country-talk"; further probing was necessary to establish which kind of country-talk.

A question as to the language spoken in the home area will be an essential part of the CFS as, in the presence of an interdiction upon questions directly concerning ethnic origin, it is the only way of securing data upon which the analysis of the very significant ethnic differentials in fertility and fertility behaviour can be based.¹³⁴

It would be most helpful if the ALCAM group could establish for each sample area a list of the dialect names likely to be encountered, broken down into language groups, both for the practical purposes of the CFS and for use in coding the responses to this question, which will have to be left open in the field. Some idea of the confusion which otherwise can result can be gathered from Ardener's description of his "real difficulties in classifying workers by tribes from the answers workers themselves give to some such question in Pidgin as "Who side you country?" The worker may give the name of his tribe, or of his village (even of a section of his village) or the nearest fair-sized town, or of another tribe which is more well known. Whatever he says may be given in the phonetic form of his own language, but commonly in some other form he imagines, rightly or wrongly, to be more comprehensible. Bali or Fulani forms are frequent from workers in the three Bamenda Plateau Divisions, and Douala forms somewhat less frequent from workers in Mamfe, Kumba and Victoria Divisions. Sometimes the form is merely the repetition of some erroneous pronunciation which exists only on the plantations. Whatever the worker says, it has next to be recorded . . . through an African clerk, who may choose an English, French or German orthography, or use a rendering of his own."¹³⁵ Ardener was concerned with the registration of ethnic group affiliation; the problems of registering language group affiliation are even greater.

5.6 RELIGION: QUESTION 6

It is always difficult in Africa to formulate the question relating to religion in such a way as to leave open to respondents the option of declaring themselves to be animists, especially as it is most rude to ask either Christians or Moslems if they are *pagans*. One previous survey in Cameroon found that the Christian interviewers were actually asking simply "Are you a Catholic or a Protestant?"¹³⁶ It is probable that many other surveys have

¹³² These discussions can be found on the tape recordings which were made.

¹³³ In fact, most Cameroonians have learnt to think of French and English as languages and of all Cameroonian *parlers* as dialects. The backtranslation from the Ewondo questionnaire showed that it was impossible to find a word which was not equated with dialect.

¹³⁴ It would be unthinkable to think of analysing Cameroonian fertility at anything but the national level without examining ethnic differentials. No Cameroonian survey to date has failed to find marked ethnic fertility differentials, which is hardly surprising given the very different customs, histories, and access to medical and other modern facilities of the ethnic groups.

¹³⁵ E. & S. Ardener, W. Warmington, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons: Some Economic and Social Studies*. NISER, 1960, pp. 24-25.

¹³⁶ See Section 4.1.2 "The Contrary View" above.

unconsciously been equally insensitive. In many local languages there is no direct translation of the Western concept of "a religion" as an abstraction. Formerly, religion was an integral part of day-to-day living and certainly not a matter of choice for the individual.

The range of possible variations in this question can be shown from the following Pidgin examples:

You dey dey for Church? Or, you dey for Hausa Church? or, You da make country fashion? – Ardener.

Y get som cuc we yu de go, o y na de go cuc? Y be kristyem y be Moslem, yu de gri fo kontri fasan, o yu go de gri fo got palaba at al? Weh be nem for yu cuc? – DeLancey.

Which kind god you dey prayer? (And which Church you de go? – Buea Translation).

Which kain God yu get? na mohamed God? na kristian God? na native God? wich kain? – Nigerian Border.

In Ewondo and Douala it is possible to ask "What are your beliefs?" . However, interviewers' immediate reaction when asked to translate "What is your religion?" is to ask the equivalent of "What is your Mission?" and although it is maintained that the words derived from mission in the local languages now cover Islam as well as Christianity the question is still unnecessarily biased and leaves no scope for the animists. The Study failed to find a satisfactory Fulfulde translation for this question. There is no general word for religious beliefs which does not imply Moslem beliefs. Equally there are two words for God, one being "Allah", which is only applicable to a single religion, and another term which implies a local spirit and would certainly not be applicable to either the Moslem or the Christian god. As the Fulfulde questionnaire stands it asks, in descending order of likelihood: "Are you a Moslem, a Christian, or what?" By pausing between each alternative to await a response the interviewer should be able to avoid offence. It is not possible to ask respondents directly if they are animists because the term for "pagan" is too pejorative for conversational use. (Its actual meaning is something midway between barbarian and infidel.) It is always a problem how to pose the question so as to allow believers in the traditional religions to affirm their belief without fear of appearing to be "backward" when faced with an evidently well-educated interviewer.¹³⁷

5.7 SIZE OF CHILDHOOD PLACE OF RESIDENCE: QUESTION 7

"In what kind of area did you live mostly when you were a child?" is much easier to translate into the local languages if it is first reformulated as "Where did you grow up?" Equally the normal Cameroonian division would be "in a village, in a small town or in a large town?" If the WFS wishes to distinguish between the countryside and a village then it will be necessary to make a four-part division. The number of large towns in Cameroon being limited, it would be as well to list them in the appropriate code. (Are only Yaoundé and Douala to count as large towns or are some dozen other major urban centres also to be included?) In his very useful linguistic *Questionnaire et Commentaire Sémantique*,¹³⁸ designed to clarify general terminological patterns for those attempting to elicit core vocabularies for Cameroonian languages, M. Houis points out that "ville et hameau seront un augmentatif ou un diminutif grand village, petit village"; thus it would cause

undue confusion not to have village itself as one of the possible categories – indeed it is the category into which most of the respondents will fall. There are also ethnic groups who do not live in grouped villages – which is yet another argument for a four-part division: "in the bush, in a village, in a small town, in a big town".

5.8 NUMBER OF CHILDREN EVER BORN: QUESTIONS 8-10

Experience, in four languages, shows that the most difficult sections of the questionnaire to translate are not the technical terms associated with fertility regulation but the abstract introductory sentences preceding certain questions. A perfect example of this is Question 201 in the Core Questionnaire which begins "Nous voudrions avoir la liste de tous les enfants que chaque femme a mis au monde pendant toute sa vie". It is impossible to translate this introduction into Fulfulde as it stands in such a manner as to avoid the respondent looking round for the other women referred to: this formal style of address is just not suited to a face-to-face interview in the African village context. It is much more appropriate to explain "we would like to have the complete list of all the children you have ever borne". Even then there is still the supplementary problem that many of the local languages do not have a word for "list". These are minor points; however, the major question is whether it is diplomatic, or even wise, in cultures where counting children is still thought likely to arouse the jealous and even murderous anger of the gods, to begin this section with such a bald statement that this is what is about to follow.¹³⁹ It is likely to be far more rewarding to begin with the much less threatening "How many of your (own, womb, biological) children live here with you?" There is always the check question as to the total number of births (and more importantly the birth history) to ensure that none of the children is missed.

Asking about dead children is a sensitive area in all cultures; in Africa this is especially so both because there are more dead children and because of the widespread belief that all or most child deaths result from witchcraft. Linguistically there is also the problem that a number of Cameroonian languages have distinct terms for dead children and for dead babies and it is therefore necessary to ask about both categories separately.

French has *accouchements* and *naissances*; English is largely restricted to births, confinements being a more technical term. Cameroonian languages draw the distinguishing line at different points, in some cases grouping together miscarriages, still births and deaths within approximately a week after birth as non-births, and in others putting late miscarriages, still births and births together as confinements. Ardener has described his problems with Pidgin-speaking respondents: "it soon became apparent in the course of the survey that, as is not uncommon, the distinction between involuntary abortion and still birth was

¹³⁷ It would be very interesting to know what formulation was used in the ORSTOM Surveys, which found up to 90 per cent animists in some areas, but such information is rarely available from ORSTOM surveys.

¹³⁸ Section de Linguistique Appliquée du Cameroun, Yaoundé, November, 1968.

¹³⁹ "Par euphemisme le Bamiléké dit: 'La femme a quatre poussins' au lieu de: 'La femme a quatre enfants' ". A. Dongmo, *Les Origines du Sens Commercial des Bamiléké*, Yaoundé, 1974. This testimony is the more interesting as Dongmo is writing of the Westernized Bamiléké, not of untouched village society.

not being maintained by the women. By the same token, doubtless the figures for dead children included some still births, although confusion in the latter case would not be regular and systematic. The distinction recognized appeared to be that between a birth that was "abortive" in the loose sense of a failure, and one which produced, at least temporarily, a breathing infant. As a result of this semantic problem, out of 420 failed pregnancies only seven could be indisputably identified as still births. The subject was clearly a painful one and it seemed humane not to insist on the distinction, despite its scientific interest and importance."¹⁴⁰

In the Fulbé interviews when asked to list all their births the women naturally included still births and late miscarriages. Far from forgetting dead children, women remembered the sex of five-month miscarriages which had occurred some twenty years previously. Given the high levels of secondary sterility often following a series of miscarriages of "dead babies" and the general frequency of "abortive births", it is certainly easier to go through the birth history if miscarriages and still births are included; long intervals can then be probed for missing events or mis-dating. If the right atmosphere has been created by the interviewer stressing that the survey is concerned with women's problems in relation to sterility, infant mortality and the like, then this section can be traversed without too much discomfort on the part of the respondent. Nothing is going to make an interview with the mother of seven children, all deceased, easy, but women who have some surviving children will discuss all dead children if it is clear to them that the findings of the survey will be used in medical planning and so forth.

According to Nida, the ideal translator has complete knowledge of both source and receptor languages, has an intimate acquaintance with the subject matter, has an effective empathy with the original author and intent and has stylistic facility and deftness in the receptor language.¹⁴¹

Few Cameroonians have an intimate acquaintance with demographic terminology. In translating the birth (or pregnancy) history questions, the CFS's translators are going to need very clear guidelines as to the distinctions involved and also they will need to have it explained to them that it is very probable that the distinctions made in their own language may be quite different and that, rather than ignoring the different cut-off points, say between still births and late miscarriages, they should be used to the full. Equally they should be made aware that the use of euphemisms for death (gone, no longer with us) is perfectly acceptable where culturally the norm, so long as there can be no confusion as to the actual status of the child.

5.9 BREAST-FEEDING: QUESTIONS 11-12

In some Cameroonian languages, the normal expression for breast-feeding is "giving the baby milk"; it will therefore be necessary to make it clear that only breast-milk is involved. As a footnote on the importance of tonal marks it should be noted that in the Ewondo translation the omission of the relevant mark resulted in the substitution of *gardée* for *allaitée*. "Votre avant-dernier enfant" proved to be an exceptionally difficult phrase to translate; the concept of the penultimate child, or even the child before last is very difficult to convey in languages which often have a specific word for the youngest child but have no simple way of referring to the previous child.

5.10 PREGNANCY STATUS: QUESTION 13

A number of Cameroonian languages have two terms for "to be pregnant", one meaning that the menstrual period is overdue or has not been seen for some time, and the other meaning that the woman is visibly big with child. It is obviously necessary to ask about both states. In Pidgin there is the additional problem that for women who make such a distinction in their mother tongues the Pidgin expression for pregnancy "get belli" will only refer to the later stages of pregnancy. There would appear to be a good case for asking all women when they last had a menstrual period and then asking if they are pregnant, especially as this is a more medical and, therefore, a less threatening sequence than asking the woman straight out whether she is pregnant. Many women still feel that to announce a pregnancy before it is visible is again to risk the jealous anger of the gods, or if they are more westernized they, nevertheless, consider it to be unlucky.¹⁴²

5.11 PROJECTED DATE OF BIRTH: QUESTION 14

The selection of the form of future tense required here is a matter for delicate consideration: in some languages it is more tactful to regard the birth as a certain event, in others it should be conditional.

5.12 SEX PREFERENCE: QUESTION 15

No obvious problems; the Pidgin "yu go like man or woman pikin?" expresses the choice very neatly.

5.13 ABSTINENCE: QUESTIONS 16-17.

Whether it is more polite to ask a woman whether she is abstaining from sexual relations with her husband or whether she is now having sexual relations varies from language to language. This is a fact for which careful and express provision will have to be made in the coding instructions. Although many languages have a euphemistic form equivalent to "sleeping with" this should not be used as it is insufficiently explicit. True Fulfulde has the advantage of an explicit but perfectly polite vocabulary in this area drawn from Islamic law. These terms, however, will not be known to non-Fulbé Fulfulde speakers with whom a coarser formulation will have to be employed. "C'était combien de temps après votre dernière naissance que vous avez repris les rapports sexuels avec votre mari?" is a fairly complex formulation even in French; careful attention should be paid to the back-translation to ensure that the correct idea has been transmitted even if not in exactly the same form. For example, the Ewondo asks "how old was your last child when you resumed sexual relations with your husband?"

¹⁴⁰ E. Ardener, *Divorce and Fertility: An African Study*, Oxford, 1962, pp. 50-51.

¹⁴¹ E. Nida, *Towards a Science of Translating*, p. 153.

¹⁴² Dongmo comments that Bamileke women often ask each other whether they are pregnant yet (especially in the early months after marriage) but the question is formulated as "Etes-vous malade?" op. cit. p. 20.

5.14 MISCARRIAGES: QUESTION 18

Miscarriages should probably be incorporated into the birth-history (see under Children Ever Born). Some languages have two words, one for when the woman is probably pregnant but not yet fat and another for when she is certainly pregnant. Indeed, many African languages rather than operating on a bipartite division (pregnant/non-pregnant), utilize a tripartite division (not pregnant/probably pregnant/certainly pregnant) and all associated terms relating to miscarriages and so forth are adjusted accordingly. From the woman's point of view the latter form would appear to be the more rational and close to reality in the absence of medical tests for pregnancy and menstruation-suppressing forms of contraception.

5.15 FERTILITY REGULATION: QUESTIONS 19-25

The translation of the fertility regulation questions raised a number of general problems which were probably aggravated by the masculine participation in the translation sessions. In general "languages tend to differ more radically in emotive meanings than in referential significations. In a number of areas in Africa, for example, there is very little taboo connected with the names of body parts and organic functions, while the names of certain animals, ancestors, and kin involve very heavy emotive significance."¹⁴³ At first approach, Cameroon seemed to offer an exception to the general rule that African societies are less prudish than European ones in relation to sexual matters. However, it quickly transpired that the real problem was that decency requirements are very much stronger for conversations where both sexes participate than for single sex conversations involving either sex. Male officials have no means of knowing what women discuss amongst themselves and apparently assume that women are as modest when only other women are present as they are obliged to be in mixed company, which is certainly not the case. It was also true that those participating in the translation sessions were middle class and mainly church educated, which tended to raise their inhibitions. Village women are much more uninhibited. For the record, one non-Fulbé woman interviewed in the Fulbé village where she had been resident for over twenty years responded to the contraceptive questions in the interview with a couple of jokes which English prudery denies reproduction here.

However, perhaps as a result of this intersex prudery, it is true that there is some difficulty in finding polite but explicit terms to describe phenomena such as withdrawal or the condom. The male translators could provide accurate but crude descriptions; the female translators took time to learn to discuss such topics in the presence of men but then were much more skilful in providing polite but explicit phrases. Outside Yaoundé, women's knowledge of the actual methods of fertility regulation was extremely limited and it would have been very helpful if they had had access to an illustrated booklet explaining the various methods, prior to attempting to translate the questionnaire.

Quite apart from the context of fertility regulation the ideas of postponement or avoidance are difficult to convey in many African languages. One Pidgin questionnaire simply asked: "Yu sabi eni kayn ting we woman fit do am so i no go get belli if i no wantam fo dat taym?" The Study's Pidgin translation said: "How weh you sabi, plenti way them dey weh woman and eh masa them fit make say i belli no be. You sabi some way or you be dong hear dis kind ting?" Neither formulation provides a direct translation of the notion of postponement which is a Western abstraction. In African languages, it is possible to say "I am not going to

do this today; I will wait and do it tomorrow", but there is no verb "to postpone". An early version of the Ewondo translation asked "do you know of any paths whereby a couple who have sexual relations can make the pregnancy pass quickly away or even stop the pregnancy ever taking root". This exemplifies the very common confusion between contraception and abortion. All women interviewed knew something about abortion; many knew nothing about contraception. All translation relating to fertility control will have to be very carefully watched to ensure that abortion is excluded or included according to the original intent of the question. The final Ewondo translation was "Do you know of means whereby a man and a woman, once they have arrived at the stage of having sexual relations, can resist or avoid a pregnancy?"

Resist, in the sense of push back, is as close as it is possible to get to "postpone" and it has the additional advantage of implying that resistance may be for a limited period of time and that it may or may not be successful. (Sometimes, especially in francophone Africa, one encounters sophisticated women who claim to know of no other method of postponing a pregnancy than abstinence, yet who have heard of the pill and other specific methods but maintain that these do not work.)

The translation of the word *pill* poses considerable problems. Some languages have a relatively neutral word meaning tablet or even medicine to be taken by the mouth, but in Fulfulde, for example, the word for any kind of tablet is "kininhoy" which is an evident corruption of quinine: the first Western medicine known to the Fulbé. Even in Pidgin "drink som medicine weh dem de call say tablet" is as close as one can get. In many languages, it will be necessary to translate "a special medicine which the woman drinks every day".

It would appear that the condom is either known as a *préservatif en caoutchouc* or not at all. Where it is not known it can be explained that it is a little rubber cap which the man wears; the problem lies in finding a polite translation of the phrase *to cover his penis*.

The idea that women are more fertile at some times of the month than others is very widespread (although the most common belief would appear to be that maximum fertility is attained immediately after menstruation). Explaining rhythm thus poses no problems although the term *continence périodique* is unknown.

The translation of the question relating to withdrawal created the greatest embarrassment: one translation provided by a young male translator had even middle-aged men hiding their faces. In the field, the question usually provoked considerable laughter. The Fulbé women could not imagine men who would be prepared to deny themselves pleasure in that way, nor why they should wish to do so. This was what they claimed; nevertheless, one could not help but suspect that a more in-depth interview would have revealed that they were familiar with the practice, at least by hearsay, especially in non-marital contexts.

Whilst in English or French it is possible to ask whether you (plural) have practised withdrawal, referring to the couple, in most Cameroonian languages it will be necessary to ask a woman whether her husband/man has practised withdrawal. Most Cameroonian languages do not have a polite plural form (as French *vous*) which is not necessarily a disadvantage as the "you" singular form makes the interview more intimate.

Despite the fact that the question relating to traditional

¹⁴³ E. Nida., *Towards a Science of Translating*, op. cit. p. 122. Cf. C. Osgood et al, *Cross Cultural Universals of Affective Meaning*, (Urbana, 1975).

African fertility regulating methods specified that they should be used to avoid pregnancy, nearly all of the positive responses were concerned with traditional methods of abortion. The most satisfactory translation of *in Africa*, which is a meaningless phrase to a village woman, proved to be equivalents of the Pidgin for *Blackman country, country fashion*.

The questionnaire as field-tested in Cameroon deliberately asked first whether women had practised contraception and only then whether they had heard of it. This was for two reasons: firstly because a woman's husband may practice withdrawal or use a condom without her ever having heard anyone talk about these things; the second and more important reason was that women are likely to "confess" to having heard of contraception if they have first been asked if they have ever used it, just as Catholic women are more likely to admit to using contraception if they have first been asked about abortion.¹⁴⁴ It must be remembered that the sale of contraceptives as such in Cameroon is still illegal; thus these questions are more threatening than they would be in many other contexts.

5.16 AGE AT FIRST SEXUAL EXPOSURE: QUESTION 26

The question on the woman's age at her first sexual exposure did not prove to be particularly threatening in the field especially as it came before any of the questions relating to marriage. Women who did not know their current age were unlikely to know their age at first sexual exposure; however, they were able to say whether this was before puberty, at puberty, soon or long after puberty, and allowance for such responses should be made in the coding provisions for this question.

5.17 AGE AT MENARCHE: QUESTION 26

A woman's ability to state her age when she had her first menstrual period was again dependent upon her ability to state her current age. Most African languages have a number of picturesque euphemisms for menstruation such as *to see the moon, to sit down* or the Pidgin *see flower*. Interestingly, this was one of the questions which the male translator interviewers found most difficult to put to the women in the field – more difficult indeed than the questions directly relating to sexual intercourse.

5.18 MARRIAGE: QUESTION 27

The questions on marriage are some of the most difficult of all to translate, not so much in immediate linguistic sense but in terms of the translation from European to local concepts. Certainly the World Fertility Survey's questionnaire will have to be largely reworked insofar as it relates to marriage which can be a much less fixed concept in Cameroon. Marriage often proceeds by stages and it is often far from easy to determine at which precise point the marriage can be said to have been finalized.¹⁴⁵

Writing in 1960, Ardener maintained that Pidgin had no word for married. "All workers in the camp sample were asked if they were married or not. Since Pidgin makes no distinction between *woman* and *wife*, the most effective formula proved to be: 'You get woman or you no get woman? We no de talk for harrot' (*harlot* = concubine). Later, the worker was asked if he was engaged or betrothed. This question usually enabled us to weed out women given as wives who should better be termed fiancées . . . In the

marriage systems of most tribes, it is difficult to judge from the terminology used whether a woman is betrothed or a wife. The completion or lack of completion of payment of bride price is a useful practical guide, and one that pidgin English speakers felt was the crucial one ('You get woman you begin pay um, nemer finis?'). Approach along these lines is more successful than true logic would suggest from the fact that it is common for only a certain part of the total bride-price to be completed before a bride goes to her husband. (Alternatively use) "Has your wife come to live with you?" ('You woman she don com dey for you house?')."¹⁴⁶

Modern Pidgin certainly uses *marret* for married and from the woman's point of view distinguishes between a *man* who is any stable partner and a *massa* who is a husband. Interestingly Pidgin uses a local word *chakara* for a broken marriage. The CFS will have to decide from what point of view it is interested in marriage and thence define what is to constitute marriage for the purposes of the Survey.

If the CFS is principally interested in whether women are at risk of pregnancy then the definition of marriage should be as wide as possible and the questions on marriage should be placed well towards the end of the questionnaire. This is especially true if the Survey wishes to gain as much information as possible on the practice of contraception, for it is probably true that such practice is most commonly found amongst the urban group of women who are in semi-stable sexual relationships but who are not yet married. Asking such women about their marital status prior to the section on contraceptive practice is liable to reduce the levels of contraceptive practice reported considerably.

Another good reason for defining very clearly what aspects of marriage the Survey is interested in is the simple fact that it is very difficult to find local language equivalents of "What is your marital status?" It is certainly much simpler to ask "Are you married, widowed, divorced or what?" as appropriate. One very marked difference between the North and the South, evident even in the Study's very limited field-trials, was the variation in marital disruption levels. In the South, the woman who had been married more than once was the exception; in the North, where parents exercise absolute control over the first marriage often in the expectation that it will not last, such women are the rule. If the questionnaire is to take detailed marital histories then a great deal of space will be needed to allow for the mobility of the Northern wives who have been shown by previous surveys to average more than two marriages each. Turning from the serial polygamy of the Northern wives to the polygyny of the husbands, the questionnaire will also need to incorporate questions on the number of co-wives and the rank of the wife, areas in which the local terminology is understandably more adequate than either French or English. Whilst the Pidgin for co-wife is *mate* in many languages the common term is much closer to the *jealous one* and needs to be used with a fair amount of circumspection.

¹⁴⁴ If this point is debated, it could be tested in the pretest whether the ordering of these questions affects the proportion of women who say they have heard of contraception, and in which direction.

¹⁴⁵ "En effet, souvent un mariage est d'abord contracté suivant le régime coutumier, puis, lorsque la dot a été entièrement payée par l'époux, il est alors confirmé par déclaration officielle auprès de l'autorité administrative" *La Population de Yaoundé, Résultats Définitifs du Recensement de 1962, 1970*, p. 61.

¹⁴⁶ E. and S. Ardener and W. Warmington, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, op. cit. pp. 72 and 78. The original question with its reference to harlots must be one of the least tactful survey questions on record.

5.19 IDEAL FAMILY SIZE: QUESTION 28

The translation of the question on ideal family size posed no special problems. A common response was that God, not individuals, made the choice. (Though, remarkably, none of the women objected to stating a sex preference for their next birth — a choice which they certainly cannot make.) In some cases, especially in Fulfulde, the qualifying phrase *in your whole life* sounded rather unnatural when translated (when else would a woman have children?) and the equivalent of *in total* was substituted in its place.

5.20 WOMEN'S WORK FORCE PARTICIPATION: QUESTIONS 29-30

The questions on women's economic activities did not pose any special problems of translation except that the long introduction with many examples proved so cumbersome that in the field many women did not really listen to the question and still claimed not to be working even when they had visibly just come in from working in the fields. The translation of tenses in relation to previous employment questions will also need to be carefully watched.

5.21 LOCATION OF WORK: QUESTION 31

Before translating this question it will be necessary to decide whether work in the field surrounding the house is to count as working at home. Does the question actually refer only to work within the four walls of the home or would selling things on the pavement immediately outside or in a shop structure attached to the house count as working at home? One example of the sort of confusion which can arise when interviewers are left to make their own translations occurred in the case of this question where one Ewondo translation asked not "Is your work of a domestic nature?" but "Are you a domestic servant?"

5.22 HUSBAND'S CHARACTERISTICS: QUESTIONS 32-33

The only new translation problems raised by these questions relate to the necessity to decide whether the term used should be strictly *husband* or whether a general term "*your man*" would be more appropriate.

APPENDIX I

Questionnaire de Base Core Questionnaire

1. Quel est le mois et quelle est l'année de votre naissance?
In what month and year were you born?
2. Quel âge avez-vous?
How old are you?
3. Avant, tout le monde n'allait pas à l'école. Avez-vous jamais fréquenté l'école?
Before, everyone did not go to school, have you ever been to school?
4. Pouvez-vous lire, mettons un journal ou une revue?
Can you read-say for example, a newspaper or a magazine?
5. Quelle langue parlez-vous normalement chez vous?
What language do you normally speak at home?
6. Quelle est votre religion?
What is your religion?
7. Dans quel genre d'endroit avez-vous passé la plus grande partie de votre enfance. A la campagne, dans une petite ou une grande ville?
In what kind of area did you live mostly when you were a child? Was it in the country, in a town, or in a big city?
- 8 a. Nous voudrions avoir la liste complète de tous les enfants que chaque femme a mis au monde pendant toute sa vie.
Combien de vos enfants vivent avec vous?
C'est-à-dire – fils et – filles?
We should like to have a complete list of all the children each woman has ever given birth to.
How many of your children live with you?
That is – boys and – girls?
- 8 b. Combien de vos enfants vivent ailleurs?
C'est-à-dire – fils et – filles?
How many of your children live elsewhere (away from here)?
That is – boys and – girls?
- 8 c. Avez-vous jamais donné naissance à un enfant, fille ou garçon qui est mort par la suite, même s'il a vécu très peu de temps?
Combien de vos enfants sont décédés?
Have you ever given birth to a baby who later died, even if it only lived for a very short time?
How many of your children have died?
- 8 d. Je voudrais être sûre d'avoir bien compris: vous avez eu au total _____ naissances. Est-ce bien exact?
I would like to be sure that I have understood, you have had _____ births altogether. Is that right?
9. Je voudrais à présent vous poser quelques questions sur chacune de vos _____ naissances en commençant par la première.
Now I would like to ask you some questions about each of your births (whether now living or not). Starting with your first birth.

10.

En quel mois et quelle année avez-vous eu votre (premier, second . . .) enfant? In what month and year did you have your first birth?	Etait-ce un garçon ou une fille? Was it a boy or a girl?	Cet enfant est-il encore vivant? Is this child still living?	S'IL EST DECEDE Combien de temps a-t-il/elle vécu? IF DEAD For how long did the child live?
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- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

11. Pendant combien de mois avez-vous nourri votre dernier enfant au sein?
For how many months did you breast-feed your most recent (last) child?
12. Pendant combien de mois avez-vous nourri votre avant-dernier enfant au sein?
For how many months did you breast-feed the child before that one?
13. Etes-vous enceinte à présent?
Are you pregnant now?
14. Quand l'enfant doit-il naître?
When is the baby due?
15. Préférez-vous avoir un garçon ou une fille?
Would you choose a boy or a girl?
16. En ce moment, est-ce que vous avez des rapports sexuels avec votre mari?
At present, are you sleeping with (having sexual relations with) your husband?
17. C'était combien de temps après votre dernière naissance que vous avez repris les rapports sexuels avec votre mari?
How long after your last birth was it before you began sleeping together again (having sexual relations again)?
18. En dehors des enfants dont vous m'avez parlé, avez-vous jamais été enceinte à d'autres moments, même seulement pendant quelques mois ou quelques semaines?
Combien de ces grossesses avez-vous eues?
Other than the children you have told me about have there been any other times when you have been pregnant, even if only for a few months or weeks?
How many pregnancies like this have you had?

19. Maintenant, je voudrais vous parler d'un autre sujet. Comme vous le savez peut-être, il existe différents moyens qui permettent à un couple de retarder ou de prévenir une grossesse. Connaissez-vous quelques-uns de ces moyens ou en avez-vous entendu parler?
Now, I would like to talk about something else. As you may know, there are different ways that a couple can postpone (put off) the next pregnancy or avoid it altogether. Do you know of, or have you heard of, any of these ways?
20. Quelles sont les méthodes que vous connaissez?
Which methods (ways) do you know?
21. Un des moyens qui permet à une femme de retarder la grossesse suivante ou de l'éviter, consiste à prendre une pilule tous les jours.
Avez-vous jamais utilisé cette méthode?
Avez-vous entendu parler de cette méthode?
One way of putting off, or avoiding, a pregnancy is for a woman to take a pill every day.
Have you ever taken these pills?
Have you ever heard talk of them?
22. Il existe aussi des méthodes que les hommes utilisent pour éviter que leurs femmes soient enceintes. Ils se servent parfois pendant les rapports d'un préservatif en caoutchouc appelé condom ou capote anglaise.
Avez-vous jamais utilisé cette méthode? Avez-vous entendu parler de cette méthode?
There are also ways which men can use so that their women (wives) do not get pregnant. Some men wear a condom (Durex, rubber, prophylactic) during sex.
Have you (plural) ever used this thing? Have you ever heard talk of it?
23. Certains couples évitent d'avoir des rapports certains jours du mois pendant lesquels la femme est plus susceptible de devenir enceinte. C'est la méthode de la continence périodique.
Vous-même avez-vous jamais pratiqué cette méthode?
Some couples avoid having sex on certain days of the month when the woman most easily becomes pregnant. This is called the rhythm or safe period method.
Have you ever used this? Have you ever heard anyone talk about it?
24. Certains hommes pratiquent le retrait c'est-à-dire, qu'ils font attention et se retirent avant l'orgasme. Avez-vous jamais pratiqué cette méthode? En avez-vous jamais entendu parler?
Some men practice withdrawal, that is they are careful and pull out before coming, have you (plural) ever done this?
Have you heard of this?
25. En Afrique, il y a des méthodes traditionnelles pour éviter une grossesse. Est-ce que vous en connaissez? Lesquels? Est-ce que vous avez utilisé une de ces méthodes?
In Africa there are traditional (customary) ways of not getting pregnant. Do you know about these? Which? Have you ever done any of these things?
- 26 a. Quel âge avez-vous quand vous avez eu des rapports sexuels pour la première fois?
How old were you when you had your first sexual experience?
- 26 b. A quel âge avez-vous vos premières règles?
How old were you when you had your first menstrual period?
- 26 c. Je voudrais maintenant vous poser quelques questions sur votre situation de famille. Etes-vous actuellement fiancée, mariée, veuve, divorcée, séparée ou quoi?
Now I would like to ask you about your own position. At present are you, engaged (betrothed), married, widowed, divorced, separated or what?
27. SI JAMAIS MARIÉE. En quel mois et quelle année vous êtes-vous mariée pour la première fois?
IF EVER MARRIED. In which month and which year were you married for the first time?
28. Si vous pouviez choisir exactement le nombre d'enfants que vous aurez tout au long de votre vie, combien en désireriez-vous?
If you could choose exactly how many children to have in your whole life, how many children would you like to have?
29. Comme vous le savez, beaucoup de femmes travaillent. Je veux dire qu'elles exercent une activité en plus du travail de la maison. Certaines prennent un emploi pour lequel elles sont payées en espèces ou en nature, d'autres tiennent une boutique ou un petit commerce, ou cultivent les champs de la famille.
Est-ce qu vous travaillez en ce moment?
As you know many woman work – I mean aside from their own house work. Some take up jobs for which they are paid in cash or kind. Others sell things, or have a small business, or work on the family farm.
Are you doing any such work at the present time?
30. Je voudrais maintenant vous poser quelques questions à propos de votre travail actuel (dernier travail).
Quelle est/ était votre activité... Que faites (fassiez) vous?
I would like to ask some questions about your present work (the last work you did).
What is (was) your occupation – that is, what kind of work do (did) you do?
31. Est-ce (était-ce) un travail surtout à la maison ou à l'extérieur de la maison?
Do (did) you work mostly at home or do (did) you work mostly away from home?
32. Votre mari a-t-il jamais fréquenté l'école?
Did your husband ever attend school?
33. Quel est son emploi – que fait-il?
What is his occupation – what kind of work does he do?

Core Questionnaire

Pidgin Version

1. Na for which month and year weh them born you?
2. How many years you dey now?
3. Before, all people them no bo go school; but yousef been go school?
4. You fit read any book? Book like newspaper weh them write news, or book weh small picture dey inside like magazine?
5. Na which kind country talk weh una de talk for una house?
6. Which kind god you dey prayer (and which church you de go)?
7. Na for which place you be grow de time weh you be small pikin?
Na for una country, or for some small town, or for some big township?
- 8 a. We go like for sabi correct number for all pikin weh only one woman dong born.
How many you pikin them do stay with you? Ah mean, man-pikin and woman-pikin.
- 8 b. Na how many you own pikin them de stay for another place; ah mean, weh them no dey with you – man-pikin and woman-pikin?
- 8 c. You been dong born pikin weh dong die? Do pikin been stay small before de pikin die? Na how many you pikin dong die?
- 8 d. For all weh you dong tell me, ah go correct if ah talk now say you dong born . . . pikin?
9. Now, ah go like for ask you some ting for every pikin weh you dong born; even if de pikin still dey or de pikin dong die. We go begin with you first pikin.

10.

Na for which moon and year weh you been born you first pikin?	Na man-pikin or woman-pikin?	Dis pikin still dey?	If de pikin dong die. Fow how long de pikin be stay before eh die?
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

11. For how many month weh you be give you last pikin bobi?
12. For how many month weh you be give bobi for de pikin weh you last pikin de follow?
13. You get belly just now?
14. Na for which time weh you go born?
15. You go like man or woman pikin?
16. As you dey so, you masa de still sleep you?

17. De time weh you be born you last pikin, how long weh you be stay before you and you masa begin sleep again?
18. For all dis you pikin weh you dong tell me so, you been dong get some belly for other time weh eh stay for some weeks or months? Na how many dis kind belly weh you been dong got?
19. Now, ah go like for talk some other ting. How weh you sabi, plenty way them dey weh woman and eh masa them fit make say bolly no be. You sabi some way or you be dong hear dis kind ting?
20. You fit sabi some way weh woman fit make sy eh no got belly?
21. One, for dis way for make say woman no get belly na for drink some medecine weh dem de call say tablet, everyday. You been dong ever drink dis kind of medecine before? You been dong ever hear dem de talk about dis medecine?
22. Way dem dey weh man pikin fit make say woman no get belly; some man them do wear some kind rubber time weh them want sleep with dem woman. Una been dong use dis kind ting; una been dong hear some people de talk about dis kind ting?
23. Some day for month eh dey weh woman fit get belly quick. So man and de woman no de sleep for that time weh woman fit get belly quick. You been dong de so; you been dong hear some people them de talk dis kind ting?
24. Time weh man de sleep woman and no want say de woman get belly, man de wake up quick. Una dong do dis kind ting; Una dong hear dis kind ting?
25. For Blackman country, country fashion de weh dom fit make say make woman no get belly. You sabi dis kind country fashion? Which kind weh you sabi? You been dong hear dis kind ting?
- 26 a. Many year weh you been be do time weh you first sleep with man-pikin?
- 26 b. How many year weh you been day de time weh you been first see moon or flower?
- 26 c. Now ah go like for ask you watin weh you be. Now so, you get some man weh want marret you? You marret? You man be dong die? You marret be dong chakara? Watin you de do now?
27. If you be dong marret: Na for which⁴ month and year weh you been marret for the first time?
28. If say woman fit take some number for pikin weh eh go like for born for life, how many pikin weh you go like for get?
29. You sabi say plenty women dem de work -- ah no mean work for house. Some de do work weh dem de pay dom money, or dash dem some thing. Some dem de sell small ting or get small business, or work farm. No so, you de do any for dis kind work?
30. Ah go like for ask you some ting about de work weh you do do now (de last work weh you been do). Na which kind work weh you de do or weh you been dong do?
31. Na so-so for house weh you de work or you been dong work, or na for outside house weh you de work or you been dong work?
32. You mase been dong go for school?
33. Watin you masa de do or watin eh been dong do?

APPENDIX II

LOCAL LANGUAGES USED IN THE BROADCASTS OF RADIO CAMEROON¹

REGIONAL RADIO STATION	LANGUAGE
Garoua	Fulfulde Hausa Arabe Choa
Yaoundé	Ewondo Bassa Bamileke ² Kaka ³ Gbaya ³ Bamoun
Douala	Douala Bamileke Beti/Ewondo/Boulou ⁴ Bassa
Buea ⁵	Bakweri Nso Meta Mbo (Balondo/Bafaw) ⁶ Keaka Nungaka Bayangui

¹ All stations broadcast in both French and English.

² The Fe? fe? , Gomala and Bangante dialects have all been used.

³ One of these two languages is used for the benefit of the East, but not both during the same period.

⁴ Only one of these three equivalent languages, which are mutually intelligible, is used in any one period.

⁵ Only a sample of the more than thirty languages which have been used is given here.

⁶ There is some dispute as to the mutual intelligibility of these two dialects.

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Dictionnaire Bassa Française (P. Lemb, F. de Gastines)
Je parle Bamiléké-Jo (G. Nissim, A. Noche, S. Ntagne)
Pe Nke (S. Ntagne, G. Sop)
Bwambo Bwa Duala (J. Moukoury)
Na ma-topo duala (Eissa, A. Elokan)
Minkama Beti (T. Tsala)
- De Feral C. M'akad na (A. Casimir, E. Mbezeje)
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