

Language Contact: The missing identity or global language use: A Linguistic perspective of Kenyang, Ejagham, Korop and Efik

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Language is the power that wields the culture of a people. For a people to advance, they unconsciously move along with their language and culture, and as a result, pick up aspects of other languages and cultures of the host or contact communities. The present move towards a global world, facilitated by some geo-political aspects such as climate change and oppression, and socio-economic factors like unemployment, religious strife, marriages, etc. tend to bring about 'unionism' and 'glocality' in language use and cultures. This seems to be the case with the Banyang, Ejagham, Korop and Efik people of Cameroon. Human migration around the globe enables people not only to move with their language, but also to pick up aspects of other languages and cultures through the media and language contact. The concern here is the aspects of borrowing and relexification that easily transcend or converge with these languages in contact, and how they acculturate or accommodate these aspects. A synchronic exploratory investigation is carried out using the case of Kenyang and Ejagham in Manyu; Korop and Efik in Ndian division, all of South West Region of Cameroon. These languages are Bantoid languages of West Africa, spoken at the borderlands of Cameroon and Nigeria. The linguistics aspects examined are the lexico-semantic and pragmatics of language use in their religious and marriage rites, in addition to the extra-linguistic aspects of the said rites. Data were collected from 4 events (2 marriage ceremonies and 2 religious rites) from 12 settlers of these languages in Kumba, Limbe and Buea through participant observation, interviews, and 8 video films where these traditional aspects and language use were displayed. The data were analysed using the quant-qualitative method to attain the intricacies of contact. The questions answered are: What identity, the current language use and how religious and marital rites are done in the present. The results attest to the fact that there is less than 30% divergence in the cultural rites investigated, and more than 60% convergence. Meanwhile, from these languages, there is more than 70% divergence in semantics, and less than 30% in pragmatics of the languages.