

TOWARDS THE INTELLECTUALIZATION OF FULFULDE AS A LINGUA FRANCA IN THE FAR NORTH REGION: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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ABSTRACT: *Fulfulde is undoubtedly one of the most developed and expansively used indigenous languages in the Northern Regions of Cameroon. The status and use of Fulfulde has grown widely with the political, religious, social and economic growth of people who use it for various purposes. Currently, it is one of the most dominant languages in Cameroon with several forms of prestige attached to it. Since it is usually a very daunting task to choose one language in a multilingual setting and empower it to be used for 'official purposes' because of peoples' strong attachment to their language, this study sets out to find out which of the languages could be intellectualized in the Far North. Data was collected through informal participant observation and a thirteen-item questionnaire administered to a random selection of 176 respondents from different age groups. The findings revealed that 120 (69.4%) preferred Fulfulde to be intellectualized and the preference of more than half of the respondents 111(68.9%) was also due to the fact that the language is widely spoken in the region. Given that the results were quite different from what is normally expected in most multicultural settings, this paper therefore argues for Fulfulde to be given due prominence through intellectualization.*

KEYWORDS: Fulfulde, intellectualization, empowerment, revalorization, prominence, translation.

INTRODUCTION

In the Far North region, Fulfulde is not only demographically superior but also a socio-economically prestigious language. That is why it can be considered to have assumed the role of a lingua franca since it is spoken by a significant number of people from different ethnic groups in the region. It is referred to as such in this study because of its dominance. A dominant language often serves as lingua Franca for inter-ethnic communication at local, national or regional levels. Apart from the existence of a relatively stable orthography, it has a comprehensively described grammar and a useful dictionary or glossary. Thus, the language has undergone reasonable standardization and codification and the quantity, quality and range of materials published also makes it one of the preferred languages.

Fulfulde is generally perceived as a dominant language due to its prestigious status. The social and economic opportunities that it provides also attract speakers of other minority languages. One

of the major advantages of arguing for the intellectualization of Fulfulde is based not only on the data obtained from the field, but also on the basis of its growing spread in the region and beyond. It is also used largely and informally in some unaccustomed domains, for instance, Oscar and Tasah (2018) looked at the morphological and semantic extension study of Fulfulde English, specifically, the borrowed lexis in the domains of Information and Communication. Technology (ICTs), Fashion, Entertainment and Miscellaneous subject and such a study among others have richly enhanced the status and prestige of the language.

According to Chiatoh (2014), in a multilingual and multicultural setting, changing the status of one or more language implies recognition of the possibilities and benefits of empowering these languages to perform important societal functions. It is an indication that people other than their native speakers are beginning to realize the importance of the languages beyond their natural native boundaries. Such perception clearly points to the need for language planning as a means of shaping social change processes in the society. Granted that the choice of a common language is quite difficult to be made freely in a multilingual context, this study seeks to find out which of the languages will be considered for intellectualization in the Far North region. This study advocates for the intellectualization of Fulfulde following Tadadjeu's, (2007) argument for some major languages to be accorded valorizing functions so that they can penetrate new domains hitherto monopolized by colonial languages. Before addressing this issue, it is important to define what constitutes an intellectualized language?

What is language Intellectualization?

Wolff (2017:20), citing (cf. Sibayan 1999, quoted in Alexander 2005), notes that the empowerment of home languages and African lingua franca through use in higher and prestigious domains of education, more recently referred to as intellectualization of languages enhances the self-esteem of their speakers and fosters uninhibited development of African identity and personality.

Alexander & Szanton, (2003, p.1) consider intellectualization as the process of developing African languages 'or use in academic or intellectual discussion, debate, curriculum development, research, or scholarly publication' just as other languages across the world have been developed. It is a term coined by a group of African linguists in 2003 to refer to the processes involved in accelerating the use of local languages in academic and intellectual discourse (especially in academic or University settings and in the society at large) by empowering them in various ways through the development of appropriate terminology in a selected language, for example, for the appropriation of the avalanche of new knowledge in science and technology available in exoglossic languages such as (English, French Portuguese, Spanish etc.).

To Bamgbose (2015), the myth of non-availability of appropriate terminology has impeded what has now come to be known as the intellectualization of African languages, i.e. their use for higher functions such as language of instruction in tertiary education.

Paraphrasing and contextualizing Sibayan (1999:448), one can say that linguists are called upon to initiate the secular process by which African languages such as Fulfulde can gradually eliminate the dominance of French and to a little extent English in the controlling domains of languages or, at the very least, share those domains with them. Having defined an intellectualized language, it is important at this point to provide some reasons for the intellectualization of Fulfulde.

Some Arguments for the Intellectualization of Fulfulde in the Far North Region

The Valorizing function of the Fulfulde language

Fulfulde needs to be empowered because of its enhanced status. This is based on Tadadjeu's (2007) argument that the status of an 'Official Language' seems to be the highest that a language can attain in a given country. But underneath this, could be found other status including that of 'Working Language'. A status can also be transitory, meaning that the language assuming it only does that for a while. The status of a language can also be legal (de jure) or simply according to fact (de facto.) He also states that the status of a language is as a matter of fact a reflection of the functions it assumes or is expected to assume. All the functions of a language do not have the same value. Some are more prestigious than others. Some bring more values to the language concerned than others. In this connection, the introduction of Fulfulde in wider domains will enable it to acquire a substantial appreciation in value more than other minority languages that do not yet assume this function. Thus, a great number of valorizing functions in Tadadjeu's view can be identified, and which contribute, each in its way, to raising the status level of the language concerned. This is, for instance, a non-exhaustive list of these functions: a given African language may be:

- a) Object of a stabilized written system (written language);
- b) The vector of a considerable literature;
- c) The object of an institution responsible for its development and promotion (Committee/Commission/Language Academy);
- d) A medium of programmes in at least one state radio station;
- e) A medium of programmes in at least one private radio station;
- f) A means of expression in the official or private print media;
- g) An adult literacy vector;
- h) A teaching vector, at least experimental in primary education (public or private);
- i) A teaching material or co-vector at the secondary level;
- j) A teaching material or co-vector at the university;
- k) A means of communication recognized in courts of justice;

- l) A common instrument of religious activities;
- m) A common medium of programs in state or private TV;
- n) An ordinary means of communication in certain health centres;
- o) A common means of expression in certain council services;
- p) A normal instrument of political and sensitization drives;
- q) A natural means of expression in traditional leadership activities (village rulers and their collaborators)

From these functions, it can be established that Fulfulde is already used unofficially in most of the domains presented above and therefore fulfills Tadadjeu's criteria for intellectualization. The communicative functions that some dominant languages like Fulfulde performs makes it more attractive to most minority language speakers in the Far North region.

The only way Fulfulde can gain more prestige is through revalorization; a process whereby an undervalued and an underdeveloped language is given a higher economically valorizing functions as a language of education, a language of official or public affairs in the local government councils, a language of mass communication, etc. (Chumbow 2009, 2010a).

It is also important to state that there exists a relationship between language, power and the economy, and considering Fulfulde has more power than others because of its use in high status functions, it stands tall among other languages in the region. If one does not have a full command of such a language, one is excluded from participation in some socio-economic activities. Since people need to communicate with one another in a highly multilingual context, the intellectualization of Fulfulde will remove communication barriers that may exist between the different ethnic groups, and thus make for a safer and more harmonious living together.

The advocacy for the intellectualization of Fulfulde is meant to provide an impetus to the language so that it can be lexically expanded to carry formal scientific and philosophical discourse and be used in new domains for the socio-economic development of the region. Maintaining the primordial language policies that are dominated by French and English to an extent in Maroua is like putting new wine into old skins. In this regard, the question is 'can Fulfulde take its rightful place in the Far North region formally following government's legislation on Cameroonian languages (see Decree No: 2017/013 of the 23rd January 2017 creating the National commission for Bilingualism and multiculturalism (NCBM))?

The erroneous view by the majority and the school system that leads to the stigmatization and revalorization of local languages in favor of French and English, as is the case in many other African states (see Bamgbose 2000) is enough argument to revalorize Fulfulde. This ignorant and entrenched attitude towards Cameroonian languages should not stop Fulfulde from becoming intellectualized. Since the majority of people are largely excluded from the formal economy such

as banking, commerce and industry, mining, manufacturing and multinational corporation, because of the domination of colonial languages, the situation could be reversed if Fulfulde is intellectualized and also employed in the formal economy so that there is increased participation and productivity of the population in the Northern region.

Growing Number of Speakers

The motivation for the Intellectualizing of Fulfulde as a regional language also lies in the fact that it is the most dominant indigenous language in Cameroon spoken in the three Northern provinces of Adamawa, North and Far North Chumbow (2008:29). In fact, Fulfulde has become an established vehicular language not only in the three Northern regions, but other parts of the country because it is spoken as a first language by about 350,000 people and as second language by three million people (Echu 2003b). It is also used for inter-ethnic communication among the population of the Northern region in general and Far North region in particular owing to the mixed population speaking different languages in the city.

Information dissemination and sensitization

Many more information packages can be produced as a result of the language's intellectualization so as to raise awareness and spread information and educate the illiterate masses on various critical issues such as HIV-AIDS, malaria, mother-to-child transmission of diseases, the ongoing Covid 19 etc. This is proposed on the basis of the majority of the illiterate population's capacity to understand information through the use of Fulfulde. For instance, information obtained during the plenary session in the 2018 of the 2nd National Symposium on Cameroonian Languages (NASCAL) organized in the University of Dschang from Chumbow Beban Sammy revealed that 'When there was a cholera outbreak in the Far North region some years ago, many illiterate people were not informed and as result some were contaminated, and it is only when Fulfulde was used in the sensitization of the population that attitudes and behavior was changed and the epidemic finally it stopped'. It is for this reason that Fulfulde is always used and at times with French in some markets for advertisements, bus stations, some community radios stations etc. for vital information dissemination.

Language use on Social Media

The intellectualization of Fulfulde will also open up the possibility for its use in social media particularly in this era where people from all walks of life seems to be addicted to social media. This will enable the speakers, mainly the youths, to regain their loyalty in the language because they will be able to use it in communicating with others through the mail, Facebook, WhatsApp among others.

Bamgbose (2000) also maintains that languages can only develop in their capacity for education through use. Thus, the more Fulfulde is used for science and technology and other official domains, the more it will develop a greater terminology and vocabulary in those areas to facilitate the learning and discussion of those subjects. All languages develop because societies consciously and

with political will develop them. Thus, it takes the involvement of the speakers and political will for the language to be intellectualized.

Teaching, translation and interpretation for job creation

There is not a single University in Cameroon where the language of instruction is a minority or lingua Franca. Since Fulfulde is ethnically neutral to an extent and is already used in wider domains by a majority of the population in the Northern regions, it could be introduced as one of the languages in the department of Language, Civilization and African Literatures and Foreign Languages of the University of Maroua. In the course of using Fulfulde in these departments, it will be empowered effectively in those domains because language develops through use. For instance, terminological development can be developed for use in disciplines such as, Mathematics, Science, Physics and Technology Biology among other subjects as practical methods of intellectualizing the language.

In addition, there is also a relationship between language and the job market. The intellectualization of the language can contribute to job creation. This implies that the knowledge of Fulfulde in reading and writing skills are commodities that can be sold. This is first of all apparent from the number of people who can earn their living through language-related or language-based skills such as language teachers, translators, interpreters, copywriters in advertising, publishers, printing shops, recording studios for audio-visual materials, language education software producers, etc. (Webb 2003). The language can support this large-scale demand because of its socio-economic and prestige value, and as a marketable commodity, it is also valuable in the area of tourism for those who come to visit the different sites. Thus, the intellectualization of Fulfulde is to give more prominence to it than other languages.

It is important to note that Fulfulde can easily be intellectualized because it has a well-established grammar and written literature as opposed to many indigenous languages in the Northern region and some adult literacy classes are often organized in the language for those interested in learning it. Unlike other minority languages that have a complex writing system and tones, it has a relatively simple writing system and does not have tones.

The language is also used as a key mostly in socialization by people of all walks of life both in private and official domains. It is used along the streets, in markets, by comedians for entertainment, in theatres, and as one of the native speakers admitted, somebody born in the region will be considered a villager if he/she cannot speak Fulfulde.

METHODOLOGY

The study sample

Data was collected through informal participant observation just to obtain useful information for the design of the questionnaire. The target sample consisted of 176 respondents from seven

different regions living in the Far North region. They were selected from different linguistic backgrounds based on their relative proficiency both in their respective languages and in Fulfulde.

The Research Instruments

Participant observation was used to collect information on the respondents' patterns of language use in different institutions that the researcher visited, and a questionnaire was later designed to find out the most dominant language could be chosen for intellectualization and the reasons for such a choice among other things. Apart from the Mosque, political campaigns and the media where I did not visit personally, the researcher gathered information on language choices in the hospital, churches, and the main market. Concerning other domains, information was only obtained through the respondents' responses from the questionnaires.

The Survey items

To address the study's objective, the target population was surveyed by the use of a questionnaire that investigated their language use patterns. The questionnaire was composed of 13 questions. It was designed among other things mainly to find out participants' language use patterns and an open question that intended to elicit reasons for the respondents' preferred language of intellectualization (see Appendix 1).

Data Analysis

The method of analysis consisted in analyzing the questionnaires with the view to determine the respondents' degree of multilingualism, the most frequently used language in the proposed domains, the respondents' most preferred language for intellectualization and reasons for such a choice. The domain analysis was useful in the understanding of language choices based on individual behavior at the level of face-to-face verbal encounter; the reflection of widespread socio-cultural norms and expectation.

On the basis of the respondents' knowledge of linguistic repertoire, they consciously or unconsciously used an appropriate language to fit specific domains. Before analyzing the use of language in the proposed domains, it is necessary to provide information related to the regions from where the respondents were born.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents in terms of region of origin

Regions		Freq	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Far-North	103	58.5	71.0	71.0
	North	20	11.4	13.8	84.8
	Adamawa	7	4.0	4.8	89.7
	East	1	.6	.7	90.3
	Littoral	2	1.1	1.4	91.7
	South	1	.6	.7	92.4
	West	11	6.3	7.6	100.0
Total		145	82.4	100.0	
Missing	System	31	17.6		
Total		176	100.0		

This table clearly shows that the participants came from different regions of Cameroon. As shown in the frequency column, the majority of the respondents 103 (71.0 %) were from the Far-North region, followed by 20(13.8 %) from the North, 7(4.8 %) from Adamawa, 11(7.6%) from the West and 2 (1.4%) from littoral and 1(.7 %) from the East and the South respectively.

Considering that bilingualism or multilingualism is a reality in most urban cities in Cameroon, the respondents were asked to indicate the number of languages they could understand or speak as presented in table 2.

Table 2: Languages that respondents could understand and speak					
		Freq	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	One	2	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Two	32	18.2	18.4	19.5
	Three	71	40.3	40.8	60.3
	Four	43	24.4	24.7	85.1
	Five	24	13.6	13.8	98.9
	More than five	2	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	174	98.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	1.1		
Total		176	100.0		

As shown in this table, the respondents could understand and speak from one to five languages with different degrees of proficiencies. The analysis of data revealed that only 2(1.1%) could understand or speak one language while 32 (18.4%) could understand or speak two languages, 71(40.8%) were capable of understanding and speaking three, 43(24.7 %) indicated four, 24 (13.6 %) stated five and only 2 (1.1%) claimed to be able to understand or express themselves in more than five languages. These analyses clearly reveal the degree to which most of the respondents were bilingual or multilingual in the proposed languages. Although the majority of the respondents claimed to be bilingual /multilingual in different indigenous languages, Fulfulde was the dominating language that had firmly entrenched its roots in their language repertoire. It can be deduced based on the results that multilingualism is daily reality in the region. The following section presents language use across some domains like market, hospital, Church/ Mosque, media and political campaigns

The status of Fulfulde is active on various complementary linguistic domains such as business, hospitals, Churches/ Mosques, radio and private broadcasting stations and politics as presented in the table 3 below.

Table 3: The respondents' preferred language used in different domains

Languages		Different domains				
Languages	Freq	Market	Hospital	Church/Mosque	Media/Radio	Political campaigns
Fulfulde	F	93	20	54	2	17
	%	52.8	11.6	31.0	1.2	10.1
French	F	18	97	27	48	40
	%	10.3	56.1	15.5	27.7	23.8
English	F	/	/	/	3	/
	%	/	/	/	1.7	/
Mother tongue	F	3	3	4	1	5
	%	1.7	1.7	2.3	.6	3.0
French and English	F	/	/	/	69	/
	%	/	/	/	39.9	/
French and Fulfulde	F	44	43	68	20	69
	%	25.1	24.9	39.1	11.6	41.1
English and Fulfulde	F	/	/	/	/	/
	%	/	/	/	/	/
French, English and Fulfulde	F	/	/	/	18	1
	%	/	/	/	10.4	6
French, English and Mother tongue	F	/	/	/	2	/
	%	/	/	/	1.2	/

French, Fulfulde, and Mother tongue	F	5	4	5	10	18
	%	2.9	2.3	2.9	5.8	10.7
French and Mother tongue	F	5	3	6	/	11
	%	2.9	1.7	3.4	/	6.5
Fulfulde and Mother tongue	F	7	3	10	/	7
	%	4.0	1.7	5.7	/	4.2
Total	F	175	173	174	173	168
	%	100	100	100	100	100

This table presents patterns of language use in the proposed domains. The number of respondents and the corresponding percentages for each of the domains that was important have been highlighted. An analysis of the table above clearly indicates that the majority of the respondents 93(52.8%) widely used Fulfulde while 44(25.1%) used both French and Fulfulde in the market.

The results of the respondents' language use in the hospital showed that 20(11.6%) interact in Fulfulde and the majority 97(56.1%) claimed to use French while 43(24.9%) used both French and Fulfulde.

With regards to Churches and Mosques, the analysis revealed that 54(31.0 %) used Fulfulde, 27(15.5%) claimed to speak French while 68(39.1%) used both French and Fulfulde.

The results analyzed in the domain of the media indicate that 48(27.7%) interacted using French, and 69(39.9%) thought that French and English were used and 20(11.6%) were of the opinion that French and Fulfulde were used in the media.

Concerning political campaigns, the statistics revealed that 17(10.1%) affirmed that Fulfulde was used, 40(23.8%) thought that it was French while 69(41.1%) claimed that it was both French and Fulfulde that were commonly used during political campaigns.

Language acts as a gateway to information, education, healthcare and other services – speakers of dominant languages like Fulfulde may sometimes take this for granted. However, there is substantial evidence to show that the majority of the population was marginalized – for example as a result of barriers to vital information in different domains and that is why this study argues for its intellectualization particularly in this era of globalization.

As indicated earlier, in a region that is linguistically complex, choosing one language for intellectualization can be a difficult task since everybody will prefer his or her MT. The table below provides which language most of the respondents preferred for prominence in the region.

Table 4: The respondents' preference of Fulfulde as an intellectualized language

Languages		Freq.	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Fulfulde	120	68.2	69.4	69.4
	Mother tongue	23	13.1	13.3	82.7
	others	21	11.9	12.1	94.8
	Fulfulde and Mother tongue	9	5.1	5.2	100.0
	Total	173	98.3	100.0	
Missing System		3	1.7		
Total		176	100.0		

It is clear from this table that the majority 120(69.4%) of the respondents preferred Fulfulde of intellectualized, 23 (13.1 %) wanted their respective mother tongues and 21 (12.1 %) preferred other languages while 9(5.2 %) preferred both Fulfulde and MT. The above results are a clear proof of the extent to which Fulfulde is widely spoken in the region because most of the participants were expected to choose their respective indigenous languages. Given that language loyalty was not really indicated from the results analyzed, it was crucial to find out the reasons for the respondents' preferred language choice in such a multilingual context. The participants might have had different reasons for the intellectualization of Fulfulde as presented in the following table.

Table 5: Respondents' reasons for the intellectualization of Fulfulde in the Far North Region

Reasons	Freq.	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
It is the most spoken language.	111	63.1	68.9	68.9
It links and promotes intertribal and cultural communication.	35	19.9	21.7	90.7
People should learn their own languages.				
It is most comprehensible.	10	5.7	6.2	96.9
We are not far from the Nigerian borders.	1	.6	.6	97.5
It should be done according to each division.	1	.6	.6	98.1
I would like to speak both French and English.	3	1.7	1.9	100.0
Total	161	91.5	100.0	
Mis sing	15	8.5		
Total	176	100.0		

This table generally presents some of the respondents' reasons why Fulfulde should be intellectualized. An analysis of the results indicate that more than half of the respondents 111(68.9%) proposed Fulfulde because it was a widely spoken language in the region, 35(21.7%) considered Fulfulde because it connected people from different ethnic groups and cultures and facilitated understanding while 10(5.7%) were of the opinion that it was the most comprehensible language. In addition, 3 (1.9%) of the respondents preferred to speak only French and English, 1(.6%) of the participants still preferred Fulfulde because it was a trans-border language while another 1(.6%) preferred Fulfulde as a language at the divisional level. From the reasons presented above, it can be stated that Fulfulde was largely preferred because it was one of the most prestigious languages not only in the three Northern regions, but also in the Far North region. All the reasons proposed were critically important to efforts made over the years towards the standardization and eventual intellectualization of indigenous languages in Cameroon.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of data in the domain of market as analyzed in table 3 above clearly indicate that more than half of the respondents 93(52.8%) widely used Fulfulde in their commercial transactions while 44(25.1%) used both French and Fulfulde. Following the results obtained, it is important to point out on the basis of personal observation that the speakers of the respective minority languages who do not master Fulfulde may often be disadvantaged socio-economically because in the world of commerce and commodity exchange, Fulfulde dominates normally as a trade language in the market, and those who speak it fluently, whether as a first or second language, usually make better deals to convince those selling different items to bargain and buy things with lower prices than those bargaining in French.

With regards to health, the use of French dominates with 97(56.1%) and to other respondents, 43(24.9%) used French and Fulfulde in the health domain. It is clear from informal observation in the hospital that some of the health personnel are not natives of the Far North region and some patients are therefore obliged either to consult using French and Fulfulde or be accompanied by someone who can assist them whenever the need for the right language to be used arises.

Concerning religion, 54(31.0%) of the respondents used Fulfulde while 68(39.1%) used both French and Fulfulde respectively. These percentages reflect the language use during religious services of most churches for better understanding and this was in line with observed information. In effect, most churches have adopted a good language policy when it concerns the Word of God although this favours only French and Fulfulde but speakers of other minority languages who neither understand French nor Fulfulde may be marginalized.

The analysis of language in the media revealed that 48(27.7%) of the respondents used French while 69(39.9%) used both French and Fulfulde respectively. It is clear from these results that French is generally used with Fulfulde in the media, like other domains since the exclusive use of French will largely exclude the majority of the population in information dissemination.

In politics, respondents indicated 40(23.8%) for French while 69(41.1%) used both French and Fulfulde during political campaigns. From our observation, it can be pointed out that both languages are usually used but some politicians may be prudent enough to carry out their campaigns only in Fulfulde because they know that it endears their listeners or with some translation into French if they are sure that a few people may not understand Fulfulde. Such politicians may be politically conscious of the impact of such a language in information transmission in order to get votes. Thus, in their speeches, some politicians can make every effort to use Fulfulde and French to an extent in order to ensure that their message has effectively got to every citizen. In this respect, the African context where there is a language for the home, another language for the market, one for school, and perhaps another language for government interaction should not be viewed as alarming according to Crystal (2004). However, the use of more than one language in one domain in the region may be the rule rather than the exception. As a result, most of the respondents' responses might have been different from the informal observed data with regards to patterns of language use depending on the topic and context of discourse, the relationship between the interlocutors, the mode of communication in the different institutions among other variables. By and large, the analysis of the results in the proposed domains indicate that evidently, Fulfulde is the major language of interethnic communication in the region.

The results also indicate that more than half 120(68.2%) of the participants (68.9) preferred the intellectualization of Fulfulde in the Far North region and one of the reasons for the preference of Fulfulde to 111(68.9%) of the respondents was because of its growing use in the region. The claim by 35(21.7%) of the participants that Fulfulde links and promotes intertribal and communication was in line with our informal observation which indicated that Fulfulde is a Lingua Franca that is widely spoken by the indigenes of most of the ethnic groups in the region. The above results are also corroborated by Tasah's (2019) findings which revealed that as Fulfulde keeps widening and spreading in Maroua, respondents' indigenous languages are also being weakened. As a result, Fulfulde poses more threat to minority languages than French in the region because of its prestigious or socioeconomic status. This implies that the different minority languages will keep declining in terms of intergenerational transmission at home and other domains if Fulfulde is accorded sufficient prominence over other languages. Based on these results, it is important for the elites and multilingual language policy of Cameroon in general and Far North region in particular to ensure that all the region's minority languages are carefully documented, codified, standardized and used locally for literacy activities. If nothing is done for the equitable use of the other minority languages in the region, there will be an increasing decrease in their use leading to limited fluency by the younger generation; and this may further result into their progressive endangerment if the vision of the intellectualization becomes a concrete reality in the region. Put differently, it can be said that the choices respondents make with regard to language use in different contexts reflect trends toward either language maintenance or language shift particularly as their increased use of Fulfulde may result in more speakers gradually abandoning their respective minority language and shifting towards Fulfulde. Although Fulfulde is quite wide spread in the

region, it has not yet been sufficiently empowered to have a stronger presence in order to be used in all official domains like colonial languages.

Some challenges that need to be addressed in the intellectualization of Fulfulde

Giving due prominence to Fulfulde will require not only a lot of human, intellectual, financial resources, but it may endanger other minority languages in the region. Although the majority of the respondents 120(68.4%) preferred Fulfulde as a possible language for empowerment, there will certainly be some stiff opposition by some language loyalists to this initiative if it is not geared towards the development of all languages no matter the population size. That is the reason why such a project may not be very successful if it is not done with Crystal's (2005) observation in mind, because the risks of accepting one language in the case of intellectualization will result into the following:

- 1) Elite monolingual linguistic: where one language group like Fulfulde assumes the monopoly of their language and encourage the development of complacent and dismissive attitudes towards other minority languages in the region.
- 2) Manipulative tendencies where the elites and influential speakers of Fulfulde also use their competitive edge to manipulate the system at the expense of those who have less power and lack the ability to use it for the continuous dominance of their language.
- 3) Marginalization where the dominance of Fulfulde may progressively marginalize and render some indigenous languages not worth learning or endangered.
- 4) Language death: when a language is considered not worth learning, it becomes irrelevant and death is hastened. This is a real danger for all minority languages and languages spoken in less powerful communities. This also perpetuates the mentality of 'survival of the fittest'. Since this study is arguing for intellectualization of Fulfulde based on the results of data, it is important to indicate that many challenges need to be addressed before it can attain this status.

Intellectualization through Translation

The translation of some selected domains of national life into Fulfulde to boost its modernization process so that it can be used both locally and officially in the region in particular and the nation as a whole is critically important. When one considers the dynamism of Fulfulde which is used by millions of speakers for communication and business, it can be argued that what is needed from policymakers is to find the best way to attend to this natural trend through legislation by allocating a budget for the intellectualization of the language. This can be achieved by producing teaching and learning materials in key domains; suggesting, without imposing, the inclusion of the language in basic through to higher educational institutions particularly in the University of Maroua, increasing the level of literacy activities, and, creating awareness to sensitize the people on the importance of the language as a tool of their own social, economic and regional integration and

development, developing new teaching and research programs that take into account the current global trends and needs, especially in the area of ICTs etc.

The translation of the constitution into the Fulfulde language among other relevant official documents would greatly enhance its intellectualization process and thereby enable the speakers to regain pride in the language and be fully involved in its revalorization process. Developmental ideas can be translated and made available or shared to some groups in the region for the sake of new breakthroughs which will also be invaluable for better living of the population.

Perspectives

In order to make Fulfulde effectively intellectualized so that it can be one of the Cameroonian languages in the University of Maroua, the language's terminological vocabulary needs to be expanded by creating new standardizing of concepts and terms in all relevant domains in which the language is to be used. This requires specialists in key domains like health, Information and Communication Technology etc. to coin and standardize concepts in these fields. For example, in the course of creating new concepts, new lexical terminology will be created, and competing terms may emerge through actual use of the language by different stakeholders, such as teachers, writers, and media practitioners, and specialists in the different fields.

Translation is one of the key elements in the intellectualization of the Fulfulde language. Professionals and scholars who are knowledgeable in the language need to translate life-saving information from health and other domains so that the largely illiterate population can access it in Fulfulde. Alexander (2007) also stresses the importance of translation by indicating that scholars who have focused on the issue of intellectualization of local languages agreed that one of the main mechanisms for bringing about and driving intellectualization is the translation of major works of literacy and scientific creation that exist in more developed languages. In this connection, critical works and materials that can improve and enhance the lives of the population can be translated from French and English into Fulfulde for increased accessibility and exploitation. The specialists in this domain also need to identify key areas that will contribute to poverty reduction when the language is intellectualized so that there will be grass root involvement and support by all the speakers.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to find out which of the languages could be given due prominence among the languages in the Far North region. From the analysis of data, the findings revealed that the majority consider Fulfulde, and their choice was mainly owing to the fact that the language is widely spoken in the region. This study has also shown that the question of multilingualism which is quite sensitive in most settings is relatively different in the Far North region. This can be as a result of the status and growing spread and use of Fulfulde in the social, religious, economic and political domains among others. It is on the basis of these results that this study argued for the language to be sufficiently empowered so that it can penetrate more official domains in education and administration. Although the road to the intellectualization of Fulfulde may be quite long and

inexhaustible, it is a worthwhile initiative for the preservation of an identity of a people who should be informed and developed through their language.

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Appendix1 1

QUESTIONNAIRE

Name :(optional) _____

1. What is your region? -----
2. How many languages do you understand and speak?
 - a. One ☐
 - b. Two ☐
 - c. Three ☐
 - d. Four ☐
 - e. Five ☐
2. Which language is mostly used by students and teachers in school?
 - a. French ☐
 - b. Fulfuldé ☐
 - c. English ☐
 - d. Mother Tongue ☐
3. Which language do you frequently use when you are in the market?
 - a. French ☐
 - b. Fulfuldé ☐
 - c. English ☐
 - d. Mother Tongue ☐
4. Which language is used in the Hospital or health center?
 - a. French ☐
 - b. Fulfuldé ☐
 - c. English ☐
 - d. Mother Tongue ☐
5. Which language is/are mostly used in your church/mosque?
 - a. French ☐
 - b. Fulfuldé ☐
 - c. English ☐
 - d. Mother Tongue ☐
6. Which language is frequently/mostly used in government or administrative offices?
 - a. French ☐
 - b. Fulfuldé ☐
 - c. English ☐
 - d. Mother Tongue ☐
7. Which language is usually used during court sessions?
 - a. French ☐
 - b. Fulfuldé ☐
 - c. English ☐
 - d. Mother Tongue ☐
8. Which language is mostly used in the advertisement of goods?
 - a. French ☐
 - b. Fulfuldé ☐
 - c. English ☐
 - d. Mother Tongue ☐
 - d. Autres ☐

9. Which language is used in the sensitization of the population against HIV/AIDS and other relevant information? Even on billboards?
- a. French ☐ b. Fulfuldé ☐ c. English ☐ d. Mother Tongue ☐
10. Which language is frequently used in the media or radio station?
- a. French ☐ b. Fulfuldé ☐ c. English ☐ d. Mother Tongue ☐
11. Which language is frequently used during political campaigns?
- a. French ☐ b. Fulfuldé ☐ c. English ☐ d. Mother Tongue ☐
12. Which language would you prefer could be made locally official in the Far North Region and why?
- a. Fulfuldé ☐ b. Mother Tongue ☐ c. Others ☐
13. Provide reasons for your choice
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