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The (de)hegemonisation of Mungaka as a lingua franca of the Western Grassfields in multilingual Cameroon

Abstract

The aim of this chapter is to identify and analyse sociolinguistic aspects of the (de)hegemonisation of Mungaka as the lingua franca of the Western Grassfields in multilingual Cameroon. Methodologically, a semi-structured questionnaire and recorded interviews on the vitality and inertia of Mungaka are administered to Mungaka speakers across cohorts of four generations in real and virtual spaces. The recordings are transcribed and analysed with the aid of consultants and computer tools along quantitative and qualitative analyses. Findings (95%) prove that the dominance of Mungaka has diminished over time, mainly across the younger generations, eliciting several aspects of interlanguage. Albeit the inertia, it is more developed than most Grassfields languages, and remains the default language of the Hallelujah Choir of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC) around the world. In conclusion, the hegemony of Mungaka has been diluted by the sociolinguistics of language contact, resulting to the dehegemonisation of Mungaka as the lingua franca of the Western Grassfields in contemporary multilingual Cameroon.

1. Introduction: Sociolinguistic background

Cameroon has a unique linguistic density due to its 277 indigenous languages (<https://www.silcom.org>) and over 200 ethnic groups. The myriad of indigenous languages co-communicate with a significant presence of official foreign languages, like English and French, and derivatives of pluricentricity such as Cameroon Pidgin English (CPE) and Camfranglais. In specific spheres of education, German, Spanish, Italian, and Chinese are incorporated. From a sociolinguistic perspective, Cameroonians who speak both indigenous and foreign languages at home and in the diaspora, elucidate aspects of interlanguage that correlate to social variables such as time, age, gender, space,

religion, education, power, culture, identity, and opportunity. These language dynamics affect the linguistic spread and load of dominant Cameroon indigenous languages such as Mungaka, a Niger-Congo language in the North-Western Grassfields of Cameroon.

Geographically, the Grassfields constitutes a dynamic area, covering primarily the Northwest and West regions of Cameroon, considered by many to be the birthplace of the Bantu languages and a primary source of ancient sedentary cultures for Central Africa. Originally colonized by Germany, the fault line between the later British-controlled Southern Cameroons and the French-controlled Cameroun ran through the Grassfields, dividing the Bamenda groups from the Bamiléké and Bamum (DeLancey, 2019, Abstract).

In spite of this demarcation, the dominance of Mungaka was not limited to the Western high plateau of Cameroon, the Northwest Region; in fact, it stretched to the Western Region, logically, as Mungaka belongs to the Nun languages group. Mungaka, also known as Bali, was once the language of evangelism, education, and wider communication (circa 1905-1940s), of hegemonic status, qualifying it the lingua franca of the Western Grassfields (Fielding, 2009; Titalanga et al., 2021). However, due to the multiplicity of languages, language choices, and allegiances in multilingual Cameroon, the hegemony of Mungaka has dwindled over time (circa 1963 onwards) to a lower status, becoming another Grassfields language, although more developed than most of these languages.

2. Literature review: Intricacies leading to the (de)hegemonisation of Mungaka

Missionaries have noted that vernacular languages are strong tools for evangelisation: this case study focuses on this concept, analysing Mungaka. Support staff have been needed as a link between the prospective converts and the colonial administration, and this linguistically diverse population needed other languages than just Mungaka. Simultaneously, linguistic allegiances and sentiments for "an own language" became trendy. Paradoxically, it is the same indigenous African population that pushed for education in the colonial masters' languages, seeing these as languages of opportunity. The intricacies align with Albaugh's (2014: 22) observation that missionaries

"aimed to save souls and diffuse morality. Administrators needed indigenous auxiliaries to help them control and extract from vast populations. Africans wanted access to jobs through education".

2.1 The vitality of Mungaka

The occupation of Cameroon by the Germans in 1884 highlighted the sociolinguistic influence of Bali Nyonga, where Mungaka is spoken, as it became the settlement of the Basel Mission (BM) in the Western Grassfields from 1902 (Titalanga et al., 2021: 349-350). "[...] The German missionaries adopted Mungaka, the Bali Nyonga language as the principal medium of evangelisation. Mungaka was subsequently introduced in formal schooling and soon became a lingua franca in the entire Grassfields" (Fokwang, 2003: 92). The choice to use Mungaka could have been influenced by "language ideology from the perspective of the 'one nation, one language' model of language and identity that developed in Europe in the eighteenth century" (Nana, 2016: 169). The vitality of Mungaka is reiterated further as the BM identified the relevance of indigenous languages in their evangelisation mission, and they strived to develop them.

By 1903, Mungaka was almost exclusively the medium of communication in Bali Nyonga, thus influencing the BM to adopt it as its official language in the Western Grassfields. The Bali Vernacular School, was the first school in the entire Western Grassfields to teach in Mungaka, starting in 1903. Over time, the school had heterogeneous populations from different ethnicities of the Grassfields and continued to use Mungaka as the language of education (Titalanga et al., 2021: 356).

The defeat of Germany in World War I (1914-1918) disrupted the BM but its missionaries returned in 1924. This group of missionaries pioneered the first comprehensive written grammar of Mungaka and translated the Old and New Testaments into Mungaka. "Knowledge spread in vernaculars was reinforced in the 1930s and early 1940s, wherein Bible translations, local church regulations, linguistic, ethnographic, and botanical studies, literature, primers, and catechism, all revealed the advancement of written Mungaka" (Titalanga et al., 2021: 356).

Today, Mungaka remains one of the most documented and developed languages of the Western Grassfields. There is continuous development of Mungaka; it has a new alphabet with online courses, with the aim "to provide users with a deeper understanding of the new Mungaka alphabet, its sounds and other basic writing conventions" (Fokwang & Gwaabe 2020).

2.2 The inertia of Mungaka

Unfortunately, the dehegemonisation of Mungaka was enabled by the

factors highlighted earlier: the colonial politics, traditional diplomacy, linguistic allegiances, the hegemony of English as the global lingua franca and its vibrant derivative, Pidgin. In this context, hegemony is synonymous to dominance and vitality, while dehegemonisation is synonymous to inertia, subordination, and dwindling status.

Cumulative opposition to Mungaka emerged in the 1940s. According to Keller, during the Second World War, traditional rulers in the Western Grassfields lobbied to oppose the use of Mungaka in their respective fondoms (kingdoms). For instance, the decision of the Bamun fondom to use Bamun and not Mungaka as the language of education:

"King Njoya of the Bamun ethnicity, himself literate in Mungaka became sceptical about it and started his own school where they used the Bamun script and language, and not Mungaka" (Titalanga et al., 2021: 357-358).

Linguistic allegiances fuelled the lobby as

"in 1943, a delegation of Meta catechists came asking for their indigenous language to be used by the BM in their Meta communities. This was followed by a complaint from Moghamo chiefs, urging the colonial authorities to prohibit the use of Mungaka in schools in Moghamo regions" (Titalanga et al., 2021: 357-359).

The preference of English as a language of opportunity, and the linguistic spread and load of Cameroon Pidgin English (CPE) nurtured the replacement of Mungaka. CPE asserted itself as the lingua franca of the Western Grassfields, which did not go unnoticed to custodians of missions for evangelisation. Eventually, in 1963, Rev. Thomas Ediage, the District Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC) reported that "it was no longer English language, but Pidgin English which was threatening the survival of Mungaka, especially in the cosmopolitan environment of growing towns and suburbs" (Titalanga et al., 2021: 357-360). This insight was validated at the General Synod, where Pidgin English was acknowledged as a fast-spreading lingua franca in the Western Grassfields, and not Mungaka.

3. Resources

By extension, the aim of this chapter is to identify and analyse aspects of Mungaka as a dominant language with a sociolinguistic subordination over time. Hence, the generic guiding question is: what is the extent of the dwindling status of Mungaka? The specific objective comprises identifying and

analysing the sociolinguistic variables that influence the dwindling status of Mungaka. It is postulated that irrespective of sparse research on pluricentric African languages, the (de)hegemonisation of Mungaka can attest to aspects of pluricentricity in some African languages.

Methodologically, a mixed method of collecting data is used. A semi-structured questionnaire using the online easy-feedback tool and interviews are administered to 46 Mungaka speakers across cohorts of four generations: >30 (or below 30), 30-49, 50-69, and 70+. Primary data is gathered through onsite and online responses to questionnaire and recorded interviews, onsite meetings, e-mail exchanges, and recorded telephone conversations. The semi-structured questionnaire and interview are structured in two sections: Section A highlights the demographic factors and Section B examines the vitality and inertia of Mungaka, wherein the Mungaka equivalents of some loan words collected from the pre-test are used to establish a reading list of words, sentences, and questions. The secondary data has been predominantly obtained from internet sources and radio programmes. The read recordings are transcribed with the aid of consultants and the computer speech tool, audacity. Quantitative and qualitative content analyses are used to analyse the entire data.

4. Data analysis and findings

The data is analysed based on information gathered on the research question, developed in the questionnaire and interviews.

4.1 Section A, Table 1: Demographic analysis

No. of respondents	46									
Section A	Demographic information									
A1: Sex	Male					Female				
	17	36.9%	29	63.1%						
A2: Age group	>30		30-49		50-69		70+			
	12	26%	12	26%	13	28.3%	9	19.7%		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		
	2	10	1	11	10	3	4	5		
A3: First language	Mungaka		English		Pidgin		Medumba & Mungaka		French	
	37	80.4%	5	10.8%	2	4.3%	1	2.25%	1	2.25%

A4: Other languages	English		Pidgin		French		Medumba (here, also Bawok & Bamiléké)		Metah, Pinyin, Mankon, Lamnso	
	35	76%	21	45.6%	19	41%	19	41%	6	13%
A5: Profession	Small business Self-employed		17	38.2%	painting, building, carpentry, welding, tailoring, milling					
	Farming		12	26%						
	Studying Apprenticeship		9	19.5%	schooling, carpentry, tailoring					
	Salaried		6	13%	nursing, teaching, veterinarian, pastor					
	Retirees/None		2	4.3%						
A6: Present residence	Bali Nyonga		Bambili							
	95%		5%							

Section A, Table 1 features the demographic analysis of the target population that currently speaks Mungaka (80.4% as L1 and the rest as another language) across cohorts of four generations to compare the previous and current use of Mungaka. Apart from Mungaka, the array of other indigenous and foreign languages spoken is apparent in the multilingual ecology of Cameroon and the dominance of foreign languages, identified as English (the leading language, used by 76% of respondents), followed by Pidgin and then French.

Mainly, 95% of this population lives in rural Bali Nyonga, homeland to Mungaka, and a total of 64.2% works predominantly in the informal sector as rural farmers, small business owners, and freelancers. Summarily, it is a gender disaggregated (63.1% female and 36.9% male), active tribal population that gives evidence on the vitality and inertia of Mungaka.

4.2 Section B, Table 2: The (de)hegemonisation of Mungaka

Section B1-3	The vitality and inertia of Mungaka					
Hegemony of Mungaka	As language of evangelism in the Western Grassfields		As language of wider communication in the Western Grassfields		As language of education in the Western Grassfields	
	4	8.7%	2	4.2%	1	2.1%
Dehegemonisation of Mungaka	As language of evangelism in the Western Grassfields		As language of wider communication in the Western Grassfields		As language of education in the Western Grassfields	
	42	91.3	44	95.7%	45	97.8%

Section B, Table 2 is a summary of the hegemony and the dehegemonisation of Mungaka, examining the influence of three sociolinguistic variables: Mungaka as a language of evangelism, as a language of wider communication, and as a language of education. An average of $15 \div 3 = 5\%$ testify about the vitality of Mungaka as the lingua franca of the Western Grassfields in contemporary multilingual Cameroon. An average of $284.8 \div 3 = 94.9\% \sim 95\%$ acknowledges the inertia of Mungaka as the lingua franca of the Western Grassfields in contemporary multilingual Cameroon.

Apart from the vitality of Mungaka reported in secondary data sources in 2.1, primary data sources reveal that "in 1912 the Germans decided to close the vernacular school, but the Fon of Bali decided to keep paying the teachers 134 shillings each per month" (46M_50-69_RA, 2023). This act evidences the resilience of a people in the phase of their language transiting from hegemony to inertia. There are also emotionally attached speakers and denialists who think the spread and load of Mungaka is still vibrant and not demonstrating any inertia, declaring that "They are still speaking Mungaka all over right up to the whiteman's country" (29F_70+, translated from Mungaka). There have been attempts to revitalise Mungaka, which have unfortunately been stalled by the ongoing sociopolitical crisis as testified below:

The use of Mungaka as a language of evangelization has [is] not reduced. The present Fon of Bali Nyonga built a school for the learning of Mungaka but due to the disturbances of the crisis, the school could not continue. The use of Mungaka as the language of wider communication... has [is] reduced and was revived but due to the crisis it could not be sustained. The use of Mungaka as the language of education has [is] greatly reduced because... due to the crisis those who were teaching the Mungaka have all run away (22F_70+, translated from Mungaka).

Aside from the inertia or dehegemonisation of Mungaka recounted from secondary data sources in 2.2, primary data sources elicit that "in 1914, the church door at Ntafoang was locked and the key was taken to the Divisional Officer in Bamenda till 1925" (46M_50-69_RA, 2023). It is not certain what the implications are, but such a move is not explicitly favourable to the vitality of Mungaka.

In terms of language of *evangelisation*, the translation of the Bible into other Grassfields languages, English, Pidgin, and French, and linguistic loyalty to an own language by other tribes, enabled the dehegemonisation of Mungaka.

For example:

"Many tribes have written the Bible in their own languages. So now, they try to communicate in their own languages, their own Bible, their own translation of the Bible. They are using their own languages" (01F_70+, translated from Pidgin).

"Even in churches they don't really read the Bible in Mungaka again. English and French have taken over" (25F_30-49).

"I think people have neglected Mungaka to practice it... It's no more there. In church you can only listen to Mungaka readings. They don't preach in Mungaka" (31F_30-49).

Regarding its function as language of *wider communication*, paradoxical linguistic loyalty, multilingualism, rural-urban migration and language contact outcomes are the lead factors for the dehegemonisation of Mungaka. A majority of the younger generation, specifically those below thirty, is unaware of the main issues that led to the hegemony of Mungaka, while others yearn to know their own local languages. For instance:

"Many people want that they should also know their own languages, ... they're trying to learn their own so that when children go to school they should know their own mother tongue" (06F_30-49).

"Many languages are being used like Lamnso, the Lamnso people have stopped using Mungaka. They are learning but their language. Every tribe is trying to put their language in use" (31F_30-49).

"Every village now is struggling to promote its language" (23M_70+)."

This is a clear example of indigenous allegiance for identity construction, the need to "to know their own". Paradoxically, the allegiance to Mungaka restricts its status to that of an ancestral home language for socio-cultural communication:

"Our parents use Mungaka when communicating with their friends at gatherings like meetings, when they are in their houses, when they have one or two talks, they use Mungaka" (04F_30-49). This restriction contributes to the inertia of Mungaka.

The interlanguage processes of borrowing and code-mixing have furthered the dehegemonisation of Mungaka as "The presence of bilingualism and training of teachers" promotes the spoken use of French and English and has contributed to "wiping away Mungaka" (09F_50-69).

"Children do no longer put in efforts to speak Mungaka. Now they

Speak and mix it with Pidgin... and with grammar learnt from school" (10M_50-69, translated from Pidgin).

The eight-year ongoing violent armed conflict in Anglophone Cameroon has caused a jump in rural-urban migration in quest for safe spaces and greener pasture. With language contact outcomes such as language maintenance, as well as language shift for specific purposes, comes the inertia of Mungaka. For instance:

"because of rural exodus, and because of the crisis we have now... people are running away. People are afraid to stay in the villages" (34F_>30).

"There are many migrants now leaving from other regions to the Grassfields, from the Grassfields to other regions..., so with that, the communication with Mungaka has really dropped" (08M_50-69).

As a language of *education*, there has been a phase out of early Mungaka learning programmes and the older generation of Mungaka teachers. There has also been pedagogic non-nonchalance and indolence in language transfer from the older to the younger generation. Finally, there has been the developing hegemony of English that doubles as world lingua franca and one of the official languages of Cameroon, alongside French. These are all enabling factors of the dehegemonisation of Mungaka. For instance:

"even in Bali itself, the Nangnangpah in Ntafoang where we attended school while growing up is no longer there... It was basic education in Mungaka. After here, they moved on to Keh'fun Nstundab" (01F_70+, translated from Pidgin).

"Most of those people that taught Mungaka are not still alive" (19M_70+, translated from Pidgin).

"Since our teacher, Ni Moses of the Fokumlah family died, we no longer have teachers of Mungaka" (29F_70+).

"Even at home we speak English to the children. We try to teach children French and other different languages that children learn in school" (07F_30-49, translated from Pidgin).

In spite of revitalisation efforts of researchers like Ndangam (2021), Fokwang and Gwaabe (2020), Fokwang (2017), Titanji (2013, 2016); the present Fon of Bali Nyonga, Doh Ganyonga III, and language development units such as Résurrection des Langues Maternelles (RESULAM); the Cameroon Association for Bible Translation and Literacy (CABTAL), etc., indigenous people attest that

"They don't study it again in school, we have no teacher to do the studies" (18F_30-49).

"Now schools are everywhere... Most people now speak English and French. Mungaka does not exist again" (33F_70+, translated from Pidgin).

"In our generation... Mungaka was an ancient language... and people will find it difficult to study Mungaka compared to the new languages like English and French or other languages" that have been introduced" (35M_>30).

4.3 The diluted hegemony of Mungaka

In an online conversation and email exchanges with one of the research assistants (RA) on the status of Mungaka as the lingua franca of the Western Grassfields, he testifies the diluted hegemony of Mungaka in the following excerpt:

The Bali Language [Mungaka] was the lingua franca in the Northwest Regions then and the Churches language. Between 1940 to 1953, the Bible had been translated into Mungaka completely with a hymn book. With the coming of the British and France in 1925 things changed to colonial languages. However, it remained the Churches theological language for the Grass field and Douala for the Forest Area (46M_50-69_RA, 2023).

Apart from in Bali Nyonga, homeland to Mungaka, there are only trace elements retained in certain parts of the Grassfields of the hegemony of Mungaka, wherein there is a stabilised usage of lexical borrowings from Mungaka. There are also idiosyncrasies in syntactic usage, spelling, pronunciation, and nativisation of some words such as "Haleluyah" and the Hebrew version, "Hallelujah" for the English loan "Alleluia". These trace elements and idiosyncrasies are testified in the following excerpt.

The word money which is, "nkap" in Mungaka is used in most of the villages in Mezam. Mungaka is still in forced [enforced] since it is the singing language of the Haleluyah Choir. Some of the best "alongie" music is still being sung all over in Mungaka... "Nyam" for meat is used in many divisions... The word "satan" is still used just as it is in English. There is no word for "kitchen" in Mungaka since it is only called kitchen. "Ngadmu" commonly used for matches is almost being forgotten for the English name matches (46M_50-69_RA, 2023).

Meanwhile, there is a significant stabilised usage of lexical borrowings by Mungaka from other languages, English, French, and Pidgin. This has facilitated the extinction of some Mungaka words. Thus, irrespective of the aforementioned trace elements, the previous dominance of Mungaka has been diluted by stabilised lexical borrowings as illustrated by a majority of the 45 respondents in Section B, Table 3.

4.4 Section B, Table 3: Loan words in Mungaka

B4: Borrowings from English, French, Pidgin, and replacements in Mungaka			
Mungaka	Borrowed from English	Mungaka	Borrowed from English
nùngètyét	wonderful	léhnki	Calabash
bé`ti	manage	pèénáh	Kettle
kèmtí	economise	káng	plate, pan
tóndáp	window	nàáh	Mum
Mungaka	Borrowed from English	Mungaka	Borrowed from English
ndânwàni	school	kàáh	Grandma
mbàntí bàmtí	a pair of scissors	fóékép	Spoon
ngàdmú/ngwàtmúh	matches	bá	papa, daddy
léhnchì	bucket	kéhfòèn	Key
vín	zinc	sòbnyàm	Fork
mfán mèkálé	nail	tàng	Ceiling
nkàám	get	kwààkòuh	Motor
kùlāj	table	ntúmùnyégèh	Football
bànkù	bicycle	nkōŋ nwà`ni nfā	Pen
nkón-ngwàni-njemeuh	pencil	ntéd tū	hair lice
Respondents don't know the Mungaka equivalents here.	television, bike, phone, machine, gallon, gate, banana, ball	Respondents don't know the Mungaka equivalents here.	pillow, pin, pump, computer, cupboard, handbag, container, slippers,
Mungaka	Borrowed from Pidgin	Mungaka	Borrowed from Pidgin
múnyàngób	pusi (cat)	bá	pa (papa, daddy, dad)
	foks (fork(s))		
Borrowed from French		Gloss in English	
tabac, carrefour, gâteaux, beignet, terrain, secour, grand frère, petit frère, petite soeur, grande soeur, rendezvous, savon, villageois, sentiment		tobacco, crossroads, cakes, doughnut, land(n) or space, rescue, big brother, little brother, little sister, big sister, appointment, soap, villager, feeling	

4.5 Language contact outcomes

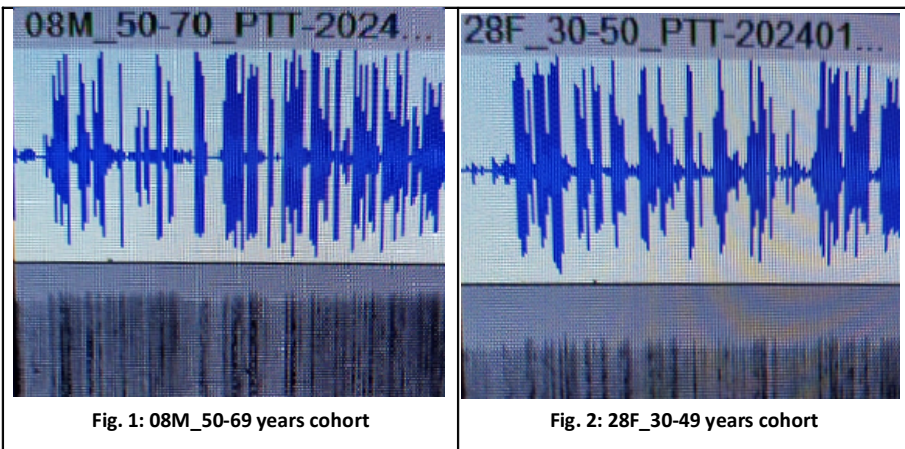
Over time, the multilingual and multicultural state of Cameroon has contributed to language contact outcomes such as language shift resulting to borrowing (4.4 Section B, Table 3), replacement, semantic shift, extension, innovation, nativisation, and pronunciation variation that have enabled the dehegemonisation of Mungaka. For example:

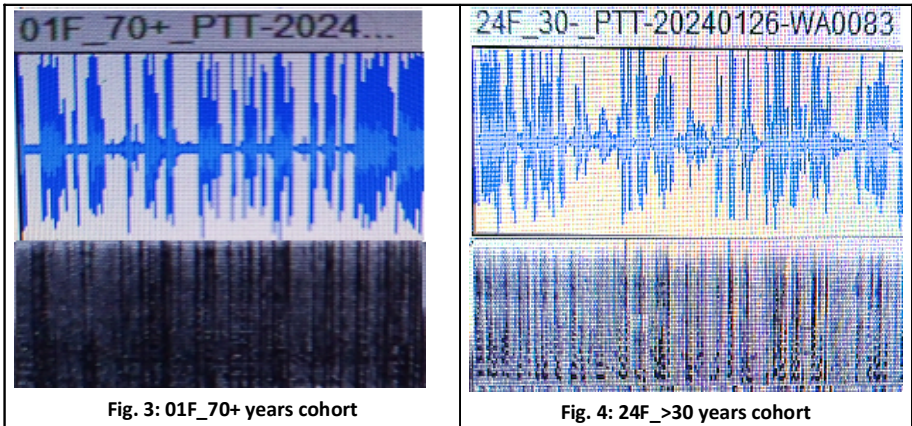
Some words do not exist in Mungaka but imported to give descriptive name and meaning as follows; eucalyptus is called "foreshi" guard, meaning the forest guard or tree of the forest guard. The word "telephone" has been given the name "tohngam" a descriptive meaning for "story box or container" (46M_50-69_RA, 2023).

The English loans in Mungaka are predominantly pronounced in Pidgin, or some nativised pronunciation of English or French words (Fonyuy 2016), for example "'blanket' is called 'planketu', mango as 'manguli', pear as 'pia', onion as 'anushi'" (46M_50-69_RA, 2023).

4.6 Audacity-enabled spectrograms of sample readings in Mugaka

Across the cohorts of four generations, pronunciation varies depending on social variables such as age, education, profession, exposure to other languages, and idiosyncrasies, witnessed in some phonological processes. There is pronunciation variation in vowel length and replacement, tone placement and misplacement, syllable weakening or strengthening in consonant clusters, representing variables that can be used to tease out differences.





Using recordings from the preceding list (B5, Table 4) we attempted to characterise cohorts of different speakers to find homogenous clusters of accents that will match age and different patterns of language acquisition (L1, L2 etc), and subsequently analyse the different variables. This ongoing effort has been hampered by the non-availability of sufficient literate speakers of Mungaka across the different generations. From Fig. 1-4, the obvious variation in accent is the personal idiosyncrasy visible in the frequencies and amplitudes over time in the spectrograms. The only shared feature is the consonant clusters visible in the darker lines or frequencies with higher amplitudes. The pale lines are frequencies with lower amplitudes visible when most vowels are realised.

In Fig. 4, the pale areas are recurrent indicating frequencies with lower amplitudes, hesitation, and silent gaps due to the use of less energy. It can be inferred from such speech features that the reader finds it challenging reading and pronouncing Mungaka and the reader is below thirty (>30). This is visibly contrasting to Fig. 3 with the more frequencies of higher amplitude, less hesitation, and less silent gaps, indicating a more fluent reader with an indigenous accent of Mungaka. This reader is above seventy (70+) and her interview responses reveal that she attended the Mungaka vernacular school (Nangnangpah and Ke'hfun ntsudap). In spite of this evidence in speech variation across cohorts of Mungaka speakers, 46 informants are not representative enough to draw a conclusion on the correlation of pronunciation to the age variable that influences the (de)hegemonisation of Mungaka.

5. Conclusion

Summarily, as the lingua franca of the Western Grassfields, Mungaka was the language of evangelisation, education, and wider communication. However, other Grassfields tribes spoke Mungaka as a second or other language, resulting in second language varieties of Mungaka. Nonetheless, findings prove the evolution of Mungaka from vitality/hegemony to inertia/dehegemonisation. Only 5% acknowledges the contemporary vitality of Mungaka with evidence from the trace elements of Mungaka in some Grassfields languages, and the revitalisation efforts. Significantly, 95% attests the dehegemonisation of Mungaka as the lingua franca of the Western Grassfields.

Today, the Mungaka language is spoken at home and entrenched in the diaspora is with aspects of interlanguage. There is stabilisation and retention of loan words from English, French, and Pidgin, presented with differing indigenous and foreign accents. There is borrowing from other languages, lexical innovations and semantic extensions, for instance, to incorporate the new communication technology vocabulary into Mungaka. These interlanguage processes underline the versatility of Mungaka with the potential to influence local and diasporic discourses across variables such as age, gender, profession, geographical space, education, power, culture, identity, and opportunity.

In spite of its dehegemonisation as the lingua franca of the Western Grassfields, it remains one of the most documented and developed languages in the Western Grassfields. It has an L2 literacy rate, ranging between 25-50%, present in "Radio programs. Dictionary. Bible: 1961-1970"¹

Mungaka is the default language of the Hallelujah Choir of the PCC around the world as testified in,

"The language of the Hallelujah Choir of the PCC is Mungaka.
Anywhere that the choir is found in the world, they sing in Mungaka"
(45M_50-69_RA).

Thus, over time, the hegemony of Mungaka has been diluted by the sociolinguistics of language contact, resulting to the dehegemonisation of Mungaka as the lingua franca of contemporary multilingual Cameroon.

¹ <https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/mhk/>

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