Full Length Research Paper

Language use in the Islamic faith in Cameroon: The case of a Mosque in the city of Maroua

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This paper examines language use and religion, paying special attention to the languages of religious practices and the factors that determine the choice of these languages in a given polity. The data are drawn from a series of Friday congregational prayers in the main Mosque of the city of Maroua, the headquarters of the Far North region of Cameroon, an area where the Islamic faith has a high concentration of worshippers. For lack of an appropriate sociolinguistic framework of analysis, the structural-functional approach proposed by Kouega (2008a) was used. Sketchily, this approach consists in segmenting a religious service into its constituent parts and checking what language is used in what part and for what purpose. The analysis of the data collected reveals that a Friday Prayer service is divided into some 15 parts and the dominant language used is Arabic. One other language cited, exclusively for sermons and announcements are Fulfulde, a widespread northern Cameroon lingua franca. The choice of these languages is determined by a variety of factors: Arabic is the liturgical language associated with Islam, while Fulfulde is the language of the Imam, that of the Muezzin and a vehicular language in the neighbourhood.

Key words: Islam, Cameroon, language in religion, language policy, language use, multilingualism.

INTRODUCTION

This section considers in turn language in religion, and the language situation in Cameroon. An online search of works on language and religion yields a long list of items whose contents fall out of the scope of linguistics (Campbell, 1999; Pecorino, 2000). When the search is narrowed to language use in religion, the yield drops to a few items. Actually, as Spolsky (2003) rightly pointed out, "the interaction between language and religion as topics relevant to bilingualism or multilingualism has been relatively little explored, although there is an extensive body of research on religious language". One leading linguistic works on the topic seem to be Crystal and Davy (1969) where the liturgy excluding the sermon was examined; another is Crystal (n. d.) where he highlighted the fundamental role that "language plays in the practical understanding … of any set of religious beliefs (with

particular reference to Catholicism) and the invaluable assistance which linguistics, the scientific study of language can give" (p. 1). Relevant sociolinguistic works are in the area of language management, which Spolsky has concentrated his efforts on. In a seminal article, he identified a number of social spaces or domains of language use including "the family", "religious institutions, workplaces, the legal domain, the health and medical domain, schools, the military, local and regional government, national or federal government, and supranational organisation" (Spolsky, 2003). Exploring language in religious institutions, he observed that these institutions "have their own language policies, especially influenced by an established belief about the importance of maintaining the original language of the sacred texts – Islam and pre-Vatican II Roman Catholicism resisted use of the vernacular; Judaism allowed and Protestant Christianity favoured translation" (Spolsky, 2007). These broad ideas will be brought up again in the methodology section below.

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Regarding the language situation in Cameroon, it is a highly multilingual country. Researchers who devoted book length works to the issue like Dieu and Renaud (1983), Bitjaa-Kody (2003), Kouega (2007), Lewis (2009) and a few others have observed that close to 300 languages of different statuses are used in the country on a daily basis. A synoptic look at these languages groups them into five categories: two official languages (that is, French and English), a few major lingua francas like Fulfulde [codes 4 and 30 in Lewis (2009)], a number of minor lingua francas like Duala (code 215), several scores of minority languages like Batanga (code 247) and one religious language (that is, Arabic). These languages are considered in turn.

Cameroon is the only African country that has adopted both French and English as its official languages. It happened in 1961 when East Cameroon with French as its official language and West Cameroon with English as its official language re-united as they were during German annexation in 1884. Besides these two official codes, there exist three major lingua francas and eight minor lingua francas in the country. The major lingua francas include:

- Pidgin English, which is spoken everywhere in the country and very actively in four regions that is the Southwest, Northwest, Littoral and West (for a map of the regions or provinces of Cameroon, see http://www.tlfq.ulaval.ca/axl/afrique/Cameroun-prov.html);
- Fulfulde, which is spoken in the northern half of Cameroon and the area stretching from Senegal through Cameroon to Sudan;
- and lastly, Beti which is the group name of a cluster of mutually intelligible languages spoken in the forest zone in the southern half of Cameroon and in neighbouring countries like Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Congo and which can be said to be represented by Ewondo (code 239).

Minor lingua francas which are so called because their speakers tend to be conversant with a major lingua franca include:

- Shuwa Arabic (code 2) spoken in the Far North region of Cameroon and the south of Chad;
- Basaa (code 201) spoken in part of the Centre and Littoral regions;
- Bulu (code 244) spoken by both native and second language users in the South region and parts of the Centre and East regions;
- Duala (code 215) spoken along the Atlantic coast;
- Hausa[1] spoken in parts of northern Cameroon and of northern Nigeria;
- Kanuri (code 12) spoken in the Far North region of Cameroon;

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[1] Hausa, which is not listed in Lewis (2009) is coded 101 in Dieu and Renaud (1983).

- Mungaka (code 185) spoken in a few localities in the Northwest and West regions of Cameroon;- Wandala (code 13) spoken in mountainous localities on the Chad-Cameroon borders.

One language variant which seems to resist classification is Camfranglais (Kouega, 2003a and b) which is a French-based made up slang used by educated urban youths to interact among themselves. Lesser minority languages are close to 300, with many of them having less than five thousand speakers. The exact number of these languages is not known, as Government is reluctant to have them counted. As for religious languages, only one code – Arabic – is used exclusively for religious purposes; other codes like French, English and Pidgin English are used in church as well as many other domains. In brief, hundreds of languages co-exist in Cameroon and they are used for a variety of purposes.

OVERVIEW OF ISLAM IN CAMEROON

Before colonisation, several communities of people had been living in the territory that is called Cameroon today. Generally speaking, these peoples occupied two geographical regions: the northern half and the southern half. The southern half of the territory, which stretches from the Mbam Division down to the borders with Gabon and Congo, was inhabited mainly by Bantu and Semi-Bantu people. The northern half of Cameroon, which is the focus of this study, stretches from the Adamawa region up to Lake Chad. This area was inhabited mainly by the Sudanese and Fulbe. The Sudanese are believed to be the people living in this area for the longest time. In the 15 and 18th Centuries, they were followed by the Fulbe, also called Fulani, who came from Senegal, passed through northern Nigeria and Cameroon and went as far as Chad and Sudan. Characteristically, these Fulbe were Muslims on a crusade aimed at evangelising the *Kirdis,* or pagans. The first groups of Fulbe to arrive, though converted to Islam, were not strong believers in this religion. Their major occupation was animal-husbandry, and they successfully integrated themselves among the Sudanese communities they met. The next groups of Fulbe immigrants came from Nigeria, purposely to teach the Quran and to convert, by will or by force, all pagans they encountered. They succeeded in conquering the whole of northern Cameroon, from Lake Chad to the Adamawa plateau, seizing all fertile lands, thus forcing non-believers (that is, the Sudanese), to seek refuge in inaccessible high lands, where they have remained up to the present time. This invasion accounts for the continuing later existence of small pockets of distinct languages found within localities where some particular language is widely spoken. Since then, Islam has been the dominant religion in the northern part of Cameroon while Christianity and Animism have been dominant in the southern part of the country. Over the years, Christianity penetrated all big localities in the northern

half and so did Islam in big towns in the southern half. Today, in all big towns in the country including Maroua, there are as many churches as there are mosques.

METHODOLOGY

This section considers in turn the setting of the study, the informants and the instruments used, and the framework of analysis.

Setting, informants and instruments

This study describes language use in one mosque in the city of Maroua. Located some 1,000 kilometres from Yaounde the capital city of Cameroon, Maroua is the headquarters of the Far North region, one of the ten regions of the country. With a population projected to be 233,200 inhabitants in 1999 (MINEFI, 2000: 7), it is the fifth most populated town in the country after Douala, Yaounde, Garoua and Bamenda. Because the city has been developing steadily, it has attracted many immigrants from other localities. These immigrants settled in the suburbs, with new immigrants settling next to older immigrants with whom they share related languages. As a result, there are many ethnic pockets which are referred to by such names as *Quartier Tupuri* (Tupuri speakers' residential area), *Quartier Mandara* (Mandara speakers' residential area), *Quartier Mofou* (Mofou speakers' residential area) etc. The city of Maroua includes several *masjid* (mosques) of various sizes and heights. Each residential area has its own *masjid*; in addition, there are a few personal *masjid*, which makes counting very difficult. For the purpose of this study, the *masjid* of Dougoy, which is located in the heart of the Fulbe-dominated residential area and which is obviously the main mosque in the city, was selected as the setting of the current investigation.

The informants of the study were people who regularly worshipped in this mosque and the main instrument used was a questionnaire. To acquaint themselves with the setting, the researchers attended several Friday services and interacted with some people who connected them with other people. Thanks to participant observation and a series of interviews, these researchers identified a number of recurrent features in the Friday services. The insight thus gained enabled them to devise a 21-item questionnaire that checked the activities that go on in each Friday service, the languages which are used to realise each activity and the reason for choosing these languages. Thanks to the connections they made during participant observation, these researchers had no difficulty in getting 10 returns out of the 20 copies of the questionnaires they prepared.

Framework of analysis

Works on the domain of religion which are relevant to the study of language and society are scarce and so are research frames for such analyses (Bitjaa-Kody, 2001; Spolsky, 2003; Pennycook and Makoni, 2005; Omoniyi and Fishman, 2006; Mühleisen, 2007). Sociolinguists have considered religion from the perspective of language contact, showing how it contributes to language spread, maintenance or revival. Applied linguists have focused on the translation of religious texts, showing how religion contributes to the codification and standardisation of chosen languages. There is therefore no sociolinguistic frame underlying research in this domain, as far as we are aware. One proposed frame still under construction (Kouega, 2008a) takes up language use in one denomination, the Catholic Church. As this frame is new, we will review it extensively. To begin with, this sociolinguistic frame is based on a two-step procedure: first, it dissects a given religious service using the participant observation method; then using the questionnaire, interview, informal discussion and participant observation methods simultaneously, it checks what language is used in each of the constituent parts of the religious service and for what purpose. To collect data for his analysis, Kouega asked a total of 20 research assistants to attend at least three of the three to five Sunday masses celebrated in various Catholic parishes in the city of Yaounde. While attending the masses, these research assistants were to provide specific answers to some nine prepared questions, which are reproduced in Appendix 1 below. These questions focused on various aspects of language use in church such as the participants (the priests, the congregation and the choirs), the activities (like reading the epistles and making announcements) and the media proper (like French, English or Latin). Space was provided for these research assistants to jot down relevant responses and comments during discussions with people around the church premises (presumably the faithful) before or after a mass. The analysis of the data thus collected revealed, among other things, that several languages were used in the Catholic Church in Yaounde. These were:

- French, used for all activities including reading the Gospel, preaching, reading the epistles and singing;
- English was heard in a limited number of parishes – e.g. Nsimeyong, Mvog-Ada - where it was used for gospel reading, sermons and singing;
- Latin was a liturgical language that surfaced mainly when certain rituals were performed, especially the recitation or singing of such prayers as *Agnus dei*, *Gloria*, *Kyrie*, *Pater noster* and *Sanctus*;
- Beti, a Cameroon indigenous language group name represented by Ewondo (code 239), was used in certain parts of the town for gospel reading and preaching, but in most parishes it was used for singing;
- Basaa (code 201), a Cameroon indigenous language, was used in some four parishes for gospel reading and preaching as well as singing;
- Pidgin English (Kouega, 2001, 2008b), a vehicular language, was used in early morning masses in one parish and in songs in a couple of parishes;
- Bamileke, a Cameroon indigenous language group name which among Catholics in Yaounde, includes Fe'efe'e (code 198), Ghomala (code 196), Medumba (code 224), Ngiemboon (code 191) and Yemba (code 190), was used mainly for reading the epistles and for singing;
- other Cameroonian minority languages – Bafia (code 229), Bamun (code 195), Banen, Guidar, Lamnso' (code 137), Mafa (code 11), Massa, Matakam, Mofou (codes 37, 38), Mundang (code 56), Yambassa etc. – were used mainly in songs;
- one African minority language, Igbo, was used for singing in the Mvogada parish, where a large community of Nigerians have been living for many decades.

The last item considered the reasons underlying the choice of these languages in a given parish. While there is some literature on language choice among bilingual and multilingual individuals (Buda, 1991; Smith, 1995; Othman, 2006; Dumanig, 2010), there has been very little research on language choice among groups of people taking part in the same activity, like an acutely multilingual group of worshippers in a religious setting. The study under consideration examined code choice in different parishes and came up with the following findings: a language was chosen in a given parish when:

- There was at least one priest speaking that language in the parish (when there was no such priest, French was used as the default language);
- When there were devoted catechists and chaplains speaking that

language in the parish; these catechists prepare the epistles to be read and help to choose potential readers within the community of speakers. In other words, catechists do the background work necessary for a mass to run smoothly;

- When the community speaking that language was fully involved in – and committed to – the activities of the parish (cleaning of the parish, financial contributions, active participation in masses reinforced by a dynamic choir and the like);

- When there were religious materials - the mass proper, hymns, the catechism and portions of scripture - available in that language.

This framework seems to work very well for the description of religious activities in Christian Churches, as shown by the following researchers: Emaleu (2008), Ndzotom (2011) and Kouega and Ndzotom (a, b and c). The present study applies this same principle to a completely different religion that is Islam.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Structure of a Friday prayer service

A typical service, which lasts for some 90 min, comprises some 15 key sections, with the first section being the First Call of the Muezzin and the last being Announcements. These 15 sections which are punctuated by recitations and various postures (kneeling down, prostration, hands raised etc) are outlined here:

1. First Call of the Muezzin or *Adhan* (this call is made when the faithful are performing their ablutions at home or by the mosque, as they prepare for the service. The call may be rendered as: "God is Great … I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except God … I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God … Come to Prayer! Come to prosperity! God is Great … There is none worthy of worship except God" (Waheed, 2011).

2. Second call (this call is made as the Imam enters the mosque, with all the worshippers already lined up. It marks the beginning of the prayer service: "Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest …There is no other divinity that deserves adoration but Allah.")

3. First *Khutbah* (sermon) (the Iman first greets the congregation and then preaches)

4. Second *Khutbah* (sermon) (after a short pause punctuated by recitations, the Iman preaches)

5. *Takirat al-ihram* (invocation): the Iman recites a series of prayers including *Al-Fatiha*, with the palms raised to the level of the shoulders: "Glory be to you my God, I praise you…") and each worshipper does the same after him;

6. *Allahu Akbar* (proclamation of God's greatness): the Iman proclaims God's greatness "Glory and praises be upon you my Lord, the Almighty…" and each worshipper does so after him;

7. *Sami' a-l-ahou* (recitation of prayers): The Iman, in a bowed position, recites a series of prayers: "May God hear he who praises him…") and the worshippers, bent down, do the same after him;

8. *Takbir* 1 (first prostration): the Iman kneeling down with his forehead touching the ground first, and his buttocks resting on his heels next, recites a series of prayers: "Glory be to my Lord…") and the worshippers take the same postures and recite the same prayers after him;

9. *Takbir* 2 (second prostration): the Iman kneeling down first and standing up next, recites a number of verses three times: "O my Lord, forgive me…") and the worshippers take the same postures and recite the same verses after him;

10. Recitation of the *Fatiha*: standing up, the Iman recites the *Fatiha* prayer and a few Coranic verses and then bows down to perform two prostrations and the worshippers take the same postures and recite the same verses after him;

11. *Al-tachahhod* (sitting down, the Iman recites a prayer: "I hereby certify that there is no other God but Allah…", and the worshippers taking the same postures, recite the same verses after him;

12. *Attahiyyatou lilo-lahi* (standing, the Iman recites a prayer: "Salutations go to Allah, pious deeds are for Allah …") and the worshippers taking the same postures, recite the same verses after him;

13. *Ashadu* (Abraham's prayer) (standing with the right hand index raised, the Iman recites this prayer: "I bear witness that there is no other god but Allah") and the worshippers, taking the same postures, recite the same verses after him;

14. *As-salamu alaykum* (final salutation) (sitting down, the Iman turns to his right and recites this prayer: "May God's salvation and mercy be upon you" and then he turns to his left and recites this same prayer; and the worshippers, taking the same postures, reproduce the words and actions of the Iman;

15. Announcements (they are made by the Imam, the Imam's assistant or the Muezzin)

Having identified the elements of the structure of a Friday prayer, the next thing was to check what languages were used to realise each element.

Languages used in each part of the service

As outlined in the Structure of a Friday prayer service above, a Friday Prayer service comprises of some 15 key parts. These parts are the focus of the 19 item questionnaire devised to check language use in the study. These 19 items are considered in turn below.

Calls to prayer

In the Muslim faith, two *adhan* (calls to prayer) are made before the Friday prayer. The first call is made some 15 min to prayer time, as the worshippers are cleansing their

Table 1. Languages used for the *Adhan.*

Languages used	Arabic
Number of informants	10 (100%)

Table 2. Languages used for greeting the congregation.

Languages used	Arabic
Number of informants	10 (100%)

Table 3. Languages used for the first *Khutbah.*

Languages used	Fulfulde
Number of informants	10 (100%)

Table 4. Languages used for the second *Khutbah.*

Languages used	Arabic
Number of informants	10 (100%)

Table 5. Worshippers' self-reported proficiency in Arabic.

Understanding	Yes, I understood	No, I did not understand	Others	Total
Number of informants	4	5	1	10
Percentage (%)	40	50	10	100

body and performing the *wudhu* (ritual ablution). The Muezzin recites a number of verses, crying out and loud: "God is great… I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except God…". As the Iman enters the *masjid* (mosque), the Muezzin makes another call to signal that the prayer has started: "God is Great…I bear witness that Muhammed is the Messenger of God…". Q1 asked the informants to indicate the languages in which the Muezzin made the *Adhan* in the last *Salat al-Jumu'ah* (Friday prayer) they attended and it was reported that Arabic was systematically used in both cases, as shown in Table 1.

Sermons

The Iman is expected to greet the congregation when he enters the mosque and to deliver a Khutbah (sermon). In fact, the *khutbah* is a compulsory element of the Friday prayer. Two sermons are delivered. When the first sermon is over, the Iman sits and recites a number of verses. Then the second sermon comes up. To check what languages were used for these activities, a number of questions were asked. Q3 asked the informants to indicate the languages in which the Iman greeted the congregation and Arabic was reported to be used (Table 2).

Q4 inquired about the languages in which the first Khutbah was made and whether there were any translations provided. The responses are displayed in Table 3.

It was found that the first *khutbah* was done exclusively in Fulfulde, the dominant vehicular language in northern Cameroon and no translation in any language was provided, which implies that the worshippers understand Fulfulde.

Q5 checked the language in which the Iman did the second *khutbah* and whether any translation was provided. The responses are displayed in Table 4.

It turned out that Arabic was the only language used and no translation into any language was provided.

To check the level of proficiency of worshippers in Arabic, we asked the informants (Q6) whether they did understand the sermon of that day, the preaching of the Iman. As Table 5 shows, it was reported that 50% of the worshippers did not understand the preaching in Arabic while 40% claimed to have understood it well.

Table 6. Languages used for *Takirat al-ihram.*

Languages used by the Iman	Arabic
Number of informants	10 (100%)
Languages used by the informants	Arabic
Number of informants	10 (100%)

Table 7. Languages used for the *Allahu Akbar.*

Languages used by the Iman	Arabic
Number of informants	10 (100%)
Languages used by the informants	Arabic
Number of informants	10 (100%)

Table 8. Language(s) used for the *Samil' a-l-ahou.*

Languages used by the Imam	Arabic
Number of informants	10 (100%)
Languages used by the informants	Arabic
Number of informants	10 (100%)

Prayers

Following the sermons are a series of prayers including *Takirat al-ihram, Allahu Akbar, Sami' a-l-ahou, Takbir* 1, *Takbir* 2, *Al-tachahhod, Attahiyyatou lilo-lahi, Ashadu, As-salamu alaykum.* Specific questions were asked to check the languages in which each of these prayers was done.

Q7 focused on the language the Iman used to do the *Takirat al-ihram* and the languauge the informants used to do this very prayer. It was found that (Table 6) the language used to perform the *Takirat al-ihram* by the Imam and the worshippers was Arabic.

Q8 checked the languages used by the Imam and the worshippers to perform the *Allahu Akbar.* As Table 7 shows, Arabic was the lone language used by the Imam and the worshippers to do this prayer.

Samil' a-l-ahou is another ritual performed in the Friday prayer. Q9 focused on the language(s) used by the Imam and the worshippers in reciting that prayer. It was found that Arabic was the only language used, as shown in Table 8.

Q10 enquired about the languages used for the *Takbir* (first prostration). Here again, Arabic was the only language used, as shown in Table 9.

The responses to the next questions – that is Q11 checking the languages used for Takbir 2 (second prostration), Q12 checking the languages used by the Imam and the worshippers in reciting the *Fatiha*, Q13 checking the languages used in reciting the *Al-tachahhod*, Q14 checking the languages used by the Imam and the worshippers in reciting the *Attahiyyatou lilo-lahi*, and finally Q15 checking the languages used by the Imam and the worshippers in reciting the *Ashadu* – turned out to be the same i.e. Arabic was the sole language used for these prayers.

Q16 asked the informants to indicate who made announcements in the last Friday prayer they attended and it was reported that the Iman (90%) and the Muezzin (10%) made them as shown in Table 10.

Then the second component of Q16 asked them to indicate the languages in which these announcements were made. It turned out that they were made in many languages i.e. Arabic, Fulfulde, Kanuri and Shuwa Arabic and Wandala, with the most frequently cited languages being Arabic (40%) and Fulfulde (30%), as shown in Table 11.

These languages have in common the fact that they operate as lingua francas in Northern Cameroon.

Q16 also enquired whether any translations were provided and it was reported that one announcement was translated from Arabic into Fulfulde. Participant observation of a number of mosques showed that each mosque has its own language policy with regard to the languages used for announcements and the combinations of languages in translation. In fact, when the source language is Arabic, translation is done into

Table 9. Languages used for Takbir1 (first prostration).

Languages used by the Imam	Arabic
Number of informants	10 (100%)
Languages used by the informants	Arabic
Number of informants	10 (100%)

Table 10. Who makes announcements in the mosque?

Making announcements	The Iman	The Muezzin	Total
Number of informants	9	1	10
Percentage	90	10	100%

Table 11. Languages used for announcements.

Languages	Arabic	Fulfulde	Kanuri	Shuwa Arabic	Wandala	Total
Number of respondents	4 (40%)	3 (30%)	1 (10%)	1 (10%)	1 (10%)	10 (100%)

Table 12. Language used for *As-salamu alaykum.*

Languages used by the Imam	Arabic
Number of informants	10 (100%)
Languages used by the informants	Arabic
Number of informants	10 (100%)

Fulfulde (the major vehicular language) regardless of the ethnolinguistic composition of worshippers in a mosque. It is in effect assumed that all worshippers are proficient in Fulfulde. When on the contrary, the source language is Fulfulde, Wandala, Kanuri or Shuwa Arabic, no translation is provided. It can therefore be assumed that the Iman is aware that not all members of his mosque understand Arabic and for that reason, translation into Fulfulde, the most widespread lingua franca, is provided. He also assumes that all members of his mosque do understand Fulfulde, Wandala, Kanuri and Shuwa Arabic, which are the lingua francas of the areas (Baimada, 2010); for this reason, no translation is provided when announcements are made in any of these languages.

Q17 asked the informants to indicate the languages in which the Iman did the final salutation and the languages in which these informants did the final salutation after the Iman. It turned out that the Iman did this ritual in Arabic and so did the worshippers, as shown in Table 12.

Q18 asked the informants to consider each language in turn and to indicate what specific activities were going on in the *jumu'ah salat* when this language was used. The languages that were listed were: Arabic, Fulfulde, Kanuri, Shuwa Arabic and Wandala, and the activities they were

used for are as follows:
- Arabic was used for 14 of the 15 key parts of a Friday service including the call to prayer, the sermon, the prostration and announcements. Being a liturgical language, it was used by the Iman, the Muezzin and the worshippers.
- Fulfulde was used singly in one key activity i.e. the first Khutbah (sermon). It was also used in announcements and, occasionally, some announcements in Arabic were translated into this language.
- Kanuri was used exclusively in announcements, usually when these announcements were addressed to those faithful who were speakers of this language.
- Shuwa Arabic was used exclusively in announcements, usually when these announcements were addressed to the fraction of worshippers who spoke this language.
- Wandala was used exclusively in announcements, usually when these announcements concerned people speaking this language.

Q19 aimed to check the factors motivating the choice of the various languages used in the mosque where the informants attended the last Friday prayer. It was found that language choice is determined by two major factors. The first factor is the association of the Islamic faith and the Arabic language: key activities in the Friday prayer

must be conducted in Arabic, the liturgical language, for these activities to be valid. Usually, both the Iman and the Muezzin are literate in Arabic, and so is a proportion of the faithful. The second factor is the spread of languages other than Arabic: the more widespread a language, the more likely is it to be used, especially in announcements. Fulfulde, the most widespread lingua franca in northern Cameroon, is used in the first sermon and in announcements; it is the language of the Imam, the Muezzin and a sizeable proportion of the worshippers. Besides, when the need to translate from Arabic arises, Fulfulde is the only language into which translations are done. When the need to address a limited fraction of worshippers who speak Kanuri arose, this language, which is a minor lingua franca, was used. The same can be said of Shuwa Arabic, and Wandala, which are two other minor lingua francas in northern Cameroon. On the basis of this observation, it can be conjectured that in the Islamic faith, preference seems to be given to lingua francas, with minority languages not being used in the mosque. Research works in progress like Baimada (2011) will eventually shed light on the issue.

Conclusion

This study has focused on language use in the Islamic faith. Drawing from data collected at a mosque in Maroua (Cameroon), it was found that Arabic was the language used for 14 of the 15 key activities of a Friday prayer while Fulfulde was used to perform only one main activity that is the first sermon. Language choice was found to be highly restricted and could be predicted but, when there was a possibility of choice as was the case with Announcements, preference tended to be given to widespread languages.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1.

Questionnaire/interview/observation (to be filled in by the research assistants)

Ecclesiastical zone _____
Parish and residential area _____
Date and time _____

Q1. In what language did the priest read the missal? _____

Q2. In what language did the priest read the gospel? _____

Q3. In what language did the priest preach? _____

Q4. In what language(s) did the congregation pray or recite rituals like 'Pater noster')? _____

Q5. In what languages did the choirs sing? (Enter the name of each choir and the language of the song). _____

Q6. In what languages were the epistles read: first reading? _____ second reading? ___ _____ Any comment? _____

Q7. In what languages were announcements made? _____ Any comment? __ _____

Q8. When a given language was used in the mass, what specific activities were going on?
Language _____ Activities _____
Language _____ Activities _____
Language _____ Activities _____
Language _____ Activities _____
Language _____ Activities _____
Language _____ Activities _____

Q9. What factors motivated the choice of the various languages used in each parish? (Talk to priests and a few churchgoers after the mass).
Language _____ Motivation _____
Language _____ Motivation _____
Language _____ Motivation _____
Language _____ Motivation _____
Language _____ Motivation _____
Language _____ Motivation _____

Appendix 2

Questionnaire/interview/observation (to be filled in by the researchers)

Consider the last Friday prayer service you attended and the languages that were used in this service.

1. In what language did the Muezzin do the *adhan* or the first call to the *salat* (prayer)?
_____

2. In what language did the Muezzin do the second call to the *salat*?
_____

3. When the Iman entered the mosque, what did he say and in what language?
_____

4. In what language did the Iman do the first *khutbah* (sermon)? Was there any translation?

_____

5. In what language did the Iman do the second *khutbah* (sermon)? Was there any translation?
_____

6. Did you understand the sermon of that day, the preaching of the Iman?
_____

7. In what language did the Iman do the *Takirat al-ihram?* In what language did you do it?
_____

8. In what language did the Iman do the *Allahu Akbar?* In what language did you do it?
_____

9. In what language did the Iman do the .*Sami' a-l-ahou?* In what language did you do it?
_____

10. In what language did the Iman do the *Takbir* 1 (first prostration)*?* In what language did you do it?
_____

11. In what language did the Iman do the *Takbir* 2 (second prostration)*?*)*?* In what language did you do it?
_____

12. In what language did the Iman recite the *Fatiha?* In what language did you recite it*?*
_____

13. In what language did the Iman recite the *Al-tachahhod*? In what language did you recite it*?*
_____

14. In what language did the Iman recite the *Attahiyyatou lilo-lahi*? In what language did you recite it?
_____

15. In what language did the Iman recite the *Ashadu*? In what language did you recite it?
_____

16. Who made announcements? In what language were they made? Was there any translation? Do you have any comments to make?
_____

17. In what language did the Iman do the *As-salamu alaykum* (final salutation)? In what language did you do it?
_____

18. When a given language was used in the *jumu'ah salat* (Friday prayer), what specific activities were going on?
Language _____ Activities _____
Language _____ Activities _____
Language _____ Activities _____
Language _____ Activities _____
Language _____ Activities _____

19. What factors motivated the choice of the various languages that were used in the Mosque. (Talk to people, citing these languages)
Language _____ Motivation _____
Language _____ Motivation _____
Language _____ Motivation _____
Language _____ Motivation _____
Language _____ Motivation _____
Language _____ Motivation _____