



BREAKING THE WALLS OF PEDAGOGIC DISCREPANCIES IN CAMEROON SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract:

This paper sets out to investigate profound pedagogic differences existing in the two sub-systems of secondary education in Cameroon. The problem identified here is that there are profound differences in the curricular contents of the two sub-systems of education in Cameroon. The central arguments in this paper have been articulated within the context of Von Bertalanffy's general system theory, John Dewey's theory of democratic education, Rousseau's social contract theory and James Banks' multicultural education theory. Both qualitative and quantitative methods of research have been used in this study. Questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions and participant observation constituted the research instruments. A thematic analysis supported by descriptive statistics was used within the context of interpretative approach of hermeneutic phenomenology. This research offers a different model for curricular organization in Cameroon taking into consideration perspectives of equity in democratic education. It argues that changes have to be effected in favour of a democratic conception of education. This is precisely because education is the means to construct the type of society appropriate for a harmonious relationship. Findings prove that pedagogic discrepancies obstruct the process of equity and quality education. This paper concludes that in order to ensure fairness and quality in the provision of educational values, a suspension of prejudices is imperative in order to establish a school curriculum proper to Cameroon irrespective of the colonial identities we assume.

Keywords: pedagogic discrepancies; educational system; Dewey's democratic education

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1. Introduction

In recent years, there has been a phenomenon of “academic exodus” in Cameroon educational system. This arises from the fact that there are two sub-systems of education in Cameroon given that two colonial masters; Britain and France ruled this country. These include; the francophone and the Anglophone sub-systems (Fonkeng, 2007).

What has been noticed is that more and more French speaking Cameroonians are developing more interests in the Anglophone sub-system for their children instead of the francophone sub-system. The arguments go that these are efforts towards enhancing bilingualism in Cameroon (Fonlon, 1961, 1963, 1969). Consequently, there is a continuous growth in the number of Anglo-Saxon primary and secondary schools in the French speaking part of Cameroon especially in major cities like Yaoundé and Douala. English speaking Cameroonians do not reciprocate this phenomenon with the same magnitude by also sending their children to the schools of the French sub-system even if they live in areas where these schools are available. Does it mean English speaking Cameroonians do not want to promote the process of bilingualism towards enhancing national integration?

In spite of this, there is an “academic myth” which holds that students from the French sub-system do well in Mathematics and Physics than those from the English sub-system, who on the other hand, outperform them in other subjects like Chemistry, Biology, Geography, History and Geology. These views portray the fact that there is no equilibrium in the curricula of the two sub-systems. There are some subjects like German and Spanish in the French sub-system, which are not in the English sub-system. The teaching of Mathematics and Physics in the francophone sub-system is apparently favourable to the interests of the learners than in the Anglo-Saxon sub-system. In this case, most of their students take interest in learning these subjects. They, therefore, develop skills and competencies that are useful in some areas of learning, viz; engineering, mechanics and computer sciences. However, when students from the Anglo-Saxon sub-system of education succeed in Mathematics and later specialize in fields that require this study in higher institutions in the country, most of them encounter major difficulties (Interviews with Teachers of Mathematics, 24th August 2016). For instance, in 2009, three hundred students registered in the department of Mathematics in Buea University, an Anglo-Saxon university. From this number, thirteen students succeeded to graduate after the stipulated three years for a Bachelor’s degree. Amongst the thirteen students, nine were from the francophone sub-system of education who demonstrated mastery of the subject matter (interviews with Graduates from University of Buea, Yaounde, 12/09/ 2010).

Within the same country, there are two different curricula, which promote different cultural values for persons who aim at national integration. For instance, two different approaches are accorded to the teaching of Mathematics. Most students from the Anglo-Saxon sub-system encounter difficulties understanding the method used in teaching Mathematics in Cameroonian higher institutions and adapting to these methods. This discourages many students from specializing in disciplines that require mathematical competence. Consequently, there are dropouts or some students choose fields of studies that do not agree with their interests. On the other hand, most of the students from the francophone background easily get along with the method. In a world of science and technology, the importance of Mathematics cannot be overemphasized. This situation poses problems of quality education, equity and harmony in the management of the curricula in the Cameroonian school systems. Lack of basic harmony in the syllabuses, schemes and teaching approaches raises questions regarding, quality education and fairness in educational practice. This leads us directly to the problem of imbalance in the educational sector. This imbalance is probably frustrating to some groups of persons who argue that they are not part of the whole. The expression of this frustration is discernable in the emphasis that some groups lay on their identity, an identity that is colonially-founded, accidental and non-essential.

2. General Objective

This research is meant to investigate the impact of pedagogic discrepancies in the two school systems of Cameroon.

2.1 Specific Objectives

- To inquire whether profound discrepancies in the syllabi of the two school systems portray the problem of equity.
- To find out if differences in the teaching and evaluation methods explain the problems of quality education in Cameroonian school systems.

2.2 Research Questions

The main research question is: To what extent do pedagogic discrepancies in the two school systems affect the educational system of Cameroon?

This is articulated into two different questions.

- How far do the differences in the syllabi of the two school systems portray the problem of equity?
- Do differences in the teaching and evaluation methods in the two school systems compromise the provision of quality education to Cameroonians?

3. Causes of Discrepancies in Cameroon school Systems

With the objective of influencing policy-making in the educational system in Cameroon, it will be appropriate to first of all diagnose the cause of the problem in question. A critical study reveals that conflict of colonial interests, issues related to the semantics of concepts; a weak political will and tradition constitute causes of the problem at stake.

- Firstly, the conflict of cultures in Cameroon probably gives reasons for pedagogic discrepancies in the educational sub-systems. There are two cultures of colonial heritage that co-exist in Cameroon. These include; the English and the French cultures. Each culture jealously guards and preserves the values of its own system of education without compromising to the other.
- Secondly, the problem of semantics that creates an atmosphere of intolerance is at the root of pedagogic discrepancies. Each sub-system is hesitant to accept change because the persons who identify themselves with this system are already used to the *status quo* and they are afraid of what those in the other system may do. There is mutual distrust and lack of tolerance between the two sub-systems. This is founded on a misconception of the objective of harmonization.
- Thirdly, the absence of a strong political will to transform ideas into action explains these discrepancies. The political will needs to investigate the matter, propose actions and implement a policy that favours the limitation of these discrepancies. When the political will enacts bad and unfeasible educational policies, it becomes impossible to implement them.
- Finally, tradition also explains profound discrepancies in curricular contents in the two sub-systems of education in Cameroon. Tradition emphasizes the values that go along with the different sub-systems. For instance, the emphasis that Anglophones place on the Anglo-Saxon character of their sub-system to the relative neglect of possible commendable values that could be gotten from the other sub-system and vice versa.

4. Review of Related Literature

The literature below is presented in both conceptual and theoretical frameworks. The former enhances the clarification of some key ideas employed in the article. These include curricular discrepancies, educational systems and democratic educational values. The latter provides basic principles on which the arguments advanced here are articulated. These are the system theory of Von Bertalanffy, Deweyan democratic theory of education and the scientific innovative theory of Rogers Everrets.

4.1 Conceptual Framework

The word pedagogy in the context of this paper is used in the sense employed by Jean Houssaye. He defines pedagogy as a praxiological science. Praxiological here refers to a blend between theory and practice. The foundation of theory here is reason or *logos* that proposes the ideas to be put into practice. *Praxis* refers to the execution of the proposed ideas in the educational set-up. Considering pedagogy from this perspective, pedagogic discrepancies refer to the differences underlying the curricular contents, ideas and methods of teaching in the two sub-systems of education in Cameroon.

The educational system in a country is a formal organisation of the educational, academic and professional pathway. With the bicultural nature of Cameroon, the educational system refers to the two sub-systems that represent the colonial legacy of Britain and France. In Cameroonian school system, there is also provision in law no. 98/004 of April 14, 1998, art 15&1- for a bilingual and bi-cultural secondary school in which both types of schools exist in the same geographical location and under the same administration. Both sub-systems are divided into two cycles. The English sub-system has the first cycle of five years and the second cycle of two years. The French sub-system has a first and second cycle divided into four years and three years respectively (Law no. 98/004/of April 14, 1998 art. 16&2 and art. 17&2).

Deweyan democratic education refers to the learning process which provides equal learning opportunities, privileges and rights to all persons irrespective of birth, colour, language, race, tribe, region and age. Democratic education presents an environment that ensures greater freedom of self-expression, respect for one another, cooperation and the good of all persons. For Dewey, the best education is one that enhances the participation of all persons followings the interest of each and every person for full integration into the life of the community (Dewey, 1966).

4.2 Theoretical Framework

The general system theory was originally proposed by Bertalanffy in 1928. Von Bertalanffy proposed that a system is characterized by interactions of components. In 1959, he extended this view to include biological systems. This theory was later popularized by an electrical engineer McNeill and Freiberger (1993 p.22 in Ngalim, 2014a). In the explanation of reality in terms of a system, one part of a system enables us to know something about another part. The information content of a piece of information is proportional to the amount of information that can be inferred from the information. In the explanation of this theory, Ngalim asserts that:

“...the educational system in Cameroon is seen as a social system which can be classified into two categories of the English sub-system and the French sub-system. Each sub-

system has a supra-system which constitutes its environment. All the sub-systems work towards the assurance of life in the social system as a whole. In order to survive, the system and its sub-systems require openness. That is, they need the capacity to relate to and exchange with their environment unlike a closed system which cannot do so"

(2014b, p.189).

Highlighting the above, no part of the whole is seen to function independent of the other. There is a need for the coordination of parts for one to talk of proper functioning in a system. As it is true of a human body or machine, it is also true of the school system in a country that envisages unity and national integration.

Also, the democratic theory of education is a philosophical system on which the whole theoretical edifice is John Dewey's education is built. John Dewey argues that the best form of society is a democratic society. This is the basic principle on which he builds his philosophy of education. Dewey observes that it is important to know which kind of society is best in order to know the kind of education that is adequate. This is because he considers education as a means of transforming the society. Knowledge is presented as a necessary means towards the transformation of society. It is only within the context of education that values leading to the growth of society can be constructed. Education has the key to the growth of society, and it remains an inevitable tool for the development of a nation. In *My Pedagogic Creed*, Dewey writes:

"I believe that education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform (...).By law and punishment, by social agitation and discussion, society can regulate and form itself in more or less haphazard and chance way. But through education society can formulate its own purpose, can organize its own means and resources, and thus shape itself with definiteness and economy in the direction in which it wishes to move."

(Dewey, 1902, pp. 437-438)

Education gives the necessary resources every society requires for progress. Democratic education refers to a system that promotes freedom of growth, sharing of ideas, tolerance, and equal access of all learners to opportunities in life. Education helps children to get integrated into society. Therefore, democratic education enhances the growth all individuals according to their needs, aptitudes, talents, experiences and desires. This approach gives equal access to all persons regardless of places of origin, sex, linguistic backgrounds and colour. Another relevant aspect of democratic education underlined by Reboul is that it does not promote values of hatred, conflict and discrimination (Reboul, 1989 & 1995). Any form of education, which encourages these vices is guilty of indoctrination (Reboul, 1995). This conception gives clarity to the

context in which this research intends to use the term. It is within the context of democratic education that we have education to good citizenship.

Moreover, in the Social contract theory of Rousseau and Rawls, a contract is said to be an agreement between two equals. Equality here refers to the availability of the same opportunities, privileges and resources to all parties (Rousseau, 1947; Rawls, 1999). The principle of fairness requires the recognition of the contracting parties and the respect of the terms of the contract as stated at the time of the contract. This contract needs to be one of the steps towards harmonisation. Prior to harmonisation, the terms of the contract should be clearly spelt out. This contract must be revocable in case one of the contracting parties fails to keep to the terms (Rousseau, 1947). The revocability of the contract is a means of restoring confidence and trust in skeptics and cynics as regards educational objectives and policies. Before this contract, it is necessary to sensitize and educate Cameroonians on the educational innovation. This is to deconstruct the fear of change, domination and assimilation. For any contract to be successful, an impartial arbiter needs to define the terms of the agreements and how it is to be managed. One of the terms has to define the status of each sub-system and what has to be harmony and how each identity and autonomy has to be maintained (Tchombe, 1999). In this case, what are the values to synthesize and which ones remain in each sub-system? For example, the medium of communication can be maintained in both sub-systems and the organization of the curriculum needs to provide some equity in the learning opportunities of all Cameroonians. Equal opportunities to learning indicate equitable distribution of educational facilities following the needs of the population.

Further, the contracting parties have to preserve the diversity of the Cameroonian culture because this is the basis on which the value of the curriculum is founded. The right accorded to each sub-system has to be presented with clarity and precision. Respect for these rights extends to decision-making and the provision of resources following the terms of the contract. The political will needs to identify the force to implement the terms of the contract. What remains interesting about the contract is its revocability. The contract in question defines the condition that determines the annulation of the contract. In this context, it is probable that skepticism and cynicism of most Cameroonians who express fear of change is probably overcome. Unless the confidence of these terms is restored, breaking the walls of pedagogic discrepancies remains a difficult process in the educational development of Cameroon.

The multicultural theory of James Banks explains multiculturalism in education as a structured process designed to foster understanding, acceptance and constructive relationships among people of different cultures (Banks, 1994, p.4). It promotes diversity and tolerance with regard to the rights of all learners. Multicultural education

is a pluralistic educational approach, which is imperative for multi-ethnic societies. James Banks states that:

“Multiculturalism is a reform movement designed to restructure educational institutions so that all students, including white, male and middleclass students, will acquire the knowledge skills, and attitudes needed to function effectively in culturally and ethnically diverse nation and world (...). Multicultural education (...) is not an ethnic or gender specific movement, but a movement designed to empower all students to become knowledgeable, caring and active citizens (...)”

(Banks, 2001, p. 8)

The above observation presents multicultural education as an educational alternative and strategy, which recognizes and attempts to reform the inequalities that exist in educational theory and practice. Parker explains that the central purpose of multicultural education is *“to improve race relations and to help all students acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to participate in cross-cultural interactions and in personal, social and civic action that will make our nation more democratic and just”* (Paker, 2003, p.5). In the context of this paper, multicultural education is a form of democratic citizenship education that recognizes plurality of our society and attempts to bring historically marginalized groups to the forefront of public education in order to develop active democratic citizens (Parker, 2003 p.8). Multicultural education fosters citizenship education, and attempts to connect the concepts of *“Pluribus ad Unum* (unity in diversity) to create inclusive, equitable and just societies. Multicultural education is not just for individuals that characterize diverse backgrounds. However, it is citizenship education for everyone. As indicated earlier, Cameroon is Africa in miniature and reflects an environment with more than one hundred and thirty ethnic groups. This characteristic imposes an educational system, which recognizes differences in experiences, potentials and culture.

5. Methodology of the study

There are two approaches of research in this study. These include; the quantitative and qualitative methods of research. The reason for these two methods lies in the fact that the weaknesses of one approach should be complemented by the strength of the other. The idea is that one can be more confident with a result if different methods lead to the same result. By combining multiple observers, theories, methods, and empirical materials, researchers can hope to overcome the weaknesses or intrinsic biases and the problems that come from single method, single-observer and single-theory studies

(Goddard & Villanova, 1996). Triangulation facilitates validation of data through cross verification from two or more sources. In particular, it refers to the application and combination of several research methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

For this quantitative method, the instrument was a questionnaire. The construction of a questionnaire was based on the main themes in the research questions. For qualitative approach, the instruments were interviews and focus group discussion guides for collecting data (Grawitz, 1976). A pilot test was carried out to test the validity of the main research instrument, the questionnaire. The pilot test proved that the instrument was reliable at 0.076. Content validity helped to modify some of the questions to avoid ambiguity. The sample regions for collection of data included the Centre and North-West regions. The target population included teachers, students and student-teachers in secondary schools and Higher Teacher Training Colleges. The scope was divided into two parts; viz, content and geographical delimitations. There are different categories got through purposive sampling. University lecturers, Teachers, pedagogic inspectors, student teachers and some students who provided responses to our questionnaire. Some of them were sampled for focus group discussions and interviews.

6. Findings

The presentation of the findings takes into consideration the discrepancies incumbent in the two sub-systems of education. Principally, divergences in the syllabi, curricular contents and teaching and evaluation methods.

6.1 Discrepancies in the syllabi of Cameroon school system

This sub-section reveals the profound discrepancies that hinder democratic educational values in Cameroon. Here, the points argued are that differences in syllabi, contents and methods of teaching and evaluation.

6.2 Divergences of the Syllabi in the Two Sub-systems

Table 1: Distribution of opinions on the divergence of the syllabi of the two sub-systems

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Indifferent | Total |
|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|-------------|-------|
| Numbers | 167 | 153 | 55 | 8 | 17 | 400 |
| Percentage | 41,8 | 38,3 | 13,8 | 2,0 | 4,3 | 100 |

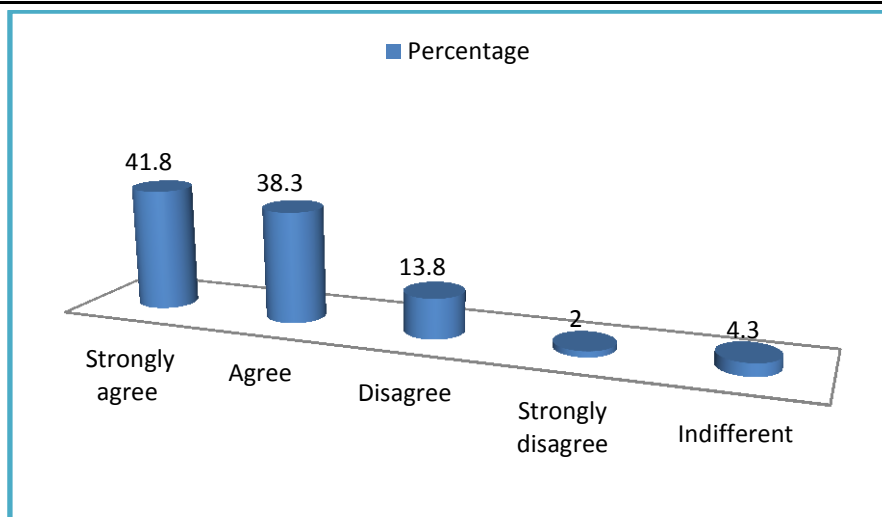


Figure 1: Percentage distribution of opinions on the divergence of the curriculum objectives spelt out in the syllabuses of the two sub-systems

Table 1 points out that, 167 out of 400 respondents strongly agree that the existence of different curriculum objectives in the syllabi of the two sub-systems is an impediment to democratic educational values. In addition, 153 also agree to this effect. 55 disagree and 8 strongly disagree that the existence of different curriculum objectives in the syllabi of the two sub-systems is a problem in the school systems. 17 respondents are neutral on this issue. This is a clear indication that majority (that is, 320 out of 400 respondents) perceive the existence of different curriculum objectives in the syllabi of the two sub-systems.

The differences in the curriculum objectives confirmed by (320 out of 400) the greater number of respondents is in line with the results obtained from focus group discussions. Some graduates and dropouts from the Mathematics department in the University of Buea argue that there are different objectives, contents and methods in the teaching of Mathematics in the two sub-systems of education in Cameroon. Listening to teachers of Mathematics in Anglo-Saxon secondary schools, there are profound pedagogic differences in the objectives of teaching Mathematics in the two school systems in Cameroon (Focus group discussion, Yaounde 24th of August 2016). Some major differences highlighted is that the Francophone sub-system is outstanding because the lay great emphasis on analysis and the theoretical approach to Mathematics. In this approach, every solution is proven through a process of analysis and derivation. There is no assumption of formulae. On the other hand, the Anglophone sub-system emphasizes the approach of applied Mathematics. They rely on calculus as opposed to Geometry that is studied by those in the Francophone sub-system. The weakness these teachers identify in the Anglophone sub-system is that you cannot apply what you do not know. Theory is the foundation of every practice. This

argument is corroborated by Deweyan democratic pragmatic theory of education where every action begins from the conception of an idea (1966). In the discussion, these teachers went further to explain that most students who are outstanding in the General Certificate of Education in Mathematics are always having problems studying Mathematics in higher institutions because there is a big gap between what they have done and the objectives and contents of what is in the University. On the other hand, average students in Mathematics in Baccalaureate get well with the study of Mathematics in higher institutions because it is simply a continuation of what have been done in secondary school. Here, there is no breakaway, but simply the fact that the objectives and contents of study in secondary school provide a platform for the students to continue their studies in the University. The implication of this observation is that there are different achievement levels of secondary school graduates in the study of Mathematics in Cameroon school systems.

The difference is noticed in the output of students from the two sub-systems. In this particular case, just like in Physics, the students from the Francophone sub-system of education are very outstanding. This fact is testified by students from the Anglophone sub-system of education. According to them, students from the Francophone sub-system of education have a very good base in Mathematics and Physics. This is justified in the success of most of the students from this background in competitive examinations in Polytechnique Yaounde and in the fields of Engineering and Mechanics in Higher Technical Teacher Training College, Bambili, in the University of Bamenda.

Moreover, discrepancies in curriculum objectives and contents are also explained in the study of Biology, Chemistry and Geology in the two sub-systems of education in Cameroon. In the Anglophone sub-system, students specialize and study these subjects profoundly in the second cycle whereas in the Francophone sub-system, students who choose the sciences do all the science subjects. This reduces the possibility of profundity and this is seen in the difficulties most of them face in the tertiary level. For instance, students in the Anglophone sub-system of education do laboratory exercises in secondary education whereas those in the Francophone sub-system of education have no laboratory experience in secondary education. These differences explain the confirmation of the 167 respondents who strongly agree that there are divergent objectives in the syllabi spelt out in the two sub-systems of education. This is to emphasize the fact that these differences are barriers to the provision of equal learning opportunities in the curricula of the two sub-systems of education in Cameroon.

For the 55 respondents who disagree and the 8 who strongly disagree, out of 400 respondents, it can be argued that these are persons who probably hold that the objectives are the same, but the divergence lies in personal input of each student and

the necessity accorded to the subject by each institution. While discussing with a vice principal, a chemistry teacher in the French sub-system of Education in Bamenda, it becomes noticeable that the differences are not so much. He argues that the divergences arise from the methods and the culture of each institution. He underlines that the Competency-Based Approach recently introduced serves as a point of convergence in the methods of teaching in the two sub-systems of education. With this opinion, one understands the reason for which some respondents disagree or strongly disagree with the fact that there are divergences in the objectives spelt out in the syllabi of the two sub-systems of education.

Figure 1 further highlights the percentage distribution of opinions on the divergence of the curriculum objectives in the syllabi of the two sub-systems. From this figure, it is clear that more than 80% of the sampled respondents perceive the divergences of the curriculum objectives in the two sub-systems as a problem to democratic values of education as compared to about 15% who disagree and strongly disagree.

6.3 Divergence of the Curricular Contents in the Two Sub-systems

Table 2: Distribution of Opinions on the divergence of the curriculum contents taught in the two sub-systems

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Indifferent | Total |
|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|-------------|-------|
| Numbers | 165 | 158 | 60 | 10 | 7 | 400 |
| Percentage | 41,3 | 39,5 | 15,0 | 2,5 | 1,8 | 100 |

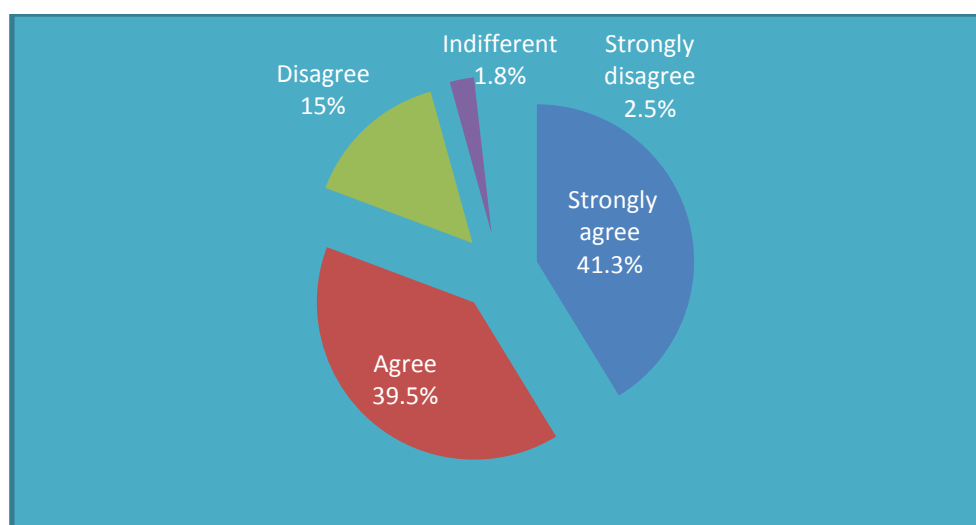


Figure 2: Percentage distribution of opinions on the divergence of the curriculum contents taught in the two sub-systems

Table 2 presents opinions on the divergence of curriculum contents in the two sub-systems of education. Out of the 400 respondents, 165 strongly agree and 158 agree that there is a divergence which constitutes a problem for the democratic education. This gives a total of 323 respondents confirming the divergences. Those who strongly disagree are 10 and those who disagree are 60 giving us a total of 70 respondents who deny that this divergence is not a problem to democratic education. The discrepancies in the curriculum contents are confirmed by the different number of subjects elaborated in the curriculum. In the first place, the number of subjects differs. For instance, in the French sub-system, the study of different foreign languages is prominent with languages like German, Spanish, Chinese and Latin in some cases. In the English sub-system, these languages do not make part of the curriculum. According to 323 out of 400 respondents to this question, these differences explain the difficulty of attaining equity in the educational system in Cameroon. For the 7 respondents who gave no response, it is probable that these persons are those who think that equity in curricular contents is not necessary for the educational development of Cameroon. This opinion is expressed in focus group discussions with secondary school teachers in Bamenda who argue that *“the process of harmonization is a myth”* to use their expression. While discussing with some members of Cameroon Teachers Trade Union (CATTU), I learned that even language teachers do not see the need for the study of foreign languages like German, Spanish, Italian, Chinese and Latin by students in the Anglo-Saxon sub-system. The argument advanced is that English is the world’s language and if complemented by French, bilingualism is enough to provide these students a window to the world. The study of other languages is superfluous and waste of resources given the scarcity of teachers. In this case, they acknowledge the differences, but they do not see the need for the provision of equal learning opportunities as far as this matter is concerned.

6.5 Divergence of the Methods of Teaching and Evaluation in the Two Sub-systems

Table 3: Distribution of opinions on the divergence of teaching methods and evaluation in the two sub-systems

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Indifferent | Total |
|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|-------------|-------|
| Numbers | 150 | 129 | 87 | 26 | 8 | 400 |
| Percentage | 37,5 | 32,3 | 21,8 | 6,5 | 2,0 | 100 |

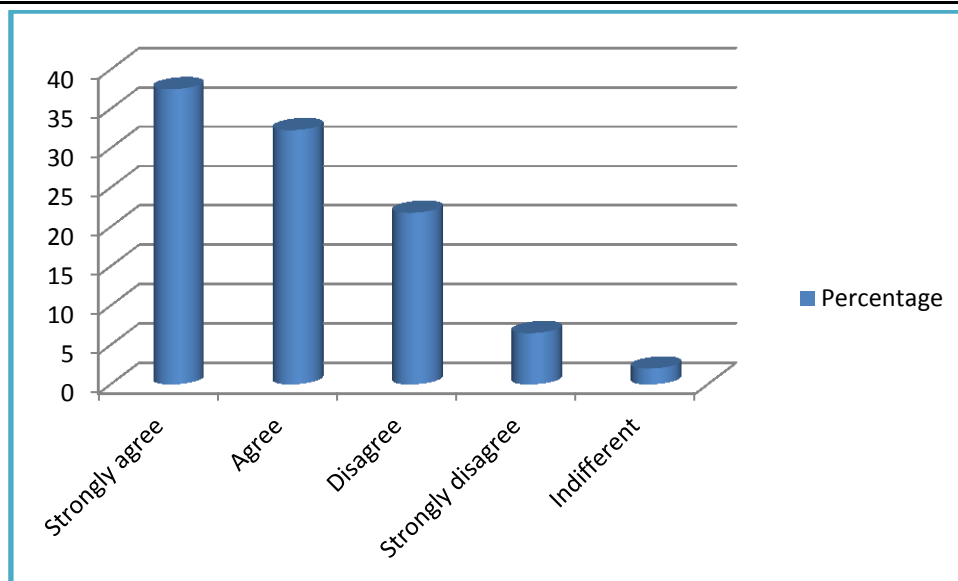


Figure 3: Percentage distribution of opinions on the divergence of teaching methods and evaluation in the two sub-systems

Table 3 explains how the differences in teaching and evaluation processes and procedures hinder the process of harmonization. Out of the 400 respondents, 150 strongly agree and 129 agree with the question. This gives a total of 279 respondents who are in accord with the fact that the divergences in teaching and evaluation methods compromise the possibility of harmonization. The different methods of teaching are expressed in the teaching of subjects like Mathematics, Physics, Biology, Chemistry and Geology. For Mathematics in particular, every process of problem-solving is proven in the French sub-system of education. The formula used has to be proven before the teacher proceeds to solve the problem. As stated by the teachers of Mathematics in the interviews, the French sub-system follows a theoretical approach to the study of Mathematics in secondary schools. In this context, great attention is given to Geometry where a lot of analysis and derivation of formulae is practiced. On the other hand, the English Sub-system relies on the applied approach, where great emphasis is given to calculus. In the Anglophone sub-system, the formula is assumed and the teacher proceeds to solve the problem.

This divergence in approaches has been unfavourable to the intellectual growth of students in the Anglophone sub-system of education, especially in the study of Mathematics and Physics. The absence of laboratory exercises in the Francophone sub-system of education has also been unfavourable to the intellectual growth of students in the francophone sub-system of education, especially in the study of Biology and Chemistry. The divergence in the approaches as expressed above is responsible for lack of equal learning opportunities in the educational sub-systems in Cameroon. This fact is confirmed by the greater percentage, which accords with the question. The total

percentage of accordance is 68.8% as opposed to 28.4%, which disagree with the question.

For the total percentage that disagrees (28.4%), it is probable that these are teachers and student teachers who still object the need for equal learning opportunities for persons in different cultural and linguistic learning settings in Cameroon. Some of these responses could also be given by technical school students and teachers whose system of education basically has a French orientation and there seem to be very little difference in teaching methods. Focus group discussions with technical school students testify this fact. The students observe that technical education is under the control of Baccalaureate Office. For this reason, this form of education has a French orientation (Interviews with students, 23rd June 2015).

With regard to the differences in evaluation, the same percentage above (69.8%) accords that this divergence is an obstacle to equal learning opportunities. The assessment procedures for the General Certificate of Education Board are distinct from that of the Baccalaureate Office. To be more precise, there are some basic specializations for Advanced Level General Certificate of Education, which are distinct from those in the Baccalaureate Examinations. While Sports is a subject of evaluation in *Brevet d'Etude du Premier Cycle, Probatoire* and *Baccalaureate*, it is not part of evaluation in the General Certificate of Education Examination. At the same time, a student can choose to sit in for Religious studies in the General Certificate of Examinations, which is absent from the Baccalaureate Examinations in the French sub-system of education. Multiple Choice Questions constitute the first paper in every subject in the General Certificate of Education Examinations. On the other hand, there are no Multiple Choice Questions in all subjects in the *Brevet d'Etude du Premier Cycle, Probatoire* or *Baccalaureate*. These differences in evaluation procedures confirm the difficulty of determining equal learning opportunities.

For the percentage that disagrees with the position (28.4%) or those that remain indifferent, one can infer that these are persons who do not accept harmonizing learning and evaluation procedures as necessary steps towards educational development in Cameroon. Probably, these are also persons who consider harmonization as a means to the destruction of the English sub-system of education. This opinion comes up in focus group discussions with teachers in the English sub-system of education in Government Bilingual High School Mendong and Essos. The views in question therefore explain the results as presented in table 3 and Figure 3.

The existence of two examination boards explains the problem above. Respondents who deny the harmonization of teaching and evaluation procedures testify that the two examination boards manage public examinations differently. From the information gotten from focus group discussions, these boards have different

examination standards. The General Certificate of Education Board of the Anglophone sub-system is seemingly portraying an admirable standard of managing examinations. This is seen in the increasing number of persons wanting to write technical General Certificate of Education Examinations. Another part of the explanation is the high demand for the Anglo-Saxon sub-system of education. It is this demand that has resulted to what we have described as « academic exodus » from the French sub-system to the English sub-system. In spite of this admiration, it has its own shortcomings.

At the same time, the Baccalaureate Office runs its examinations differently. Some of its objectives, contents and methods of evaluation differ from that of the General Certificate of Education Board. For example, Physical education is a compulsory field of evaluation for all students examined under the auspices of the Baccalaureate Office. This is not the case with the General Certificate of Education Board. Unlike the Baccalaureate Office, the General Certificate of Education Board gives students the opportunity to sit for Religious studies as an academic field. Besides, *Probatoire* examination is a pre-requisite to write *Baccalaureate* in both technical and general education of the French sub-system of education. There is no *Probatoire* in the General Certificate of Education Examinations and a student can write the General Certificate of Education technical examinations at both levels without sitting in for the *Probatoire*. From the information gathered from pedagogic inspectors, students and student teachers, the *Probatoire* examination is archaic. It is an unpleasing heritage of the French colonial system that is no longer in the French system of education. Students from both general and technical forms of education think that this examination has been responsible for academic frustration and high school dropouts. This contention is testified by most of them who think that this examination should be abolished. Some students say that this is merely a promotion examination without a certificate. It is responsible for the lack of popularity of the French sub-system of education.

Considering the respondents in interviews and focus group discussions on the question of two examination boards, it is probable that most persons in the Anglo-Saxon sub-system do not support the view of a common examination board. From discussions, it could be determined in the speeches of persons who showed great passion for the General Certificate of Education Boards. Some inspectors even argue that a common examination board will ruin the credibility of examinations in Cameroon. They argue that the effort to harmonize the examination calendar is already ruining the process of evaluation where everything is done in a rush. These persons probably lack trust in the Baccalaureate Office and also fear the majority French-speaking Cameroonians. Consequently, they are hesitant to subscribe to common teaching, and evaluation procedures as well as a common examination board.

6.5 Pedagogic Discrepancies and Democratic Values of Education

This sub-section tests the hypothesis on the relation between profound pedagogic discrepancies and democratic education values. Here, two elements are highlighted for the test. These include the relationship between the equal learning opportunities and the different curricular contents and the different achievement levels in the sub-systems.

Table 4: Association between democratic values of education and the Different Curricular contents of the Sub-systems

The two systems have different curricular contents democratic values exists in all aspects of education

Crosstabulation

Count

| | | Democratic values exists in all aspects of education | | | | Total |
|--|-------------------|--|-------|----------|-------------------|-------|
| | | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | |
| The two systems have different curricular contents | Strongly Agree | 21 | 16 | 36 | 68 | 141 |
| | Agree | 31 | 15 | 4 | 17 | 67 |
| | Disagree | 14 | 9 | 33 | 29 | 85 |
| | Strongly Disagree | 14 | 9 | 21 | 51 | 95 |
| Total | | 80 | 49 | 94 | 165 | 388 |

| Chi-Square Tests | | | |
|---|---------------------|----|-----------------------|
| | Value | Df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 59,066 ^a | 9 | ,000 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 56,553 | 9 | ,000 |
| Linear-by-Linear association | ,830 | 1 | ,362 |
| N of Valid Cases | 388 | | |
| a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 8,46. | | | |

The Chi Square probability is 0.000, which is less than 0.01 or (1%). This result denies the null hypothesis that democratic values of education and the curricular contents of the two sub-systems are independent. There is a strong relation between these two variables. Pedagogic discrepancies justify lack of democratic values in the school systems. This reinforces the fact that these discrepancies also explain the difficulty of having equal learning opportunities and achievement levels. These differences may be discerned in learning opportunities expressed in teaching objectives, curricular contents,

processes and procedures of examinations. With these differences, there is lack of equity.

Table 5: Association between democratic values of education and the Different Achievement Levels of the Sub-system

The two systems have different achievement levels * democratic values exists in all aspects of education

Crosstabulation

Count

| | | Democratic values exists in all aspects of education | | | | |
|---|-------------------|--|-------|----------|-------------------|-------|
| | | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Total |
| The two systems have different achievement levels | Strongly Agree | 31 | 5 | 38 | 112 | 186 |
| | Agree | 25 | 30 | 26 | 33 | 114 |
| | Disagree | 5 | 14 | 30 | 2 | 51 |
| | Strongly Disagree | 19 | 0 | 0 | 18 | 37 |
| Total | | 80 | 49 | 94 | 165 | 388 |

| Chi-Square Tests | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|----|-----------------------|
| | Value | Df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 138,545 ^a | 9 | ,000 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 152,413 | 9 | ,000 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 25,288 | 1 | ,000 |
| N of Valid Cases | 388 | | |

a. 1 cells (6,3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4,67.

The Chi Square probability is 0.000. This is less than 0.01 or (1%).The result negates the null hypothesis that democratic values of education and different achievement levels of students in the two sub-systems are independent. There is therefore a relation between the two variables, democratic values of education and the achievement levels of students in the two sub-systems. The discrepancies in question justify lack of democratic values of education. The differences in the achievement levels of students in the sub-systems portray problems quality education. For this reason, the urgency of harmonizing some basic educational values cannot be over emphasized.

The results obtained as regards the second hypothesis reveal that profound discrepancies in the two sub-systems of education justify lack of quality education in the school system. The discrepancies range from to teaching objectives, subject contents, evaluation procedures and subsequently different achievement levels. These facts affirm the hypothesis, which holds that lack of democratic values in the educational

system can be explained by discrepancies in the curricula of the two sub-systems thus affecting the standard of education in Cameroon.

7. Discussion

7.1 Profound Discrepancies in the Syllabi of the School Systems

The question of fairness in the educational system in Cameroon is a sensitive issue in Deweyan democratic theory of education. This is because most schools are responsible for educational inequalities. The underlying question is whether the causes of inequalities are political, economic or socio-cultural. This problem stems from the distribution of educational assets in the various regions in the country. The respect for human rights must be primordial in determining the provision of learning opportunities rather than simply fostering political or economic ambitions. Democratic education emphasizes equal access of all persons to quality education. This does not refer to the same subject matter and content of education, but educational facilities that enhance the aptitude and interests of all persons (Dewey, 1966 p.21).

Educational equity is a mandated right to all students in democratic education. This entails equal access to classes, facilities and educational programs irrespective of one's region of origin, race, gender, sexual orientation, first language or other distinguishing characteristics. In upholding educational equity in Cameroon, secondary schools in all parts of the country are required to provide certain programs for students to ensure equal education. For instance, students from different linguistic backgrounds are educated in common skills and competences that enable them to fully integrate into the life of the community.

One major problem arising from pedagogic discrepancies in the school systems is the inequities that continue to exist amongst schools. It is evident that inequities are prevalent in every society. Anything that makes two people different becomes a challenge to society. This is not how things go on in this period of time. Discrimination is a noun that is not discreetly used and differences have become a source of isolation. It is quite disappointing that these inequities are rampant in academic institutions where students are expected to learn commendable values. Schools are expected to be venues where young people experience the principle of compromise and equality. Unfortunately, the situation at stake reveals that one sub-system of education may mean less chances of a better education, less opportunity and a reduced potential for greatness in learning some skills like Mathematics, languages and other Sciences and Arts. Consider the cases of pedagogic discrepancies in the teaching of Mathematics, Physics, Philosophy, Chemistry, Biology, History and languages in the two sub-systems of education. From this premise, it follows that students have not got an equal access to

learn in the educational systems in Cameroon. Not everyone is prioritized in the distinct sub-systems. The problem one has to raise is whether a sub-system of education is an indicator of educational potential or of people who work hard. It is not very uncommon to hear that Francophone students show a good mastery of studies requiring Mathematical skills as opposed to their Anglophone counterparts. This prejudice is fueled by the pedagogic discrepancies in the curricula of the two sub-systems of education.

In this case, one dares to argue that discrimination is still prominent in the different aspects in secondary school education in Cameroon. Physical differences are easy to identify because ignorance and prejudices characterize our schools. Following the Deweyan democratic theory of education, it must be maintained that there is no relation between one's place of origin, colonial cultural background and one's aptitude in learning. It is the place of schools to address these issues as it greatly affects the students both in academic and social lives. The students from the two sub-systems are not given an equal quality of education. It is a regrettable fact that some students are learning more than others in some respects because their school system has better programs and teaching approaches. Take the example of Philosophy, where Logic has been introduced in the first cycle of the Anglophone sub-system of education and is presently not even taught profoundly in the Francophone sub-system of education. Logic is a subject in the Ordinary Level of the General Certificate of Education Examinations. Unfortunately, it is not found in the *Brevet d'Etude du Premier Cycle*.

Also, let us be very precise with the problem of equity and excellence in Mathematics for the students in the two sub-systems of education. Here, it can be argued from two perspectives: Firstly, students in the French sub-system can afford access to better quality education because their school system provides good theoretical and analytical approaches to the study of the subject. For instance, a lecturer in Mathematics says when a student from an Anglo-Saxon sub-system of education is asked to define a concept in Mathematics, he resorts to the rationalisation that definitions are not necessary in Mathematics rather than answering the question. The lecturer says this is not precisely his/her fault because the system trains him/her in applied Mathematics without some necessary theoretical foundations. At the same time, the program for the Anglophones lay emphasis on Calculus to the relative neglect of Geometry, which is found in the program of their Francophone counterparts. This example reveals the profound discrepancies in the syllabi of the two sub-systems. These could be discerned in the objectives and subject contents. The differences in the schools systems easily widen the gap of the academic achievements and standards between the Advanced Level holders and graduates with the *Baccalaureate*. These different achievement levels are outstanding in higher education where students from the two

systems are expected to compete on the same platform. Though there may be exceptions where students with Advanced Level are also outstanding, it has to be noted that some of them have risen in their performance thanks to their hard work and perseverance. Consequently, narrowing the gap of educational inequity through the process of harmonization entails a greater number of successful students.

All students regardless of race, ethnic group, gender, socio-economic status, geographic location, age, language, prior Mathematical learning and achievement require equal access to Mathematical excellence. The concept of equity has profound implications for teaching and learning Mathematics through-out the school community (Socrates, 2003). The assurance of equity and excellence has to be at the core of systematic reform efforts in harmonizing the educational sub-systems in Cameroon.

The case at hand refers to most students including a disproportionate number of students from the Anglophone minorities who leave school without the Mathematical skills they need to thrive in an increasingly complex global economy. All students can learn a significant core of Mathematics and that the entire school community must have high expectations for every child's education (Nelson, Palonsky & McCarthy, 2006 p.34). The poor dispositions of most Anglophone students to Mathematics as compared to their Francophone counterparts require a critical consideration. The problem here can also be traced in the absence of a harmonized program to foster equity and excellence for all learners. Culture and linguistic diversity do not justify discrepancies in academic standards. In a bid to increase the participation and success of under-presented groups as proposed by the multicultural theory of James Banks, the arguments upholding a harmonized curriculum require great attention. It is therefore important to challenge these inequities in Cameroonian secondary schools and seek remedies to the problems arising.

7.2 Differences in Teaching and Evaluation Compromise Quality Education

Democratic conception of education especially in Deweyan terms requires aspects of equity and quality education. The exigencies of equity in education refer to fairness and equal access to opportunities. Fairness here must be understood in Rawlsian context where the principle of difference is binding in the execution of justice. Here, the vulnerable groups or the minorities are favoured in order to enhance their progress and well-being. This situation is antithetical to "might is right" ethics or "survival of the fittest" conditions of life (Rawls, 1999). In the application of Rawlsian principle of difference, democratic education enhances the needs, interest, preferences, desires and aptitudes of the vulnerable or weak students in order to ensure their participation and integration in the life of the community (Dworkin, 1972). It is fairness or equity that ensures quality education in a democratic context. Therefore, the discrepancies and

problems expressed in the curricula of the two sub-systems of education betray the absence of equity and consequently quality education.

Besides, these problems extend to other aspects in the management of the curricula of the two sub-systems of education in Cameroon. One identifies problems in different examinations and evaluation procedures and those associated with human resource personnel. The problem of equity is discernable in the distribution of human resources in the two sub-systems of education. What could be interpreted is that the two sub-systems of education do not have the same status. The English sub-system is the underdog as far as the provision of teachers in both general and technical secondary schools is concerned. These problems provoke other associated shortcomings in the provision of equity and quality education to Cameroonian citizens. For example, the Higher Teacher Training Colleges and the Higher Technical Teacher Training Colleges in Cameroon train teachers for the two sub-systems. The problem that arises is that the recruitments of teachers on the basis of language of expression do not provide an equitable distribution in the two school systems. Following the arguments of Cameroon Teacher Trade Union, the English speaking part of Cameroon is disfavoured in this situation. This problem is further aggravated by the fact that teachers trained who have English as their first language of expression are sent to teach in Francophone schools. Also, Cameroonians of French-speaking expression is sent to teach in Anglophone schools in English, a language they do not master. This perspective contradicts the thesis advanced by Bernard Fonlon Nsokika on the case for bilingualism in Cameroon. A teacher worthy of the name and integrity has to master the subject matter and the medium of communication; otherwise, he/she un-teaches the pupils or students.

Further, technical education in Cameroon is presented as an example of assimilation in education. The French orientation of technical education and its associated pedagogic problems betray the absence of equity and quality education in Cameroon. This form of education and the exigencies of its public exams provoke high school dropouts thus rendering technical education unpopular to many English speaking Cameroonians. For example, the *Probatoire*, which is a promotion examination in the French sub-system, is not in the English sub-system. What is unfortunate is that this examination is imposed on English-speaking Cameroonians who intend to sit for the *Baccalaureate*. However, the Technical General Certificate of Education Examinations comes to rescue those who have been frustrated by the *Probatoire*. The question that arises is why these discrepancies in teaching and evaluation? Success in the General Certificate of Education Examinations is determined by the number of papers passed as opposed to the point average in the Baccalaureate Examinations. These differences pose problems of questioning the quality and standards of one system as opposed to the other. The social implication relates to the perception persons from one sub-system

have with regard to those in the other system. Each sub-system claims superiority to the relative neglect of values in the other sub-system. Following James Banks multicultural theory, no culture is superior to the other. Each culture has something to offer to the other. This calls for tolerance, respect of others identities and values with a spirit of openness. This is a relevant perspective for Cameroonians in the two sub-systems, where they are expected to learn from one another, respect diversity and cultural identities of each culture and be open to exchange values that will enhance educational development of Cameroon. This attitude is antithetical to the conflict of cultural superiority in education, where the some Cameroonians claim the Anglophone sub-system is the best and some argue the Francophone sub-system is the best (Ngalim, 2014a). It is not the argument that determines quality. It is not the culture that assures quality. Instead, it is the inputs and the processing that enhance appropriate output.

In an attempt to break the discrepancies that compromise equity and quality assurance in the school systems, it is imperative to refer to the different philosophies that promote unity and ensures quality teaching in a multicultural environment, either in the general or the technical sector. Breaking the walls of pedagogic differences stand a better chance to ensure fairness in curricular organization, the conservation of cultural patrimony and the enhancement of education to good citizenship (Mvesso, 2005, Fonkoua, 2007). Finally, mobility of students from schools in one sub-system to another within the country has little problems as parents move from one part of the country to another without fear of quality education for their children.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

Breaking the walls of the differences of the contents that is studied in the two sub-systems of education is imperative. For this objective to be attained, a few questions have to be answered. What is the purpose of the Curriculum? What are the objectives of the Curriculum? What should be taught to Cameroonian secondary schools students of Cameroon? Answers to these questions define the purpose for the Curriculum. To examine the contents, there is a need for educational stakeholders to compare the different subjects studied in the two sub-systems. Are there the same or some are more than others? Should the two sub-systems have the same number of subjects or the reconciliation should be limited to core subjects? These questions provoke us into thinking about the steps towards breaking the walls of pedagogic differences.

Specifically, there is a need for a basic agreement of what is taught from Forms one (sixieme) to forms five (seconde). With this requirement, which subjects have to be dropped or maintained in the two sub-systems? For instance, the study of Agriculture (practised in form of Manual labour) is prominent in the English Sub-system but

neglected in the French Sub-system. A synthesis of values means this field of study has to be introduced into the two sub-systems of education, even though taught in different languages. In an attempt to break the walls of pedagogic discrepancies, Ahidjo asserted;

(...) It is impossible for the children of one and the same country to be educated under different systems. We do not believe that language barrier is sufficient enough to prevent the harmonization of syllabus and structures. We have already expressed our believes that harmonization is not intended to ensure the domination of one linguistic group by another but (...) to gradually help to create an original culture, which retains what is valuable from foreign cultures and adds what is valuable of our own"

(Nguegan, 1983: No 2778 in Fonkeng, 2004:186)

Besides, the elaboration of the subject contents is absolutely necessary for a synthesis of values in the two sub-systems. The elaboration of the subject contents refers to the breaking of the different subjects into teachable schemes as stipulated in the syllabi so that the content to be taught, objectives and evaluation procedures are not very much different. What do secondary school students need to know? This question has evolved to; what do secondary school students need to be able to do? These questions apply to every subject or course because what learners learn "in order to know" include helping them "in order to do". This view is shared by Menskowski (1990 p. 40), and Dewey: (1966 p.71). Learning "in order to know" is not set aside, but it is a fundamental component of "learning in order to do". This view is the blend of theory and practice in the democratic conception of education.

In the context of the elaboration of the subject contents, two pedagogic components have to be taken into consideration. At the end of learning each topic or item in the subject, what should the student be able to do? The subjects as indicated in the syllabi. In the Anglophone sub-system for example, the study of Chemistry, Physics, Biology, and Geology is accompanied by laboratory exercises. This instills in the students the competence of doing what they know while in secondary education.

Equal access of all students to the same learning opportunities. The two sub-systems need to complement each other by being open to the merits of what each sub-system already has. For instance, Physical Education requires special attention in the Cameroonian secondary school curricula. In *The Republic*, Plato emphasizes the importance of physical education in the organization of the curriculum. The Latin adage testifies a healthy mind in a healthy body "*Mens sana in corpore sano*". MINESEC has to define the standards for the evaluation of this aspect of education in public examination. The Anglophone sub-system neglects this aspect of learning in its evaluation procedures. The effect is that students from this sub-system see this aspect of

learning as insignificant. Moreover, the study of foreign languages like German, Spanish and Chinese is prominent in the Francophone sub-system.

An adaptation of common teaching methods and learning experiences break the walls of pedagogic discrepancies. Teaching methods refer to the processes and procedures of guiding learners to grow in intellectual and moral values. The synthesis of the teaching methods comes up in the recent innovation of the Competency-Based Approach. The problem arises at the level of the contents taught employing these methods. If the competency-based approach entails that what is taught in the two sub-systems must be done in the same way, then there is a problem. Are the schemes of work elaborated in such a way that they have the same contents? Are the teachers having common didactic materials in the two sub-systems? Do the textbooks provide the same contents of study in the two sub-systems? If these questions are answered in the negative, then the competency-based approach has many problems to overcome. The exigencies of clarity and precision require that the competency-based method is employed within the set-up of common values in the two sub-systems, expressing common objectives of learning. The justification here is that a system of education cannot maintain a common method with different values expecting the same outcomes.

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