

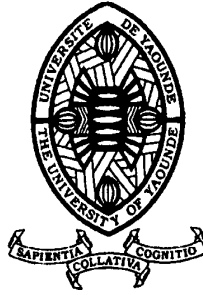
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## **THE ATTITUDES OF FORM FOUR AND FORM FIVE STUDENTS OF GHS NKOR NONI TOWARDS THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

A Dissertation Submitted to the Higher Teacher Training College Yaounde in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of a Postgraduate Teacher's Diploma (DIPES II) in English Language,

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my family.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The completion of this dissertation was possible with the support of several people. I would like to express my gratitude to all of them. First of all, I am extremely grateful to my supervisor, Professor Daniel Nkemleke, for supervising this work.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This investigation sought to determine the attitudes of both Form Four and Form Five students of GHS Nkor Noni towards their learning of the English language. The theoretical framework adopted for the study was the socio-psychological approach as developed in Gardner and Lambert (1972) and Gardner (1959). The subjects selected for this investigation comprised 120 Form Four and Form Five students who study English Language and are being taught all other subjects in the English language. Through the use of a 17 item questionnaire, data were collected from these students and their responses subsequently coded and entered using the Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS). The results indicated that the students have a positive attitude towards learning the language because they are instrumentally motivated to do so. However, they are faced with some difficulties (lack of textbooks, difficulties understanding the teacher and being unable to practise their language) which impede them from easily learning the language. It was suggested that educators who qualify to teach English Language should have received a relevant training and qualification in English Language.

## **RÉSUMÉ**

Cette étude cherchait à déterminer les aptitudes linguistiques des élèves des classes de Form Four et Form Five en Anglais. Cette recherche s'inscrit dans le sillage des théories sociopsychologiques développées par Gardner et Lambert (1972) et Gardner (1959). Dans le cadre de cette analyse, nous avons sélectionné 120 élèves des classes de Form Four et Form Five qui, bien que suivant des cours tous dispensés en Anglais, suivent également un cours d'anglais inscrit dans leur programme scolaire. Les données qui ont été collectés à travers des questionnaires ont par la suite été codées et introduites dans le logiciel de calcul statistique SPSS. Les résultats obtenus ont révélés que ces élèves avaient une bonne aptitude à leur apprentissage de l'anglais, cela grâce à leur motivation. Cependant, ils sont confrontés à certaines difficultés qui les empêchent d'apprendre aisement la langue.

## CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this work, entitled “The Attitudes of Form Four and Form Five Students of GHS Nkor Noni towards the English language” was carried out by **Botashe Kiyah**, under my supervision.

Signature .....

**Daniel Nkemleke**  
**Professor**  
**E N S Yaounde**

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS**

GHS: Government High School

NS: Native Speakers

L2: Second Language

L2: Second Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

TESL: Teaching English as a Second Language

SBE: Standard British English

CamE: Cameroon English

GCE O/L : General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level

F4: Form Four

SPSS: Statistical Packages for Social Science

F5: Form Five



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## **CHAPTER ONE :**

### **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

This research work entitled “The Attitudes of Form Four and Form Five Students of GHS Nkor, Noni towards the English language”, attempts an investigation of the attitudes Form Four and Form Five students of the said institution have towards the English language. For the purpose of understanding of this study, this chapter will present an overview of the study area, that is, the general background to the study. It will also articulate the statement of the problem, the objectives, the research questions, the significance of the study, the scope, the definition of key concepts and the structure of the work.

Adams (1735 - 1826), the second president of the United States of America, made a prophetic declaration about the future universal role of English when he said “English will be the most respectable language in the world and the most universally read and spoken in the next century, if not before the end of this one.” (Cited in Kachru 1992:2). Today, in the twenty first century, the role of English as an international language cannot be disputed. English has become the world’s leading language. It is the world’s lingua-franca evident in the position it occupies in world affairs as the language of international communication, politics, commerce, travel, and the media. (Quirk et al 1972; Crystal 2003; Schneider 2007).

Pennycook (2001:78-79) estimates speakers of English to have numbered between 700 million and 1 billion. These figures encompass Native Speakers of English (NS), Speakers of English as a Second language (ESL), and speakers of English as a foreign language. Crystal (2003) approximates that there are about 320 million native speakers of English, 420 million second language users of English, and about 600 million foreign users of English dispersed in more than 40 countries in the world. Given that these estimates date some thirteen years back the present number of speakers would have increased tremendously. The engco forecasting model which has been designed by the English Company (UK) Ltd as a means of examining the relative status of world languages and making forecasts of the number of speakers of different languages based on the demographic, human development and economic data projects that by 2050 the number of

NS will drop while ESL and EFL users will continue to be on the rise. (Cited in Graddol 2001:33).

The global spread of English around the world has resulted in the pluralism of *English*. There is now talk in the literature of new Englishes. Kachru (1985) captures this phenomenon in his new Englishes paradigm where he groups speakers according to their uses in terms of three concentric circles: the inner circle, the outer circle and the expanding circle. Kachru and Nelson (2001:14) equate this classification to the traditional native, ESL, and EFL Speakers of English. Kachru and Nelson (ibid) state that:

Teaching English as a second language has gained more grounds than any other language. Although the more specific teaching as a second language (TESL) cannot be equated with the more general enterprise of language teaching, still there is undoubtedly more international teaching, materials, production and published thought in TESL than in any language of wider communication such as Arabic, French, Hindi, or Spanish.

As the demand for English continues to grow around the globe, especially in the ESL teaching industry, there is a general consensus amongst researchers about the falling standards of the language. Graddol (2001: 26) believes that “the widespread use of English as a language of wider communication will continue to exert pressure towards global uniformity as well as give rise to anxieties about “declining” standards, language change and loss of geolinguistic diversity”.

Cameroon represents a perfect case for exploring the potential issues of the notion of ESL. As a norm-dependent country (Kachru 1996) Cameroon is mainly dependent on British English Standard (SBE) as the norm provider in teaching English. To most students in Cameroon, the goal of learning English is to be able to succeed academically and pursue a job thereafter. The teaching of English in a country such as Cameroon is quite different from that of Britain because it is taught to non-native speakers by non-native speakers, neither teachers nor students who themselves become the next generation of teachers ever having contact with a native speaker. The complex nature of the ESL Classroom is further compounded in Cameroon whose

multilingual setting has necessitated her adoption of a national English – French bilingual policy (Odusina and Ayuk 2005).

Cameroon is a multilingual country where there exists over 280 indigenous languages and none of these languages has risen to a status where it can be used as a lingua-franca. This peculiar heterogeneous language situation does not facilitate linguistic communication; on the contrary, it constitutes a major handicap to linguistic communication in view of a nation-wide lingua-franca that serves as a common linguistic idiom. (Echu 2004). In the absence of a nation-wide lingua franca, the English language has maintained its position as the medium of instruction in Anglophone schools. English is not only used as the medium of instruction, it is also a compulsory subject on the curriculum for secondary school students in both the Francophone and Anglophone sub-systems of education.

There has been concern and dissatisfaction over the marked deficiency in the level of English used by Cameroonian children at all levels of education (Constable 1974; Miller 1976; Spurling 1976; Chia 1980 cited in Odusina and Ayuk 1995). This fall in standard is very glaring in the performance of students recorded at the General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (GCE O/L). Many language researchers have accounted for these falling standards in several ways. According to Chiatoh and Akumbu (2014:23) government's decision to implement English and French as the exclusive language of instruction in Cameroon schools was a naïve decision as the policy are having negative consequences now. They remark "Today, 50 years afterwards, these consequences are surfacing with concerns being intensified about the falling standards of English language in particular and the decline in academic performance across the curriculum in general."

From their own stance, the very fact that Cameroonians have been made to learn in a foreign language such as the English language at the expense of their own local languages is the reason behind falling standards in the English language. From the above quotation, it is also evident that a fall in the standard of the English language also affects academic performance as all other subjects are taught in the English language. Because the English officially recommended as the model to be taught in the Cameroonian classroom is SBE, some language scholars see this to be illusory. Benson (2008:16-17) asserts:

Native-like competence is rarely acquired by anyone who is not surrounded by native speakers. To achieve high-level competence in a second or foreign language, learners require input from highly competent speakers of that language along with regular and sustained practice through communicative interaction in different domains, usually in an environment where that language is used regularly, in addition to study of grammatical rules.

In line with Benson's assertion, there is an ongoing debate amongst scholars about the kind of English that will be appropriate in a multilingual context such as Cameroon. While some are opting that the standards are preserved to enable intelligibility at the international level, some are advocating context specific varieties. Simo Bobda (2000) is of the opinion that teachers of English in Cameroon should approximate a native-like variety of English. He, however, acknowledges the existence of an autonomous variety of English in Cameroon, but maintains that "I believe that we are still, in many ways, dependent upon British and American norms. Our educational and professional successes are still determined by these norms. (Simo Bobda 2002:vi). Atechi ( 2006:11) Corroborates the above view as he states:

It is not new to point out that among the English Varieties in the world, only two have held sway in terms of standards and codification. That is British English and American English. By every indication, these two varieties, often referred to as the two main native varieties, are seen as the model for other varieties.

According to Ngefac (2011) it is not possible for Cameroonian teachers to effectively teach SBE because they are non-native speakers of the language and to claim to teach SBE in Cameroon is a situation he describes as the blind leading the blind. There is third school opting for the mother tongue to be promoted at the expense of SBE. However, teachers of English are left with no option but to rely on SBE norms since Cameroon English has not yet been codified.

Chiatoh and Akumbu (ibid:26), observe that as Cameroon worries about development, there is also worry about the standards and quality of education. Teachers of English in Cameroon are preoccupied with reviving the falling standards of the language. The main thrust of L2 classroom research in the 1970s has been the persistent search for strategies of efficacious instruction in a



bid to mould learners to become proficient users of the language both in and out of the classroom environment. Williams (1990:7) holds that:

Factors of motivation and personality have been given importance as influences on language learning. The idea is that we should make the student feel that he is a person to be valued by the teacher and the peer group alike. Language teaching has thus become more student-centered.

Motivation is therefore seen as a major factor in L2 learning. Students can successfully learn a language if they have strong motivational reasons for doing so. Corder (1967:164) also stresses the importance of motivation in language learning as he says “Let us say that, given motivation, it is inevitable that a human being will learn a second language if he is exposed to the language data. Closely related to motivation is the concept of attitudes. The degree of motivation that language learners bring into the classroom will determine the kind of attitude they have towards learning the language and hence their output in the language.

This partly accounts for the reason why this investigation set out to determine the attitudes of Form four (hereafter F4) and Form five (F5) students in a rural area such as Noni. The situation of the English language learning in Cameroon is a complex one as Blasius and Akumbu (2011) assert that a vast majority of school-going age children in Cameroon can be said to be living in difficult conditions, because although they speak and understand minority languages at the time they start formal education, they are compelled to learn in foreign languages which neither they nor their parents speak and understand. (ibid:26)

This, seemingly, is what obtains in rural areas. This research endeavour has as its population sample F4 and F5 Students of GHS Nkor, which is a rural area. It is important to mention here that Noni is still a rural area and is plagued by the socio-economic realities of most rural areas in the country. For instance, there is still no access to electricity; the villagers depend on other light-giving sources such as kerosene lamps and solar touches. Moreover, most of the inhabitants are subsistent farmers with no source of income. It, therefore, becomes difficult for them to meet the demands of providing quality education for their children. They hardly pay all the fees not to mention buying textbooks for their children. In view of all these constraints, it is important to

find out the students' attitude towards the English language which is not only a subject on the curriculum but also the medium of instruction. This study, therefore, tries to investigate the attitudes which both F4 and F5 students of GHS Nkor hold towards the English language in general. In the changing scenario of language teaching theories and methodologies, where the learners, rather than the teachers, are gaining a central position, learners' attitude plays a vital role in maximizing learning and teaching output. Learners' attitude can be defined as a collection of feeling regarding language use and its status in the society.

This research, which deals with the attitudes of F4 and F5 students towards the English language, is significant in many ways. It will not only add to the existing literature on students' attitude, but will also help present and future language teachers to be able to adapt their teaching methods so as to instill positive attitudes in their students towards learning the language. Stewart (1972:472) rightly points out that:

Attitudinal factors have been of great interest to the linguist because such an investigation offers an opportunity to aid the language learning process in that the learners' orientation towards a given linguistic group can easily be changed, thus providing an opportunity to modify their motivation towards learning a second language.

It will also help curriculum designers to design curricula that will meet the needs of the students especially those studying in rural areas as they are faced with different realities from those learning the language in urban areas.

There is a general outcry about the falling standards of the English language in the Anglophone sub-system of education in Cameroon. This marked deficiency in the language proficiency of students is evident in both the written and oral medium of students at higher institutions of learning. The language, however, remains the sole medium of instruction in Anglophone schools, and it is expected that learners in this sub-system of education have a certain level of competence in the language so as to attain academic success and function well in the society as it is the official language. Students learning in rural areas are faced with a double challenge when studying the language as compared to their peers in urban areas. Their socio-economic realities are quite different from those studying in urban areas. It is, therefore pertinent to investigate the attitudes of L2 Learners in a context such as Cameroon in order to decipher the factors that

account for both positive and negative attitudes towards the language. It is against this backdrop that we decided to investigate the attitudes of F4 and F5 students of GHS Nkor, Noni towards the English language in order to ascertain which factors motivate and demotivate them. Given that Noni is still a rural area with no access to electrification yet, it is obvious that the students in this area do not have the level of exposure to the language as compared to those in urban areas. Their learning of the language will be marred by the socio-economic realities which typify Cameroonian rural areas.

The objectives of this study are:

1. To describe their attitudes towards their study of the English language.
2. To investigate how students rate their performance in English Language.
3. To explain, generally, how they perceive the English languages

Every research work is guided by a set of research questions. The research questions which guide this study are:

1. What is their attitude towards their study of the English language?
2. How do the students rate their performance in English Language?
3. Overall, how do they perceive the English language?

This research endeavour is limited only to investigating the attitudes of F4 and F5 students of GHS Nkor. A questionnaire was administered to 120 students of both classes. This was done to delimit the study area to a researchable proportion

In order to give readers a clear picture of what this research sets out to investigate, it will be of utmost importance to define the key word “attitude” as it pertains to this study. Baker (1992:10) defines “attitudes” as a “hypothetical construct used to explain the direction and persistence of human behaviour.” This means that through behaviour, certain stable and enduring dispositions in people can be explained. Ajzen, quoted by Baker (1992:11), views it as “a disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution, or event.” Briefly, attitudes can be said to be self-descriptions or self-perceptions, and, therefore, cannot be directly observed, but must be inferred from observation of personal behaviour. According to *The Black*

*Encyclopedia of Social Psychology* (1995:53), attitudes are said to be “dispositions or tendencies to behave in a generally favourable or unfavourable manner towards the object of the attitude.”

This research work is divided into five chapters: Chapter One entitled “General Introduction”, outlines the background to the study. Chapter Two, “Theoretical Framework and Review of Literature”, presents the theoretical framework on which this work is premised, the second part attempts a review of relevant literature. Chapter Three, “Methodology”, describes the manner in which the data for this study were collected. Chapter Four, “Categorization and Analysis of Data”, presents in numerical form the percentages of the respondents’ responses, and the final part which is the Conclusion, summarises the findings and suggests the implications for pedagogy.

## **CHAPTER TWO :**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

This research work falls within the framework of Second Language Learning. The theoretical framework adopted for the study is the socio-psychological approach as developed in Gardner and Lambert (1972) and Gardner (1959). This chapter will therefore be broadly divided in to two parts: 2.1 will be the theoretical framework, while 2.2 will attempt a review of the related literature.

#### **2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The role of L2 learning motivation has been intensively studied by social psychologists in Canada where French and English are the two official languages. Gardner (1959) hypothesized that L2 learners with positive attitudes towards the target culture and the people will learn the target language more effectively than those who do not have such positive attitudes. Gardner and Lambert (1972) found that aptitude and motivation were the two factors mostly associated with learners L2 achievement. Gardner (1982) in his socio-educational model identified a number of factors which are interrelated when learning a second language. Unlike other research carried out in the area, Gardner's model looks specifically at L2 acquisition in a structured classroom setting rather than a natural environment. Within the model, motivation is perceived to be composed of three elements. These include effort, desire and affect. Effort refers to the time spent studying the language and the drive of the learner. Desire indicates how much the learner wants to become proficient in the language, and affect illustrates the learner's emotional reactions with regard to language study (Gardner 1982).

##### **2.1.1. Integrative motivation**

Motivation has been identified as the learner's orientation with regard to the goal of learning a second language (Crooks and Schmidt 1991). It is thought that students who are most successful when learning a target language are those who like the people that speak the language, admire the culture and have a desire to become familiar with or even integrate into the society in which

the language is used. Falk (1978). This form of motivation is known as integrative motivation. It is also theorised that “integrative motivation typically underlies successful acquisition of a wide range of registers and a native like pronunciation” (Finnegan 1999: 568).

### **2.1.2. Instrumental motivation**

In contrast to integrative motivation is the form of motivation referred to as instrumental motivation. This is generally characterised by the desire to obtain something practical or concrete from the study of an L2 (Hudson 2000). With instrumental motivation the purpose of language acquisition is more utilitarian, such as meeting the requirements for school or university graduation, applying for a job, requesting higher pay based on language ability, reading technical material, translation work or achieving higher social status. Instrumental motivation is often characteristic of L2 acquisition where little or no social integration of the learning into a community using the target language takes place, or in some instances is even desired.

While both integrative and instrumental motivation are essential elements of success, it is integrative motivation which has been found to sustain long-term success when learning a second language. (Taylor, Meynard and Renault 1977: Ellis 1997 : Crookes Et Al 1991). However, this conclusion has not been adequately substantiated. Indeed it seems that it is not so much the type of motivation that counts as its strength. Certainly, a student who has a strong integrative motivation will be likely to succeed, but the same is also true of the student who has strong instrumental motivation. (Harmer, 1983:4).

### **2.1.3 Intrinsic Motivation**

Harmer (1983) suggests that intrinsic motivation plays by far the larger part in most students' success or failure as language learners. Many students according to him bring no intrinsic motivation at all to the classroom. Factors which influence intrinsic motivation include the physical conditions under which the learners are learning the language, the methodology the teacher uses, the teacher; whether the students like the teacher or not and the success of the students. All these can alter a student's motivation either positively or negatively. Attitudes appear in learners as motivation. As regards how motivation can be assessed, McDonough

(1986) observes that there is danger in assessing motivation on the basis of questionnaires and interviews, of expecting actual behaviour to be entirely predictable from expressed attitudes.

## **2.2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This part of the chapter dwells on reviewing literature related to the present study. The review of literature will focus on Native speakers' attitudes towards non-native varieties of English, concerns about the variety of English to be taught in an ESL context, and a review of some empirical works on language attitudes in West Africa with Nigeria and Cameroon as focus.

### **2.2.1 The Notion of Attitudes**

The importance of considering attitudes to the use of English worldwide has been emphasized by Crystal (1985:9) cited in Boyle (1997:3) "The question is not so much do people use English internationally, but in what state of mind , with what attitudes do they use it? Do they see it as a strength or a weakness?" What this implies is that though English has become a global language, not everyone has positive feelings towards its spread and usage. Cooke (1985) cited in Pennycook (2001:80) has described English as a Trojan horse, arguing that it is a language of imperialism and of particular class interests. Both he and Judd (1983) draw attention to the moral and political implications of English teaching around the globe in terms of the threat it poses to indigenous languages and the role it plays as a gatekeeper to better jobs in many societies. English poses a threat to other languages to the survival of other languages. This is especially true for Africa where indigenous languages have been relegated to the background in favour of the English language. Day (1985) has called this situation a linguistic genocide.

Schmied (1991:164) distinguishes three categories of attitudes: attitudes towards certain languages in general, or language stereotypes, attitudes towards specific sociolinguistic topics, or language beliefs, and attitudes towards particular language varieties. This research concerns the first type of attitude which is attitudes of students towards learning the English language while the literature review will tilt towards language attitudes in general. He goes further to say that as attitudes are sometimes felt to be sensitive or personal among people with a heightened national language awareness, even a sensitive political matter, there is often a marked difference between attitudes uttered in public and those uttered privately as well as those uttered in an interview

situation. For this reason, the relationship between the interviewer and the informant is of crucial importance.

### **2.2.1.1 Native Speakers Attitudes towards Non- Native Englishes**

The purists are conservationists of the traditional English. They argue that features which differ from SBE are haphazard deviations that must be corrected. Their fear is that recognising and promoting these varieties is likely to jeopardise the position of English as a world Lingua Franca. They also believe that encouraging such deviations may lead to serious problems of intelligibility; this proposition is defended by scholars such as Quirk (1985); Honey (1989); and Chevillet (1999). Geeraerts (2003) cited in Atechi (2006:11) identifies two schools of thought as far as attitudes towards the English language are concerned. These include the Romantic and the Rationalist models respectively. The proponents of the Romantic model (Prator 1968; Quirk 1990) hold that English as a world language should remain a monolith arguing that international intelligibility will only be guaranteed if a single standard is maintained. The deviations that characterise English language use in non-native contexts have caused some native speakers of English to have a negative attitude towards non-native varieties. Simo Bobda (1994:17) states that

Native speakers' attitude towards non-native Englishes range from outright condemnation to tolerance. Many native speakers strongly believe that the English Language has degenerated in the Outer Circle, and the present situation is that of total disarray... The general feeling in native circles has long been that of caution, suspicion, amusement, and condescension.

Quirk (1990:7) is one of those who still strongly believe that Standard English norms should be maintained in non-native areas, if we do not want to see English degenerate into mutually unintelligible varieties. Prator (1968) stands out clearly as a typical example of this attitude. He is so far the most quoted example of a purist. The title of his paper testifies to this: "The British Heresy in TESL".



### **2.2.1.2 Positive Attitudes towards Non- Native Varieties of English**

Kachru (1996) opposes the romantic view of preserving English as a monolith language. He stands out clearly as a Rationalist, a promoter of native varieties of English across the globe. Kachru (1986:10ff) commenting on the Purists' attitudes, says they exhibit ethnocentrism, that is to say ignoring non-native varieties of English as culture bound codes of Communication. He believes Prator ignores linguistic interference and language dynamics, systematicity of non-native varieties of English, and overlooks the "cline of Englishes" in Language intelligibility and that of exhibiting linguistic colonialism. Firstly, he identifies the kind of tolerance akin to apartheid, with the native speaker enjoying, perceiving the speaker of the outer circle as different. He suggests that this type of attitude can be held responsible, at least in part, for the spread of innovations in the third world Englishes due to its pedagogic implications.

### **2.2.1.3 The Variety of English to be taught in an ESL Classroom**

Talking about falling standards in non-native areas Quirk (1990:7) contends "there is the need for native teachers support and the need for non-native teachers to be in constant touch with the native language". He further observes, "Since research has shown that natives have radically different internalisations, the implications for attempting the institutionalisation of non-native varieties of the language are too obvious for me to mention". He frowns at the liberal way in which issues of standard are handled. Chevillet (1992) concurs with Quirk (1990) when posing the question "would it be reasonable for an EFL teacher to recommend to his students to acquire a Nigerian or an Indian accent? Certainly not...". To him he does not think a teacher will ask his students to approximate a non-nativelike variety.

Simo Bobda (1994) echoes Makoni (1992:8) in thinking that there are many economic considerations behind the fight for maintaining native English as the sole norm. He notes that during recession, it is Britain and America who can sell English teachers and teaching materials unchallenged, an advantage compromised if the New Englishes are recognised in Education in Africa an Asia.

Modiano (1999) airs the same view as Brown (1995) that non-native features should gain legitimacy in the classroom and should be accepted as alternative standards in international

English proficiency tests like TOEFL and TOEIC and suggests that non-native English features should be taught. Simo Bobda (2000) sees two problems that may likely militate against such an ambitious proposal. Firstly, the Limited professional and educational opportunities attached to such features in a world almost exclusively controlled by the West. Secondly, the lack of codification of these alternative standards; a prerequisite for the design of required didactic materials.

On the strength of the above propositions, one can conclude that it will take a long time for attitudes towards non-native varieties of English to gain legitimacy in the ESL classrooms. While waiting for the eventual codification and standardisation of a Cameroon Variety of English, ESL teachers in this context are left with no choice but to fall back on SBE norms.

### **2.2.2 Review of Some Empirical works on Language Attitudes in West Africa**

In many African Nations, language attitudes are seen as a central element in language policy, language use and language learning. (Schmied 1991:163). The general attitude Africans have towards the English language is positive. Findings of studies reveal the functional value of the language. Attitudes to English in Cameroon vary a lot. Chia (2006:120) reports Cameroonians especially in the South West Region spite their own indigenous languages. Speaking the mother tongue is equated to causing rain to fall. This indicates that the English language is held in high esteem. In this part of the country, it is common practice for parents and children to rely entirely on English and pidgin for communication at home. Attitudes of this nature are illustrative of the generalised inclination to use standard forms of English to perpetuate English as the sole medium of instruction in schools.

This parallels what obtains in Nigeria. Babajide (2001:5) investigated the attitudes of Nigerians towards indigenous languages and foreign languages and his findings revealed that:

*because of the heterogeneous multiplicity of languages and cultures in Nigeria and because English language is the unifying tongue with a great instrumental significance, the attitude of Nigerians to English is strongly positive.*

His findings revealed that 85% of Igbo respondents used English almost always in all situations because the language has been with them for centuries. By coincidence, others (speakers of Nigerian languages beside Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa) also recorded 85%. The socio-linguistic factor by which this can be justified is the fact that English is the only language by which they can interact with a wide range of people across cultures outside their provenances. His study further revealed that Nigerians are more favourably disposed in attitudes to French than other European languages and the Muslim majority in Northern Nigeria have positive attitudes towards the use of Arabic.

Chiatoh and Akumbu (2014) observe that Cameroonians are noted for near-zero intolerance towards non-standard use of the language even if they do not end up speaking the desired standard themselves. They pay a lot of attention to differences in accents that reveal ethnic and cultural variations in the use of Cameroon English (CamE). Ironically, Mbangwana (1987) view contrast with the position above as he reported that Cameroonians have a negative attitude towards speakers of English in Cameroon who try to approximate SBE features. This means that those who claim to approximate SBE are looked upon with scorn instead of being applauded. With the rise of different varieties of English around the world, studies in attitudes are tilting towards these new varieties.

Ngefacs (2010) describes the continuum in CamE phonology and investigates attitudes towards the different varieties that make up the continuum. He labels ethnic features as “tribal uneducated features” (Ngefacs 2010:5) with limited reference to the Nso variety. Using the bipolar adjective scales, 67% of the informants think “basilectal tribal English pronunciation should seriously discouraged” (Ngefacs 2010:6). It is interesting to note that while Cameroonians maintain a significantly negative attitude towards ethnolects of CamE, accommodating to near-native English does not escape ridicule as observed by Mbangwana (1987). Koueaga (2008) in investigating the attitudes of some educated Cameroonians doing combined English- French studies at the University of Yaounde I, reveals that Cameroonian indigenous languages are mostly used in the home setting rather than in public sectors such as education and the media. Oyetade (2001) investigation of the attitudes of Nigerians use of foreign languages vis a vis their indigenous counterparts reveals similar findings. The indigenous languages are used for high domains while the primary domains are reserved for indigenous languages. He states that

“English is a prestige language in Nigeria”. However, Kouega (2008) further suggests that these Cameroonians said they are prepared to encourage their children to learn their ancestral languages. From the finding of his study, it can be deduced that Cameroonians are no longer want to stigmatise their indigenous languages but are prepared to preserve and promote them.

Iruafemi (1988) reviewed in Oyetade (2001) surveyed attitudes of 160 parents in Lagos and Ibadan towards the use of indigenous languages in the early stages of their children’s education. He discovered that the majority of the parents were not favourably disposed towards early education in the mother tongue. A negligible percentage of 6.3 of them supported the use of the mother tongue. The use of English alone was supported by 23.7 percent of the respondents while an overwhelming majority of 70 percent supported using both the mother tongue and English simultaneously. This means that the respondents did not completely ignore the use of the mother tongue but encouraged that their children learn it alongside English. Like Kouega (2008) whose respondents recognise the need to promote their indigenous languages, Iruafemi (1988) respondents also recognise the need to preserve their indigenous languages.

Unlike in Nigeria, Tanzania, Ghana etc, Cameroon lacks any numerically domineering ethnic group with regional language, an identical cultural background and other writing factors that could identify such a large ethnic group. (Yuka 2001). As a result of these Pidgin is taking centre stage. Yuka (ibid:146) remarks, “Today, pidgin has virtually taken over the centre stage, while the local languages are are gradually receding to the background. In towns like Limbe, Tiko, Kumba, etc pidgin is creolising. Chia (1984) observes that Pidgin is not only widely spoken; it is a very popular language in Cameroon. Despite the popularity of pidgin, government has resisted elevating it to the status of a national. It is looked down on as an undignified variety. Pidgin has been socially stigmatised as the language of the poor, illiterate class. It has been branded as a distortion of the English language by the educated class. It is commonly referred to as *Bad English* and accused of corrupting the abilities of the young to acquire Standard English. (Yuka 2001:148).

The above literature has reviewed language attitudes in Nigeria and Cameroon. The language attitudes ranged from attitude towards English in general, attitudes towards indigenous languages and attitudes towards pidgin. Different people have different inclinations towards these

languages but it is quite glaring that the English language is favoured as the prestige language, while the other languages are stigmatised and not worthy of use in high domains. From the review of literature, there can be no gainsaying that there exists a wealth of material on language attitudes' in Cameroon, but none of these works so far have attempted an investigation of students' attitudes towards learning the English language in a classroom situation in a rural area such as Noni. This study is therefore novel as its main thrust is to investigate the attitudes of F4 and F5 students' of GHS Nkor, Noni towards the English language.

## **CHAPTER THREE : METHODOLOGY**

### **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explains the procedures used in carrying out this study. It describes the research design, informants, the place where the research was conducted, instruments of data collection, techniques employed in data collection and method of data analysis.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The survey research design was chosen for this study because it takes into consideration the sampling of opinions and attitudes of people. Since the Research Design permits some generalizations to be made from the findings, it therefore best suits this study given that the study aims at surveying the attitudes of F4 and F5 students towards the English language.

#### **3.2 Selection and Description of Informants**

An anglophone school in the North West Region of Cameroon precisely from Bui Division, was selected for this study. This choice was made because Government High School Nkor is situated in a rural area. The F4 and F5 students of GHS Nkor, Noni make up the target population of this investigation. They are made of students learning the English language in an L2 context. We selected 120 students via the random sampling technique; 60 F4 students and 60 F5 students. We chose informants from a rural area such as Noni where we assumed students would be motivated to learn the language but their learning will be marred by the socio-economic constraints typical of rural areas. First of all, these students are natives of Noni who have grown up in homes in which solely L1 is spoken and encounter the language in most cases as they start school. Moreover, Noni, still has no electricity supply and this accounts for the reason why teachers may be reluctant to stay in such a place to teach. The table below shows the distribution of respondents who were chosen for this study.

**Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to class**

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Valid</b>	<b>2,00</b>	1	,8	,8	,8
	<b>4,00</b>	60	50,0	50,4	51,3
	<b>5,00</b>	58	48,3	48,7	100,0
	<b>Total</b>	119	99,2	100,0	
<b>Missing System</b>		1	,8		
<b>Total</b>		120	100,0		

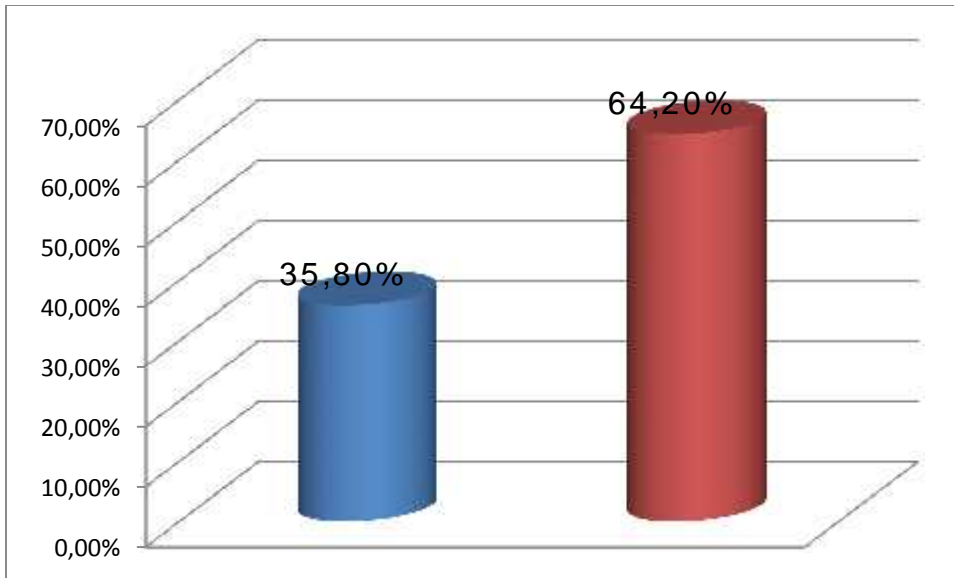
Table 1 presents the percentages of the respondents according to class. The respondents comprised both F4 and F5 students of GHS Nkor. There was an even distribution of the questionnaires to the respondents: 60 questionnaires to F4s and another 60 to F5s. All F4s indicated their class giving a total of 50% while not all F5s indicated their class resulting in 48.3%. Part of the bio data also required the respondents to give their ages. This is shown in the table below.

**Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to age**

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Valid</b>	<b>13,00</b>	2	1,7	1,7	1,7
	<b>14,00</b>	18	15,0	15,3	16,9
	<b>15,00</b>	43	35,8	36,4	53,4
	<b>16,00</b>	30	25,0	25,4	78,8
	<b>17,00</b>	15	12,5	12,7	91,5
	<b>18,00</b>	7	5,8	5,9	97,5
	<b>19,00</b>	3	2,5	2,5	100,0
	<b>Total</b>	118	98,3	100,0	
<b>Missing</b>	<b>System</b>	2	1,7		
<b>Total</b>		120	100,0		

The respondents' ages ranged from 13- 19. 1.7% of the respondents were 13years old; 15% were 14 years old; 35.8% were 15 years old; 25% were 16 years old, 12.5% were 17 years old, 5.9% were 18 years old and 2.5% of the students were 19 years old. It can therefore be deduced that the mean age of the respondents is 16 which is just normal for the classes chosen for this investigation. This shows that they are neither too young nor too old for the class. Their ages are just perfect for their class. It was also vital to know the sexes of our respondents and this is shown in the figure below.





**Figure 1: Distribution of respondents according to sex**

The percentage of female respondents almost doubles that of male respondents. The female respondents were 64.2% while the male respondents were 35.8% giving a ratio of 1:1.79. But at the time of the distribution of the questionnaires to the students, the classes seemed to be predominantly filled with males. The random sampling of the subjects unfortunately resulted in more girls filling in the questionnaires.

As far as the informants were concerned, they were exclusively students. Teachers and the rest of the school staff were not required to fill in the questionnaire. F4 and F5 students in Anglophone Secondary Schools make up the first cycle of secondary school and they are the classes soon to face the English Language in public exams such as the GCE O/L. So it was necessary to investigate attitudes of students in such classes to evaluate their attitude towards the language so as to determine whether such attitudes could lead to good performance or not.

### **3.3 Instrumentation**

Data were collected through the use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The qualitative research methods employed in this study included participant observation and the researcher's impressions. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) talking about the importance of this method posit that:

Qualitative research is multi-method in focus involving an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Participant observation was used here which permitted the researcher to be part of the target population being investigated.

According to Adler and Adler (1994:378) “participant observation enjoys the advantage of drawing the observer into phenomenological complexity of the world, where connections, correlations and causes can be witnessed as they unfold.” Besides, this method of research seeks to understand the meanings and significance of these actions from the perspectives of those involved. Moreover it usually focuses on a small number of individuals, groups, or settings. (Richards 2003).

### **3.4 Questionnaire**

Since the qualitative approach could not adequately address the problem being investigated, the quantitative approach was included. This was the use of a 17 item questionnaire.(see appendix). The questionnaire was chosen because of its succinctness. The questionnaire survey is one of the most common methods of data collection on attitudes and opinions from a large group of participation. It has been used to investigate a wide variety of questions in L2 reasearch. According to Dornyei & Taguchi (2010), questionnaires are very popular since they are easy to construct, extremely versatile, capable of gathering a large amount of information quickly in such a way that is readily processable. The questionnaire was designed to elicit factual information from F4 and F5 students on their attitudes towards the English language. It was made up of both closed and open-ended questions where the informants were required to specify and give reasons. A detailed description of the questionnaire will be seen later.

### **3.5 The Content of the Questionnaire**

The questionnaire provided some space for background information. In that section, the informants were supposed to specify their class, sex and age. The questions generally required the informants to react to the English language. How they perceived it. They were also asked to

make an appraisal of their own English; for instance, to say whether they rate themselves in the four language skills as "good", "average" "very good" or "excellent". This was also done for grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. In this way all the English language skills plus the above-mentioned three aspects were assessed. Other questions inquired about the frequency of their English Language lessons, whether they were boring or interesting and to also say whether they attended all their lessons or not. They were also asked to indicate if they had all their textbooks or not. The questions further demanded that they rate their own attitude towards the English language in terms of positive, very positive, negative or very negative. This was done in order to assess their attitude towards the English language.

### **3.6 Method of Data Analysis**

Given that the data collected for this study had to be quantified, we had to rely on the computer for part of the analysis. The computer is essential for the analysis of most quantitative research data, since it can handle complex analysis of large amounts of data in a very short time and at a very reasonable cost. (Seliger and Shohamy 1989:238). The data were then coded and entered using the Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) which would eventually present the frequency of the students' responses numerically on bar charts, pie charts, and tables for further analysis.

### **3.7 Difficulties Encountered**

No research endeavour can be carried out successfully without facing some difficulties. First of all, there was limited time to collect the data which was needed for this research. This was because the data were collected one week after school resumption and we were expected to also start school a week after secondary schools had resumed. So there was very little time to observe the students and interact with them.

Moreover, the respondents had problems understanding some of the questions on the questionnaire. They did not easily grasp what some of the questions required from them and as a result asked questions every now and then, and this called for intervention on our part, especially, the question which required them to estimate the percentages of the frequency with

which they interacted with the English language, Pidgin, and Mother tongue in formal and informal environments. Some of the questions really appeared complex to them, however they were clarified and this made them provide the necessary data for the study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR : CATEGORIZATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA**

### **4.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents and analyses data obtained from the students' responses to the questionnaire. The data is classified on the bases of the research questions this study seeks to answer. This, therefore, implies that in our analysis, the research questions will be answered. The tables and figures present the frequency of the students' responses and this is shown in the tables and charts in percentages.

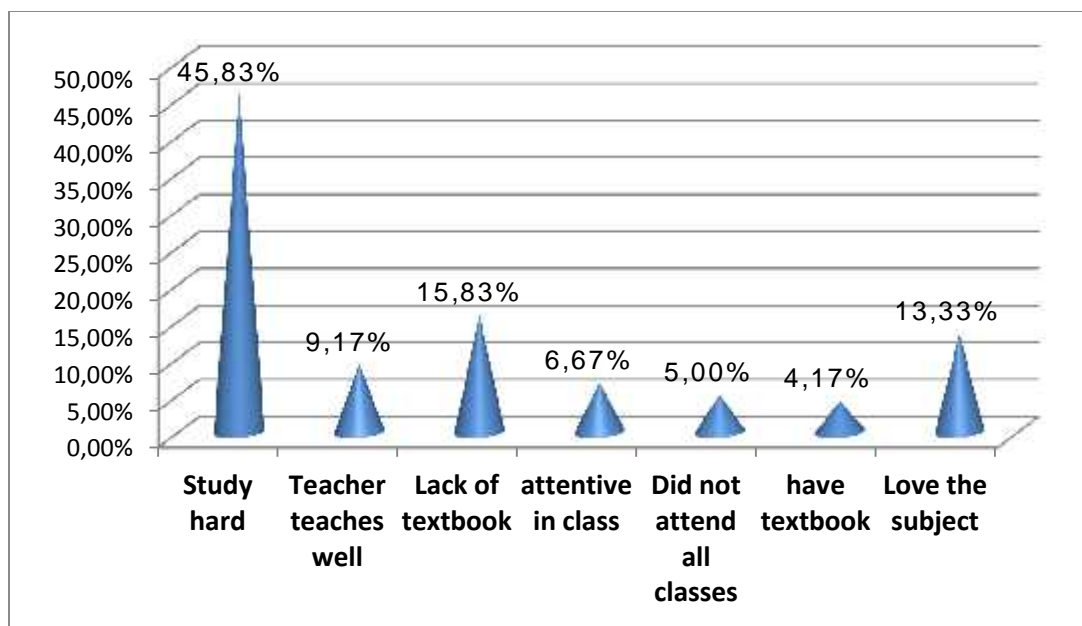
### **4.1 STUDENTS SELF RATING OF THEIR PERFORMANCE IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

The students were asked to rate their performance in the English Language. They were given a mark range to select from. The table below shows the students' performance in the subject in the previous academic year. Since the data were collected at the beginning of the academic year, the students had to respond based on the previous academic year. The F4s were expected to respond based on their performance in Form Three, while the F5s would have done so based on their F4 performance.

**Table 4: Highest Mark Scored in the Subject**

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Valid</b>	<b>8-10</b>	14	11,7	11,8	11,8
	<b>11-13</b>	23	19,2	19,3	31,1
	<b>14-16</b>	46	38,3	38,7	69,7
	<b>17-20</b>	36	30,0	30,3	100,0
	<b>Total</b>	119	99,2	100,0	
<b>Missing System</b>		1	,8		
<b>Total</b>		120	100,0		

The table above shows that 11.7% of the students said they scored between (8-10), 19.2% scored between (11-13), 38.3% scored between (14-16) while the remaining 30.0% scored between (17- 20). 1 student did not respond to this particular question. The students were further asked to provide reasons why they had the mark they had. And their reasons can be seen in the figure below.



**Figure 2: Reasons advanced for marks**

The students provided several reasons why they thought they had the mark they had. 45.83% accounted for their marks on the bases of the fact that they studied hard. Studying hard means revising lessons taught in class back at home. 9.17% said they had the mark because the teacher teaches well, 15.83% said they lacked the textbook and that is why they had a low mark; 6.67% attributed their mark to being attentive in class, 5.00% said they had a low mark because they did not attend all their classes; 4.17% had their textbook while 13.33% attributed their marks to the love for the subject. This shows that the students have a positive attitude towards learning the subject as a higher percentage of their reason is because they studied hard. We could also infer from the figures that the lack of textbook is a major handicap to the students' performance in the subject.

#### **4.1.1 Students' Self Rating of their Competence in the Four language skills**

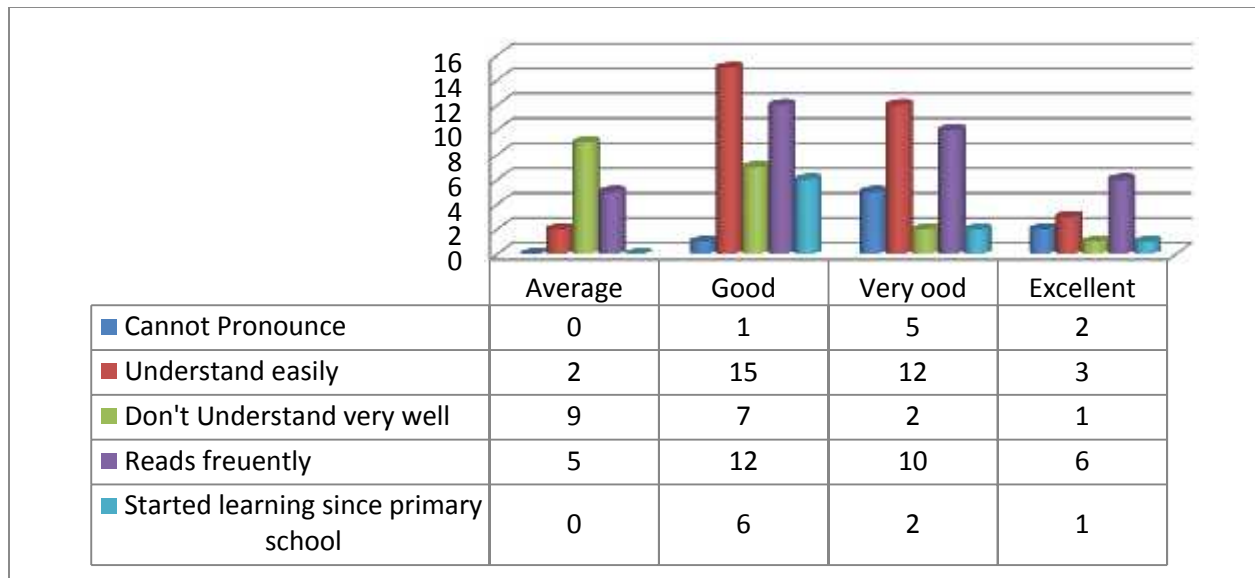
Since this study sets out to investigate students' attitude, it was necessary that we get the students' own views on how they feel about their competence in the four major English language skills. As such, they were asked to rate their proficiency in reading, writing, listening and speaking.

**Table 5: Students' self-rating of proficiency in reading**

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Valid</b>	<b>Average</b>	20	16.7	18.0	18.0
	<b>Good</b>	40	33.3	36.0	54.1
	<b>Very good</b>	27	22.5	24.3	78.4
	<b>Excellent</b>	24	20.0	21.6	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	111	92.5	100.0	
<b>Missing</b>	<b>System</b>	9	7.5		
<b>Total</b>		120	100.0		

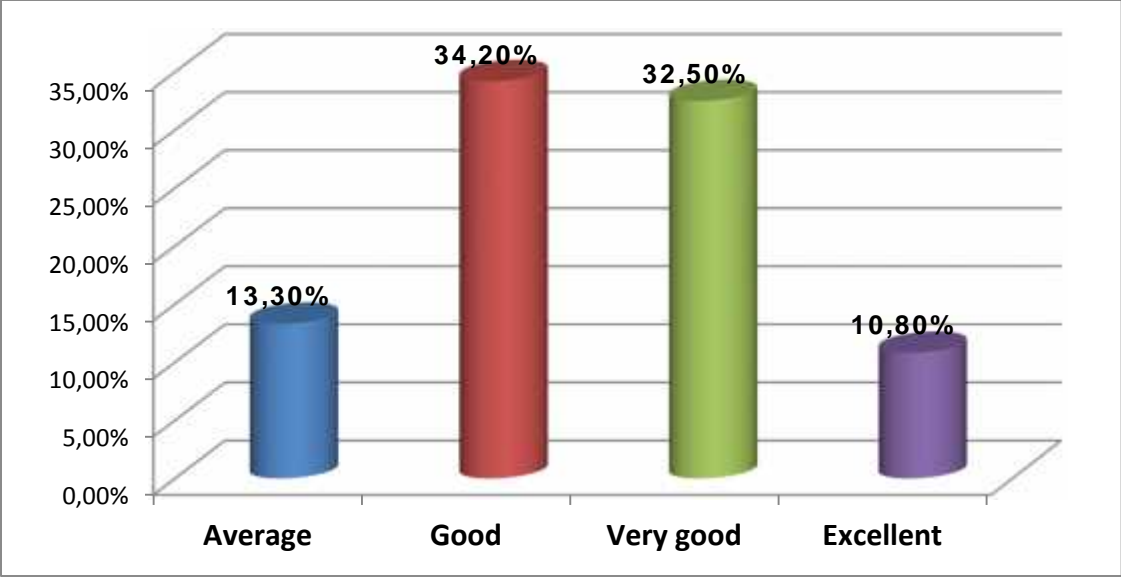
From the figure above, 16.7% rated their reading skills as "average", 33.3% rated theirs to be "average", 22.5% of the students felt their reading skill is "very good" while 20.0% considered theirs to be "excellent". 7.5% of the students did not rate their proficiency in English. The reasons for their choices can be seen in the figure below.





**Figure 3: Reasons advanced for level of proficiency in reading**

For the students who rated their reading skills as “average”, 2 of them gave the reason that they understand easily when they read, 9 said when they read they don’t understand well, 5 of them said they read frequently. For those who rated their reading as “good”, 1 said he or she could not pronounce well, 15 attributed theirs to the fact that they easily understand, 7 said they don’t understand well, 12 said they practice reading frequently and 6 said they had begun reading since primary school. Those who rated their English as “very good” ironically said they cannot pronounce well. If you cannot pronounce well, one would normally expect such a person to rate their reading as “average or “good”. 12 reported that they read and understand easily, 2 reported that they read and don’t understand well, 10 said they read frequently and 2 said they started reading since primary school. It is still ironic that 2 people rated their reading as “excellent” and put forward the reason as cannot pronounce. 3 said they read and easily understand, 1 said she reads and doesn’t understand well, 6 said they read frequently while 1 said she started reading since primary school. 19 respondents gave no reason for their level of proficiency. It was discovered that the students had difficulties for their rating. Students were expected to also rate their proficiency in writing which they did in the following percentages.



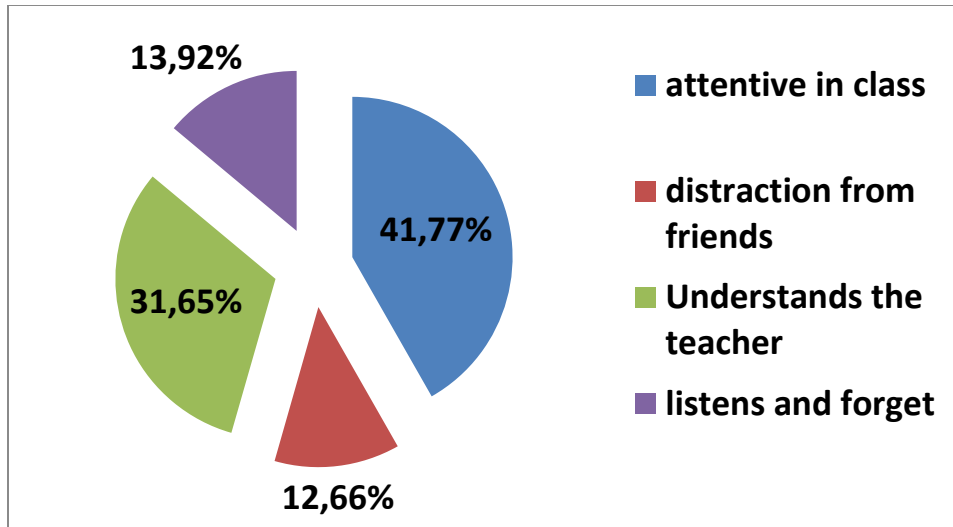
**Figure 4: Students’ self-rating of proficiency in writing**

13.30% rated their English writing skills to be “average”, 34.20% rated theirs to be “good”, 32.50% rated theirs as “very good” and 10.80% rated theirs as excellent. The students did not really understand the criterion which they could use to rate their writing skills. Most of them associated their proficiency in writing to having good hand writing while a few attempted to say they spelt well. Some even said they had been taught how to write since primary school. Even those who claimed to spell well had spelling problems as they filled in the questionnaires.

**Table 6: Students’ self- rating of level proficiency in listening**

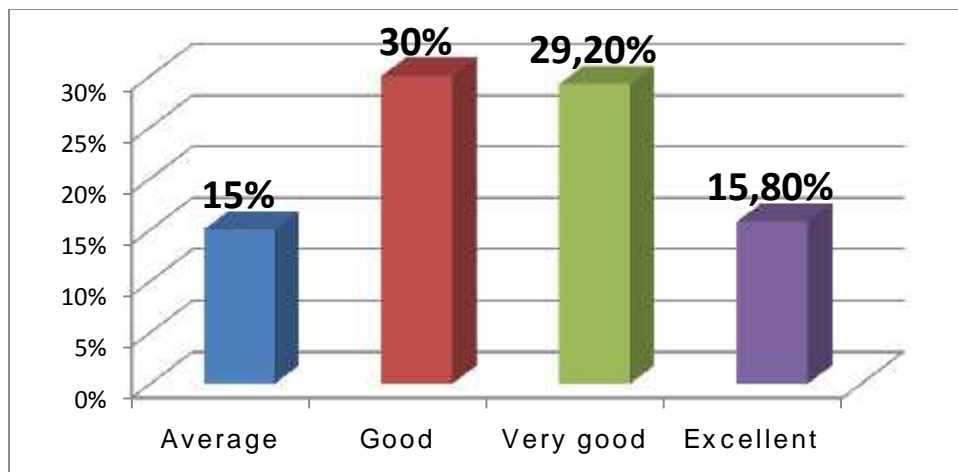
		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Valid</b>	<b>Average</b>	26	21,7	23,6	23,6
	<b>Good</b>	36	30,0	32,7	56,4
	<b>Very good</b>	29	24,2	26,4	82,7
	<b>Excellent</b>	19	15,8	17,3	100,0
	<b>Total</b>	110	91,7	100,0	
<b>Missing</b>	<b>System</b>	10	8,3		
<b>Total</b>		120	100,0		

21.7% of the students said they were “average” in listening, 30.0% considered their reading to be “good”, 24.2% felt their reading skill is “very good” and 15.8% felt theirs is “excellent.” 8.3% of the respondents did not answer the question. The reasons for their choices can be seen on the pie chart below.



**Figure 5: Reasons advanced for level of proficiency in listening**

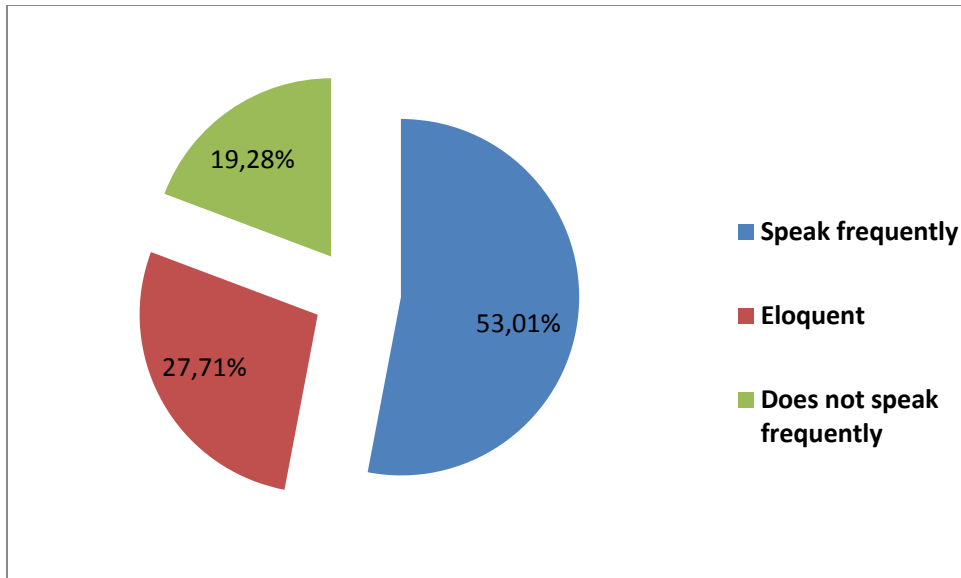
We can still deduce from the students' responses that they did not know the parameters by which they could use to judge their listening skills. 41.77% said they were proficient in listening because they are attentive in class, 12.66% said they are not very proficient in listening because they are faced with distraction from friends. However, 31.65% were able to ascribe their proficiency to understanding. Their main goal of listening is to be able to understand. They said they understand when the teacher teaches, and 12.66% said they are not proficient because they listen and forget. By this, they meant they are unable to recall what the teacher has taught even in the other subjects. But retentiveness is certainly not a parameter to evaluate one's listening ability. The fourth major skill which the students were asked to rate their proficiency in is speaking as can be seen in the figure below.



**Figure 6: Students' self-rating of proficiency in speaking**

The figure shows that 15% of the students felt their speech is “average”, 30% considered their speech to be “good”, 29.20% said theirs was “very good” while 15.80% said their speech is “excellent.” The reasons for their considerations are found in the figure below.

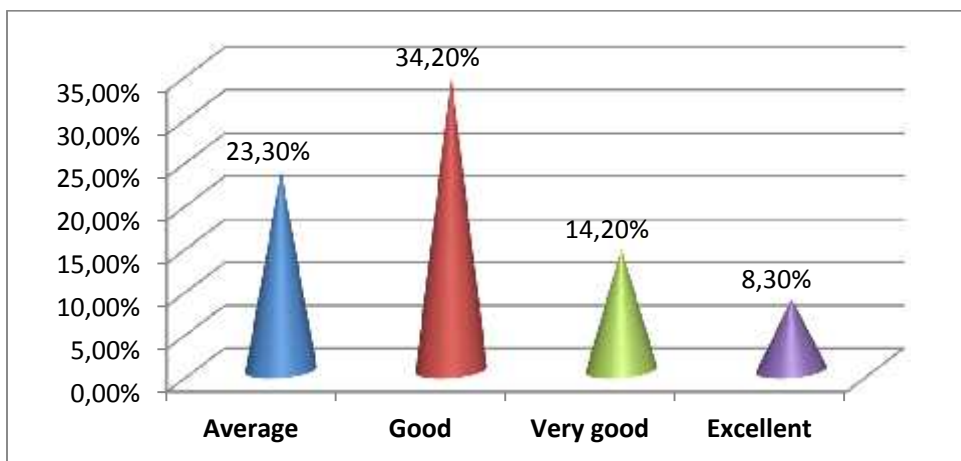
As can be observed from the figure below, 19.28% of the respondents accounted for their proficiency in speaking giving the reason that they speak frequently which means they practice speaking the language. Their desire to be proficient speakers of the language is high since they admitted that they practice their speech. 27.71% said they are eloquent, while a higher percentage accounted for average and good performance because they do not speak the language frequently. This is not strange as it is obvious that the language mostly spoken in the area is the mother tongue. They are quite aware that to gain mastery of a language, they need to immerse themselves in the language but this is marred by the fact that they are surrounded by speakers of their L1.



**Figure 7: Reasons advanced for proficiency in speaking**

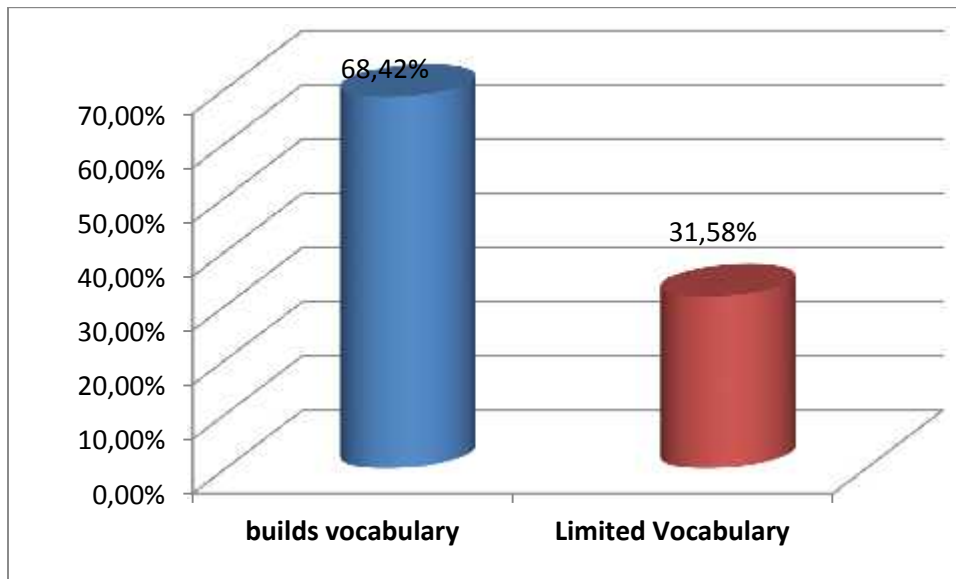
#### 4.1.2 Students Self Rating of their Proficiency in the Sub-Language Skills

The students were further asked to rate their proficiency in the sub-language skills which include vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. The students rating of their proficiency in vocabulary is as follows:



**Figure 8: Students' self-rating of proficiency in vocabulary**

From the above figure, 23.30% said their vocabulary is “average”, 34.20% said their vocabulary is “good”, 14.20% considered themselves to have acquired “very good” vocabulary in English and 8.30% said they had an “excellent” vocabulary in English. Their reasons are presented on the bar chart below.



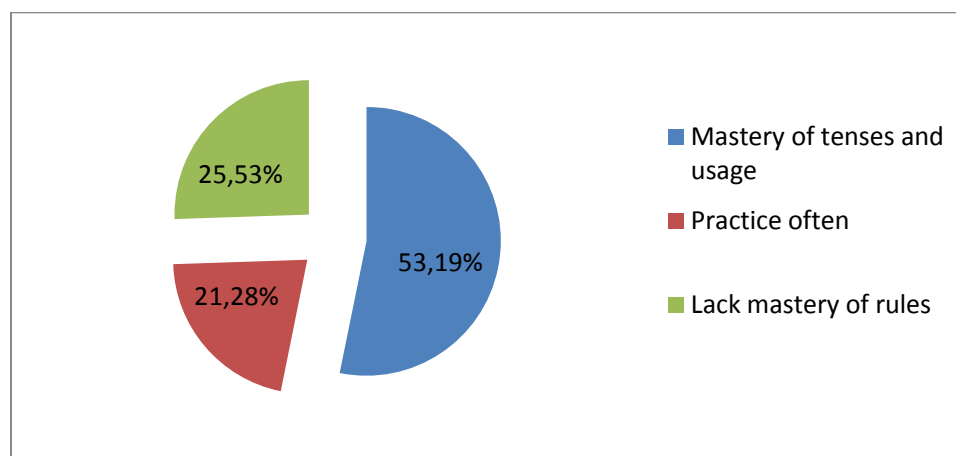
**Figure 9: Reasons for Proficiency in Vocabulary**

A large percentage of the students consider themselves to have had a good proficiency in vocabulary because 68.42% admitted that they build their vocabulary while only 31.58% considered themselves to have a limited vocabulary in the English language. They students said they build their vocabulary by reading extensively but this contradicts their responses concerning textbooks. Nearly all of them said they don't have textbooks. If their parents cannot afford basic textbooks like those for the English Language, it implies that for all other subjects they lack the necessary textbooks and would therefore rely on the notes the teacher gives in class. The students also rated themselves in their grammar skills. This would be seen in the table below.

**Table 7: Students' self-rating of competence in grammar**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Valid</b>	<b>Average</b>	21	17,5	21,9	21,9
	<b>Good</b>	47	39,2	49,0	70,8
	<b>Very good</b>	20	16,7	20,8	91,7
	<b>Excellent</b>	8	6,7	8,3	100,0
	<b>Total</b>	96	80,0	100,0	
<b>Missing System</b>		24	20,0		
<b>Total</b>		120	100,0		

As can be seen from the above table, 17.5% of the students rated their grammar as “average”, 39.2% rated theirs as “good”, and 16.7% rated their grammar as “very good” while 6.7% of the students rated their grammar as “excellent”. Their reasons are found in the figure below.



**Figure 10: Reasons advanced for proficiency in grammar**

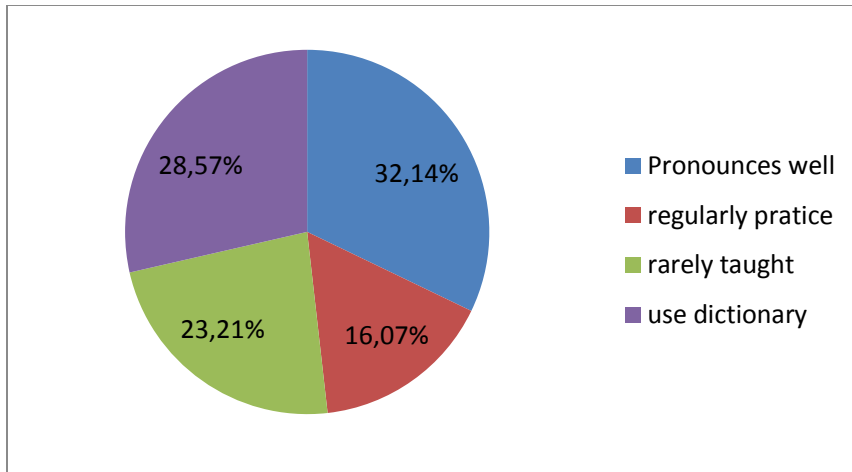


A vast majority of the students seem to be versed with grammar usage. This is because 53.19% of them said they master tenses and also know when to use the tenses. 21.28% said they practice often. The students understood grammar to mean the language itself and so by practice they meant they practice speaking. 25.53% said their grammar is not very good because they lack mastery of grammar rules. Some of them rightly said that they are still studying grammar. The table below shows the students rating of their pronunciation skills.

**Table 8: Students' self-rating of level of proficiency in pronunciation**

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Valid</b>	<b>Average</b>	30	25,0	31,9	31,9
	<b>Good</b>	24	20,0	25,5	57,4
	<b>Very good</b>	24	20,0	25,5	83,0
	<b>Excellent</b>	16	13,3	17,0	100,0
	<b>Total</b>	94	78,3	100,0	
<b>Missing</b>	<b>System</b>	26	21,7		
<b>Total</b>		120	100,0		

As regards pronunciation, 25.0% rated their pronunciation as “average”, 20.0% rated theirs as “good”, 20.0% rated their pronunciation as “very good” while 13.3% considered theirs to be excellent. The reasons which account for these choices will be evaluated below.



**Figure 11: Reasons advanced for level of proficiency in pronunciation**

Most of the students assumed they are quite good in pronunciation. 32.14% just feel they pronounce well; 16.07% ascribed their ability to pronounce regular practice; 28.57% of the students claimed to use the dictionary while 23.21% said they were either good or average in pronunciation because they were rarely taught vocabulary. It is surprising that some of the students said they practice regularly and pronounce well when from observation they are seen to be speaking the mother tongue more than half of the time

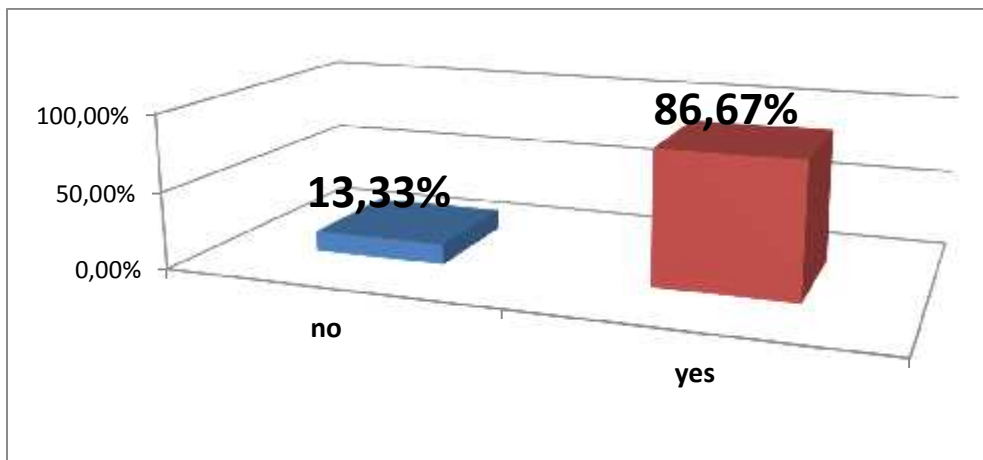
#### **4.2 STUDENTS ATTITUDE TOWARDS THEIR STUDY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

A number of questions asked on the questionnaire were intended to answer the research question “What is their attitude towards their study of the English language? The students were first asked to indicate the number of hours of English lessons they had each week. They all indicated that they have 6 hours of English each week as can be seen the table below. Williams (1990:13) points out “Constraints of time and space are part of the reality of classroom learning.’ This implies that the six hours of English allocated to the study of the English language is not enough for the learners given the large class size too. He further notes “We cannot presume that what goes on in the classroom is ‘natural’, a literal substitute for the ‘real thing’ in the wider context of language use for social purposes.’ Students have to make a maximum effort to learn the language out of the classroom setting.

**Table 9: Hours of English per week**

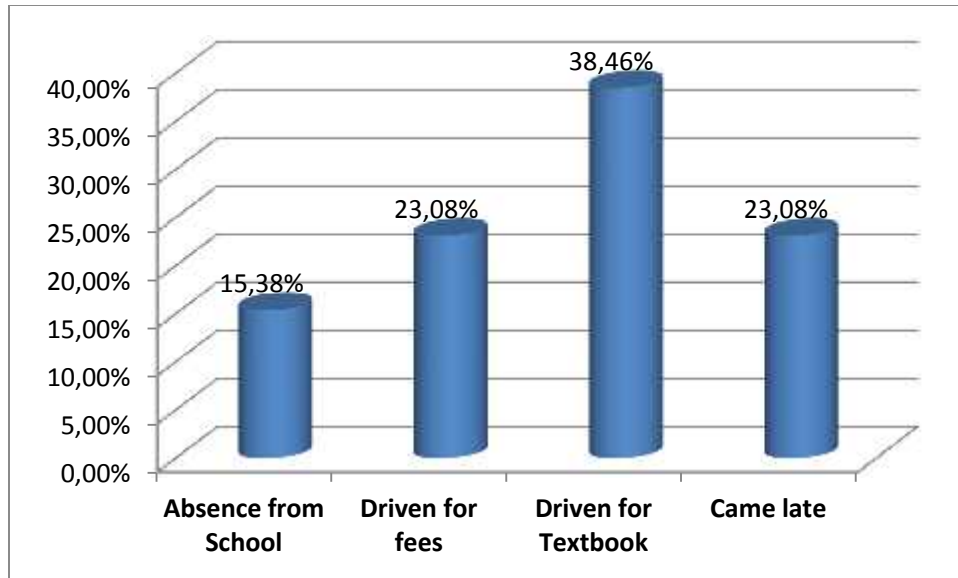
Number of hours of English attended each week		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Valid</b>	6,00	119	99.2	100.0	100.0
<b>Missing</b>	<b>System</b>	1	.8		
<b>Total</b>		120	100,0		

This table shows the number of hours of English the students are supposed to have each week. After having known the number of hours the students have English lessons, it was necessary to find out if they attend all their classes or not. The percentages are shown in the figure below.



**Figure 12: Distribution of respondents according to class attendance**

From the above figure, 86.67% of the students said they attended all their classes while 13.33% of the students said they did not attend all their classes. Their reasons for not attending classes are provided in the figure below.



**Figure 13: Students' reason for not attending classes**

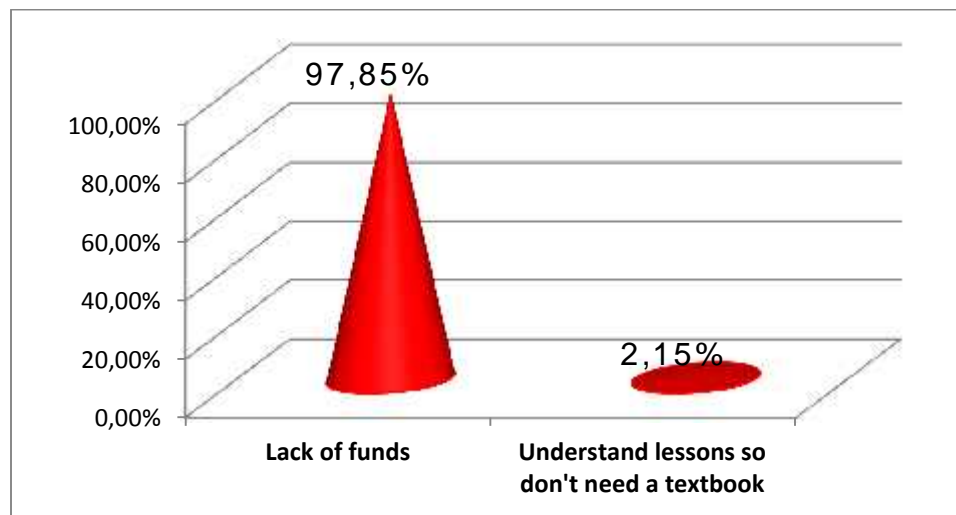
The students gave a series of reasons why they do not attend classes. 15.38% said they do not attend all their classes because they are absent from school on some days due to health reasons. 23.08% said they do not attend all their English classes when they are driven for fees. 38.46% said they do not attend classes when they are driven for textbook. The issue of textbook seems to be a major issue for the students. 23.08% ascribed their not attending classes to late coming. However just a few students admitted that they do not attend all their classes which means the students have a serious disposition as far as their lessons are concerned. This could be that they are motivated to attend their classes for instrumental reasons; that is to succeed in the subject at the GCE. Another question posed required the students to say whether they had all their English language textbooks or not. The figures are shown in the table below.

**Table 10: Availability of textbook**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Valid no</b>	99	82,5	82,5	82,5
<b>yes</b>	21	17,5	17,5	100,0
<b>Total</b>	120	100,0	100,0	

Out of the 120 informants only 21 of them said they had their textbook giving a percentage of 17.5%. 99 Students admitted they do not have their textbook giving a percentage of 82.5%. The figure calls for concern. How then can the students be motivated to learn the language when they do not have textbooks? It is therefore very difficult for the students to have a certain level of competence in the language since they neither speak the language frequently nor do they have access to textbooks.

The students were further required to state the reason for not having their textbooks and their responses were quite obvious. See the table below.



**Figure 14: Reasons for not having Textbook**

From the figure above it is not surprising why the students do not have their textbooks. The reason is simply financial. Most of their parents depend on subsistence agriculture for livelihood. They can barely afford registration fee not to mention buying textbooks for their children. The lack of textbook is a major handicap to the students learning of the English language.

### 4.3 Students' Perception of the English language

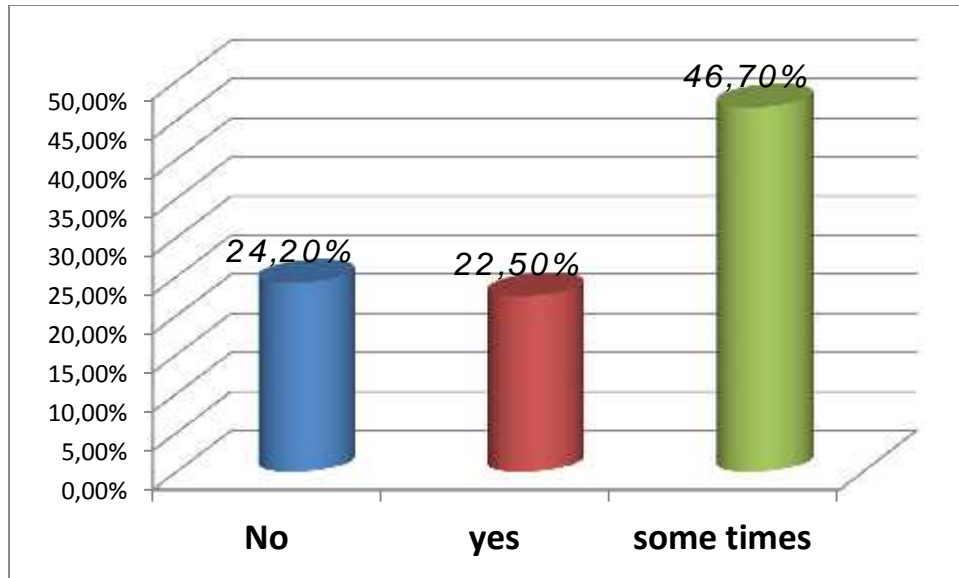
Questions were also asked to elicit information on how the students perceive the English language. The students were first of all asked to rate their English lessons whether they were lively, interesting, or boring. Their responses are shown in the table below.

**Table 11: Students rating of English lessons**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>always very lively and enjoyable</b>	98	89,7	83,1	83,9
<b>sometimes very boring</b>	16	13,3	13,6	97,5
<b>I don't know</b>	3	2,5	2,5	100,0
<b>Total</b>	118	98,3	100,0	
<b>Missing System</b>	2	1,7		
<b>Total</b>	120	100,0		

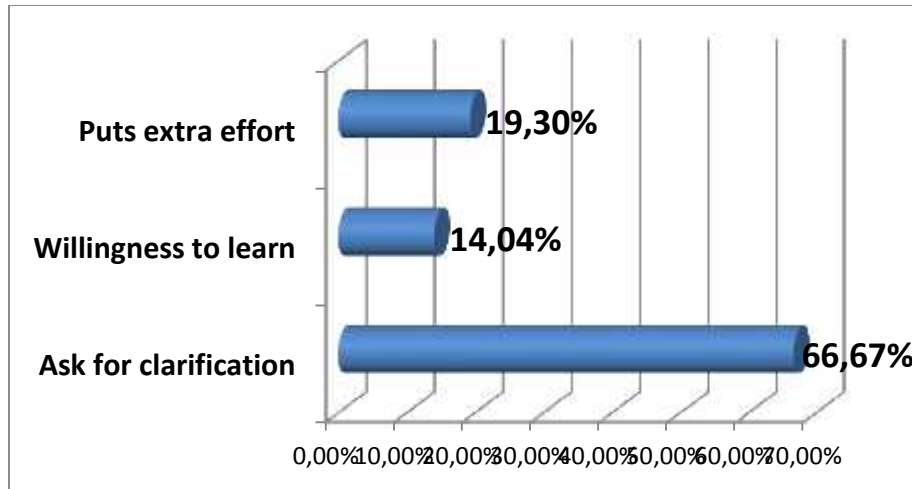
When asked about their English lessons 89.70% of the students rated their English lessons as always lively and enjoyable: 13.30% rated the lessons as sometimes very boring, while 2.5% said they didn't know. The facts that a higher percentage of the students said their lessons are always very lively and boring indicates that they have a positive attitude towards the language. They are probably very motivated to learn the language because they need to succeed in the subject at the GCE it is one of the compulsory subjects in the secondary school syllabus.

The students were further asked to say whether they had difficulties understanding their English teacher and were given options to choose from. This is shown in the figure below.



**Figure 15: Difficulties understanding the teacher**

24.20% of the students said they had no difficulties understanding their English teacher: 22.50% of the students admitted they had difficulties while 46.70% said they sometimes had difficulties understanding their teacher. We were interested in finding out whether this motivates them or demotivate them as they struggle to learn the language. Their responses to whether they were motivated or demotivated can be seen in the figure below.



**Figure 16: Motivation**

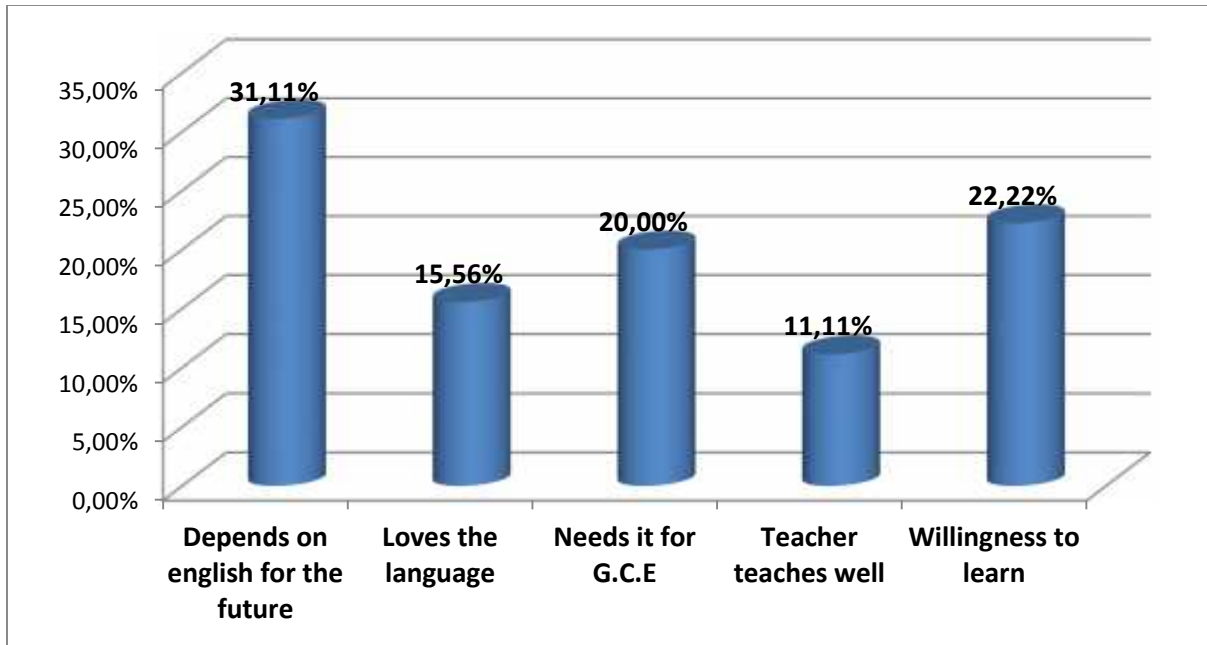
Interestingly, the students said they were motivated when the teacher said something which they did not understand. Williams (op.cit) believes that factors of motivation and personality have been given importance as influences on language learning. The idea is that we should make the student feel that he is a person to be valued by the teacher and the peer group alike. Language has thus become more student-centred. They gave explanations as to how they handle the situation. 66.67% of the students said when they don't understand the teacher they asks for Clarification. Some however said at times when they asked the teacher for clarifications s/he ignored them and this was demotivating to them. This means the teacher doesn't put them at the centre of his or her teaching. 14.04% explained how motivated they are in terms of willingness to learn the language while 19.30% of the students handle the situation by putting in extra effort. The students were then asked to rate their attitude towards the English language and give reasons for their answers.



**Table 12: Students' Attitude towards the English language**

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Valid</b>	<b>positive</b>	61	50,8	57,5	57,5
	<b>Very positive</b>	34	28,3	32,1	89,6
	<b>Negative</b>	8	6,7	7,5	97,2
	<b>Very negative</b>	3	2,5	2,8	100,0
	<b>Total</b>	106	88,3	100,0	
<b>Missing</b>	<b>System</b>	14	11,7		
<b>Total</b>		120	100,0		

50.8% of the students rated their attitude towards the language to be positive; 28.3 said their attitude is very positive; 6.7% of the students rated their attitude towards the language as negative while 2.2% of the students rated their attitude to be very negative. Generally we infer from the percentages that the students are positive towards the language. The reason for their positive attitudes towards the language is shown in the figure below.



**Figure 17: Reason for Attitude**

31.11% of the students said they have a positive attitude towards English because they depend on English for their future, 15.56% said they love the language; 20.00% have a positive attitude because they need to succeed in the subject at the GCE, 11.11% ascribed their attitude to the teacher's manner of teaching and 22.22% said they are willing to learn the language that's why they have a positive attitude towards it. From all their reasons we can see that the students are instrumentally motivated to learn the language.

**Table 13: Personal Influence**

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Valid</b>	<b>Positively</b>	90	75,0	90,0	90,0
	<b>Negatively</b>	10	8,3	10,0	100,0
	<b>Total</b>	100	83,3	100,0	
<b>Missing System</b>		20	16,7		
<b>Total</b>		120	100,0		

75.0% of the students were positively influenced by their response while 8.3% of the students said they were negatively influenced.

#### **4.4 FREQUENCY OF LANGUAGES SPOKEN**

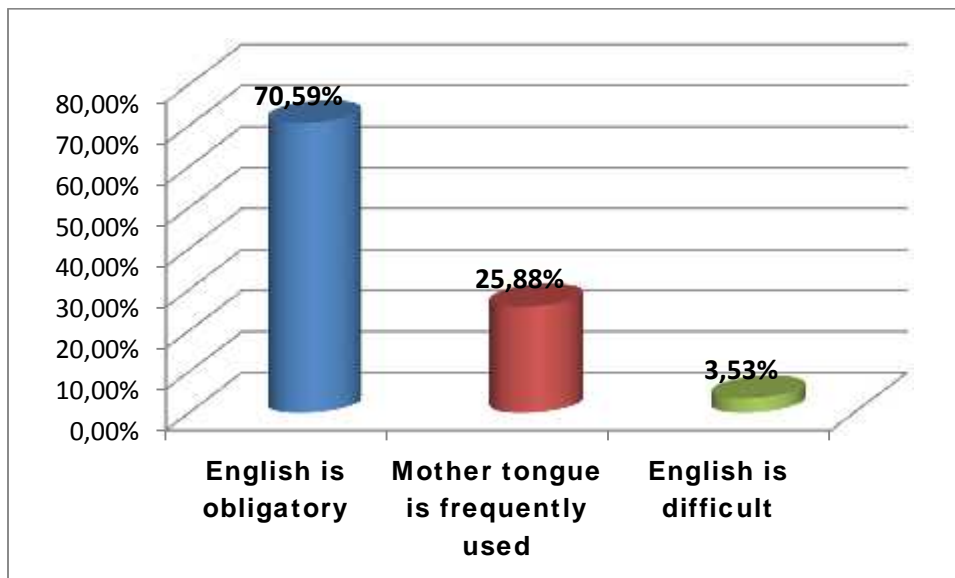
The students were presented with three languages, that is English, Pidgin and Mother tongue to rate the frequency with which they spoke these languages and this is illustrated in the table below.

**Table 14: Rank of Languages**

<b>Language</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>% Frequency used</b>	
		<b>Formal</b>	<b>Informal</b>
<b>English</b>	1.8	70.8	28.8
<b>Pidgin</b>	2.3	33.9	60,48
<b>Mother-tongue</b>	1,7	31.8	67.05

The students ranked the languages on bases of how frequently they used these languages in both formal and informal situations. The students said they used 70.8% of English in formal situations; this was particularly in the school milieu because of its obligatory status. 28.8% of

English usage was allocated for informal situations. As regards Pidgin 33.9% of Pidgin is spoken in formal situations while 60,48% is spoken in informal situations. The Mother-tongue is spoken 31.8% of the time in formal situations while 67.05% of the language is spoken in informal situations. From every indication, the student speak English most of the time only in school and the time spent in school which is a formal environment is far less the time spent in informal environments where they acknowledged using the Mother-tongue and Pidgin in these environments.



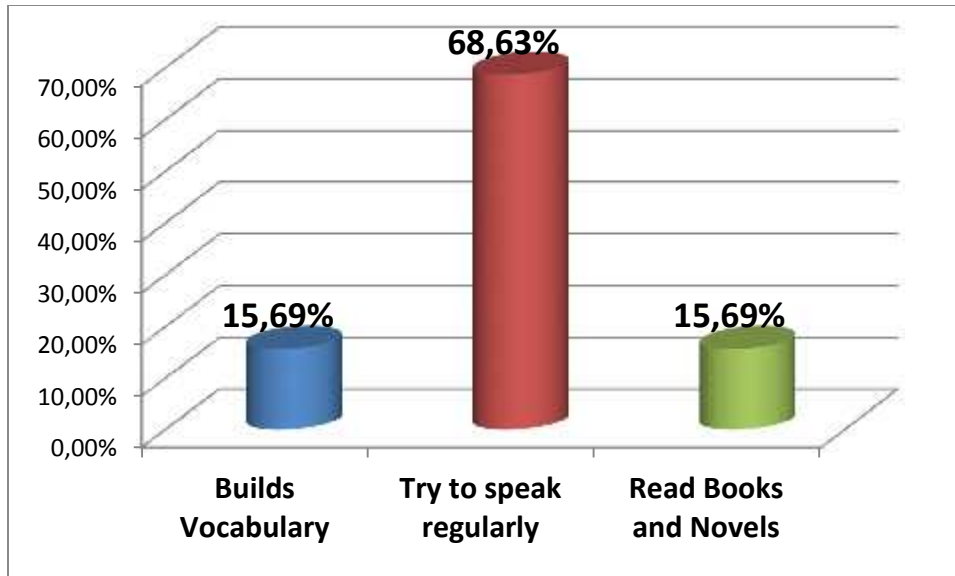
**Figure 18: Reasons advanced for rank of language**

Here are the reasons advanced for the rank of Languages. 70.59% of the students said the speak English in a formal environment because it is compulsory. It is important to note here that by formal environment the students merely referred to the school setting which as we have already mentioned that they do not spend most of their time in school. 25.88% admitted that they speak the mother-tongue frequently while 3.53% of the students ranked that they speak English less because it is difficult. The figure below shows the percentages of students who admitted that they make personal efforts to improve on their English language proficiency.

**Table 15: Personal Efforts made to improve language Proficiency**

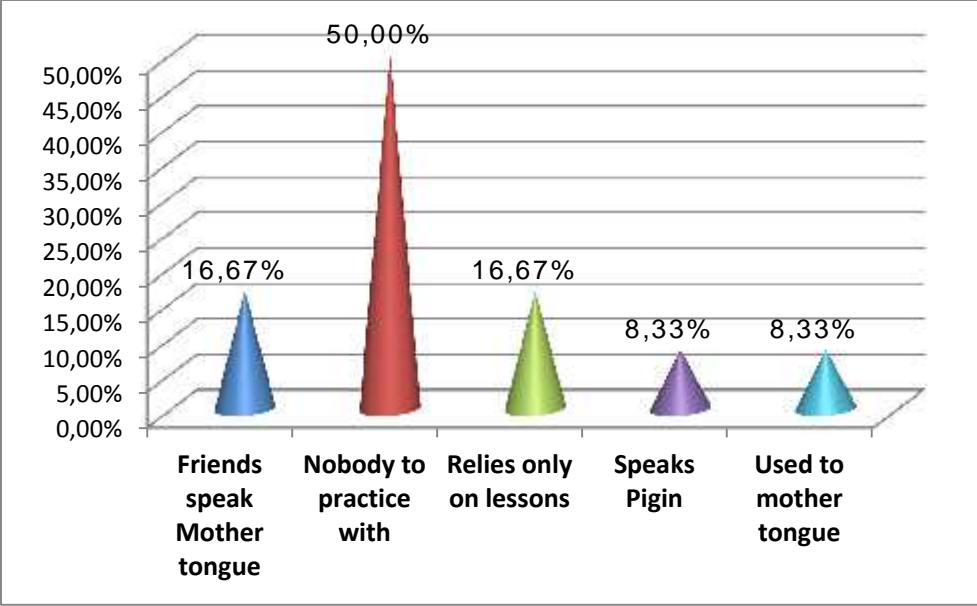
		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Valid</b>	<b>No</b>	22	18,3	20,2	20,2
	<b>Yes</b>	87	72,5	79,8	100,0
	<b>Total</b>	109	90,8	100,0	
<b>Missing</b>	<b>System</b>	11	9,2		
<b>Total</b>		120	100,0		

Given that their general attitude towards the language is positive, it was but normal for them to accept that they make personal efforts to improve on their English language proficiency. Those who said they make no personal effort constitute 18.3% while those who said they make a personal effort were 72.5%. They had to further explain what they do to improve on their language proficiency. The figure below shows the percentages of the various ways by which the student try to improve their proficiency.



**Figure 19: How they improve proficiency**

15.69% of the students said they improve on their proficiency by building vocabulary, 68.63% said they make an effort to speak the language frequently while 15.59% said they read books and novels. The percentage of those who try to speak regularly surpasses those who build vocabulary and read books. But how is this possible when from observation most of the students were found to be speaking the mother tongue instead of English even in the school milieu. Some of the students categorically said they make no effort to improve on their English language proficiency and their reasons for this are illustrated in the figure below.



**Figure 20: No attempts to improve proficiency**

The figure above presents the various reasons why the students do not make efforts to improve on their language proficiency. 16.67% person admitted that most of the students speak the mother tongue, 50.00% said there is nobody to practice speaking the language with, 16.67% said they rely solely on lessons to acquire the language, 8.33% said they are used to speaking pidgin and the remaining 8.33% said they are used to speaking the mother tongue. All of these reasons boil down to one thing which is that the students speak their mother tongue more than 80% of the time. It would be difficult to practice speaking in such an environment.

From the Analysis we can conclude that the students have a positive attitude towards the language, however, they cannot fully achieve competence in the language because they encounter the language most of the time when they are in the classroom. They also do not have their language textbooks which further hinder their learning of the language and so cannot attain a high level of proficiency in the language skills even though their attitude towards the language is not positive but very positive. The students recognise that they need to make personal efforts outside the classroom environment to build their language skills.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, PEDAGOGICAL RELEVANCE AND CONCLUSION**

### **5.0 INTRODUCTION**

This study, entitled “The Attitudes of Form Four and Form Five students of GHS Nkor Noni towards the English language” aimed at investigating the attitudes of F4 and F4 students as they grapple with learning the language in a rural context such as Noni which is characteristic of most rural areas in Cameroon. The research was aimed at answering the following questions

1. How do the students rate their performance in the English language?
2. What is their attitude towards their study of the English language?
3. Overall, how do they perceive the English Language?

After an analysis of the students’ responses, the following findings were arrived at.

### **5.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

From the foregone analysis in Chapter Four, the findings could be summarised as thus: the students generally have a positive attitude towards their learning of the English language. 50.8% of the students reported that they have a ‘positive’ attitude towards the English Language; 28.3% rated their attitude towards the language as “very positive”. Just a small fraction, (6.7%) said they had a negative attitude towards the English language, while 2.2% rated their attitude as very negative. Positive attitudes towards a language could stem from a number of factors. Schmied (1991:165) postulates that:

Expressions of positive or negative feelings towards a language in general may reflect impressions of linguistic difficulty or simplicity, ease or difficulty of learning, the degree of importance or status it has in the community or even the importance of the people who use it as a first or second language.

In line with Schmied’s stance above, some students reported that the language is difficult. However, the percentage of those who said they don’t speak the language often because it is difficult was just 3.53%, a very insignificant proportion of the sample population.



These students probably have a negative feeling towards the language because of this difficulty.

The students' positive attitudes towards the English language is associated to the degree of importance or status it has in the community and not the importance of the people who use it as an L1 or L2 evident in the reasons the students put forth. 31.11% of the students said that they have a positive attitude towards the English language because they depend on the language for the future, 15,56% said they love the language, 20.00% said they need to succeed in it at the GCE, 11.11% expressed a positive attitude towards the language because the teacher teaches well, while 22.22% said they are just willing to learn the language. Their reasons are predominantly the ones Gardner and Lambert (1972) have labelled as instrumental.

The students also indicated that their positive attitude towards the language is as a result of the teacher's manner of teaching. This shows that the teacher's methodology can either promote or hinder success in the students' output in the language. So, the teacher has some influence on the affective filters of the students. The students reported that they had difficulties understanding the teaching sometimes. 46.70% of the students said they sometimes had difficulties understanding the teacher. 24.20% denied that they had any difficulties understanding the teacher and 22.50% said they had difficulties understanding the teacher. Those who had difficulties understanding the teacher admitted that this did not discourage them in any way in their learning process; instead it spurred them to learn the language. So, 66.67% were further motivated by asking the teacher to give clarifications; 14.04% said their motivation stemmed from the fact that they were willing to learn the language while 19.30% said they had to put in extra effort. All these reason buttress the fact that the students are motivated to learn the language despite the hindrances they may be confronted with.

However, the students' successful learning is impeded by the lack of textbooks. Almost all of the students reported that they had no textbook for the subject. Williams (1990:12) remarks:

The preparation of textbooks and syllabus materials is a kind of problem in multi-lingual situations where both English and the mother-tongue are languages of instruction. Admittedly, there are a number of difficulties in learning English speech, grammar, and

vocabulary which are common to many different language groups. But no single textbook can equally satisfy the needs of a class of students from varied language backgrounds. Quite apart from the relevance to language backgrounds, there is the question of availability of materials, which cannot be taken for granted in most situations where English is taught as a Second Language.

Williams' declaration above shows that the absence of relevant textbooks impedes effective learning of English in a multilingual environment. He is aware of the fact that L2 Learning is hindered by the availability of materials. 85.50% of the students reported they lacked textbooks while only 17.5% reported that they had textbooks. The reason advanced by almost all of them for not having a textbook is the economic factor and this is not surprising as most of their parents are subsistent farmers. 97.85% said they hadn't their textbook because of lack of finance. The absence of textbook is a major handicap to the students' learning of the language as 38.46% of the students also reported that the reason for not attending all their English language classes was as a result of them being sent away for textbooks. 15.83% of the students indicated that the reason they had a poor mark in the subject is due to the fact that they lacked a textbook. So the issue of textbook is a major handicap to the students' learning of the language.

More than 80% of the students acknowledged that they have both "positive and "very positive" attitudes towards the English language which means that they make personal efforts to improve on their proficiency. Much of the language a learner acquires is as a result of the effort they put in learning the language. The Six hours of English they have each week cannot really make them proficient users of the language if they rely solely on it. They ranked that they spoke English highest (70.80%) in formal environments and their most formal environment is the school environment. They advanced that the reason they spoke English highest in school was because it was compulsory. The students from observation were seen to speak the mother-tongue even at school. The students said that they spoke the mother tongue 67.05% of the time in informal situations. The students, however, acknowledged that they need to make an effort to improve on their English language proficiency. 72.50% admitted that they make an effort to improve on their proficiency while 18.30% said they make no effort to improve on their proficiency. 68.63% reported that the improve on their proficiency by speaking the language

regularly but it is not very certain that they do say since most of them speak the mother tongue most of the time. 15.69% said they tried to improve their vocabulary by building their vocabulary. Another 15.59% said they improve their proficiency by reading books and novels. For those who make no attempts to improve their level of proficiency, 16.67% reported that their friends spoke the mother tongue; 50.00% reported that they have no one to practise with, 16.67% said they rely only on their lessons to improve their proficiency, 8.33% said they speak pidgin while 8.33% said they are used to speaking the mother tongue. All of these responses boil down to one thing which is that the situation in which the students find themselves those not give room for practise of the language. They have a positive attitude towards learning the language but have no way to practice their speaking which is one of the productive skills of language. After reviewing the analysis of data it would be important to say how this study is pedagogically relevant.

## **5.2 PEDAGOGICAL RELEVANCE**

According to Gardner (2012:4) methods of training in Africa, especially formal training, are often not culturally appropriate, but instead are usually based on Western-style training programs, and thus are less effective than they could be. Since the goal of L2 learning is that learners develop communicative competence at the end of the learning, curriculum designers should design a curriculum that meets the needs of the students. The teaching and learning of the English language should be made more utilitarian so that the learners acquire language naturally.

Students' attitude is an integral part of learning, and should therefore become an integral part of L2 language learning pedagogy. Attitudes towards learning are believed to influence behaviours such as selecting and reading books, speaking in a foreign language etc. Especially in Education, if the students have a positive attitude towards any subject, they can achieve many things in that specific area. The present research has revealed that the learners have a positive attitude towards the English language, this however does not stop the teacher from devising new strategies to help the students stay positive towards their study of the language. Here are some ways by which teachers and pedagogues can help their learners stay positive towards learning the language, hence achieving high levels of proficiency.

Educators and parents should always encourage learners to read materials written in English like newspapers and magazines. Educators who qualify to teach English should have received a relevant training and qualification in English. Also, a positive psychological classroom atmosphere is needed for language learning. Harmer (1983) proposes that teachers should presumably try to make their classrooms as pleasant as possible by using posters and even students' work on the walls.

One of the major findings of this study revealed that 85.50% of the students lack the basic textbook which could aid them in their study of the English language. If the above conditions are taken care of, learners would receive proper knowledge which would help them to develop confidence and they will be competent in their society.

### **5.3 CONCLUSION**

This study sought to investigate the attitudes of both F4 and F5 students of GHS Nkor towards the English language. The findings revealed that the students are instrumentally motivated to learn the language. They are aware of the status and importance of the language in their society and strive to make personal efforts to improve on their English language proficiency even though they live in an environment where inhabitants predominantly speak the mother-tongue. Because of the socio-economic constraints typical of rural areas in Cameroon, these students lack the necessary textbooks which would serve as a guide in their study of the language.

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## **APPENDICES**