

Using lexical and discursive resources in Anglophone Cameroon literary works as a means for the preservation and transmission of cultural heritage

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Abstract

Drawing data from eleven literary works of six Anglophone Cameroonian writers (Asong, Kongnyuy, Ambanasom, Tardzenyuy, Nyamnjoh, Nkemngong Nkengasong, this paper studies how Anglophone Cameroon writers make use of linguistic resources (lexes and discourse) for the preservation and transmission of cultural heritage (values and knowledge) as well as the linguistic strategies of insertion of these cultural values and knowledge in these texts. The analysis reveals that in the ongoing globalized world where cultural values and knowledge in many African countries are gradually losing grounds due to the influence of Western cultural practices, literary texts can be one of the means to preserve these cultural values and knowledge so as to transmit them to future generations. Besides, it is found that various linguistic strategies are utilized by these writers in order to insert these cultural values and knowledge in their literary works: loanwords, loanblends, loantranslations, idiomatic formation, Cameroon Pidgin-English discourses, French discourses and proverbs. It is recommended that in the selection of literary texts to be used in the secondary and high schools of African countries that priority should be given the literary texts which embody the cultural values and knowledge of their countries. This will enable African students in general and Cameroonian students in particular to be more versed with some cultural values and knowledge of their sociocultural environments.

Keywords: Cameroonian writers, literary texts, preservation, transmission, cultural values, cultural knowledge, linguistic strategies.

Introduction

Over the years the transmission of cultural heritage, especially the immaterial cultural heritage from one generation to another in many African societies in general and in the Cameroonian society in particular has been done through orality. As a consequence, many aspects of the cultural heritage of African people have been lost due to the fact that they were not kept in written records. This situation is commented by Omeluzor, Abayomi Imam and Itunu Bamidele (2014: 83) in the following terms:

Generally all African communities have something in common culturally, that is the culture is largely oral in nature. Words of mouth are very important in Africa and oral literature consists of myths, fables, folklore, history and genealogy. Since culture has been seen as a unifying factor that binds a people together and that Africa is a home to about 2000 of the 6000 languages spoken in the world today and many of these language are used mostly in oral, unwritten form (Akinyemi 2011), therefore converting them into written and digital form for posterity is not only expedient but necessary to avoid cultural extinction. The major problem faced by most African countries is that most of the discoveries and culture were not documented nor (either) recorded on any form of information source (Okoro 2010). This, therefore pose[s] a great threat to Africa's cultural heritage as lack of documentation and preservation could lead to total extinction. With the advent of globalization many cultural practices and habits of Africans are gradually disappearing since these people tend to value Western cultural practices and habits to the detriment of theirs.

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Also, in some of these countries, for instance, Cameroon, the setting up of national policies concerning the teaching of local culture is very recent and is not yet very effective in educational settings (nursery, primary, secondary and high schools) throughout the country.

So, the need to develop strategies in order to safeguard the cultural heritage becomes expedient if at all African people want this heritage to stand the test of time. This heritage can be preserved not only through museums (especially the material/physical heritage) but also through written documents such as literary works. It is therefore argued in this paper that literary works can be used as a means or reservoir for the preservation and transmission of cultural heritage.

Anglophone Cameroonian literary works have drawn the attention of various language researchers. It has been found that Anglophone Cameroonian novelists, like many non-native writers of English expression make use of various linguistic features to subject the English language into the sociocultural imperatives of the Cameroonian society. Some of them are the following: thematisation of deixes, thematisation of phrases, emphatic deixes, reduplication, pronoun copying (Meutem Kamtchueng, 2011), direct loans, coinages, loanblends, loantranslation, idiomatic formation, transliteration of metaphorical expressions, imagery, code-mixing, code-switching, interference, the use of French discourses, Cameroon Pidgin, proverbs, etc. (Meutem Kamtchueng, 2013; Meutem Kamtchueng, 2014; Meutem Kamtchueng and Bamiro, 2013; Meutem Kamtchueng, 2017 and Epoge, 2017). This work differs from previous studies in the sense that it stresses the fact that Anglophone Cameroon literary works can be used as a fruitful means to preserve and transmit cultural heritage. These literary works should be used as important tools for the teaching of Cameroonian national culture in the various Cameroonian secondary and high schools. This work attempts to make a contribution to the promotion of interculturality as it is nowadays one of the major concerns of the Cameroonian Government authorities who are resolutely determined to succeed in this project.

The paper is structured as follows: section I provides a definition of cultural heritage while in section II, the necessity to preserve cultural heritage is discussed. The preservation and transmission of cultural heritage as a UNESCO's major concern is handled in section III and section IV analyses Cameroonian literary texts as a reservoir of cultural heritage laying emphasis on the various linguistic strategies used to preserve and transmit this cultural heritage.

1. Cultural heritage: definition, preservation and transmission

According to Stennings (2015), cultural heritage is typically understood to be built heritage, monuments related to culture such as museums, religious buildings, ancient structures and sites. However, we should also include the slightly less material things, i.e., stories, poems, plays, recipes, customs, fashions, designs, music, songs and ceremonies of a place, as cultural heritage. These are vital expressions of a culture and just as important". Two types of cultural heritage can be identified, namely the material/physical/tangible cultural heritage and the immaterial/intangible cultural heritage.

What constitutes the material or tangible cultural heritage can be classified under the following groups: monuments (architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science); groups of buildings (groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science); sites : works of man or the combined works of nature and of man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological points of view" (Pressouyre 1995:13) and also artistic objects. Intangible/immaterial cultural heritage refers to:

The practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage (Pressouyre 1995:13),

Oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, traditional craftsmanship.

This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity (Reiko Yoshida [https://www. Scribd.com](https://www.Scribd.com)).

It is worth pointing out that intangible cultural heritage, as opposed to the tangible one, is more vulnerable and can easily face extinction if concrete strategies are not put in place for its preservation and transmission.

As pointed out by Stenning (2015) societies have long sought to protect and preserve their cultural heritage, for reasons ranging from education to historical research to the desire to reinforce a sense of identity. In times of war and conflict, cultural identity and cultural heritage become all the more important. Buildings, monuments and symbols of culture that speak of shared roots acquire an increased significance. From the standpoint of history, the knowledge of people's cultural heritage enables them to know about their past, which can be considered as a reservoir from which they can draw solutions to face future challenges. Furthermore, culture is what binds people together. People of the same cultural group share the same cultural identity. The more people are aware of their culture, the better they stand chances to understand one another and become more tolerant with regard to other peoples' culture. This point is in consonance with Thomas-Hoffman (n.d.) as quoted by Omeluzor, Abayomi Imam and Itunu Bamidele (2014: 84) who says that "cultural identity is essential for the peaceful cooperation and civilizations [...] if people have a strong sense of self-identity through culture, they are more likely to interact peacefully with other cultures. Most of the cultural identities of a people include language, dress, song, food among others". Due to the necessity of preserving people's culture, UNESCO has set up various legal instruments.

The preservation of cultural heritage is hindered by various factors. Mutula (2008) as quoted by Omeluzor, Abayomi Imam and Itunu Bamidele (2014: 87) lists the following: "lack of access to electricity and telephone, illiteracy, limited skills in language barriers, technology penetration, PC density, lack of content developers, lack of appropriate cultural policies, poor reading habits and brain drain [...] cultural diffusion and infiltration of foreign culture. The safeguard of cultural heritage therefore becomes expedient and has been one of the major concerns of UNESCO. This United Nations organ has designed many legal instruments to achieve this purpose, namely the 1966 Declaration on the Principles of International Cultural Cooperation, the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, the 1989 Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore (1989), the 1998 Programme on the Proclamation of the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity and the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The foundation for the preservation of cultural heritage was laid down during the UNESCO's General Conference in 1966. It was stated, among other things, in the declaration that "each culture has a dignity and value which must be respected and preserved, and that every people has the right and duty to develop its culture and that all cultures form part of the common heritage belonging to all mankind". It should be mentioned that this declaration was partly motivated by the desire to build the cultural heritage of people which was destroyed during WWII. That is why it focused essentially on the material or tangible aspect of cultural heritage. The culminant point of this declaration is the 1972 UNESO's Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage which was ratified by 142 states and which has permitted the inclusion of 440 properties on the World Heritage List (Pressouyre, 1995:13). This convention, like the Declaration on the Principles of International Cultural Cooperation, still dwelled essentially on tangible cultural heritage.

It is in 1982 at the World Conference on Cultural Policies *Mondiacult* (Mexico City) that UNESCO included intangible cultural heritage as an important component of the World cultural heritage which needs to be preserved. Both the notions of "culture" and "cultural heritage" were redefined. Culture "may now be said to be the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group.

It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs" (<http://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf>) and cultural heritage of a people includes the works of its artists, architects, musicians, writers and scientists and also the work of anonymous artists, expressions of the people's spirituality, and the body of values which give meaning to life.

It includes both tangible and intangible works through which the creativity of that people finds expression: languages, rites, beliefs, historic places and monuments, literature, works of art, archives and libraries. (<http://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf>).

One of the obligations of UNESCO thanks to this conference was the development within its cultural heritage programmes, a programme which aimed at preserving, studying presenting intangible cultural heritage, especially oral tradition. <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf>.

The concern to protect intangible cultural heritage was buttressed some years later, more precisely during the 1989 UNESCO's General Assembly, during which a recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore was made. The affectivity of the preservation of the intangible cultural heritage was stated in the programme of the Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity which was adopted in November 1998 by the UNESCO'S Executive Board. It was therefore proclaimed that "the oral and intangible heritage has gained international recognition as a vital factor in cultural identity, promotion of creativity and the preservation of cultural diversity". <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf>. The programme therefore enjoined governments, NGOs and local communities to identify, preserve and promote their intangible cultural heritage in general, and to encourage individuals, groups, institutions and organizations to make outstanding contributions to managing, preserving, protecting and promoting the oral and intangible heritage in question, in accordance with UNESCO's objectives. <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf>.

The most recent UNESCO's legal instrument concerning the preservation of the intangible cultural heritage is the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. This convention defines the notion of "safeguarding" as "measures aimed at ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage, including the identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education, as well as the revitalization of the various aspects of such heritage" and "intangible cultural heritage" as "the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage". It goes further to point out that this intangible cultural heritage is transmitted from generation to generation and is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. The convention also includes the following new domains as part of the intangible cultural heritage: oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, traditional craftsmanship. <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf>.

2. Cameroonian literary texts as a reservoir of cultural heritage

The linguistic texture of the literary works of some Anglophone Cameroonian writers delineates various aspects of the tangible and intangible heritage of the country. This heritage can be perceived through lexical and discursive features. The data analysed are drawn from eleven literary works of six authors identified as follows: *SNS: Son of the Native Soil* (Ambanasom, 1999), *TDH: The Deadly Honey* (Kongnyuy, 2002), *Nnyusham* (Tardzenyuy, 2002), *TWM: The Widow's Might* (Nkemngong Nkengasong, 2006), *NFM: A Nose for Money* (Nyamnjoh, 2006), *ALOTD: A Legend of the Dead* (Asong, 1994a), *SIH: A Stranger in his Homeland* (Asong, 1994 b), *COT: The Crown of Thorns* (Asong, 1995), *SC: Salvation Colony* (Asong, 1996 a), *Chopchair* (Asong, 1998), *DFN: Doctor Frederick Ngenito* (Asong, 2006).

As concerns the choice of the novelists, it was found necessary to collect the data from the works of English-speaking Cameroonian novelists of all walks of life who are natives of the two English-speaking regions of the country (North-West and South-West regions). So, no literary work written in French and translated into English was included.

These literary works were read and the elements which have to do with aspects of culture were identified and classified. The elements were scrutinized and the linguistic processes through which they were incorporated identified. A corpus data based was therefore obtained.

The theoretical framework which underlies the study is the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is an aspect of linguistic relativity which stipulates that language influence how people view or conceptualise the world in a certain way (Penn, 1972). So, aspects of cultural heritage in Anglophone Cameroon literary works are encoded through lexical and discursive features. These linguistic elements can be transmitted from generation to generation.

2.1. Lexical features

In order to safeguard aspects of their cultures, these language users incorporate in their works lexical elements which express them. These lexical elements are incorporated therein through borrowing (loanwords, loanblends and loantranslations) and semantic extension. These lexical items generally fall under the domain of traditional events and songs, traditional products, traditional titles, foodstuffs, local dishes and drinks, socialization, relations and acquaintances.

2.1.1. Borrowing

Borrowing is the taking over of words from other languages” (Yule 1985:52). It is the incorporation in a text or language linguistic elements which originate from a different language. The elements borrowed by these language users, in many situations, are elements which illustrate aspects of their culture.

■ Traditional events, songs and dances

The linguistic texture of the write-up of these novelists is interspersed with many lexical items which originate from local languages and which refer to traditional events (traditional dances and ceremonies) and songs. Almost all these borrowed lexis do not have equivalents in native English contexts. Literary works therefore constitute a reservoir from which these aspects of culture can be tapped and taught to students. The lexical items which illustrate traditional events and songs are illustrated below.

(1) “**Adene**”: name of traditional dances in Ngie² language community (*SNS*, p. 97), (2) “**Akara**”: name of traditional dances in Ngie language community (*SNS*, p.97), (3) “**Asiko**”: name of a variety of dance which originates from the Douala people, ethnic group in the Littoral Region of Cameroon (*NFM*, p. 53), (4) “**Asondere**”: name of traditional dances in the Ngie language community (*SNS*, p.97), (5) “**Bendskin**”: name of a variety of dance which originate from the Medumba people, an ethnic group in the West Region of Cameroon (*NFM*, p. 53), (6) “**Ayén**”: name of the funeral war-song in the Ngie language (7) “**Bikutsi**”: name of a variety of dance which originates from the Ewondo and Bulu people, ethnic groups found respectively in the Center and South Regions of Cameroon (*NFM*, p. 53), (8) “**Born-house**”: ceremony organised when a baby is born (*TAF*, p.123), (9) **Cry-die**: funeral (*SC*, p.140), (10) “**Ichibi**”: name of traditional dances in the Ngie language community(*SNS*, p.97), (11) “**Ingua**”: name of traditional dances in the Ngie language community, (12) “**Kikum**”: name of a traditional dance in the Nso’³ community performed only in the day time (*Nyusham*, p. 94), (13) “**Kikumkévistse**”: name of a traditional dance in the Nso’ community performed only in the day time (*Nyusham*, p.94), (14) “**Kom**”: name of a traditional dance in the Nso’ community performed only in the day time (*Nyusham*, p. 94), (15) “**Laáli**”: name of a dance that can be performed both in the day and at night in the Nso’ community(*Nyusham*, p. 94), (16) “**Làm**”: name of a popular and unique traditional dance in the Nso’ community which is performed only in the compounds of the native who have a very high traditional rank (*Nyusham*, p. 86), (17) “**Látir**”: name of a dance that can be performed both in the day and at night in the Nso’ community (*Nyusham*, p.95), (18) “**Lenya**”: name of traditional dance in the Nweh Community (*DFN*, p. 191), (19) “**Limantón**”: name of a dance that can be performed both in the day and at night in the Nso’ community (*Nyusham*, p. 94), (20) “**Makossa**”: variety of music which originates from the Douala people, ethnic group in the Littoral Region of Cameroon (*NFM*, p. 53), (21) “**Mbáyá**”: name of a dance that can be performed both in the day and at night in the Nso’ community (*Nyusham*, p.94), (22) “**ánsaj**”: name of a dance in the Nso’ community which is performed only at night (*Nyusham*, p.94), (23) “**ngiri vitsə**”: name of a dance in the Nso’ community which is performed only at night (*Nyusham*, p. 94), (24) “**Mfoombám**”: name of a dance in the Nso’ community which is performed only at night (*Nyusham*, p. 94), (25) “**njáj**”: very popular traditional dance in the North-West region of Cameroon (*Nyusham*, p.94), (26) “**Ubu**”: birth ceremony in the Ngie language(*SNS*, p.231), (26) “**Akama dance**”: name of a dance on the Ngie Community (*SNS*, p.97).

It can be said that these writers incorporate in their literary works lexis which originate from their sociocultural environment and which convey important aspects of their cultures. It is also worth pointing out the specificities of these traditional songs, dances and events. Some of these songs are sung in some specific contexts. For instance, “**Ayén**” (6) is a funeral war-song in the Ngie language and it is sung only in that context. With regard to traditional dances some are popular and are performed in almost all regions of the country. It is the case of “**Asiko**” (3), “**Bendskin**” (5) and “**Bikutsi**” (7), “**Makossa**” (20).

² Ngie is a language spoken in the North-West Region of Cameroon.

³ Nso’ is a language spoken in the North-West Region of Cameroon.

These dances are performed in joyful contexts both at night and in the day time. Other traditional dances are performed only in the day time. It is the case of “*Látír*” (17), “*Lenyá*” (18) while others are performed exclusively at night. Examples of such dances are “*ánsaj*” (22), “*ngiri vitsə*” (23), “*Mfoómbám*” (24). In addition to these dances, there are others which are performed both in the day time and at night. Some of them are the following: (19) “*Limantòn*” (19), “*Mbáyá*” (21). Traditional events such as (8) “*Born-house*” (8) and *Cry-die* (9) are also organised during some specific occasion and for a particular purpose.

■ Traditional products

In addition to the lexical items referring to traditional products, it can be observed that the linguistic texture of these literary works is rich in terms of lexical items referring to traditional products. So, these literary pieces of works give an opportunity to Cameroonians to be versed with various products of their cultures. The following lexical items are instructive in this respect.

(1) “*Ankem*”: name of a locally made basket” (TDH, p. 4), (2) “*Casingo*”: name of a traditional cane (NWTD, p. 6), (3) “*Atem*”: name of a small thatch hut in the Nweh community where commoners can sit in and have discussions (COT, p.193), (4) “*den-gun*”: locally made guns (Nyusham, p. 92), (5) “*Foonbam*”: a cult meant for men only found in the Nso’ community (TDH, p. 124), (6) “*Kam-ngang*”: head of the ngang, juju group with about twenty jujus in the Nso’ community (TDH, p. 127), (7) “*Kighevshu*”: featherless black juju bearing a wild garden egg in its mouth in the Nso’ community (TDH, p.138), (8) “*Kikkwaa*”: rattling instrument made by notching bamboo cut to a length of about a metre and against which a piece of calabash is moved up and down in Lamnso’ (Nyusham, p. 58), (9) “*Kitarang*”: a sort of fixed colossal table of about eight yards long and four yards wide in the Mbum language community (TDH, p. 2), (10) “*Ku-ngang*”: name of a kind of fetish, a juju in the Lebialem⁴ and the Bamileke⁵ land of Cameroon (COT, p.46), (11) “*Mba*”: a six-sided rattling instrument made with pieces of bamboo clapped together; dry beans or corn seeds that are put inside its empty space made a rhythmic rattling noise” (Nyusham, p. 58), (12) “*Manjong*”: the army of the village in the Nso’ community (TDH, p. 3), (13) “*Miykó*”: large clay-pot with a famous diagnosis concoction in Lamnso’⁶” (Nyusham, p. 159), (14) “*Musong*”: name of a disease which makes the patient’s body get rotten. The disease is generally contracted when you’re bewitched by a Bassa⁷ man (TDH, p. 131), (15) “*Nban*”: name of the juju house in Lamnso’ (TDH, p. 127), (16) “*Ndek*”: name of a kind of drum in the Ngie culture (SNS, p.16), (17) “*Ndie-ndee*”: name of a house in the middle of the palace in the Nweh community where people can wait while expecting information to be announced by the chief (COT, p.39), (18) “*Nteuh*”: locally made and sounding drum in the palace used to announce important information to the villagers in the Nweh Community (COT, p.39), (19) “*Sares*”: Fulfulde word used to refer to the enclosures of houses in the northern regions of Cameroon (SIH, p. 261).

In addition to traditional dances, songs and events, these language users incorporate in their works an abundant number of lexes which refer to locally-made objects (e.g.: (1) “*Ankem*” (1), “*Kikkwaa*” (8), “*Kitarang*” (9), “*Nteuh*” (18), etc., traditional cult groups, jujus and diseases (e.g. *Foonbam* (5), “*Kighevshu* (7), “*Manjong*” (12), “*Musong*” (14).

■ Traditional titles

In the Cameroonian traditional society, like in any other African traditional society, there are many traditional titles which are used when addressing people of a certain traditional rank in the community. These honorifics, which abound in the write-up of these novelists, are illustrated below. The knowledge of these honorifics is necessary as it enables people to be in harmony with the traditional norms of the community in which they live. Various instances of honorifics drawn from these literary pieces of works are provided below.

(1) “*Afaáy*”: lineage heads in the Nso’ community (Nyusham, p. 86), (2) “*Beukems*”: name used to refer to nobles in the Nweh language community (DFN, p. 186), (3) “*Chinda / Nchinda*”: follower, servant of a traditional ruler, (4) “*Chopchair*”: heir (*Chopchair*, p.7) (5) “*Duüylam*”: traditional title in the Nso’ culture (Nyusham, p. 86), (6) “*Faí*”: title for the sub-chiefs who headed some extended families in the Nso’ community (TDH, p. 118), (7) “*Fons*”:

⁴ Lebialem is the name of a community found in the SouthWest Region of Cameroon.

⁵ Bamileke refers to a community found in the West Region of Cameroon.

⁶ Lamnso’ is the name of a language found in North-West Region of Cameroon.

⁷ Bassa is the name of the community found in the Littoral and Center Region of Cameroon. It also refers to the language of the people of this community.

chief of a community (DFN, p185), (8) “**Fuo**”: name used to refer to traditional rulers in the Nweh community and also in the Grassfield part of Cameroon (*Chopchair*, p.19), (9) “**Ankwetta**”: Assistant queen mother in the Nweh⁸ language community (SIH, p.372), (10) “**Asa’ah**”: traditional judge who deliberates cases in the palace (SIH, p.372), (11) “**Ataa**”: name used to refer to the chief in the Ngie language community (SNS, p. 24), (12) “**Lamido**”: traditional ruler in the northern part of Cameroon (SIH, p.259), (13) “**Mafuo**”: traditional title used to refer to the queen mother in the Nweh community. She coordinates the activities of women in the community (DFN, p196), (14) “**Mfoomi**”: title bestowed upon a great military leader who commanded the manjong, the army of the village in the Nso’ community (TDH, p. 3), (15) “**Mmè-bafuo**”: traditional title (DFN, p.196), (16) “**Munchi**”: person of a doubtful lineage (COT, p.74), (17) “**Ngwi-Nkongho**”: First wife of the Chief in the Nweh community (COT, p.133), (18) “**Nkwetta**”: person who reduces the work load of the Chief in the Nweh community (SIH, p. 372), (19) “**A princess of the leopard skin**”: princess born on the throne (*the expression “princess of the leopard skin” is literally translated in Lamnso’ as “Wànnto’ woójuvbaá”*) (Nyusham, p. 121), (20) “**Nwéròn**”: highest ruling body of the land in the Nso’ community (Nyusham, p. 170).

The knowledge of these traditional titles is of paramount importance to the people of the community as they enable to articulate sociocultural norms with regard to the respect of people who hold certain traditional titles in the community. The respect of the holders of these titles enables to preserve social peace in the community. It is the case of traditional titles such as “**Afaáy**” (1), “**Beukems**” (2), “**Chinda / Nchinda**”(3), “**Chopchair**” (4), “**Duúylam**” (5), etc.

■ Foodstuffs, local dishes and drinks

There exists in the Cameroonian setting much foodstuff, local dishes as well as drinks which either have a different name in native English contexts or do not exist in these contexts at all. A large majority of these lexical items or expressions originate either from Cameroonian home languages or from CamPE.

(1) “**Afofo**”: name of a locally-brewed drink (borrowed from CamPE) (SIH, p.25), (2) “**Abe-letsea**”: name of a local dish in the Nweh community made up of pounded cocoyams and red oil soup (SIH, p118), (3) “**Abe-nchi**”: name of a local dish in the Nweh community made up of pounded cocoyams and fried vegetable (SIH, p.50), (4) “**Achu**”: name of a local dish (TDH, p. 191), (5) “**Bobolo**”: cassava soaked and put in the leaves in the form of sticks before being cooked (borrowed from Cam PE)(TDH, p. 58), (6) “**Boungo Tsobbi**”: name of a Bassa local dish made up of fish and black ingredients (NFM, P.11), (7) “**Corn beer**”: name of a local beer made out of corn (TDH, p. 34), (8) “**Haa**”: a locally brewn wine (SIH, p. 246), (9) **Matango**: local name for palm wine (NFM, P.79), (10) **Ndole**: name of a variety of bitter vegetable, (11) “Ngapsambie”: name of a local dish (SIH, p. 118), (12) **Nkang**: name of a locally brewed wine (Nyusham, p. 85), (13) “**Sha**”: name of a locally-brewed wine (Nyusham, p. 129), (14) “**Akara beans**”: local name of a variety of beans use to make dough nuts (NFM, p.6), (15) “**Akembe federal**”: name of a locally brewn wine (synonym of “haa”) (SIH, p. 246), (16) “**Coca-Alhaji**”: mixture of a Coca-Cola and whisky (TMA, p. 49), (17) “**Fufu-corn**”: name of a local dish (*Chopchair*, p. 31).

The linguistic texture of these literary works also comprises abundantly lexical items which refer to foodstuff, local dishes and drinks. These edible local-made products are indexical items of the Cameroonian sociocultural identity. It is the case of “**Achu**” (4), “**Bobolo**” (5), “**Boungo Tsobbi**” (6), “**Haa**” (8), **Matango** (9), **Ndole** (10), “**Sha**” (13), “**Coca-Alhaji**”, (15) “**Fufu-corn**”.

■ Fauna and Flora

These writers refer to some trees using their local names. This can be due to the fact that either these plants do not have English name because they are unknown in native English contexts or because the writers are not familiar with their scientific names. Another reason for using these local names might be that the writers want to refer to these plants using the names which are well-known by local people. The same applies to the names of some animals.

(1) “**Afukè-eh**”: name of a local plant used to pave the ceremonial ground or the way to welcome important personalities (COT, p.58), (2) “**Ngam**”: large spiders used by soothsayer to make predictions in the Cameroon Grassfield⁹ area (TDH, p.119),

⁸ Nweh is the name of a language Community of the Lebialem people, a language community found in the South-West Region of Cameroon. It is also used to refer to the language of these people.

⁹ Cameroon Grassfield area covers the West, Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon.

(3) “**Nkeng plants**”: name of a local plant used to pave the ceremonial ground, the way to welcome important personalities and even to settle disputes (*SNS*, p.239) (4) “**Peace-plant**”: name of a local plant used to pave the ceremonial ground or the way to welcome important personalities (“*peace plant*” is the translation of the French phrase “*arbre (tree) de (of) paix (peace)*”) (*Nyusham*, p. 169).

Some plants and animals in some cultural areas of Cameroon are given a traditional importance. For instance, some of these plants are used during ceremonies to pave the way or to pass across a message. It is the case of the “**Afukè-eh**” (1) which is also referred to as “**Peace-plant**” (4). With regard to “**Ngam**”, it is the name given to large spiders used by soothsayer to make predictions in the Cameroon Grassfield area. These predictions help local people to foresee the future so as to act accordingly.

■ Traditional outfits and superfluosity

There are many dressing styles as well as traditional outfits which are proper to some Cameroonian ethnic groups. As such, they do not have equivalents in native English contexts.

(1) “**Agbada**”: Pidgin-English name used to refer to a locally made dress which is usually put on for ceremonies (*ALOTD*, p.139), (2) “**Aguada**”: Pidgin-English name used to refer to a locally made dress which is usually put on for ceremonies (*FID*, p.44), (3) “**Cincin**”: local name of a kind of sandals in Lamso’ (*Nyusham*, p. 101), (4) “**Kabba**”: name of a traditional dress, borrowing from the Douala language (*SNS*, p.213) (5) “**Kabangondo /Kabangundu**”: name of the traditional wear of Duala people (*Nyusham*, p. 83).

In Cameroon, many traditional outfits exist as one moves from one cultural area to another. These traditional outfits are generally put on by people during (traditional) ceremonies. Some of them are the following: “**Agbada**” (1), “**Aguada**” (2), “**Cincin**” (3), “**Kabba**” (4), etc.

■ Socialization, relations and acquaintances

There are some loanwords and expressions used typically in the Cameroonian sociocultural setting to ask for excuse, to refer to some kinship terms, to show respect to the person to whom the speaker wants to talk and to express one’s reaction to something, etc. These borrowed items usually originate either from local languages or from Pidgin Englishes.

(1) “**Ashia**”: Cameroon Pidgin English word used to show sympathy (*TWM*, p. 134), (2) “**Mammy élé, yayayo!**”: CamPE expression used for welcoming one’s mother in a very familiar and affective way, (3) “**Mbe**”: word of respect uttered by people to traditional rulers in the Ngie cultural community (*SNS*, p.24), (4) “**Ndzee-na**”: word uttered before addressing the chief in the Nso’ community (*TDH*, p. 119), (5) “**Nyar**”: word uttered before addressing the Fon (traditional ruler) in the Nso’ tradition (*Nyusham*, p. 41).

Human beings are social beings. In other words, they cannot live in isolation. So, these lexical items enable people of the community to socialize. Socialisation is important in the society as it helps to articulate sociocultural norms of the community. Knowledge of the lexis or expression used for socialization is necessary to people of the community for that purpose. Some of them are “**Ashia**” (4), “**Mammy élé, yayayo!**” (2), “**Mbe**” (3), “**Ndzee-na**” (4), “**Nyar**” (5), etc.

The borrowed lexis presented above indicate that Anglophone Cameroonian writers use their literary works as a means to safeguard the cultural aspect not only of their sociocultural environment but also of that of Cameroon. A scrutiny of these borrowed lexis reveals that they originate from home languages (in their majority), Cameroon Pidgin English and French. There is a great tendency for these writers to incorporate in their literary works lexical items which originate from their local language and which delineate the salient aspects of their culture. So, these literary works can be used as a tool which can be helpful for any reader who wants to learn about various aspects of culture of these writers. For instance, the novel entitled “*Nyusham*” provides salient information about the Nso’ (an ethnic group found in the North-West region of Cameroon) culture in its various aspects; *Son of the native soil* (*SNS*) contains aspects of the Ngie (an ethnic group found in the North-West region of Cameroon) culture while *The Crown of Thorns* (*COT*) and *Chopchair* informs readers about the Nweh (ethnic group found in the Southwest region of Cameroon) culture. It is also worth pointing out that the most common strategy used by these writers in order to provide readers with the meaning of these borrowed lexical items consists in inserting a parenthetical element immediately after the lexical item, which provides the reader with information about the meaning of the borrowed

word. It is worth pointing out that by incorporating these various aspects of their culture in their literary works, Anglophone Cameroon writers contribute significantly not only in preserving their cultural heritage but also in transmitting it to future generations. As the teaching of national languages and cultures is one of the recent concern of the Cameroonian educational policy makers, these literary works which embody various aspects of the Cameroonian Grassfield culture conveyed through the lexical resources they contain can be useful in the teaching of this culture.

2.1.2. Semantic extension

The meaning of some English lexical items found in the write-up of these language users is extended so as to incorporate various aspects of the Cameroonian sociocultural environment. In effect, in addition to their meaning(s) attested in Standard British English, these lexes take new ones. The examples provided below illustrate this point.

- (1) "I beg in the name of all my *brothers* who run this tribe" (*COT*, p. 43) (Brothers: any male person of the community)
- (2) "My *fathers*, I know this evening is going to be another bad one for all of us" (*COT*, p. 119) (Father: any elder of the community who has or may have the age of one's father)
- (3) "When the god of your tribe is stolen, my *son*, you don't talk about succeeding any more" (*COT*, p. 38) (Son: any male child of the community)

Many writers or speakers in non-native contexts are influenced by their local cultures. This may account for the new meanings they associate to many English lexical items. The use of kinship terms is a good illustration of this phenomenon is a case in point. For instance, in the Nweh culture in particular and in many Bantu cultures in general the equivalent of the English word "brother" is used to refer to any male person of the community whose age might be equal to yours. Also, the equivalents of the words "father" and "son" are used in these sociocultural settings to refer respectively to an elder who has the age of one's father and to any male child of the community. This specific way of using kinship terms is transmitted from one generation to another.

2.2. Discursive features

The discursive features handled in this work are the following: codemixing, codeswitching, Cameroon Pidgin English, French discourses and proverbs. They are analyzed in turn.

2.2.1. Code-mixing

The richness of the Cameroonian cultural heritage also lies in the richness and diversity of its linguistic landscape which is portrayed by the multiplicity of languages attested on the territory. This linguistic richness is portrayed by Biloa (2004:1) in the following terms:

Cameroon is generally looked at as the microcosm of Africa. From a variety of perspectives, it is Africa in miniature. Historically, it is a zone of confluence and convergence of the civilizations that have impacted Africa. Linguistically, three of the four linguistic phyla attested in Africa are represented therein. To say the least, it is a linguistic melting-pot or patchwork. Apart from the local languages, there are two languages of European importation: French and English. On top of that, two hybrid languages are spoken in Cameroon: Pidgin English and Camfranglais.

From the above quotation, it can be retained that the linguistic landscape of Cameroon is mapped out by indigenous languages, Indo-European languages (English and French) and hybrid languages (Pidgin English and Camfranglais).

It should be pointed out that another strategy used in safeguarding the cultural heritage of Cameroon can be perceived in the Anglophone Cameroonians writers' efforts to incorporate in their works linguistic constructions which constitute a blend of discourses originating from various languages. Codeswitching is one of these strategies. This phenomenon "occurs when conversants use both languages to the extent that they change from one language to another in the course of a single utterance" (Wardhaugh, 1986:103).

A scrutiny of the data shows that the linguistic texture of the literary productions of Cameroonian novelists is interspersed by various instances of code-mixing sentences which take various patterns. The patterns of code-mixing identified from the corpus include the following: English-CamPE, English-French, French-English, English-French-English and English-French-English-French-English code-mixing.

2.2.1.1. English-CamPE code-mixing

The examples provided in this sub-section involve English and Cameroon Pidgin English units. Only one pattern is identified, namely the pattern English-CamPE. Sentences which illustrate the pattern CamPE-English are not found in the corpus.

- (1) “[...] before you promise, think thrice because, you *know my engine saw how i de cut*” (ALOTD, p.69)
- (2) It is only in a Small Monje meeting that you can show this *ya madness*” (ALOTD, p.241)
- (3) “OK, mammy, *you go*.” (ALOTD, p.261)
- (4) “He had been discovered under a mask when a team of armed robbers had been trapped. He had led a gang to way lay a businessman who had “*chopped njangi*” (ALOTD, p.124)
- (5) “I am not churchman... *I only helep myself*” (SC, p.25)
- (6) “From here you pay 500 Francs, *they go take you to Azilut*” (SC, p.26)
- (7) “You alone, *you heavy like six calabash*, you *no know that*” (SC, p.26)
- (8) “If you want *helep* him more than that”, Pa Matty added, “*God go bless you*” (SC, p.28)
- (9) “You people cause Monique *die die wey not be her own*” (NFM, 198)

The following reasons can be put forward in order to account for the above instances of English-Pidgin code switching: speakers’ effort to show one’s familiarity to his or interlocutors and their insufficient exposure to the English language (these discourses are uttered by characters who belong to a low educational and economic backgrounds). However, in the literature of code-alternation, it has been proven that moving from one code to another can be a sign of proficiency in several languages rather than a lack thereof since these speakers usually opt to use more than one language in the same speech passage, combining their linguistic resources to better get a given message across (Pittman, 2008: 125). Taking this into consideration, it can also be hypothesized that the above code-mixing sentences stems from speakers’ ability to manipulate tactfully the languages found in their verbal repertoire (English and Cameroon Pidgin-English) to convey their message successfully.

2.2.1.1.2. Code-mixing involving English and French languages

As opposed to the sentences of the preceding sub-section, those presented here include exclusively English and French lexis, phrases and units. It is also worth observing that unlike the sentences presented in the preceding subsection, those found in this one take various patterns. The patterns identified are the following: English-French, French-English, English-French-English / and English-French-English-French-English code-mixing.

■ English-French / French-English codemixing

- (1) “Is that one you’ve selected for madame, *M’sier?*” (NFM, P.9)
- (2) “But Jean-Marie Just told you, *n’est-ce pas?*” (NFM, P.40)
- (3) “Haven’t you heard about *l’avarice de Monsieur Gaston Abanda?*” (NFM, p.60)
- (4) “So when should I expect you, *ma chère?*” (NFM, P.109)
- (5) “*Ah, mon ami, 8.000* is too expensive”, Prospère protested (NFM, P. 9)

■ English-French-English / English-French-English-French-English code-mixing

- (6) “But to tell the truth, *au nom de Dieu*, they are mistaken. I ask them” (NFM, P.107)
- (7) “He had been persuaded by a friend to go these to be treated for *la maladie d’amour* he believed he had contracted” (NFM, P.26)
- (8) “How can you, *un nègre* purge your bowels into your master’s very nostril?” (NFM, P.45)
- (9) “He concluded by saying that greed not love of *la patrie* had pushed *Monsieur Gaston* to report himself to the police” (NFM, P.56)
- (10) “Alright, I’ll bring you food! *Bebe*, come!” (FID, p. 160)
- (11) “I like this one... that’s a lovely *culotte*, exactly like the one Denise, *la chaude du Ministre Kwacam*, wore last week at her birthday party” (NFM, P.104)

Almost all the instances of code-mixing which involve English and French languages in the corpus are drawn from one novel, namely Nyamnjoh’s *A Nose for Money*. In this novel, the code-mixed sentences are uttered by characters that belong to various social classes. Taking this into consideration, it can be postulated that the following reasons can be used to account for this switching: insufficient exposure of speakers to English and French (they cannot convey their message fully in one language), for prestige (French in Cameroon can be said to be the more prestigious official language since it is mostly used in the public life and every Cameroonian would like to speak it.

So, by interspersing their speech with French discourses, these characters who usually speak English, show that they also have a knowledge of French and therefore reveal their English-French bilingual identity: by mixing English and French, these characters portray a crucial aspect of the linguistic identity of Cameroon, namely French-English official bilingualism.

2.2.2. Code-switching

In the literature of language contact and more precisely in that of code alternation, a distinction is made between situational and metaphoric code-switching. In situational code-switching, “the switches between languages always coincide with changes from one external situation to another” whereas in metaphoric switching, “it is the choice of the language that determines the situation” (Hudson, 1980: 53). At this juncture, it is important to distinguish between code-mixing and code-switching. In the literature, the term “code-switching” is used “to refer to switching from one language to another between sentences” and “codemixing” “for switches occurring within the same sentence or clause” (Pittman, 2008: 125). So, code-switching is intersentential (i.e. a switch between two clauses or sentences) and code-mixing is intrasentential (i.e. a switch within clauses.) (Pittman, 2008: 125).

2.2.2.1. English-CamPE codeswitching

Just a handful of instances of English-Cameroon Pidgin English codeswitchings were identified in the corpus.

(1) “Madam, if in one minute you don’t show us where your husband is sleeping you will answer for it, you hear?”

We no come here for play” (ALOTD, p.63)

(2) *Government work no di finish*. I will go there whenever I want” (SIH, p.84)

(3) **Conversation between Prospère and Nweron**

Prospère: “I wish you had told me this a few weeks ago”, prospère said.” **(English)**

Nweron: “But you know I wasn’t here”, the Nweron defended himself.

Prospère: Does Ngek divine as well?”**(English)**

Nweron: Yes, he cures, heals, divines and recovers heart from the underworld”

(4) **Conversation between Prospère and Ngek, a witchdoctor**

Prospère: “I beg you [...]. Tell me. I beg. **(English)**

Ngek: “I no want talk for sake of bad news [...] you no go like what you hear”

Prospère: “*Tell me [...] I beg. I go pay anything*” *He had pleaded.*” **(Pidgin English)**

Ngek: “Money no be the palaver, but I fear plenty.”

Prospère: “*Tell me, I be man*”**(Pidgin English)**

Ngek: “Monique die diwey not be her own [...] you kill Monique for nothing.”

Prospère: “*Qu’est-ce que ça veut dire ? [...] Vous ne voyez pas que j’ai huit enfants? [...] Et que mes deux femmes ci-présentes sont encore grosses ?*” **(French)**

(NFM, p. 196-198)

Field: Discussion between Prospère and Ngek, the witchdoctor about the causes of the barrenness and death of Prospère’s wife.

Tenor: -**Agent roles:** client (Prospère) VsNgek (witchdoctor)

-**Social relations:** hierarchic

-**Social distance:** maximal

Insight: Because of the infertility of his wife coupled with her later death, Prospère is advised by Nweron to consult a witchdoctor in order to have more clarifications about these two sorrowful situations (see Prospère’s first conversation with Nweron). During this conversation, the language the two men use is English. When he meets Ngek, the witchdoctor, he continues speaking English by begging this man who has divine powers but who seems to be reluctant to clarify these to him by explaining the causes of the sorrowful situations. Note that the language spoken by the witchdoctor is Pidgin-English. In Prospère’s effort to convince the witchdoctor, he switches from English into Pidgin-English, the language spoken by the witchdoctor (an illustration of speech convergence). Prospère’s switch from English into Pidgin-English aims at creating some sort of familiarity between him and the witchdoctor. After that the witchdoctor had clarified the situation by saying that Prospère is at the origin of his wife’s infertility and death, Prospère became furious and expressed his furiousness by using French. He has therefore switched from Pidgin-English into French. This switching is to create some sort of distance between him and the witchdoctor.

2.2.2.2. Codeswitching involving English and French languages

Two patterns can be identified from the corpus, namely French-English and English-French codeswitching.

-French-English codeswitching

- (1) “*Donne alors 4.000, M’sier*. If you really want it” he said. (NFM, P.10)
- (2) “*Je suis parfaitement d’accord*. After all, I’m not married.” (NFM, P.42)
- (3) “*Venez me tromper ici. Je ne connais pas bien l’argent. Venez me trompez, ma sœur, mon frère. Je donne tout pour rien*. Buy one take two, buy one take two”. (NFM, P.8)
- (4) “*C’est huit mille francs, M’sier*. Not the least expensive. You can see”. (NFM, P.9)
- (5) “*Le ministre ce n’est pas n’importe qui, comme vous le savez bien, Monsieur*. It is our business to protect him from the rabble.” (NFM, P.102)

-English-French Codeswitching

- (6) “This, you can’t find anywhere in Sawang. *C’est la vraie, vraie qualité, mon ami. Je jure. De Paris, de Cotonou, d’Abidjan...*” (NFM, P. 9)
- (7) “Here prestige counts for everything. *Ça c’est la fierté des Français. La nôtre aussi.*” (NFM, P.138)
- (8) “I gave you a cloth this good for so cheap and you argue? What manner of man are you ... Anglo? *Comme ça tu n’achètes jamais rien pour la femme. Tu es chiche.*” (NFM, P.10)
- (9) “Using your house is in fact all we really want from you, and you can have the car when we leave in a couple of days. *D’accord?*” (NFM, P.43)
- (10) “But my business with you would be strictly within the rules, in the same way, I suppose that yours has been both in west Mimbolandais and abroad. *Je sais comment les Anglophones sont strictes!*” (NFM, P.135)
- (11) “This isn’t something to fuss over. Il nous faut tout faire notre devoir, *n’est-ce pas?*” (NFM, P.102)
- (12) “Holland wax, English wax, Republic of Kuti wax, veritable wax... Real guaranteed wax. *C’est ça! Je jure.*” (NFM, P. 9)
- (13) “What madam doesn’t know Damas, *le pagne Hollandaise?*” (NFM, P. 9)
- (14) “The number one [...] from Europe that makes a woman stands out in a thousand? I sell the real thing, *la vraie, vraie qualité.*” (NFM, P. 9)
- (15) “Beware, of fakes! Buy from me the cloth that doesn’t fade, the flower that doesn’t wither under the heat of the tropical sun. *Je jure.*” (NFM, P. 9)
- (16) “Touch and feel for yourself, and know that I’m no liar. Why lie when something is so good? *N’est-ce pas je dis la vérité, mon ami...?*” (NFM, P. 9)
- (17) “They would like to take everything for nothing.” *C’est impossible ça!* (NFM, P.107)
- (18) “What are you waiting for?” Marie–Louise laughed. “*Vous êtes beau, présentable, et valuable, apparemment.*” (NFM, P.108)

English and French languages are the languages of European importation which were inherited by the country through colonisation. Codeswitching is one strategy through which these language users incorporate these languages in their write-up (Cf. French-English codeswitching (examples 1-5), English-French codeswitching (examples 6-18). English and French are the official languages of the country and are therefore used in the Cameroonian public life. So, English-French official bilingualism is a maker of the cultural identity of the country. It is a linguistic heritage which is being preserved by political and educational authorities despite the fact that much effort still needs to be put in order to reinforce the effectiveness of English-French bilingualism in Cameroon.

2.3. Cameroon Pidgin-English

Cameroon Pidgin-English is one of the most spoken lingua francas in Cameroon. It is the only lingua franca spoken in the two English-speaking regions of the country. This language actually cuts across the ethnic, social class barriers in the North-West and South-West regions of the country. Besides, this hybrid language is also spoken in the French-speaking regions especially in cosmopolitan towns such as Douala, Yaounde, Nkongsamba and Bafoussam. So, the language is spoken not only by English-speaking Cameroonians but also by their French-speaking compatriots. In the Cameroonian novel of English expression, Cameroon Pidgin-English is the second language used after English, as the following examples indicate. The Standard British English equivalents are provided in brackets after the examples.)

- (1) “Wetiwona want for ya? Who call wona?” (COT, p.131)(What do you want here? Who called you?)
- (2) “Ah ha massa, if the man don pass you jus gree” (COT, p.131)(If that man is above you, you have to accept that)
- (3) Whosai whisky and champagne we you hide’am” (SIH, p.97)

(Where are the whisky and champagne that you hid?)

(4) “Massa, massa, I get some market tin for ya” (SIH, p.240)

(Sir, I have something to sell here)

(5) “Meresin for sick madam. If madam sreep with man wey get gonoleah or eny such kind tins, madam most tek wan capsole wan tams for...” (SIH, p.241)

(I have a drug for you madam. If you want to have sexual intercourse with a man who is infected by gonorrhoea, or any other disease, you must take one capsule once...)

Almost all the above Pidgin English productions are made by characters that do not belong to an upper social class. To be more precise, in the corpus, it has been observed that Pidgin-English in the Cameroonian novel of English expression is usually used by hawkers, nightwatchmen, housewives, rascals, just to name these few. This concurs Bamiro (1991: 277-284) when he points out that “West African writers often employ Pidgin English not only to make penetrating criticism against their societies, but also to characterise the status of interlocutors in the African social system, to reveal social classes and group identities and to provide local colour”. Also, this hybrid language is also used by characters in order to create familiarity with their interlocutors.

2.4. French discourses

In Cameroon, French is the first official language for French-speaking Cameroonians. It is the lingua franca used in the eight French-speaking regions. As compared to CamPE instances, those of French are fewer in the corpus as illustrated by the examples below. The SBrE translation is provided after each sentence)

(1) Conversation between Achamba and a Gendarme Officer

A: “*Qui êtes-vous Monsieur ? et ou allez-vous ?* Barked the officer in French.

(Who are you?” And where are you going to?” Barked the officer in French)

A: “*Mais renseignez-vous au bureau, Monsieur* “ordered” the man. *Ce n'est pas comme ça que les choses se passent ici. Allez voir le chef au bureau, d' accord?*

(Find out from the office, Sir. That is not how people are attended to here. Meet the Office Head, right?)

B: “*Oui, chef*”, replied Achamba. (SNS, p.61)

(Yes, Sir, replied Achamba)

The presence of French sentences in the Cameroonian novel of English expression shows the co-existence of two languages of European importation on the Cameroon territory, and therefore goes a long way to express the bilingual nature of the country. Besides, it can also be seen as a mark of linguistic integration of English and French speaking communities in the territory.

In order to portray the various aspects of their identity, Cameroonian novelists of English expression subject the English language to the social, cultural, historical and geographical realities of Cameroon. This is a trend in the linguistic texture of African writers in general who modify the English language to so that this code of European importation suits “new realities, social norms and ecological needs” (Bamiro, 2000: 89)

This sociocultural identity is expressed in the Cameroonian novel of English expression through the use of linguistic features such as borrowing (loanwords, loanblends and loan-translations), code alternation (code-switching and code-mixing), Pidgin-English and French discourses and interference. The large majority of the above borrowed lexes denote realities through which some Cameroonian ethnic groups can be identified. They therefore convey realities which can be considered as indexical markers of the Cameroonian sociocultural identity.

In addition to borrowed items, it is upheld that through the phenomenon of code alternation, these writers portray other aspects of the Cameroonian sociocultural identity, namely, English-French biculturalism and the coexistence of two lingua francas in the country, namely French and Cameroon Pidgin English. Talking about English-French biculturalism, it is important to indicate that one of the linguistic peculiarities of Cameroon is that it is one of the rare country in Africa, if not the only one, which has been colonized by the British and the French and which has adopted English and French as its official languages. The coexistence of these two languages of European importation shows the bicultural nature of this country. Some regions of the country are English-speaking (North-West and South-West) while others are French-speaking. This biculturalism is reflected in the novels of these writers through code-switching and code-mixing constructions which put into prominence these languages of European importation.

It can therefore be pointed out that these instances of code alternations indicate the presence of two languages of European importation in the linguistic repertoire of the characters and undoubtedly portray one crucial aspect of Cameroon identity, namely French-English biculturalism and French-English official bilingualism, a unique situation in Africa.

In addition to patterns of code alternation which involve English and French languages, it has also been identified in the corpus not only patterns of code alternations which involve French and CamPE but also various instances of French and English interference. Also, it has been identified in the corpus various conversations in French and in Cameroon-Pidgin English. The presence of French and Pidgin-English in the Cameroonian novel of English expression provides additional information about the linguistic identity of Cameroon. French and Pidgin-English are the two major lingua francas spoken on the Cameroonian territory. French is the lingua franca in French-speaking regions while Pidgin-English is the language which dominates English-speaking regions. This situation is a linguistic peculiarity of the Cameroonian linguistic landscape in Africa and can therefore be considered as a maker of the linguistic identity of Cameroon.

2.5. Proverbs

A proverb is a short sentence, etc. usually known by many people, stating something commonly experienced or giving advice" (*CALD*, 2005: 1017). It has been observed that Cameroonian novelists of English expression make use of proverbs which are generally translated from their home languages. Their impressive proportion and frequency in the novels indicate that they are common devices used by these writers in order to convey their thoughts, ideologies and customs and traditions. Proverbs are a feature of orality. The following examples are instructive in this respect.

- (1) "The fly followed the corpse to the grave because it had nobody to advise it" (*COT*, p. 134)
- (2) "When a man goes to the latrine without something with which to clean his anus he can do many wrong things" (*COT*, p.134)
- (3) "A man never plants only a single grain of corn because no one can look into the seeds of time to tell which seeds would grow and which one would die" (*COT*, p.136)
- (4) "The shoulder can never grow above the head" (*COT*, p.151)
- (5) "The tree which falls and touches the ground is the tree that grows alone..." (*COT*, p.153)
- (6) "You cannot harvest where you did not sow" (*COT*, p.171)
- (7) "A weak man should not be wicked because he has the whole world to fight against" (*COT*, p.172)
- (8) "Before the dog impregnated its mother, it all began like a joke, scratching her back, smelling and licking her anus while she urinated. Then one day it happened" (*COT*, p.41)
- (9) "One tree cannot make a forest" (*COT*, p.49)
- (10) "When there is no water, people use spittle to wash their faces" (*COT*, p.68)
- (11) "Even the hands of a potter can sometimes shake" (*COT*, p.102)
- (12) "When a hen leaves the incubator, it must be chased far out of the house if the housekeeper does not want to step on warm excrements" (*COT*, p.116)
- (13) "We cannot stretch our hands longer than the bones in them" (*COT*, p.121)
- (14) "A calabash should never have anything to do with a stone. Whether it is the calabash which hits the stone or it is the stone that hits the calabash it is the calabash which breaks" (*COT*, p.130)
- (15) "A good plum is often located on a risky branch" (*SNS*, p.51)
- (16) "When your brother is up a kola-nut, you can pick up a juicy one" (*SNS*, p.75)
- (17) "When the house gives you away, the world takes" (*SNS*, p.221)
- (18) "The woman's urine can never rise above the fence" (*SNS*, p.233)
- (19) "If you decide to seize someone else's wife, as the saying goes, at noon, in plain daylight, you should be ready to demonstrate your worth by cashing down all that has been spent on her by the first husband" (*SNS*, p.78)
- (20) "For every successful man, lies a woman" (*SNS*, p. 14)

Although these proverbs are said in English, they still retain the flavour of the sociocultural environment from which they originate. They are the product of the experiences of the people. It is of paramount importance to stress the importance of these proverbs in the education of local communities in various domains of life. The education got from these proverbs help people of the community to preserve their sociocultural practices so as to transmit this knowledge to future generations.

Conclusion

As a whole, it can be retained that the preservation of the Cameroonian cultural heritage can be achieved through literary works. A scrutiny of the literary texts of Anglophone Cameroonian writers has enabled us to bring out the various aspects of this cultural heritage which is perceived through the incorporation in their works of lexis which bring into light these various aspects, namely lexis which belong to the domains of traditional events and songs; traditional products and titles; foodstuffs, local dishes and drinks; socialization, relations and acquaintances. These lexical items are inserted in their write-up through borrowing which takes the form of loanwords, loan blends and loan-translations and they originate from home languages and Cameroon Pidgin English. Besides, it can be observed that the preservation of this cultural heritage is also materialized through the use of various discursive features such as code mixing, code-switching, interference, Cameroon Pidgin English discourses and French. On the basis of the cultural richness of these literary productions, it can be said that these works constitute important reservoirs from which various aspects of Cameroon cultural heritage can be tapped and taught in secondary and high schools. Teachers of Cameroon cultures draw from these literary works important data for the teaching of Cameroonian culture. Also, in order to reinforce the cultural integration and exchange in Cameroon, it is advisable that some selected Anglophone Cameroonian literary works be included in the official booklist of English Language in the Francophone subsystem of education and that some selected Francophone Cameroonian literary works be included in the official booklist of French language in the Anglophone subsystem of education. This will certainly enable students of both subsystems of education to be familiar with the various aspects of the Cameroonian cultural heritage.

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