



The Status of Translation, Challenges and Perspectives in Cameroon

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the status of translation challenges and perspectives in Cameroon. It builds on the premise that the trajectory of Cameroon predisposes it to the industrialisation of translation. This practice has been institutionalised in Cameroon a long time ago but no one can trace for sure, its status and milestone to professionalization. The objectives of this study were therefore to (1) find out if translation is professionalized in Cameroon, (2) determine the effectiveness of translation practice in Cameroon, and (3) identify those who serve as translators in Cameroon. The study relied on observation, interviews, questionnaires, documentation. Secondary source material such as text books, journals and any relevant material were also consulted and fully exploited for the collection of relevant information. Findings revealed that: translation in Cameroon is not professionalized; translators do not enjoy any prestigious status; there is lack of organization and no effective translation practice in the country; the myriad of language pairs are still to be effectively served by the existing practitioners; existing translation schools are yet to provide the translation market with the relevant number of qualified translators; translation is practiced by anyone who can speak two or more languages. It was recommended that further studies be carried out on the requirements of professionalization in translation practice.

KEYWORDS

Status, translation, professionalization.



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1. Introduction and Background to the Study

Cameroon also known as ‘Cameroun’ in French, ‘Kamerun’ in German, ‘Camaroes’ in Portuguese and ‘Cameroon’ in English is a country found in Central Africa, bounded clockwise by the Gulf of Guinea, Nigeria, Congo, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea. Its contact with other countries not only brought in political, economic and social activities, but also different cultures of the neighboring countries such as the languages spoken. Spanish spoken in the two Guineas and Nigerian Pidgin English spoken in Nigeria have gradually found their place in Cameroon. These represent fertile ground for translation in general (Nama, 1990). Cameroon, has had contacts with various European countries. First came the Portuguese who called the territory Rio Dos Camaros (River of Prawns). Then the Germans and the British a race for annexation, with the Germans finally hoisting their flag over Cameroon. With the outbreak of World War One and the defeat of Germany, the British and the French took over the territory. This led to English and French becoming the official languages following independence and reunification in 1961. In the 1961 Federal Constitution, it is stated that “the official languages of Cameroon shall be French and English” (Cameroon, 1961). The presence of these European countries were not only political and economic, but they also came with their different cultures which were planted in the country. Spanish, Portuguese and German are taught in most schools in Cameroon. The presence of these languages represents a fertile ground for Translation.

The country is known to be bilingual, though the general feeling is that the country is pre-dominantly French-speaking. Indeed, of the 10 regions that make up the country, only 2 of them are English-speaking regions (the Northwest and the Southwest regions), while the remaining eight are predominantly French-speaking (Adamawa, Centre, East, Far North, Littoral, North, West and South). But Cameroon is not just English and French speaking, it is also a myriad of national languages, almost equal in number to the ethnic communities that make it (Ethnologue, 2002). The SIL International Reference Publication (Gordon, 2005), listed 279 languages. Some sources, such as (Echu, 2003), listed 247 languages, and claimed that some of the languages listed in Ethnologue are varieties of the same language. Ethnologue (2002) shows that Cameroon has between 250 and 300 languages, divided into three of the four language phyla of Africa: Afro-Asiatic, Nilo-Saharan and Niger-Congo. This variety of languages and cultures further makes the need for translation most probable.

As earlier evoked, Cameroon is a bilingual country as per her constitution. However, French seems to be the Language of Wider Distribution (LWD). Also, there exist populations with languages of even lower distribution, who tend to be monolingual speakers of any of the almost 300 national languages of Cameroon. Indeed, 2004 is the year when legislation seemed to begin giving attention to national languages. Cameroonian national languages may be used in municipalities. Cameroon therefore presents an ideal situation on the industrialization of translation. The government of Cameroon from independence has identified the paramount role of translation in the nation building process. In fact, it was impossible to dream of a nation without a unifying language which translation provided. The presidency of the republic made it a duty to recruit language mediators, some of whom were natural translators, to serve the communication needs of the government. Early translators and interpreters were sent abroad for training under the sponsorship of the government of Cameroon (Nama, 1990).

In 1985, the first ever translation and interpretation school in Sub-Saharan Africa was created. This was the Advanced School of Translators and Interpreters (ASTI), created to further serve the very urgent communication needs of the government. Graduates from this school were directly recruited into the public service and posted to the presidency and the national assembly. This school has

churned out over a thousand graduates since creation (Nama, 1990). The Judicial Organization of Cameroon as contained in the law on judicial organization comprises the following courts: Customary Law Courts; Courts of First Instance; High Courts; Military Courts; Lower Courts of Administrative Litigation; Lower or Regional Audit Courts; Courts of Appeal and the Supreme Court. The law on judicial organization states that justice shall be administered in the name of the people of Cameroon. This justice unfortunately is administered only in English and French except in customary courts where local tongues are used. A cross section of the population has to rely on translators since most of the population cannot speak these two exogenous languages.

The Ministry of Public Health in the country is responsible for the maintenance of all public health services. Many religious organisations also own health centres. There are more than 5000 health units spread all over the country. People are bound to move from one region of the country for health reasons and it is not sure they will understand the language spoken in those regions. Labour mobility is a reality in Cameroon, the health sector not being an exception. Medical practitioners are posted to hospitals where they do not necessarily speak the local language. Cameroon is a central African country that is home to different religious groups. A large part of the population in the country is affiliated with a certain religious community. The Constitution allows the freedom of conscience and religious worship, making Cameroon a religion-tolerant country. However, for a religious group (apart from African traditional religions) to be legally functional, it has to be registered by the State after meeting the basic requirements such as having a considerable congregation. In Cameroon, Christianity is the most practised religion followed by Islam ((Nama, 1990).

This country offers all major characteristics that can be found in other countries in Africa: a highly diverse cultural background found in more than 200 ethnic groups, an exceptional geological, ecological and botanical potentials, wildlife in its natural form and varied climatic conditions. This is the main reason why tourism is ranked 10th top priority of the government. Cameroon has more than 200 ethnic groups with over 279 languages spoken and a diversity of cultural activities. There are also ecotourism potentials that can be developed in every region of the country thanks to the highly contrasting landscape. Mountaineering and tourism on mountains can also be practised on the mountain ranges that are found all over the country. Safari can also be practised by visiting the multitude of national parks which contain a diversity of mammals, birds and other beasts. Henceforth, a safari could be a visit to Waza to watch animals, then back to the northern parks like that of Bouba Ndjidah, or Korup in the south and the Dja national patrimony to enjoy the beauty of nature. The somewhat median position of Cameroon in Africa makes it easy to encapsulate a good number of characteristics of the continent, thereby earning its nickname of 'Africa in miniature'. The country's vegetation, the green dense southern region is dominated by the Equatorial Forest, to the low green savannah and steppe towards the north. The Western section of the country is dominated by a high relief and by the savannah while the littoral section of the country has an extensive coastline marked by greyish yellow fine sands. There are also interesting aspects of the landscape marked by attractive sites, traditions and people. All these have led to different types of tourism which are practised throughout the year, depending on the seasons.

Translation has certainly been in existence from time immemorial and has played a vital role in the history of the people and countries. The origin of the name Cameroon could quickly be seen as a product of translation. Foreign languages were introduced in Cameroonian soil for trade and administrative purposes. It is of interest to know not only how these languages were used for the intended purpose but also to know who aided these foreign administrators and traders to communicate with locals who themselves already had a myriad of clearly unintelligible languages to deal with. This

literature might be misleading as far as the origins of translation is concerned. As a matter of fact, it may be tempting to think it started with the arrival of western explorers and merchants at the coast of Cameroon (Nama, 1990).

When a country speaks more than 250 languages, there is bound to be misunderstanding, suspicion and confusion. Unity in such a multilingual setting could be very much challenged. Today in Cameroon, some social upheavals pin their demands, amongst other things, on language issues. According to some groups clamouring for autonomy and independence, especially in that part of the country which before independence and reunification, was administered by Britain and had English as its lingua franca, they are not fairly treated. They argue that the English language is not only relegated to a secondary role, but its speakers do not enjoy the same privileges like their French-speaking counterpart as far as education, employment, social welfare and many others are concerned. According to Echu (2004), the policy of official language bilingualism, adopted by Cameroon at independence and originally aimed at guaranteeing political unity and integration of the Cameroon State, now seems to constitute a source of conflict and political disintegration.

Many ethnic tensions, though attributed to land matters, could also be attributed to language and cultural hegemonies. Inter-tribal wars such as the Bali-Bawoc in the North-West Region of Cameroon stands as a glaring example where it is rightly or wrongly claimed that the uneasy relationship between the two villages was compounded by the misinterpretation of a government official's message to both villages. The endless conflict between the 'chief' of Balafi and the paramount chief of Foutouni in the West Region could be attributed to a poor interpretation of the law on decentralisation. Many more of such cases exist. This not only attests to the fact that mastery of these exogenous languages by the population is still a dream but also compels anyone to strongly believe that effective translation could have prevented violent confrontations between these villages. Such effective translation can also only be possible with well-trained professionals, thereby underscoring the role of translation in enhancing national unity and integration (Echu, 1999). Communication is a sacrosanct right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, guaranteed by the Cameroonian legal system. By virtue of the principle of fair hearing, for a proceeding to be effective, both parties must effectively understand each other. How can fair hearing therefore be possible in a multilingual setting like Cameroon where the languages of the court are English and French? Though at independence, French and English were adopted as the official languages of the country, 50 years after, it is sad to note that a majority of Cameroonians cannot read and write these official languages (Echu, 1999). Even in the intellectual milieu, bilingualism does not mean much (Bobda, 1999). That is, some clearly hold that it is the country which is bilingual, not its citizens. This makes the role of the translation primordial in ensuring the right to communication.

The medical field, which is as delicate as the legal domain seems not to enjoy the same privileges. Cameroon is a multi-ethnic society where peaceful coexistence is encouraged. People move from one side of the country to another for health reasons. Doctors are posted to regions where they cannot speak the indigenous language. How do such doctors communicate with patients? What instruments guide the status of translation? Who are the medical translators used and what is their profile? What is the status of translation in the Cameroonian hospitals? Cameroon is one of those heavily-indebted poor countries where solace-seeking in anything in the name of a church is the norm. That is why the American Pentecostal movement has found fertile ground in this country. Unfortunately, translation has not sufficiently attracted scholarly attention, although it is one of the fast-growing domains.

Cameroon is a country blessed with touristic attractions. Tourists flood the country all year round, visiting various sites. Some come for business purposes. All these missions can only be successful if they are accompanied by a sound and solid team of translators. Translation can help to better sell the country and invite more tourists. This practice is unfortunately still at its stuttering stage. It seems to be poorly organised and practitioners are not trained. This could be a deterrent to the growth of tourism as an income-generating sector in the country. Both professionals and academics have so far paid very little attention to the practice, stakes and challenges of this sub-field of translation. It is hard to know whether translation is a profession or is just an occupation.

Today, many other schools are training translators both for the national and international market. Though graduates are no more directly recruited into the public service which is still in dire need of qualified translators, these graduates are well served by the international market and freelancing. With all these achievements, many questions come to mind, all centered on how the profession is developed and what status does it enjoy on the labour market and with what consequences. Is the activity still carried out by amateurs? What control do practitioners have over the substance of the profession? What documentation exists on practice? How are practitioners trained? Do they respect any code of ethics?

2. Literature Review

The status of translators is not to be confused with how well anyone translates. It concerns the perception of a translator's value, what people think a particular translator can do, and how well or badly the translator is assumed to do it. Status is defined as the set of social signals that create, first, the presumption of some kind of expertise, and second, the presumed value of that expertise. In the world we live in, most employers and users of translations have to rely on the various signals of status. They do so individually, when assessing the value of a particular translator, and also socially, when making assumptions about the relative value of translators as a professional group (Pym et al, 2012).

From the perspective of the individual translator, status is something that must be acquired, in addition to actual translation skills. One should be able to translate, but ways are needed to signal skills to clients or employers. In this sense, a degree or a certification becomes a commodity, something that can be bought, something one need in order to set up shop as a professional translator. It should perhaps not be surprising to find "Certification" listed alongside Computer Aided Translation tools and a Database of Agencies as one of the things a translator might want to purchase online (Pym, 2012). From the collective perspective, status concerns the various signals that rank a social group or profession with respect to others. This concerns several related kinds of value, beyond questions of objective competence or expertise. A profession is defined as 1) an occupation or vocation requiring training in the liberal arts or the sciences and advanced study in a specialized field, and 2) the body of qualified persons of one specific occupation or field (The American Heritage Dictionary, 1998). A profession is born out of a societal need to have available certain services that require specialized knowledge and skills. Reynolds and O'Morrow (1985), define profession as the process whereby occupations seek to upgrade their status by adopting the organizational and occupational attributes and traits attributed to professions [National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 1997].

The term has been used in a variety of contexts throughout history, beginning with the religious connotation of taking vows or expressing a belief. The sense of an occupation or calling came along later. In modern times, medicine, law, and the ministry have been considered the original "learned

professions" (jokes about the "first profession" notwithstanding), and are regarded as models for others to emulate (Tseng, 1992). Professionalization is not an acquired state, but rather a dynamic social process in a continual state of flux (Burbules & Densmore, 1991). The process is complex and typically extends over a long period of time.

The field of translation in Cameroon has been engaged in such a process for many years now. Reflecting on the process to date by examining the current state-of-the-art provides important insight into the challenges currently facing practitioners. The English word translation has been derived from the Latin word *translatio*, which itself comes from *trans* and *latum* together meaning "a carrying across" or "a bringing across". In other words, it is the business of carrying across a message/written content from one text to another, from one person to another and from one language (source language) to a different language (target language). It can happen within the same language (from one dialect to another dialect or from one form to another) or between languages. It is best seen as a communication process where the transfer of a message/written content from one language into a new language takes place (Echu, 2003).

However, poets engaged in the job of translation often think of translation as 'interpretation', 'taking a view', 'bringing to life', or 'transformation'. Whatever may be its meaning, every act of translation involves the expression of sense. A translation is a text that is considered to be different from the original (the source text) but it is also a fact that the source text and the translated text are the same in terms of the sense they convey. It is often said that translation gives new clothes to a piece of writing by putting it in a different form. This interactive relationship between source and translation goes on in the hands of mature translators of prose and drama but it is the best in poetry (Echu, 2003). While translating, a translator discovers the meaning of a text behind the forms in the source language (SL) and reproduces the same meaning in the target language (TL) with the forms and structures available in the target language. The form changes but the meaning or sense or message remains the same. Nowadays we find translators using computers to translate one language into another, but human beings still play the major role in deciding the final output (Echu, 2003). While translating images/metaphors and emotive expressions in literary texts, computers cannot replace human beings. Translating is more than simply looking up a few words in a dictionary.

Translation is a mental activity in which a meaning of given linguistic discourse is rendered from one language to another. It is the act of transferring the linguistic entities from one language into their equivalents into another language. Translation is an act through which the content of a text is transferred from the source language into the target language (Foster, 1958). The language to be translated is called the source language (SL), whereas the language to be translated into or arrived at is called the target language (TL). The translator needs to have good knowledge of both the source and the target language, in addition to a high linguistic sensitivity as he should transmit the writer's intention, original thoughts and opinions in the translated version as precisely and faithfully as possible. Due to its prominence, translation has been viewed differently.

According to Ghazala (1995), translation is generally used to refer to all the process and methods used to convey the meaning of the source language into the target language. Ghazala's definition focuses on the notion of meaning as an essential element in translation. That is, when translating, understanding the meaning of source text is vital to have the appropriate equivalent in the target text. Thus, it is its meaning that is translated in relation to grammar, style and sounds (Ghazala, 1995).

Translation is a process and a product. According to Catford (1995), translation is the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL). This definition shows that translation is a process in the sense that it is an activity performed by people through time when expressions are translated into simpler ones in the same language (rewording and para-phrasing). It can be done also from one language into another language. Translation is, on the other hand, a product since it provides us with different cultures, to ancient societies and civilization life when the translated texts reach us

Yowell & Mutfah, (1999) states that translation is as old as human civilization. Since the dawn of civilization, human beings have been using language to translate our thoughts and ideas. We use a set of symbols or codes to communicate or transfer an idea or thought or a feeling to the person whom we address during an act of communication. Here too we have translation. In this sense, we translate every day. With the evolution of human society, we became more anxious to know about the thoughts and feelings of people in distant places. Hence, we used two sets of symbols and codes to transfer the thoughts and ideas of people speaking a different language to our own language. This gave rise to translation as we see and use it today.

Jakobson (1959), a leading linguist and noted expert in the subject of translation, defined translation as "the interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language. Through this process of translation, texts in one language are transformed into texts in another language with the same meaning. These materials range from the isolated words in a language to the complex network of sentences of philosophical texts. Oxford University (2021), defines translation as the process of translating words or text from one language into another. The Cambridge Dictionary (2021) also endorses that. This can mean the word to word rendering of the text in one language to another or replacing the equivalents of the words or phrases in one text to another. The translated text may have formal equivalence when the source text and the translated text look alike in form. It may have functional equivalence when the source text and the target text or translated text convey the same sense or perform the same function, though they have formal differences. It is often seen that the idioms and usage of the source language creep into the target language through translations which often enrich and shape the target language.

Translation is the communication of the meaning of a text in a source language (SL) into a comprehensive version of target language (TL) without causing any loss to the original message. It is often thought that if one is a bilingual s/he can be a good translator. People having good communicative and writing experiences in both the languages can be good translators, which includes their being bilinguals. We cannot confine translation to one or two definitions. It is elastic in nature and depends upon the person who does the translation. It differs from language to language, and from culture to culture. Hence it is not as easy as it is thought to be. While trying to be a different version of the original, it maintains its own uniqueness, an identity of its own.

3. Statement of the Problem

From the above narratives, Cameroon presents a fertile ground for the development and industrialization of translation, but it is hard to talk about the status of the profession in the country. It is difficult, several years after the introduction of this practice in the country, to state whether it has developed from an occupation to a profession.

4. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

- i Find out if translation is professionalized in Cameroon;
- ii Determine if there is effective translation practice in Cameroon and;
- iii Identify those who serve as translators in Cameroon

5. Hypotheses

The study hypothesized that:

- i. Translation is not professionalized in Cameroon
- ii. There is no effective translation practice in Cameroon
- iii. Bilinguals act as translators in Cameroon

6. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative and quantitative method. Data was collected through the use of questionnaires, observation and interviews. Data analysis was done based on the simple percentage method and presented in tables. With the use of the simple percentage method, a response of 49% and below is considered negative while a response of 50% and above is considered positive. Quantitative data was presented in a tabular form. Data collected through interviews was analyzed and presented in a table. Questionnaires were served to 55 respondents and only those willing to participate in the study were administered questionnaires. The 1992 Tseng control theory and Tseng model, which is based on the quality of a profession, was also used in this study.

The age groups of respondents varied. Out of 55 respondents, 92 % were aged between 20 and 35 and 4 respondents (8%) were within the age range 36-55. Of the ten regions in Cameroon, 30 respondents (59%) came from the Northwest Region. The Southwest Region had 16 respondents (30%) and 9 respondents (8%) were from the Littoral region. The other regions had no respondents.

From the data collected, 30 respondents were Bachelor's degree holders, 16 were Master's degree holders and 9 were advanced level holders. Also, 18 respondents (33%) had worked with ministries, 28 respondents (51%) worked on freelance basis, while 09 respondents (16%) worked with international organizations.

An inventory was made of the available secondary data, libraries and archives, publications by trained translators and journals, were exploited to collect relevant material on the history of translation in Cameroon.

It can be deduced from the foregoing that, both genders are represented in the translation industry. The number of men was slightly higher than that of women. Out of 55 respondents, 61% were male and 39% were female.

7. Findings

Findings will be presented in this section based on the methods used for data collection.

7.1. Findings based on questionnaires

Questionnaires were administered to various stakeholders and the aim was to know how developed the practice of translation is in Cameroon. It was anticipated that, answers to these questionnaires will either corroborate or contradict the impression obtained from the observations made.

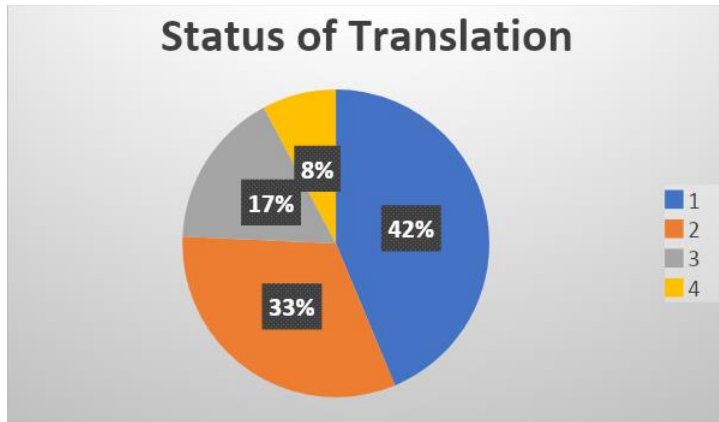
Questionnaires were also administered to translators and the aim was to see whether they are trained translators and how effective their performances were. This section also set out to know if translators

respect any code of ethics, the motivations of these translators to engage in the trade and to know whether they are working as part-time or full-time translators and their language proficiencies.

- On the status of the profession, it was discovered that translation is not professionalized.
- None of the agencies confirmed that training was the main measuring rod in the recruitment of translators.
- Most of them use translators who accept the price, some use translators who are available to help.
- None requested for any training certificate prior to recruitment.
- Very few translators belonged to a professional association and almost all did not adhere to any code of ethics.
- The remaining 8 respondents (15%) said the profession adhere to a code of ethics.
- However, despite the fact that majority of respondents adhere to a code of ethics, they rather adhere to ethical codes provided by the employer and not by the profession.
- This is further evidenced by the fact that very few, almost none are members of any professional association.
- Their roles and responsibilities are therefore determined by the employer.
- The above situation suggests that their practice is not organized by translators but by the employers. This shows a lack of internal organization.
- Another issue worth mentioning is that translators' roles and responsibilities are imposed by the employer which suggests a lack of professional control by the practitioner and a lack of organization.
- Responses from recruitment agencies also corroborate the fact that translation is not professionalized.
- None of the agencies confirmed that training was the main measuring rod in the recruitment of translators. Most of them use translators who accept the price, some use translators who are available to help. None requested for any training certificate prior to recruitment.
- The government of Cameroon in its recent recruitments has gone as far as recruiting bilinguals to serve as translators in some ministries. In some ministerial departments, the head of the translation unit is someone who is not a translator.
- Training is in the hands of academics and not professionals. Practitioners have little or no say on the training curriculum.
- The profession does not enjoy a prestigious status in the country as it wields no power and authority on the substance of the profession. Practitioners have no control on who enters and leaves the profession. Remuneration is determined by the client and there is no set standard for practice. The few associations that exist like APTIC (Association of Professional Translators and Interpreters of Cameroon) and CATIS (Cameroon Association of Translation and Interpretation Service) do not have the might it takes to determine the trajectory of the profession. They are more of ceremonial and membership is optional. They have no binding code of practice and are more or less like a mercantile arrangement based on friendship and reciprocity.
- Translation is not professionalized. Data from questionnaires and interviews reveal that from the perspective of adherence to a code of ethics and the roles they play, they do not have control over their profession.
- Several translators are untrained. Translators do not belong to any translators' association.. This was noted from their responses concerning aspects of the code of ethics. Due to lack of common translator's rules and regulations, individual translators seem to do what they think is

proper. This could also be seen in the fact that authorities decide to hire translators who are available to help.

Figure 1: Status of Translation in Cameroon

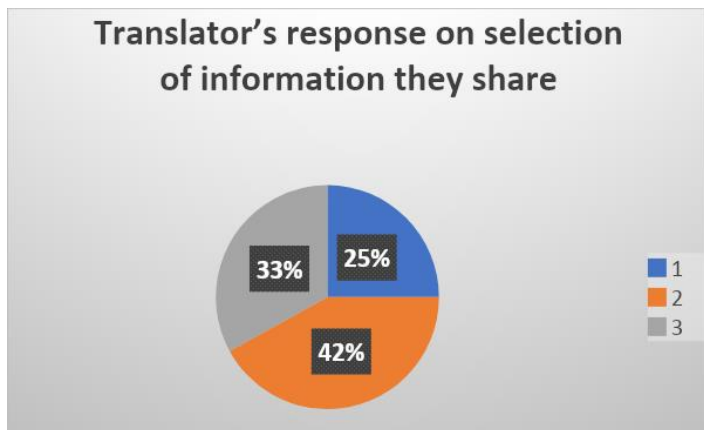


- Regarding the status of the practice of translation, 5 translators (42%), did not know what the status of translation was. Four (33%) said the status of translation is average. Two translators (17%) confirmed that the status of translators is good. One respondent (8%) said it is bad.

Table: 1 Translator’s response on selection of information they share

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of respondents	Total number of respondents
Yes	3	25%	12
No	5	42%	
Maybe	4	33%	

Figure 2: Translator’s response on selection of information they share



- From the pie chart above, 3 translators (25%) were aware of the existence of any translator’s association, of which they mentioned APTIC. 5 translators (42%) did not know there exists any translators’ association, while 4 (33%) were skeptical on the existence of any translators’ association. This confirms the fact that translation is not professionalized in Cameroon. Given that the translators questioned, were not trained translators, they do not belong to any translators’ association.

- Data on translation from questionnaires and interviews revealed that from the perspective of adherence to a code of ethics and the roles they play, they do not have control over their profession.

Figure 3: Code of Ethics

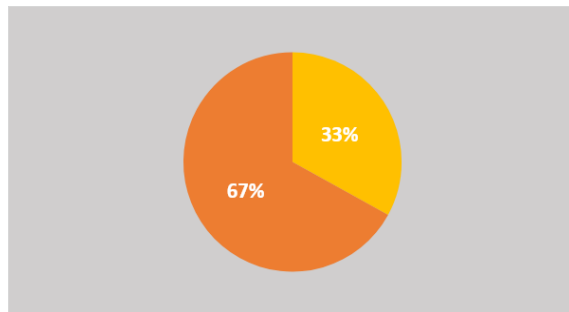


Figure 3 above shows that only four respondents (33%) confirmed that they adhere to a code of ethics while 8 translators (67 %) responded that they do not abide by a code of ethics. This data suggests that the status of translation is not regulated.

- Respondents who confirmed they adhere by a code of ethics did not adhere to the translators' code of ethics. They followed the norms provided either by the institution where they work or by the employer.

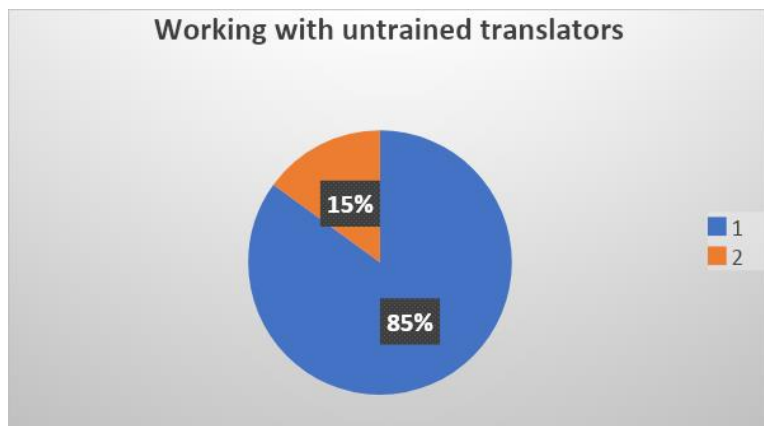
From the above responses, it can be deduced that translation in Cameroon is not organized. Responses only testify to the fact that there are no clear rules and regulations governing the practice.

- A good number of translators were not trained.
- Untrained translators, far from facilitating communication, can cause many problems. Their language skills may be deficient, they may not have the necessary appreciation of relevant cross-cultural differences, they may not have translating skills (as opposed to conversational abilities); their choice of words may be imprecise and consequently misleading and they may have a tendency to flavour the translation with their own views and perception of the fact'.

A lack of training in translation and equally lack of understanding of the role of a translator can be catastrophic in relaying the message.

Table 2: Working with untrained translators.

Response	Percentage of respondents	Total number of respondents
Yes	85%	13
No	15%	



Respondents were also asked if they have worked with untrained translators before?

- Out of 55 respondents, 85% affirmed working with untrained translators while the other 15% skipped the question since they had never worked with translators before.
- On the need to know those who serve as translators in Cameroon, data from questionnaires show that those who act as translators in Cameroon are in most cases bilinguals, some of whom received some training and others just because they understand and speak two or more languages. Translators in the country are not all trained as translators but as bilinguals. However, being bilingual does not make one a translator.

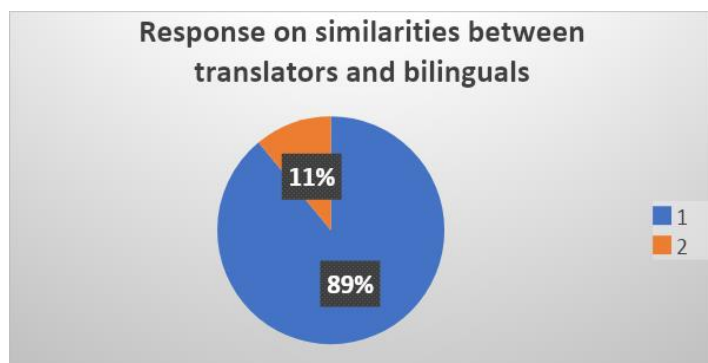
To determine if translators considered synonymous with bilinguals, respondents were asked if being a translator is same as a bilingual?

- 89% of respondents thought they are the same while 11% thought they are different. This variation suggests that the translation profession is not organized and popularized.

Table 3: Response on similarities between translators and bilinguals

Response	Percentage of respondents	Total number of respondents
Yes	89%	13
No	11%	

Figure 4: Response on similarities between translators and bilinguals



7.2. Findings from Interviews on the status of translation in Cameroon

Personal interviews were conducted with some stakeholders and the aim was to know what instruments regulated the use of translators, the kind of translators available in the country; whether these translators are trained or not. Interview was a better option for authorities since it was easier for them to better explain what they have to say without having to write down everything. Interviews were also used to test the hypothesis that translation in Cameroon is not professionalized.

Interviewees indicated that translators are educated but not all trained as such. Fifty per cent (50%) of translators agreed that they were trained as journalists rather than translators and they have been doing the job of a translators because they are bilinguals.

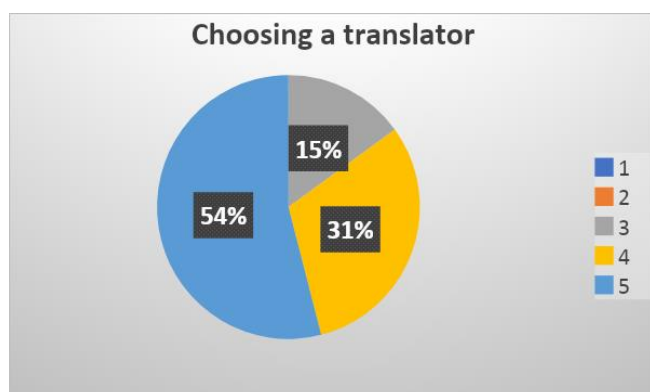
Respondents were asked what guides them in choosing a translator?

- No respondent was motivated by the training or professionalism of the translators, both representing 0%. 15% chose translators if they could afford the financial obligations. Another 15% chose translators who were available to help out and 54% had other reasons for choosing a translator.

Table 4: Data on choosing a translator

Response	Percentage of respondents	Total number of respondents
Trained	0%	55
Professional	0%	
Affordable	15%	
Available to help	31%	
None of the above	54%	

Figure 5: Choosing a Translator



- It was evidenced that bilinguals, both trained as well as untrained, serve as translators. Despite the many schools training translators in Cameroon like ASTI (the Advanced School of Translators and Interpreters) of the University of Buea, ISLTIC (The Higher Institute of Languages, Translation and Interpretation and Communication) based in Yaounde and Douala, the Université Protestante d’Afrique Centrale based in Yaounde, The Universities of Douala, Dschang, Bamenda

just to name these few, are not enough to churn out the required number of practitioners both for the local and international markets.

7.3. Findings from observation

Observation was one of the methods used in collecting data and focus was more on the attitudes of respondents towards the questionnaire and the working conditions of translators. The aim was to see how translation is carried out; identify the modes of translation and the degree of respect by translators of the canons of the code of ethics such as fidelity, impartiality and confidentiality. Observation here entailed watching how translators go about their businesses. Observations was also used to test some hypotheses set for the study. It was observed that:

- Some respondents felt very uncomfortable with the questionnaire, they were convinced that, the exercise was mainly for academic purposes
- The working conditions of some translators in the public sector were below expectation and some were not trained translators
- Some translation units could barely take a table and a chair for the unit head, and a small cupboard, and any attempt to bring in more than three people was already an embarrassment.

8. Discussion and conclusion

This study builds on the premise that mindful of the history and linguistic landscape of the country, Cameroon presents a fertile ground for the development and industrialization of translation. The research problem anchors on the fact that it is hard to tell about the status of the translation profession in the country. It is difficult, several years after the introduction of this practice in the country, to state whether it has developed from an occupation to a profession.

This study relied on observation, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. Secondary source material such as text books, journals and any relevant materials were consulted and fully exploited to collect relevant information.

This section concludes the study with a recap of the main thrust of the research, summary findings, a testing of the hypotheses and significance.

- Translation is not professionalized. Data from questionnaires and interviews reveal that from the perspective of adherence to a code of ethics and the roles they play, they do not have control over their profession. Therefore, the first hypothesis that translation in Cameroon is not professionalized was confirmed.
- The second objective was to know if there is effective translation practice in Cameroon. Lack of training and poor organisation of their practice attest to the fact that, the practice of translation in Cameroon is not effective. The current Anglophone crisis, born out of the lack of effective communication especially the request by lawyers that some of their documents like the OHADA Code be translated are all pointers to the lack of effective translation in Cameroon. This confirms the second hypothesis
- Those who act as translators in Cameroon are in most cases bilinguals, some of whom received some training and others just because they understand and speak two or more languages. Both men and women practice translation. Most of them are aged from 20 to 35. Most of them are degree holders, a few master's graduates and one GCE 'A' Level holder. Translators in the translating sector are not trained as translators but are bilingual. However, being bilingual does not make one a translator.

In a nutshell, this study examined the history, professionalization, plays as well as the status of translation in Cameroon. It should be noted that all the four hypotheses were tested and confirmed and the research objectives were achieved. On the basis of literature studied on the status of translation in

Cameroon. Results from questionnaires, interviews and observation and even recommendations were formulated to upgrade the status of translation in Cameroon.

9. Recommendations

The recommendations proposed hereunder are formulated after a detailed study of the responses given by practitioners regarding the challenges they face and solutions they proposed. Training translators especially through workshops will be a more practical way of enhancing the performance of translators. Regarding training translators as a possible solution to the challenges they face, worth noting is the fact that training should be adapted to the context taking into account the background of practitioners. It should be seasonal and tailored to the needs of both in-house and freelancers.

Furthermore, a step forward will be the creation of a body to regulate the practice of translators. Cameroon has a translators' association with a binding and enforceable code of ethics which could inspire translators. An association of translators could in the future, impose training as a requirement for aspirants.

Another considerable step forward after establishing basic conditions is to create a body to regulate and differentiate the work between bilingual journalists and translators.

This body will help translators to gain trust and exert control after lobbying for influence on the public and government authorities.

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