



Language Use as a Tool for Peaceful Coexistence: A Lexico-Semantic Study of *The Post* Newspaper in Cameroon

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Abstract: Multilingualism and Multiculturalism stand as challenging issues for peaceful coexistence in Cameroon today. This situation has been worsened by the escalation of the Anglophone Crisis that has taken a more violent turn in recent times. Cameroon, a nation with a rich linguistic and cultural tapestry, and with a history of colonial tensions, thus, presents itself as a compelling case study for exploring language as a tool for peace building. It is in this regard that this research paper examines how *The Post* Newspaper uses vocabulary and meaning-making strategies to shape public discourse and foster social harmony. The corpus for the study consists of forty-five (45) purposively sampled news-related stories or articles on the concept of Living Together/Peaceful Coexistence within the newspaper's content, drawn from the 2016, 2017 and 2018 publications. The paper is framed on Halliday's (1985) theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to analyse editorials, articles, and opinion pieces within *The Post* Newspaper. Upon the analysis of the data, prominent themes related to peace and social cohesion within the newspaper's content and the lexico-semantic features employed by *The Post* to navigate the complexities of Cameroon's social landscape were identified. Such included the use of some lexical preferences that denote togetherness such as '*Living Together*,' '*National Unity*,' and '*National Integration*,' lexical items suggestive of *dialogue*, the use of *religious situated lexicons*, *moral situated lexicons*, lexical items associated with *radicalism*, lexical items associated with *good ethics* and the use of *rhetorical questions*. The analysis highlighted the newspaper's use of inclusive language, reframing of divisive narratives, and promotion of intercultural understanding. Overall, the analysis revealed that *The Post*'s language choices have an ideological function in fostering national unity as an ingredient for peaceful and harmonious coexistence.

Keywords: Multilingualism/Multiculturalism, Language Use, Living Together/Coexistence, Lexico-Semantics, Newspaper Corpus.

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1. INTRODUCTION

One of the current and challenging issues faced by contemporary multilingual and multicultural societies is that of peaceful coexistence. Instilling and consolidating the spirit of Oneness among people with diverse educational systems, legal

systems, religious denominations, social and cultural backgrounds, as it is the case in Cameroon, has been most pressing in recent times (Hagenbüchle, 2001; Marco Antonsich, 2014). Cameroon, a Central African nation, boasts a vibrant multilingual and multicultural society. It has over 266 indigenous

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languages (Nkwain, 2010), with two official languages (English and French), a wide spread *de jure lingua franca*-Pidgin English (PE) and a hybrid code-*Camfranglais*. Being a host of myriad languages and cultures, Cameroon has attracted to herself the appellation a “linguistic tower of Babel” (Mforteh, 2006). Its remarkable diversity, encompassing a variety of landscapes and natural features has equally contributed to its allure as *Africa in miniature*. The country is also a bastion of religious diversity, but with Christianity, Islam and Traditionalist being the three main religions (Mbaku, 2005). However, this diversity has also presented challenges in achieving peaceful coexistence or harmonious living together. Colonial legacies and ethnic tensions have, at times, fuelled social unrest. In fact, the problem that prompted the need to reconcile and negotiate the coexistence of citizens and the various ethnic groups in Cameroon stemmed largely from the colonial period which witnessed the partitioning of Cameroon between Britain (with 1/5 of Cameroon) and France (with 4/5 of Cameroon) after World War I. As a result of this uneven distribution, post-independent Cameroon witnessed a lot of ethnic bitterness, disagreements and fierce competition especially among the two major territories (the Anglophone Cameroon and the French Cameroon) that joint to form the Federal Republic of Cameroon, with the English-speaking Cameroonians feeling marginalized and striving to assert their distinctiveness in the struggle for power and influence in Cameroon. The Anglophone Cameroonians felt marginalized by the French-dominant government, with frustrations simmering over issues like unequal representation, a sidelined legal system, and a perceived lack of economic opportunities (Konings and Nyamnjoh, 2004; International Crisis Group, 2023). This has led to what is commonly referred to as the “Anglophone Problem” in Cameroon today (Konings, 1997, 2003, 2019 & Nyamnjoh, 2004). Today, this historical landmark has been a major challenge to National Unity and peaceful coexistence to the extent that hardly does a day pass in the heart of the nation, without an episode or event that makes one wonder as to what kind of people Cameroonians are and what they have as a collective sense of nationhood. It is as a result of such diversities and tensions that Aluko & Usman (2016: 12) opine that:

A multi-ethnic state requires potent integration mechanisms because multi-ethnicity is a potential political ‘time-bomb’ which may explode at any time. Thus, there is the need to position integrating mechanisms which will stem the tide of violence, favouritism and nepotism in the polity.”

In this light, efforts have been made over the years to consolidate and foster living together or peaceful coexistence and national integration in

plurilingual and multi-ethnic nations. One of such efforts is the creation of commissions to realize peaceful coexistence by some governments of multilingual countries such as the Canadian government through the creation of Canadian Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (CRCBB), the Swiss government through the Plurilingual Commission (PC) and the Cameroonian government through the National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism (NCPBM). In this context, the media equally plays a crucial role in shaping public discourse and promoting social harmony. This paper, thus, examines the language used in *The Post* Newspaper, a prominent Cameroonian publication, to foster peaceful coexistence. As Ambe Shu (2013) states, the importance of a vibrant and critical media in any country that is bent on enhancing development and improving the lot of the citizens, ensuring good governance and transparency, cannot be overemphasized. It is, therefore, no secret that a vibrant press is an agent of development and potent machinery that serves as the market place for ideas on important and/or controversial issues such as the concept of peaceful coexistence of Cameroonians in the case of this study.

2. Print Media landscape of Cameroon

Cameroon today boasts a highly pluralistic media landscape prominently towering over 760 legally approved media outlets as of late 2024. This includes 232 print media publications, which encompass newspapers that are both publicly and privately owned. The media ecosystem further comprises 93 television stations and 298 radio stations (commercial and community combined), serving a population estimated at about 28 million people (National Communication Council, 2025). Privately owned newspapers dominate the print media sector in Cameroon. The sole government newspaper is *Cameroon Tribune*. Prominent privately owned newspapers include *The Guardian Post*, *The Post*, *The Chronicle*, *The Voice*, *The Scoope*, *Breaking News*, *The Horizon*, *The Sun*, *The Life Time*, and *The Times Journal*. Many newspapers in Cameroon do not publish on a fixed periodic schedule and are often issued primarily during peak electoral periods or major events, underscoring challenges in sustainability and regularity in the print media sector. The print media distribution is uneven across the country, with a significant concentration in the Centre, Littoral, and Western regions, while regions like the East and Adamawa have fewer print media outlets.

Tabé (2015) highlights a significant shift in the attitudes of Cameroonians towards newspapers in recent times, unlike in the past. She notes that this growing interest in newspapers as a source of

information is evident in the daily commotion that characterizes newspaper kiosks or newsstands, which have become a morning routine, especially in the major cities of the country. Tabe attributes this surge in newspaper readership to the fact that newspapers carry information on important topics and are relatively inexpensive. Additionally, the attractive, bold headlines and incisive front-page editorials act as strong incentives for passersby, who are often captivated enough to purchase a copy of the day's edition or at least read the headlines summarizing the news of the day.

Despite the growing interest in newspapers as noticed, the media landscape in Cameroon remains a hollow pluralistic media that lack the full vibrancy and the potency of unchaining themselves and playing their watchdog role in what many have referred to as a "budding democracy." Press freedom in Cameroon has long been contested, with many observers arguing that its existence remains largely theoretical rather than practical (Eribo & Tanjong, 2005). This is evident in continued government actions such as banning local publishing houses and arresting media practitioners who report contrary to official narratives (Irin News, 2007). In recent years, Cameroon's press freedom environment remains precarious; the World Press Freedom Index 2025 ranks Cameroon at 134th out of 180 countries, noting persistent threats including intimidation, censorship, and arbitrary detentions of journalists (Reporters Without Borders, 2025). Journalists face accusations from both government and rebel groups, especially in conflict zones, making neutral reporting a perilous endeavor (Cameroon Journalists' Trade Union, 2025). With these practices, Cameroon seems to present itself in the international public space as a country that still has one of the longest journeys to embark on, if it intends to reach the promised land of an unfettered press, and why not genuine democracy.

Despite these constraints, some newspapers like *The Post* persist in adopting a critical editorial stance, notable for their readership and circulation, thereby maintaining an important role in Cameroon's media ecosystem. Preference, thus, was made for *The Post* newspaper for this study due to the critical perspective of the newspaper, its editorial policy, and readership and circulation.

This paper, thus, seeks to address the following questions:

- How is the concept of living together or peaceful coexistence in Cameroon discursively constructed in the newspaper under study?
- What are the lexico-semantic features used to legitimate this concept of living together or peaceful coexistence?

3. Theoretical Framework

This study aims at exploring the role of language use as a tool for peaceful coexistence in Cameroon. Specifically, it conducts a lexico-semantic study of *The Post* newspaper, analysing the language choices and patterns employed in promoting peaceful interactions within the diverse Cameroonian society. Since this study focuses on a functional use of language, and in a bid to provide a comprehensive theoretical foundation for this study, M. A. K. Halliday's (1985) theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is adopted as the theoretical model, and the analysis of the data collected from the language use in the print media will fit in the principles laid by Halliday's theory on which this work is established. SFL is a comprehensive theoretical framework that examines language as a social semiotic system. It goes beyond traditional grammar analysis and focuses on the functional aspects of language in various social contexts. SFL views language as a resource for meaning-making and social interaction, emphasizing the relationship between language, society, and culture. This theory not only describes the structure of language, but also provides rich and sustainable resources for unveiling the underlying meaning and the properties of discourse and its functions found in news articles. For Halliday (1985), language is a meaning potential, that is, how people exchange meanings by "*linguaging*." His theory, therefore, posits that all speakers are influenced by the socio-economic systems in which they live and also by the roles they inherit within these systems. Thus, each speaker creates language, acts, makes linguistic choices that are constrained by the semantic repertoire provided by their personal and socio-cultural experiences. In systemic functional model, great concern has been on the function of language such as what language is used for, rather than what language structure is all about and the manner by which it is composed (Matthiessen & Halliday, 1997). This explains why Halliday (1985: 14) sees language as being 'systemic' because language studies the choice of meaning or interprets meaning based on the web of lexico-semantics and the syntactic choices of the speaker (writer/user) within the context. Functions are, therefore, taken to have left their mark on the structure and organization of language at all levels which is achieved via metafunctions. These metafunctions of language that are a semantic component of the SFL model is construed from three angles viz: ideational metafunction (it is concerned with how people's experience of reality, material and symbolic is construed in discourse), interpersonal or active metafunction (refers to language as a medium for interaction, expressing attitudes and obligation). Halliday (2007: 184) sees it as the 'participatory function of language' that allows for the expression of attitudes and evaluations and is realized by mood and

modality. Thus, mood and modality are at the center of the Interpersonal metafunction. Interpersonal metafunction also allows the expression of a relation set up between the text-producer and the text-consumer (Halliday & Matthiessen, 1999: 7). It is also concerned with the relationships that exist between the speaker and his addressee(s), and between the speaker and his message) and textual metafunction refers to written language and how information is organized and presented. It underscores the fact that language is used to organize discourse and create continuity and flow in our texts or in conversations.

By adopting Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics as a theoretical framework, this research paper provides a comprehensive analysis of the language use in *The Post* newspaper, focusing on its role in promoting peaceful coexistence in Cameroon. The application of SFL enables us to uncover the underlying linguistic strategies employed in creating a harmonious discourse and contribute to the understanding of language's potential as a tool for peaceful coexistence.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

Linguistic study, especially a lexico-semantic approach on the concept of Living Together or peaceful coexistence in Cameroon seems to have not drawn the attention of many linguists in Cameroon. However, some researchers out of the country have examined some related societal practices such as the notion of National Unity and National Integration reported in newspapers, and others carried out research on newspaper language from a lexico-semantic approach.

Eghosa (2007) did an investigation on the role of the press in the promotion of national integration. The narrative is told against the backdrop of the Nigerian context, which is a major factor in the press's activities, starting from the historical emancipatory role they played during the colonial period. The aim of the work was to understand how the press, within a multi-cultural context, can represent nationality, regional or sectional interests. The press's role in this endeavor was questioned with regard to the cultural variables embedded in the Nigerian society which threaten national unity. The way the press owners manipulate these issues and how such manipulations impact national integration and national unity were also some concerns in this work. The author came up with the findings showing that the press, as a powerful medium of communication could do much to help resolve the Nigeria crisis, and this can only depend on the way it goes about exercising its power. The researcher thinks that one way the press could achieve this successfully given the socio-economic and political realities of Nigeria, would be by

recognising the realities of the crisis and also appreciating why the realities exist and how they came about and within that context, promote a Nigerian national identity amongst the various groups that constitute the Nigerian state. Hanita, Hadina H. *et al.*, (2012) investigated the role of the media in realizing, 'Unity in Diversity.' This was triggered by the introduction of the One Malaysian Concept (1Malaysian concept) which was introduced in 2009, with the aim of strengthening the unity and harmony of people from different ethnic groups. The authors had as purpose the quest to discuss the roles of media in realizing this new political branding of "1Malaysia." This was against the backdrop that in a multicultural country like Malaysia, with the population consisted of a multiplicity of ethnic groups, and given the fact that each group has its own 'unique culture and heritage, such as language, belief systems, tradition and religion, there is thus a strong reason for instilling unity among the people so that the country's peacefulness and harmonious relationships among different races can be preserved. The authors, thus, discovered that the media play an important role in portraying the desired images of 1Malaysia, of which, people of different races come together in harmony to mean "This is us." The media is also responsible for educating people on the importance of racial integration which is believed to be crucial in achieving Vision 2020, that is, for Malaysia to be a fully developed country. They further discovered that the media is also a platform in depicting the cultures of different ethnic groups of Malaysia, which have formed the identity of 1Malaysia. Hanna (2012) assessed the role of language in multilingual societies. This was against the backdrop that language which can be used as an effective instrument for national development and the promotion of national consciousness and unity, can also be used as a weapon for marginalization and or exclusion. The latter trend, according to his findings, can destabilize national unity as it sets different linguistic groups against each other in an attempt to fashion out an identity for themselves and express their existence and/or relevance to the society. The work centred on the phenomenon of language use in the Nigerian context. It proposed the adoption of English language to solve the language problem in the multilingual Nigeria. Wanyu (2017) carried out an investigation on the linguistic construction of the Anglophone Cameroonian in *The Guardian Post* newspaper. This was against the backdrop that such a construction is ideologically biased. He aimed at investigating the Anglophone identity in *The Guardian Post* newspaper in a bilingual Cameroon, and how the Anglophones are represented in the media vis-à-vis the Francophones. To him, the discursive linguistic strategies represent the Anglophone Cameroon as a 'victim' of politico-economic 'exploitation' and sociocultural

'assimilation,' which such linguistic construction of national sameness and difference is accompanied by linguistic xenophobia through the use of sensational or emotional language in glorifying the in-group (Francophones) at the detriment of the out-group (Anglophones). The outcome of the study further revealed that this prejudicial premise is an indication of a potential state of anarchy as linguistic prejudice in the press may spur up anti-nationalist feelings and galvanize such tendencies into extreme physical intolerance among the Cameroonians.

From a lexico-semantic approach, Teilanyo (2010), while bringing to light the Lexico-Semantic Nigerianisms in Nigerian Newspapers, laid emphasis on linguistic plane of vocabulary and meaning. He argued that the lexico-semantic categories comprised of the occurrence of un-English words and expressions in Nigerian English contexts. He further scrutinized semantic extension, tautology, malapropism, code-mixing and innovative idiomatic expressions. His findings revealed that Nigerianisms are in fact the indexical markers of Nigerian English and such indexical manifestations pave the way for further formalization, codification and elaboration of Nigerian English by means of a reliable source of newspapers. Sartaj & Behzad (2018) explore the lexico-Semantic features in the Pakistani English Newspapers. This was with a principal goal to examine lexico-semantic variation in Pakistani English newspapers along with the functional outcomes within the vibrant mould of perceptions. Findings of the study highlight that lexico-semantic categories in Pakistani English Newspapers are infused within the local aroma while having a diversity of colors of usage and elucidations in multifaceted functional settings of Pakistan. Yeibo & Akerele (2015) examine the lexico-semantic patterning in Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, such as simplicity of lexical choices, collocation, semantic fields, selectional restriction rule, category rule violation, imagery and lexical relations (i.e., synonymy). Their intention was to establish the connotative implications of these lexico-semantic features, and to show how these features cohere in the text to foreground the author's artistic target, in conjunction with other linguistic elements and cultural and contextual variables. With M.A.K. Halliday's SFL as the analytical template for the study, the study reveals that the construction of a literary text is a linguistically conscious activity, as the lexico-semantic nuances and dynamics of Adichie's text explored are critical and strategic both stylistically and in message delivery. Findings of the study also confirm the fact that the linguistic choices a writer makes from the plethora of options at his/her disposal, are engendered by subject matter and context, as these twin elements choose their own variety of language. Mellouki (2016) carried out a

lexico-semantic study on Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. This was in a bid to examine the stylistic features of language used in the text that made the text gain wide readership, and the author (Hemingway) a Nobel Prize for this fictional book (*The Old Man and the Sea*). She came out with findings which revealed the fact that the novella *The Old Man and the Sea* contains innumerable Lexico-Semantic features such as the use of repetition, borrowings, and the use of allusions. She also discovered that Hemingway's experience as a journalist has a great influence on his style of writing. Oladipupo (2016) did a lexico-semantic study of Mariama Ba's *So Long A Letter*. This was premised on the fact that the text is lexically and semantically presented, to reflect or imitate the realities of life. The study attempts a lexico-semantic study in order to reveal the author's creative deployment of language to achieve her purpose in the text. In other words, the study examines how the author uses words to expose the ills plaguing African society. His findings revealed the use of figures of speech, lexical relations and sense relation among others. Through these lexico-semantic features, the themes of political exclusion, evils of polygamy, sadness and loneliness, socio-economic degradation, betrayal, immorality, among others, were developed.

5. The Corpus

The corpus used in this study consists of forty-five (45) purposively sampled news-related stories or articles based on the concept of Living Together or Peaceful Coexistence and the lexico-semantic elements found therein, culled from a Cameroonian privately owned and a bi-weekly newspaper, *The Post*. This newspaper is among the most widely read in Cameroon, and known for its editorial policy which is "*The Independent Newspaper at the Service of the People*". It is a critical newspaper which reports the demands, plights and the reflection of the people, and as a privately owned newspaper, it is likely to be more objective and not biased about issues and ideologies of Cameroonians of all walks of life, political and educational status, surrounding the concept of coexistence and living together in Cameroon; unlike the government-owned newspaper agencies which, more often than not in developing countries, are pro-governmental. It is these characteristics of the newspaper that is at the core of our choice of the newspaper. The news articles were thematically selected from the Monday (*The Post*) and the weekend (*The Post Weekender*) editions of the newspaper. It should be noted that *The Post* and *The Post Weekender* are not different newspaper outlets. Since *The Post* newspaper is a bi-weekly newspaper, which has two editions published on Mondays (the first edition) and towards the weekend (mostly on Thursdays for the second edition), its weekend edition is termed '*The Post*

Weekender. The articles were taken from 2016, 2017 and 2018 publications. This time frame was deemed fit because it was a period when discussions on the subject of living together or peaceful coexistence were at their peak in the media, as these periods witnessed Cameroon beckoning for peace and tranquillity owing largely to the eruption of the Anglophone crisis which stands as a great threat to the unity of the country.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Two central questions were set to guide the present research paper, notably:

1. How is the concept of living together or peaceful coexistence in Cameroon discursively constructed in the newspaper under study?
2. What are the lexico-semantic features used to legitimate this concept of living together?

6.1. The Concept of Living Together or Peaceful Coexistence in Cameroon

Following the first research question (Q1: How is the notion of peaceful coexistence or living together discursively constructed in *The Post* newspaper?), it is possible to conclude, based on the data that *The Post* newspaper discursively constructs the concept of living together or peaceful coexistence of Cameroonians as a challenging issue in Cameroon. This challenge is posed by the multilingual and multicultural character of the country. It is discernible from the reoccurrence of lexical items that strung to beckon the idea of togetherness in Cameroon. We can as well call them catch phrases because they are on everyone's lips in Cameroon, manifesting different ideological underpinnings. These catch phrases include: *Unity, Living together, National Integration, Bilingualism, Multiculturalism, Decentralization, one and indivisible.*

Table 1: A Tabular Representation of Recurrent Key Words Suggesting Togetherness

Linguistic variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Living Together	52	47.273
Coexistence	12	10.909
Indivisible	16	14.545
National unity	25	22.727
National Integration	5	4.545
Total	110	100

These lexico-semantic features identified in the corpus and presented on the table above, play a crucial role in shaping the notion of peaceful coexistence in Cameroon. These features emphasize the importance of unity and social cohesion among the diverse population of Cameroon. By promoting concepts like national integration, bilingualism, multiculturalism, and living together, the texts highlight the significance of embracing togetherness among different ethnic and linguistic groups in Cameroon. Here are some excerpts from the corpus:

- *To Ama Tutu Muna, ensuring living together in a diverse country with several cultures is the main assignment of the Commission.*
- *Shortly after their installation, the members of the Bilingualism and Multiculturalism Commission pledged to enhance the spirit of living together in Cameroon.*
- *The Mayor said the Council organized the tournament to promote peaceful coexistence in the municipality, whose population is composed of people from different tribes, religious denominations, social and cultural backgrounds.*
- *Our country should remain one and indivisible. We should remain one and*

indivisible. We have differences but with the spirit of dialogue, I am sure we can overcome all these difficulties."

- *Any claim, no matter how relevant, loses its legitimacy once it jeopardizes, even slightly, the building of national unity."*

From these excerpts above, it is observed that Cameroon grapples with the challenges of peaceful coexistence. This is further strengthened by the use of semantically associated items in the corpus such as *terrorism, cruelty, torture, conflict and violence, separation, extremism, resistance, exile*, which attests to the fact that Cameroon is facing the problem of cohabitation, in other words, living together of its people. It shows that Cameroon as a country is stained by these vices which are not natural conditions but scourges of ethnic bitterness and lack of national consciousness. That is why there are repeated references to promoting national unity and living together, such as the Minister [1], urging youths to "reject all forms of exclusion" and promoting "peaceful coexistence among people, value diversity, recognise the uniqueness of every individual." The functions of these lexico-semantic features in the corpus serve to reinforce the ideals of

¹ Mr. Mounoua Foutsou, the Minister of Youth Affairs and Civic Education, (MINJEC.).

living together harmoniously and building a peaceful society in Cameroon. Some of the socio-political realities of contemporary Cameroon are captured below within the web of lexico-semantics.

6.2. Lexico-Semantic Associations

This section of the study identifies the lexico-semantic features used in *The Post* newspaper.

Lexical and semantic associations in the corpus capture and portray the state of affairs in Cameroon, attesting to the upsurge in the call and discussions in the social and media spaces on the subject of living together and peaceful coexistence in the Cameroonian society. Some of these lexico-semantic patterns are captured on the table below.

Table 2: A Cumulative Lexical and Semantic Association

Lexical Sets/Semantic Fields	Words
Words associated with government/politics	Head of state, dictator, regime, politician, democracy, civilian, cabinet, minister, president, state emblems, national flag, Fatherland.
Words which are associated with law	justice, lawyers, magistrates, court, amnesty, constitution, supreme law, judiciary, arrests, justice, equity human right, civil right,
Words which are associated with religion	Prayer, God, spirit, love, religion, mercy, Most High, heaven, scriptures
Words which are associated with unrest	Unrest, Malaise, grievances, crisis, injustice
Words associated with radicalization/Extremism	Extremists, separation, terrorist, terrorism, protest, crisis, violence, resistance, exile, wars
Lexical items associated with Good Ethics	Integrity, morals, truth, character dedicated morality, nobility, credibility and honor. Patriotism
Lexical items associated with the military/war	troops, allies, civilian, soldier, police, gendarme, Brigadier General, Captain, officer, war captives
Words connoting injustices	killings, brutality, torture, arrest, detain, wars
Words associated with education	Education, schools, teachers, students, resumption of classes

6.2.1. Lexical Items Associated with Radicalization or Extremism

There is underlying assumption in the corpus that extremism, exclusion, and radicalization are threats that need to be rejected, with the state cautioning youth against destructive influences. That is why there are repeated references to promoting national unity and living together, such as the Minister [²], urging youths to “*reject all forms of exclusion*” and promoting “*peaceful coexistence among people, value diversity, recognise the uniqueness of every individual*”. The discourse constructs a nationalist ideology centralizing power with the state, framing dissent or alternative voices as extremist threats undermining unity and progress.

6.2.2. Lexical Items Suggestive of Dialogue

References are made to promoting dialogue to resolve issues. As Tabe & Njofie (2018:75) define it, dialogue “is a process whereby the disagreeing parties sit together for objective discussions to solve the common differences or misunderstanding that goes on between them.” In every successful dialogue, there should be competent representatives from both sides to freely and frankly address the root cause of the problem and difficulties should be solved objectively to avoid future occurrences of the same or

a similar issue. As Henry (2002) remarked, dialogue begins with the willingness to question and to be questioned, while realizing that mutual understanding and working together towards common goals requires accepting differences. In part, dialogue is an effort to comprehend the inherent value of difference and commonality, for the sake of learning and living together. Chhaya (2006) stated that a dialogical co-evolution among various ethnic groups serve to maintain national consciousness while enhancing the ability of differentiated individuals within the national politics with unifying actions. Understudying the data, therefore, dialogue has been projected as the best mechanism that can ensure better living together as well as social justice in Cameroon. It is seen as an instrument, a tool of good governance and it is relevant in making a more stable and more equitable society. So, in stifling any threat to the peaceful coexistence of the people, dialogue is presented as an imperative measure. Some of the excerpts that present the strengths of dialogue over any crisis in Cameroon are presented below.

- *We have to ensure the spirit of dialogue. We must dialogue and learn to live together and maintain the unity of our country... We have differences but with the spirit of dialogue, I am*

² Mr. Mounoua Foutsou, the Minister of Youth Affairs and Civic Education, (MINJEC.).

sure we can overcome all these difficulties.” (The Post, No. 01787. Monday, January 9, 2017. p. 6).

- We want citizens to have love for their fatherland and I would say dialogue would be the best way to solve our problems and to make this country what we want it to look like.”...Dialogue is what God has created for us human beings to use and solve our problems. So we need to sit and talk,” he said. (The Post Weekender, No. 01865, Friday, November 3, 2017. p. 2.)
- ...Under these conditions, a frank and comprehensive national dialogue on the ‘Anglophone Crisis’ appears to be necessary to restore trust within our communities... (The Post, No. 01834. Monday, July 10, 2017. p. 3)
- The solution to the strike does not lie in the stigmatization of some citizens. It does not also lie in the wanton arrest of Anglophones that is ruled by score-settling, corruption and the abuse of freedoms. The panacea to the strike lies in dialogue, forgiveness, appeasement and national reconciliation! (The Post, No. 01794. Monday, February 06, 2017.p. 4).
- Biya stated in an address on the occasion of the 51st edition of the National Youth Day. Biya regretted the fact that children in the Northwest and Southwest regions have not been attending school for several weeks due to the strike action some teachers’ trade union initiated. He said in order to arrest the crisis, he ordered a constructive dialogue between the government and the trade unions concerned. (The Post, NO.01918, Monday, June 4, 2018. p. 2.)

Dialogue is premodified in the corpus by some adjectives such as *constructive...*, *genuine ...*, *continuous ...*, *frank ...*, *sincere*, *comprehensive* dialogue, *objective* dialogue, *inclusive* dialogue, *national* dialogue. The bold adjectives define the type of dialogue that should take place in order to realize a positive result.

6.2.3. Lexical Items Associated with Religion

Going through the data, we discovered that some lexicons are associated with religion. Such lexical items as cited on the above table include:

Spirit, divine, faith, Paradise, doomsayers, clergy, Most High God, Blessed Father, heavenly Father, Holy Word, Holy Scriptures, Glory, religion, man of God, church, Apostle, prayers.

The use of these religious situated words in the corpus are not mistaken, as these words explain and portray the religious beliefs and philosophy of their authors, who regard the nation Cameroon as a prototype of heaven on earth. For example, Nico Halle, a Peace Crusader and a member of the National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism (NCPBM) appealed:

I come on bended knees before the Most High God, with my heart and mind submitted to the Blessed Father of the Cameroonian family who is also the God of peace, and before all men and women of Cameroon on this day by means of this prayer and appeal for the return of peace in our cherished nation-prototype of heaven on earth.

By invoking and soliciting the Divine intervention into the problem Cameroon faces, reveals the speaker’s act of faith and religious belief in the supernatural power of God. It entails that the solution to the problem plaguing Cameroon is now beyond human capacity to solve. Hence, seeking the face of God, therefore, is considered by the author as the only way through which peace and return to normalcy in Cameroon can be realized and the harmonious coexistence of Cameroonians can be cemented.

6.2.4. Lexical Items Associated with Good Ethics

With the word good ethics or national ethics, we are referring to the largely set of cultural habits, rule of behaviour and expectations that inform, define and constitute our living together, including the various dimensions of emotional, intellectual and physical interrelationships that shape our daily activities (Harry,2003). National ethics pay homage to the vital importance of maintaining a keen awareness of events that affect Cameroonians in their own nation. The selection and projection of lexicons indicating good values as observable in the corpus, clearly indicate that the assimilation or inculcation of such moral values over the use of force and other vices, are prerequisite for achieving a better living together of Cameroonians. Some of these lexicons are tabulated below.

Table 3: Tabular representation of some moral situated words

<i>Words</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Love	11	23.40
Justice	8	17.02
Respect for human rights	2	4.26
Equity	3	6.38
Rule of law	3	6.38

Sympathy	1	2.13
Transparency	3	6.38
Patriotism	10	21.28
Accountability	2	4.26
Dignity	1	2.13
Honesty	2	4.26
Fear of the Lord	1	2.13
Total	47	100

Table 3 above illustrates that the dominant moral situated lexicon used is 'love' with 23.40%, followed by 'patriotism' with 26%. 'Justice' accounts to 17.02%, while 'equity,' 'Rule of the law,' and 'transparency,' all take 6.38% each. 'Respect for human rights,' 'Accountability' and 'honesty' have 4.26% each while 'dignity,' 'sympathy' and 'Fear of the Lord' all have the percentage of 2.13%.

The excerpts reveal the use of good moral situated words in the corpus.

I want to take this opportunity to appeal to the consciences of Cameroonians and implore all and sundry to shun hypocrisy, falsehood, lies-telling, manipulation, gimmicks, cover-up, bad governance, marginalization, backstabbing, witch-hunting and all other malignant vices which have created and exacerbated this crisis. Though I have made peace my watch word, I want to say that peace does not exist in a vacuum. Peace emanates from core moral values namely: love, truth, justice, equity, respect for the rule of law, patriotism, accountability, transparency, respect for human rights, integrity, nobility, credibility and honor.

While enumerating *hypocrisy, falsehood, lies-telling, manipulation, gimmicks, cover-up, bad governance, marginalization, backstabbing, witch-hunting* as some of the unethical and amoral values that are injurious to the peaceful coexistence of Cameroonians, the author or speaker in the above text also projected lexis or core moral values such as *love, truth, justice, equity, respect for the rule of law, patriotism, accountability, transparency, respect for human rights, integrity, nobility, credibility and honor*, to tell the Cameroonian populace that if they are well-coordinated, they can produce impeccable characters that would serve as a panacea to stifle the challenges that come with entrenching national cohesion and promotion of cohabitation, as living together hangs on these core moral values. No wonder, the author lambastes living together hypocrisy by further asserting:

We cannot talk of Living Together if we don't love each other like brothers and sisters without considering one's tribe, religion, language, or social status. We cannot talk of loving each other if we do things that constitute injustice against some other citizens. We cannot talk of Living Together

when there are human rights abuses. We cannot talk of Living Together if we do not love our country.

This is to say that the inculcation of such creative virtues as friendliness, compassion, non-violence, love, patriotism, as the author proffered, is a way of promoting peace and stability. Most of these virtues imply that national peace carried with it a surpassing of personality, and abandonment of ethnic, cultural and religious egoism. Thus, though Cameroon is no doubt a complex country with a plural nature, Cameroonians must radically transfer their obsolete ethnic modes of interacting with each other and develop a viable and sustainable national ethics. They must first appeal to people's moral conscience and to personal and political will. Peace emerges from the depths of the human heart and political will must always be renewed, so that new ways can be found to reconcile and unite individuals and communities. These lexical components enumerated above constitute the bits and pieces of language which are combined meaningfully for linguistic expression and human communication to be realized.

6.2.5. The Use of Rhetorical Questions

Some rhetorical questions were identified in the data. A rhetorical question is a linguistic device used to persuade or subtly influence the audience. Rhetorical questions have always been a very powerful persuasive or thought-provoking tool. The texts below made visible the appropriation of this device by the writer to tilt the minds of the readers and the Cameroonian populace as a whole toward the justice system in Cameroon:

In handling the current crisis, Government has maintained that 'Cameroon is one and indivisible.' But many moves constitute a contraction to this maxim.

- *Why arrest citizens and try them far away from the jurisdiction in which the crime is alleged to have been committed?*
- *Is this not a violation of the criminal procedure code, CPC?*
- *How come even press offences are entertained at the military court?*

The rhetorical nature of the questions and the attitude of the author on the government's action

in resolving the Anglophone Crisis, shows a discontent in the management of the crisis which stands as a stumbling block to the peaceful coexistence of Cameroonians. The rhetorical questions highlight contradictions in the Cameroonian government's stance on unity amidst on-going crises. They provoke critical thinking about the legality and morality of government actions, such as arresting citizens outside their jurisdiction and trying press offenses in military courts. This technique emphasizes the dissonance between official narratives and actual practices, encouraging public scrutiny and debate over the government's adherence to the law and principles of justice. As Herman & Chomsky (1988: 9) opine, 'Anti-government newspapers criticize the state aggressively to portray themselves as spokesmen for free speech and the general community interest.' The use of the rhetorical questions logically tends to satirize Cameroon government as it fuels the crisis through its justice system rather than stifling it. This explains why the questions are asked not for answers, but to galvanize civil society and draw attention to perceived injustices within the political system. The writer aims at kindling the reflection of the Cameroon government as well as the Cameroonian populace on the application of justice in Cameroon.

6.2.6. Intertextuality /Analogies

Intertextuality or analogy is based on making references to other texts and discourses outside the field of the speech being currently made. As Beard (2000:27) stated, "Ideas and concepts are intended to be clarified in an analogy by comparing them to supposedly well-known phenomena." They may be used to support an argument, if, for instance, real examples or precedents are close in time or if it is an extremely sensitive issue (Charteris-Black 2005:4). The excerpts below provide examples of some analogies or intertextual references made as observed in the corpus.

- *I want to close this special appeal to the Cameroonian people and State authorities by invoking the Holy Scriptures which affirm that "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. "(2Chronicles 7:14) Amen.*
- *One of the most important lessons I learnt in my life of struggle for freedom and peace is that in any conflict, there comes a point when neither side can claim to be right and the other wrong, no matter how much that might have been the case at the start of the conflict."* Nelson Mandela.

- *The Anglophone crisis seems to have gone beyond conflict resolution because according to Sifiso Mbuyisa, 'Though conflict resolution aims to address the causes (single or multiple linear) of conflict, it does not necessarily change the relationship amongst the parties enjoined in conflict, nor the systems that are in place, and therefore is not addressing the factors underlying the conflict.' That leaves us with the concept of conflict transformation which, according to Ronald Kraybill, is an approach that 'asserts the belief that conflict can be a catalyst for deep-rooted, enduring, positive change in individuals, relationships and the structures of the human community.'*
- *This is what Mwalimu Julius Nyerere calls the 'Palaver tradition.' The palaver tradition is the culture of talking and hearing things out, a kind of government by discussion where issues are agreed on while 'sitting down under the tree.'*

The excerpts above indicate a complex intertextual or analogical phenomenon. The speakers make references to different domains. There is an analogy or reference made to a biblical text as well as other political figures' ideologies or philosophies. These aspects of intertextuality and analogy evident in the corpus, however, indicate that politicians refer not only to other political figures but also borrow from the realm of religion. The use of this strategy, therefore, is considered crucial as it provides politicians or political figures with a solid foundation on which to build their own positions, arguments and or ideologies, as well as giving the audience motivation towards trusting and believing in them.

CONCLUSION

This paper set out to investigate the role of language use in *The Post* newspaper in promoting peaceful coexistence in Cameroon. The analysis examines how the newspaper used vocabulary and meaning-making strategies (lexico-semantics) to shape public discourse and foster social harmony. The corpus for the study consisted of forty-five (45) purposively sampled news-related stories or articles on the concept of Living Together, drawn from the 2016, 2017 and 2018 publications. Findings of the study revealed that the peaceful coexistence among Cameroonians is a challenging issue owing to the multilingual and multicultural character of the country. The research identified prominent lexico-semantic features employed by *The Post* newspaper to navigate the complexities of Cameroon's social landscape. Such included the use of some lexical preferences that denote togetherness such as 'living together,' 'national unity,' and 'national integration,' some lexical items suggestive of dialogue, the use of religious situated lexicons, moral situated lexicons,

lexical items associated with radicalism, lexical items associated with good ethics and the use of rhetorical questions. Overall, the analysis revealed that *The Post's* language choices have an ideological function in fostering national unity as an ingredient for peaceful and harmonious coexistence. It revealed the newspaper's use of inclusive language, reframing of divisive narratives, and promotion of intercultural understanding. The functions of these lexico-semantic features employed in the newspaper, thus, serve to reinforce the ideals of living together harmoniously and building a peaceful society in Cameroon.

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