

## **The Anglophone Crisis and Emerging Bilingualism Trends on State-Owned Mass Media in Cameroon**

**Victor Ngu Cheo** (*Ph.D.*)

Department of Communication and Development Studies  
The University of Bamenda  
vncheo@yahoo.com

### **Abstract**

One of the major causes of the Anglophone Crisis which started in 2016 was the dominant use of the French language to the detriment of Anglophones in a country that is dubbed bilingual and whose constitution confers an equal status to both the English and French languages. In a bid to mitigate this situation, the government embarked on a series of measures amongst which the creation of a Bilingualism and Multiculturalism Commission to oversee the implementation of official bilingualism in the country. This new wave of bilingualism also seems to have actuated a ray of change in the practice of bilingualism in the state media in Cameroon. Using the methodological approaches of observation and content analysis, this paper appraises the emerging trends of bilingualism on the state media; Cameroun Tribune, the national radio and television, CRTV. Underpinned by the Knowledge Gap Theory, the analysis revealed that the anglophone crisis has ushered in some positive changes as far as the practice of bilingualism on the media is concerned. In trying to increase the level of bilingualism practice in the state media, the information gap between the Anglophones and Francophones has been narrowed. This notwithstanding, there is still quite a lot to do to improve on the status of bilingualism on the official media so as to be a good pace-setter in the media landscape in Cameroon. On this basis, this paper recommends that during bilingual newscasts it could be better to report one story in the French language and then the same story follows immediately in the English language. This will also promote the learning of French and English as the audience can put words in context easily.

*Keywords: Anglophone Crisis, Bilingualism, Trends, State-owned Media, Cameroon*

### **Introduction and Background to the Crisis**

Cameroon is host to an estimated 25 million heterogeneous population spread over 10 regions. She equally has over 250 different ethnic groups with distinct languages and customs (Nwati, 2001). An estimated 5 million of the population live in the South West and North West regions, areas formerly under the British colonial rule while the majority resides in the francophone regions, areas formerly under French colonial rule (United Nations, 2019).

What is today known as the ‘Anglophone problem’ has its roots in Cameroon’s colonial history and heritage. Upon the defeat of the Germans in Cameroon in 1916 by a British and French alliance, both countries proceeded to divide the country into two unequal parts in a treaty signed in London. While France took control of the bigger portion of the country, Britain occupied two disconnected portions referred to as British Southern Cameroons and British Northern Cameroons, which together made up one-fifth of the territory. At the close of the WWI, a League of Nations Mandate was granted to the territories to be administered by the two powers, followed by a trusteeship agreement under the same powers in 1946 after the creation of the United Nations (Ngho, 1996). The French and British established parallel administrative, educational, and legal systems in their controlled parts of the territory, each reflecting the practices in both colonizing countries. While the French established the Civil Law system in the French part of Cameroon, the British set up the Common Law system in their part; the Anglo-Saxon system of education was applied in the British occupied territory, while the French system was applied in the French occupied part. On October 1, 1961, in a UN plebiscite, British Southern Cameroon voted for independence by joining the Republic of Cameroon, which had gained independence from France in 1960 to become the Federal Republic of Cameroon. In May 1972, in a referendum, the country voted to become a unitary state and by a presidential decree of 1984, the name of the country was changed from United Republic of Cameroon to Republic of Cameroon (Konings and Nyamjoh, 1997; Anyangwe, 2009). These complex historical developments are still at the centre of present-day challenges leading to the current crisis (Relief Web, 2017)

The Anglophone problem has come to be understood as the political, social, and economic marginalization of the people of former British Southern Cameroons since it acceded to independence by joining the majority former French Cameroon in 1961 (Kouega, 2018). The crux of the problem has been repeatedly traced back to the controversies surrounding the reunification process and the subsequent shelving aside of the federal system. The failure to harmonize or sustain the two parallel systems, alongside economic and administrative marginalisation only worsened the problem. For decades, the Anglophones have complained of unfair representation in government affairs, marginalisation

resulting from the unequal and ineffective application of bilingualism, the dominance of the French language, excessive centralization, and the lack of development in the Anglophone areas, all of which put them at a disadvantage in competing for resources and opportunities (Kouega, 2018).

From 1961-1972, the marriage between the two Cameroons was that of inconvenience. Southern Cameroonians on their part were never treated as equals in the union, thus mounting bitterness and hatred in the operating Federal system. Anglophones were not represented enough both at the Federal government and local governing councils. In terms of developmental projects, Southern Cameroon was backward. All these grudges have been the reasons of regrets by many Anglophone Cameroonians. Furthermore, for the past 50 years, the Anglophones have been treated as second class citizens in a government where marginalization, suppression, cruelty, the abuse of the constitution and the use of force is the main tool of governance by the majority francophones (Nwati, 2001). In the book “betrayal of too trusting a people”, Anyangwe (2009) explains how the desire for self-determination remains alive in the people of Southern Cameroon even though engaged in their current status.

The current Anglophone Crisis started with a ‘sit-in strike’ initiated by lawyers in the two English-speaking regions on October 11, 2016 and a subsequent strike by teachers in the same regions later. The strike actions were in protest against the perceived assimilation of the Anglophone education and legal traditions inherited from the British former colonial masters into the dominant Francophone system. This came after the teachers’ and the lawyers’ trade unions petitioned the government to address their grievances without success.

But the crisis began gathering more steam with the formation of the Cameroon Anglophone Civil Society Consortium, CACSC, an organization made up of university lecturers, secondary school teachers and lawyers of the two English speaking regions of the country, NW and SW. In a more organized manner, they took to the streets in a peaceful protest, because the English language which is the language of the Anglophones, has been trampled upon (Aljazeera, 2016). They also protested against the fact that a high number of monolingual French speaking administrators have invaded the Anglophone system; French-speaking judges were posted into the NW and SW making the French language the

language used in courts during proceedings, most administrative documents were all in French. Also, Francophone teachers were posted into the Anglophone region. Most of these teachers could not speak English nor could the students understand French, thus making learning not very effective. The teachers and lawyers were brutalized on the streets by the military. Taxi drivers, bike-riders commonly called “Okada” and university students all turned against the government. The streets of Bamenda and Limbe were full of demonstrators (Quartz, 2017). The lawyers demanded that the government should redress the situation of the lawyers and teachers in the two English regions of Cameroon.

In response to the protests, the government of Cameroon created an ad hoc inter-ministerial committee to dialogue with members of the CACSC. CACSC presented, among others, a draft for Federalism but their demands were met with unyielding opposition from the government which banned the organization on January 17, 2017 (Amnesty International, 2017). Their activities were described as illegal and against the security and unity of Cameroon. The government proceeded to arrest prominent Anglophone leaders under the country’s anti-Terrorism Law while others fled the country or went into hiding. The government also shut down internet services in the two English speaking regions until April 20, 2017 when the services were restored after 93 days. This led to the upsurge of extremist leaders and separatist movements that began to demand the independence of Cameroon’s English-speaking regions rather than Federalism. On October 1, 2017, Anglophone separatists declared the two Anglophone regions as the self-proclaimed “Republic of Ambazonia” (HRW, 2018).

Following the declaration of the Republic of Ambazonia and the abduction of some government officials and the subsequent killing of some soldiers, the president of the Republic, Paul Biya on December 30, 2017 declared war on the Anglophone separatists. This was the beginning of the Anglophone war. The war started in Manyu which is the Amazonian Defense Force, ADF base, then spread like wildfire to other areas like Lebielem, Fako, Momo, Bui, and Ngoketungia. Also, several armed groups emerged, such as the Red Dragon, Tigers, and Seven Kata, amongst others. Hundreds of homes and property have been destroyed in villages like Kwa-Kwa, Nso, Tadu, Kembong, Muyenge, Wum, Batibo etc. On the

5th of January 2018 members of the Ambazonia interim government headed by Sisiku Ayuk Tabe were all abducted from Nigeria and brought to Cameroon. They spent more than 10 months in the gendarmerie (SED) Yaoundé. Sisiku Ayuk and the team were later sent to the maximum-security prison in Yaoundé pending trial. The trial started in December of 2018 (Watch, 2019, Kindzeka, 2019). After being convicted in a military court, Sisiku Ayuk and team were later sentenced to life in prison on the charges of Terrorism and secession, with a fine of 350 million dollars. Today, what started as a peaceful demonstration has grown into a full-blown war with the military in combat against the secessionists (Nwati,2021).

The Anglophone crisis has since October 2016, caused mass displacement of civilians from the North West and South West regions. At least 3,000 have been killed, more than 200 villages destroyed and an estimated 500,000 displaced internally while an estimated 40,000 others have fled to neighboring Nigeria. The crisis equally disrupted the educational system and livelihood in the North West and South West regions. Around 700,000 children were deprived of schooling in their home areas; one in three people needed humanitarian aid (Aljazeera, 2020, ICG, 2017).

In an attempt to appease tensions, the government created a National Commission on Bi-lingualism and Multi-culturalism, implemented a special recruitment of bi-lingual teachers in secondary education and translated the Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA) Uniform Acts into English. The government also announced reforms, creating a Common Law Bench at the Supreme Court and a Common Law section at the School of Administration and Magistracy. It also recruited English speaking trained court clerks and convened the Major national Dialogue which held from September 30 to November 4, 2019. The National Dialogue, which essentially dealt with the crisis in the two Anglophone regions, made a series of recommendations such as granting a special status to the two Anglophone regions and ensuring equality of English and French in all aspects of national life (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 2021).

**Problem Statement**

Cameroon is a bilingual country by virtue of its political and socio-cultural history. In fact, there are officially, two bilingual countries in the world, Cameroon and Canada. Both countries are each an amalgamation of both Francophones and Anglophones. Owing therefore to the coexistence and cohabitation of both the Francophones and the Anglophones in Cameroon, it is enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon that “The official languages of the Republic of Cameroon shall be English and French, both languages having the same status. The State shall guarantee, the promotion of bilingualism throughout the country” (Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon, 1996). However, contrary to the Constitution, the perception and use of both the French and English languages do not reflect the fact that they have equal status. The French language is treated as superior to the English language. Until about five years ago, the French language occupied centre stage in virtually all national public events, ceremonies, offices, institutions and the media. In fact, in certain parts of the Anglophone Regions of Cameroon, even though the inhabitants, predominantly speak English, the French language is often given undue precedence over the English language to the detriment of the Anglophones.

On the basis of the background information provided above, it is clear that there is an imbalance in information or knowledge acquisition between Francophones and Anglophones in Cameroon especially as most socio-economic and political actors are Francophones. It is often said and of course this is true that it is the country which is bilingual and not the people. In Cameroon, Francophones and Anglophones are living side by side just like English and French co-exist. This dynamic is equally reflected in the Cameroon media landscape with many more francophone television and radio stations, and newspapers of the French language expression than those of the English language expression. Furthermore, the newspapers of French expression are nationwide, that is are more wide spread all over the national territory than those of English Expression that are pervasive only in the Anglophone regions and some major cities like the political capital, Yaoundé, the economic capital Douala and Bafoussam because of its proximity to the North West region. While Anglophone Cameroonians have little worries with the privately-owned mass media for their insignificant English

language contents, they have serious issues with the State-owned Cameroon Radio Television, CRTV and the State newspaper, Cameroun Tribune whose contents are largely francophone oriented. This even goes beyond the mere concept of the knowledge gap hypothesis where those with a higher socio-economic status definitely have more access to mass media information. Rather, in this case language is a key barrier to information acquisition.

This paper therefore argues that in this postindustrial information society, information is a valuable critical resource so much so that those who can access it are supposedly able to participate more effectively in making informed and sound political, social and economic decisions that can impact their society positively. Many Anglophones are of the opinion that the dominance of the French language in public spaces in Cameroon is seriously depriving them from valuable information. This is part of the main causative factors of the current anglophone crisis (Cheo & Ngwobela, 2019). In a bid to mitigate this outcry, the media just like other arms of the state are becoming a little bit more accommodating in the application of official bilingualism. There is therefore a slight change in the practice of bilingualism on the media, particularly the state-owned media, though much still remains to be done. This constitutes the emerging trends of bilingualism in the media landscape in Cameroon.

### **Objective and Theoretical Framework**

This paper therefore attempts an appraisal of the emerging bilingualism trends currently taking hold of the media as part of the positive outcomes of the current anglophone crisis in general and the Major National Dialogue in particular. The state-owned media in particular is seen to be ushering in the dawn of a new era of bilingualism on the media landscape either through the media practitioners themselves or by news sources or media actors.

This paper is underpinned by the Knowledge gap hypothesis. It was first proposed in 1970 by Philip J Tichenor, then Associate Professor of Journalism and Mass Communication, George A. Donohue, Professor of Sociology and Clarice. N Olien, Instructor in Sociology, all three researchers in the University of Minnesota. They upheld that, as the infusion of mass media information into a social system increases, higher socioeconomic status segments tend to acquire this information faster than lower socioeconomic status population segments.

Hence the gap in knowledge between the two tends to increase rather than decrease. In other words, people with a higher purchasing power stand a higher chance of more readily having access to mass media thereby gaining information faster than those with a lower purchasing power with the resultant effect being the widening of the information gap between them. Hence the people of the higher economic class tend to gain more in terms of the benefits associated with information, particularly in this postindustrial information society where information is a critical resource. Thus, if the information services are not made equal for the entire society, this gap of information will increase over the years.

In this theory, knowledge is treated as any other commodity which is not distributed equally throughout the society and the people at the top of the ladder have more easy access to it. This theory was used in the presidential election and it was seen that when a new idea invades in the society, the people of the higher strata understand it better and hence the gap expands. But, events such as debates, free talks may help to reduce this gap. The mitigating circumstances alluded to here have to do with the two-step flow theory which evokes the use of opinion leaders or analysts. But this again is contingent on the fact that both the senders and the receivers of the messages share the same linguistic code or language. In the absence of this, it becomes mass communication minus the masses.

A major criticism of the theory is that it focuses only on those with a higher socio-economic status and information acquisition through the mass media without any allusion to the fact that in addition to access to the media, in order to gain meaningful information, one must understand the language use on the media. Language is a very key factor in information acquisition. It is therefore rather unfortunate that even in 1975 when Tichenor and his colleagues made a proposal on how to narrow the knowledge gap, they did not still consider the language factor. In this regard therefore, those who cannot be accommodated by the media programming due to language issues tend to be too specialized in their choice of media programmes. Hence it is the uses and gratifications which tend to determine people's choice of a media. This is actually the case in Cameroon with the minority Anglophones with no English Channel on state-



owned media to cater for their needs. Rather there exist fewer English programmes without equity or equality of information disseminated for public consumption to both the Anglophones and the Francophones. Thus, rather than recourse to the media because of what the media (programmes/messages/information) do to them, it is the reverse. Media is sought as a function of what they use the media for. This is the main tenet of the uses and gratifications theory. Hence people, and usually the minority like Anglophones will access the media seldomly not only because it can do very little for them but moreso because language is a limiting factor. One cannot determine of what use is the media when he or she cannot understand the language used in the media.

### **Methodology**

Given the nature of the study which has to do with the examination of official language use on the media in Cameroon with a focus on the state media as the supposed agenda setter of bilingualism, this study essentially adopted a qualitative approach. Qualitative information was acquired through observation and content analysis of news stories published in the state-owned newspaper, Cameroon Tribune, news and magazine programmes on the Cameroon Radio and Television, CRTV as well as from some private, radio and television stations in the country which were purposively sampled. The study is therefore limited to the bilingual daily, Cameroun Tribune, and radio and television stations with a nation-wide coverage. The study also makes use of secondary data sources; books, article, and the Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon. The findings are reported in an explanatory and descriptive manner.

### **Bilingualism on the Cameroon Mass Media Prior to the 2016 Anglophone Crisis**

It is a well-established fact that Cameroon and Canada are known as the only two bilingual countries in the world. This is because both countries have endorsed French and English as their official languages owing to the co-existence of both the Francophones and the Anglophones. Most Francophones who are in the majority predominantly speak the French language while the Anglophones who make up 20% of the entire population speak English. However, an infinitesimal number of both Francophones and Anglophones

speak both French and English, that is, they are bilingual. It is for this reason that one will often hear statements like it is the country which is bilingual and not the people. It is with this in mind that the successive constitutions of Cameroon have been very emphatic on the fact that French and English are the official languages of Cameroon and that both languages have equal status. This bilingual character of the country has over the years been reflected on the media, particularly, the state-owned newspaper, Cameroon Tribune and the state-owned audio-visual media, the Cameroon Radio and Television, CRTV where French and English are visibly used either on independent news slots and programmes on the same media or on bilingual news slots and programmes. Examples abound such as the separate news casts in the English and French languages and also magazine and current affairs programmes like *Cameroon Calling*, *Dimanche Midi*, *Actualité Hebdo* and the Week-end Bilingual News Casts every Friday to Sunday and the Midnight Bilingual News Casts every week days. Also, there are seldomly live bilingual broadcasts like during the Head of State's visits nationally or internationally, on Youth Day and National Day celebrations, during the hosting of international and regional summit meetings, during national Elite One matches in a programme like "*Sports et Rhythmes*" on the national station every Sunday from 5.30pm to 6pm as well as during international football competitions where Cameroon is participating. The situation is not very different from the state-owned newspaper which equally publishes stories in English and in French.

The bilingual character on the Cameroon state-owned media notwithstanding, the French language preponderates over the English language. The argument advanced for this is that it reflects the proportionality of the Francophones who are in the majority as opposed to the minority Anglophones. It is even made worse as often times the information disseminated in the French language newscast for example is not exactly the same as in the English language newscast. Besides, in the same bilingual edition of the news, the French version has more details than the English version of the same news stories. This at times even leaves the audience wondering whether the English News Desk is allocated the same amount of news coverage resources as the French News Desk. This therefore brings about the problem of information or knowledge gap.

Hence, the Francophones are usually better informed and therefore more knowledgeable and in a better position to make informed decisions.

While it is common to find stories published in the French and English languages in the same edition of *Cameroon Tribune*, this is not the case with the audio-visual media where reports are exclusively presented in either English or French in separate newscasts with the exception of the Weekend Bilingual News Casts or other special broadcasts previously cited. And as previously stated, even though the weekend news casts are tagged bilingual, the only real features of bilingualism are the presences of two presenters; one English speaking and the other French speaking plus the presence of reports in the English and French languages. Meanwhile, though in the bilingual newscasts, reports in the French language were presented alternatively with those of the English language, there was usually a bias in terms of the number, depth, magnitude duration, length as well as the diversity of stories reported in French compared to those reported in the English language. The questions which therefore arise is how, where and when were the news assignments allocated? Are there certain information which are exclusive to Francophones even though they live together with their Anglophone counterparts? The answer obviously is no, even though there are situations which warrant one to think so. For instance, formerly most presidential decrees and appointments on the media were only in the French language and during the French language programme broadcasts. Hence, most Anglophones in general and Anglophone appointees in particular without any mastery of the French language got accustomed to certain administrative appointment stock expressions, phrases or words such as, “*en remplacement de, appelé à d’autres fonctions, relevé de ses fonctions, muté, poste vacant, poste créé, and admis à faire valoir ses droits à la retraite*”. This was a kind of linguistic marginalization which of course falls in line with the politics of assimilation of the Anglophones by the Francophones. Today things have changed as most appointments are done during the 5-6pm radio bilingual newscasts and are read in the English and French Languages.

In addition to the appraisal made above the only obvious rare exceptions were when the president of the Republic is addressing the nation during his end of year speech usually on December 31, or when he is addressing the youths on

the eve of the Youth Day, usually on February 10. But even so, the nature of manifested bilingualism in these contexts is such that a specified time-slot is identified on both radio and television during which the Head of State's message is broadcast in the French language and immediately followed by the English translated version. Again, the question has been asked whether in the attempt of translating the message, there is no misinformation or disinformation. Be it as it may though, this is one of the challenges of bilingualism, particularly in a country where the citizens are not bilingual per se. Attempts at mitigating this situation is often the employment of so-called analysts in French and English thereby evoking the two-step theory or two-step flow model of communication (Lazarsfeld et al., 1944) with equally unequal representation in terms of the number of experts in French and English with the usual orientation being that of more Francophone experts than Anglophone ones. The outcome is a second deprivation of Anglophones of vital information thus further widening the information or knowledge gap. Thus, the problem of ineffective bilingualism on the Cameroon media is a complex one for which not only the media are to blame but also the actors and sources of information on the media. But this could also be termed a mitigating circumstance, given the absence of a real political will on the part of government to rigorously implement the bilingualism policy as enshrined in the previous and current Constitutions of Cameroon.

Meanwhile, given the absence of any official government policy on bilingualism on the media in particular, there is no obligation on the private media to enhance the bilingualism practice. Apart from the separate newscasts in English and French and at times the weekend bilingual news, English programmes on the private media is about 5% while the remaining 95% is dedicated to programmes in the French. This is understandably so because these channels are mostly located in big cities and towns in the Francophone zones. The reverse is equally true for French language programmes in channels in the English-speaking zones of Cameroon.

### **Anglophone Crisis and the New Dawn of Bilingualism on the Media**

In the old order there was much of official bilingualism talk without any visible, perceptible or concrete change in general and on the media in particular. But since the start of the anglophone crisis in 2016, even in statutory Anglo-Saxon

traditional settings, there has been a glimmer of hope for bilingualism in the country in general and on the media specifically. This assessment is in tandem with the findings of Cheo and Ngwobela (2019). As an expedient but rather cosmetic and cursory measure to mitigate the problem linked to bilingualism and multiculturalism, the government created a National Commission on Bilingualism and Multiculturalism, implemented a special recruitment of bilingual teachers in secondary education and translated the Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA) Uniform Acts into English. The government also announced reforms; created the Common Law Bench at the Supreme Court and a Common Law section at the National School of Administration and Magistracy, ENAM. She also recruited English speaking trained court clerks. While this was happening, there was also a parallel development related to the practice of bilingualism on the media on the media landscape. It was being championed by the state-owned media, viz Cameroon Tribune and the Cameroon Radio and Television. Since then, the positive changes have been progressive as explained below.

Prior to the crisis, Cameroonians had been accustomed to the Head of State addressing the nation in French on the media while Peter Essoka, a veteran journalist and president of the National Communication Council, NCC will thereafter read out the English language version of the translated speech. Some Cameroonians derisively refer to Peter Essoka as the Anglophone president of Cameroon. While this practice is still in place because of the inability of the Head of State to effectively articulate himself in the English language, there is however, a broader post presidential-speech analysis with both francophone and anglophone analysts with the view to bridge the language gap contrary to the past where one or two anglophone analysts were brought in to comment as opposed to a panoply of francophone experts. This therefore gives room for some form of parity or equity on that score with the same number of francophone and anglophone journalists sitting side-by-side to decode the Head of State's message. This also has a positive impact in terms of the amount of information received by both the francophones and the Anglophones. To say the least, there is some kind of balance or better still the information gap between the francophones and anglophones has become considerably narrowed.

With regard to the regular bilingual editions of the news on CRTV television, there has been much improvement with the same stories presented most of the time in English and French as well as in the same sequence in English as in the French language. But where a high sense of consciousness has been manifested on the media is with the media actors or news sources themselves particularly when it comes to news attribution. Today, almost all government Ministers, Presidents of the National Assembly and the Senate, Governors, Directors of State Corporations etc., all strive to speak both French and English during news making events. Even ecumenical services broadcast on radio and television have witness a dramatic change with the priests and pastors displaying a certain level of bilingualism to at least ward off the accusation of marginalizing of Anglophones. In spite of the fact that most of these actors and news-makers, the majority of whom are Francophones who do not speak very good English, at least the consciousness and efforts to implement some form of bilingualism on the media is praise-worthy. This is thanks to the bilingualism agenda which the state-owned media is setting. Moreover, the attempt at promoting bilingualism on the media is not limited to news sources or news makers but also include the journalists themselves. It is for this reason that it is common today to hear a francophone journalist interviewing an Anglophone in English and vice versa. Even the Director General of CRTV, Charles Ndongho has made countless pronouncements and at times, managerial instructions on radio and TV in English and French. Also, private and public service announcements written in English are read in French programmes and vice versa, a practice previously unheard of. Today equally, all press conferences are done in French and English and the organizers or convenors who are mostly government officials make a deliberate effort to respond to questions in either French or English depending on whether the journalist is French speaking or English speaking.

Furthermore, the radio unlike the Television did not have a single bilingual newscast. Rather, a summary in either French or English followed each major newscast in either of the official languages. The trend has changed today with the introduction of bilingual news briefs at almost every top of the hour daily. However, a major innovation perceived as a true illustration of walking the talk of bilingualism was the recent introduction of a bilingual newscast on radio

called the 5-6pm newscast popularly known in French as “le 17-18”. The format of this newscast is exemplary with an alternating sequence of the news in both French and English without a change of the presenter. That is if the impending report is in French, the lead or introduction will also be in French irrespective of whether the presenter is an Anglophone and vice versa. A major feature of this newscast is the fact that it is used as a medium for high profile appointments and presidential decrees read entirely in French and English as opposed to what obtained in the past where appointments and presidential decrees were read on radio exclusively in the French language. This usually had a negative impact on Anglophones most of whom could not understand the French language. Although the 5-6pm presentation has been dominated by Anglophones in the likes of George Kelong, Drussilla Mokosso Njoki, Albert Njie Mbonde and Gladys Tata, the pioneer presenter was a Francophone, Jean Pierre Ndzana who was very bilingual. He remains a prototype of a bilingual journalist and this perhaps explains why he was used at the inception of the bilingual newscast in order to set the pace, standards as well as for subsequent presenters to emulate. This strategy seems to have augured well as Njie Mbonde and Drussilla Mokosso Njoki cued in very well. These presenters are showcasing veritable bilingualism on the media while setting a new bilingualism agenda for the rest of the media landscape in Cameroon.

Most likely, the performance of Njie Mbonde Albert on the 5-6pm newscast informed the decision of the CRTV management for him to become one of the presenters of one of the oldest sports programme on the national radio, *Sports et Rythmes* whose presenters have always been of the french expression, though occasionally sports commentaries were filed in from the two anglophone provinces today known as regions.

Another common feature which has improved on the bilingualism profile on the media concerns the transposition of similar programmes that exist in English into the French language. For instance, *Cameroon Calling* and *Dimanche Midi* on CRTV Radio each Sunday, *Press Hour* and *Scène de Presse* on CRTV Television each Sunday, and *Présidence-ACTU* and *Inside the Presidency* still on Television, a fortnightly programme on Mondays. They handle same or similar issues in their separate editions with the only difference being the language of

expression. The insistence on the sameness of issues discussed in the official languages of Cameroon, ensures that the bicultural and linguistic components of our country is taken care of. Similarly, the lone state-owned newspaper, Cameroun Tribune which is a bilingual publication has had to step up its number of stories in English. Even the front-page outlook has changed thereby reflecting the fact that the paper accommodates more English stories than before. This again is a commendable approach and a suitable platform for the promotion of bilingualism.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has attempted to illustrate the emerging trends of bilingualism influenced by the outbreak of the anglophone crisis. From the above analysis it is therefore evident that the anglophone crisis has ushered in some positive changes in relation to the use of the official languages on the media. In trying to increase the level of bilingualism practice in the state media, the information gap between the Anglophones and Francophones has been narrowed. The trend set by CRTV most especially is bearing fruits as even the private news channels like Equinoxe, Canal 2 and DASH Televisions are following suit. In fact, the programme *Droit de Réponse* on Equinoxe features both French speaking and English-speaking journalists to pose questions to the guest or expert who has the choice to answer in French or in English. It is the same thing with *Equinoxe Soir* or *le débrief* du Journal moderated by Serge Allain Ottou on Equinoxe on Mondays through Fridays daily. These specified programmes on Equinoxe also make an effort to accommodate Anglophones among their panelists.

These notwithstanding, there is still quite a lot to do to improve on the status of bilingualism on the official media so as to be a good pace-setter in the media landscape in Cameroon. On this basis, this paper recommends that during bilingual newscasts it could be better to report one story in the French language and then the same story follows immediately in the English language. This will also promote the learning of French and English as the audience can put words in context easily. While hoping that in future, most if not all programmes on radio and TV would be bilingual in nature, it is highly recommended that important magazine programmes like *Actualité Hebdo* should be Bilingual. For now, it is a programme exclusively for Francophones with high profile guests or



experts with indispensable knowledge on state affairs which does not trickle down to a vast majority of the Anglophone population. This rather widens the knowledge gap and deprive them from making informed decisions or participating in making informed decisions that can impact the society seriously.

To therefore attain the lofty goals of Cameroon truly becoming a bilingual country, there is need for a consolidation of these emerging trends on the media and also redesigning the English syllabus for francophone secondary schools and that of French for Anglophone schools. Furthermore, there is equally the need for the systematic certification of bilingual competence in Cameroon which will, in due course, be made a requirement for recruitment, appointment, and posting of civil servants.

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