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The Revitalization of Cameroonian Languages through the Translation of Some Official Documents: The Case of Kom in Boyo Division

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Abstract- In the discussions of the status of African languages today, especially among linguists, one of the problems that keep coming up is the need for the revitalization of endangered languages threatened by the current trend of globalization. Most Cameroonian languages are used only for local socialization in the respective communities, but not in official domains in the administration because foreign languages have overshadowed them; and become the preferred mode of communication among the younger generation. This paper argues that the revitalization of Kom through the translation of some official documents will enable the language not only to assume some of the prestige-conferring and valorizing functions, but also penetrate new domains in the local municipality hitherto monopolized by colonial languages. This strategy is proposed based on the argument that once a language's status is raised through any revitalization technique, the speakers will perceive it on more equal ground with official languages albeit as a 'Local Official Language' (LOL). It uses the UN's 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the conceptual framework.

Keywords: *translation, revitalization, official, documents, vitality, domain.*

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The Revitalization of Cameroonian Languages through the Translation of Some Official Documents: The Case of Kom in Boyo Division

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Abstract- In the discussions of the status of African languages today, especially among linguists, one of the problems that keep coming up is the need for the revitalization of endangered languages threatened by the current trend of globalization. Most Cameroonian languages are used only for local socialization in the respective communities, but not in official domains in the administration because foreign languages have overshadowed them; and become the preferred mode of communication among the younger generation. This paper argues that the revitalization of Kom through the translation of some official documents will enable the language not only to assume some of the prestige-conferring and valorizing functions, but also penetrate new domains in the local municipality hitherto monopolized by colonial languages. This strategy is proposed based on the argument that once a language's status is raised through any revitalization technique, the speakers will perceive it on more equal ground with official languages albeit as a 'Local Official Language' (LOL). It uses the UN's 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the conceptual framework. The bilingual documents originally established in French and English that have been translated into the Kom language constitute data for this study. The documents that are used to argue for the revitalization of the language include a Baptism card, Medical certificate, Bachelor's Degree Success Testimonial, a Civil Status Register center, Marriage Certificate, National Identity card, Birth Certificate, Registration card, and Tax payer's card.

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I. Introduction

It has long been recognized that the lack of investment and official recognition of minority languages is one of the main barriers to citizens' participation in local administration and development. A majority Africa countries have adopted an exoglossic language policy in that they rely heavily on an ex-colonial language for their official or national communication. Only a small percentage of languages seem to use an indigenous language, either exclusively or dominantly in their formal functions. Such countries have traditionally been considered as model countries in using local media in formal domains such as South Africa, which has recognized 11 languages as official (Lüpke 2019:2).

In Cameroon, the establishment of all official documents is still carried out in French and English which are the country's imported languages although the majority of the population are illiterate. The result is the exclusion of many people in the nation who cannot contribute to the economy other than as consumers. Suppose the situation is reversed and Cameroonian languages are also employed in the formal administration, education, judiciary, politics, agriculture, economy etc., it is obvious that the level of participation will increase as well as the productive capacity. This is one of the reasons why we argue for the revitalization of the Kom language through the translation of some documents for citizens' entrenched attitudes towards their language. But why use this approach in the revitalization of the language? This will be answered after the definition of some concepts. What is language revitalization?

According to (Chumbow 2009, 2010a), *revitalization* refers to all measures and actions necessary to ensure linguistic vitality and language maintenance, leading to the preservation of the remarkable quality and degree of cultural and linguistic diversity that characterizes the rich heritage of African nations. This is envisaged in terms of, and in consonance with the recommendations of UNESCO (2003a).

Closely linked to revitalization is *revalorization,* and Chumbow also notes that it pertains to all those provisions in the action plan that are geared towards ensuring added value for African languages, beyond their basic communication and identity functions within the ethno-linguistic group. This is achieved, for instance, by giving such a language supplementary, economically valorizing functions as a language of education, official or public affairs in the local government councils and mass communication, etc. (Chumbow 2009, 2010a).

Since all Cameroonian languages are not official except English and French that are used in conducting all official government transactions in the public administration, UNESCO (2013) defines an official language as "*one* designated by law to be employed in the public domain." This is distinct from a national language, which is a "language spoken by a large part of the population of a country, which may or may not be designated an official language" (UNESCO, 2013).

Concerning an official language that results from the work of revitalization, it is one that is used by

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the administration (mostly by the government in the courts of law and for official business) within a country and sometimes it is used as a means of international communication. An official language has 'its restriction to 'the secondary domain cluster' consisting mainly of administrative, economic, political and educational uses' Bamgbose (2000:104). Very often, the role of an official language is enforced by legislation or decree and to a large extent, it is restricted to formal settings. It has been noted that its function is primarily utilitarian rather than symbolic (Holmes, 1992). For example, the Cameroonian Constitution stipulates the use of English and French as the official languages. In addition, Bamgbose (2007) notes that an "official" Language of a country generally appears to be one in which the laws of the country are made and publicized, whereas the "national" language is the one which is used, more often orally, in the administration, mass-media, primary education, and literacy campaigns; but laws do not have to be passed nor published in them.

As indicated above, why should Kom among other Cameroonian languages be revitalized through the translation of some documents? This question can be addressed basically based on Bamgbose's (2011:2) argument that when people talk of a common language that will facilitate communication; they almost always refer to an official imported language, which, as is well known, is only truly common to perhaps 10-20% of the population**.** The argument about cost is that operating in a single language is more economical than operating in several. In addition, the existence of such a language avoids the problems of translation, interpretation, and production of documents in several languages. While this may be true, the real cost is a comparison between denying a citizen the right to be heard in his or her language as opposed to the so-called economy of operating in a language in which one is not competent. In Cameroon, English and French are invariably the only languages that enjoy official status according to the constitution. (Chumbow 2008) on his part maintains that the fact that the sum total of the knowledge, technology, skills and techniques relevant to and required for national development are confined to and transmitted in a foreign language used by a relatively small fraction of the population means that the majority (60 to 80%) who do not speak the official foreign language are literally marginalized and excluded from the development equation. It is on the bases of these arguments that this study uses the translation of selected documents in the Kom language as data to argue for an alternative strategy in revitalizing Cameroonian languages.

Generally, most Cameroonians cherish their indigenous languages and maintain them with pride in the primary domains of language, i.e., in family, community, religious and elementary school contexts. They do not, however, believe that these languages are capable of becoming languages of power, i.e., dominant in what Sibayan and other Philippine sociolinguists call "the controlling domains of language", such as government administration, the formal economy, secondary and tertiary education. Their disabling language attitudes are a reflection of what Bourdieu (1997) refers to as the linguistic market where ownership of cultural capital prescribes the rules of distribution. Moreover, the low status of the Kom language among others is manifested in their non-use or minimal use in education, administration, health, formal economy, judiciary etc. If the language's status is considered low, then it is crucial to address this issue and also look at what should be done to change this status. This lead us to ask the following questions:

a) What is the cause of low language status?
b) How can the status of the Kom languages be enhanced and revitalized?

The first question can be addressed by looking at the causes of low status of minority languages.

a) What is the cause of Kom low language status?

It is the government through its language policy that recognizes some languages as 'official' and 'national', and thereby according more value to such languages than others. The Cameroonian government accords official status to French and English by adopting them for use in administration, education, judiciary, parliament, media, etc. while at the same time excluding minority languages in these functions by way of policy following the 1996 Constitution. It makes policies on languages and enforces such policies through legislation. Often, government's policies on Cameroonian languages are reflected in the constitution and/or other documents such as the National Policy on Education. By adopting English and French as the language of education, government has raised the value of both languages over minority languages. When for instance, people in a given community like Kom perceive the learning of their language as the only means of obtaining access to education, health, administration etc. their demand for such a language may be translated into different actions for its development.

i. *Government's language policy through the Constitution*

The Constitution (the latest is that of 1996) which is the fundamental laws of Cameroon provide very little on the language policy. The only clauses on English and French in the Constitution are in Article I, Section 3, which stipulates that "The Republic of Cameroon shall adopt English and French as the official languages with equal status". This section further stipulates that the state "shall guarantee the promotion of bilingualism all over the territory" The indigenous languages are also provided for in the same Section, the only clause being the one-sentence stipulation that the state "shall work

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towards the protection and promotion of national languages" (national being the local label for the local/ indigenous languages) Simo Bobda (2004). In the absence of an inclusive favorable language policy for minority languages, the principle governing the use of language in the Cameroonian society is, predictably, that of the "survival of the fittest". The use of the Kom language in official documents is one of the strategies towards the revitalization and eventual emergence of the language.

According to Mackey (l984) quoted by Bamgbose (1991:741) "language is like a currency: the more it can buy, the greater value it has. 'If this assertion is established, the logical inference will be that the translation of all official documents in the Kom language will promote and give it a greater market value in the vital sectors of public life and public policy in religion, administration, health and politics etc. Put differently, the translation of the different documents in Kom has raised and revalorized the language's prestige.

Batibo (2005:47) also maintains that speakers of minority languages in most African countries are excluded from or marginalized with respect to national participation because of the use, by the ruling elite, of an ex-colonial language or of a dominant indigenous language, which may be used as a lingua franca while not understood by certain groups within the nation. Speakers of minority languages are thereby denied direct participation in public interaction, meaningful audiences with government authorities, and contact with other groups, or active contribution at public rallies. The exclusion of minority language speakers for these reasons is very common in Africa, as most countries either assume that all are able to follow discourse in those languages or insist that all official communication be made in them whatever the social cost. The immediate consequence is that nationalism, which is an economic necessity that can only be achieved by a communication that is capable of reaching all members of society in the economic process is not achieved.

b) *How can the status of the Kom language be revitalized?*

The language can be revitalized through different lexical expansion strategies and that is why this study focuses on translation as a technique in the intellectualization of the Kom language. It has been said that "Western Europe owes its civilization to translators" (Kelly 1979:1). Thus, if the speakers have to be civilized and emerge following vision 2035, then the translators from Kom and other languages should start translating key texts and documents from colonial languages into their respective languages. According to Mutasa (2006), African languages are viewed as not adequate as languages of tuition for other subjects because of linguistic deficiency. On the one hand, the constraint of terminology is real and the whole question of terminology is part of the overall cultural, economic and social subjugation of developing nations by the West. In this vein, the lack of terminology or academic register in Kom and other languages can be provided as the rationale for depriving their rightful roles in administrative and educational domains at all levels. Terminology should not only be regarded as an attribute that is characteristic of European languages but as an inherent element pertinent to all languages in the administrative, health, social, economic and scientific domains. Does English have terminologies for all African artifacts? English also needs elaboration in this regard but who says anything about its shortcoming?

The poverty or underdevelopment of the Kom language is due to deliberate refusal to enrich and use it in wider domains. When a language is revitalized through translation like Kom for instance, Fafunwa (1990) notes that the process becomes easier for other languages. However, the financial or the economic factor may pose a major problem for the development and wider use of Cameroonian languages to be revitalized and used in formal contexts. Nevertheless, the economic cost must not only be viewed in monetary terms but also with respect to the long-term effects on Cameroon resulting from her continuous use of imported foreign languages that disadvantage a greater section of the population. It is therefore important not to allow any language to be endangered and get extinct nowadays when it could be documented and revitalized by producing appropriate literacy materials or translating different documents for its enhancement and vitality. As pointed out in the introduction, this paper argues that the translation of some documents in the Kom language will greatly reinforce its revitalization but why should some documents be translated in this language?

i. *Justification for the Translation of some official Documents into African languages with Kom as a case study*

It has been argued that language rights are an integral part of well-established basic human rights widely recognized in international law, just as are the rights of women and children (Varennes 2001: 1). These rights are also enshrined in various articles of the UN by member states that cherish democracy. As a signatory to these UN articles, Cameroon is both politically and morally obliged both to observe the articles and enforce them for enhanced democratic citizenship of all communities.

The concept of participatory democracy goes beyond ritual voting to elect governments. It includes "a citizen's right to make his or her views and needs known as well as the right to be able to influence policy in so far as his or her welfare is concerned" (Bamgbose 2008:24). It follows, therefore, that "as long as the language of governance is accessible only to the

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educated elite, majority of the citizens will be excluded thereby making nonsense of participatory democracy" (Bamgbose 2008:31). Protecting these languages through the translation of relevant documents, then, is not simply a matter of preserving the country's linguistic and cultural wealth, it is also vital to ensuring equal access and opportunities for Kom people's linguistic rights.

(Bamgbose 2008:31) also points out two aspects of national life which are worth mentioning here such as justice and health. He states that in a system of justice in which a litigant or an accused has to be subjected to questioning through an interpreter, it is not unusual to discover that there is often miscarriage of justice arising from faulty interpretation. Similarly, information on health which is not presented in a language that the consumer understands can lead to failure or even disastrous consequences. The prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Africa has led to a realization that the war against the pandemic can yield no tangible results unless it is conducted in a language familiar to most people. At least in this respect, African languages are coming into prominence in terms of their role in this domain. But there is still much left to be done. Labels on medication continue to be mainly in the imported official language (or in the language of the country from which the medicines have been imported). Although pharmacists try to explain the use of the medication they dispense, there is no substitute for instructions in a language that patients can understand on the basis of these arguments, some materials should be produced or translated into translated into minority languages for such information to be available to the illiterate population.

National languages are never used in situations where the State is involved except during electoral campaigns (Bitja'a Kody, 2001a) while English and French are used in all documents, written and oral communications. Persons employed by the State are forced to use either English or French in their communication with clients even if they know the client's national language and thus creating communicative problems. In most African countries, the formal economy (banking, commerce and industry, mining, manufacturing, and multinational corporations) is dominated by the imported official languages hence the need to translate official texts and documents in local languages.

Although there is wider effect of using imported foreign languages in Cameroon, it can be contended that knowledge and skills are imparted to Cameroonian citizens almost exclusively in foreign languages while the majority of the population are farmers and craftsmen, and perform their daily tasks in local languages. The question is: why not help them to improve their social, economic and political activities via the mother tongue? Why continue to disseminate information on different domains or establish official documents only in English or French when local languages can be used as exemplified in this study with the Kom language.

The dominance of French and English can be traced back to colonial language policies, which gave pride of place to their use in formal administration, legislation, communication, education, and the economy. Post-independence administrations have largely continued these policies and relegated local languages to informal and non-official domains. Coupled with the dominance of the foreign languages is the hegemony associated with them, which generally translates into their aggressive promotion, particularly by agencies devoted to the propagation of these languages. Aid in form of personnel, materials, training, and funding is easily available for them, while African languages have to make do with meagre resources Bamgbose (2011). As a result, it is critically important now for all national languages to be developed and also used formally in formal domains.

Another motivation is to create value through the translation process in the language for the speakers and those of other languages. Although there are some emerging intervention strategies, generally most Cameroonian languages are not accorded sufficient attention in other domains. Since the effect of low status affects practically all of them as well as growing population of speakers of these languages, the translation of these documents in Kom is useful in awareness creation and grassroots involvement of the speakers in their development.

As minority languages are becoming increasingly marginalized and endangered in this era of globalization in terms of schooling, legal systems, and social services, the revitalization of the Kom language through the translation process is an alternative process of broadening its scope of usage.

Following the President's decree, No: 2017/013 of the 23rd January 2017 creating the National commission for Bilingualism and multiculturalism (NCBM), linguists, researchers in Cameroonian languages can cease the opportunity to promote them through different intellectualization processes with a view to proposing their use both in local administration and education among others. That is why it is necessary for linguists to empower them so that they will not continue to be endangered and stigmatized by the speakers.

To meet the needs for curriculum and resource development, translation of already approved and available learning material for various subjects is one approach that has been used effectively in some locations. For example, the Kenya Institute of Education produced one book and had it translated into the various languages, surmounting the economic obstacle of producing different books in every language of the students and satisfying the need for learning and

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teaching resources in a centralized curriculum. Translation played a similarly large role in the development of Kiswahili literature (Mulokozi, 2004). Translation is the key element in the intellectualization of African languages. Translation will also help both translators and readers to recognize important differences, similarities and universals in human experience, cultural perspectives, knowledge and conceptual systems" (Szanton, 2003:5).

It is also based on Alexander's (2007) observation that scholars who have focused on the issue of intellectualization of local languages agreed that one of the main mechanisms for bringing about and driving intellectualization is the translation of major works of literacy and scientific creation that exist in more developed languages. The Kom language is already reasonably developed and that is probably why in 2006, it was selected by Walter and Trammell (2008) for the Kom Experimentation Project (KEP) from right through to 2012.

The translation of some selected domains of national life into the Kom language will greatly enhance its intellectualization process in the language so that it can be used in wider domains and consequently, the speakers will regain confidence and develop more justified pride in using it in wider domains.

II. Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

One of the main pillars of language rights is the UN's 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration (of human rights) without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, or social origin, property, birth or other status. It is clear that language rights are enshrined in the UN documents and scholars have researched and written about language rights (Blommaert 2003; Skutnabb- Kangas 1985; Skutnabb-Kangas & Cummins 1988; Skutnabb-Kangas 1990, 1995; UNEP 2001; Varennes 2001). A conceptual distinction ought to be drawn between the right to private and public use of language. According to Varennes (2001), private use of a language usually refers to the individual use of one's native language in family life, freedom of expression, non-discrimination or the right of persons belonging to a linguistic minority to use their language with other members of their group. Failure to guarantee such uses of language amounts to a breach of an individual's language rights. At another level, language rights can be explained by distinguishing language use in public. This includes the use of a language that an individual understands well both in court proceedings and court documents as universally recognized in international law as a basic "linguistic" right based on a fundamental human right (Varennes 2001:6). The language uses at this level are also understood to include uses by public authorities: such as public education using a minority language as a medium of instruction, public radio and television broadcasting in a minority language, use of minority language by public officials in the provision of services to the public (and therefore a major source of employment for individuals within the civil service) etc. (Varennes 2001:6).

III. Methodology

a) Data Collection Methods

This study is purely descriptive in nature in terms of data collection. The data was collected mainly through the translation of the selected bilingual documents from French and English into the Kom language and to ensure their accuracy, we translated them with an experienced native literacy teacher, and the translations were later crosschecked, corrected and approved by one of the Kom language committee members.

However, it is worth noting that in the course of translating the documents, Sager (1990) guidelines were respected by the researchers as well as the Kom Literacy instructors. The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) has been concerned with providing guidelines for the creation of terms, but a major problem that ISO has to contend with is the diversity of structures and term formation techniques in different languages (Sager, 1990:89). The ISO guidelines on a broad and general level are as follows:

- Terms should be created systematically with respect to their morphological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic characteristics;
- A term should conform to the morphology, spelling and punctuation conventions of the languages for which is intended;
- Once a term has gained general acceptance, it should not be changed without compelling reason and strong certainty that the new term will be accepted as a full substitute;
- If a new term succeeds only partially in replacing an existing term, the confusion may become worse as this would amount to deliberate synonym creation.

Terminology is also seen as an activity which enhances translation. In Kom like other African languages, the common processes used in creating or standardizing terminology include paraphrasing, borrowing, compounding, semantic transfer and derivation. Bamgbose (2015:16) maintains that in coining new terms, the following principles must be observed: Transfer of concept, priority of internal resources, brevity and consistency. Since most technical terms needed were brought in mainly from English and French, care was also taken in the translation according to accepted principles.

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Presentation of the selected Translated documents in Kom

The translated documents that constitute data for this work are presented below as follows: A Baptism card, Medical certificate, Bachelor's Degree Success Testimonial, a Civil Status Register center, Marriage Certificate, National Identity card, Birth Certificate, Registration card, and Tax payer's card.

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Date of Baptism/ achiifu i mu
N° du registre du baptême _____
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Sponsores _____

Sponsors /ntò'sɨ

Signé par_____

Signed by /Nchwæ wùl

PREMIERE COMMUNION
FIRST HOLY COMMUNION
Kóminyònɨyîàsɨ
Lieu _____
Place /alê'
Date _____
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Ministère_____
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Date _____
Date /achi
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N° du registre du baptême _____
N°. L.B /akôyn a ghelɨ mu
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Temoins _____
Witnesses/Nchwœnchwònsa'sɨ

DIOCESE DE
ARCHDIOCESE OF
Alê'achinɨ-a nɨBishob
CERTIFICAT DE BAPTEME

CATHOLIQUE

THE CATHOLIC FESTIMONIAL BOOK

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PAROISSE
PARISH
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OBSERVATIONS

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REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN / Ila'iKàmàlûyn
REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
PAIX – TRAVAIL – PATRIE / Mbôyni-Ifêl-Nse
PEACE – WORK – FATHERLAND

MINISTERE DE L'ECONOMIE ET DES FINANCES
MINISTRY OF ECONOMY AND FINANCE

Ndôàfyà' nɨgômnázɨ a yì n-kiawokûmɨkwo

MINISTERE DE LA SANTE PUBLIQUE
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH

NdôÀfyà' nɨGômnæzɨ a yì n-kiawokûmɨwuyn two

N°: Akôyn:

E ŋwà'lɨNdôàfvɨ Ilêm i

In application of the laws and regulations in force,
Sɨ ni kɨ ta tɨsa'tnɨndyêyn

Je soussigné _____

I the undersigned
Ma ta màsàyn

Docteur en médicine en service à _____

Medical officer working in / ɨDôktàɨgha'nɨ a ifèl a

Certifie

Certify / bɨmimeyn na

Il résulte de cette visite que l'intéressé (e)

As a result of this examination the person concerned / Bómikininâyèniwulateynnɨnghɨ

En foi de quoi le présent certificat de visite médicale a été délivré pour servir et valoir ce que droit.

In witness whereof this medical examination certificate has been issued to serve where and when necessary / ŋwà'lɨyèynnɨnghɨsɨtimisɨ a nchwònsa' nômɨ wo ta ghɨn-kɨŋ

A Yàmàndè , le _____ 2012

At theBèŋnkamsɨbónɨbèŋsɨnjvàsɨbò

A achi

Le Praticien

(Doctor) Dôktà :

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN / Ila'i Kaèmaèluêyn
Paix-Travail-Patrie / Mboêyníè-Ifeêl-NseBæ

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Peace-Work-Fatherland

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ATTESTATION DE REUSSITE / ŋwà'ɨ̀imèsi
AU DIPLOME DE LICENCE
BACHELOR'S DEGREE SUCCESS TESTIMONIAL / Dɨgɨlî̀ɨyî̀àsí

N° /Akôyn**_____ UY/FALSH/VD/PAC/CSDPP**

Le Doyen de la Faculté des Arts, Lettres et Sciences Humaines de l'Université de Yaoundé I atteste que :
The Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences of the University of Yaounde I certifies that
NtisɨFakoltiŋwà'lisiníèSoshalSayànsYùnivesitiYàmàndè ɨ yî̀àsí ɨ bimîna
M./Mlle Matricule:
Mr./Miss / Bobe/Ngóyn Registration Number / akôyn a inyà' izɨyn
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De 180 crédits pour le cycle de LICENCE
of 180 credits.
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Spécialité : Moyenne Général Pondérée (MGP)
Specialisation /Awo a ni nɨ-a *General Point Average* /mâksîsɨ a wùchɨyntɨkèli
En foi de quoi la présente attestation lui est établie et délivrée pour servir et valoir ce que de droit
In witness whereof the present testimonial is given with the privileges theretopertaning. / ŋwà'lɨyèynɨnghɨsɨtimisí a nchwónsa' nômɨ wo ta ghɨ n-kɨŋ

Système de notation / Grading / Ifê'		
MGP/4	Cote	Mention /Drade / Ifê'
[2-2.3[	C	Passable /Pass /Chwomeyn
[2.3-	C+	Assez-Bien /Fair / Chwomeynajû ŋ
2.7-3[	B-	Assez-Bien /Fair / Chwomeynajû ŋ
[3-3.3[	B	Bien /Good /Faytɨmeynchwòajûŋ
3.3-	B+	Bien /Good /Faytɨmeynchwòajûŋ
[3.7-4[	A-	Très-Bien /Very Good /Faytɨmeynchwò nô ajûŋ
4	A	Excellent / Chwomeynàmǽnkàyn

Yaoundé, le
Yaounde, the /Yaèmaèndeè, achi

Le doyen
The Dean /NtîsɨFakoltì

N.B. Il n'est délivré qu'une seule attestation de réussite, le titulaire pourra en faire établir autant de copies certifiées conformes qu'il voudra. Le diplômelui sera délivréultérieurement.

Only one success testimonial is issued; it is in the interest of the owner to make as many certified true copies as he/she mlay desire. The Certificate will be issued later/ Ghɨ n-fukɨŋwà'lɨyèynìmó'; yi tifaŋkisɨwùlvzɨ a wù n-kelɨnawùfaytisɨlisɨfùisa'isayn.

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REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix – Travail – Patrie
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Peace – Work – Fatherland/ Mbôynɨ-Ifêl-NsêBǎè

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CENTRE D'ETAT CIVIL
CIVIL STATUS REGISTRATION CENTER
alê' a ŋwà'li afavtɨniɨ-a

De – of -a----------
Acte de naissance n°/akôyn ----------
BirthCertificate / ŋwà'lɨibzɨ-i
Nom de l'enfant ----------
Name of the child / Ibzɨyniwayn ……
Le-on the – achi ……
Est né à ……
Was born at/ghibzɨtîbzɨ-i a
Nom de l'enfant ----------
Name of the child / Izɨyniwayn ……
De sexe – sex – ɨwayngha----------
De– of – Izíynibòwàyn----------
Né à – Born at – ghɨbzɨ-i a ----------
Domicilié à ----------
Resident at / alê' a chinɨ-a

Profession – Occupation – atuifèl----------

Dressé le ----------
Drawn up on the / ghífàytɨ a

Sur la declaration de ----------
In accordance with the declaration of / kɨibènɨghelighèyntêyn

---
Lesquels ont certifié la sincérité de la présente declaration
Who attested to the truth this declaration / ɨàŋenaghi a ghɨbènanômɨ ghà a ŋwà'linâghàynninghɨkɨsamo'

Par nous ----------
By us / a nighès ----------
Le déclarant, Signature de l'officier de l'Etat Civil
The declarent, Signature of registrar
Wulɨnɨɨ nchwæwùlvzɨ a wù n-lemŋwa'lɨsɨ

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
PAIX – TRAVAIL – PATRIE

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON – Ila'iKàmàlûyn
PEACE – WORK – FATHERLAND - Mbôynɨ-Ifêl-NsêBæ

……

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CARTE D'ÉLECTEUR ŋwà'lɨvɨt

Registration card – ŋwà'lɨìzɨyn i nya'nɨ-i

……

Ministère de l'Administration territorial et de la décentralisation

Ministry of territorial Administration and decentralization

Ndôàfyà'ɨtísɨnɨnɨìgwôsɨ-iadya'i a gômnæ

N° /akôyn……

Bureau de vote /ndozɨ a ghɨ n-ma'ɨfɨñwà'lɨateyn

Pulling station/Alê' kì a ghɨ n-vîtateyn……

Ressort ……

Area of jurisdiction /alê'aisa' …… ……..

Nom ……

Surname /lzɨynila' ……

Prénoms ……

First name /Izɨyn I yiasɨ-i……. ……

Nom du père ……

Father'sname /lzɨyn i Bæ……

Nom de la mere ……

Mother's name /izɨyninì …… ……..

Date de naissance ……

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Date of birth /achiibzɨ-i…….

Lieu de naissance ……

Place of birth /alê' ibzɨ i

…….

Profession ……

Occupation /atuifèl

CNI N° ……

NIC /akôyn a nchwæŋwà' lɨàlɨŋsɨ

Le ……

The /achi

…….

Signature de l'électeur

Elector's signature
Nchwæwùlvzɨ a wù

Signature de l'autorité

Authority Signature
Nchwæwùlàdyà'

……

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REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
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Peace – Work – Fatherland/ Mbôyni-Ifêl-NsêBæ

ACTE DE MARIAGE

Mariage certificate / ŋwà'liichiyntɨ N° / akôyn ----------

Mariage de ----------
Marriage of / ichɨyntɨi
Et – and of – nɨ ----------
Le – on the – achi ----------
Devant nous ont comparé publiquement
Before us, appeared publicly / asɨnɨghès a ndayn
M. Boèbe / nàwàyn ----------
Âgé de ---------- ans, né le ----------
Aged / ɨlwema years, born on the / bèŋsɨ, achiibzɨ-i
A – at – a ----------
Profession – occupation – atuifèl ----------
Domicilié à ----------
Resident at / alê' a chinɨ-a
Fils de ---------- et de ---------- d'une part
Son of / ɨwâyn and of/ nɨon the one part/ abàs a li a
Et **Mlle** – miss – ngòyn ----------
Âgé de ---------- ans, né le ----------
Aged /ɨlwema years, born on the / bèŋsɨ, achiibzɨ-i
Profession – occupation – atuifèl ----------
Domicilié à ----------
Resident at / alê' a chinɨ-a
Fille de ---------- et de ---------- d'une part
Daughterof / ɨwâyn and of/ nɨon the other hand/ abàs a li a
Les futurs époux déclarent que le contrat a été établi comme suit :
The bride and the bridegroom state that the marriage settlement has been established as follows: /
Lûmwinɨwîlum be meynnadzɨichɨyntɨnɨàŋenana
ghɨ a dzɨghàyntèyn:

Régime matrimonial – Type of antenuptialsettlement – inkiichɨyntɨ

Il n'a été constaté aucune opposition
No objections to marriage have been recorded
Ituynsɨinɨnghɨwi a ichɨyntɨnâghàyn
M. / wulɨlûmnɨ ---------- et Mlle / ñgòyn ----------
And Miss
On déclare l'un après l'autre vouloir se prendre pour époux et nous avons prononcé au Nom de la loi qu'ils sont unis par le mariage.
Both declared they wish to be husband and wife in accordance with the law and we

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pronounce that they are united by the marriage. / aèñenabímimeynsínaèghí Lumnɨwi ta isa'inɨndyêyn, ghèsɨbênaàŋenagvimeynchɨyntɨsɨafo à mò'.
En presence de – In presence of – antêynɨnɨghelighèybtêyn:
M. ---------- Chef de famille de l'époux ou son représentant
Bóbe/nàwàyn Head of the family of the wife or his representative
Atuisasindonɨwùlɨwikèsawuluzɨ a wù n-lîalê' a ŋweyn.
Qui consentent au mariage, et de
who agree to the marriage, and of: /a ghɨbɨmiichɨyntɨ i:
M. ---------- témoin de l'époux et de :
Bòbe/nàwàyn Witness of the husband, and of: / nchwònsa' ɨwùlɨlûmnɨɨ
M. ---------- témoin de l'épouse.
Bòbe/nàwàyn Witness of the wife / nchwònsa' ɨwùlɨwi:
Le présent acte a été dressé par Nous, ----------
The present certificate has been drawn by Us,
ŋwà'lɨyèynnɨnghɨ ma à nyà'ghès:

Signature des époux A/a----------le / achi ----------
Bride and bridegroom's signature Signature des témoins
nchwæLûmwinɨnɨyîwîlumWitnesses signature : /Nchwænchwònsa'

Signature de l'Officier d'Etat Civil :
Signature of registrar:
nchwæwùlvzɨ a wù n-lemŋwà'lɨsɨ

RÉPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON /Ila'iKàmàlûyn

CARTE NATIONALE D'IDENTITE /NATIONAL IDENTITY CARD /ŋwà'lɨàlièñsí

Autorité /Autority

N°
Date de délivrance **Date d'expiration**
Date of issue Date of expiration
Achi kì a ghɨfàytɨateynachikì a kɨn-làmæateym

IDCAM ----------« ----------« « « « « « « « « « « « « « «
NOM
SURNAME / izɨynila'

Prénoms
Given Names /Azɨyn a li a

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Né(e) le
Born on /Achi ibzɨ-i
A
At /A

Père
Father /Bæ

Mere
Mother /Ni
Profession
Occupation /atuifèl

Adresse /Alê' a chinɨ-a
Address

Tail
Height /idyêf
Sexe /wayngha?
Sex

S.P
S.M /Alas

Signature du Titulaire / Signature of Bearer
Nchwǽwùlvzɨ a wù
N-kelɨŋwà'lɨàlɨŋsɨnâyèyn

RÉPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix– Travail – Patrie

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON /Ila'iKàmàlûyn
Peace – Work – Fatherland /Mbôynɨ-Ifêl-NsêBæ

CARTE DE
CONTRIBUABLE
TAXPAYER'S CARD /ŋwà'lɨtâks

N° CONTRIBUABLE ----------
Taxpayer's N° / akôyn a wùlvzɨ a wùmâ'ítâks

CENTRE DES IMPOTS
Tax center /ndôtaks /alê'kɨ a ghɨ n-lâ'ítaksateyn

NOM/RAISON SOCIALE ----------
Surname /Business name/ izɨynindômbêy'lɨ

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PRENOM
First name /Acronym /lzɨyniyiasɨi/nchwæ

SEXE : ---------- nationalité :
Sex / wayngha? Nationality /ila'

DATE (1) /Achi ---------- A/at/a ----------
N° CNI ou RC: ----------
Id N° /Business Register /akôyn a ŋwà'lɨàlɨŋsɨkèsaŋwà'lɨzɨ a ghɨ n-wesɨawo a mbêy'lɨateyn
REGIME FISCAL ----------
Taxe schedules /Dzɨzɨ a ghɨ n-lâ' taksateyn

ACTIVITÉ PRINCIPALE:
Main activity /Iwo itoi

ADRESSE ----------
Address / Ghíkà'aghɨkelitivâ a?

(1) Date de naissance personnes physiques /achiibzɨ-inɨwùlvzɨ a wù n-to kítêynnteŋ

Date constitution personne morale /achi a wulàtɨ-ati

As presented above, the translated documents clearly demonstrate that the Kom language like others can be used effectively in wider domains. If minority languages are generally stigmatized and even marginalized, it is because they are considered underdeveloped in official and scientific fields and they can only be useful and visible in different contexts through active use.

IV. Some Challenges and Perspectives

New words and expressions need to be urgently created in very large numbers in order to reinforce the existing literacy materials in the language and also facilitate the work of literacy instructors, students, and adult learners in the language so that people can use them effectively within the community wherever the need arises in different contexts.

Social media is one of the huge potentials that can also be used in the promotion of the Kom language; and since it is not used in this platform, more efforts need to be made to empower the language so that it can penetrate the domain of ICTs. The visibility of this language can also be enhanced through the institutionalization of viable codification measures and by improving the socioeconomic well-being of the speakers.

The translation of some of the documents in the Kom language clearly shows the possibility of developing vocabulary in all domains of life. In fact, as Bamgbose (2015:9) maintains, works carried out which require finding terminology in different domains have buttressed the position that terminology can always be found when the need to do so arises. Examples of such works, carried out by either interested individuals or committees engaged in vocabulary creation, which have exploded the myth of dearth of vocabulary to him include translations of two of Shakespeare's plays by the late President of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, who translated *Julius Caesar* and the *Merchant of Venice* into Kiswahili. This feat is matched in the sciences by a remarkable translation of Albert Einstein's Relativity Theory into Bambara by Mamadou Doucoure and the compilation by J.A. Odetayo of a *Dictionary of Engineering Physics* in Yoruba.

The examples of works cited that have been carried out in Kiswahili and Yoruba is enough justification to undertake similar projects in Kom and other Cameroonian languages.

Since globalization seems to have led to the strengthening of the former colonial languages to the detriment of the Cameroonian languages like Kom, it is crucial to give value to the language by raising it to a LOL for the speakers to be more involved in its development.

Even though most of the speakers in the Kom language may not be sufficiently literate enough to read the translation of the documents or other materials in their language, many will be motivated to attend literacy classes if they are aware of the existence of such materials among others in the Kom language, and the transformational potential to their socio economic well-being.

In addition to translating only materials or information from French or English to the local languages, Szanton (2003:5) is of the opinion that "the translation of African texts into other languages including other African languages will be important to

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establish Africa's contribution to the world's literature. Translation will also help both translators and readers to recognize important differences, similarities and universals in human experience, cultural perspectives, knowledge and conceptual systems", original knowledge can also be translated from the indigenous languages like Kom into foreign languages in the domain of medicine particularly with regards to traditional medicine, indigenous knowledge collections of oral literature, creative literature etc.

Translating all relevant up-to-date information in various fields available in French and English languages into Kom particularly health related and socio economic documents for the improvement of the living standards of the indigenes.

There is also need for specialists in some technical domains to produce materials in all fields of knowledge in the community.

Although the translated documents presented above provide one of the options proposed for the revitalization of the Kom language, other linguists and researchers could begin such a process by translating materials that capitalize on local sources, traditional and verbal events that are deeply rooted in the culture of the speakers concerned or domain specific events (for terms relating to specific domains), if other researchers wish to carry out more comprehensive research issues that are related to this paper. Such materials that are based on the interest of a particular target audience would be more useful because the speakers would already be familiar with them.

The translation of such documents among others can result in the creation of a local community language industry and services for translators and interpreters in the different government administrative offices in the community to assist most of the illiterates who may be in need of some services for their children or for themselves. Since information is power, the provision of information to people who would otherwise not have been able to access it in their local language is one of the greatest benefits of translating documents or texts and using them to render services and for the empowerment of the population. This proposal is corroborated by Batibo (2005: 46) who notes that "all resources whether physical or human are only valuable if society recognizes their value, manages them properly and puts them to the right use". If properly planned for, the language sector can potentially be transformed into viable language industries capable of generating a lot of employment. In support of this view, Alexander observes that, if handled properly, languages, like all other resources, have a job-creating potential. In some countries, notably Australia, Canada, Belgium, Sweden, a language industry has been set up which caters for domestic as well as international linguistic needs. In this vein, hundreds and even thousands of translators and interpreters, terminologists, lexicographers, other language practitioners and professionals have to be trained and employed in order to make the multilingualism work smoothly (Alexander 2003: 34).

V. Conclusion

This paper looked at the revitalization of Cameroonian languages through the translation of some official documents in Kom. It examined the causes of low status and provided some arguments for the translation of selected official documents as a strategy for the enhancement and vitality of African languages that generally have low status. The creation of terminology from the translated documents followed the ISO and Bamgbose's principles, and Kom like other African languages, is capable of expressing advanced knowledge in all formal administrative domains. The translation of the language was carried out as a vicious circle technique since it cannot be used in formal domains if it is not translated, and the language will not be revitalized unless there is need to use it in a wider range of domains. The bilingual documents that were translated into the Kom language act as an effective strategy in language revitalization because they have the potential not only in raising and enhancing the status of the language, but also in shaping entrenched attitudes so crucial to language revitalization. Given that different proposals to widen the domains of Cameroonian language so as to extend their use to some of the domains currently dominated by French and English have often failed owing to their oral and limited use in the respective communities, the revitalization of the Kom language through the translation of selected documents as presented in this paper is an irreversible giant step towards its penetration into official domains.

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