

## Language and Peace on WhatsApp and Facebook Messages on the Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon

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### Abstract

*This study set out to explore the promotion of peace by some social media messages related to the ongoing crisis in Southern Cameroons. Focus is on the lexical choice and style that show ways out of the warped communication out of language crisis, and the possible impacts of the messages on the readers' minds of Cameroonians and other world citizens. The theory of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by Fairclough (1989, 1992, 1995a, 1995b) guided the analysis of the data (150 messages) collected from 75 participants (45 males and 30 females) both from WhatsApp (100) and Facebook (50) posted by Cameroonians from the English-speaking part. The researcher and the field assistants used the Android phone to collect these data. Results reveal that there is an intensive war of words and words of war almost every line of the e-messages from either of the platforms. The numerous messages of peace are overshadowed and outnumbered by verbal bullying and the tense mood in the discourses. Some messages advocate national unity and push readers to think of peaceful co-existence. Therefore, readers are served with messages that feed them with bitterness about the current affairs in the country and accept war for peace to reign; in other words, the messages of peace are likely to recruit less militants than the words call for uprising.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Social media are fast vehicles to convey an avalanche of texts and opinions on any subject. They have niched all the aspects of human life such as entertainment, information, advertisement, scamming, dating, lobbying, gambling and fighting (Kapoor et al., 2018; Busuyi et al., 2020). Because of its fast nature of spreading messages (Baruah, 2012; Bosley et al., 2013; Denis, Klein & Gueguen, 2014, Zhang et al., 2014) at a cheaper cost; youngsters (Chukwuere & Chukwuere, 2017; Winstone et al, 2021), adults and elders (Yavich, Davidovitch & Zeev, 2019) glue to the screens and stick to what they see and reply, react, discuss or post about what they stand for, what they like or dislike and what they experience. The terms of violence online sparked armed battles (Jibon & Minar, 1997; Mengü & Mengü, 2015; Polak & Trottier, 2020; Manyerere, 2021;

Proctor, 2021) and the report of the battles by social media users gave rise to abundant information which aims at shaping the views of the larger audience on the crisis; pro-separatism users lobby the social media users with their opinions as they preach the merits of the ‘struggle’ against the singers for peace who drum the necessity of dialogue as wanted by the government. The rush to give details about the incidents during the conflict from the two sides has created two conflicting groups of opinions. Thus, the words on social media give the temperature from the battlefields. It should be maintained that online violence is limited to Internet-based interactions, while others are directly related to face-to-face acts of violence (Patton et al., 2014). Protestors/activists incite people to conflict through the use of hate speech, cyberbullying (Dooley, Pyzalski & Cross, 2009; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010) and an excessive violence, campaigns of abuse towards certain people and institutions as well as black propaganda. Far from only being a field of battles, social media is also a peacebuilding environment (Kahl & Puig Larrauri, 2013; Mac Ginty, 2017; Baytiyeh, 2019; Denskus, 2019; Tawanda & Mbwirire, 2020; Hillena, 2021) that promote peaceful co-existence through reconciliation. In other words, social media impacts efforts to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts.

As a reminder, the genesis of the problem that led to the armed conflicts goes back to the world political climate in 1916 when Germany was defeated in World War I by Britain and France's joint forces; they divided Cameroon into two, thus leaving two different political heritages. The sharing was confirmed in 1922 by the League of Nations Agreement. France governed its own portion of Cameroon as an autonomous part of its colony, while the British administrated Northern and Southern regions as part of its Nigerian colony (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974; Osuntokun, 1975, 1978; Ngoh, 1987). The history of these two regions took twists and turns. In the course of time the international scenes and the management of the home affairs by the ruling cast made the brothers to be like ‘co-wives’. This is the result of the degradation of the relationships between the two areas, which led to the degradation of the language; in its turn, the degradation of language brought to the bloody actions. As such, this study examines the linguistic expressions that portray and encourage peace on WhatsApp and Facebook messages about the Anglophone crisis by Anglophone Cameroonians. It also looks at the impact of the expressions on the interactants' ideologies.

### **1.2.Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)**

CDA has been widely used in various genres of linguistics to analyse some of the critical language phenomena which lead to the emergence of a certain ideology, power relation and domination within a domain, and inequality among races, genders, and social classes. It is perceived that the most crucial aspect where power and domination are exercised is in public through the media. The media is an explicit domain, and the public is exposed to various ideologies which influence

their opinions. It is perceived that discourse shapes the way a text is produced (Fairclough 1992) and vice-versa.

CDA is the basis of this study. It uses Fairclough's triple-dimensional approaches to seek out social relations and practices through the use of language. Fairclough's model is based on three levels, as discussed below:

- **Discourse as Text:**

In this first level, the text is examined under ten-question criteria. The first four questions deal with grammatical, sentence-level text analysis, vocabulary, and cohesion.

- **Discourse as Discursive practice:**

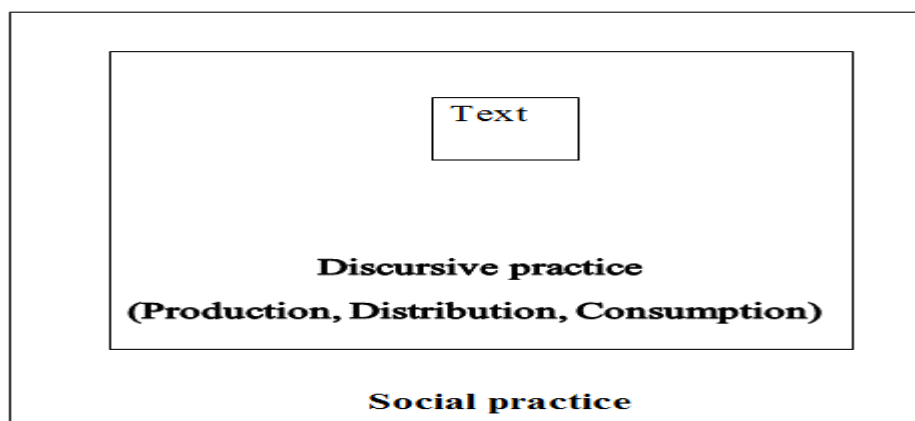
This analysis level involves three text functions: the construction of the text, distribution, and usage of text. Here text highlights the relationship between participants.

- **Discourse as Social practice:**

The third and last level takes discourse as an activity performed in a society or social context (Dremel & Matić, 2014, p. 155). Fairclough's CDA model plays a significant role in discourse by relating text directly to society regarding interactions. Fairclough (2001), as cited in Ghani and Hussain (2021), states that text and meaning productions are the outcome of production and interpretation activities; they involve social contexts that affect the conditions in which texts are produced and interpreted. These three factors are all necessary to dissect the layers of the texts concerning hidden motives, power relations, and social inequalities.

Fairclough's approach to CDA is useful because it provides multiple points of analytic entry (Hussain, Gill & Afzal, 2020). It does not matter which kind of analysis one begins with as long as they are all included and are shown to be mutually explanatory at the end. In this interconnection, the researcher finds the interesting patterns and disjunctions that need to be described, interpreted and explained. The simultaneity of this method of CDA has been with a model that embeds the three different kinds of analysis, one inside the other.

**Figure 1:** Fairclough's triple-dimensional model of discourse



*Source: Adapted from Fairclough (1989)*

Linguistic analysis is descriptive, whereas intertextual analysis is more interpretative (Fairclough, 1995). He defines intertextuality as the property texts of being full of snatches of other texts, which may be explicitly demarcated or merged in, and which the text may assimilate, contradict, ironically echo, and so forth. According to Fowler and Hodge (1991) and Fairclough (1995), the ideational function refers to the speakers' knowledge of the world and its phenomena, whereas the interpersonal function personifies the insertion of speakers' attitudes and evaluations about the phenomena in question, and establishing a relationship between speakers and listeners (Bukhari & Xiaoyang, 2013, p.9). Instrumental to these two functions is the textual function. It is through the textual function of language that speakers are able to produce texts that listeners understand. It is an enabling function connecting discourse to the co-text and context in which it occurs. The messages collected from WhatsApp and Facebook are described, interpreted and explained following Fairclough's framework.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Conceptual Reviews

The socio-political upheaval in Cameroon led a number of researchers to look, listen and speak; this provided abundant literature on the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon from different dimensions. It has been studied from the educational perspective (Akame, Crockett & Awutarih, 2021), geopolitical and rhetorical (Ekah, 2019; Ascone & Renaut, 2019), and linguistic perspectives (Tabe & Fieze, 2018; Tchouape, 2019). These scholars used different approaches and obtained both convergent findings (Tabe & Fieze, 2018; Tchouape, 2019) and divergent (Ekah, 2019; Ascone & Renaut, 2019). These studies revealed that violence and disruption may have sought educational alternatives through informal learning methods, as well as relocating to neighbouring towns in Northwest and Southwest of the country or other relatively sub-urban areas of the Anglophone regions.

Moreover, the strategic location of Southern Cameroons, the presence of natural resources (Flint, 2006; Kurecic, 2015), demographic considerations and other geopolitical parameters are proving to be responsible for the heightening of the Anglophone crisis (Nfi, 2014; Ekah, 2019). Violence attributed to online hate speech has increased worldwide (Kweitsu & Besong, 2019; Sombaye). It has been linked to a global increase of violence, verbal bullying and threats toward minorities, including mass shootings, lynching and ethnic cleansing (Kweitsu & Besong, 2019; Sawalda, 2020; Ezeibe, 2021). Salome (2018) and Barrach-Yousefi (2018) found that social media is fertile for hate speech. It contributed to the escalation of protests and conflicts worldwide, and the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon is left out. The success of online activism greatly relies on offline action, and the use of small media greatly complements social media use as platforms for alternative discourse (Feltwell et al., 2017; Salome, 2018; Nazarudwas0). It was

revealed that hate speech in Cameroon, as in other contexts Hate speech over the social media has greatly influenced the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon (Ngange & Mokondo, 2019; Nganji & Cockburn, 2019, Ngange et al., 2020). It was a powerful tool with which Cameroonian diaspora and separatist groups threatened national cohesion and development (Sombaye, 2018; Okpara & Chukwu, 2019). In addition, online hate speech looked from pragmatic perspective, claimed that most of the hate language posted and tweeted by the Cameroonian diaspora activists centered on the incitement of violence conflict, defamation, ethnic criticism and large challenge on the Cameroon government (Sombaye, 2018; Edimo, 2021; Orock, 2021). It is one of the causes of offline conflict in Cameroon today (Sawalda, 2020).

## **2.2. Empirical Review**

Many studies have been carried out on the ongoing Anglophone crisis in Cameroon. Some linguists have studied the language used to report and present the sociopolitical crisis in Cameroon Anglophones regions (Tabe & Fieze, 2018; Fieze, 2019; Tchouape, 2019) while others (Agborsangaya, 2018; Nganji & Cockburn, 2019; Ngange & Mokondo, 2019; Nounkeu, 2020) studied the role of media use during the Anglophone crisis.

Tchouape (2019) investigated the way language is used to portray the crisis in newspapers to analyse metaphors; while Tabe and Fieze (2018) analysed news headlines in newspapers. Tchouape used metaphor identification procedure (MIP) of 75 articles dealing with the Anglophone crisis while Tabe and Fieze utilised Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of 130 headlines from 16 private newspapers, and 01 public newspaper (Cameroon Tribune). Their study suggests that the crisis is reverberated in the media landscape through a war of opinions respectively. Their findings are similar in the sense that metaphors were used to build in Cameroonian's minds the image of a destructive and disastrous crisis sponsored mostly by the Cameroonian diaspora (Tchouape, 2019). These metaphors were used to discredit the leadership of the elite and tarnish the images of some individual political figures (Tchouape, 2019). Their findings diverge somehow for, apart from metaphors, Tabe and Fieze's results showed much more linguistic expressions used in newspaper headlines to portray the crisis. It is therefore revealed from the findings that, the headlines of these newspapers use language which creates terror, incites violence towards the government which is accused of mishandling not only the armed conflict, but also the mismanagement of the country (Tabe & Fieze, 2018).

On the other hand, Cameroon Tribune uses soft speech and peaceful language to downplay not only the outrage in the discourse, but also to calm down the public opinion and promote dialogue. Their data indicates that the government is mouthpiece is the only newspaper with the highest use of words suggestive of dialogue (Tabe & Fieze, 2018). This interaction between physical and verbal tension, they think, worsens the unrest. The researchers suggest that fixing the language

used by the competing and influential claims in the narratives on the situation can take some miles forward to its solution. Investigating on CDA of 184 private and government newspapers articles on the Anglophone crisis and using CDA theory, Fieze (2019) highlighted that the presentation of the Anglophone crisis was a war of words with each side accusing the other for perpetrating violence and tension.

Agborsangaya (2018) carried out research on the role of social media and small media during the Anglophone crisis. He looked at their positive and negative roles in protests by the diasporas. They served as a link between Anglophones at home and abroad. The findings revealed that (90%) of Anglophone Cameroonians feel strongly that the use of social media contributed to fuel the crisis out of proportion. In addition, the use of social media led to the spread of propaganda and rumour, which contributed in weakening the legitimacy of the Anglophone crisis (Agborsangaya, 2018). It could be deduced that online activism without field action is not enough for a winning 'struggle'. The researcher argued that even though social media are very powerful tools for information sharing, their shortcomings in protest cannot be underrated as the success of online (Agborsangaya, 2018).

Nganji and Cockburn (2019) presented how twitter is being used in the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon by several groups, including the government, Anglophone activists, media organisations and every day citizens to spread opinions on the war. The researchers used the critical theoretical perspective to examine tweets from September 2016 to December 2018. The findings of the study showed that social media are being used by the government, Anglophone activists and non-affiliated people to sway public opinions on the crisis and solicit the attention of local diaspora and the international community.

Ngange and Mokondo (2019) examined the content information (graphics, audios, videos, texts) posted on WhatsApp and Facebook while Nounkeu (2020) assessed the information shared on Facebook about the Anglophone crisis by individuals who present themselves as citizen journalists. The former used a qualitative approach to analyse data of falsehood propagation during the Anglophone crisis; he utilised a mixed multi-method approach, the researcher analysed messages and information given in the social media Facebook. Their findings were contradictory in the sense that Ngange and Mokondo's results indicated that social media activists used computer software to distort pictures that depict the messages they wanted to pass across. The activists also spread rumours using texts, audio clips and distorted videos (Ngange & Mokondo, 2019; Nounkeu, 2020). It could be said that social media have been awash with falsehood in the Cameroon Anglophone crisis. On the other hand, Nounkeu's study revealed that a large number of Facebook news stories lack important elements of verifiability and reliability. In fact, the affordability of social media and especially Facebook facilitates the spread of fake news or at



least the circulation of unverified information (Nounkeu, 2020). The claims they made is that the pieces of information were distorted to cast discredit on the army and the leadership of Yaounde.

Ngouo (2020) analysed contradictory discourse and conversations on Facebook on the future of the English-speaking regions. Using Critical Discourse Analysis, he critically analysed the linguistic as well as the social, political and psychological features in conversations and discourses made by Anglophone activists on Facebook regarding the Anglophone crisis. The study aimed at identifying how Cameroon nationalism is challenged or reproduced in people's discussion about the status of Anglophone regions of Cameroon on Facebook (Ngouo, 2010). The findings revealed that there are two opposing views on Facebook: the separatists' and the prounionists' positions. On one hand, the separatist activists through their Facebook posts discourse reject the pan-Cameroonian identity. On the other hand, the pro-unity Anglophone activists who defend national unity and reject secessionist discourse (Ngouo, 2020).

It could be concluded from the above review that almost all the works carried out on the Anglophones crisis in off and online media portray terror, violence, derogative expressions, verbal bullying, accusation and threats just to mention but these (Willis, McAulay, Ndeunyema & Angove 2019). None of the reviewed works has, however, evoked the language of peace which is the concern of this research.

### **3. METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION**

The data used for this study collection of some WhatsApp and Facebook e-messages from Anglophone Cameroonians. The messages were collected with the help of field assistants and the personal appeals from Cameroonians from all walks of life from 2018 to 2022. These messages were collected on WhatsApp group chats and Facebook made up of 45 male and 30 female informants. Some participants were in different WhatsApp groups while those from Facebook are from individual account. The researcher and the field assistants got the consent of the users of the targeted platforms for the purpose. Most of the interactants sampled in this study are either university students or workers. The researcher used purposive sampling technique so as to get the data from those who gave their consent for the use of their chats in the research.

**Table 1: Corpus composition**

<b>Platforms</b>	<b>participants</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>Number of e-messages</b>
<b>WhatsApp</b>	50	40	20	22	24	44	<b>150</b>
<b>Facebook</b>	25	17	12	10	13	23	<b>75</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>225</b>

Statistics from table 1 shows that a total number of 150 WhatsApp and Facebook messages were obtained from 75 informants made up of males and females in the selected platforms. The

majority of the participants are males. Each of them provided three e-messages. The extracts used as examples are presented the way they appeared on the chats or e-messages. Hence, some of the chats are presented with their errors. Besides, the informants' messages were coded for ethical reasons. Qualitative analysis was applied to the data collected. This enables, the presentation, the description and interpretation in statistical tables. The WhatsApp and Facebook messages provided the researcher with actual and complex patterns of e-messages texts for analysis of language that portrays peace.

Two questions guided the analysis of the data collected from the targeted platforms:

- 1- What are the linguistics features of the conversations of Anglophone Cameroonians on WhatsApp and Facebook?
- 2- How do they impact the promotion of peace?

#### 4. DATA ANALYSIS

It should be reminded that this study sought out to investigate on the kind of linguistic expressions used by Anglophone Cameroonians on WhatsApp and Facebook messages to encourage peace. The data analysis revealed the use of expressions indicating peace related to the Anglophone crisis on some WhatsApp and Facebook messages. It also indicated language that portrayed tension. It is worth mentioning that most of the social media interactants reacted harshly to the ongoing crisis by inciting to violence, threatening and terrorising the government as unveiled in some works (Tabe & Fieze, 2018; Fieze, 2019; Tchouape, 2019). Despite these kinds of reactions, some net speakers tried to dab the population by using expressions that encourage people to go in for peaceful coexistence and promote the social cohesion (Achu, 2020).

#### 5. ANGLOPHONE CRISIS AND PEACE RHETORIC

Below are some extracts that illustrate peaceful expressions in the participants' threads of conversations:

- (1) *On the way to Buea. I am ready to sacrifice myself also, but Let us practice to make peace among ourselves. (15-2020-WHAP-Male)*
- (2) *... activities or movements of our people within the cities or local government areas will have to go on as usual e.g during a no circulation period, life within Buea, Kumba, Bamenda etc must go on as usual ... (40-2020-WHAP-Female).*
- (3) *...complete shutdown of Ambazonia with no movements of persons, vehicles, businesses, shutdown within and without the cities. Then this has to be done 3 days before the banned elections to avoid any casualties on our people or confrontations between ourself, defence forces and occupied forces that may get our people harmed. (27-2020- WHAP-Male)*

From the first and second samples, the informants call the people with whom they are together on the same platforms for a return to peace through the use of expressions such as “*Let us practice to make peace among ourselves*” and “*... activities or movements of our people within*



*the cities or local government areas will have to go on as usual*". In example 3, the participant implicitly calls for peace, for the expressions and "*shutdown within and outside of the cities*" are some drawbacks of war.

*(4) I know someone shall be quick to say some Fons in the NW have also been subjected to humiliating and degrading treatment. But that is a false equivalency. The Fon of Nso was Kidnapped and tortured by sons of Nso. [...]. There is no evidence that thugs from the SW are the ones doing these things to the traditional rulers of the NW. I do not condone violence or hate speech wholesomely directed towards a group of people. But I understand the frustration and I feel the pain of the people of Fako Division as every day they watch, almost helplessly, their traditional rulers being humiliated and killed and their sacred institutions desecrated. (11- 2021- WHAP-Male).*

*(5) Never take delight in causing pain or sponsoring the tears of another.\**

*Also, never use anything to frustrate others. Hnnnnmm (45-2022-WHAP-Male).*

*(6) It is not about war after all there is nothing wrong for one to decide he is no longer comfortable with the union and therefore want to opt out. LETS GIVE PEACE A CHANCE AND SEPARATE HONORABLY. This is worth sharing over and over again...British named them Burma. They rejected it, restructured & renamed themselves Myanmar (63-2021-WHAP-Female).*

In the fourth sample, the informant is campaigning against violence and hate speech that some participants directed against some traditional rulers. To him, violence or hate speech usher into chaos. Thus, he strongly stands against such practices. The participant in the fifth sample holds the same discourse with the user quoted in example (4) in the sense that he is criticising the sponsors of the conflicts. In addition, the sixth sample begs for stability.

*(7).....Similarly, when the Anglophone crisis broke out and even well before that, I began to promote federalism, which I have always proposed as the only answer to separatism and, by extension, to the more general problem of regulating intercommunity relations in Cameroon. A large number of media blocked me, with the argument that I was leading Cameroon into the division and that in any case, a small squad of gendarmes was going to subdue the Secession. 5 years later, where are we? We are today (50-2022-WHAP-Male)*

A close look at the above message shows that the speaker sees the conflict in Anglophone regions as a result of careless steps that brought to irreparable and irreversible turns; they try to dissuade the war lords and the separatism campaigners by spreading messages of peace;

*(8) Cameroonians need to PRAY, especially the Anglophones! What recently happened in Yaounde is going to take more lives in Cameroon! Bloodshed is going to be Worst! Finally, the Anglophones are going to have their Independence. But they have to STOP ALL IN FIGHTING amongst them very fast, and be ONE! Once they do this, it won't be upto 5 months, their Independence will be declared. PRAY AGAINST SERIOUS BLOODSHED IN THE FRENCH SPEAKING CAMEROON!!! (65-2021-WHAP-Male)*

*(9) We are gearing towards mass Killings of Christians especially, or towards WW3 which will be very devastating! If the WORLD can REPENT, FORGIVE, PRAY and FAST, it will be very minimal. (78-2022-WHAP-Female)*

The participants in samples (8) and (9) share a view as they call for prayer which they believe can help restore peace in the minds of the population, in the towns and villages. They see prayer as the way out of the horrible and overwhelming security climate. When a phenomenon overpowers a human, they look towards heaven for solace. This is typical of some biblical verses, psalms, and hymns meant to be read for consolation in difficult times (Psalms 59: 16; Jeremiah 16: 19). As a reminder, churches play a role in the evolution of the conflict with their bold position against war; they also serve as the thresholds where people come and sing souls to seek for comfort.

*(10) I think it is time for the Biden administration to arrest and deport secessionist leaders in USA to answer chargers of their hideous crimes against civilians especially killing students & teachers in schools in the 2 English speaking Regions (80-2022-WHAP-Male)*

*(11) When will Africans understand the manipulation of the western? At times I just feel ashamed of myself. Why don't we ask ourselves some questions (1) why is cocoa grown in Africa but yet chocolate cheaper in the western world. (2) why does petrol comes from Africa but yet cheaper in the western world. (3) why gold from African but still the western world media makes us understand Africa is the poorest of continent. (4) is it that we don't fabric weapons but rather fights more than the western world that fabrics. Just to mention a few. If the western world doesn't manipulate us guys to keep fighting yourselves, they can get those things for little pr even no cost. Ambazombias keep kidnapping, kidnap even paul Biya idiots those manipulating you guys are eating in vergolden plates, Did you think Sisikuos suffering? No he is dining on high table. I will be back. (FBK, Mar, 19. 2018-Male)*

*(12) The world should see what the so call Ambazonians are doing to kids who want to go to school. They have been kidnapped and now the will be raped to fortify their Odeyshi powers and use them to fight their senseless war on killing innocent civilians. Eric Tataw, Tapang Ivo, VerlaFranklineVerla, YannickSicot, Ayaba Cho Lucas, Capo Daniel, KemiAshu. MolaWonjaWonjaMbua, you all will answer for these crimes. Your think hiding abroad is save heaven for u rights? Shameless idiots. If u listen to the terrorists himself u will realise he is an illiterate, no wonder they don't like kids to be educated (FBK, Nov, 5. 2018-Male)*

*(13) thank you Anglophone crisis, at least we have SEEN the sad consequences of giving GUNS & DRUGS TO ILLITERATE RASCALS & BANDITS (FBK, Jan, 10. 2019-Male)*

*(14) Gamblers who want to gamble with the faith of 8 million folks. Rejection! You cannibalize your brothers & you say is liberation? Who is the enemy? Who will you govern? A total rejection! A cancer! (FBK, Dec, 17. 2018-Male)*

*(15) All die people them Weh they deh for biya e die lock... abeg make them enter coffin di die di go...we the youth of watawata go figth for our independence!!!! Nonsense!!! (FBK, Oct, 1. 2019-Female)*

*(16) No Ambazonian on GZ should listen to any white person or France. We are put in today's situation by white people. All the deaths in Ambazonia today is because of UN agenda to colonize the world by hook or by crook. We will not let them dictate to us anything again. Idiots. (FBK, Mar, 4.2020-Male)*

The examples above indicate renunciation or rejection of conflict by the interactants who are tired of looking at massacre issued by the ongoing war in the Southern Cameroon. The victims and some humanists are crying out for peace to get back in that area. Knowing the fact that no one can really benefit from a given conflict, some Anglophone Cameroonians engaged in looking for peaceful and safety refugee. Therefore, everyone should take extra measures to resign from war and come together to promote pacific living together. For that reason, some Anglophone Cameroonians have used expressions like *peace among ourselves; avoid confrontations; the western world doesn't manipulate us guys to keep fighting yourselves, they can get those things for little pr even no cost. Ambazombias keep kidnapping, kidnap even paul Biya idiots those manipulating you guys are eating in vergolden plates, Did you think Sisiku; If the WORLD can REPENT, FORGIVE, PRAY and FAST, it will be very minimal; we the youth of watawata go fight for our independence!!!! Nonsense!!!; and No Ambazonian on GZ should listen to any white person or France. We will not let them dictate to us anything again. Idiots.*

Through these illustrations, some participants are encouraging people to get back to normal life by advocating national unity which in turn will push the readers to think of peaceful living together. Their voices advocate calmness and peaceful co-existence. It should also be said the fact that only 16 over 150 messages (10 from WHAP and 6 from FBK) highlight or portray and promote peace show the will of the belligerents to pursue the fight to attain their goal. The frequency and the percentage of the used features are presented in table 2.

**Table 2: Frequency and percentage of linguistic features portraying the language of peace**

Platforms	Number of E-messages	Frequency	Percentage (%)
WHAP	100	10	10
FBK	50	6	5

Statistics from table 2 shows that 10% of WHAP messages encourage and promote peaceful life compared to 5% of FBK. This means that the issue of peace on WhatsApp and Facebook messages about the Anglophone crisis is utopic and far from reality. The example clearly shows that there are less shared opinions for the fight to stop. In other words, the way back to peaceful life in that area is nightmarish. From the above figures, it can be educed that the discussions of Anglophones on the crisis rocking their regions are fraught with frequent use of peace expressions calling for a return to stability. Some messages on these same platforms incite the readers to violence.

### **Anglophone crisis and war rhetoric**

The role of social media in facilitating some conflicts is gaining more and more weight and steam. Most of times, the conflicts are fuelled by hate speech, dehumanising language and absolutely

resolute incitement to tension and violence. These tactics that perpetrators use deliberately to call for an uprising. They always make choose words that push people to revolt against the regime, as illustrated below in samples (17) and (18).

**(16):** *How can Atanga Nji sack Edith kahwalla of the CPP and appoint his preferred president of that part?* (FBK, Nov, 16, 2018-Male)

**(17):** *Horrible! Cameroon terrorists (soldiers of the Terrorist Biya Regime) shoot a house wife in her legs after breaking into her home in the city of Buea, Ambazonia.* (FBK, Sep, 29, 2018-Male)

## 6. CONCLUSION

This study examined the linguistic expressions that portray and encourage peace on WhatsApp and Facebook messages about the Anglophone crisis by Anglophone Cameroonians. A total of 150 e-messages were collected from two different platforms: WhatsApp and Facebook. The findings revealed that the corpus used for the analysis is fraught with words and expressions that appeal to peace. However, these words and expressions are overpowered by hate language that is found in some messages on either Facebook or WhatsApp. These platforms are no man's land, and therefore there is an influx of hate language, verbal bullying and propaganda found in more than 100 messages out of 150 messages screened for the target words or expressions. The verbal violence against the ruling class, some government officials, some party representatives and individuals accumulated into a shell that rocked, rocks and is till rocking the whole social media and mass media landscape. Nowadays, the words on the screen have been transformed into real violent and bloody actions on the field: from warped communication social media platforms to armed conflicts on battle fields. Provided that there is still a higher percentage of violent expressions than peace language on these platforms, sensitisation remains a master key to curb the spread of hate speech; establishing local restrictions on the contents of the publications on Facebook and WhatsApp can also help to fight against the expressions that poison the opinions of the social media subscribers. Some people can volunteer as peace keepers on these platforms and preach peace so as to counteract hate language.

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