



Il a coupé la petite-là–A Linguistic Study of the Language of Sexuality in French-Speaking Cameroon

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Abstract

The language of sexuality in French-speaking Cameroon is characterized by a lexico-semantic creativity which can pose a problem of intelligibility to language users who are not familiar with this code. So, drawing data from a corpus of close to 200 entries obtained from questionnaire, magazines and participant observation, this paper sets out to decipher this code and study the structure of its lexicon. Besides, it accounts for the factors which can provide hints for the understanding of this code. Basing the analysis on an eclectic framework which encompasses psychoanalysis, structuralism and functionalism, it is found that the language of sexuality in French-speaking Cameroon is characterized by a lexico-semantic creativity which can be discussed under the following lexico-semantic categories: compounding and reduplication, affixation, coinages, borrowing, conversion, clipping, initialisms, collocational extension and change in verb valency, idiomatic formation and stereotyped sentences. A thematic analysis of this language shows that these lexico-semantic constructions can be classified under the following domains: sex organs, accessories and functions, sexual intercourses, sexual partners, relationship and intercourses, sexual orientation and body image, sexual activities and toponyms, sexual experiences, fantasies and diseases. Besides, the findings indicate that the language of sexuality in French-speaking Cameroon draws its lexicon from English, Cameroon Pidgin-English, Camfranglais, home languages and unknown sources. The paper further argues that a semiotic, psychoanalytic and sociocultural analysis can provide insightful tools to the understanding of this code. The study concludes that though sexuality is a phenomenon which is universal, each society develops its lexicon to refer to its practice.

Keywords: linguistic hallmarks, sexuality, lexico-semantic creativity, lexicon

INTRODUCTION

As pointed out by López Rúa (2005, p. 164), “language is a living instrument, so it evolves with its users and adjusts to the times”. It is important to stress the fact that language exists only within the society. As such, it reflects the realities of the society in which it is spoken. So, the language spoken by individuals within a society should adjust to its sociocultural, economical, technological, geographical and political realities. These

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realities constitute a great source of enrichment of the language, especially at the level of its lexico-semantics. For instance, López Rúa (2005, p. 149), states that “the major fields for lexical creativity are science and technology, learning, consumerism, and media entertainment [...] the fields through which [...] people exert power”. In addition to the abovementioned fields, it can be observed that the domain of sexuality is one of the prolific areas where the phenomenon of lexico-semantic creativity is very perceptible. In French-speaking Cameroon, the field of sexuality can be identified as one of the domains which have considerably contributed to the phenomenon of linguistic creativity of the French language in this country.

It should be pointed out that in many parts of the world, sexuality is a tabooed issue. As a consequence, language users resort to lexico-semantic creativity in order to communicate while avoiding being distasteful, shocking, impolite, etc. So, various linguistic processes come into play in order to serve this purpose. The new terms created as well as the new meanings taken by existing words are not necessarily intelligible by the language users which are not familiar with the code. This paper, which sets out to decipher this code and account for the factors which can account for such a lexico-semantic creativity, is based on the following assumptions:

- The language of sexuality in French-speaking Cameroon which is gradually developing its lexicon draws from background languages such as Cameroon Pidgin English, English, Camfranglais, home languages and unknown sources.
- A functional, semiotic, psychoanalytic and sociocultural analysis can provide insights to the understanding of this code.

Research on the language of sexuality in Cameroon has not drawn much the attention of researchers. The work carried out so far is that of Fosso (n.d.) who has studied the phenomenon of lexical creativity, in relation to sexuality, on the campus of the University of Yaounde I, Cameroon. As pointed out in the work, the data for the study was collected orally from 263 students (undergraduate and postgraduate) aged 20 to 25. The necessity to further the study on the language of sexuality was motivated by several reasons. First of all as compared to the data found in the present study, it can be said that the lexicon of the language of sexuality in French-speaking Cameroon has tremendously evolved both in terms of quantity and diversity of sources (donor languages). In other words, the number of lexes collected for this study is almost the double of the one got by the previous researcher and this lexicon draws not only from French, as it is the case in the previous study, but also, from Cameroon Pidgin-English, Camfranglais, some home languages and foreign sources. Secondly, the previous researcher has limited his informants to university students, more precisely those of the University of Yaounde I, Cameroon. This makes his corpus narrow. It is worth mentioning that for the present study, data was collected not only from university students but also from secondary and high school students, hawkers, French-speaking Cameroonians of other walks of life.

It is pointed out by Fosso (n.d.) that the processes which governs lexical creativity in the domain of sexuality in French-speaking Cameroon are the following: modification by

collocation (e.g. valider une UV à la sueur se son sexe: to pass a course by having sexual intercourse with the lecturer), modification by denotation (e.g. conjuguer une fille: to have sexual intercourse with a girl), modification using metaphors and metonymy (e.g. triangle: female sex organ), abbreviation (eg. UVM: Unité de Valeur Maternité: pregnancy) and compounding (e.g. jeter le maïs: to court), borrowing (e.g. match: sexual intercourse). In the present study, the language of sexuality is discussed under two main headings and eleven subheadings. The first heading is entitled “Lexes” and handles the following processes: compounding, affixation, semantic shifts, coinages, borrowing, conversion, clipping and initialisms, collocatioanal extension and change in verb valency. The second main heading, entitled “Stereotyped lexico-semantic constructions, dwells on idiomatic formation and stereotyped sentences.

DEFINING SEXUALITY

Various definitions have been provided to the term “sexuality”. According to Bucholtz and Hall (2004, p. 470), it is “the systems of mutually constituted ideologies, practices, and identities that give sociopolitical meaning to the body as an eroticized and/or reproductive site”. Cameron and Kulick (2003, p.4) note that the meaning of the term “sexuality” which initially meant “the socially constructed expression of erotic desire has been narrowed so that it refers primarily to that aspect of sexuality which is sometimes called sexual orientation [...] being homosexual or heterosexual”. In The Oxford Paperback Dictionary (henceforth OPD) (1990, p.744), sexuality is defined in terms of pertaining to one of the sexes and also as sexual characteristics or impulses. This dictionary further defines “sex” as the categorization of living things into one of two gender groups, the act of sexual intercourse, sexual feelings or impulses and the mutual attraction between members of the two sexes (OPD, 1990, p.744). The Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (CALD) (2005, p. 1165) defines it as a “sexual activity involving the penis or vagina, especially when man puts his penis into a woman’s vagina”. The Dorland’s Illustrated Medical Dictionary (henceforth DIMD) (1988) defines it in terms of the reproductive, attitudinal and activational characteristics associated with membership of either of the two sexes. According to Sheerin and MCKenna (2000, p.5), it is the characteristics, feelings and impulses attributed to persons belonging to either one of the two sexes. It can therefore be pointed out that “sexuality” goes beyond sexual organs and includes our gender identity (i.e. the core sense that we are female or male), gender role (i.e. the idea of how we should behave because we are a female or male), sexual orientation (i.e. heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual), the feeling we have about our bodies (i.e. body image), sexual experiences, thoughts, ideas, and fantasies, the way in which the media, family, friends, religion, age, life goals, and our self-esteem shape our sexual selves, how we experience intimacy, touch, love, compassion, joy, and sorrow and is expressed in the way we speak, smile, stand, sit, dress, dance, laugh, and cry. As a whole, it can be said that sexuality is an integral part of who we are, what we believe, what we feel, and how we respond to others (http://www.srcp.org/for_all_parents/definition.html).

METHOD

The data analysed in this paper was collected via participant observation, interviews, written sources and also from the music of some Cameroonian artists.

Participant observation

A considerable proportion of the data found in this paper was collected through participant observation. As a Cameroonian living in one of the French-speaking regions of the country, I have got the possibility of listening to people, especially the youth, speak French in their everyday's interactions in various contexts (school, market, university, job sites (public and private offices, cinema, brothel places, etc.). Each time I heard a new word or expression related to sexuality, I jotted it down in a notebook coupled with its meaning. The meaning(s) of the lexes and expressions were obtained on the basis of the context in which they were used by the speakers. The meaning(s) of the lexico-semantic constructions (lexes and words) whose meaning was difficult to get was obtained from other language users who were familiar with them. In addition to participant observation, I collected the data through interview.

Interviews

The most sizeable proportion of the data analyzed in this paper was collected via interviews. For the data to be representative, it was found necessary to include among the interviewers male and female French-speaking Cameroonians of various walks of life, who live in the seven French-speaking regions of Cameroon, especially the youths. The choice of the interviewee was done at random. These interviews were conducted in French in the chief towns of seven French-speaking regions of Cameroon (Center, Littoral, West, Adamawa, East, North and Far-North). These interviews were conducted in the chief towns of any of these regions, on the grounds that these chief towns are cosmopolitan areas where there are more interactions among the people of various ethnic groups found in the country. In each region, 50 people were interviewed and the interviews tape-recorded. The following are the English translations of the questions found in the interview:

1. Are you a Cameroonian?
2. Are you French-Speaking or English-Speaking?
3. What is your region of origin?
4. What is your profession?
5. Have you ever heard of "sexuality"?
6. What does it mean?
7. Can you provide some words and expressions which are related to sexuality and which are used in the French-speaking part of Cameroon?
8. What is (are) its (their) meaning(s)? In which context are they used?

The information provided by the informants was tape-recorded. So, three hundred and fifty informants were interviewed. The lexes and expressions retained for the analysis

are the ones which have recurred at least twice among the lexico-semantic constructions provided by the interviewees.

Written and audiovisual material

In addition to participant observation and interviews, the data was also collected from some written materials, more precisely from youth magazines such as *100% Jeunes*, *Entre-Nous Jeunes*. As opposed to the method of data collection provided above, youth magazines provide written data. The added advantage of written sources is that they provide written data which inform on the various spellings of some of these lexes, given that many of them are coined and do not therefore feature in dictionaries. Also, much of the data was collected from audiovisual materials drawn from the music of some Cameroonian artists such as Petit Pays (1994), Foly Dirane (2001), and Franco (2015).

Theoretical framework

This paper will be discussed using an eclectic framework which encompasses structuralism, functionalism and psychoanalysis. Structuralism is helpful in this work in the sense that it will facilitate the study of the lexico-semantic processes (compounding, clipping, suffixation, prefixation, idiomatic formation, semantic shifts, etc.) used by French-speaking Cameroonians to create new lexes and expressions related to sexuality. As regards functionalism, it will be helpful in studying the various semantic processes conveyed by the verbs used in the language of sexuality in French-speaking Cameroon. According to functionalists, verbs denote several processes which can either be material (verbs of doing and happening, e.g. to play, to write), mental (which involves emotion (e.g. to feel), cognition (e.g. to know), perception (e.g. to see), desideration (e.g. to need), relational (which set up a relation between two concepts, e.g. the verb “to be” in “The bread is stale), verbal (verbs of saying, e.g. to talk), behavioral (which refers to behavior, e.g. to behave), existential (which express mere existence of an entity, e.g. There is some other darker pattern)(Halliday & Matthiessen 2004; Geoff Thomson, 2004). So, functionalism will enable us to identify the type of processes which are conveyed by the verbs used in the language of sexuality. Psychoanalysis will be helpful in this study in the sense that it will enable us to account for the choice of the realities used by French-speaking Cameroonians to represent sex organs. As pointed out by Winick’s (1995, p.71), “psychoanalytic symbolism connects femininity with round, hollow, concave, and enclosing shapes and masculinity with elongated, convex, sharp, and penetrating forms.”

Lexico-semantic processes

It is important to point out that the language of sexuality is full of circumlocutions and figurative language. In other words, since sexuality is considered as a taboo issue in many sociocultural contexts, language speakers do not call a spade a spade to talk about it. This is concurred by Allan and Burridge (2006, p. 144) who observe that “sexual activity is tabooed as a topic for public display and severely constrained as a topic for discussion. The language of sexual pleasuring and copulation gives rise to a great deal of

verbal play and figurative language". This holds true for French-speaking Cameroonians who have manipulated their linguistic resources in order to obtain various linguistic constructions so as to talk about sexuality. So, the language of sexuality in French-speaking Cameroon can be discussed under two main headings: lexes and stereotyped lexico-semantic constructions.

ANALYSIS

LEXES

The following processes will be handled under the section of lexes: compounding, coinages, affixation, conversion, shortening and abbreviation, collocational extension, semantic shift and idiomatic formation. These processes are examined in turn.

Compounding and reduplication

Compounding is one of the word-formation processes through which can be observed lexico-semantic creativity in the language of sexuality as used by French-speaking Cameroonians. It consists of "joining two separate words to produce a single form" (Yule, 1985, p. 53). Kouega adds that this technique consists in forming "a new word by bringing together two or more items which need not belong to the same grammatical class" (Kouega, 2003, p. 523). Reduplication, on its part, "consists in creating a new term by repeating an existing item" (Kouega, 2003, p. 523). It can therefore be stated that compounding is a technique which consists in creating novel lexical items by bringing together either two or more already existing lexes. The difference between compounding and reduplication is that in compounding, the items put together are not identical while in reduplication, the lexes brought together are the same. A compound can involve either two lexical items or more than two while reduplicated constructions consists of two lexes only, as exemplified in the table below.

Table 1. Sexuality and compounding/reduplication

Noun + (preposition) +Noun/NP				
1	<i>French lexes</i>	<i>Word class of the compounds/re duplicated items</i>	<i>Literal English translation</i>	<i>English meaning of the French compounds</i>
2	arachide du deuil	Noun	groundnut for funeral	a woman who has sexual intercourses with every body
3	ballon d'or	Noun	golden ball	stomach of a pregnant woman
4	carrefour-condom	Noun	condom-crossroad	name of a crossroad in Yaounde
5	couleur du taxi	Noun	colour of the taxi	woman who is fair in complexion
6	chicotte de papa	Noun	whip of daddy	male sex organ
7	coup du coq	Noun	blow of a cock	a coitus which does not last for long
8	lit de l'hôpital	Noun	bed of the hospital	a woman who has sexual intercourses with every body

9	maladie du siècle	Noun	sickness of the century	Aids
10	miss lolo	Noun	miss big breast	a woman who has very big breast
11	pain deux oeufs	Noun	bread and two eggs	male genital organ
12	partie de jambes en l'air	Noun	game of legs in the air	sexual intercourse
13	rue de la joie	Noun	street of happiness	name of a street in Yaounde where there are many prostitutes
14	terrain sans gazon	Noun	field without grass	sex organ without pubic hair
15	terrain avec gazon	Noun	field with grass	sex organ without pubic hair
16	trou-canard	Noun	hole-duck	vagina

Noun + Adjective/infinite clause

	<i>French lexes</i>	<i>Word class of the compounds</i>	<i>Literal English translation</i>	<i>English meaning of the French compounds</i>
17	couleur présidentielle	Noun	presidential color	woman who is fair in complexion
18	choses pour faire	Noun	things for making	condoms (condoms are used in love making)
19	pays bas	Noun	country lower	sex organ

Adjective + Noun

	<i>French lexes</i>	<i>Word class of the compounds</i>	<i>Literal English translation</i>	<i>English meaning of the French compounds</i>
20	chaud gars/mec	Noun	warm gentleman	gentleman who is much loved by women
21	chaude fille	Noun	warm lady	lady who is much loved by men
22	full contact	Noun	complete contact	unprotected sexual intercourse
23	grand-match	Noun	big match	pornographic film
24	jolie sucre	Noun	nice sugar	woman (generally someone's wife, or girlfriend)

Determiner/Preposition+ Noun/verb

	<i>French lexes</i>	<i>Word class of the compounds</i>	<i>Literal English translation</i>	<i>English meaning of the French compounds</i>
25	contre-tibias	Noun	against tibia	condoms
26	troisième pied	Noun	third leg	penis
27	deuxième bureau	Noun	second office	girlfriend of a married man
28	sans-caleçon	Noun	without pant	striptease
29	un but sort	Noun	one goal gets out	practice which consists in driving away a sexual partner (usually a woman) after having sex with her

Verb+ Verb/Noun

	<i>French lexes</i>	<i>Word class of the compounds</i>	<i>Literal English translation</i>	<i>English meaning of the French compounds</i>
30	coller-coller	Noun	paste-paste	type of dance in which the two

				dancers (man and woman) lean on each other
31	tourne-cœur	Noun	turn-heart	somebody towards whom one has much feelings of passionate love
32	viens on reste	Noun	come we stay	relationship in which a man and a woman leave together without being officially married
33	zone rouge	Noun	red zone	period of menstruation

From the table above, it can be observed that some compound lexical items identified in the corpus comprise two lexes (e.g. chaud gars, full contact, grand-match, troisième pied, deuxième bureau, etc.) while others are made up of more than two (e.g. arachide du deuil, Rue de la joie, maladie du siècle, couleur du taxi, ballon d'or, un but sort, etc.). Besides, it can be said that all the compounds identified are all noun compounds and they take various patterns, namely noun + (preposition) + noun (eg. arachide du deuil, Rue de la joie, ballon d'or, terrain sans gazon, etc.), noun + adjective/infinite clause (eg. plantain mur, couleur présidentielle, choses pour faire, etc.), adjective + noun (chaud gars, chaude fille, grand-match, etc.), determiner/preposition+ noun/verb (troisième pied, deuxième bureau, sans-caleçon, un but sort), verb+ verb/noun (coller-coller, tourne-cœur, viens on reste).

Affixation

Affixation is a word-formation process which consists in combining affixes (inflectional and derivational affixes) in order to form new words. Affixes can be grouped into two main sub-groups, namely inflectional and derivational affixes. When inflectional affixes are added to words so as to create new grammatical forms, the process is called inflection. When derivational ones are attached to lexical items in order to produce new lexes, the process is referred to as derivation. It has been noted that French-speaking Cameroonians make use of the agentive suffix /-eur/ (masculine form) and /-euse/ (feminine form) in order to create new words which reflect their sexual thoughts and fantasies. In the table below is illustrated this process.

Table 2. Sexuality and affixation

Bases		Donour language of the stem	Meaning of the donour language's base	Suffix	New lexes	Word class of the new lexes	Meaning of the new lexes
34	allume	French	light	/-euse/	allumeuse	Noun	a woman who easily arouses men's sexual feelings
35	baise	French	kiss	/-eur/	baiseur	Noun	a man who has much sexual intercourses with women
36	baise	French	kiss	/-euse/	baiseuse	Noun	a woman who has much sexual intercourses with men
37	chicotte	French	wip	/-eur/	chicotteur	Noun	a man who has much sexual intercourses with women
38	chicotte	French	wip	/-euse/	chicotteuse	Noun	a woman who has much sexual intercourses with men

39	coupe	French	cut	/-eur/	coupeur	Noun	a man who has much sexual intercourse with women
40	coupe	French	cut	/-euse/	coupeuse	Noun	a woman who has much sexual intercourse with men
41	fracas	French	smash	/-eur/	fracasseur	Noun	homosexual who plays the role of a male
42	fracas	French	smash	/-é/	fracases	Noun	a homosexual who plays the role of the female
43	nyass	Camfranglais	make love	/-eur/	nyasseur	Noun	a man who has much sexual intercourse with women
44	nyasseur	Camfranglais	make love	/-euse/	nyasseuse	Noun	a woman who has much sexual intercourse with women
45	nyoxe	Camfranglais	make love	/-eur/	nyoxeur	Noun	a man who has much sexual intercourse with women
46	nyoxe	Camfranglais	make love	/-euse/	nyoxeuse	Noun	a woman who has much sexual intercourse with women
47	pine	Camfranglais	make love	/-eur/	Pineur	Noun	a man who has much sexual intercourse with women
48	pine	Camfranglais	make love	/-euse/	Pineuse	Noun	a woman who has much sexual intercourse with women
49	rythme	French	rhythm	/-eur/	rythmeur	Noun	a man who like the company of women but who is not courageous to make love with them
50	chat	English	to court	/-eur/	tchatcheur	Noun	a womanizer
51	tchouk	Pidgin-English/Camfranglais	to hit/to push/to make something move	/-eur/	tchoukeur	Noun	a man who is fond of having sexual contacts with women

Coinages

It can also be noted that the linguistic creativity displayed by the language of sexuality of French-speaking Cameroonians can also be observed at the level of coinages. Mbangwana (2002, p. 62) defines coinages as “new lexical items created out of no familiar elements.” In other words, it is “the invention of totally new terms” (Yule, 1985, p. 52). Coined lexical items are used by French-speaking Cameroonians to express sexuality, as displayed in the chart below.

Table 3. Sexuality and coinages

	Lexes	Gender	Word Class(es)	Meaning(s)
52	baisodrome	masc.	Noun	a place meant for sexual intercourse
53	bangala	masc.	Noun	male sex organ (penis)
54	binda	.....	Verb	to have sexual intercourse
55	chopal	fem.	Noun	clap (name of a sexually transmitted disease)
56	lo-lo	masc.	Noun	very big breasts
57	mbit	masc.	Noun	male sex organ (penis)
58	ndepso	masc.	Noun	an homosexual
59	ntouma	.....	Verb	to have sexual intercourse
60	zizi	masc.	Noun	male sex organ (penis)
61	zooze	masc.	Verb	male sexual organ (penis)

Borrowing

One of the linguistic hallmarks of the language of sexuality of French-speaking Cameroonians is borrowing. As pointed out by Biloa (2004, p. 1), “Cameroon is a linguistic melting-pot or patchwork. Apart from local languages in this country, are attested French and English, which are two languages of European importation. On top of that, two hybrid languages are spoken on the territory, namely, Pidgin English and Camfranglais” (My emphasis). So, these language users draw the lexicon of sexuality from various local languages attested in Cameroon, as illustrated by the table below.

Table 4. Sexuality and borrowing

	Lexes	Gender	Donour Language(s)	Donor Language Word Class(es)	Meaning(s)
62	belle	masc.	Cameroon Pidgin-English (from the word “belly”)	verb/noun	-to impregnate a woman (verb) -stomach of a pregnant woman (noun)
63	bôтчô	masc.	Foreign sources	Noun	buttocks
64	djo	masc.	Camfranglais	Noun	boyfriend with whom a woman usually have sexual intercours
65	lass	masc.	Cameroon Pidgin English	Noun	buttocks
66	ndolo	masc.	Duala	Noun	passionate love
67	ndombolo	masc.	Foreign sources (Ivory Coast)	Noun	buttocks
68	ngâ	fem.	Bulu	Noun	girlfriend with whom a man has sexual intercours
69	nyangue	fem.	Cameroon Pidgin English	Noun	prostitute
70	nyass	.....	Camfranglais	Verb	to have sexual intercours
71	tchouker	.....	Cameroon Pidgin English (from the word “tchoukam”)	Verb	to have sexual intercourse (man)
72	tchoukam pass	masc.	Cameroon Pidgin-English	Noun	practice which consists in abandoning a woman once one has had sexual intercours with her
73	waka	fem.	Cameroon Pidgin English (from the word “walk”)	Noun	a prostitute

Conversion

This process, also termed category change, functional shift, is a word-formation process in which a word changes its word class without changing its morphology. For Jackson and Zé Amvela (2000, p. 86), conversion is “a process by which a word belonging to one word class is transferred to another word class without any change of form, either in pronunciation or spelling”. Words which undergo conversion change their function without any reduction in their form” (Yule, 1985, p. 57). Some words used in the language of sexuality by French-speaking Cameroonians are lexical items which are attested in Standard French but whose word class has changed in the course of their

integration into the lexicon of sexuality. Details about these lexes are provided in the table below.

Table 5.Sexuality and word-class shift

	Lexes	Word class in Standard French	Meaning in standard French	Word class in the lexicon sexuality	Gender in the lexicon of sexuality	Meaning in the lexicon of sexuality
74	chaud	adjective	hot	Noun	masc.	a boyfriend with whom a woman usually has sexual intercourse
75	chaude	adjective	hot	Noun	fem.	a girlfriend with whom a man usually has sexual intercourse
76	fatiguée	adjective	tired	Noun	fem.	pregnant woman
77	Léger	adjective	light (not heavy)	Noun	masc.	a coitus
78	Petite	adjective	small	Noun	fem.	a girlfriend with whom a man usually has sexual intercourse

Clipping and initialisms

Bauer (1983, p. 233) defines clipping as the process whereby a lexeme (simple or complex) is shortened, while retaining the same meaning and the word class. Initialisms on their part, is considered as “an extreme kind of clipping since only the initial letters of words, or sometimes initial syllables are put together and used as words”(To Jackson and Zé Amvela (2000, p. 88). Initialisms are classified into two sub-groups, namely, alphabetisms or abbreviations (e.g. *ID* (Identity Card)) and acronyms (e.g. *ROM* (Read only Memory)). Initialisms are known as alphabetisms or abbreviations when they are pronounced with the names of the letters of the alphabet and are known as acronyms when they are pronounced as words. This word-formation process is not very prolific in the language of sexuality of French-speaking Cameroonians as the following examples indicate.

Table 6.Clipping and initialisms in the corpus

	Shortened Lexes	Full form	Gender	Word-formation processes	Meaning(s)
79	Calé	caleçon	masc.	Clipping	underpants
80	VCD	ventre et caleçon dehors	masc.	initialisms(abbreviation)	women's dress which neither covers their stomach
81	Porno	pornographie	fem.	Clipping	pornography
82	PCR	petit coup rapide	Masc.	initialism (abbreviation)	very fast coitus
83	Préso	preservative	masc.	Clipping	condom
84	DVD	dos et ventre dehors	masc.	initialisms (abbreviation)	women's dress which neither covers their stomach nor the back of their back
85	NST	notes sexuellement	Masc.	initialisms (abbreviation)	marks got through sexual intercourse

transmissible

Semantic shifts

Semantic shift is a process through which lexico-semantic creativity can be perceived in the language of sexuality of French-speaking Cameroonians. A scrutiny of the meaning conveyed by many lexes used by French-speaking Cameroonians to express sexuality shows that many French words used have undergone semantic shifts. In other words, these language users make use of lexical items attested in Standard French but instead give them a different meaning. The lexical items provided in the table below are instructive in this respect.

Table 7. Sexuality and semantic shifts

	Lexes	Gender	Donor Language	Word class	Literal meaning in standard French	New meaning(s)
86	appuyer	.....	French	Verb	to press	to have sexual intercourse (man)
87	assureur	.....	French	Verb	to insure	a man who has a good sexual performance
88	bander	.....	French	Verb	to bandage	to have one's penis erected
89	bazooka	masc.	French	Noun	bazooka (name of a gun)	penis of big size
90	bombe	fem.	French	Noun	bomb	a nice-looking woman who easily arouses men's sexual feelings
91	bouillie	fem.	French	Noun	pap	spermatozoa
92	cannon	masc.	French	Noun	cannon	penis
93	carotte	fem.	French	Noun	carrot	penis
94	cerceau	fem.	French	Noun	hoop	vagina
95	chenille	fem.	French	Noun	caterpillar	penis (of small size)
96	crayon	masc.	French	Noun	pencil	penis
97	chefferie	fem.	French	Noun	traditional palace	sex organ
98	chicotter	.....	French	Verb	to whip	to have sexual intercourse (man)
99	coup	masc.	French	Noun	blow	a coitus
100	couper/cut	.....	French	Verb	cut	to have sexual intercourse (man)
101	chat	.....	English	Verb	to discuss with somebody	to court (a woman)
102	chaussette	fem.	French	Noun	socks	condoms
103	corrosol	masc.	French	Noun	name of a fruit which contains a white juice	spermatozoa
104	de l'eau glacé	masc.	French	Noun Phrase	cold water	an impotent man
105	dossier	masc.	French	Noun	file	a woman
106	décharger	.....	French	Verb	to unload	to give birth
107	démarrreur	masc.	French	Noun	starter	an edible product used to arouse one's sexual appetite
108	derrière	masc.	French	Noun	back	the buttocks
109	écraser	.....	French	Verb	to grind	to have sexual intercourse (man)
110	fouetter	.....	French	Verb	to whip	to have sexual intercourse (man)
111	gâteau	masc.	French	Noun	cake	female sex organ

112	gésier	masc.	French	Noun	guts	vagina
113	haricot	masc.	French	Noun	beans	clitoris
114	kola	fem.	French	Noun	kola	vagina/a woman who easily have sexual intercourses with men
115	micro	masc.	French	Noun	microphone	penis
116	mandarines	fem.	French	Noun	mandarin	breast of very small size
117	mortier	masc.	French	Noun	mortar	vagina
118	noyaux	masc.	French	Noun	stones (e.g.. of a fruit)	testicles
119	oranges	fem.	French	Noun	orange	breast of average size
120	pamplemousses	masc.	French	Noun	gape fruit	breast of relatively big size
121	pilon	masc.	French	Noun	pestle	penis
122	pistache	masc.	French	Noun	pistachio nut	vagina
123	plantain	masc.	French	Noun	plantain	penis
124	plantain mur	masc.	French	Noun	plantain	penis of a man who is fair in complexion
125	plantain non mur	masc.	French	Noun	unripe plantain	penis of a man who is not fair in complexion
126	poitrine	masc.	French	Noun	chest	breast
127	trou	masc.	French	Noun	hole	vagina
128	queue	fem.	French	Noun	tail	penis
129	spaghetti	masc.	French	Noun	spaghetti	thin penis
130	tendon	masc.	French	Noun	tendon	penis
131	trou	masc.	French	Noun	hole	vagina
132	tuer	.....	French	Verb	to kill	to have sexual intercourse (a man)
133	tunnel	masc.	French	Noun	tunnel	tunnel

Collocational extension and change in verb valency

Collocational extension is another feature which can be perceived in the language of sexuality of French-speaking Cameroonians. In other words, these language users utilize Standard French lexes but assign them new collocates. Also, it can be observed that some verbs change their valency when used by these language users. In other words, a transitive verb can become intransitive and vice-versa. Collocational extension can be illustrated in the corpus via lexico-semantic constructions such as the following: “décapsuler une femme(134)”: to deflower a woman, which translates literally in English as “to open a woman”; “un homme trenchant(135)”: a womanizer” which translates literally as “a sharp man”; “barrer un homme/une femme(136)”: to ditch a man/woman, which translates literally as “to bar a man/woman”; “coller une femme/un homme(137): to get closer to a woman/man in such a way that the two bodies touch each other” which translates literally as “to stick to a woman/man”; manger une femme(138): to have sexual intercourses with a woman, which translates literally as “to eat a woman”. In standard French, the verb “décapsuler” cannot collocate “femme (woman)” but can collocate “beer” (e.g. décapsuler une bouteille de bière: to open a bottle of beer); the adjective “tranchant” cannot collocate “homme” (man) but can collocate “couteau” (knife) (e.g. un couteau trenchant: a sharp knife). Similarly, the word “barrer” cannot collocate “homme” (man) or “femme” (woman) but can collocate

“route” (road) (e.g. barrer la route: to bar the road) etc. The verb “manger” (to eat) in standard French collocates with edible products (e.g. manger (to eat) le haricot/beans, les pommes de terre (potatoes).

Also, the verb “faire” (to make/do) which is a transitive verb in French (e.g. faire un travail) becomes intransitive when used by French-speaking Cameroonians in the domain of sexuality. The same holds true for the verb “verser”, a direct transitive verb in Standard French which means “to pour”. In the language of sexuality, as spoken by French-speaking Cameroonians, this verb is intransitive and means ‘to ejaculate’. It is commonplace to hear these language users say “j’ ai envie de faire (139)” to mean “I want to make love/I want to have sexual intercoursess”. In such a usage, the verb “faire” becomes “intransitive”.

STEREOTYPED LEXICO-SEMANTIC CONSTRUCTIONS

Under this section will be studied idiomatic formation and stereotyped sentences. It is worth indicating that collocational extension can also be considered as stereotyped lexico-semantic constructions.

Idiomatic Formation

Fromkin and Rodman (1988, p. 236) define idioms as “fixed phrases, consisting of more than one word, with meanings that cannot be inferred from the meanings of the individual words”. An idiom is “a phrase which has a distinct meaning [...] which cannot be explained from the separate meanings of the different words in the phrase” (Platt et al, 1984, p. 107). In effect, what is common to idiomatic expressions is that their meanings “cannot be accounted for as a compositional function of the meanings their parts have when they are not parts of the sequences” (Cruse, 1986, p. 37). As a whole, an idiom “is a group of words whose meaning cannot be explained in terms of the habitual meanings of the words that make up the piece of language (Todd, 1987, p. 87). Idiomatic formation is a dominant feature in the language of sexuality of French-speaking Cameroonians. A structural analysis of these idioms can enable to establish the following patterns: verb + object (+ object), verb + object + adverbial, verb + adverbial, verb + complement, as exemplified below. The literal translation of each expression is provided in bracket immediately after the expression and the meaning of the expression is provided after.

●Verb + Object (+Object)

- 140) **Baisser la culotte (to pull down the short):** to have (a man) sexual intercoursess with somebody of the same sex (man)
- 141) **Gérer un dossier (to manage a file):** to date a girl/woman
- 142) **Fracasser le derrière de quelqu’un (to smash the bottom of somebody):** to have (a man) sexual intercoursess with somebody of the same sex (man).
- 143) **Avoir la poitrine (to have the chest):** to have big breasts
- 144) **Faire la pipe (to do the pipe):** to have oral sex

- 145) **Froisser le derrière de quelqu'un (to bruise the bottom of somebody)**: to have (a man) sexual intercourse with somebody of the same sex (man).
- 146) **Faire papa et maman (to do daddy and mummy)**: to have sexual intercourse
- 147) **Faire le poteau (to do the pole)**: to get involved in prostitution
- 148) **Tirer le coup (to shoot the blow)**: to have sexual intercourse
- 149) **Télécharger une femme (to download a woman)**: to have sexual intercourse with a woman
- 150) **Gâter le lait de l'enfant (to spoil the milk of the child)**: to have sexual intercourse with a woman who is steal breastfeeding.
- 151) **Renforcer le bébé (to reinforce the baby)**: to have sexual intercourse with a pregnant woman
- 152) **Retirer/nettoyer les toiles d' araignées (to remove/clean spider webs)**: to have sexual intercourse with a woman who has spent a long time without having sexual intercourse.
- 153) **Verser l'eau/la bouillie/le manioc (to pour water/pap/cassava)**: to ejaculate
- 154) **Voir la lune (to see the moon)**: to be in the period of menstruation (a woman)
- 155) **Avoir les forms (to have shapes)**: to have (a woman) body shapes which easily attract men
- 156) **Verser le corossol (to pour the "corossol" (local name for a fruit))**: to ejaculate
- 157) **Donner/tirer un léger (to give/to shoot a light (thing))**: to have sexual intercourse
- 158) **Allumer un homme (to light a man)**: to arouse men's sexual feelings
- 159) **Manger sa part de kola (to eat his/her share of kola)**: to have sexual intercourse with a woman

●Verb +Object + Adverbial

- 160) **Manger la banane avec la peau (to eat banana with the peeling)**: to have unprotected sexual intercourse.
- 161) **Avoir envie de faire (to feel like making)**: to feel like making love
- 162) **Filer le plantain à une femme (to give the plantain to a woman)**: to have sexual intercourse with a woman
- 163) **Filer un truc à une femme (to give a thing to a woman)**: to have sexual intercourse with a woman
- 164) **Faire le rally sur une femme (to do rally on a woman)**: to have (woman) sexual intercourse with many men at a time on the same spot.
- 165) **Succer le bonbon avec la peau (to suck sweets with the peelings)**: to have protected sexual intercourse
- 166) **Mettre le dos d'une femme au sol (to put the back of a woman on the ground)**: to have sexual intercourse with a woman

●Verb + Adverbial

- 167) **Etre au feu rouge (to be at the red light)**: to menstruate
- 168) **Pisser dans une femme (to pee in a woman)**: to ejaculate

- 169) **Aller/descendre à la cave (to go/to go get down to the cellar)**: to have (man) oral sex with a woman
- 170) **Flasher sur quelqu'un (to flash on somebody)**: to fall in love with somebody
- 171) **Finir avec une femme (to finish with a woman)**: to have sexual intercours with a woman
- 172) **Aller à la mosquée (to go to the mosque)**: to have (man) oral sex with a woman
- 173) **Voyager sans décoller (to travel without taking off)**: to have sexual intercours
- 174) **Tomber sans glisser (to fall without slipping)**: to fall in love
- 175) **Etre en mode un but sort (to be on the mode one goal gets out)**: to ditch a woman after having had sexual intercours with her
- 176) **Manger dans le même plat quelqu'un (to eat on the same plate with somebody)**: to have (two or more persons) sexual intercours with the same partner
- Verb + Complement

- 177) **Etre bilingue (to be bilingual)**: to be homosexual

Stereotyped sentences

Stereotyped sentences are defined as sentences whose lexis and patterns they comprise are relatively fixed and whose meaning they (stereotyped sentences) denote cannot be obtained on the individual meaning of their lexis (Meutem Kamtchueng, 2015). Like idioms, stereotyped sentences comprise fixed lexical items, but unlike idioms, stereotyped sentences take the patterns of complete sentences (e.g. subject + verb + object). These sentences are commonly used by French-speaking Cameroonians while talking about sexuality. For each stereotyped sentence presented below is provided immediately in bracket its literal translation. For instance, to mean that they are menstruating, female French-speaking Cameroonians use stereotyped sentences such as "*la poule a versé l'huile*"(178) (hen has poured oil), "*il pleut au pays bas*"(179) (it is raining on the downer country), "*il pleut dans la cage*" (180) (it is raining in the cage), "*je suis en prison*"(181) (I am in prison), "*je me suis sali*"(182) (I have dirtied myself), "*il ya marée haute*"(183) (there is high tide), "*le terrain est miné*"(184) (there are mines on the field), "*ça coule*"(185) (it is flowing). Similarly, to talk about courtship and sexual intercours, stereotyped sentences such as "*on ne mange pas la banana avec la peau*" (186) (one does not eat banana with the peelings): for sexual intercourse to be enjoyable, it should be unprotected; "*qui a bu boira/qui a fait fera*" (187) (whoever has drunk will continue to drink/whoever has done something will continue doing it): once you have had sexual intercours with a woman once, you stand better chances to continue having them with her in the future; "*argent en main, caleçon en bas*" (188) (money in hands, pant down): if you give me money, I give you sex; "*même l'eau sale éteint le feu*"(189) (even dirty water put off fire): each woman, no matter her physical appearance, can satisfy a man sexually; "*le trou c'est le trou*"(190) (the hole is the hole): any vagina can serve the purpose; "*ton bic n'écrit pas?*" (191) (your pen does not write?): are you impotent (man); "*l'homme c'est son ventre et son bas-ventre*" (192) (man is his

stomack and the lower part of his stomach): the satisfaction of a man requires the satisfaction of his sexual and alimentary desires; *il ya arrivage* (193) (there is delivery): there are many girls to be chatted around; *tout ce qui est fendu n'est pas defendu à ce qui est tendu* (194) (everything which is split is not unauthorized to everything which is elongated): a man can have sex with any woman; *si tu mets, ça ne va pas entrer?* (195) (if you put in, will it not enter?): a penis can penetrate any vagina, *son tuyau est cassé* (196) (his pipe is broken): he has clap, name of a sexually transmitted disease.

LEXICAL DOMAINS

On the basis of the meanings conveyed by each of the lexes and expressions presented above can be established their classification into various lexical domains. The following lexical domains can be obtained: sex organs, accessories and functions (e.g. *coup du coq*, *terrain sans gazon*, *choses pour faire*, *pays bas*, *contre-tibia*, *troisième pied*, *zone rouge*, *boullie*, *démarreur*, *bangala*, *ndombolo*, *présé*, etc.), sexual partners, relationship and intercourses (*chaud gars*, *full contact*, *grand match*, *deuxième bureau*, *lit de l'hôpital*, *viens-on-reste*, *allumeuse*, *nyasseur*, *baisser la culotte*, *mettre le dos d'une femme au sol*, etc.), sexual orientation and body image (*ballon d'or*, *couleur du taxi*, *couleur présidentielle*, *ndepso*, etc.), sexual activities and toponyms (*Carrefour-Condom*, *Rue de la joie*, *sans-caleçon*, *faire le potau*, etc.), sexual experiences, fantasies and diseases (*mal du siècle*, *un but sort*, *tchoukam pass*, *coller-coller*, *allumer un homme*, *maladie du siècle*, *chaupal*, etc.). The lexico-semantic constructions presented above do not have the same proportion. Besides, it should be indicated that these lexico-semantic resources draws from various sources. The following table depicts the proportion of these linguistic constructions in relation to their source language.

Table 9. Distribution of lexico-semantic constructions per donor languages

Languages involved Processes	French	English	Cam-Franglais	Cameroon Pidgin-English	Home Languages	Unknown Sources	Foreign Sources	Total
compounding	31	1	1	/	/	/	/	33
reduplication	1	/	/	/	/	/	/	1
affixation	9	1	07	1	/	/	/	18
semantic shift	47	/	/	/	/	/	/	47
coinage	/	/	/	/	/	09	/	9
borrowing	/	/	2	06	02	/	02	12
word class shift	05	/	/	/	/	/	/	05
clipping	03	/	/	/	/	/	/	03
initialisms	04		/	/	/	/	/	04
collocational extension	05	/	/	/	/	/	/	05
change in verb valency	02	/	/	/	/	/	/	02
idiomatic formation	39	/	/	/	/	/	/	39
stereotyped sentences	18	/	/	/	/	/	/	18
Total	164	02	10	07	02	09	02	196

A FUNCTIONAL, SEMIOTIC, PSYCHOANALYTIC AND SOCIOCULTURAL ANALYSIS OF THE LANGUAGE OF SEXUALITY

A functional, psychoanalytic, sociocultural analysis of the language of sexuality of French-speaking Cameroonians can contribute to the understanding of this code. A functional analysis of the language of sexuality in French-speaking Cameroon can enable us to find out the types of processes conveyed by the verbs used in this code. As pointed out by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) and Geoff Thomson (2004), verbs denote various processes which can be material (verbs of doing and happening, e.g. to play, to write), mental (which involves emotion (e.g. to feel), cognition (e.g. to know), perception (e. g. to see), desideration (e.g. to need), relational (which set up a relation between two concepts, e. g. the verb “to be” in “The bread is stale), verbal (verbs of saying, e. g. to talk), behavioral (which refers to behavior, e.g. to behave), existential (which express mere existence of an entity, e.g. There is some other darker pattern) (Halliday & Matthiessen (2004), Geoff Thomson (2004). A scrutiny of the corpus reveals that the verbs used denote various processes:

●Material

- Couper (to cut)
- Ecraser (to grind)
- Chicotter/fouetter (to whip)
- Tuer (to kill)
- Appuyer (to press)
- Baisser (pull down) la culotte
- Gérer (manage) un dossier: to date a girl/woman
- Fracasser/froisser (to smash/shatter) le derrière de quelqu'un
- Faire (to do) la pipe
- Faire (to do) papa et maman
- Faire (to do) le poteau
- Tirer (to shoot) le coup
- Télécharger (to download) une femme
- Gâter (to spoil) le lait de l'enfant
- Renforcer (to reinforce) le bébé
- Retirer/nettoyer (remove/clean) les toiles d'araignées
- Verser (to pour) l'eau/la bouillie/le manioc
- Verser (to pour) le corossol
- Donner (to give) un léger
- Allumer (to light) un homme
- Manger (to eat) sa part de kola
- Manger (to eat) la banane avec la peau
- Filer (to give) le plantain à une femme
- Filer (to pass on) un truc à une femme
- Faire (to do) le rally sur une femme
- Succer (to suck) le bonbon avec la peau
- Mettre (to put down) le dos d'une femme au sol

- Pisser (to pee) dans une femme
- Finir (finish) avec une femme
- Manger (to eat) dans le même plat que quelqu'un
- Voyager (to travel) sans décoller (take off)
- Tomber (fall) sans glisser (to slide)
- Aller/descendre (go/go down) à la cave
- Aller (to go) à la mosquée
- La poule a versé (poured) l'huile"
- Il pleut (raining) au pays bas
- Je me suis sali (dirtied)
- ça coule (flows)"
- On ne mange (eat) pas la banana avec la peau
- Qui a bu (drunk) boira (will drink) /qui a fait (done) fera (will do)
- Même l'eau sale éteint(put off) le feu
- Ton bic n'écrit (write) pas?
- Si tu mets (put), ça ne va pas entrer (to enter)?
- Avoir envie de faire (make)

●Perception

- Voir (to see) la lune
- Flasher (to glance) sur quelqu'un

●Relational

- Avoir la poitrine
- L' homme c'est son ventre et son bas-ventre
- Avoir les formes

●Existential

- Etre au feu rouge
- Etre en mode un but sort
- Etre bilingue
- Je suis (am) en prison
- Il y a (is) marée haute
- Il y a (is) arrivage
- Tout ce qui est (is) fendu n'est (is) pas défendu (forbidden) à ce qui est tendu (elongated)
- Son tuyau est cassé

The data presented above shows that the verbs used in the language of sexuality in French-speaking Cameroon are the ones which denote material and existential processes as well as those of perception. Besides, it can be observed that the overwhelming majority of these verbs denote material processes.

From the standpoint of semiotics, it can be pointed out that there is a close relationship between the language of sexuality in French-speaking Cameroon and the alimentary.

This corroborates Allan and Burridge's (2006, p. 186) assertion according to which, "somewhere at the back of our minds, carefully walled off from ordinary consideration and discourse, lies the idea that human beings might become food, and eaters of each other. Violence is necessary if any organism is to ingest another". They add that "there is a close connection between the alimentary and the sexual. [...] Even our everyday language reminds us of the link between eating and sex". It can be said that Allan and Burridge's (2006) observation can provide insights to the understanding of the semiotics of the language of sexuality in French-speaking Cameroon. The language of sexuality of these language users is characterized by a striking relationship with the eating. This is quite remarkable when these language users refer to sex organs, partners and sexual intercourses. For instance, the male genital organ is referred to using edible products such as "plantain" (plantain), plantain mûr (ripe plantain), plantain non mûr (unripe plantain), carotte (carrot), spaghetti (spaghetti), tendon (tendon which is edible), pain deux oeufs (bread two eggs), etc. Similarly, female genital organs are also referred to using edible products such as haricot (beans), used to refer to the clitoris and the words "gésier" (guts), "pistache" (pistachio) and gâteau (cake), used to refer to the vagina. In the same vein, women breasts are referred to using words such as "mandarines" (mandarins): breasts of very small size; "oranges" (oranges): breast of average size; pamplemousses (gape fruits) (breast of big size). Also, a woman who easily has sex with people is referred to as "l'arachide du deuil" (groundnut for funeral). Besides, any consumable product used to arouse one's sexual impulses is called "démarreur" (starter). A man who does not sustain erection is called "de l'eau glacé"/cold water". Furthermore, it can be noted that some expressions used in the language of sexuality also have a relationship with the eating. For example, the expressions "manger la banana avec la peau" (to eat banana with its peel) and "sucrer le bonbon avec la peau" (to suck sweet with its peels) mean "to have protected sexual intercourses". Also, the expressions "filer le plantain à une femme" (to give plantain to a woman), "manger une femme" (to eat a woman), manger sa part de kola (to eat one's share of the kola), on the one hand and "manger dans le même plat avec homme" (to eat on the same plate with another man) on the other hand, are respectively used to mean "to have sexual intercourses with a woman" and "have sexual intercourses (two men) with the same woman. Furthermore, the stereotyped sentence "qui a bu boira" (one who has drunk will drink) is used to mean that once a man has had sexual intercourses with a woman, the probability of having them in the future is very high. The striking link between this language and the eating portrays the cannibalistic facet of this code. This cannibalistic aspect can be perceived through the fact that in this code, genital organs, as pointed out above, especially female, are represented by the use of edible products. So, the female sex organ as well as other intimate body parts and to an extent the whole body, are equated to edible products. That is what accounts for the use of lexes listed above used to refer to sex organs and some expressions used to refer to the act of having sexual intercourses. So, it can be said that in this language, women intimate parts and to a lesser extent men's are perceived by these language users as foodstuff.

Furthermore, a psychoanalytic analysis of the language of sexuality in French-speaking Cameroon can also enable us to understand the factors which motivate the choice of the

objects in the real world to refer to male and female sex organs. Freud (1933), in his famous lecture on “Femininity” has established a distinction between the “masculine” and the “feminine” as follows: “when you say ‘masculine’, you usually mean ‘active’, and when you say ‘feminine’, you usually mean ‘passive[...] male genitals are convex; females, concave”. That is, the penis’ convex shape makes man active; the vagina’s concave shape makes woman passive.” This corroborates Winick’s (1995, p. 71) observation according to which “psychoanalytic symbolism connects femininity with round, hollow, concave, and enclosing shapes and masculinity with elongated, convex, sharp, and penetrating forms.” These clues can throw more light on the motivations of the choice of certain lexical items by these language users to refer to male and female sex organs. The notions of “convexity” and “concavity” can be very helpful. A scrutiny of the lexes used by these language users reveals that the objects used to refer to male sex organs are convex while those used to refer to female organs are concave. For instance, convex-shape objects such as “bazooka” (bazooka), “cannon” (cannon), chenille (caterpillar), “pilon” (pestle), “plantain” (plantain), plantain mûr (ripe plantain), plantain non mûr (unripe plantain), carotte (carrot), spaghetti (spaghetti), tendon (tendon which is edible), pain deux oeufs (bread two eggs) are used to refer to the male sex organ. Concave-shaped objects such as “mortier” (mortar), “tunnel” (tunnel), etc. are used to refer to the female sex organ. Also, round and hollow objects, which are considered by Winick (1995, p. 71) as psychoanalytic symbols of femininity are used by these language users. It is the case of the objects such as “gésier” (guts), “pistache” (pistachio), used to refer to the vagina “mandarines” (mandarins): breasts of very small size, “oranges” (oranges): breast of average size and pamplemousses (gape fruits) (breast of big size).

It is worth noting that what is common to many of the lexes used to refer to these sex organs and partners is that they are generally metaphoric. They can therefore be classified under object metaphors (cannon (cannon), bazooka (bazooka), pilon (pestle), spaghetti (spaghetti), chicotte de papa (whip of daddy), pain deux oeufs (bread two eggs), tunnel (tunnel), mortier (mortar), etc., animal metaphors (chenille (caterpillar) and plant metaphors (plantain (plantain), plantain mûr (ripe plantain), plantain non mûr (unripe plantain), pistache (pistachio), mandarines (mandarins), oranges (oranges), pamplemousses (gape fruits), carotte (carrot), etc.

The language of sexuality in French-speaking Cameroon, from a sociocultural standpoint, portrays the patriarchal aspect of the Cameroonian society which is essentially male-domineering. In effect the linguistic resources (lexes and stereotyped lexico-semantic constructions) reveal the violent, aggressive and authoritative nature of men on women. A scrutiny of some of the lexes used to refer to sexual intercourse shows the violence and authority of men on women. For instance, verbs such as “couper” (to cut), écraser (to grind), chicotter/fouetter (to whip), tuer (to kill), appuyer (to press), tchouker (to hit/to push/to make something move) une femme (a woman), which essentially denotes violence, are used to refer to the act of having a sexual intercourse with a woman. So, in a sexual intercourse in the language of sexuality of

French-speaking Cameroonians, a woman is “cut” (coupée), “ground” (écrasée), whipped (fouettée), killed (tuée), pressed (appuyée), hit/pushed (tchoukée), etc.

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing analysis, it can be said that the language of sexuality of French-speaking Cameroonians is characterized by lexico-semantic creativity. To be more precise, French-speaking Cameroonians are very linguistically creative as regards the lexico-semantic resources that they put at work in order to express their sexuality. The analysis has led to the identification of various lexico-semantic hallmarks which characterize this code, namely compounding and conversion, affixation, semantic shifts, coinages, borrowing, conversion, clipping and initialisms, collocational extension and change in verb valency, idiomatic formation and stereotyped sentences. Also, it has been pointed out that the linguistic resources attested in this code can be classified under the following lexical domains: sex organs, accessories and functions; sexual partners and relationship; sexual orientation and body image; sexual activities and toponyms; sexual experiences, fantasies and diseases. Furthermore, the analysis shows that the language of sexuality of French-speaking Cameroonians draws its lexicon from Standard French, English, Camfranglais, Cameroon Pidgin-English, home languages, foreign and unknown sources. Semiotically speaking, it has been established a striking relationship between this code and the alimentary. From the standpoint of psychoanalysis, the findings go in the same vein with Winick's (1995, p. 71) observation according to which psychoanalytic symbolism connects femininity with round, hollow, concave, and enclosing shapes and masculinity with elongated, convex, sharp, and penetrating forms. Socioculturally speaking this code portrays the patriarchal aspect of the Cameroonian society which is essentially male-domineering. It is worth pointing out that the language of sexuality in French-speaking Cameroon is a perfect illustration of the dynamism of the French-language in the Cameroonian sociocultural setting. At a moment when various research are being carried out on the lexico-semantic features on the French language in French-speaking African (Cf. Racelle-Latin(1988), Lafage (2002),Boucher and Lafage (2000), Mfoutou (2000), Dumont (2008), just to name these few, such a study is of paramount importance and should be conducted in various French-speaking African countries so as to put at the disposal of lexicographers useful lexico-semantic resources which can enable them foster the establishment of the linguistic hallmarks of French in French-speaking Africa and compile dictionaries. It is worth pointing out that though sexuality is a universal concept, the lexico-semantic resources of the language of sexuality vary from one geographical area to another. So, each society develops its lexicon to refer to its practice.

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