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Evaluating the Effectiveness and Impact of the Special Recruitment of Translators and Translators-Interpreters into the Cameroon Public Service (2019-2024)

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Abstract

This study analyzes the impact of the special recruitment of translators and translator-interpreters in Cameroon's public service between 2019 and 2024. A structured questionnaire was administered to 44 professionals to assess the perceived value of translation after recruitment, the clarity of translators' professional missions, and the opportunities and challenges encountered. The results indicate a generally positive perception of the initiative, with 66% of respondents reporting improved visibility and recognition of translators in public institutions, largely due to increased bilingual government communication. However, some respondents observed minimal change because of administrative inefficiencies and limited understanding of translators' roles. Job assignment remains problematic, as only 34% frequently receive tasks related to their training, while some receive no tasks. Professional development is also limited, with 80% reporting no training since recruitment. Other challenges include inadequate tools, poor working conditions, and limited career advancement. The study recommends clearer role definition, continuous training, improved working conditions, and stronger institutional recognition to enhance the effectiveness of translators in the public sector.

Keywords: Translators, Translators-interpreters, Public service, Special recruitment, Cameroon

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1. Introduction

Translation and interpretation just like a good number of liberal professions such as journalism, architecture and medicine, serve both public and private interest. As such, translation and interpretation have to be accurate,

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reliable and accessible to all because liberal professions are of a marked intellectual character and as such require high-level qualification which are usually subject to clear and strict professional regulations¹.

For translation and interpretation to be highly accessible and accurate in the public service, their value should be upheld. This will eventually avoid a good number of conflicts. Moreno-Rivero (2020:2) argues that translation is an essential tool in diverse societies. As language conflicts grow within certain sectors of the population, translation and interpretation help bridge the communication gap in multilingual nations.

In Cameroon, translation featured prominently among the many grievances brandished by Common Law lawyers in September 2016 when they took to the streets². These grievances eventually led to the Anglophone crisis. To solve this crisis and to contain feelings of marginalisation, the President of the Republic, His excellency Paul Biya in an unusual address to the nation on 10 September 2019 announced the holding of a Major National Dialogue³. This Major Dialogue had as one of its main themes “Bilingualism, cultural diversity and social cohesion”, and it came pregnant with a good number of recommendations among which was passing legislation that spells out the equitable use of both official language in all areas of national life (Yenkong, 2024:71) to make effective the equal status of both English and French as stated in the Constitution⁴. To help implement these resolutions, the government of Cameroon introduced the Special Recruitment of Translators and Translators-Interpreters into the public service⁵. To introduce this study, this first part shall present the background, problem statement, objectives, key concepts, and theoretical framework underpinning the research.

1.1. Problem

In 2020, the government of Cameroon launched the recruitment of 500 personnels within the corps of Translators and Translators-interpreters for five years. The intention for this recruitment was first, to implement one of the resolutions of the Major National Dialogue—that of making effective official bilingualism by recruiting translators and translators-interpreters, and second, to quickly uphold the French-English linguistic balance as prescribe by the 1972 Constitution. With this initiative, one would have expected translators and translators-interpreters as well as translation to have a key role in government’s communication policy. However, this seems not to be the case whereby appropriate translation / interpretation services are not used and translators’ / interpreters’ missions are not clearly defined and considered. This paper seeks therefore to assess the outcome and the impact of the Special Recruitment of Translators and Translators-Interpreters into the Public Service by answering the following questions:

1. What is the value of translation after the special recruitment of translators and translators-interpreters into the public service?
2. To what extent are the missions of translators and translators-interpreters recruited during the special recruitment defined and respected?
3. What are some challenges faced and opportunities awaiting translators and translators-interpreters after the special recruitment of translators and translators-interpreters into the public service?

1.2. Objectives

In line with the research problem, this work intends to:

1. To investigate the value of translation after the special recruitment of translators and translators-interpreters into the public service.
2. To assess the extent to which the missions of translators and translators-interpreters recruited during the special recruitment are defined and respected.
3. To explore some challenges faced and opportunities awaiting public service translators and translators-interpreters after the special recruitment of translators and translators-interpreters into the public service.

¹ Liberal Profession as defined by the ECJ in its judgement of 11 October 2001.

² Translation: The Forgotten Grievance in the Anglophone Crisis, Nchanji Njamnsi, LinkedIn article.

³ Cameroun Tribune of 30 December 2019.

⁴ Law No.2008/001 of 14 April 2008 to amend and supplement some provisions of Law No.96/06 of 18 January 1996 to amend the Constitution of 2 June 1972.

⁵ The Guardian Post of 1 October 2024.

1.3. Key Concepts

Key notions such as the special recruitment are going to be analysed in this chapter, alongside the global and local understanding of translators and translators-interpreters. The last concept to be reviewed shall be translators and translators-interpreters into the public service in Cameroon.

1.3.1 Special Recruitment

While there exists no exact definition for 'special recruitment', Dale (1970:229) defines recruitment as "a process to discover, manpower sources to meet staffing requirements and employing measures to attract manpower". From this definition, special recruitment could be referred as a targeted recruitment process designed to attract specific profiles for specific roles. This type of recruitment could be conducted through direct outreach, customised assessments, networking and competitive examinations as it is the case for governmental and intergovernmental organizations.

The notion of "Special recruitment" is very recurrent in Cameroon. This type of recruitment is very often touted as a panacea to address socio-professional concerns. Special recruitments across professions like education, military, justice, administration, police, statistics, engineering, medicine and penitentiary services. In 2025, the government of Cameroon announced 2,860 special recruitments in the public service. The breakdown includes 1,555 positions through standard recruitment via competitive exams and training, 750 positions for special recruitment in Higher Education, Penitentiary Services, and Research, and 555 positions for career advancements⁶.

On 20 November 2019, a press release signed by the Minister of state, Secretary-General of the presidency of the Republic informed the public that the Head of State, His Excellency Paul Biya, ordered a special recruitment of 500 (five hundred) Translators and Translator-Interpreters into the public service to be conducted over a period of 5 (five) years, with effect from the 2020 financial year. According to the Minister of state, Secretary-General of the presidency, this special recruitment sought to staff government services with sufficient qualified translation and interpretation professionals following recommendations of the Major National Dialogue on the need to produce official documents in English and French.

1.3.2. Translators

A translator's primary responsibility is to accurately convey the meaning of texts, articles, or books from one language to another, such as from / into a foreign language. This involves translating various content, including literary works and important documents. To produce high-quality translations, translators must be familiar with the subject matter, possess in-depth knowledge of both the source and target languages, and be able to effectively transfer meaning while considering cultural and social contexts. Additionally, they should have strong writing skills in the target language to ensure clarity and readability (Tira, 2024:16). Neubert and Shreve (1992:15) add that, the translator needs to understand his communicative function, target language textual style, potential audience, and the requirements of the host culture and linguistic system being translated.

Tira (2024:17) therefore argues that, translation involves more than just replacing words from one language to another. It's a nuanced process that requires careful consideration of various factors to produce accurate and culturally relevant results. Understanding the context of both languages is crucial to capture subtle differences in meaning. Familiarity with the grammatical rules of both languages is also essential. Additionally, knowledge of target language spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and formatting is necessary. Furthermore, navigating complex idioms and phrases that may not translate directly is vital. By considering these factors, translators can create high-quality translations that convey the intended meaning and resonate with the target audience.

Having an effective translation services and well-trained translators, in the Cameroon public service implies that speakers of both English and French will have equal access to public written resources, and if allowed to carryout their task, public service translators can help Cameroon deal with the challenges of unity, national integration, social cohesion and linguistic marginalisation.

⁶ CRTVweb of 24 April 2025 consulted on 28 April 2025.

1.3.3. Translators-Interpreters

Though not academically documented but highly professionally common, a translator-interpreter does the writing and talking by converting text and speech from a source language into a target language⁷. Cameroon public service translators-interpreters hold two university degrees; one in translation and the other in interpretation. This is due to the absence of institutions issuing degrees in both translation and interpretation.

Just like translators and interpreters, translators-interpreters plays an important role in conveying to the second party what is said and written by the first party in the source language into the target language. They are professional person who facilitates communication between two or more people who speak and write different languages. They work in verbal and oral contexts simultaneously with native speakers to translate speech and words into the target language.

1.3.4. Translators and Interpreters in the Public Service

When talking about translators and interpreters in the Cameroon Public service, it is essential to refer to Decrees No. 75 770 of 18 December 1975, No 70 / 252 of 25 June 1976, No 76 / 251 of 25 June 1978 alongside letter No. B355 / SG / PR of 20 November 2019.

According to (Sakwe, 2024:18), Decree No. 75-770 of 18 December 1975 signed by former president El Hadj Ahmadou Ahidjo, is the main document that describes the special rules and regulations applicable to translators and interpreters in the Cameroon public service. Sakwe (2024) further adds that, this decree sets forth both general and special provisions for translators and interpreters into the public service. According to Article 1(2) of this decree, interpreters are responsible for interpreting at meetings, while translators handle the translation of official documents. Article 2 specifies that the Translation and Interpreting Service consists of two cadres: translators and translator / interpreters, both classified under category A. Additionally, Article 4 introduces a special category within the corps referred to as "senior translators or senior interpreters" (Sakwe, 2024:18).

In terms of special provisions, Article 6(1) distinguishes between grades, stating that senior translators fall under grade 2 while translators are classified under grade 1. The profession is further divided into five classes, ranked from highest to lowest: senior translators' special class, senior translators' class 1, senior translators' class 2, translators' special class, translators' class 1, and translators' class 2.

Recruitment procedures are laid out in Article 9, which specifies that both senior translators and translators are selected based on qualifications through professional competitive examinations and grade promotion by selection. Senior translators must possess at least a bachelor's degree and a diploma in translation from a national, foreign, or international institute recognized by a presidential order. Translators, by contrast, are recruited from candidates holding a secondary education certificate an Advanced Level General Certificate of Education or a baccalauréat or an equivalent recognised qualification. However, in practice and during recruitments, senior translators are expected to hold a postgraduate university degree and translators are required to hold at least a bachelor's degree.

1.4. Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by Reiss, Vermeer and Nord's Functionalist theory which emphasises the purpose (skopos)—Translation is a purposeful action to serve a specific function (Reiss and Vermeer, 2014:85). in the public service. Being aware of the skopos helps to understand and decide whether translators' tasks are predefined and respected. Translators-interpreters are not merely language converters but cultural mediators within the public service, an aspect that shapes the value and contribution of the work. Institutional norms guide translation practice, embodying the difficulties translators face under the umbrella of public service institutional norms. The Functionalist theory further reveals institutional and practical difficulties shaping the functional attainment of translation tasks, along with potential areas of improvement.

This research is also guided by Sociological translation studies proposed mainly by Pym (2012) and Wolf *et al.* (2007) who emphasise that translators operate in complex social networks and institutional contexts which shape their work, agency, and visibility.

⁷ American Translators Association.

This approach examines translation not merely as a textual or linguistic practice but rather as a social practice strongly embedded in institutional, political, and cultural contexts. Wolf *et al.* (2007:7) argues that, translation is viewed as a discursive practice constitutive of culture and that plays a role in the formation of social identity, image and roles. Sociological approach helps to examine the professional integration and identity of the new recruits of translators and translators-interpreters into public service institutions; how institutional power relationships condition translators' and translators-interpreters' autonomy and decision-making, social and organizational challenges translators translators-interpreters face after recruitment, interactions between translators, public service officials, and users, through which translation outcomes are framed and how translators' and translators-interpreters' roles are constructed, negotiated, and sometimes constrained within public sector bureaucracy.

2. Methodology

This section describes the methodological framework underpinning this study, providing a comprehensive explanation of the research design, sampling procedure, data elicitation process, method of data processing, analysis and presentation, instrument validity and reliability, as well as the ethical considerations.

2.1. Research Design

This study adopts a cross-sectional descriptive survey design using both qualitative and quantitative data. It does not employ an experimental approach and does not test causal hypotheses; rather, it answers predefined research questions through descriptive and interpretive statistical analysis. The exploratory dimension aims to address the research questions concerning the value and mission of translation and translators-interpreters in public service contexts.

A purposeful population of translators and translators-interpreters employed by state institutions was selected. This equally included 44 participants, a mix of: Recruited translators and translators-interpreters during the recruitment process, and public service translators and interpreters.

Inclusion criteria required participants to be currently employed in a public institution and either recruited during the 2019–2024 special recruitment or already serving as translators or translator-interpreters before it. The sample, therefore, includes both newly recruited and pre-existing staff, as well as both professional categories, across multiple ministries and administrative units.

The intended scope of inference is limited to translators and translator-interpreters working in Cameroonian public institutions rather than the entire national profession. Because purposive sampling was used, findings should be interpreted as analytically indicative rather than statistically generalisable.

2.2. Data Processing and Analysis

To effectively address the study's objectives, a structured data processing and analysis was implemented whereby quantitative responses were coded numerically and analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, and cross-tabulations). Likert-scale responses were grouped into analytic categories (high, moderate, low). Open-ended responses were thematically coded through inductive categorisation. Mixed or uncertain responses were treated as a distinct analytical category rather than merged with affirmative or negative responses. Missing responses were excluded from percentage calculations but retained in total sample reporting, which explains occasional variation between 44 total participants and 42 valid responses for some items.

Moreover, the operational definitions of core constructs in this study are specified include; the value of translation which refers to respondents' rating of institutional appreciation, measured through Likert-scale responses on perceived importance; visibility denotes the perceived recognition of translators within institutional structures and is measured through yes / no / mixed responses concerning improved professional presence; mission respected refers to the frequency with which respondents report that supervisors acknowledge and follow their professional mandates, assessed using an ordinal scale ranging from never to sometimes too often; role confusion designates the reported assignment of tasks unrelated to translation or interpreting; and recognition refers to perceived institutional acknowledgement, incentives, or consultation in decision-making, with these operational definitions guiding the interpretation of all percentages reported in the findings.

2.3. Validity and Reliability of Instruments

Content validity is ensured through expert (public service translators and translators-interpreters). Checking of interview guides. For reliability, a use of a questionnaire guide to ensure consistency across questions and a pilot-testing of the questionnaire with a small population for clarity and refinement of relevance. Data was cross-checked and peer-checked.

2.4. Ethical Considerations

Participants in the study will be provided with clear, written consent forms detailing the research's purpose, emphasising their voluntary participation, and affirming their right to withdraw at any time. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, all names and identifying information will be anonymised. Furthermore, the principle of non-maleficence will be strictly adhered to, ensuring that participants are not placed at institutional or personal risk, especially

3. Presentation of Findings

This study seeks to assess the outcome and the impact of the 2020-2024 Special Recruitment of Translators and Translators-Interpreters into the Public Service by administering questionnaires to 44 public service translators and translators-interpreters.

3.1. Objective One: To Investigate the Value of Translation after the Special Recruitment of Translators and Translators-Interpreters into the Public Service

Below, 45%(20) of respondents opine that translation is moderately valued, 23%(10) consider it to be highly valued, 23%(10) see the value of translation as being low, 7%(3) see it as being high while 2%(1) see the value given to translation in public institution and being very low (Figure 1).

From the above, 59%(26) of respondents argue that the role of translation in government communication is recognized, 31%(14) assume not to know, while 10%(4) say the translation is absent in government communication policy (Figure 2).

On one hand, most respondents at 66% argue the special recruitment has positively impacted the role of translators. This includes increased government recognition, better representation, improved document availability in both official languages, and enhanced communication. Responses highlight progress in quality and visibility of translation services in public institutions. On the other hand, 29% (nearly one-third) see no visible difference or remain sceptical, pointing to ongoing challenges such as administrative dysfunction, lack of understanding of translators' roles by civil servants, and translators being sidelined in daily operations despite recruitment efforts. Added to this, 5% of respondents have Mixed / Uncertain reactions. A very small number of respondents express a mixed view or did not answer, indicating some uncertainty or lack of clear opinion (Table 1).

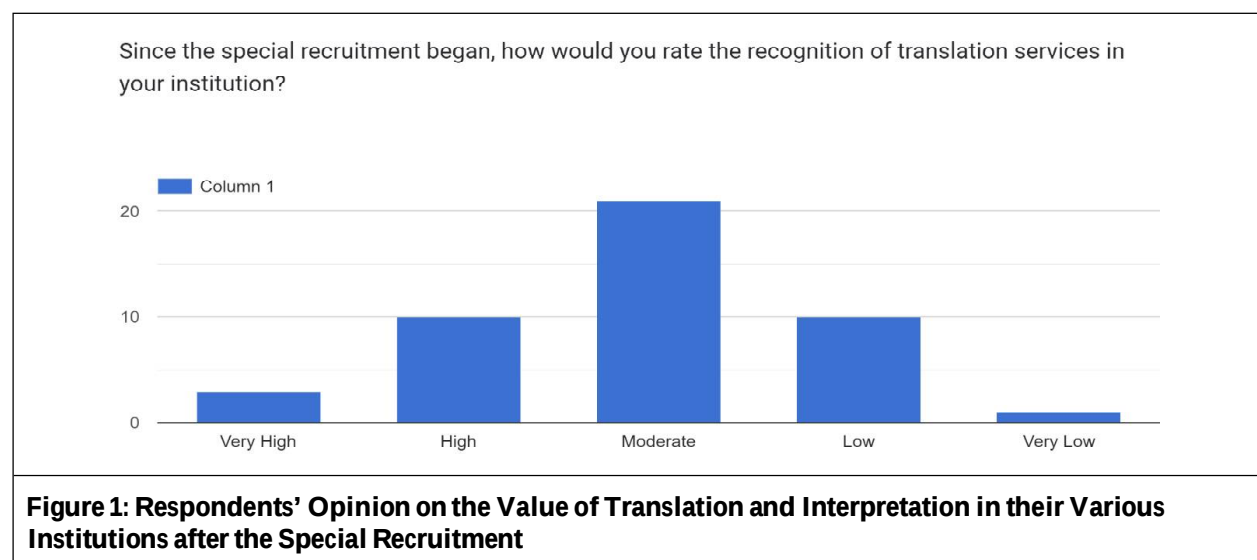


Table 1: Respondents' Opinion on if the Special Recruitment Helped Improve the Visibility and Importance of Translators and Translators-Interpreters in Public Institutions

Response	Answer	Comments
1	Yes	The recruitment shows government recognition of translators' crucial role in communication and access to information; improved representation and inclusivity.
2	No	—
3	Yes	Government now makes efforts to communicate in both official languages.
4	Yes	—
5	Yes	Documents are now available in both national languages.
6	No	No visible difference noticed.
7	Mixed	Translators are still side-lined in daily operations.
8	No	Not really.
9	No	—
10	Yes	Increasing number of translators raises awareness.
11	Yes	Recognition of translators' role in promoting bilingualism and multiculturalism.
12	Yes	Despite ongoing challenges, the recruitment acknowledges and elevates the role of translators in public institutions.
13	Yes	In MINAT.
14	Yes	Upgrade and balance in official documents.
15	No	Administrative dysfunction prevents some from deploying their skills.
16	Yes	Most institutions now strive to provide documents in both official languages.
17	Yes	80% of translation now handled by trained translators; quality has improved since 2018.
18	No	—
19	No	Many civil servants do not understand the translator / interpreter's role.
20	Yes	Translation is more discussed than in the past.
21	Yes	Special recruitment shows translators are important; needed to convey messages effectively.
22	Yes	Previously, many were unaware of translation as a profession.
23	Yes	A little.
24	Yes	90% of documents in one institution now pass through the translation division.
25	Yes	Since the number of translators is rapidly increasing, it made other services know that translators do exist. In my institution, about 90% of documents always pass through the translation division, to make it available in both languages.
26	Yes	It helps bringing light to translators and interpreters by recognizing our value and mission in the promotion of bilingualism and multiculturalism.
27	Yes	While challenges may still exist regarding optimal utilization, career progression, or resource allocation, the fundamental act of a targeted recruitment drive signals a significant step towards acknowledging and elevating the visibility and importance of these crucial language service providers within the public sector.

Table 1: (Cont.)

28	Yes	Because there have been an upgrade and balance in official documents.
29	No	Some of us do not have the chance to deploy our capacities because of the administration dysfunction.
30	Yes	Because most public institutions make an effort to have their documents in the two official languages.
31	Yes.	When I visit institutions, I find that 80% of the people handling translation activities are translators, rather than bilingual staff as was previously the case. The quality of most translated texts has also improved noticeably since 2018. This is proof that public services have recognised the need for translators.
32	No	—
33	No	Many civil servants don't understand the role and missions of a translator / interpreter
34	Yes	Translation is more discussed than in the past.
35	Yes	For the government to launch such a recruitment means translators are important and their services are needed to convey messages effectively to the audience.
36	Yes	Because before now, many people were not aware of a profession like this.
37	Yes	As a Senior Translator in my institution, the Translation Unit is really involved in the Ministry's activities. The contents of our website and Facebook page are bilingual.
38	Yes	The special recruitment has undoubtedly improved the visibility and importance of translators in Government institutions. This initiative demonstrates Government's recognition of the crucial role translators' play in facilitating communication and access to information. This special recruitment has increased representation as it brought more translators into the civil service, enhancing their presence and contribution to governance. It has also improved communication as with the presence of these newly recruited translators, public institutions can better serve diverse populations, fostering inclusivity and effective communication.
39	No	—
40	No	Translators are still shifted aside in the day-to-day running of their institutions.
41		Not really.

Is the role due to translation in government communication policy now recognised?

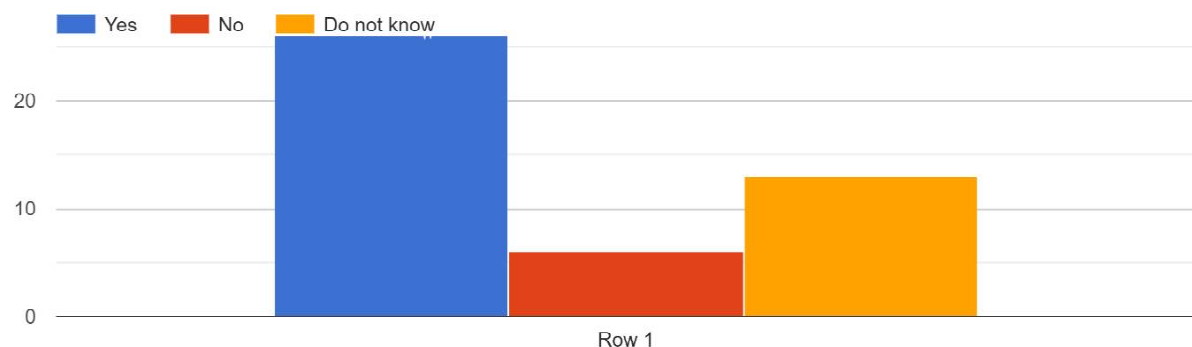


Figure 2: Respondent's Opinion on the Role Due to Translation and Interpretation in Government Communication Policy

3.2. Objective Two: To Assess the Extent to Which the Missions of Translators and Translators-Interpreters Recruited During the Special Recruitment are Defined and Respected

From the above, 40%(18) of respondents declare that their missions and responsibilities were defined upon recruitment, while 30%(13) of them say their missions were not defined, 30%(13) say their missions were partially defined (Figure 3).

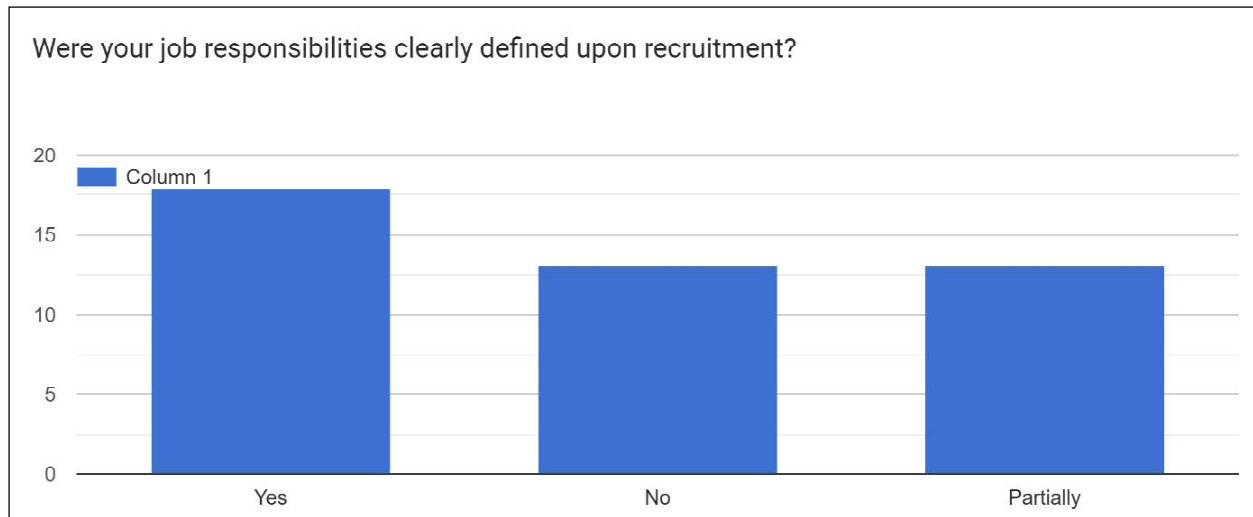


Figure 3: Respondents' Opinion on if their Job Responsibilities were Clearly Defined

In aggregate, 47%(20) of respondents, almost half, declare that their professional mission is sometimes respected, while only 33%(14) assert that their missions are often respected, 10%(4) say their missions are often respected, and 10% (4) say their missions are never respected (Figure 4).

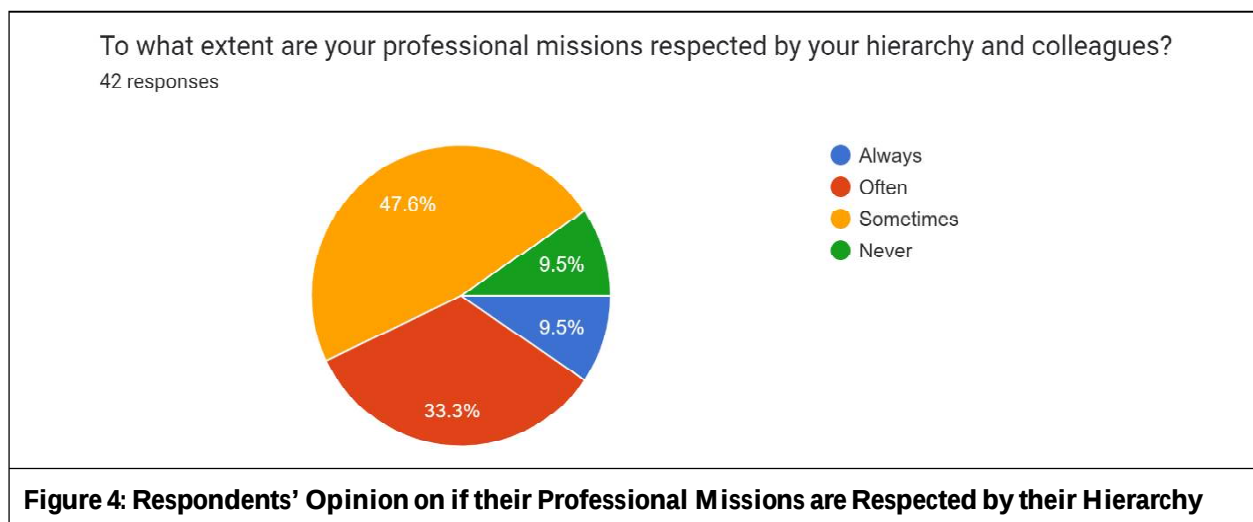
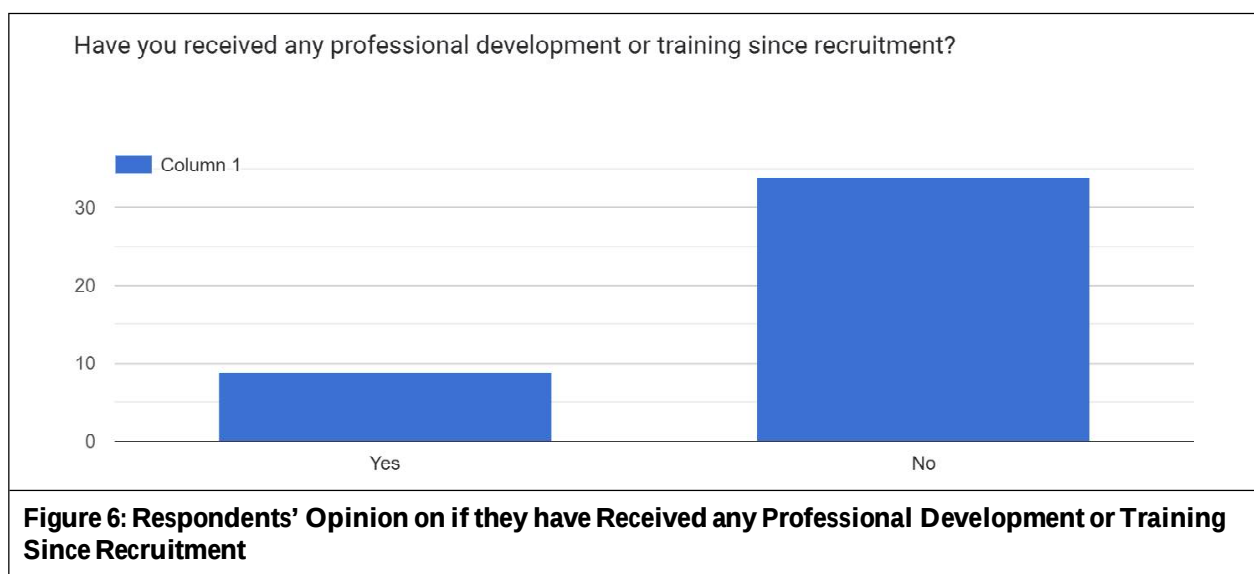
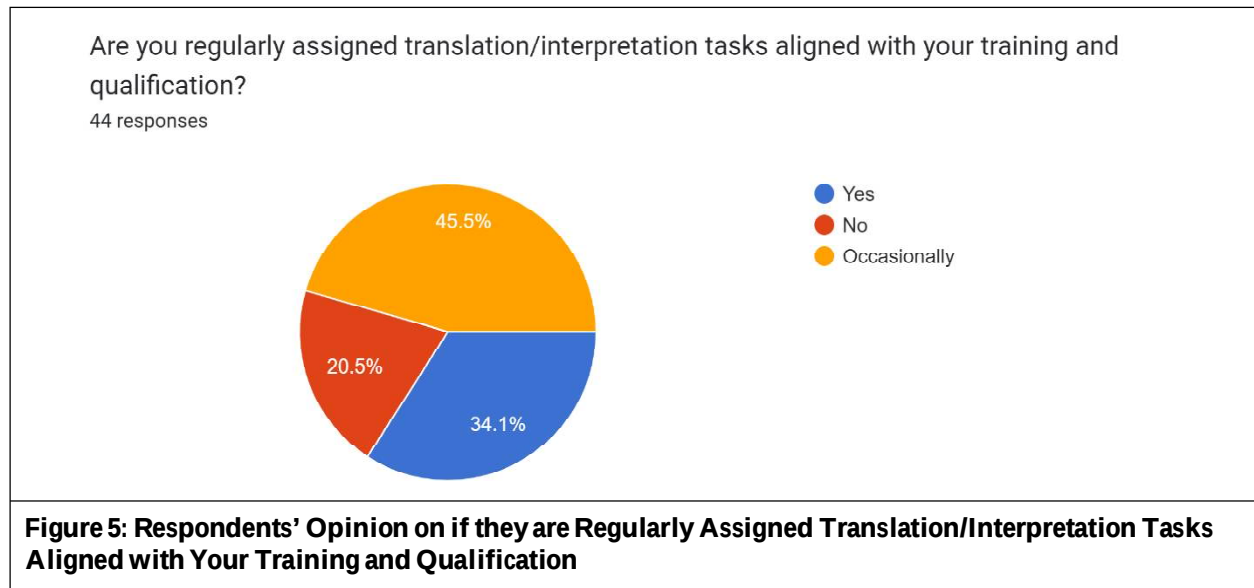


Figure 4: Respondents' Opinion on if their Professional Missions are Respected by their Hierarchy

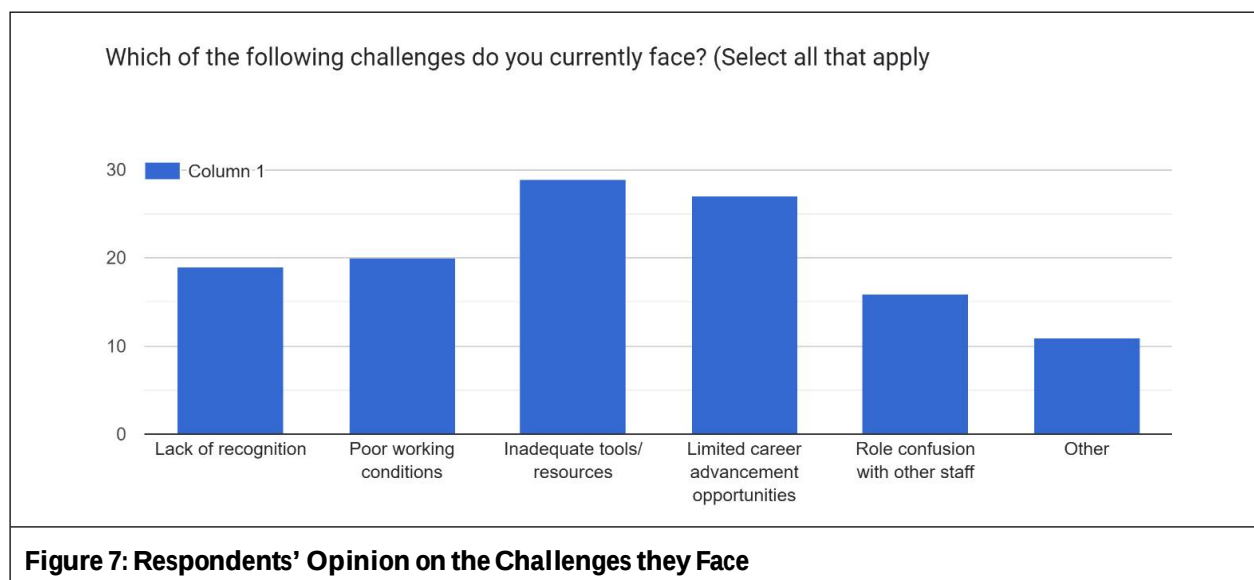
In aggregate, 46%(20) of respondents, declare that they are occasionally assigned tasks in line with their training and qualification, 34%(15) declare that they are tasked in line with their training and qualification, while 20%(9) assert that they have never been assigned tasks in line with their training and qualification (Figure 5).

3.3. Objective Three: To Explore Some Challenges Faced and Opportunities Awaiting Public Service Translators and Translators-Interpreters after the Special Recruitment of Translators and Translators-Interpreters into the Public Service

Out of 44 respondents, 35(80%) declare never to have received professional development or training since recruitment while only 9 of them (20%) admit to have received professional development or training since recruitment (Figure 6).



From the Figure 7, the most common challenge faced by translators and translators-interpreters at the end of the special recruitment is inadequate tools / resources (67%), which appeared 29 times, followed closely by limited career advancement (59%), appearing 26 times. Poor working conditions (46%) were declared 20 times,



and lack of recognition (43%) was ticked 19 times. Also, while confusion of task (36%) was considered by 16 times, and other issues (25%) hindered 11 respondents, and are less frequent but still notable, affecting a quarter to a third of respondents (Figure 7).

In aggregate, 23% of respondents feel there are no clear opportunities or express dissatisfaction with the current state, 11% see networking and exposure as the greatest opportunity while career growth and skill development are mentioned by 9% of respondents, cultural and national impact (7%) such as advancing national bilingualism and multiculturalism is seen as opportunity for some respondents, training/ specialisation is considered by 5% of respondents as opportunities, specific work-related task (5%) such as translating official documents, a great portion of responses (40%) were unclear (Table 2).

Table 2: Respondents' Opinion on Opportunities Available to Translator or Translators-Interpreters in the Public Service Today		
Theme	Number of Responses	Percentage (%)
No Opportunities / Negative Sentiment	10	23%
Networking / Exposure	5	11%
Career Growth / Development	4	9%
Cultural or National Impact	3	7%
Training / Specialization	2	5%
Unclear / Ambiguous	18	40%
Specific Work-Related Task	2	5%
Total	44	100

Respondents' opinion on what could be done to enhance the recognition and appreciation of the value of translation and interpretation, as well as the contributions of translators and translator-interpreters in the Cameroon public service are organised into 13 categories. Many respondents emphasise the urgent need to formally institutionalise the translation and interpretation profession by establishing clear career pathways, promotion opportunities, and fair remuneration. Such measures would grant translators and interpreters the official status and job stability they currently lack, enhancing their professional identity within the public service.

In addition, continuous training and professional development are also highlighted as essential. Regular workshops and skills upgrade do not only keep translators' abilities sharp and relevant but also signal that their growth is valued and supported. This investment in capacity building is crucial for meeting evolving demands in the field.

Moreover, a significant concern raised involves the misuse and role confusion faced by translators, where trained professionals are often assigned unrelated administrative tasks. Ensuring that translators focus solely on translation and interpretation respects their expertise, improves job satisfaction, and maintains professional standards.

Furthermore, respondents further stress the importance of providing the right tools and working conditions. Access to up-to-date software, reliable internet, adequate office space, and a conducive environment directly impacts productivity and morale, enabling translators to perform their duties effectively.

There is also a strong call for a robust legal and policy framework to support the profession. Enforcing bilingualism laws, mandating translation of official documents, and establishing national language policies would institutionalise and legitimise translators' roles, safeguarding the quality and integrity of their work.

Additionally, increasing visibility and awareness through public campaigns, media exposure, and celebratory events can significantly improve societal appreciation of translators' contributions. Such efforts help bridge the gap between the profession and the public thereby raising its profile.

Table 3: Respondents' Opinion on What Could be Done to Enhance the Recognition and Appreciation of the Value of Translation and Interpretation, as well as the Contributions of Translators and Translator-Interpreters, in the Cameroon Public Service

Response Theme	Summary of Answer	Comment
Institutionalization and Career Structure	Create clear career paths, promotion systems, and fair remuneration; establish regulatory bodies and national orders for translators	Focuses on formal recognition through structure and regulation
Training and Professional Development	Regular workshops, training programs, skills upgrades, and continuous professional development	Emphasizes capacity building and skills enhancement
Proper Use of Translators and Job Clarity	Ensure translators do translation work only; avoid role confusion; assign translation jobs exclusively to trained translators	Addresses misuse and role misplacement issues
Provision of Tools and Work Conditions	Provide translation tools, CAT tools, internet access, offices, and adequate working conditions	Highlights the need for resources to perform quality work
Legal and Policy Framework	Enforce bilingualism laws, mandate translation before signing official documents, and create national language policies	Suggests legal backing for professional translation and interpretation
Visibility and Awareness Campaigns	Conduct public awareness, sensitization campaigns, media visibility, Translation / Language weeks, and award ceremonies	Aims to raise public and institutional appreciation through promotion and celebration
Networking and Inclusion	Involve translators in government meetings, international missions, strategic plans, and policy drafting	Encourages integration into decision-making and broader projects
Recognition and Incentives	Offer awards, pay scale improvements, incentives on special days (Translators Day, Bilingualism Day)	Focus on motivating and rewarding translators
Decentralization and Deployment	Send more translators to decentralized / deconcentrated services	Suggests spreading expertise beyond central government units
Advocacy and Leadership	Heads of translation units should advocate for the profession and take responsibility	Points to leadership role in elevating the profession
Public Education and Clarification	Educate public institutions on the profession's importance and clarify difference between translators and bilinguals	Helps reduce misunderstandings and enhances appreciation
Technology and Innovation	Introduce advanced technological tools	Encourages modernization to improve efficiency and output
General Suggestions / Miscellaneous	Assign work matching translators' expertise, improve wages, provide offices, respect the profession like other sectors (police and military)	Other varied but relevant ideas to enhance status and functioning

Also, integrating translators into high-level meetings, international missions, and policy drafting processes can enhance their visibility and influence within government institutions. This inclusion empowers translators to contribute meaningfully to governance and diplomatic initiatives.

To add, recognition through formal awards, improved salaries, and incentives on special occasions would motivate translators and acknowledge their vital role in public service. These measures boost morale and encourage retention of skilled professionals.

Similarly, the idea of devolving and decentralising translator deployment to regional and local governments

units also emerges as a key recommendation. This would improve access to quality language services across the country and create more professional opportunities.

As well, strong advocacy and leadership within translation units are necessary to champion the profession's needs and ensure translators receive adequate support and recognition from their institutions.

Likewise, educating the public and government staff about the distinct roles of translators compared to bilingual individuals is essential to dispel misconceptions and elevate the profession's standing.

In support of this, embracing modern technology and innovation, such as advanced translation tools and software, can improve efficiency and demonstrate a commitment to advancing the profession in line with global standards.

Finally, respondents suggest a range of other improvements, including better alignment of tasks to translators' expertise, enhanced wages, provision of dedicated offices, and extending the same respect given to other professional sectors, such as the military. These recommendations collectively point towards a comprehensive strategy to uplift translation and interpretation in Cameroon's public service.

In summary, findings show that while a majority (66%) believe the recruitment improved the visibility and importance of translators through better bilingual documentation, increased recognition, and quality service delivery, a significant minority (29%) see no change due to administrative challenges and lack of understanding of translators' roles.

However, over half (56%) say their job responsibilities were not clearly defined, and nearly half (48%) feel their missions are only sometimes respected. Additionally, only 20% have received any training since recruitment. The top challenges reported include lack of tools (67%), limited career advancement (59%), poor working conditions (46%), and lack of recognition (43%).

Opportunities in the field remain unclear for many (40%), with 23% reporting no visible opportunities. Those identified include networking, career growth, and contributions to national bilingualism.

To enhance recognition and appreciation of translators, respondents recommend formalising the profession with clear structures, improving training, legal reforms, proper role assignment, better tools, leadership advocacy, and increased public visibility. These steps aim to better the effectiveness of translation services in the Cameroonian public sector.

Moreover, the findings can also be interpreted through the Functionalist (Skopos) framework and sociological translation studies. From a functionalist perspective, unclear task allocation and limited role recognition indicate a mismatch between institutional translation needs and the intended communicative purpose of translation activities. From a sociological perspective, reported challenges such as hierarchy-based constraints, limited autonomy, and role confusion demonstrate how institutional norms and power structures shape translators' professional visibility and agency within public service systems.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that special recruitment of translators and translator-interpreters into the Cameroonian public service has achieved mixed results, having reflected progress as well as persistent problems. Most respondents do believe that this special recruitment has increased the visibility and importance of translators in the public sector, this being on account of improvements in bilingual documentation, recognition, and the delivery of quality services. They, in turn, point to the potential for such targeted recruitment to raise the profile of key professions such as translation, which is critical in facilitating communication and access to information in a multilingual society such as Cameroon.

However, a significant minority either perceive no change or maintain a sceptical view of the special recruitment's impact. This viewpoint is often associated with persistent administrative problems and a lack of basic understanding among civil servants of what translators do. Such problems indicate the complex nature of inserting new professional cadres into existing bureaucratic systems. An absence of relevant job descriptions and at times intermittent incongruence between duties assigned to translators and their training and abilities. Such challenges are further compounded by the often-inappropriate matching of training and qualification to

a task. Therefore, these challenges have to be resolved to allow for the satisfactory functioning and meaningful contribution of translators to public service.

There are a number of recommendations that may be derived from the present work to enhance translation services and attain special recruitment benefits. Giving translators and interpreters the official status and job stability they currently lack by formalising the profession would entail setting up career paths, promotion schemes, and fair remuneration. It is implied that continuous training for professional development will keep language translators up-to-date and sharp in this fast-evolving field. Furthermore, legal reforms that enforce bilingualism laws and that make mandatory the translation of official documents can institutionally legitimate the role of the translator and protect the quality and integrity of the translation undertaken.

The above-mentioned measures can go a long way in promoting official bilingualism in Cameroon and enhancing communication across linguistic barriers and eventually promoting national unity and integration.

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