Euphemism in Cameroon English: Sweet Talking or Deception?

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to show that communicative expressions in Cameroon English that are intended by the speaker to be less offensive, distasteful, precise, direct, disturbing, or troubling to the listener encompass both sweet talking and deception. As sweet talking, euphemistic terms, in Cameroon English, are a palliative in that, by their very nature, they soften or disguise unpleasant elements of reality and glorify the commonplace through verbal delicacy. They are used to replace unpleasant tabooed objects in order to maintain one's face by not being rude and offensive to others. Consequently, they are psychological painkillers because they soothe distasteful notions and hide unpleasant or disturbing ideas, even when the literal term for them is not necessarily offensive. As deception, the use of euphemistic terms is a deliberate dishonest roundabout way of using words, phrases or expressions to make the bad seem good or, at least, tolerable. It is the way of concealing plain facts by using evasive words or expressions to make indecency look decent. However, the flattery effect can only be ephemera because the reality of the thing remains very much in the addressor's and the addressee's mind. The reality has not lost its sting. It comes from the human instinct and it is the tendency to avoid fear and to be hypocritical. To this end, the addressor and addressee meet the psychological needs of self-deception and avoidance.

Keywords: Cameroon English, euphemism, sweet talking, deception, psychological painkiller

INTRODUCTION

Language is a tool for expressing man's social reality. People engage in different rhetorical uses of language to achieve their different goals. One of the obvious rhetorical strategies used in discourse is indirect language. The use of indirect language is made possible by the changeable nature of word meanings, which Warren (1992, p. 128) describes as negotiable and dynamic. This nature of word meaning makes it possible to allocate references that are not usually found in dictionary descriptions. Therefore, in communication, in order to better maintain social relationship and exchange of ideas, people have to resort to a new different kind of language which can make distasteful ideas seem acceptable or even desirable. To this end, as the "offensive" referents, for which these words stand, must still be alluded to, they are often described in a roundabout way, by using substitutes called euphemisms (Antrushina et al, 1985).

EUPHEMISM

According to Webster New Collegiate Dictionary (1991), euphemism is "the substitution of an agreeable or inoffensive expression for one that may offend or suggest something unpleasant". Cruse (2006:57) goes further to say that euphemism is an expression that refers to something that people hesitate to

mention lest it cause offence, but which lessens the offensiveness by referring indirectly in some way. The most common topics for which euphemisms are used are sexual activity and sex organs, and bodily functions such as defecation and urination. Also, euphemisms can be found in reference to death, aspects of religion and money. The main strategies of indirectness are metonymy, generalisation, metaphor and phonological deformation. In this light, Trask and Stockwell (2007) stipulate that

> …euphemism is the use of a word or phrase as a synonym for another word which is avoided because of its taboo status or because of its negative political or ideological connotations. Famous examples of euphemism include the huge number of terms for the lavatory (itself a word that focuses on washing rather than defecating): w.c., toilet, restroom, loo (from the French lieu 'place'), netty (from the French nettoyer 'to wash' or possibly the Italian gabinetto 'cabin', i.e., toilet), little boys/girls room, cloakroom, ensuite, convenience, and euphemistic phrases such as *powder my nose*, *pay a visit, freshen up* and many more (p. 89).

On the other hand, "there is a particular kind of euphemism that involves using language in a perverse way to conceal thought. This is called doublespeak" (Katamba, 2005, p. 192). This view echoes that of Rawson (1981:70) who states that "…when speakers and writers seek not so much to avoid offense as to deceive,…we pass into the universe of dishonest euphemisms, where the conscious elements of circumlocution and doubletalk loom large". With regard to this, Trask and Stockwell (2007, p. 89) hold that political and military euphemism has been a particularly productive area of lexicalization as governments have become more democratically accountable and sensitive to adverse public opinion of their wars: the USA–Vietnam war produced *collateral damage* (for "civilian casualties"); the Balkan war turned 'genocide' into *ethnic cleansing*; the USA–Iraq war produced *surgical strikes* (for "supposedly precise bombing"); the Israeli–Hezbollah war refined this as *a needle strike*; soldiers are *assets;* wars are *campaigns*; deadly weapons are *systems*, and so on. Furthermore, when the Afghanistan was under the Russian occupation in the 1980s the Afghani fighters were referred to as "freedom fighters". Also, during the apartheid regime in the Republic of South Africa, the agency which was responsible for the assassination of political opponents was called the "Civil Cooperation Bureau" (Katamba, 2005, p. 192). Thus, in critical discourse analysis Chilton (2003) claims that euphemism in discourse is the opposite of metaphor as far as ideology is concerned: where metaphor replaces words and is coercive and legitimizing, euphemism is suppressive and dissimulating. He suggests that the linguistic strategies that effect euphemism include not only lexical replacement but also omission, passivization and nominalization.

The foregoing discussion reveals that there are two types of euphemisms: the type that involves the substitution of an agreeable or inoffensive expression for one that may offend or suggest something unpleasant (Webster Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary); and the type (doublespeak) which misleads, distorts reality, pretends to communicate, makes the bad seem good, avoids or shifts responsibility, makes the negative appear positive, creates a false, verbal, map of the world, limits, conceals, corrupts, prevents thought, makes the unpleasant appear attractive or tolerable and creates incongruity between reality and what is said or not said (Lutz, 1996, p. 77). To this end, Allan (200, p. 168) holds that deceptive euphemism "is merely a way of deceiving others; the recipients. It is a relationship between two parties: one who has direct access to information and the other who receives it through the first one's version.

It is healthy to point out here that the need for euphemism is both social and emotional, as it allows discussion of 'touchy' or taboo subjects without enraging, outraging, or upsetting other people, and acts

as a pressure valve whilst maintaining the appearance of civility (Linfoot-Ham, 2005). Taboo here refers to "a proscription of behavior for a specifiable community of one or more persons, at a specifiable time, in specifiable contexts (Allan and Burridge, 2006, p. 11). Furthermore, it is believed that most of these avoided words and phrases are central to our life, but they cannot be uttered publicly because they are felt to give actual realization to what they refer to. With regard to this, it is evident that euphemistic usage upgrade services, mislead or deliberately deceive or conceal the true nature of things or people (for example, *underprivileged* or *disadvantaged* for "a cripple"), and seek to exercise a certain degree of prudery and tactfulness. The idea is to be hypocritical or to sound good or evil and make a reservation agreeable and inoffensive. Consequently, euphemism can be broadly construed as an expression intended by the speaker to be less offensive, distasteful, precise, direct, disturbing, or troubling to the listener than the word or phrase it replaces. Its aim is to avoid shocking, in order to be elegant, pleasant, dignifying, or refined. All in all, it is an exercise in verbal upgrading through a roundabout diction. The resultant effect is the passion for the genteel tradition and to some degree the glorification of the commonplace through verbal delicacy.

It is worthy of note that euphemism is a language associated with different rhetoric and figurative strategies such as circumlocution, metonymy, innuendos, and metaphors (Bosman, 1987; Howe, 1988; Yusuf, 2003; Linfoot-Ham, 2005; Charteris-Black, 2005; Carver and Pikalo, 2008). Consequently, the use of euphemism is one of the spheres of social life in which language plays a pivotal role. When people are communicating, they normally take care to ensure that what they say is chosen appropriately so as to avoid embarrassing or offending anyone. In this regard, sociolinguists often discuss euphemism phenomena in terms of face. 'Face' is described as the 'public self-image of a person'. It refers to the emotional and social sense of self that everyone has and expects everyone else to recognize (Yule, 1996, p. 60). Consequently, face can be deduced as the 'public self-image' that all rational adult members have when engaged in spoken interaction. Face consists of two related aspects - positive face and negative face. Positive face includes the want that one's self-image be appreciated and approved, whilst negative face is the claim of every 'competent adult member' to personal preserves, non-distraction and freedom from imposition, and to the desire that their actions be unimpeded by others. Both negative and positive face needs of participants in interaction are constantly under threat by various acts or omissions of other participants. Face is therefore highly valued; it can be lost, maintained or enhanced, and must be constantly adhered to in interaction. As we communicate with others, we are constantly aware of our own and others' face needs, we attend to it consciously or unconsciously, and we cooperate to maintain one another's face (Brown and Levinson 1987, p. 62). People attempt to soften utterances or acts that will threaten the face needs of others, that is, face threatening acts by using a variety of politeness strategies, including address terms. Sometimes, either consciously or unconsciously, people engage in face threatening acts by saying things that threaten the other's face. To this end, Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 46) hold that "the most conspicuous intrusion of social factors into language structure" is deference phenomena. They observe that deference is realized under the general theory of politeness and involves paying attention to the "face want"[1] of the addressee.

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[1] face is what you lose when you are embarrassed or humiliated in public. It is a truism that we need to maintain and demonstrate our membership in a social group and to get what we want without offending anyone. As such, a face-threatening act is any piece of behaviour which can easily make another person lose face and a face-saving act is any piece of behavior which lessens or removes the threat of losing face. Failing to mask some words or expressions appropriately is a grave breach of decorum.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The data for this study comes from the responses provided to a questionnaire administered to 205 speakers of English in Cameroon; and my observations through recordings and field investigations over the past four years. The questionnaire consisted of words covering various topics and semantic fields. These entries were selected on the basis of their frequent use in everyday life. The respondents were asked to complete the open-ended questionnaire wherein, each of them was asked to write as many euphemisms as possible pertaining to each of the major words given. The respondents' answers were collected and the data gained was prepared and analysed. The identification of euphemisms was based on the frequency of occurrence of the euphemistic items identified, the mechanisms involved in their formation, their semantic fields and meaning.

Data was also collected through recordings and field investigation. The recordings involved mainly the informal conversations of secondary and university students as well as educated speakers of Cameroon English at different social events. The informal recordings reflect different settings, sexes, ages, ethnic and educational backgrounds. Some of the data used in this study are also drawn from obituary announcements, funeral masses and some radio and television discussions. With the assistance of some English language experts in the country and fifteen postgraduate students, the present researcher identified impressive number of euphemistic terms in the extemporaneous and written speech of the respondents using Warren's (1992) euphemistic model. The words and expressions thus identified are classified and analysed into two categories: sweet talking and deception. The first part of the analysis deals with euphemism as sweet talking in order to maintain face while the second deals with euphemism to conceal thought (deception). Although many of the euphemistic items presented in this paper may occur in other varieties of English, the sources of their influence and patterns of their use may be different.

EUPHEMISM AS SWEET TALKING

Each culture has its own values, habits, customs and taboos. Euphemism, which is referred to as sweet talking, is used to be polite in impolite situations or to maintain one's face. Maintaining one's face, therefore, is common between the speaker and the hearer. Whenever we are in an interaction, we are expected not to be offensive or be offended by others (Yule, 1996, p. 60). To this end, when someone uses a euphemistic item, which is referred to as sweet talking, the person is trying to maintain his face and that of others. Failure to do so, he will be labeled impolite and offensive to the hearer since he does not maintain both faces. Consequently, sweet talking maintains not only the speaker's face but the others', as well (Levinson, 1997, p. 72).

In Cameroon English, sweet talking is used to refer to profanity in a suitable way in order to maintain face and avoid hurting feelings. Profane words and expressions are utterances which the public think cannot be used in polite conversation (Crystal 2003). Thus, profane words and expressions in Cameroon English come from areas such as sex, excretion, superstition, menial jobs and lies telling.

English-speaking Cameroonians believe that some experiences are too intimate and vulnerable to be discussed without safeguards. One of them is sex. The subject of sex is of major concern to the life of Cameroonians and it is one that is likely to elicit embarrassment. Consequently, they feel reluctant to deal with the subject of sex using straightforward terms owing to fear of being impolite and obscene. As such, they try to soften the effect of what they really want to communicate when faced with sex language. The fear of sounding obscene and vulgar has enabled English-speaking Cameroonians to resort to euphemism to strip off explicit offensive or obscene overtones when talking about the sexual

act itself, associated body parts, and even certain things associated to sexual intercourse. The sexual profanity words and expressions such as sexual intercourse, penis, vagina, menstruation, genitals, sanitary towel used for cleaning the genitals after a sexual intercourse, girlfriend of a married man, regular sexual partner, orgasm, sexual intercourse between spouses, a love making instance, etc are almost never acceptable in formal relationships or public use. They undergo radical rehabilitation by modeling them. For instance, linesman for "a sanitary towel used in cleaning the sexual organs after a sexual intercourse"; tango, make a phone call, eat the fruit in the garden of Eden, have fun, sleep with, go to bed with, etc for "sexual intercourse"; perform matrimonial duty, meet as husband and wife for "sexual intercourse between spouses"; the king of glory, master of ceremony, Pa Joe, rector of females, joystick, peacemaker, family jewel, etc for "penis"; mouse trap, jerusalem, garden of Eden, place of pleasure, hole of pleasure, the Cape of Good Hope, the Garden of Eden, for "vagina"; bottom power for "sexual influence"; mbrah, issue, periodic discharge, period, month-end, elena-tomato, woman's sick, flying the red flag for "menstruation"; important part, private, private part, thing, for "genitals"; a match for "a love making instance"; eating banana with peelings, for "having sexual intercourse with a condom on the penis"; going out with someone for "having a romantic relationship with someone"; deuxième bureau for "a girlfriend of a married man"; stocking, socks, godasse for "a condom"; titulaire for "regular sexual partner"; end-of-journey, fulfilment, satisfaction, gone to jerusalem for "orgasm". The words substituted by euphemistic items are regarded as obscene and profane. Another way is focusing on the location rather than the process: going to bed with somebody instead of having sex; in which the focus is drawn on the location 'bed' rather than the process of having sex.

Excretion is another major concern to the life of Cameroonians which can likely elicit embarrassment. With regard to this, English-speaking Cameroonians feel reluctant to deal with the subject of excretion using straightforward terms owing to fear of being impolite. The excretory profanity words such as piss and shit are almost never acceptable in formal relationships or public use. Consequently, speakers of English in Cameroon try to soften the effect of what they really want to communicate when faced with the language of excretion by using euphemisms such as: to put oneself at ease, to ease oneself, to visit the house of chicken. Most terms related to excretion are replaced by sweet talking by modelling or by undergoing radical rehabilitation such as to make water for "to piss", to answer the call of nature for "to defecate" or "sit".

It is healthy to point out here that it is also generally believed that there are superstitious euphemisms which are based, consciously or unconsciously, on the idea that words have the power to bring bad fortune. English-speaking Cameroonians feel reluctant to deal with the subject of death and some disease using straightforward terms owing to fear and superstition that to speak the word 'death', for example, is to invite death. This fear to speak freely of human mortality, in the Cameroonian society, has enabled English-speaking Cameroonians to resort to soft, decent, and better-sounding names related to dying, death, and burial, to strip off explicit offensive or obscene overtones. For instance, dead is substituted for "to be in blessed memory", "joined the ancestors", "fallen asleep in the lord", "gone far away into the silent land", "rest in peace", "pay a debt of nature", "breathe one's last breath", "go to where pain can reach one no more"; bury for "lay to rest", "hide someone", "lay someone down to rest"; grave for "six feet", "four-corners", "rectangle"; death for "final summons", "demise", "eternal rest", "separation", "enjoyment of the labour of a well spent life"; sudden death for "Foe or Lambo" (by analogy with Foe, a Cameroon professional football player who died on the field during a match and Professor Lambo who died a few hours after a lecture). Sometimes the dead person is said to have gone to a better place. This is used primarily among the Christians with a concept of heaven. For example, "called home", "fallen asleep in Christ", "gone to eternal rest", "gone to the world of unending glory", "gone to the eternity of happiness", "have eternal rest", "slept in the Lord", "passed away to eternity",

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"joyful communion with God", "fall asleep in Christ", "find eternal rest in the throne of God", "be called by the will of the Almighty God before His throne of mercy", and "pass into glory". As far as diseases are concerned, Mencken (1962, p. 646) points out that in order to avoid the direct reference to illnesses and diseases, people use circumlocutions and abbreviations in order not to show the illnesses and diseases plainly. Some disease profanity words and expressions such HIV/AIDS, deadly disease, cancer, epilepsy, syphilis, gonorrhea, psychosis, epileptic feat, tuberculosis, venereal disease, undergo radical rehabilitation in Cameroon English, by modelling them, in order to soften the effect of and limit the stigmatization associated with these diseases whereby people do not want to associate, interact or relate with a person suffering from any of them. For instance, euphemistic terms and expressions such as in seven-plus-one to replace "HIV/AIDS", slow poison for "a deadly disease which wears the patient out and eventually kills him/her", social disease for "syphilis", sugar-sugar for "gonorrhea", STD for "sexually transmissible disease", VD for "venereal disease", sakis or njapa for "epilepsy", lung problem for "tuberculosis", are used. Furthermore, someone with a mental illness is not said to be suffering from psychosis directly but that the person has gone gaga, crossed the other side of the road, gone out of mind, lose sense, a loose screw, or that the person has a mental disorder or that the person is unclean. These are expressions that are used to express unpleasantness in a mild way by making use of indirect terms or phrase in substitution for a direct one in order to avoid bluntness or for the fear of calling something its real name or to take away the fear attached to the appellation.

In Cameroon, a white-collar job is considered to be the high job whereas some physical labour jobs are recognized as humble. Thus, most of the people hold that people with white-collar jobs have a better status in society. Some lowly paid or indecent jobs are referred to, in Cameroon English, using euphemistic terms just to save face and express politeness. These euphemisms are used to express some fancy occupational titles, which can elevate the people's status. For example, euphemistic terms such as sanitation engineer, hysacam employee (for "rubbish collector"), rodent control officer (for "rat catcher"), neck man (for "a beggar"), nyeh (for "a corrupt police officer"), beautician (for "a hairdresser"), and hysacam (for "rubbish collection company", "dustbin") are used to endow lowly vocations with names presumed to be dignified.

It is unhealthy and considered an insult to tell someone bluntly that you are telling lies or that you are a liar. English-speaking Cameroonians have developed new ways of communicating the same idea to avoid bluntness. Expressions such as njariba is substituted for "lies"; to exaggerate, to distort facts, to not make an accurate statement, to stretch the truth, substitute for "to tell lies"; mukulu for "gossip", and sweet mouth for "flattery talk". To this end, Greenough and Kittredge (1961, p. 305-306) maintain that to say 'you lie' is an insult, and there are various other ways of calling man a liar.

As the foregoing discussion reveals, it can be deduced that the idea of sweet talking in Cameroon English is coined to replace words which are considered taboo, demonic, forbidden or impolite. The expression 'taboo' here refers to "a proscription of behavior for a specifiable community of one or more persons, at a specifiable time, in specifiable contexts" (Allan & Burridge, 2006, p. 11).

EUPHEMISM AS DECEPTION

The word deception comes from the root word "deceive". "Deceive" means "to cause to accept as true or valid what is false or invalid" or "to give false impression" (Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary, 2009). To this end, deception is when people hide the truth, especially to get an advantage. This breeds a particular kind of euphemism which Katamba (2005) terms doublespeak. "Doublespeak", according to Katamba (2005, p. 192), is a particular kind of euphemism that involves using language in a perverse way to conceal thought. To this end, the main techniques used in deception euphemism are circumlocution

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(to "speak around" a given word by implying it without saying it) and jargon. Circumlocution is an indirect way of saying something, especially something unpleasant (Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary, 2009). It is a deliberate dishonest roundabout way of using words, phrases or expressions to make the bad seem good or, at least, tolerable. Jargons, on the other hand, are special words and phrases which are used by particular groups of people, especially in the work. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (2005) goes further to define jargons as "words or expressions that are used by a particular profession or group of people, and are difficult for others to understand".

As the foregoing discussion reveals, deception euphemism is used to refer to terms or expressions which mislead, distorts reality, make the bad seem good, which avoid or shift responsibility and make the unpleasant appear attractive. Thus, deception euphemism terms and expressions in Cameroon English come from sex life, administrative jargon, police and gendarme jargon, political jargon, military jargon and circumlocution. English-speaking Cameroonians believe that some experiences are too vulnerable to be discussed without safeguards. One of them is sex life. As such, they feel reluctant to deal with the subject of sex life using straightforward terms in order to distort reality or make the unpleasant appear attractive. Sex life words and expressions such as MBF [married but free] (for "a married woman who still dates other men"), sponsor, spender, goldmine (for "someone who gives out money and gifts in exchange for sex"), sugar daddy (for "an older man who supports a younger woman financially in exchange for sex"), sugar mummy (for "an older woman who supports a younger man financially in exchange for sex"), generous giver, comfort woman, a woman of pleasure (for "a prostitute"), short time (for "to have sex with a lady in a hotel"); seven door (for "a brothel"), flying-shirt (for "a poor boyfriend"), fɜːk (pronunciation for 'fork') because the pidgin English word 'fork' means sexual intercourse, American Invention to Discourage Sex (for "Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome" [AIDS]) are used.

Another area whereby we have deception euphemisms is crime. These are expressions that are used to express unpleasantness in a mild way by making use of indirect terms or phrase in substitution for a direct one in order to avoid bluntness or for the fear of calling something its real name or to take away the fear attached to the appellation. The following euphemistic usage, in Cameroon English, fall in the field of crime euphemisms: four-one-nine (419) (for "a cheat", "a fraudster"), men of the underworld, night visitors, the owners, property owners, five-fingers, gentlemen of the road (for "pickpockets" and "robbers"), cartouche, bomb, l'eau (for "lecture notes brought into an examination hall by a student in order to cheat"), fayman (for "someone who moves about defrauding people"), docky (for "forged official documents such as testimonials, birth certificates"), dockyman (for "a person who issues forged official documents"), operation sparrow hawk (for "the act of fishing out those who embezzle State Funds"), tchoko, gombo, rob someone's lips with oil, to show appreciation (for "a bribe" or "to bribe"), complice (for "partner in crime"), and nyeh (for "a corrupt police officer"). These terms are used to depict the Cameroonian environment whereby crimes and perpetrators of crimes are given other names masking their real identities and activities.

It is unhealthy and considered an insult to tell someone bluntly that you are telling lies or that you are a liar. English-speaking Cameroonians have developed new ways of communicating the same idea to avoid bluntness. Expressions such as njariba, distorting facts, exaggerating, not making an accurate statement are substituted for 'lies', and mukulu for "gossip".

Moreover, police and gendarme jargon is full of deception. When someone is imprisoned without legal justification, the person is said to be on preventive detention. The expression "preventive detention", used by the police and gendarme, is deceptive in that there is someone who is imprisoned without legal justification; and the person is imprisoned because he can be a threat to the law and order of the society

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as signaled by the premodifier "preventive" of the noun phrase "detention". This portrays manipulation by circumlocution to deceive the public by hiding the truth. The use of language in this way is an obfuscator of changing facts to show the victim as a dangerous person who should be prevented from harming others for the benefit of society (Rooij, 2002). Same deceiving expressions and phrases could also be found in the military jargon. During the Bakassi crisis the "occupied territory" was referred to as disputed territory; "confiscation of land" was labelled as bilateral negotiation and "victims of deliberate killing" were reported as people caught in crossfire, "to kill or disable a person or target" as neutralize. In the political and governmental usage euphemistic expressions such as called to other duties, classified, layoff, are used. The deceptive euphemistic expression "called to other duties" instead of "dismissed from office" is used, when appointments are made to the post of responsibilities in Cameroon, to make the person dismissed from office think that he has been called up to other duties. In effect, the person, who is always said to be called to other duties, ends up not given any post of responsibility. Looking at this expression, at prima facie, we are tempted to say that the power that be, has noticed talents in this person and they think that these talents will be appropriately exploited in the new position he is going to occupy. This portrays manipulation by circumlocution to deceive the public by hiding the truth. The expression "classified" in governmental usage refers to information which has been evaluated and possibly assigned a security clearance. Also, the expression "layoff" means mass firing of employees, usually due to business restructuring or economic conditions.

Furthermore, deceptive euphemistic terms are noticed in the semantic field of drinks. The names of some brand of drinks are looked upon as acronyms. Some of these acronyms are: WHISKY (Watch How I Slowly Kill You), CASTEL (Come And See Teachers Enjoy Life), GOLD HARP (Government Officers Like Drinking Heavily After Receiving Payment), GUINNESS (Girls Under Immaturity Never Never Enjoy Sweet Sex), FANTA (Fine Asiahoo2 Never Takes Alcohol). These labellings come about as a result of the effect the population think a brand of drink has on human body (as in the case of "WHISKY"), the association of a brand of drink to a group of people (as in the case of "Gold Harp", "CASTEL", "FANTA"), or the attachment of a drink to something (as in the case of "Guinness" wherein this brand of drink is looked upon as an aphrodisiac).

Despite the afore-mentioned semantic fields, there are a host of other deception euphemism in Cameroon English such as fanta-coke (for "someone who has lightened his/her skin with cosmetics"), shishung (for "Chinese"), slow learner, not smart (for "dull person"), mbanga pongo (for "unpleasant situation" or "problem") [by analogy with the problems and unpleasant situation presented by the crash of a Kenyan aircraft at Mbango Pongo], ngumba (for "secret society"), ngumba house (for "site of a secret society"), christmas tree (for "a girl with too much make-up"), chaka (for "low quality shoes"), kumba bread (for "first generation mobile phones").

CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the use of euphemism in Cameroon English in two different perspectives – sweet talking and deception. In the context of sweet talking, euphemism is used to replace unpleasant, impolite, profane, offensive and tabooed words with sweet ones in order to maintain one's face and avoid being rude and offensive to others. As deception, euphemism is used to conceal plain facts using evasive words or expressions. It is worthy of note that the addressor using deceptive euphemisms has direct access to the information that he wants to conceal from the public. It is a deceiver-deceived relationship that exists by concealing a horrible or indecent thing and showing it to others as tolerable,

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2 'Asiahoo' is a Cameroon Pidgin English word for a prostitute.

or that it can be handled and controlled easily. The   techniques used in deception euphemism are periphrasis or circumlocution and jargon. Though the addressor tries to change the name of distasteful thing, the reality of the thing remains very much in the addressor's and the addressee's mind. For instance, when somebody is labeled as "cripple", it makes the addressor and the addressee feel that it is as if it were the fault of the person addressed to. But when a euphemistic item such as "underprivileged" is used in this situation, the tendency is that the euphemistic usage tends to shift the responsibility to the society as being the cause. It could be said in this situation that it is change of orientation and not the thing under examination. Consider, for example, a man discussing his will. In the process, he avoids saying the distasteful expression "After I am dead"; but prefers the euphemistic usage "If I am not around" or "In my absence", "when I have joined my ancestors" etc. Though death has been concealed by the euphemistic usage, it is still realized at the end that death has not lost its sting. However, though euphemistic usages in Cameroon English are not a cure to people's discomfort or distasteful situations, they are at least a palliative in that by their very nature, they soften or disguise unpleasant elements of reality, thus meeting the psychological needs of self-deception and avoidance, In short, euphemism in Cameroon English is a psychological painkiller because it soothes the distasteful notion. Such a psychic therapy is very much welcome as it evasiveness and appeasement in making things decent and bearable. Despite the plausibility of the psychic therapy of euphemism in Cameroon English, it usage has made pedagogues find themselves at crossroads since their goal of teaching is to achieve simple, clear, precise and concise meaning.

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