

## FORENSIC LINGUISTICS AS A TOOL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAMEROON NATIONAL LANGUAGES: THE CASE OF TUNEN

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**ABSTRACT** Forensic linguistics is the study of language and the law to examine the language related issues within legal settings. Cameroon is a multilingual nation with 2 exoglossic official languages and more than 250 national languages. There are communication problems in its legal milieu as all laws are written and spoken in English and French only and not in any of the national languages. Consequently, illiterate Cameroonians involved in legal encounters of arrests, interrogations, and trials experience genuine communication barriers in police stations and courtrooms, as do their legal advisers and the community interpreters. This paper advocates the introduction of national languages into the legal settings in order to ensure linguistic accommodation for suspects and convicts with poor language proficiency in both English and French. The authors embarked on developing key legal terms in Tunen, a language spoken in the Littoral and Central Regions of Cameroon using five terminology development strategies, namely semantic extension, compounding, translational equivalence, phrasing, and transplanation. In doing so, the authors refute the fallacy that African languages cannot express abstract realities and pave the way for terminology development in any African language.

**Key Words:** Forensic linguistics; Terminology development; Legal terms; National languages; Tunen.

### INTRODUCTION

For many decades after colonialism on the African continent, its negative legacy remains ubiquitous throughout the continent. A glaring illustration is in the languages that still prevail over Africa, omnipresent in the political, social, economic, and religious lives of citizens. Despite the status of independent nations of the African countries, and the abundant literature on the advantages of (multilingual) mother-tongue education, African leaders in the 21st century still maintain and promote the languages of the former colonial rule, English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese. In fact, out of the 54 countries of the African continent, 19 have English as their official language, 22 have French, 5 have Portuguese, 1 has Spanish, and Arabic is the official language in 7 (Lodhi, 1993: 80).

The major reason generally advanced to account for the spread of foreign languages throughout the continent is the quest for rapid development (Bamgbose, 2011: 4). Due to the strength and prestige of those languages, African leaders rightly or wrongly have used the languages as means toward emergence, develop-

ment, and prosperity. They fail to understand that the development of a nation lies in the hands of its citizens, as they need to participate in the development of their nations and can do so only if they have access to quality knowledge. Knowledge is power (Weiler, 2011). Power is wealth, and wealth brings development. To develop, a nation needs knowledge. How then can citizens have access to quality knowledge if it is encoded in books written in foreign languages?

UNESCO (1953) has strongly advocated the importance of mother tongue education. Scientists, linguists, educationists, politicians, etc., have given much evidence that the eradication of poverty can only be done through quality education, i.e. efficient, effective, and equitable education (Adams, 1993). In a broader sense, quality education entails quality learners, quality learning environments, quality content, quality processes, and quality outcomes (UNICEF, 2000). A scrutiny of these five dimensions of quality education reveals that the language of instruction is a key factor in education which is meant to be operational, i.e. the kind of education that will allow them to transform their environment. The very first article of the UNESCO declaration, Education For All (EFA), unambiguously states the necessity of inclusive education: “Every person - child, youth and adult - shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs” (UNESCO, 2007: 14; UNESCO, 1990).

Yes, education for all! But whose education for all, and in whose language? (Brock-Utne, 2000). The fifth paragraph of the Asmara Declaration reads, “All African children have the unalienable right to attend school and learn in their mother tongues. Every effort should be deployed to develop African languages at all levels of education” (Asmara African Languages and Literatures, 2000: 130). Learning through a foreign language instead of through a familiar one (Brock-Utne, 2000) has proven to be a daunting task for learners.

Despite this consistent outcry, decision makers continue to turn a deaf ear to the imperative necessity to teach African children in their mother tongues:

The languages schools use for instruction can have an impact on learning and academic achievement in general. Research suggests that many benefits can be gained by beginning primary education in the student’s home language. Yet in Africa, especially in French speaking West Africa but not excluding Anglophone areas, resistance to primary instruction in the local language persists. (UNICEF, 2000: 17).

As applied linguists faced with this complex situation, the authors’ first interest is to provide more scientific evidence that quality education can be possible only through quality content in the African languages, rather than to find out the reasons for such resistance. The purpose of this paper therefore is to refute the erroneous notion that African languages cannot express scientific knowledge or be competitive in this era of globalisation (Nyika, 2015), by proposing an avenue where African languages may gain imperative empowerment (Bamgbose, 2011: 10), specifically in the legal domain.

It is an undeniable fact that there are still many African languages that may

not yet have developed enough to be used in scientific literatures. However, this does not mean that those African languages cannot meet the challenge. In effect, any concept can be expressed in any given language. Hence, the question is not to know whether African languages can be used in every domain of life but, rather to think of the avenues for their empowerment (Bamgbose, 2011: 3). One of those avenues is the focus of this paper, i.e. the analysis of possible linguistic strategies to develop the terminology in poorly described aspects of the legal register, as a way to boost the development status of all Cameroonian languages.

For centuries, linguists have produced elegant descriptions of African languages now available in renowned scientific journals and publishing houses. But, those languages remain weak, marginalized, and under-developed, having no official roles, functions, and domains of use (Bamgbose, 2011: 1). However, a few linguists have worked on the development of African languages and their introduction into many pertinent domains of use, such as medicine, education, technology, agriculture, politics, journalism, religion, and law. In South Africa, Alberts (1997) launched a project on legal terminology development in South-African languages which led to the creation of five legal dictionaries. Tschonghongi (2012) translated the Cameroon Constitution into Aghem, a Cameroon national language. Unfortunately, these initiatives geared toward the intellectualization of African languages are so isolated that they go unnoticed. The authors have focused on the benefits for professional as well as amateur court interpreters and lawyers. This paper proposes a set of legal terms in Tunen (Banen), a Southern Bantoid language of Cameroon spoken in the Centre and Littoral Regions. In fact, taking pretext of the application of linguistics to any use of language with legal relevance, i.e. forensic linguistics (FL), the authors propose the set of terms to enrich the lexical stock of the Tunen language with a legal lexicon.

This paper is structured as follows. In the next section, the authors briefly introduce the field of forensic linguistics. After discussing the relevance of the study in Section 3, the authors provide a quick introduction to the Tunen language in Section 4. Section 5 presents the methodology, the data, and the results. The conclusion is presented in Section 6.

## FORENSIC LINGUISTICS AS A PRETEXT

Assuming that the solution to the plights crippling Africa would come from a multidisciplinary perspective, the motivation of the authors for this study is the desire to search for remedies from the linguistic standpoint, more precisely, from FL. This study will be useful, for example, to court interpreters and lawyers engaged in judicial procedures. Given the generally low-level proficiency in English and French, the two official languages of the country, it is commonplace in Cameroon courts that the judge is constrained to resort to the services of community interpreters for communication with the defendants. Community interpreters usually are employed in the consecutive dialogue-like interaction between the low English/French-proficiency speakers and the providers of public services such

as healthcare, government agencies, community centres, legal settings, educational institutions, and social services (Healthcare Interpretation Network, 2007: 4). In most cases in the Cameroon context, the interpreters are not professionally trained. They are interpreters, simply because they are proficient in the language, be it their first language (L1) or second language (L2). This proficiency in daily routine interactions does not make interpreting an easy task in healthcare or tribunal settings where the vocabulary is highly technical and strange to the non-initiated. No matter how high the level of proficiency in a language, it is a common experience in meeting a medical doctor or lawyer that one has to use some linguistic accommodation strategies to lower the language barrier. What then of the community or institutional interpreters who are only orally literate in their language as in the case of Cameroon? One of the fundamental challenges in their task is the lack of vocabulary and terminology to translate efficiently. Such a context where an ill- or untrained interpreter, a defendant, and other persons pertaining to the legal case battle with language to communicate is the domain of the applied linguist who is interested in the interface between language and the law.

FL is a new branch of applied linguistics that makes use of scientific mechanisms as well as subfields of linguistics such as phonetics, stylistics, pragmatics, dialectology, and semantics, to solve language-related problems in the legal and judicial setting (Coulthard & Johnson, 2010). In other words, FL is delimited by the science of language and legal preferences such as those formulated by courts and legal authorities (de Groot, 2002).

## RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

The amended constitution of Cameroon of 1996 revised the section on language policy as follows:

The official languages of the Republic of Cameroon shall be English and French, both languages having the same status. The State shall guarantee the promotion of bilingualism throughout the country. It shall endeavor to protect and promote national languages (The National Assembly, 1996; emphasis added by the authors).

The Cameroonian official languages are English and French, and the State's main ambition is to make sure that Cameroonians speak both languages fluently. Measures to achieve this goal is seen, for example, in the creation of Pilot Language Centers in every single capital city of the ten Regions where citizens can learn the two official languages. As for the Cameroonian languages or national languages, the State has only endeavored to protect and promote them, and there has been no clear action to actively encourage the learning and usage of them.

The functions and roles of official languages in any given nation are always very clear and precise. They are used for official purposes in formal settings, such as politics, economy, health, education, law, public talks, and notices. However, the functions and roles of national languages are never clearly identified and noted down in the form of a policy, especially in most African countries. An example of such a country is Cameroon, even though the authorities, very recently, have

introduced the national languages in the primary and secondary levels of education, with very little success because of lack of infrastructure. In fact, the function and roles assigned to those languages are to ensure communication in households. An adequate provision of a well-designed language planning policy to integrate the official and non-official languages is not of concern for the African leaders, who seem more interested in physical projects that attract immediate attention and political followers. Spending resources to design an appropriate language planning policy and implementation strategy have not been in their interest.

In Cameroon, about 40 percent of the population is illiterate in English and French (Esson, 2001: 10). Consequently, many people face communication problems in settings where those two official languages are dominant. The legal setting, one of the most sensitive domains of life in any given nation, is also known for its deficit of communication among the legal authorities and the suspects, especially those from a very poor background and with very low level of schooling. Considering that the rules and regulations of a nation keep it functioning, the citizens are called to respect the laws enacted by the government for a smooth running, development, and sustainability of the country. Suspects must enjoy their language rights. In Cameroon, unfortunately, all legal documents are written in English and French. The legal authorities are trained in English and French, and judicial proceedings are carried out in English and French. Thus, lay Cameroonians involved in legal encounters frequently request the assistance of a community interpreter. The interpreters, by the nature of the task assigned to them, enter the most private spheres of their client's life by discussing the most intimate and significant everyday issues in settings such as a surgical room, social worker's or a lawyer's office, jail, police station, or courtroom (Hale, 2007: 25–26). The interpreter's task is not an easy one, to translate the legalese into either un- or under-developed national languages, or vice versa. In fact, African languages need to be developed in order to ease the work of those courtroom interpreters, for example, who often find it difficult to translate some legal concepts into the various national languages. The authors aspire to contribute to developing a legal terminology in Tunen, a Cameroon national language, through linguistic strategies.

## THE TUNEN LANGUAGE

This work is done within the framework of FL with the aim to develop the legal lexis of Tunen (A.44), a Cameroonian Narrow Bantu language of the Basaa subgroup (A.40). The linguistic heterogeneity of Cameroon is a pride that many Cameroonian linguists are fighting to preserve. Cameroon has 283 national languages (Simons & Fennig, 2018). Tunen (or Banen, Banend, Penin, Penyin, Nen) is spoken by approximately 40,000 people in the Centre and Littoral Regions, with an ethnic population of 100,000 (Simons & Fennig, 2018). In the Central Region, the language is spoken in the Mbam Division, and Ndikinimeki and Makenene Subdivisions, while in the Littoral Region, in the Nkam Division and Yingui Subdivision (Lovestrand, 2011: 2). Mous & Breedveld (1986) wrote that Tunen had

been influenced by other languages of the Basaa subgroup such as Nyokon (A.45) spoken in the Central Region, Nomaande (A.46, Central and Littoral), and Tuotomb (A.461) spoken in the Central Region.

## METHODOLOGY AND DATA PRESENTATION

The methodology used throughout our study followed a strict procedural and linguistics analysis consisting of transcribing and glossing the Tunen word/utterance following the Leipzig Glossing Rules (<https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/pdf/Glossing-Rules.pdf>). The results obtained are presented in tables.

### I. Methodology

The authors started with a clear and a well-formed 4-step procedural scheme to obtain data.

#### Step 1:

With the assistance of two barristers (legal consultants), the authors selected 43 legal terms from a list of many such terms used in the Cameroon legal system. The number of the terms, 43, is justified by two constraints: 1) space, i.e. the limited number of pages in a paper and 2) the ultimate goal of the study, i.e. to examine the challenges that such an endeavor brings to a terminologist. In other words, with this limited number of lexemes, the authors shall make the central point of the paper.

#### Step 2:

The authors verified the effective use and meaning of those terms with the legal consultants.

#### Step 3:

The authors cross-checked and confirmed the meaning of the 43 terms with the well-known legal dictionary, the Oxford Dictionary of Law, “made up of over 4,000 entries defining and explaining the major terms, concepts, processes, and organizations of the English legal system” (Martin, 2003), to ascertain the identity or divergence in the meaning. This comparison was necessary because the Cameroon Common Law borrows much from the Common Law of England, although it has certain features that make it peculiar (Samuelson, 2018).

#### Step 4:

After these three steps, the data was collected with two native speakers of the Tunen language (language consultants) via the method of elicitation. We used the 3 types of eliciting techniques found in the literature: 1) contextualising elicitation where speakers are asked to comment on or provide contexts for a given word or construction, 2) translation equivalent where consultants are asked to translate

a given word or utterance, and 3) judgement whereby speakers are called to the task of evaluating the acceptability/grammaticality of a given form (Austin, 2018). The results are presented in section 5.3.1. Before presenting the results, the authors briefly explain linguistic strategies necessary to have a context-sensitive Tunen glossary.

## II. Linguistic strategies

The main linguistic strategies used to develop words and phrases to express the ideas in the selected legal terms from Cameroon legal English into Tunen are, borrowing, compounding, explanatory phrases, phrasing or clauses, lexical innovation, semantic extension, and translation. For translation, there are two processes: translational equivalence and transplanation. The authors briefly elaborate on lexical innovation, semantic extension, and translation. The authors used all above strategies to ensure the simplicity of the terminology developed, believing that the terms or locutions should be simple enough to be understood at the grassroots.

### 1. Lexical innovation

Lexical innovations are cases where a speaker uses a sentence containing a novel expression-meaning pair, but successfully communicates her intended meaning to her audience (Armstrong, 2016: 87). Thus, lexical innovation is the creation of a new word, or the restructuring or transformation of a word form in order to accommodate or welcome a new meaning. This is achieved through linguistic adjustment, modification of existing lexical material, and innovation and invention of new lexemes (Sornig, 1981: 63).

### 2. Semantic expansion

The term, expansion, broadly refers to any process whereby an initial linguistic state is enlarged. For example, in historical semantics, an early meaning of a word may come to be expanded to cover a wider range of referents (Crystal, 2008: 179). In the view of Mutaka and Tamanji (2000), lexical expansion has been one of the most productive means employed by African languages to expand their different stocks of vocabulary. With this strategy, no new word is created, but only the meaning is extended. The result is that a single linguistic form will have multiple meanings attached to it. This strategy to expand the lexical stock by extending the meaning of an initial word existing in the language is called semantic expansion. As a highly productive strategy in languages, it is extensively used here. Semantic expansion reflects a creative cognitive process of understanding abstract concepts through concrete ones, with metaphor and metonymy being the two main cognitive mechanisms involved (cf. Sakita, 2001; Lai, 2003).

### 3. Translation

“Translation refers to the process of, or the product resulting from, transferring or mediating written text(s) of different lengths (ranging from words and sentences to entire books) from one human language to another” (Colina, 2015: 3). Under



the strategy of translation, the authors made use of two sub-strategies: translational equivalence and transplanation. The first, translation equivalence, is having a corresponding word or expression in another language, or when there is similarity between a word or expression in one language and its translation in another (SIL, 2018). Transplanation is a process whereby the translation of a term or text is combined with some explanations in order to make the translated word or text rather target-oriented than source-oriented (Ousmane Ngom, pc).

## DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

### I. The data: the word list

As written above, the English legal lexemes selected and analyzed are terms used in the judiciary setting in Cameroon and crosschecked with a standard legal dictionary. In other words, the authors used a list of 43 words, together with their word categories, of which they provided equivalences in Tunen. The definitions/meanings against the words below are strictly from the *Oxford Dictionary of Law*:

Abduction (n.): the offence of taking an unmarried girl under the age of 16 from the possession of her parents or guardians against their will.

Abortion (n.): a miscarriage or a premature expulsion of a foetus from the womb before the normal period of gestation is complete.

Accession (n.): the formal agreement of a country to an international treaty.

Accessory (n.): one who is a party to a crime that is actually committed by someone else.

Acquittal (n.): the decision by the court that a defendant accused of a crime is innocent.

Alibi (n.): a defence to a criminal charge alleging that the defendant was not at the place at which the crime was committed and so could not have been responsible for it.

Alimony (n.): formally, the financial provision made by a husband to his wife when they are living apart.

Bail (n.): the release by the police, magistrate, or crown court of a person held in legal custody while awaiting trial or appealing against a criminal conviction.

Cession (n.): the transfer of sovereignty over a territory.

Chastisement (n.): a physical punishment as a form of discipline.

Cohabitation (n.): living together as a husband and wife without having been married.

Compensation (n.): monetary payment to compensate for loss or damage.

Complainant (n.): a person who alleges that a crime has been committed against him.

Conspiracy (n.): an agreement between two or more people to behave in a manner that will automatically constitute an offence by at least one of them.

Corroboration (n.): evidence that confirms the accuracy of other evidence “in a material particular.”

Defamation (n.): the publication of a statement about a person that tends to lower his reputation.

Default (n.): failure to do something required by the law.

Discrimination (n.): treating one or more members of a specified group unfairly as



- compared with other people.
- Embezzlement (n.): the dishonest appropriation by an employee of any money or property given to him on behalf of his employer.
- Eviction (n.): the removal of a tenant or any other occupier from occupation.
- Execution (n.): the process of carrying out a sentence of death imposed by a court.
- Expatriation (n.): a person's voluntary action of living outside his native country.
- Fraud (n.): a false representation by means of a statement, or conduct made knowingly or recklessly, in order to gain a material advantage.
- Garnishee (n.): A person who has been warned by a court to pay a debt to a third party rather than to his creditor.
- Gazumping (n.): the withdrawal by a vendor from a proposed sale of land in the expectation of receiving a higher price elsewhere after agreeing the price with a purchaser but before a legally binding contract has been made.
- Genocide (n.): conduct aimed at the destruction of a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group.
- Gift (n.): a gratuitous transfer or grant of property.
- Guardian (n.): one who is formally appointed to look after a child's interests when the parents of the child do not have parental responsibility for him or have died.
- Harbouring (n.): hiding a criminal or suspected criminal.
- Honorarium (n.): a payment or reward made to a person for services rendered by him voluntarily.
- Homicide (n.): the act of killing a human being.
- Human rights (n.): rights and freedom to which every human being is entitled.
- Illegitimacy (n.): the status of a child born out of wedlock.
- Immigration (n.): the act of entering a country other than one's native country with the intention of living there permanently.
- Immunity (n.): freedom or exemption from legal proceedings.
- Incriminate (v.): to charge with a criminal offence.
- Judgement (n.): a decision made by a court in respect of the matter before it.
- Judge (n.): a state official with power to adjudicate on disputes and other matters.
- Kidnapping (n.): carrying a person away, without his consent, by means of force, threat, or fraud.
- Law (n.): the enforceable body of rules that govern any society.
- Licence (n.): formal authority to do something that would otherwise be unlawful.
- Malice (n.): a state of mind usually taken to be equivalent to intention or recklessness: it does not require any hostile attitude.
- Mitigation (n.): reduction in the severity of some penalty.

The authors believe that this short list is representative of the process of creating legal terms to facilitate the task of Cameroon translators and interpreters.

Although the words listed above pertain to both the British and Cameroon legal systems, it is important to note that the Cameroon legal system is different from the British system, precisely because of the different cultural milieus characteristic of the two systems. Thus, some English legal terms are not commonly used in Cameroon and vice versa.

The wordlist above has 43 words with their corresponding definitions. These definitions were of great help during the terminology development process. In effect, the authors realised that it is a daunting task to pair the modern legal terms

with the national languages, considering the levels of abstraction involved. Thus, it was vital to first clearly define the terms before developing the terminology in Tunen.

## II. Developing the legal terminology in Tunen

Below, the 43 words in section 5.3.1 above are shown with equivalents through the lexical expansion strategies including, semantic extension, compounding, translational equivalence, phrasing, and transplanation. The following abbreviations are used: TU: Form in Tunen, GL: Glossary, DT: Direct translation, and ST: Strategy adopted.

### 1) Abduction

|    |   |
|----|---|
| TU | <i>mò-ná m'ónd mú t'etē hólíní</i>                        |
| GL | 1-child girl 1.AGR small snatch                           |
| DT | “small female child snatching” “under age girl snatching” |
| ST | Compounding   |

### 2) Abortion

|    |                        |
|----|------------------------|
| TU | <i>fiémi ní-fùm</i>    |
| GL | remove 5-pregnancy     |
| DT | “remove the pregnancy” |
| ST | Compounding            |

or

|    |                        |
|----|------------------------|
|    | Abortion               |
| TU | <i>ní-fùm fiémi</i>    |
| GL | 5-pregnancy remove     |
| DT | “remove the pregnancy” |
| ST | Compounding            |

### 3) Accession

|    |                         |
|----|-------------------------|
| TU | <i>j-òkín'ónì</i>       |
| GL | 7-arrangement           |
| DT | “arrangement/agreement” |
| ST | Semantic extension      |

### 4) Accessory

|    |                    |
|----|--------------------|
| TU | <i>ù-kàm'èl</i>    |
| GL | 3-help             |
| DT | “help/assistance”  |
| ST | Semantic extension |

### 5) Acquittal

|    |                  |
|----|------------------|
| TU | <i>ù-hùmb'ùl</i> |
|----|------------------|

|     |                                |           |                     |
|-----|--------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| GL  | 3-liberation                   |           |                     |
| DT  | “liberation”                   |           |                     |
| ST  | Translational equivalence      |           |                     |
| 6)  | Alibi                          |           |                     |
| TU  | <i>ì-ndzòm</i>                 |           |                     |
| GL  | 7-alibi                        |           |                     |
| DT  | “reason”                       |           |                     |
| ST  | Semantic extension             |           |                     |
| 7)  | Alimony                        |           |                     |
| TU  | <i>ù-</i>                      | <i>ú-</i> | <i>ú-né</i>         |
| GL  | 3-money                        | 3.AGR     | 5-food              |
| DT  | “money for food”               |           |                     |
| ST  | Transplanation                 |           |                     |
| 8)  | Bail                           |           |                     |
| TU  | <i>ù-fám</i>                   | <i>ú-</i> | <i>bí-ból sàbòn</i> |
| GL  | 3-exit                         | 3.AGR     | 8-jail pay          |
| DT  | “payment to get out of prison” |           |                     |
| ST  | Transplanation                 |           |                     |
| 9)  | Cession                        |           |                     |
| TU  | <i>nj-àf</i>                   |           |                     |
| GL  | 5-cession                      |           |                     |
| DT  | “cession”                      |           |                     |
| ST  | Translational equivalence      |           |                     |
| 10) | Chastisement                   |           |                     |
| TU  | <i>ì-bónósè</i>                |           |                     |
| GL  | 7-punishment                   |           |                     |
| DT  | “punishment”                   |           |                     |
| ST  | Translational equivalence      |           |                     |
| 11) | Cohabitation                   |           |                     |
| TU  | <i>ú-sónó</i>                  | <i>nà</i> | <i>tùén</i>         |
| GL  | 3-coming                       | and       | stay                |
| DT  | “come and stay”                |           |                     |
| ST  | Transplanation                 |           |                     |
| 12) | Compensation                   |           |                     |
| TU  | <i>ù-fàŋ</i>                   |           |                     |
| GL  | 3-exchange                     |           |                     |
| DT  | “exchange”                     |           |                     |
| ST  | Semantic extension             |           |                     |

- 13) Complainant  
 TU *mù-sómên*  
 GL 1-complainant  
 DT “complainant”  
 ST Translational equivalence
- 14) Conspiracy  
 TU *mù-nif*  
 GL 3-conspiracy  
 DT “plan”  
 ST Semantic extension
- 15) Corroboration  
 TU *ù-lùmìn*  
 GL 3-proof  
 DT “proof”  
 ST Semantic extension
- 16) Defamation  
 TU *ù-tènèn*      *ú-*      *ní-ɲ*  
 GL 3-spoil      3.AGR      5-name  
 DT “spoil name”  
 ST Compounding
- 17) Default  
 TU *ì-ndòk*  
 GL 7-disobedience  
 DT “disobedience”  
 ST Semantic extension
- 18) Discrimination  
 TU *ɲà-fàn*  
 GL 5-discrimination  
 DT “discrimination”  
 ST Translational equivalence
- 19) Embezzlement  
 TU *bùip*  
 GL 9-stealing  
 DT “stealing/theft”  
 ST Semantic extension
- 20) E  
 TU *ù-fúèni*  
 GL 3-elimination

DT “elimination”  
ST Semantic extension

or

Eviction  
TU *ù-bùl*  
GL 3-elimination  
DT “elimination”  
ST Semantic extension

21) Execution  
TU *ù-fàṅè*  
GL 3-kill  
DT “kill”  
ST Semantic extension

22) Expatriation  
TU *ù-jó*  
GL 3-trip/journey  
DT “travel to settle in s.o.’s country”  
ST Translational equivalence

23) Fraud  
TU *ì-fòsòn*  
GL 7-cheating  
DT “cheating”  
ST Semantic extension

24) Garnishee  
TU *m-ṅndùè*      *ù-ndúné*      *kāl*  
GL 3-person      3-money      owe  
DT “person who owes money”  
ST Transplanation

25) Gazumping  
TU *ùbóli*      *ú*      *ù-ndúné*  
GL 3-increase      3.      3-money  
DT “increase money”  
ST Compounding

26) Genocide  
TU *j-ṅnón*  
GL 7-mass killing  
DT “mass killing”

ST Semantic extension

or

TU Genocide

TU *nì-bùm*

GL 5-mass killing

DT “genocide”

ST Semantic extension

27) Gift

TU *nì-hámén*

GL 5-gift

DT “gift” “donation”

ST Translational equivalence

28) Guardian

TU *nì-bóhól*

GL 5-guardian

DT “guardian”

ST Translational equivalence

29) Harboursing

TU *m-ònd(ò)* *mù-nìf*

GL 1-s.o. 3-complicity

DT “accomplice”

ST Compounding

30) Honorarium

TU *mò-sáḃḃn*

GL 3-salary

DT “salary”

ST Semantic extension

31) Homicide

TU *j-òńń*

GL 7-killing

DT “killing”

ST Semantic extension

32) Human rights

TU *kùndzò* *ì* *m-ònd*

GL 9-freedom 9.AGR 1-s.o.

DT “someone’s freedom”

ST Phrasing

- 33) Illegitimacy  
 TU *mò-ná*            *nàà*            *ì-sè*  
 GL 1-child            without            7-father  
 DT “child without father/ bastard”  
 ST Phrasing
- 34) Immigration  
 TU *ù-jó*  
 GL 3-trip/journey  
 DT “trip or journey”  
 ST Semantic extension
- 35) Immunity  
 TU *kùndzè*  
 GL 9-freedom  
 DT “freedom”  
 ST Semantic extension
- 36) Incriminate  
 TU *ù-sómên*  
 GL 3-accuse  
 DT “to accuse”  
 ST Semantic extension
- 37) Judgement  
 TU *mù-kál*  
 GL 3-judgement  
 DT “judgement”  
 ST Translational equivalence
- 38) Judge  
 TU *mù-kálisi*  
 GL 1-judge  
 DT “judge”  
 ST Translational equivalence
- 39) Kidnapping  
 TU *hòliní m-ònd*  
 GL snatch 1-s.o.  
 DT “snatch someone”  
 ST Compounding
- 40) Law  
 TU *ì-mbènd*  
 GL 7-law



|     |   |  |  |
|-----|---|--|--|
| DT  | “law”   |  |  |
| ST  | Translational equivalence   |  |  |
| 41) | Licence   |  |  |
| TU  | <i>kùndzè</i>   |  |  |
| GL  | 9-permission  |  |  |
| DT  | “permission”  |  |  |
| ST  | Semantic extension  |  |  |
| 42) | Malice  |  |  |
| TU  | <i>mò-ndò tù-fósón</i>  |  |  |
| GL  | 1-s.o. 13 -cheating   |  |  |
| DT  | “someone cheating”  |  |  |
| ST  | Compounding   |  |  |
| 43) | Mitigation  |  |  |
| TU  | <i>ù-lòsì</i> <i>ú</i> <i>kókósè</i>                                  |  |  |
| GL  | 3-reduce                      3.AGR                      9\punishment |  |  |
| DT  | “reduce the punishment”   |  |  |
| ST  | Compounding   |  |  |

### III. Discussion

Briefly, the strategies or methods of terminology formation used to create various lexemes for the legal system in Tunen are summarised in the table below.

**Table 1.** Strategies of legal terminology creation

| Terminology formation method | Explanation  | Example   |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| Semantic extension           | Extending the meaning of an existing word in Tunen to a legal concept.           | The Tunen term, <i>mìnif</i> “plan,” is used to mean “conspiracy.”                            |
| Compounding                  | Two or more words are joined.  | Tunen, <i>nìfùm hòlìni</i> “pregnancy removal,” for “abortion.”                               |
| Translational equivalence    | Providing the equivalent in Tunen.   | Tunen, <i>nihámên</i> “gift/donation,” for the English equivalent.                            |
| Transplanation               | The combination of translation and some explanations.                            | Tunen, <i>ùfám úbìból sàbòn</i> “payment to get out of prison,” for the English term, “bail.” |
| Phrasing                     | Using short nominal phrases comprising two nouns linked by an agreement concord. | Tunen, <i>kùndzè ì m̀nd</i> “someone’s freedom,” for the English concept of “human rights.”   |

Some Tunen equivalents were short sentences. It was necessary for easy readability to reduce the short sentence by using the principle of juxtaposition or collocation of content words. Thus, from the technique of “transplantation,” i.e. translation via explanation, the collocation of the main content words was derived. This is valid for terms such as “abortion” and “kidnapping”:

Abortion n. Tunen  
 à ná ní-fùm fiémi (from language consultants)  
 3sg Pst 5-pre remove  
 “she removed the pregnancy”  
 ní-fùm fiémi (authors’ suggestion)  
 5-pre remove  
 “pregnancy removal”

Kidnapping n. Tunen  
 bá ná wé hólíni (from language consultants)  
 3pl Pst 3pl.obj snatch  
 “they snatched him”  
 hólíni mōnd (authors’ suggestion)  
 snatch someone  
 “snatch someone”

Where the reduction into only two content words was not feasible, the authors employed lexical reduction:

Abdu Tunen  
 à ná mōná mōnd mú tētē hólíni  
 (from language consultant)  
 3sg Pst child girl 1.AGR small snatch  
 “s/he snatched an underage girl”  
 mōná mōnd mú tētē hólíni (authors’ suggestion)  
 child girl 1.AGR small snatch  
 “underage girl snatch(ing)”

Bail n. Tunen  
 à ná ù ú bí-ból sàbòn  
 (from language consultant)  
 3sg Pst 3-exit 3.AGR 8-jail prison  
 “he paid to get out of prison”  
 ù ú bí-ból sàbòn (authors’ suggestion)  
 3-exit 3.AGR 8-jail prison  
 “pay to get out of prison”

The concepts of law, legal systems, and judiciary systems are not a completely strange phenomenon for many African citizens. Before the late 19th century, Africans practiced indigenous systems of law where criminals were judged and condemned by traditional rulers. This is certainly the reason why the Tunen language already had terms such as /*imbànd*/ law, /*mùkálási*/ judge, or /*mùkál*/ judgement in its vocabulary. These Tunen words simply replaced the English.

During the development of legal terms in Tunen, the authors respected a certain standard for the definition of the original terms, which was that the new terms had to be simple enough to be understood by the target population, but to conserve the original meaning and the cognitive power involved. This justified the use of the various strategies listed above. Thus, sometimes, to derive a single legal term, the authors had to make use of two different words or a whole phrase, as in *mònduè undùnè kál*, “person who owes money,” for the English term, garnishee, or *mòná mǝnd mú tètè hólíní*, “underage girl snatch(ing)” for abduction.

Moreover, the authors were at times compelled to use two different linguistic strategies to reach the equivalent of a single word. For instance, to have the Tunen equivalent for the English term, abortion, the authors made use of transplanation (*à ná nífum fúémí* for “she removed the pregnancy”) and lexical reduction (*nífum fúémí* for “pregnancy removal”). However, the strategy of lexical reduction is not listed among the 5 listed above, as it is an intermediary process leading to compounding.

Furthermore, during the terminology development process, the authors took advantage of the existence of some generic/polysemous terms in Tunen. The word, *jǝnǝn*, for example, refers to various concepts that include killing, mass killing, genocide, and homicide. As such, the morpheme, *jǝnǝn*, appears more than once in the table below with the semantic extension strategy. This strategy was used with all words sharing some similar characteristics at the level of their function, form, meaning, location, texture, origin, circumstances, measure, and value.

The English legal lexemes and their Tunen equivalents together with the linguistic strategies of semantic extension, compounding, translational equivalence, transplanation, and phrasing used during the development process are presented in the table below.

**Table 2.** English-Tunen legal term list

| No. | English      | Tunen                              | Strategy                  |
|-----|--------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1)  | Abduction n. | <i>mòná mǝnd mú tètè hólíní</i>    | Compounding               |
| 2)  | Abortion n.  | <i>hólíní nífum / nífum hólíní</i> | Compounding               |
| 3)  | Accession n. | <i>jǝkínǝnì</i>                    | Semantic extension        |
| 4)  | Accessory n. | <i>ìkàmèl</i>                      | Semantic extension        |
| 5)  | Acquittal n. | <i>ìhùmbùl</i>                     | Translational equivalence |
| 6)  | Alibi n.     | <i>ìndzǝm</i>                      | Semantic extension        |

|     |                   |                          |                           |
|-----|-------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 7)  | Alimony n.        | <i>ùndùnà úné</i>        | Transplanation            |
| 8)  | Bail n.           | <i>ùfam úbíbòl sàbòn</i> | Transplanation            |
| 9)  | Cession n.        | <i>njàf</i>              | Translational equivalence |
| 10) | Chastisement n.   | <i>ìbónósè</i>           | Translational equivalence |
| 11) | Cohabitation n.   | <i>úsónó nà tùén</i>     | Transplanation            |
| 12) | Compensation n.   | <i>ùfàŋ</i>              | Semantic extension        |
| 13) | Complainant n.    | <i>mùsómên</i>           | Translational equivalence |
| 14) | Conspiracy n.     | <i>mùnif</i>             | Semantic extension        |
| 15) | Corroboration n.  | <i>ùlùmìn</i>            | Semantic extension        |
| 16) | Defamation n.     | <i>ùtènèn únín</i>       | Compounding               |
| 17) | Default n.        | <i>ìndòk</i>             | Semantic extension        |
| 18) | Discrimination n. | <i>njà-fàn</i>           | Translational equivalence |
| 19) | Embezzlement n.   | <i>bùíp</i>              | Semantic extension        |
| 20) | Eviction n.       | <i>ùfúèni / ùbùl</i>     | Semantic extension        |
| 21) | Execution n.      | <i>ùfàŋè</i>             | Semantic extension        |
| 22) | Expatriation n.   | <i>ùjò</i>               | Translational equivalence |
| 23) | Fraud n.          | <i>ìfòsòn</i>            | Semantic extension        |
| 24) | Garnishee n.      | <i>mòndùè ùndùnà kǎl</i> | Transplanation            |
| 25) | Gazumping n.      | <i>ùbòlí ùndùnà</i>      | Compounding               |
| 26) | Genocide n.       | <i>jònón / nìbùm</i>     | Semantic extension        |
| 27) | Gift n.           | <i>nìhámên</i>           | Translational equivalence |
| 28) | Guardian n.       | <i>nìbóŋól</i>           | Translational equivalence |
| 29) | Harbouring n.     | <i>mònd mùnif</i>        | Compounding               |
| 30) | Honorarium n.     | <i>mòsábôn</i>           | Semantic extension        |
| 31) | Homicide n.       | <i>jònón</i>             | Semantic extension        |
| 32) | Human rights      | <i>kùndzà ì mònd</i>     | Phrasing                  |
| 33) | Illegitimacy n.   | <i>mòná nàná ìsè</i>     | Phrasing                  |
| 34) | Immigration n.    | <i>ùjò</i>               | Semantic extension        |
| 35) | Immunity n.       | <i>kùndzà</i>            | Semantic extension        |

|     |                 |                       |                           |
|-----|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 36) | Incriminate vb. | <i>ù-sómên</i>        | Semantic extension        |
| 37) | Judgement n.    | <i>mù-kál</i>         | Translational equivalence |
| 38) | Judge n.        | <i>mù-kálsì</i>       | Translational equivalence |
| 39) | Kidnapping n.   | <i>hòlíní mônd</i>    | Compounding               |
| 40) | Law n.          | <i>imbànd</i>         | Translational equivalence |
| 41) | Licence n.      | <i>kùndzè</i>         | Semantic extension        |
| 42) | Malice n.       | <i>mòndò tífósón</i>  | Compounding               |
| 43) | Mitigation n.   | <i>ùlòsì ú kókósè</i> | Compounding               |

## CONCLUSION

In this paper, the authors developed some Tunen terms frequently used in the English law in Cameroon. The goal was to raise awareness for the necessity to address the crucial lack of specialized terms in important domains such as the judiciary. The lives of Cameroonians will be enhanced without the communication barrier. In the judicial setting where people's lives are at stake, all the necessary means must be available for equitable justice. The legal setting should be the last place where human rights, more specifically language rights, are trampled. Thus, taking pretext of the intimate connection between language and the law, the authors used five linguistic strategies to attempt to fill in some of the gaps in the lexical stock of terms related to the Cameroon legal system. The present work should therefore be considered as a sample representation of a terminology development strategy for Cameroon national languages. The authors posit that the above 43 words translated into Tunen are sufficient to demonstrate how the research into languages and the law, i.e. FL, can be beneficial for the development of the national languages of Africa. There is a sad reality that the African leaders, who may be instrumental in the development of the national languages, still see the exoglossic languages such as English, French, and Portuguese, as the only means for upwards mobility for their citizens, the only possible languages for sophisticated and abstract thinking, and the sole speech forms for the development of the African continent. Many still hold strongly to the fallacious idea that Africans cannot have access to hardcore sciences and new technologies with the national languages, which to the leaders are meant (and should be meant) for home usage only. It is an irrefutable necessity that Africans countries need to develop their national languages, and this implies the lexical development of those languages in all the domains of life. Thanks to the advances of FL, language is seen as an integral part of the practice of the law. In other words, there is no law without language, and there is no equitable justice without the respect for language rights.

The few methods or strategies used in this paper may not be an exhaustive list,

as the languages need more terms in various domains such as medicine, education, science, and technology, amenable to the enhanced expansion and creation mechanisms. For a domain as in medicine, borrowing will certainly be a main resource.

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