

## Space, Spanish and Toponymy in Cameroonian Literary Discourse

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### Résumé

*This study tackles Cameroonian literary discourse in Spanish as artificial space dominated neither by exogenic languages nor by those that are originally indigenous to Cameroon, but by an exoglossic linguistic code. It is tantamount to the conquest of a new space by means of a vehicle from a different cultural world. Spanish confers a paratopic status on Cameroonian writing. Though not widely known, it carves out for itself a micro-literary niche in Cameroon's overall literary production landscape. The textual space thus becomes an expressive forum for the periphery as against the centre. By means of the linguistic signs used, it defines its stenography and the author's own space. Through specialization and localization, Cameroon literature in Spanish is able to function as veritable topographic and toponymic reproduction of physical space, that is, in more concrete terms, Cameroonian space.*

**Key terms:** space, literary, Cameroon, Spanish, text, genre, paratopia, periphery.

### Introduction

The life of a human being and everything surrounding him is governed by space. Space constitutes the pillar of his essence. Along with time, this topologic reality can be apprehended as the pivot underpinning the existence of both living beings and non-living things. Indeed, man is born into some space. He is himself space and, in turn, creates spaces. Taking possession of surrounding space thus becomes the first sign of civilization. Accordingly, the cultural subject becomes a user of spaces. His behaviour depends on the use he makes of space. Inevitably, the creation of these new spaces generates another type of relationship between created subjects and objects that are rather invested with new values. Textual space thus becomes an artificial human creation that is essentially conceptual in nature. As a worldly being, man establishes distances and founds places<sup>1</sup>. His dynamism justifies his concern to apprehend his environment, explore and control it.

In this regard, space appears as a reference point that gives meaning to his personal experience and aspirations. The spatial inhabitant<sup>2</sup> operates and defines himself through this coordinate, which makes it possible to classify him in relation to his species and in relation to things and other living beings. By means of a semio-pragmatic approach, this study attempts to examine the spatial distribution of Cameroon literature in Spanish. Discussing space in Cameroonian writing in Spanish means reflecting on the quantification of a category compartmentalized into levels or stages. What is more, this exercise corresponds to analysis of reference coordinates to which this reality refers. This study has three core parts. The first focuses on semic and conceptual breakdown of the lexeme *space*. The second presents Spanish as a medium that confers a unique discourse to Cameroon literature. The last part analyses the universe of the literary work. It also attempts to decipher topographic, toposemic and toponymic entities contained in the textual space.

### 1. Space and conceptual and semic interpretation

The term *space* has very broad conceptual and semic elasticity, thus making it highly polysemic. Indeed, everything tends to carry the notional value of space. This lexeme has a close link with geographical space. In this wise, it contains the following semes: /boundaries/, /borders/, /localization/, /situation/, /map/ and /location/. Even more, this object-term contains the semes of /dimension/, volume/<sup>3</sup> and /surface/<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Place refers to site, the *locus* where something is situated.

<sup>2</sup> In this regard, we may talk about *biotope*, *habitat*, *cabin*, *country*, *continent*, *village*, etc.

<sup>3</sup> It may be encompassing or encompassed.

<sup>4</sup> This seme is either surrounding or surrounded.

Accordingly, space implies the design and use of some architecture. Under this condition, semic breakdown makes it possible to establish the nexus between this sign and the notions of *topography*, *cartography* and *toponymy*.

The term evinces synonymy with other lexical entries such as *terrain*, *place*, *surrounding*, *sector*, *spot*, *milieu*, *territory*, *landscape*, *microcosm*, *site*, setting and *place*. In this synonymic relationship, *universe*, *world*, *expanse*, *centre*, *environment* and *zone* also come into the picture. From the semio-discursive standpoint, space refers to a psycho-enunciative representation. It contains the minimal significant traits of /domain/, /genre/, /position/, /positioning/, /circle/ and /scope/ to which may be added those of /sphere/, /trend/, /school/, /doctrine/, /ideology/, /culture/ and /area/.

On the narrative plane, space appears as one of the textual categories – alongside time and characters – that contribute to the production of meaning. Clearly, it is a structural coordinate of narration. As a result, it is close to the concepts of *context*, *situation*, *localization*, *spatialization*, *orientation*, *anchorage*, *disengagement*, *engagement*, *itinerary*, *surroundings*, *course*, *plan*, *movement* and *deixis*. Against this background, the linguistic sign, *space*, generates a number of lexies consistent with this meaning. Here, we are referring to *literary space*, *literary field*, *textual geography*, *literary sphere*, *enunciative goal*, *literary legitimacy* and *literary institution*. Others, such as *literary map*, *literary territory*, *literary nationality*, *enunciative loop* and *literary inscription* flesh out the point. The foregoing interpretation construes space as a value, a constructed object that impacts on visual, psychophysiological and even socio-cultural capacities. In this sense, textual space is an artificial human creation that is essentially conceptual in nature. The choice of Spanish as the language of writing poses the problem of creation of a unique space as well as the problem of the place of this code in the new literary territory in Cameroon. Spanish thus injects into the Cameroonian literary world the attendant semes of /scenography/, loop/, /portion/, /plot/, and even /mirror/. Through this linguistic code, writing establishes two reference points for literary communication, namely: the centre and the periphery. As a matter of fact, these points constitute the sign of identification of the space to which the literary product is attributed, located or belongs. The same applies to the writer. Language introduces into this communication situation the concepts of (writer's) *tribe* and *paratopia*.

## **2. Spanish, medium and space: from peripheral writing to the periphery**

The adoption of Spanish as the language of composition by some writers highlights the impact and challenge of taking up a plot of Cameroonian literary space with an exoglossic code. Here, the concern is to identify the discursive, identity and conceptual status of that portion of Cameroon literary space. Now, the spatial entity imposes the way of being. By the way, it fashions the subject and not the reverse. However, while language<sup>5</sup> is part of a culture, it generally contributes to strengthen and format the identification and identity of a good number of activities of a given geographical space. In this sense, Cameroon is heavily branded by the influence of exogenous and indigenous linguistic codes. Therefore, space affects the cultural substrate as the subjects develop certain traits that are specific to them. From this standpoint, the literary area can be co-existential to language or to the linguistic area. However, an endogenous culture can be transmitted – with certain limitations sometimes- by means of an exoglossic language. Spanish jumps into the picture to specify the existence of a literature or, in a broader sense, of a corpus of established facts that are given aesthetic value and recognized as fundamental by part of Cameroonian society. The said corpus constitutes its literary universe. In this regard, Maingueneau (1993: 103) thinks that « *la littérature joue un rôle capital dans cette délimitation sociologique des langues. L'Un imaginaire de la langue se soutient à l'existence d'un corpus d'œuvres qui contribuent à lui donner sa cohésion. Les écrivains, loin de venir après, participent à sa définition* ».

In this case, Cameroonian works do not use only the medium of language. Every act of literary enunciation here, however trivial it may seem, comes handy to strengthen the role of Spanish as a language worthy of literature and, besides, its role as a language, simply. The use of Spanish by some Cameroonian writers as a communication or expression tool highlights the communicability and functionality of this discursive space. It is a paradigm closed at the two points configured by social participants of the communication act. Here, space assumes a highly semiotic function. It challenges the idiosyncrasy of languages in Cameroon's literary and linguistic environment. The introduction of Spanish into Cameroon's literary landscape poses a linguistic, definitional, designational, conceptual and even pragmatic problem.

<sup>5</sup> The notion of *language* as a social institution remains closely tied to some physical or geographic space. It thus implies a common and individual identity that characterizes a transindividual subject.

It raises the issue of the relevance and appropriateness of the designation of that space incarnated by a handful of writers. The latter single themselves out through their cultural and linguistic immersion into the Hispanic cultural world. Regarding the discursive space, several possibilities<sup>6</sup> are open: *Cameroon literature in Spanish, Hispano-Cameroon literature and Cameroonian Spanish literature*.

Therefore, talking about Cameroonian discourse in Spanish presupposes a movement, namely that of identity, imagination and psychological rapprochement between two geographically distant spaces or worlds. Such an interpretation captures the culmination and transformation of a virtual element into reality. Spanish thus succeeds in carving out space for itself in Cameroonian writing. This option evinces the writer-subject's aspiration to shorten distances. This is an attempt to remove barriers and deterritorialize language. Indeed, Cameroonian writers use Spanish without bothering about frontiers, which is proof that the functionality and life of a language transcends its natural borders through linguistic and cultural immersion. The work thus brings together participants in literary communication, which eludes the closed space of Cameroonian society. Language plays therein its full role as symbolic form, literary tool, with both aesthetic and social value. Maingueneau (1993: 110) argues that « *la littérature ne vise pas à replier un groupe sur lui-même. Le code langagier d'une œuvre n'est pas l'anti-langue d'une communauté existante, mais celle d'une communauté à venir, les lecteurs, qui sont appelés à partager son univers* ».

Domestication by Spanish of a portion of Cameroonian space expresses a *forward movement*, which is at once construction and future. It is tantamount to the conquest of new space by a vehicle from another cultural world. The process is facilitated by cultural relativism that results in the formation of hybridity that impacts both that fragment of Cameroon literature and individuals (human spaces). The use of Spanish contributes to the construction of a utopic world and a closure discourse. At the same time, it engenders paranoia for the author and his work. It is the illustration of paratopic writing. Communicational competence in this case brings on board two enunciatively and pragmatic categories: the enunciatively purpose and the enunciative authority. Combined, these factors contribute to the formation of a tribe of writers: the tribe of Cameroonian Spanish authors. As such, it is not self-evident for a Cameroonian author to write in Spanish, for his paratopic condition assigns him no other place than a frontier, as writing widens an irreducible gap with Spanish. Here, space is construed as a micro-world. Writing in Spanish is simply a rapprochement of the subject-writer of the Spanish cultural space (centre) with the related space (Hispanic and, especially hispano-american). Maintenance of the link with this language shows the possibility of inserting a literary code using a language through which the subject-writer conveys African culture. It is the expression of peripheral positioning that alludes to another called the centre.

This dynamic movement highlights the existence of spaces. The latter are situated at the level of the writing act in conformity with geographical territorial conquest. Alongside the axis with so-called writing of the centre that serves as a reference, there is another type, namely peripheral writing. In this case, language acts as a compass, a weighing balance or better still an indicator to assign a status to one or other literary world. With regard to the Cameroonian literary space, Spanish even further confines to the periphery the writing of Cameroonians that inhabit the said micro-space. Language constitutes the boundary that circumscribes that space: Cameroon writing in Spanish. It acts as the differential trait and frontier. It marks the divide between the writing of the axis<sup>7</sup> and a portion of Cameroonian literature that constitutes the expression of the periphery. Spanish comes across as the vector of a dual periphery: marginality as against the discursive Hispanic centre and marginality in relation to the rest of Cameroonian literature. Through the uniqueness of that language, a micro-space is successfully created within a macro-space, namely Cameroon literature. The language thus fosters the development of African literature in Spanish. It pre-supposes a society, a corporation and an identity. The said space refers to a professional class: hispanicists (mainly teachers), in short, to intellectuals bound by writing, by language (Spanish) and belonging to the same origin (they are Cameroonians).

### 3. Cameroon literature in Spanish

#### 3.1. Cameroonian literary space, legitimization and linguistic delimitation

The adoption of Spanish in a portion of Cameroonian literary discourse raises a number of concerns, top among which is literary legitimization and institution.

<sup>6</sup> Of all the hypotheses, only the first appears pertinent to us, because Spanish in Cameroon is an exoglossic language.

<sup>7</sup> We are referring here to Spanish literature and, to a lesser extent, the gap with Hispano-american and hispano-guinean literatures. The latter are in turn peripheral literatures. However, the concern is literature of quantification of the periphery.

Writing in Spanish defines a still fledgling and insignificant, or better, a still emerging literary world as witnessed by the volume of production. The notion of space in writing is connected to the concept of *literary nationality*. The latter implies the territorialisation of the literary text. Now, the text in question employs not a local language and, much less, an exogenic language (English, French), but an exoglossic language: Spanish. This is indeed the territorialisation of discourse and the delocalization of a language.

Though little known to Cameroonian recipients and readers, Cameroon literature in Spanish raises the problem of admission and enrolment of its author into Cameroon's literary<sup>8</sup> map. According to Tcheho (2004: 41), the « *carte littéraire d'un pays désigne la représentation graphique ou iconique dudit territoire assortie de l'indication des zones d'origine de ses écrivains* ». What is more, it provides information about the degree of contribution to the national literary heritage of the various geographical components of the territory under consideration. The new space offered by these Cameroonians has brought to the Cameroonian literary scene writers of another kind with their uniqueness. However, the use of Spanish casts a doubt on their recognition at the national level. Writing on the issue, Mbock (2004: 186) underscores that the « *prépondérance de la langue dans la classification d'une œuvre littéraire est telle qu'il ne vient à l'esprit de personne de parler de littérature française d'expression anglaise, ou de littérature russe d'expression portugaise. Il n'y a que l'Afrique pour se satisfaire des littératures anglaise, nigériane ou camerounaise de langue portugaise, anglaise ou française* ». To this is added an expressive difficulty<sup>9</sup> that resides in the formulation, designation and appellation. Accordingly, can it be said that this literary space incorporates what Pie Jahn (2008) describes as *hispano-African literature*? In a critique, Mbock (2004: 187) indicates that languages constitute the bedrock of peoples and nations. He argues that we « *avons toujours su nous complaire dans cette exception culturelle de la soumission aux langues des autres. Cela revient à dire que nous aurons exceptionnellement de la littérature produite au Cameroun, de la littérature produite par des Camerounais exceptionnels, mais jamais de la littérature camerounaise. Pour que cette dernière existe comme telle, il lui faudra s'exprimer dans l'une ou l'autre langue du Cameroun. Car la spécification d'une littérature pose prioritairement la question de sa langue d'expression, cette fois sans exception* ». However, Spanish as a medium is just a simple “means” of expression or dissemination. It conveys the meaning engendered by the work.

For his part, Kom (2004: 189) affirms that the first criterion of “national literature” has to do with the “writing conditions. After the writing conditions, we need to focus on production, publication and distribution conditions”. In addition to the lack of national production facilities, the author enumerates the obstacles that impede the functioning of a literary space that really corresponds to the label, *Cameroon literature*. The problem gets even more complicated when literary discourse is written in an exoglossic language. The main shortcoming is pragmatic: What is the target audience in Cameroon of writing in Spanish? In truth, its practice is limited to a few micro-spaces (colleges, high schools, schools, departments, streams) within the education or university environment. The concern here is the number of Cameroonian readers of such production, the consumption and distribution conditions, the distribution time and network<sup>10</sup>. Besides, Kom (2004) points out that in addition to bookshops- in respect of Cameroon literature- the other important consumption link is the library. He also touches on the absence of a corps of critiques<sup>11</sup> for the works published. To these elements that are external to production may be added legitimization. Theoreticians contend that there can be no national literature without legitimization bodies. In the case of writing in Spanish, these bodies are foreign. In this regard, he insists that « *on ne devrait plus alors parler de littérature camerounaise mais d'œuvres écrites par des Camerounais. Parce que l'expression «littérature camerounaise» entendue comme littérature nationale camerounaise est différente de littérature écrite par des Camerounais* ».

<sup>8</sup> Most often, Cameroon's literary map covers only literary production in official languages (English and French). The space occupied by Cameroon literature in Spanish constitutes additional literary production little known to the immense majority of Cameroonians.

<sup>9</sup> Here-above, we have already raised the issue of the appropriate appellation for this literary world.

<sup>10</sup> Networks and places of consumption refer to the market for such literary production.

<sup>11</sup> Referring to national reception of this production, the author argues that « *il y a peut-être des critiques mais ceux-ci ne constituent pas encore un corps. On a simplement à faire à une juxtaposition d'individualités! Pour que ces critiques fassent corps, il faudrait qu'il existe des canaux institués de vulgarisation [...]. C'est ainsi que ça se passe ailleurs!*» (Kom 2004: 191).

However, the space occupied by works written in Spanish by a class of Cameroonians from within and without deal with themes fundamental to Cameroon-space or Cameroonians wherever they find themselves, which explains the Cameroonity of their textual world. Yet, we cannot but note the near total absence of a corps of critiques.

### 3.2. Human space and the writing environment

#### 3.2.1. From human space to fictional space

The subject-writer alone constitutes a whole world, an individual and psychological space with a unique identity. It is a unique space that creates textual spaces, synonymous to literary production (macro-signs, stabilized utterances). These artificial spaces correspond to language acts, or better still, to macro-acts. They constitute the materialization of literary communication.

The latter is deferred and calls for various categories of readers (instituted, virtual, etc.). The writer has a conscience, which comes across as both symbolic and semiotic space. He uses language material that contributes to constructing the expression of a mental representation. Its activity results in the creation of an imaginary, fictional and virtual space. Through this psychic and enunciative dynamism, the conscience takes on the value of a semiotico-ideological space. Cros (2011: 115-116), argues that semic space

*implique une juxtaposition des systèmes mnésiques qui, à partir des expériences multiples du sujet, se sont organisés suivant des lois d'associations à définir sans exclure les mécanismes qui sont propres à la langue et à la parole et qui sont susceptibles de générer les glissements d'un système à l'autre. Il s'agit, avec cette notion, de fixer provisoirement l'état d'une conscience sous la forme de ce que Bakhtine appellerait un stock social de signes disponibles.*

According to the theoretician, the space amounts to a reservoir of material supports waiting to be solicited by yet-to-come mental representations. Activation of this semiotico-ideological space converts language material into textual space. The latter requires a place and context of writing, a legitimization body and a literary institution.

#### 3.2.2. Place of writing and literary institution

A literary work pre-supposes production circumstances (period, spot, and individuals). The notions of Cameroonian *literary space* and *world* in Spanish imply first and foremost the place of genesis or of production (place of composition) of the writing. Second, they refer to a place of publication (Nkongsamba, Spain and Italy). These concepts also cover virtual or constituted places of consumption and distribution (bookshops, libraries, cultural centres, sections, departments, and universities). They also pre-suppose a place of destination and recipients (Spain, Spaniards), and a place of reception (Cameroon, Africa). Given that a work is at once a transportable good and space, *literary space* and *world* imply that at reception, there are virtual readers located in unsuspected destinations. Cameroonian literary discourse in Spanish shields a relational web wherein intervenes various entities. The latter include publishing houses, printing houses and geographical origins. Construed as space, discourse depends and rests on legitimization bodies recognized by this literary position. Maingueneau (1993: 189) points out that « *la création littéraire [...] institue ses lieux d'énonciation en des carrefours stratégiques. Elle suppose un écart, celui par lequel elle se sépare des activités « profanes», mais aussi une dépendance, qui en fait un domaine parmi d'autres de l'activité sociale* ».

As happens to almost all writers, Cameroonian literary space in Spanish boasts a place of writing (office, room, house, living room, garden, library, etc.), which is defined as the space where textual space is instituted. It constitutes a writing environment taken only from what it is supposed to contain. Maingueneau (1993) points out the polysemic nature of this lexie. According to the author, the place of writing « *est à la fois un lieu de repli sur soi et d'ouverture sur le monde, un lieu à l'extérieur et à l'intérieur du lieu d'écriture. Condition de possibilité d'une écriture, il en est aussi une matérialisation* » (Maingueneau 1993: 50-51). The place of writing is construed as physical space where enunciation<sup>12</sup> is produced. It gives corps to the paratopia of a writer who combines reflexivity and observation of the world. Such interpretation of writing space confers on the writer the value of author, of a god giving birth to a subject, a creature and an institutional framework: the literary and discursive<sup>13</sup> genre.

<sup>12</sup> According to Chartrand (1999), enunciation encompasses both the writing and the oral emission of an utterance.

<sup>13</sup> These are the different discursive modeling forms: novel, poems, essays, tales, epics, etc.

### 3.3. Context and world of the work: textual space

#### 3.3.1. Imaginary space and world of the work

Space implies content and a container. It makes it possible to apprehend Cameroon literature in Spanish as a representation of the world (Africa, Cameroon and some incursions into the West). In this case, it entails iconicity as the primary given, additionally to figurativization of its texts. In this regard, the fictional character of the said literary discourse is due to the simple fact that the lexemes contained therein install ready-made images. Thus, as Maingueneau (1993: 131) indicates, the works achieve legitimacy by tracing an enunciative loop. Indeed, through what it says, the world it represents, the work must justify itself and legitimize its scenography. To achieve this, each space of the said Cameroonian literary world is construed as a collection and an intermingling of namable or non-namable icons that refer at once to the real world as it is and to the world captured in words (Greimas et Courtés 1979: 148). Space thus assumes this value, notwithstanding the fact that it manifests itself either in abstract form or in figurative form. Such is the iconicity of literary discourse in light of the reference space under consideration here.

Figurativization acts as iconization that tends to cover spatial figures with reference illusion that coverts them to images of the world. As Maingueneau (1990: 166) specifies, the world of the work must be interpreted in both senses as the world represented by the work and the world it constructs through its closure. In this regard, the author talks about the world of the work. According to him, such world « *se joue de la séparation rassurante entre l'énonciation et le monde. L'œuvre ne parle d'autre chose qu'en montrant prise dans ce qu'elle est censée décrire, elle s'ouvre en se fermant sur soi* », Maingueneau (1990: 167). Therefore, fictional<sup>14</sup> closures touch on the relationship between literary discourse and its "exterior". From this standpoint, the work comes across as a fragment of the world that proposes a code for deciphering it. The notion of *space* thus activates the relational process between the work and the world. It amounts to talking about a world wherein there is not necessarily a place for what the subject says about that world. Maingueneau (1990: 177) is therefore right to think that the work is not a solipsistic universe.

From a semio-discursive standpoint, cognitive spatialization within and without the literary work captures the positioning of subjects and objects in space. Such use of spatiality does not satisfy just simple description, but the use of space for purposes of meaning. In the same light as enunciation, the concept of *space* pre-supposes certain conditions of legitimization of the message of the literary work. Having the legitimacy of Cameroon literature in Spanish recognized pre-supposes that the production is registered in some literary field. Writing thus creates a textual space, which is in actual fact a discursive creation that corresponds to a genre, or better still, to modeling that acquires the value of space. In this line of thought, Maingueneau (1990: 15) describes literary discourse as an institution, with its enunciative rituals of which genres constitute the obvious manifestation.

#### 3.3.2. Discursive genre as space

The assignment of Cameroon literary production in Spanish to genres situates it within what Maingueneau (1993: 68) refers to as the *literary sphere*. From this perspective, positioning Cameroonian writers by genre and language is tantamount to interconnecting a run of the sphere with the place they assign to themselves in the literary field through their works. This is a digressive genre that creates a hybrid literary space. Modelling thus comes across as the application of a model designed elsewhere, but adapted to the environment of an endogenous group. In this regard, its use makes it possible to express and add value to the different realities of another world. Such an operation can only happen with works that not only are consistent with these various realities and differences, but also capture them. The choice confirms the thought, vision and ideology of a continent (Africa), a country (Cameroon) and, lastly, cultural and transindividual subjects. In this case, the objective of the work is not only to represent otherness, a cultural model or enunciative modelling. Also, its end objective is to describe not only a milieu, but also to institute the space for its own enunciation: paratopic writing. However, the meaning of the generic choice varies depending on the constraints specific to the aesthetic world of each author. In this line, Maingueneau (1993) recommends that it is necessary « *à chaque fois, s'efforcer de restituer le geste qui soutient l'attribution générique et le rapporter au positionnement de son auteur dans le champ littéraire* » (Maingueneau 1993: 74).

Context appears as an important given in the determination and configuration of textual space. The context of the work is the field where the writer positions himself. However, as an utterance, the work also predicates a context.

<sup>14</sup> They are generally referred to as *mise en abîme*.

It requires the mainstreaming of the enunciation situation, the scenography that the work presupposes. In return, the latter validates it. Scenography thus constitutes a privileged articulation of the work and the world. According to Maingueneau (1993), the scenography of a work is dominated by the literary scene. The latter gives the work its pragmatic environment, combining the position of “author” with that of “public” or reader. This explains why Maingueneau (1993: 122) notes that, as the medium of socially recognized discourse, a work is an utterance through an institution, in this case, a given genre of discourse.

### 3.3.3. Archive, textual geography, topography and toponyms

Cameroon textual space in Spanish plays the role of archive. Indeed, it constitutes a background that is capable of guiding different social stakeholders when oral tradition would have lost the traces or onomastic signs of these reference spaces (*Kribi, Tsan, Nkoldongo*, etc.). As space, the text acts at once as a toponymic data sheet, field handbook, showcase and topographic map (*bosques, macizo Maneguba, ríos, monte Bamboutos, El carro de los dioses*, etc.). Conceptual space figurativizes texts as well as created spaces. At this level of figurativization, onomastics comes into play through the introduction of numerous toponyms (Camerún, Guinea Ecuatorial, Gabón, Europa, Francia, España, USA, URSS, Kribi, Yaundé, Duala, etc.).

These spaces have corresponding external topographic referents.

Spatialization of the Cameroonian text is achieved both through usage and isotopic selection of generic data (*la selva, el bosque, el matorral, la cama, el lecho, el puente et el paisaje*) and through spatial<sup>15</sup> indices. Space in this discourse remains very present in the narrative path and programme. Its iterativity makes it an isotopic coordinate. This recurrence of linguistic units that bear place and spatialization semes results in a relational network which is none other than semantic, semiotic and especially spatial isotopy. The recurrence of these semes gives rise to a sort of toposemy. Movement, localization, displacement and travel are a constant in the Cameroonian text in Spanish, which explains the use of certain data such as *el paisaje* and *el puente*. The use of toponyms and the iterative evocation of common places endow the text with an acceptable degree of reproduction of the real: Cameroon, its realities, its cultural substrate and neighbouring countries (*Gabón, Centáfrica, Guinea Ecuatorial and even Zaire*). In fact, the narrator takes leaps into the geographic, though cognitive and imaginary space of the text. He evokes voyages and travels to distant places (*Europa, Occidente, Francia, Bélgica, Portugal, Norteamérica*) and to neighbouring countries (*Guinea Ecuatorial, Centráfrica, Zaire et Gabón*).

The Cameroon literary world offers a sample of the textual geography of the space-Cameroon. Indeed, it is a sort of postcard via literature. In actual fact, Cameroon writing in Spanish constitutes real geographic description manuals facilitated by voyage via the literary text. It is the expression of cultural geography within conceptual space. The latter has its own spaces (towns, watercourses, villages, forests, enclosures, yards, airports). It includes in them collective entities (maps, secret societies, etc.). The latter correspond to spaces<sup>16</sup> or human circles governed by some demarcation. The textual space incorporates into the narrative landscape and path the elements of *land, water* and *air* that permit the development of natural life (*tierra, mar/río/agua, aire/cielo*). Numerous monemes that describe features<sup>17</sup> of the land are frequently used (*cerro, colina, sierra, macizo, cascadas, monte*). The title *El carro de los Dioses* (The chariot of the Gods<sup>18</sup>) refers both to a textual space (that contains fictional micro-spaces) and to real physical space. Such is a clear case of mimetic topography.

Besides, it is expressed through the iconic value of the toponyms of the world in those literary works. Such toponyms introduce not only xenisms (*Bafoussam, Mbouda, Minta, Ongola, Sanaga, Fraúton, Kribi, Mengoa, Mbomdjock, Nguiniuma, Epón, Tsen, Abam, Lula, Lobe, Moka, Bassako, Biapa*), but also calques (*Yaundé, Malabo, Camerún, París, Alahagrafía, Duála, Bamboutos, Menúa, Maneguba*). The textual world also contains names of paratopic places (*El carro de los Dioses, isla, mar, cascadas, cielo, Jaula, monte Bamboutos, paraíso, zoo, Macizo del Maneguba, and playa*). Such topographic mimetism also covers sacred or witchcraft sites (*campamento, cascadas de Lobe, arboleda, mar, cementero, altar, lugar sagrado, panteón, corral, et cántara de agua*). To these may be added the names of towns (*Bruselas, Londres, Lisboa, París, Malabo, Duala, Kribi, Yaundé, Nueva York, Barcelona*) and neighbourhoods (*Nkoldongo, Santa Cruz et Elanguema*).

<sup>15</sup> They refer to the problems of deixis, as well as engagement and disengagement that develop spatial localization. This aspect of space will be dealt with amply in subsequent studies.

<sup>16</sup> The appellations of the various spaces are taken from Metanmo (1985 ; 2010), Inongo-VI-Makomè (1996; 2003; 2008) ; Jhlio (1998) ; Mbol Nang (2004).

<sup>17</sup> Terrado (1999 : 32) groups under the appellation *corónimos* the common nouns used to describe features of the land.

<sup>18</sup> It is an appellation used to refer to Mount Cameroon.

Other spaces such as «Maison Blanche», *Central park* and *Grassfields* are proof of the heteroglossy that inhabits the cultural subject and the Cameroonian writer. In the same vein, many lexemes are used with a certain degree of recurrence (*hoyo, casas, habitación, ciudad, cabaña, hueco, escondrijo, escondite, campamento, hogar, choza, apartamento, palacete, palacio, castillo, sala, mansión, bar, papelería, iglesia, provincia, plaza, departamento* and *sede*). Others, by contrast, describe population centres (*escuela, instituto, ministerio, gendarmería, hospital, poblado, aldea, ciudad, capital, pueblo, comarca, barrio, campo* and *reino*).

Linguistic signs indicating communication routes people this literary landscape. These include terms such as: *calle, calzada, senda, camino, pista, carretera* and *encrucijada*. Other locational lexical entries appear emphasized (*lugar, patio, espacio, superficie, puente, entorno, portal, puerta, alrededores, globo terrestre, mundo, universo, embarque, aeropuerto, mostrador, asidero, kilómetros, ribera* and *orilla*). Topographic data are also perceptible through the use of names referring to spaces created by plants or places affected by human action (*plantación, bosque, maleza, selva, cañaveral, arboleda, cafetal, matorral* and *pántano*). Others capture spaces created through animal action (*nido, colmena*). The tree also constitutes the reference point for spatial location (*al pie del árbol, desde el baobab*). Here, directional markers come into play (*a la izquierda* et *a la derecha*). Part of textual space is represented by common nouns and toponyms describing watercourses (*arroyuelo, mar, río, río Tiá, río Sanaga, río Lobe, río Niungá* and *río Etembwe*).

Alongside the iterativity of the lexeme *río*, we also have the sign *puente*. All these spaces are fixed. However, there are others that are perceived as mobile (*cayuco, coche, avión, aeronave, barco, piragua, camión, barca, autobús, microbús, coaster, microbús coaster, taxi, mercedes, helicóptero, furgonetas, bicicleta*, etc.). Lastly, mini-spaces constructed by the narrator constitute a signal of the expressiveness of the *space* category at another level. They bring into the picture the notions of spatial *spatialization* and *location*. Such mini-spaces are perceptible through the recurrence of adverbialization translated by numerous complements of circumstance. We also have the redundant use of substantives or terms (*cama, puerta, puente, mortero, lecho, olla, marmita, techo, paredes, ventanas, barriga*, etc.) preceded by a preposition (prepositional syntagms). Recursivity that uses adjectivation<sup>19</sup> via adyacence comes across as another technique used to evoke space.

## Conclusion

At the end of this study, several conclusions may be drawn. The most obvious is that Spanish has succeeded in carving out in Cameroon a literary world suggestive of a new discursive space. Cameroon literature in Spanish turns out to be a discourse of closure. It is the expression of paratopic writing in respect of the space-Cameroon. The creation by Spanish of a literary space has spurred the advent of a tribe of Cameroonian writers. Such space evokes a territoriality and world of beliefs. Through translation and transliteration, it has also permitted the transmission of Cameroonian culture. Accordingly, it is perceived as a transportable place of exhibition of this peculiar vision of the world. Through far-reaching mimetism, Cameroonian literary space in this exoglossic language comes across nearly as a reproduction of reality. This iconicity has demonstrated its topographic and toponymic dimension. This aspect no doubt justifies the value of literary geography document that each narrative text acquires in this regard.

<sup>19</sup> Adjectivisation, adverbialization, the use of prepositions, adverbs and verbs of place that refer to space shall be dealt with in greater detail in subsequent studies.

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