

The Rehabilitated Image in the Written Press in Cameroon and Its Mediation Challenges: The Example of *Cameroon Tribune*

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Abstract

The Cameroonian daily press is now taking a new look at the use of photography in its columns. Photography is therefore at the heart of the new information system: the application of a new formula, a photographic formula, therefore visual, which is a novelty. The aim of our article is to highlight how the Cameroonian daily press constructs the discursive staging of this visual content. It proposes to examine the ways in which the news image in *Cameroon Tribune* is constituted in journalistic writing. In this article, we will analyse the photographic content of the daily newspaper *Cameroon Tribune*. The corpus consists of 1245 photographs from 25 issues published between 21 October and 22 November 2019. The technique used is media content analysis, which allows us to produce exhaustive descriptive statements that meet the criteria of scientific validity and reproducibility. Emancipated from its strict illustrative function, photography in the daily newspaper *Cameroon Tribune* then becomes fully a means of information and communication, in the same way as text. This translates into the construction of informative sets such as the importance of the surface area of the visual content which gives pride of place to the visual, giving an impression of abundance that is perceptible from the Front Page. One of the important features of the newspaper's iconography is the great positivity of its images, which reinforces the closeness between the reader and the news. In total, the newspaper highlights photographs of limited informative interest: these are portraits that show the faces of the protagonists of the articles, to the detriment of current events.

Keywords

Information Image, Mediation, Strategy Statement, Content Analysis, Written Press, *Cameroon Tribune*

1. Introduction

The so-called “functional” photography (Moles, 1981) [1], has become a medium of information so much used by our contemporary media. The prodigious increase in the production and dissemination of information is one of the characteristics of our modern societies. The rhythm of daily life and, above all, the mass of information that we have to process and use do not encourage us to adopt a divergent attitude in front of visual documents, favouring contemplation. We are more and more solicited by the producers of visual supports, to read much more than just looking at images, which present a minimum of practical interest. We are therefore increasingly inclined to develop a functional perceptive attitude to images.

It should be noted, however, that the general context in which the print media operates in Cameroon is influenced by a wide variety of titles, which have so far published few black-and-white photographs, partly for technical reasons, but also because of the economic difficulties faced by newspapers.

Studies in the specific field of image in the written press in Cameroon are multiple and ancient. Most of them focus on the insufficient use of images in the Cameroonian written press and their lack of informative qualities. One example is the work of Atanga (1999) [2].

Beyond this, our work seeks to highlight and understand the main modes of discursive organization of this new visual formula of the newspaper.

At the forefront of progress in the field of image, advertising, in all its forms, has invaded our iconic world. The development of an advertising system imported directly from Europe, coming with the consumer society, has somehow accompanied the economic growth in our country. On the other hand, the informative and aesthetic qualities of the advertising images have given them a strong potential for capture and impact which, from the first glance, provoke a reaction of attraction and adhesion. It is in this cultural context marked by the oral tradition, so powerful in our societies, that Cameroonians will learn the iconic language and advertising style. At the same time, the graphic and textual context, precisely in the written press in Cameroon, has a large predominance of text; it should be noted that this predominance of the written word over the image has considerably delayed the introduction of images as objects of study within the human and social sciences. Since 2016, very recently therefore, the use of images in the Cameroonian press, quantitatively and qualitatively, is in fashion. Each medium, no doubt due to the effect of competition, uses the image in its own way. The reader has never known such an abundance of images in the Cameroonian written press; yet it constitutes a sociological novelty that raises relevant scientific questions. The massive use of images is mainly due to the improvement of the technological environment, in particular the development of digital technology, which will considerably change photojournalism. Probably also, the influence of television and the Internet in the dissemination of images and information has forced the print media to rethink their use of photography,

or at least to give it a more clearly established place. From then on, *Cameroon Tribune* massively introduced the image in their pages. Also, given the effectiveness of the iconic writing techniques used in advertising, it has been very tempting for information professionals to apply them in full to information that has also become a consumer good.

The image and the press article, which constitute two modes of information, nowadays appear more and more together, closely linked and interacting. The discursive mechanisms used are not only the textual information that can be observed along the pages of a newspaper, typographic and iconographic materials are just as much concerned as the text. How in a non-iconic context such as ours where, historically, the relationship between the written word and the image in the press has always been characterized by the primacy of the written word, what Anne-Marie Laulan calls the imperialism of the written word (1978, pp. 7-16) [3], *Cameroon Tribune* adapts the image to the function and objectives of its press medium in order to inform its readership? What's in the pictures of *Cameroon Tribune*? What do they show? What effects do they seek to produce? In what way?

Our first objective is therefore to identify all the discursive mechanisms involved in iconographic material in relation to the daily print media. Embodied by images and texts, this functioning can only be grasped through the analysis of textual and visual mediations. We will therefore try to highlight the specificity and characteristics of iconic writing in *Cameroon Tribune* since the changes in its graphic charter. For this, we postulate that the existence of an “editorial statement” or a graphic charter of a newspaper is intentional. This editorial statement means, first of all, acknowledging the part devoted to the image, *i.e.* its informational dimension and, beyond that, its communicational dimension, *i.e.* its capacity to arouse a reaction of attraction and adhesion. We want to grasp the image as a means of information and communication, an appealing value capable of making information visible, and also of making the press article readable. We will therefore study for our part the image of information, the way in which iconic information is constructed in a particular daily newspaper of the general news press in Cameroon: the daily newspaper *Cameroon Tribune*.

Cameroon Tribune, the purpose of our study, is a Cameroonian general daily newspaper published by the Société de Presse et d'Éditions du Cameroun (SOPECAM), created by the government in 1974. It is therefore a public capital company with the State as its sole shareholder. It was originally published in two versions, a French and an English version. In the mid-1980s, it became bilingual by merging the two versions, mixing articles in English and French. Considered a daily newspaper of the Cameroonian State, *Cameroon Tribune* has often been described as the “Voice of the Government”. It is characterized by an active subscription policy, particularly in public administrations, in order to build reader loyalty. Advertising is becoming very present in its pages, it is now a reference for the publication of commercial advertisements. A criticism is then addressed

to the newspaper, which would become a commercial product, intended for administrations for the dissemination of information of an institutional nature. With a daily circulation of around 10 000 copies, *Cameroon Tribune* reaches several million Cameroonian readers. The quality of its readers only increases its influence through the multiplying effect of the “intelligentsia” that consumes it.

In 2016, SOPECAM is forced to change its formula and adopt a new newspaper policy to cope with a falling sales curve. For obvious reasons of profitability of their product, and in order to achieve the objectives assigned to it, it will initiate a modernity at the level of its strategic positioning: it reinforces its informative capacities by the image, the image is supposed to really play its role of information.

Indeed, in order to survive, any media medium must retain its audience, both in number and quality. It has to sell itself twice: to the reader, of course, but also to the advertisers, whom it must satisfy by the number and nature of its readers. This satisfaction will of course depend on the content of the newspaper, but also on the way in which it addresses the reader, especially as the differences in content between it and its competitors will be small.

2. Purpose and Method

First, we specify the purpose of our research and the scientific method that allows us to study this purpose.

2.1. The Purpose of Study

We focus our reflection on the static functional image, *i.e.* the still image. According to Claude Cossette (1981, p. 8) [4], “The functional image” is an image conceived according to a code (conscious or intuitive) and carried on a physical medium with the intention of communicating specific information. Its purpose is therefore to indicate and transmit a message. Our research is exclusively dedicated to static photographic images. Functional images are created every day to inform: this is the case, for example, of the photographic images contained in the written press; the author decides on the content of the message beforehand, he also decides on the framing, the angle of the shot, the moment likely to symbolize the event to be covered.

As we can see, there are a number of biases, choices have to be made, and these choices are a function of the institution’s editorial statement. The purpose of our study is to highlight what the work of *Cameroon Tribune* on the image of information consists of. The press, as a means of communication, performs a social function that goes far beyond the simple transmission of information: that of translating information according to standards or values defined by the institution.

Following a similar theme, we have the work of L. Boltanski (1965, pp. 173-198) [5], who, in a comparative study of the photographic techniques of France-Soir and Paris-Match, demonstrates that the techniques are adapted to

the function and objectives of the press medium, and we could even add that they are also adapted to the perceptive capacities of the target. Barthes (1964) [6] speaks in the same sense as Boltanski of the rhetoric of the image. Veron, for his part, theorized the privileged relationship that is created between a medium and its public by developing the concept of the “reading contract” (1985, pp. 203-230) [7]; he sought to understand what can distinguish between them and magazines whose content is almost identical, and which makes people buy one rather than the other. These works share with the present reflection the concern to pose the image of information as a construction of the real, this construction of the real, of a symbolic nature since it is made of signs, includes rules specific to the newspaper. It is therefore possible, based on the analysis of the production of the iconic, to report on it. This is the spirit of our reflection.

2.2. The Constitution of the Corpus and the Method

The constitution of the corpus implies, of course, a selection among all the newspapers of *Cameroon Tribune* published over a given period, especially since it introduced the image in its information strategy in June 2016. We limited our study to 25 newspapers published between October 21 and November 22, 2019. The choice of this period is characterized by intense socio-political activity, namely, the holding of the Major National Dialogue, the participation of the President of the Republic of Cameroon in the second Paris Forum on Peace, the extraordinary summit of Heads of State of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa, etc. The period was also characterized by the presence of the President of the Republic of Cameroon at the second Paris Forum on Peace. Despite the brevity of the period, the data obtained seems to us valid and perfectly illustrates the iconic writing in *Cameroon Tribune*. Our concern, in fact, is to have a sufficient corpus to analyze the news photos that appear alongside the articles.

We remind you that we initially admitted only functional images in connection with a feature article. Our definition therefore excludes poetic or aesthetic images, advertisements, as well as souvenir photos, announcements, and cartoon illustrations that are not related to the information. Also, for the selection of information articles and images to be retained for the analysis, we did not retain all the pages of the newspaper. On the other hand, we have chosen the front page of the newspaper and the pages relating to the following headings: Politics, Economy, Society, Weekend Sports or Sports, International, the Event, Parliamentary Space, Regional, 24 hours, Focus, Douala Special. This set of pages constitutes our corpus.

Moreover, in visual communication studies, the analysis focuses either on the production process (the intention of the designers, techniques and professional practices, etc.), or on the reception of messages (how the reader interprets the images), or on the images themselves and their content. According to Zoonen (1994, p. 133) [8], “Ignorance of the content of a media is an obstacle to the

production of knowledge on the part of the media production and reception authorities”, the lack of documentation on the visual content of *Cameroon Tribune* led us to favour the latter approach. We can consider that this object of research is specified according to a problematic more oriented towards an iconic visual form, to describe categories and their implementation, and this in a filiation of image content analysis. The technique used is therefore media content analysis, which produces comprehensive descriptive statements that meet the criteria of scientific validity and reproducibility. We first carried out a quantitative analysis: types of images, elements composing the image, types of formats, place of the image in relation to the text, etc., some results of which are presented here, followed by qualitative work on what characterizes the writing of the functional image specific to the function and objectives of *Cameroon Tribune*.

A corpus of 1245 photos was thus assembled. Each element of the corpus has been classified according to variables such as: format, image function, visual modality, image components, nature of the image, etc.

3. Results Achieved

Since our research has a dual purpose, we have chosen to present the results in two distinct but interrelated moments. In order to provide an exhaustive survey of the visual content of *Cameroon Tribune*, we first present the results, mainly quantitatively, according to each of the variables used as a unit of analysis when processing the images: types of format, headings, number of images, etc. The results are then presented in the form of a table. Following this statistical presentation, we will also have a discussion section where we will provide a more in-depth analysis. Then we will proceed to a qualitative work on the discursive strategies of *Cameroon Tribune*.

3.1. Quantitative Analysis

3.1.1. The Format

Photographs occupy a preponderant place in *Cameroon Tribune*, which is measured as much by the number of occurrences as by the surface area. The initial corpus of twenty-five issues, which totalled 485 pages validated according to our criteria, allowed us to build up a corpus of 1245 photos. For our study, we retained as a variable, the number of photographs according to the type of format: small, medium, large, very large. With regard to the Front Page of the newspaper, which is also the place where the news is reported, all 25 issues, *i.e.* 25 Front Pages, occupy at least half a page (medium format). At the same time, the inner pages of the newspaper are structured as follows: 0.7% occupy a full page, almost 30% of the photos occupy half the surface of a full page (medium format). More than half of the corpus (53.9%) are at least a quarter page long (small format), while 16.5% are less than a quarter page long (very small format) (**Table 1**).

At the end of reading this data, we can conclude that each issue of *Cameroon*

Table 1. Number of photographs by format (Inside pages).

Format	N	Percentage (%)
Very small	206	16.5
Small	671	53.9
Average	360	28.9
Large	08	07
Total N = 1245	1245	100.0

The rates (%) were obtained taking into account the number of photographs according to the format: small, medium, large, very large. These numbers were divided by the total number of photographs in our sample.

Tribune presents on its “Front Page” a photograph that occupies half a page. For the inside pages, we obtain a total of 1245 photographs for 485 pages in total, *i.e.* 2.57 images per page. Once again, image plays a key role in the Cameroonian stand.

3.1.2. The Headings

For the purposes of analysing the topics covered in the newspaper, we have identified and selected all the headings contained in all 25 issues of *Cameron Tribune* published between 21 October and 22 November 2019. The following list shows the headings identified, as well as the number of occurrences:

- Politics (25)
- Sports (05)
- Regions (04)
- Economy (22)
- International (05)
- Parliamentary Space (04)
- Society (19)
- Event (02)
- 24 hours (07)
- Focus (02)
- Special (06)
- Culture (04)
- Douala (03)

Among the most stable and recurring topics in our sample of 25 issues, the “Politics” topic is characterized by its density, encompassing all information concerning statesmen, the activities of political parties, Parliament, official statements, diplomatic issues, Africa, the Major National Dialogue, legislative and municipal issues in 2020, the landslide in Bafoussam, the promotion of peace and unity, decentralization, and many other topics.

As for the theme relating to the “Economy”, such diverse topics are dealt with as the social economy, the Central African Economic Union, business, employment, the IMF mission, banks, the Cima treaty, the Douala-Bangui-Ndjamen corridor, electric power, forestry, industry, etc.

The theme on “Society” is full of various topics such as breast cancer, hepatitis B and C, cinema, public health, ICT training, the church, the 48th meeting of the French-speaking press, etc.

The headings concerning “Event” or “Special” deal with the most important current events of October and November: the Paris Peace Forum, the CEMAC stock exchange, the CAN 2021 and CHAN 2020, the Year 37 of the New Deal, the extraordinary summit of the Heads of State of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa, etc.

3.1.3. Number of Images by Topic

An analysis of the headings listed in the sample of 25 issues that make up our corpus shows that 33% of iconic information is devoted to politics, 21% to the economy, 12% to society, 8% to “special” and “events”, 4% to parliamentary space, and finally 22% to all other categories (**Table 2**).

Reading this table shows that “Politics” (33%), “Economy” (21%) and “Society” (12%) are the headings most frequently covered by the newspaper.

It should be noted that in the “Event or Special” category, *Cameroon Tribune* published the “Special” column six times and the “Event” column twice during the study period. We have not separated these two headings, as they deal with the same topics; for example, the topic of the Paris Forum has been dealt with in the “Event” and “Special” sections. What characterizes the iconic treatment of the photographs represented here is the number of photographs per article and per issue. It should also be noted that most of the related topics concern events in which the President of the Republic is involved. It is also under these two headings that we note the largest formats: 7 large formats, *i.e.* the images occupy the surface of a whole page. So despite the low rate of appearance of this particular heading (8%), it remains ultimately the most significant heading due to the nature of the topics dealt with, for example, Heads of State or major summits; and above all the type of photographic format devoted to it. The topics covered in these two sections are therefore characterized by the number of photographs used to accompany the text, and reach a high number for a single topic and per newspaper, since 17 images accompany the topic “Year 37 of the New Deal (Newspaper 1)” and 16 images also accompany the topic “Extraordinary Summit of CEMAC Heads of State”. We obtain an average modality, between 12 and 14%, for the topics related to the Conference of Ministers of CEMAC, Year 37 of the New Deal (newspaper 2), 2020 Municipal and Legislative Elections. Only 4% of the corpus is devoted to the Bafoussam landslide (**Table 3**).

The photographic processing of images under the headings “Special” and “Event” shows that the number of photographs is a function of the importance of the event or topic. Thus, a topic of lesser importance will receive only one image. In the same way, a topic deemed important will be illustrated by several images.

Table 2. Distribution of information images according to headings, Oct.-Nov. 2019.

Headings	Total (%)
Politics	33
Economy	21
Society	12
Event-special	08
Parliamentary space	04
Others	22
Total N = 1245	100%

3.1.4. Modes of Discursive Organization: The Functions of the News Image of *Cameroon Tribune*

The communicative function of a visual message must be taken into consideration, as it largely determines the meaning of the images (Joly, p. 1994) [9]. In this analysis, the use of this variable ensured the identification of the informative strategy of the news photos contained in *Cameroon Tribune*, a relevant data to situate the image in its implication in relation to its article. In order to do this, it has often been accepted that images can be, or rather descriptive or narrative. The “descriptive” category includes images that “bring things into focus” (Jamet and Jannet, 1999, p. 185) [10]. In fact, any image, still or moving, is descriptive. What it shows is an exhibition of objects from around the world. On the other hand, the “narrative” category includes topics where “two, three, four... successive images more or less clearly outline a narrative” (Jamet and Jannet, 1999, p. 159) [10], and sometimes take on the appearance of an illustrated narrative.

The results are convincing: only 08% of the photographs have a narrative function. With their occurrences (92%), the descriptive function thus characterizes the vast majority of the corpus (Table 4).

3.1.5. Components of the Image Information in *Cameroon Tribune*

The writer of a news picture usually writes his message so that it can be read. The latter cannot always choose the components he would like to use to write his information. He must make do with the components that the situation or scene

Table 3. Number of images according to the importance of the event.

Event by issue	Percentage (%)
Bafoussam landslide	04
Paris Peace Forum (1)	08
Paris Peace Forum (2)	06
Paris Peace Forum (3)	09
Year 37 of the New Deal (1)	17
Year 37 of the New Deal (2)	14
Extraordinary summit of CEMAC Heads of state	16
CEMAC conference of Ministers	12
Municipal and Legislative Elections	13
Total N	99

It should be noted here that each event has a corresponding issue of the newspaper.

Table 4. Number of photographs by image function.

Function of photography	N	%
Narrative function	100	08
Descriptive function	1145	92
Total N = 1245	1245	100

offers him. According to Almasy (1974, p. 60) [11], we have three kinds of components in a picture: “fixed components, moving components, and living components”. The analysis indicates that 1174 photos (94% of the corpus) have human components compared to 71 photos, or 6% static components (Table 5).

After analysis and reading, we see that the results first reveal the preponderance of the human element, with 1174 images out of a total of 1245 images, which is equivalent to nearly 94% of the corpus. That is to say that the human element is the most important in the image of *Cameroon Tribune*. Nearly two times out of three, the images are composed of sets and characters essential to the event (58%). For their part, images of characters only, without setting, make up 36% of the corpus. If we look at the 1174 images in which the characters are presented, either full-length or in such a way as to be easily identifiable, we see that 894 images are dynamic images. The characters appearing in the images intervene in proportion to their importance in the conduct of the action. In the majority of cases, the characters are captured in the heat of the action. Action is therefore a dominant attribute of the characters represented in the analysed photographs.

In addition, 71 images, *i.e.* 6% of the corpus, show fixed components: public buildings such as hydroelectric dams, football stadiums under construction or Ebolawa’s “Hotel du Comice”.

3.1.6. Captioned Images

To limit possible errors in the reading of the iconographic information, due to the polysemic nature of the image, the image editor can add a written caption to them. Indeed, when they are used in the same communication space, text and image are rarely autonomous or independent of each other.

In *Cameroon Tribune*, captioned photographs occupy a predominant place which is measured by the occurrences. Of the 1245 images that make up our corpus, 1245 images, *i.e.* 100%, are captioned. In the triptych article-caption-image, it is undeniable that the caption makes the image intelligible and allows a quick reading of it. Given the characteristics of iconic writing, and the specificity of the image, the process of understanding its meaning is more a matter of interpretation, and not of decoding as is the case with language. However, the interpretation

Table 5. Components of the image.

Components of the image	N	%
Human components:		
Characters without setting	447	36
Characters with setting	727	58
Total Human components	1174	94
Fixed components	71	06
Moving components	00	00
Total N	1245	100.00

is personal, and it is for this reason that the caption helps to guide the reader. Moreover, Farqzaid (2010, p. 65) [12] evoking the caption, points out that “by its layout, it seems to double the image and its denotative content. It is therefore less connotative than the title and the article”.

In this analysis, the use of this variable ensured the identification of photos with “caption-comment and caption-quote” (Gauthier, 1984, p. 14) [13]. According to Gauthier, the caption-quote reinforces participation in the diegesis, it consists of a brief excerpt of text, whose reference is always specified in brackets or quotation marks. At the end of the analysis, the results are conclusive: only 13% of the photographs have a caption-quote. It should be noted that in our corpus, it is more often in the form of an interview, an explanation or the word given to the actors that the caption-quote is used. On the other hand, with their 1083 occurrences (87%), the caption-comment characterizes the vast majority of the corpus (Table 6). It is a verbal commentary or caption, often long, that links the image to the article it illustrates. Naturally, the photographic image being only a partial view of an event, the action is therefore always separated from its context, it is necessary to situate it by means of a text.

It was also interesting to relate the results of the caption-comment to the iconic content in order to situate its implication or the type of relationship they have. It appeared to us that most of the time they maintain an explanatory report, *i.e.* 92%. In fact, the explanatory report makes the components of the image legible. On the other hand, only 8% of the captions present a complementary relationship: it very often happens that the image has expressive shortcomings, for example when it has to express “when and where” an event took place, and it is therefore at this level that the text plays its role as a relay (Table 7).

3.1.7. The Visual Modality

Visual modality is a formal property that corresponds to the degree of realism in relation to the aesthetic qualities and legibility achieved by the images. This property depends on the technical context of image production, *i.e.* the means of producing and printing the images offered in a given context. At a high modality,

Table 6. Types of captions in the image.

Caption	N	%
Caption-quote	162	13
Caption-comment	1083	87
Total N = 1245	1245	100.0

Table 7. Involvement of the image with the caption-comment.

Comment caption	N	%
Explanatory caption	996	92
Additional caption	87	08
Total N = 1083	1083	100.0

the colours are vivid and bright, almost true. Conversely, a black-and-white image would not provoke an effect of realism as striking as in the high modality, because it operates a detachment between the object and its representation, its modality is weak.

The photographs of the corpus reach a high degree of realism, since 100% of the photographs have a high visual modality. The photographs of *Cameroon Tribune* have a high aesthetic quality, and are therefore characterized by a real effect. This success is due to the high level of production and printing technology available to the newspaper.

Ultimately, the detailed presentation of this set of results was intended to document the photographic dimension of *Cameroon Tribune*, and to establish the conceptual conditions for a semiotic analysis of news photography produced by the written press. In the lines that follow, we highlight certain aspects that appear crucial to understand the discursive strategy of the iconic device of *Cameroon Tribune*. The discussion therefore focuses on the ideological nature of visual representation while drawing on several concrete examples.

3.1.8. Discussion

Visual content occupies a considerable part of the material published by *Cameroon Tribune*. Its importance is measured in terms of the surface area occupied and the large number of images, *i.e.* 1245 photographs extracted from the corpus of 25 issues; its importance is also measured by the size of each photograph, which is, more than once out of three times, at least half a page of the newspaper. In terms of formal properties, the visual content is characterized by the very appreciable quantity of its images, whose colours are so bright that they almost manage to convey the reality of the things and people they represent.

Why images take centre stage in *Cameroon Tribune*? The question can be answered by questioning the communication function that this visual content fulfils.

The results show that corpus photos have a descriptive function almost nine times out of ten. They therefore explicitly transmit simple information without semantic ambiguity. Among the relevant clues contained in the image, the reader should be able to identify the main information without great effort. For the image editor, it is a question of highlighting the components that contain the information by framing, in order to ensure the effectiveness of the message. Indeed, this enunciative mode, in this case, the descriptive mode, is not the result of chance, but rather an editorial choice directly linked to the predominantly informational function that this visual content performs. This type of mode simply allows you to put before the eyes of the reader, what you want to show in the image. The description thus puts the reader in touch with the world. Moreover, in the relationship between the image and the article, the image seems to have an advantage over the text, it shows the totality of its object at a glance, which the text must enumerate linearly in the succession of words and sentences.

It must also be pointed out that images have power, and the power of images

lies in their claim to truth or, in other words, in their ability to attest to the existence of what they depict. The very nature of the image seems to be descriptive, it doesn't just say "that is", it is also necessary to say "that is true".

With regard to the components of the information image in *Cameroon Tribune*, the photographic content presents important differences between the different components of an image. In the press, the purpose of our study, human components are 17 times more often represented in the image than fixed components. The human element constitutes the information, and given its semantic value, it alone symbolizes the event, thus overcoming the difficulties presented by the polysemic value of the image.

3.2. Quantitative Analysis

Let us now turn to the discursive strategies adopted. Their study has always been carried out within the same discursive universe, in this case, that of the *Cameroon Tribune* newspapers published from 21 October to 22 November 2019. We have therefore analysed in detail the images and legends related to the corresponding articles, highlighting the constituent elements of the discursive strategies implemented by *Cameroon Tribune*. Here we illustrate the main results.

Cameroon Tribune's first strategic choice concerns its strategy of enunciation: the vision and perception of the world and Cameroon that are deployed there. It should nevertheless be recalled here that *Cameroon Tribune* is a public service newspaper which is, by definition, aimed at a collective of Cameroonian citizens.

During the night of Monday, October 28, 2019, a landslide in Gouatchié 4 neighbourhood in Bafoussam caused the death of several citizens and the destruction of several houses. Naturally, *Cameroon Tribune* abundantly described the situation in this small village. As an example, a reading and analysis of *Cameroon Tribune* of Wednesday, October 30, 2019 allows us to make the following observations:

The front page of the newspaper shows a picture of the excavations made by the Population With the following title: "Deadly landslide in Bafoussam-Paul Biya comforts the victims".

Let's take a closer look at the analysis on pages 9, 10 and 11 of the same issue:

On page 9, there are three images:

- *Image 1: large and descriptive plan of the place of the event with an important presence of the population. The caption indicates: Searches are continuing for the bodies.*

- *Image 2: wide shot with on the right a stretch of the site which is empty and on the left the population. The caption indicates: The landslide swallowed up 11 houses.*

- *Image 3: remake of the front page image. The caption indicates: Significant material and human damage.*

On pages 10 and 11, we note the entry of politicians on the scene:

- *Image 1: Important presence of people in the picture with Minister Georges*

Elanga Obam and the Governor of the West Region, Augustine Awa Fonka. The caption indicates: The soil is clayey.

- *Image 2: Portrait of the Minister. The caption indicates: “25 million to provide support to victims”.*

- *Image 3: Portrait of the Governor. The caption indicates: “We’re going to make this area more secure to prevent further tragedy”.*

Unlike other national newspapers which also dealt with the same topic, the landslide is constructed in these newspapers as a fatal event treated with a certain amount of emotion; one notes in these newspapers a hint of accusation, of denunciation, one looks for the guilty party. On the other hand, *Cameroon Tribune*, while also describing the serious human and material consequences, on the contrary, highlights the social reaction, the intervention of the rescue services and the mutual aid of the population. At the stage of social cohesion, where we show public services working together, organizing, rescuing, *Cameroon Tribune* also stages the intervention of the politician: we talk about reconstruction and relocation, identifying other areas at risk. *Cameroon Tribune* presents itself as a mediator between social actors. All the actors find an echo in it. This staging of its own mediation activity, or even its intervention in the course of the event, is the second strategic choice of this press.

Another example of *Cameroon Tribune* as a mediator can be revealed in the edition of *Cameroon Tribune* of Thursday, October 31, 2019 which displays the following full-page headline:

Landslide in Bafoussam—Head of State releases 200 million FCFA ... The Minister of Territorial Administration, Paul Atanga Nji leads an inter-ministerial team on the ground. Objective: to make an assessment of the situation.

In passing through this other excerpt, we notice a construction and a mediation quite frequent in *Cameroon Tribune* in connection with other events.

Another fundamental specificity in enunciation strategies is that the type of images used is what can be called “Testimonial Information”, in the sense that the visual document presents a partial aspect of an event or situation. The most common example of this is the photo report. The work of the photographers of *Cameroon Tribune* consists essentially in presenting the actors rather than showing the event itself. It is interesting to put this analysis in relation to the preponderance of the human component (94%), observed in the analysis of the components of the image of *Cameroon Tribune* (see table N°5). In the same perspective, we have also noted that movement is of paramount importance in the photography of this newspaper. It must therefore be recognized that the presence of the human element, the choice of the scene or the capital moment make the quality of the work of the reporter-photographer of this newspaper. Symbolizing an event or situation with an image that contains the most relevant elements is not an easy task, especially when it concerns largely institutional information such as summits, seminars, inaugurations, and meetings of all kinds. *Cameroon Tribune’s* photography derives its value from the monosemic charac-

ter of its images, whose informative content consists strictly in the objective representation of a subject or an object. Indeed, the reading of such an image is a combination of two simple processes: reading-recognition and identification, and reading-interpretation. The first must necessarily precede the second. It's an easy and fast reading that appeals to the lower cognitive registers. The reader doesn't have to think, from the first glance, the identification is generally quick and the image doesn't provide any more information. Naturally, since the action is separated from its context, the newspaper usually situates it by means of the text: an often long caption that links the image to the article.

Third element in the construction of a strategy of enunciation, *Cameroon Tribune* has decided to focus on the photo and to include this type of mediation in its new policy contained in its graphic charter. The result will be a very strong predominance of the image as a means of information. It seems to us that in this diary, the visual weight of the image is very clearly above that of the text, which is tantamount to saying that there is an overload of iconic information in this diary. The principle of mass balance in the composition of an image cannot be understood in terms of equality of area or number. Indeed, in an iconic composition, a red or black stain can be in balance with a whole page of text, from a psychological point of view of course.

It is true that the objective of this entire strategy is both commercial and linked to the concern to inform. This type of iconic writing is characterised not only by the highlighting of information, but also attractive sensory elements through the use of colour. Today we know the psychological power of colour and its effects on individuals. We know that colour arouses an appealing reaction from the first sensory contact, it contributes to making photography pleasing to the eye and improves the informational impact. Generally speaking, it seems to be taken for granted that the iconic colour code is above all aesthetic, seductive, it strikes the imaginary, the affective and the irrational.

4. Conclusions

The data collected and the analysis of the iconic mediations of *Cameroon Tribune* have shed light on the explicit aims of this newspaper.

A hypothesis had been formulated as to how *Cameroon Tribune* adapts the image to the specific function and objectives of its medium. It stipulated that *Cameroon Tribune*, like all media, has its own way of expressing itself, which reaches different audiences, and that this can be seen in the way images are treated. Analyses have revealed that, for the front page as well as for the inside pages, there is indeed a massive use of the image.

The surface area occupied by the visual content of *Cameroon Tribune* is too large to be ignored for the sole benefit of the textual content. In addition to occupying a considerable amount of space, this content is broken down into photographic images that impose themselves by their format, which sometimes goes as far as the double-page spread of the newspaper. Moreover, it is not uncom-

mon to see the image participating in the narrative, through narrative images, on the occasion of New Year's greetings or the celebration of the 20th of May; the newspaper thus stages a form of visual narration based on the succession of several images closely linked by a context, and has up to 9 pages of image sequences. The image indeed occupies a predominant place in the information system of *Cameroon Tribune*. Readers of the newspaper cannot escape the messages conveyed by these images, nor the appeal of their high degree of realism, made possible by recent technological advances in the fields of printing and photography, but also thanks to the economic resources available to SOPECAM, which produces this press. Indeed, these images have attractive sensory characteristics that can only improve the informational impact. However, beyond its formal properties, visual content conveys information about who the actors are rather than about the event itself. The human element is preponderant and confers a strong influence on the image; it is the stimulus that first captures and attracts the eye. Also, its primary quality resides in its attachment to an event or a fact, which allows us to understand at the moment what it represents. In addition, the great strength of these photographic images lies in their positivity: the image has a great power, that of giving to be seen, therefore of showing. Indeed, it is from this document that the reader of a newspaper, for example, will perceive a partial aspect of an event or situation. It is only at this price that it will make the reader want to read the text.

Insofar as the written press, and especially *Cameroon Tribune*, massively introduces images into its pages, especially for the front page, which is the place where the news is stated, visuality has become an unavoidable media phenomenon. From then on, *Cameroon Tribune* saw it as an imposition that is now difficult to resist. Television, then the Internet and today's filmed radio had already increased their need for images. Consequently, iconicity now represents one of the most important inter-media interfaces between the article and the image for the written press or between the voice and the image of the speaker for filmed radio.

The image of information contained in *Cameroon Tribune* has a precise function: to be a mirror through which one accesses content that is above all topical; and it is skillfully designed to achieve its objectives. Intended to be read in a very short period of time, this information must be both condensed and easy to decode in order to maintain its informational effectiveness.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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