

A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH CHOICE AS SECOND MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE

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ABSTRACT

Currently in the world, English is known as the global language with a valuable linguistic asset that has seriously contributed to a country like China's socio-economic development. The main purpose of this paper is to conduct a sociolinguistic investigation to show that English use as second medium of instruction in Côte d'Ivoire can be socio-economically advantageous for this multilingual French-speaking country. In the trends of this analysis, our focus will be based on language policy and economics of language theories. From the results of this study, we retain that even if some scholars and linguists do not perceive such a language policy implementation as useful in this country, English language use as second medium of instruction appears as a relevant linguistic asset that can allow this country to benefit from important advantages at diplomatic, educational and economic levels.

KEY WORDS : advantageous, bilingual identity, English, medium of instruction, language policy.

RESUME

Dans le monde entier, l'anglais est connu comme la langue ayant des atouts linguistiques qui ont énormément contribué au développement socio-économique de nombreux pays dans le monde. Le principal objectif de cette étude est de mener une investigation sociolinguistique pour montrer que l'usage de la langue anglaise comme second medium d'instruction en Côte d'Ivoire peut être très avantageux dans ce pays francophone. Les théories de la politique linguistique et de l'économie du langage nous ont permis de mener cette étude. Il ressort des résultats de notre étude que l'implémentation d'une telle politique linguistique avec la langue anglaise comme second medium d'instruction, apparait comme un valeureux atout linguistique qui peut permettre à ce pays de bénéficier d'énormes atouts au niveau de la diplomatie, de l'éducation et de l'économie.

Mots clés : Anglais, avantageux, identity bilingue, moyen d'instruction, politique linguistique.

INTRODUCTION

In the search of solution to the issue of development mainly in some developing countries, linguists and researchers like Plonsky (2013), Djité (2021) have encouraged the promotion of English language to any country wishing to know a socio-economic development. This language promotion is known as a relevant solution to the issue of a country's sustainable development.

As this language is recognized in the world as the global language, English is suggested to be used as a valuable medium of instruction in any country of the world. In that respect, English is pointed out as the suitable language which promotion may be beneficial for Côte d'Ivoire's development. This country can reach that objective through a language policy implementation in order to permit its citizens' graduates to be proficient in that global language.

According to Rubin (1973) the term 'language policy' can be referred to as "language planning". Thus, these two notions can be broadly regarded as synonyms and refer to the same reality because they consist in doing and trying to reach the same goal. For Fasold (1987, p.246): "Language planning is usually perceived as an explicit choice among alternatives. This, in turn, implies that there has been an evaluation of alternatives with the one that is chosen having been evaluated as the best". In short, a language policy or planning choice permits to improve a specific country best choice of language for reaching a specific objective.

In the world, English has been resorted to as one of the main medium of instruction by numerous countries and this language choice has tremendously raised those countries' socio-economic development. This situation related to English relevance in the world is highlighted by Brooker (2018, p.6) who stated that the global market research organisation 'Euromonitor International' reported the key assets that English language conferred to countries like Rwanda, Puerto Rico, China and Pakistan. Indeed, this report underlined that the English language proficiency increase in those countries, through a language policy implementation contributed to these countries development at various levels (diplomatic, economic, education).

English language promotion through a language policy implementation can be advantageous in any developing country because such a language policy implementation can permit this country to benefit from several socio-economic assets that may favour its advancement. However, can such a language planning implementation be advantageous in a multilingual French-speaking country like Côte d'Ivoire?

The main purpose of this work is to evaluate whether English use as second medium of instruction in Côte d'Ivoire through a language policy implementation can be valuable and advantageous. To reach that aim, this study is divided into three main parts. The first part

investigates what has already been indicated concerning a language policy implementation best choice through a literature review. Then, the methodology of data collection will allow us to pinpoint how the data of this study have been collected. Finally, the step of results and discussion has been resorted to analyse the data collected and assess the significance of English use as second medium of instruction in Côte d'Ivoire.

I- Literature Review

This study investigates the value of English use as second main medium of instruction in Côte d'Ivoire through a language policy implementation. As far as the literature review about this topic is concerned, a controversial debate has been shared about the suitable language to be selected for a successful language planning implementation in a multilingual French-speaking country like Côte d'Ivoire.

Two main standpoints have emerged concerning the kind of language to be selected as the best choice for a language policy implementation in a multilingual country. In fact, according to the first viewpoint, a language policy in a multilingual context should be only implemented with a vernacular or a local language of any country wishing to promote and standardize a language. However, the second one, underlined that a local language which is a specific language of lower communication cannot be suitable and beneficial for a language policy implementation in a multilingual country. That is the reason why, they suggest that, it is only an international language of wider communication that may be used for a relevant language policy implementation.

As far as the first standpoint is concerned, researchers like Koffi (2012), Pascal (1978), (...) who are known as defenders of this viewpoint, mention that only a local language use for a language policy implementation that can be relevant in a multilingual and independent country. To account for their viewpoint, they underline that only such a language should be promoted through a language policy because this language is the one that can contribute to the valorization of a specific country's culture. They also highlighted their viewpoint by stating that only a vernacular of a country can be source of this country's unity.

However, as a reaction to this standpoint, other researchers like Fasold (1984), Skattum (2008), Cooper (1996), Bloomaert (1996) have stated that the best choice for a language policy implementation in any country is an international language of wider communication like English. To instantiate their viewpoint they mentioned that a local language selection for a language policy implementation in a multilingual country like Côte d'Ivoire may be source of

socio-cultural troubles and conflict because these countries have numerous local languages which are individually closely related to ethnic groups or tribes that may reject another local language selection as a national language. They may consider this specific national language selection as imposed to them. This situation may be source of conflict. They also mention that a suitable language policy cannot be implemented with a mother tongue because of the low marketability of a local language.

That is the main reason why they mention that an international language of wider communication like English is the best choice for a language policy implementation in a multilingual country. Specifically, they underscore that a multilingual French-speaking country like Côte d'Ivoire should promote English language which is currently known as a relevant language in the world. It is the suitable language that can be source of numerous assets for this country in various domains. Taking into account English language importance and considering Côte d'Ivoire's graduates problems to benefit from job opportunities because of the high rate of unemployment in the country, it is worth scrutinizing whether English language use in Côte d'Ivoire as second medium of instruction through a language policy implementation could be beneficial in this multilingual French-speaking country or not.

To reach that aim, the socio-economic beneficial assets that English use as second medium of instruction in this country may favour will be evaluated. However, before implementing this language policy, it is worth evaluating what is Ivorian general viewpoint about English use as second medium of instruction in the country.

2 - Methodology of Data Collection

The data of this study were collected through quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The qualitative method of data collection is mainly based on documentary researches concerning the advantages of English use as second medium of instruction in other countries. The main goal of this qualitative research is to select the suitable variables in order to underscore English current importance in the world.

As far as the quantitative data are concerned, these data have been collected through the analysis of data submitted to some samples of the Ivorian educational, socio-economic and political strata of this country. To reach that aim, surveys have been conducted to generate details about that issue concerning most of Ivorians' perception about English use as second valuable medium of instruction in this country. The target population has also been submitted to a guiding interview in order to have their main viewpoint concerning English choice as

second medium of instruction in the country. The result of this study’s data should allow us to scrutinize whether the bilingual French-English speaker status of the Ivorian graduates could contribute to the socio-economic development of Côte d’Ivoire at political, diplomatic, educational, social, and economic levels.

3- Results and Discussion

As a result, even if English is neither a local nor an official language in Côte d’Ivoire, the overwhelming majority of the Ivorian participants in the survey have expressed a favourable viewpoint about English use as second medium of instruction in the country’s education institutions. The different socio-professional groups taking part to the survey are the country’s secondary school students, some higher education students, some workers in private and public administrations, some higher education lecturers, some elites and some agencies. In this survey, some Human Resources Managers and some educational institutions departments’ authorities have been consulted. The following table points out the results of these participants’ perceptions about English use as second medium of instruction in Côte d’Ivoire,

Table I: Participants’ Opinions about English use as Second Medium of Instruction in Côte d’Ivoire

OPINIONS	Results	Percentages
Favourable	821	93.72%
Unfavourable	29	03.31%
Neutral	26	02.96%
Total	876	100%

Source: Personal project

This table illustrates that most of Ivorian participants expressed a valuable perception about English use as second medium of instruction in Côte d’Ivoire. Indeed, out of a sample of eight hundred seventy-six (876) participants in the survey achieved, 93.27% of these participants are favourable to English use as second medium of instruction in the country’s education curricula and 3.31% of participants are unfavourable to such a language policy implementation. However, some of the respondents have preferred expressing a neutral position

about English use as second medium of instruction in the country's education institutions' curricula. They represent only 02.96% of the participants.

In a nutshell, Ivorians have expressed a favourable viewpoint about English use as second medium of instruction in Côte d'Ivoire. As most of Ivorians' perception of English is positive, it is worth having more details about what can be the advantages of English use as second medium of instruction in Côte d'Ivoire. The next part of this investigation will examine what can be the advantages of English use as second medium of instruction in Côte d'Ivoire. It should also allow to scrutinise whether this language choice as second medium of instruction in Côte d'Ivoire's educational institutions may be beneficial for favouring this country's socio-economic development.

3.1- English as a Political and Diplomatic Asset

The promotion of English, a foreign language in a French-speaking country like Côte d'Ivoire may be a political and diplomatic asset because the Ivorian diplomats are authorities in charge of representing the country around the world. Indeed, during the international meeting, they are those who exchange, meet or convince other developed countries' authorities about investing in their country. However, their lack of the English proficiency, compel the current country's diplomats to have interpreters during the international meetings and conferences. They also face difficulties for exchanging, convincing and defending the interests of the country with other developed countries' authorities because they are not proficient in English which is the global language.

As a solution, English use as second medium of instruction in Côte d'Ivoire's education may allow its graduates and diplomats to become French-English speakers. This bilingual French-English speakers status may contribute to the country's development because the English proficiency's skill is a relevant asset that may enable these diplomats to be assigned missions everywhere in the world for promoting or defending their country's interests. That is the main reason why, the country's diplomats require to be proficient in English for succeeding in working and interacting fluently, harmoniously with their fellow diplomats and other countries authorities in the world. A country's diplomacy represents a so relevant strategic asset for its economic development, Wanyama (2013, p.24) mentioned that according to the economic consultant Ivan Mbiri, any African country wishing to embark on the major economic development is required to embrace the basic tenets of economic diplomacy. This standpoint shows that diplomacy in a country must be well-conducted for favouring a country's economic

growth. Thus, any country diplomacy's officers and governmental agencies should be conferred suitable roles, initiatives and trainings in order to succeed in intensifying their interactions with other countries in the world.

According to Jiao and Zuo (2013, p.2), globalisation makes that English is a language which is widely used in some significant fields such as "politics, economy, trade, culture, diplomacy, tourism, communication, natural science, and academic research of humanities." This statement highlights that English is currently the essential language of human activities. Jiao and Zuo (2013, p.2) also mentioned that English is so important that "85% of international organisations are using English as their common language, and 75% of the world mails are written in English, 80% of publications and internet information is published in English." This contribution corroborates that English is an essential global language which controls all the main domains of humans' interactions in the world. Accordingly, English use as relevant medium of instruction in Côte d'Ivoire can be advantageous for this country because it may allow this country to be in touch with all the international global activities.

This global language importance makes that a language policy implementation in Côte d'Ivoire with English may allow the country's graduates to become French-English bilingual. This status may allow the country to acquire more accreditation in the world in terms of politics and diplomacy and therefore can be more opened to the world. The case of China is an example that should be followed because the promotion of English proficiency in this country has favoured China's economic growth thanks to the development of exchanges and correlation with all the other countries of the world (Joel and Zuo, 2013, p.2).

English use as second medium of instruction in Côte d'Ivoire may allow this country's diplomats to succeed in easily consulting stakeholders and exploring the world marketplace issues so as to negotiate the best investments and interests for their country. This English proficiency's skill is well-known as a requirement for any country's diplomats because it is a potential allowing to foster cooperation with international investors and institutions in support of economic development. This extension of economic diplomacy on the whole country may have a positive effect on Foreign Direct Investment acquisition. It can play a crucial role as support to the country's export market development. That is why, English use as second medium of instruction in Côte d'Ivoire's education institutions can represent an economic valuable resource, since it can contribute to consolidate and expand the business in the existing markets as well as favouring access into emerging markets with other countries in the world.

In a nutshell, English use as second medium of instruction in Côte d'Ivoire may be relevant at the level of this country's diplomacy. The diplomats of this country need to be proficient in English in order to succeed in expressing creative alternative or providing solutions to the country's development. The country can reach that goal by implementing this language policy aiming at fostering English use as second valuable medium of instruction in the country. Such a language policy implementation can favour all the country's graduates to be proficient in English. The promotion of Côte d'Ivoire's graduate English proficiency may foster an important strategic diplomacy that can motivate numerous international organisations and companies to invest in the country. This investment may be source of strength for the country's economic development. It can contribute to the development of exchange, interaction and negotiations with investors that could permit to liberalise and enlarge trade by allowing free movement of goods and services in the country.

3.2- English as an Educational Asset

As a global language, English hegemony appears as an educational linguistic asset for any country. However, English is not currently used as a relevant medium of instruction in Côte d'Ivoire. In fact, For Ouamourou (2012), who is a lecturer in the country's higher education institution, the question of English coefficient at school is a crucial impediment favouring English learners' demotivation to be proficient in English. He underlines that in the second cycle of the country's secondary school, the students are oriented either in 'Literary or Scientific' studies. For those dealing with literary studies, English is conferred a significant value because the English subject coefficient is three. On the contrary, for the students dealing with the scientific studies, English is pointed out as a minor field of study, since English coefficient is one only. He also added that during the Bacaleaureate examination, while the literary students face English 'Oral and writing' examinations, the scientific and other secondary school studies in the country, only face an 'Oral' examination in English. Moreover, during these students secondary schools' training, English is not perceived as a valuable language because its coefficient is one only. This field of study has no specific value for these secondary schools students. Hence, that is one of the main reason why, numerous graduates of this country are not proficient in English. Even in the country's higher education institutions, English number of schedule hours vary from one field of study to another.

Consequently, for numerous researchers, taking into account the fact that English is source of a key stand at educational level and given that some non-native English-speaking

countries like China, Rwanda and Pakistan have implemented a language policy for English use as a relevant medium of instruction in their countries, a developing country like Côte d'Ivoire should achieve an English language policy implementation. This perception is shared by Plonski et al. (2013, p.9) who mentioned that English is an essential medium of instruction for any country in the world. The current world global language proficiency is a valuable educational training that should be considered during all the students' training. This suggestion attests that English language use as second medium of instruction in Côte d'Ivoire can be important for this country.

Similarly, the claims of Djite (2008, p.63) pinpointing the significant role that a suitable global language like English selection as a meaningful medium of instruction in a country is an essential reality that may allow any developing country to be connected to the current global realities. Hence, he sensitizes the whole African authorities whose most of countries are multilingual and underdeveloped to select and use as essential medium of instruction, a language that can permit their countries to be in touch with the world global realities. Accordingly, he revealed that: "Language in education policy needs to be better targeted in order to favour development in a globalizing and changing world" (Djite 2008, p.63). This statement of Djité underlines that the selection and the use of an appropriate language like English in a developing country's education policy can be useful for this country. It shows that this language valuation in Côte d'Ivoire may be an advantageous asset for this country's socio-economic development.

Additionally, English use as second relevant medium of instruction in Côte d'Ivoire from primary school to higher education institutions may appear as an educational asset in this country because English may allow this country's students to be well-trained and benefit from any kind of research training. It may favour this situation, since most of the world research documents are written in English. That is the main reason why, for numerous of this study's survey informants, the students or scientists who are not proficient in English face impediments to be more in touch with the suitable research documents during their training in specific fields of studies because of their low level in English. This situation may account for why Graddol (2006, p.74) stated that English importance and competitiveness led some European countries to sign the "Bologna process". This process involving 45 countries requires the use of English at their educational level. This example suggested by Graddol testifies that English use as relevant second medium of instruction in Côte d'Ivoire can be important and source of the Ivorian students' educational training improvement. It may also allow the country to be more

competitive like the European developed countries. Furthermore, English use as second medium of instruction in Côte d'Ivoire may contribute to provide more values to the higher education training in Côte d'Ivoire. English asset at educational level may increase this country's graduates prestige and their revenue. These advantages favoured by English are underlined by Graddol (2006, p.374) who asserted:

The top universities are citizens of an international academic marketplace with one global academic currency, one global labour force and increasingly one global language, English. They are also increasingly citizens of a global economy, sending their best graduates to work for multinational companies.

This statement of Graddol underscores that English language is a meaningful requirement of the international marketplace. Such a language policy implementation may contribute to provide more value to Côte d'Ivoire's educational training levels. It may permit the Ivorian parents not to send their children to USA or England for allowing them to benefit from studies in English during their higher education trainings. This language is so useful for a country's graduates instruction that Lee (2006, p.26) suggested that this language use in a country's education is perceived as a prerequisite for success.

3.3- English as an Economic Asset

At economic level, English is the global language known as a key economic essential asset for any country. However, since English is not used as significant medium of instruction at the level of education, the country's graduates are not proficient in English. This situation should be improved through English use as second medium of instruction in Côte d'Ivoire. This language policy should be achieved because English is known as an economic asset for any country's socio-economic development. Zhang and Grenier (2012, p.8) quoting Vaillancourt (1980) and Grin (1994), mention that the suitability of language policy in terms of education through a global medium of interaction is a key element in a country's strategic revitalization for economic development.

Conscious of English language value, Plonski et al. (2013, p.4) resorted to the viewpoint of Coleman (2010) to sensitise the African authorities about promoting this language in their country through its use as a relevant medium of instruction. In fact, he mentioned that according to Coleman, English language use as valuable medium of instruction in a country is essential because a serious link exists between English proficiency's development and a country's

economic growth. Hence, he stated that any country pursuing an economic strategy based on export and attraction of foreign capital should adapt their educational policies' language to the requirement of economic strategies.

This viewpoint concerning the valuable relationship between English language and economic development in a country is attested by Grin (2002, p.30) who revealed that English language proficiency is a gainful investment for any country. This language is a relevant economic advantage that may allow a country to easily interact with other countries. Accordingly, for him, all the countries aiming at benefiting from the current world economic advantages at many levels should manage so that their citizens be proficient in English. This language proficiency's development is a powerful investment that he pointed out as source of several economic resources by mentioning:

English language skills are correlated to other determinant of income, particularly education, and that higher earnings accruing to those who speak English may simply reflect the fact that, having a higher education, they can hold better paying jobs and this may have nothing competence to do with the fact that they have some competence in English. Grin
(2002, p.30)

This assertion of Grin underscores that English competence is correlated with various economic advantages such as income, earnings and job opportunities. It testifies that this language proficiency skills can be important for an individual and represents an asset that may contribute to a whole country's development. That is why, English use as an essential medium of instruction in Côte d'Ivoire may be relevant for this country's economic development.

Besides, English is an economic asset because English is a meaningful economic variable in business, since this language is known as the language of business in the world. Indeed, English is a so essential business asset that Plonski et al. (2013, p.3) underlined that it is the Harvard Business Review that notes English as 'the global language of Business.' In that respect, it is the main language through which the authorities and businessmen may negotiate and convince developed countries' companies from everywhere in the world to invest in their country. Accordingly, English use as second medium in any developing country like Côte d'Ivoire appears as a necessary asset that may allow this country to succeed in taking part to the world marketplace and business competition. Such a necessity may also allow this country to easily exchange, promote and plan business achievement in their country. Likewise, English use as second medium of instruction in Côte d'Ivoire may be a noteworthy resource for

attracting several new investors and more international companies in the country. As a proof, a report of Euromonitor (2010, p.8) stated:

Companies such as MTN Communications and Microsoft have found that both Nigeria and Pakistan offer a more attractive business environment than many other countries as a result of these countries' higher levels of English proficiency, among other factors.

This assertion points out English as a useful economic asset that provided these countries with the opportunity to attract more foreign investors and increase their countries' economic growth through favouring more business and trade opportunities with other developed countries. It may attest that English use as second valuable medium of instruction in Côte d'Ivoire's education may represent an economic resource, since it can contribute to consolidate and expand the business in this country's existing markets as well as favouring its access into emerging markets with other countries in the world. As evidence, Wanyama (2013, p.9) underlines the economic value that has been already provided by this language promotion in some East African countries. In fact, he stated that English has allowed those countries to generate employment and wealth that have tremendously favoured these countries economic prosperity.

This analysis underscores that English promotion at educational level has been beneficial for some East Africa countries. So, this language use as second valuable medium of instruction in Côte d'Ivoire may allow this country to benefit from more international companies' investments. These economic investments may tremendously contribute to increase Côte d'Ivoire's growth rate and its socio-economic development. Such a goal may be reached because a country's human capital with a valuable language proficiency can permit its nation to be in touch with the world market trade. It may also allow this country to benefit from numerous foreign direct investments that represent some essential assets needed by a country to favour its socio-economic development.

CONCLUSION

This paper led a sociolinguistic analysis of English choice as second medium of instruction in Cote d'Ivoire. Our investigation has allowed to discover that English use as second medium of instruction in Côte d'Ivoire can be relevant in this multilingual country.

This research study's findings have shown that most of Ivorian people have a favourable perception about English use as second medium of instruction in Côte d'Ivoire. This work has also allowed to retain that English use as second medium of instruction in Côte d'Ivoire can be source of valuable assets at the level of diplomacy, education and economy.

The tentative outcome of this study may eventually contribute to understand why English use as second medium of instruction in Côte d'Ivoire may be beneficial for this multilingual French-speaking country. Thus, this investigation about English use as second medium of instruction in Côte d'Ivoire may be helpful for further research in language policy.

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