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The Status of French among Ivory Coast Speakers

Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Candidacy of Master Degree in Language Studies

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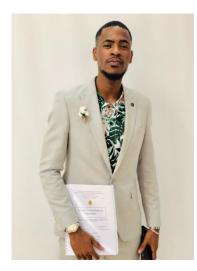
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DEDICATIONS

*I dedicate this research work to my father **Jacques***

*To my mother **Aimée***

*To my uncle **Benjamin***

*To my wonderful sisters: **Patricia**, **Joelle**, and **Rebecca***

*To my brother **Abraham***

*To my fiancée **Angena***

To all my friends

SAMUEL

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ABSTRACT

This is a micro-sociolinguistic study of French status among Ivory Coast speakers, taking the speech community of Port Bouet (one of the township of Abidjan) as a case in point. The study attempted to explain how French is perceived in Ivory Coast and the attitude of Ivorian speakers towards this language as well. To reach a reliable data, three research instruments were used: an observation that helped in preparing question, a survey and an interview, addressed to a sample of 90 educated participants involving three different categories of age. The result revealed that Ivorian speakers in general acknowledge the status of French among them; they know its value in all the main areas of the country. Yet, because of the many spoken dialects in the country that existed before the French colonization, most of Ivorian speakers from the young age to the old age category manifested some negative attitudes toward French. In addition, the obtained outcomes seem to support the proposed hypotheses.

List of Acronyms

AOF: Afrique Occidentale Française

CI: Côte d'Ivoire

CP: Covert Prestige

CS: Code Switching

IC: Ivory Coast

LA: Language Attitude

LI: Linguistic Insecurity

MT: Mother Tongue

OP: Overt Prestige

PF: Popular French

SF: Standard French

SM1: Senior Man 1

SW1: Senior Woman 1

List of Tables

List of Figures

Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE: Theoretical Review: Some Sociolinguistic Phenomena.

CHAPTER TWO: The Sociolinguistic Situation of Ivory Coast

CHAPTER THREE: Research Methodology, Data Analysis and Interpretation

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Ivory Coast (henceforth IC) constitutes an interesting sociolinguistic situation in Francophone Africa that grasped the attention of many sociolinguists and scholars. This is due to its complex linguistic situation mirroring the former colonial domination of French colonists after the settlement of African tribes in the country. This kind of language contact situation between French and local languages is not different from other language contact situations elsewhere in the world. In IC, it led to social competitions and linguistic conflict.

When the French officially occupied IC in 1893, the French colonial policy was explicitly designed to "civilize" the country. This policy aimed at imposing both French language and culture on the whole society. Thus, to control the Ivorians, it had at all cost to prevent them to speak their mother tongues; hence, the beginning of the language attitude in Ivorian society.

After the end of the colonial period, especially when IC proclaimed its independence in 1960, French was recognized in the institution as the only national and official language to the detriment of local languages. Then, the status of French expanded in all area of the public life of the country in order to eradicate the other spoken languages present at this time. But the Ivorian and African languages kept their status and their full strength against French. Therefore, the status of French among IC started to be challenged. Otherwise, the local languages influenced French to the point that this official language was misrepresented by Ivorian speakers.

This work has a major importance, in the sense that it demonstrates patterns of linguistic situation in IC with particular reference to the status of French among Ivorian, its use, and attitudes towards French in the country.

The following research questions are essentially exposed as follows:

- Why did IC speakers accept French in addition to their numerous indigenous dialects?
- What attitudes do most of Ivorians including uneducated people have towards the use of French?

Trying to answer these questions, the following hypotheses were put forward:

- The French language is imposed to the Ivorian society because of the French colonization and serves as a lingua franca in the whole country.
- Most of Ivorian speakers exhibit negative attitudes towards the use of French due to the bond to their mother tongue.

To tackle these former research questions and test the validity of the hypotheses, data have been collected by means of survey and interview administered to a sample of respondents from one of the 10 townships of Abidjan (economic capital of IC) called Port Bouet. Concerning the survey, three categories were targeted among the respondents; the first one was concerned with the young age, the second one the middle age, and thirdly the old age. Yet, only seniors were concerned with the interview.

The present research work is divided into three chapters; initially the first chapter is dedicated to the theoretical review. Then, the second chapter deals with the sociolinguistic situation of IC, and finally, the third chapter is devoted to the methodology, data analysis and interpretation. The first chapter starts with how language can be distinguished from dialect. It gives an overview about sociolinguistic phenomena in general, and in Ivorian society in specific. It also presents other phenomena that emerge when two or more languages come into contact in IC such as: multilingualism, bilingualism, code switching, borrowing, overt and covert prestige, and linguistic insecurity and language attitudes. In the second chapter, some light is shed on the sociolinguistic situation of IC; the chapter deals with the geographical

situation, historical background of IC, and it describes the linguistic repertoire of the country in which it tackles French, its sociolinguistic context, and its different varieties (Popular French and Nouchi). It also touches the ethnic groups that made this country multilingual by focusing on the most spoken one which is Dioula. The third chapter is concerned with the methodology used in gathering data and describing the sample population, followed by the analysis and the interpretation of the obtained results in the township of Port Bouet by means of surveys and interview.

1.1. Introduction

People need language for different purposes in their everyday interactions. It means that a society cannot stand alone without the use of language. That's why over half the world's population are bilingual and many people or nations in general are multilingual like the Ivorian community. So, the first chapter is dedicated to the theories and views of linguists about the notion of "language" and also some sociolinguistic concepts related to the use of language like: language varieties, bilingualism, multilingualism, code switching, borrowing, overt and covert prestige, linguistic insecurity and language attitudes with relevance to the Ivorian society.

1.2. Language Varieties

The fact that a group of people in such multilingual societies share more than one language is called in sociolinguistics: language varieties. Otherwise, language variety refers to the various forms of language triggered by social factors. It also involves two sociolinguistic terms which are: language and dialect or variety.

1.2.1. Language

There are too many ways to define what language really is. R. A. Hall (1968) defines language as the institution whereby humans communicate and interact with each other by means of habitually-used oral-auditory arbitrary symbols. In other words, language is a system of communication using sounds or gestures that are put together in meaningful ways to set rules. In fact, language is a rule-governed system, but it is not governed by rules in the same way that society is governed by laws. Linguists actually do not decide on rules and do not try to make follow them; rather they look at language to discover the rules that make it work. So, language is the thing that makes communication possible. Language changes and new rules are described and these rules tell speakers how to combine different parts of that language.

The Yiddish linguist Max Weinreich (1945: 13) states: "a language is a dialect with an army and a navy". It means, language is that complete thing, it is a fully structured system used in society. A country or a community also cannot subsist

without an army; a culture without the ability to communicate and share one's culture would never exist simply because the single most important symbol in culture is language. Moreover, language is that innate human capacity. In one word, language defines humans. Therefore, it would be necessary to talk about the different varieties of language in the following paragraphs.

Most languages have a standard form. Language is associated with a standard variety. The standard variety is the language used in the formal setting like: education, administration, politics and so on. Indeed, standard language is prestigious and it has a written form. Holmes (2001: 76) states that: "the standard variety is generally written and has undergone a degree of regularization and codification. That is, the standard variety has a written form and is regarded as more correct and socially acceptable than the other varieties". As a French colony, it is assumed that Standard French (henceforth SF) is the major medium of communication in IC. It is spread in all areas of public life. That is to say, SF is the language of administration, education and the vehicle of written and audiovisual information as well. Thus SF is considered as the most prestigious language among many other varieties used by Ivorian speakers in their daily life.

1.2.2. Dialect or Variety

There is no distinction between a dialect and a variety because both share the same characteristics in linguistics. In one word, dialect is also a variety. In fact, dialect is a linguistic variety spoken by a speech community that is characterized by systematic features (e.g.: phonological, lexical, grammatical) that distinguish it from other varieties of that same language. In this way, Trudgill (1992: 23) states that: "a dialect is a variety of language which differs grammatically, phonologically and lexically from other varieties".

On the other hand, Hudson (1996: 22) defines a variety as: "a set of 'linguistic items' with similar social distribution". According to the author, a variety of language is a set of human speech patterns (presumably sounds, words, grammatical features,

etc.) which we can connect with some external factor apparently, a geographical area or social group. Through these definitions, it is clear that both dialect and variety are the same. Accordingly, each variety has its own characteristics either at the level of grammar, phonology, or vocabulary.

According to Wardhaugh (2006), a dialect is considered as an inferior linguistic form of communication, being equivalent to non-standard. In this respect, Auer (2005: 1) affirms that: "dialects have relatively little overt prestige and are mainly used orally". Chamber and Trudgill (2004: 3) declare that: "a dialect is also a term which is often applied to forms of language particularly those spoken in more isolated parts of the world, which have no written form". Therefore, a dialect is that spoken form used in everyday life in our different societies; it is generally associated with low status.

Moreover, from a linguistic view; although this is not always the case, dialects are mutually intelligible, while languages are not. Mair (1991: 17) writes: "mutual intelligibility is normally accepted by linguists as the only plausible criterion for making the distinction between language and dialect". Thus, if one can understand the other, they must be speaking dialects of the same language. In IC for example, although *Baoulé* and *Agni* are different dialects, a *Baoulé* speaker can easily understand *Agni* because both are dialects of the same family which is the Kwa-Akan group.

Now, it has been specified that there are two types of dialects. It can be regional or social dialect. That is why Crystal D. (1992: 76) defines variety as: "a system of linguistic expression whose use is governed by situational variables, such as regional, occupational or social class". Otherwise, dialect is more or less identifiable as a regional or social variety of language (Trask 1999).What makes regional dialect different from social dialect?

1.2.2.1. Regional Dialect

A regional dialect is a distinct form of a language spoken in a particular geographical area. It involves features of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar which differ according to the geographical area the speakers come from. In this regard, Hudson (1996: 38) states that: "The dialect geographer may then draw a line between the area where others were found, showing a boundary for each area called an isogloss. Regional dialects identify where the person is from". Accordingly, distance is an important factor because regional dialects show fewer differences from their neighbors and more differences from distant varieties. This is the case of two close neighboring cities; Gagnoa and Lakota in the west of IC. They are actually dialects of the same family which is *Bété*, the dominant language of the Kru group. Although they differ in terms of pronunciation and vocabulary, *Bété* speaker from Gagnoa may understand the one from Lakota because they are considered as examples of regional dialects.

1.2.2.2. Social Dialect

Social dialect is a variety of language that reflects social variation in language use, according to certain factors related to the social group of the speaker such as education, occupation, income level, etc. It is also known as sociolect. According to Peter Trudgill (2000), social dialect called also sociolect is a variety which is thought of as being related to its speakers' social background rather than geographical background. That is to say, speech varies according to social variables in social dialect.

1.3. Multilingualism

Multilingualism is the act of using two or more languages, either by an individual speaker or by a community of speakers. Actually, multilingualism is a complex phenomenon that can be studied from different perspectives in disciplines such as linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and education. Nowadays, multilingualism is a very common phenomenon all over the world. This is to be expected, considering that there are almost 7,000 languages in the world and about 200 independent countries (Lewis, 2009). It is not only that there are more languages than

countries, but also the number of speakers of the different languages is unevenly distributed, meaning that speakers of smaller languages need to speak other languages in their daily life.

Several factors have contributed to the current visibility of multilingualism. Among them, globalization, transnational mobility of the population, and the spread of new technologies are highly influential in different political, social, and educational contexts. Aronin and Singleton (2008) compared the features of historical and contemporary multilingualism and reported seven distinctions. These distinctions can be clustered into three main areas:

i.   **Geological**: In comparison with the past, multilingualism is not restricted to topographically near dialects or to specific border ranges or trade routes. It may be a more worldwide phenomenon spread over diverse parts of the world.

ii. **Social**: Multilingualism is now not related with specific social strata, callings, or rituals. It is progressively spread over distinctive social classes, professions, and sociocultural activities.

iii. **Medium**: Within the past, multilingual communication was regularly restricted to composing, and mail was moderate. Within the 21st century, because of the internet, multilingual communication is multimodal and momentary.

Globalization has increased the value of multilingualism. Speaking different languages has an added value. As Edwards (2004: 164) pointed out, speaking English can be necessary, "but the ability to speak other languages nonetheless ensures a competitive edge". Moreover, there are many definitions of multilingualism. In fact, a multilingual is at the same time an individual and a social phenomenon. It can be considered as an ability of an individual, or it can refer to the use of languages in society. On one hand, Li (2008: 4) defined a multilingual individual as "anyone who can communicate in more than one language, be it active (through speaking and writing) or passive (through listening and reading)". On the other hand, a well-known definition of

multilingualism is given by the European Commission (2007: 6) as: "the ability of societies, institutions, groups and individuals to engage, on a regular basis, with more than one language in their day-to-day lives". These definitions of multilingualism are relevant for explaining some of its dimensions: on the first point, the individual dimension, and then, the social dimension of multilingualism.

1.3.1. Individual Dimension of Multilingualism

Individual multilingualism is sometimes referred to as plurilingualism. Council of Europe (2007) defines plurilingualism as the capacity and competence to learn more than one language, as well as the value of linguistic tolerance within individuals and countries. Both multilingualism and plurilingualism are concerned with the individual ability to learn and speak several languages or dialects. Reason why, the word plurilingualism was also be used by Moore and Gajo (2009: 138) to highlight "the focus on the individual as the locus and actor of contact" in a holistic view of multilingualism. Within individual multilingualism, there can be important differences in the experience of acquiring and using languages.

An individual can acquire different languages simultaneously by being exposed to two or more languages from birth or successively by being exposed to second or additional languages later in life. These experiences are related to the different possibilities in the organization of bilingual memory and the distinctions between compound, coordinate and subordinate multilinguals (see also De Groot, 2011). Accordingly, the focus on the multilingual individual rather than on the languages spoken by the multilingual individual has resulted in interesting insights about the characteristics of language learning and language used by multilingual people (Kramsch, 2010; Todeva & Cenoz, 2009).

1.3.2. Social Dimension of Multilingualism

At the societal level, there is an important distinction between additive and subtractive multilingualism. In the case of additive multilingualism, a language is added to the linguistic repertoire of the speaker while the first language continues to be developed. The example is totally clear in IC society: generally, the first language the child learns is his/her mother tongue (henceforth MT) before to be educated and learning French which is the official language of the country. Then an Ivorian can master at least two other languages in addition to their MT, which means French language and another variety spoken in IC community.

Nevertheless, subtractive multilingualism refers to situations in which a new language is learned and replaces the first language. Additive multilingualism is more likely to happen when speakers of a majority language acquire other languages; subtractive multilingualism can often be found when immigrant schoolchildren are required to shift to the language of the host country without being given the opportunity to develop their own language. A related issue is the difference between being multilingual in demographically strong languages with a high status and weaker languages (Kramsch, 2010).

1.4. Bilingualism Defined

Bilingualism is the standard term which refers to the ability of using two languages by an individual speaker or a group of people in society. In fact, definitions of bilingualism vary widely depending on the angle it is approached. Baetens Beardsmore (1982:1) argues that: "Bilingualism as a term has open-ended semantics". For the author, the definition of bilingualism is subjective. Also, linguists' definitions of bilingualism are divergent to the question of degree.

On one hand, Weinreich (1953) defines bilingualism simply as 'the practice of alternately using two languages'. Similarly, Mackey (1962: 52) defines bilingualism as "The ability to use more than one language". For them, a bilingual person is that person who knows and who is able to speak at least two languages no matter how. In

this respect, Mohanty (1994: 13) states that: "bilingual persons or communities are those with an ability to meet the communicative demands of the self and the society in their normal functioning in two or more languages in their interaction with the other speakers of any or all of these languages". On the other hand, some linguists like Bloomfield (1933: 55) and Haugen (1953: 7) proposed respectively the following definitions of bilingualism as the ''native-like control of two languages'' and ''the point where a speaker can first produce complete and meaningful utterances in the other language''. Considering these definitions, bilingualism refers to the perfect use of a foreign language with the MT. Otherwise, a good bilingual is expected to have a perfect control as well as a full mastery and high command in both languages. For Bloomfield and Haugen, competence is very important in bilingualism.

What complicates the definition of bilingualism is the issue of degree. However, no matter what the definitions of linguists such as Haugen (1953), Mackey (1962) and Bloomfield (1933), they are applied and equal the views expressed by ordinary people. In Ivorian society, for instance, most of speakers are at least bilinguals because in addition to their MT, they understand and speak the French language.

1.5. Code Switching Defined

One of the most fascinating aspects of speaking more than one language is that one can express an idea or produce an utterance in a given language and then, at the same time switching to another one without affecting the meaning or changing it. It is undeniable that individuals who master several languages tend to code switch when talking to each other more than when they are in contact with monolinguals. Wardhaugh (1986:102) asserts that a code is a specific dialect or language one chooses to use it on any situation, and a system for communication between two or more groups. Romaine (1995:121) in addition writes "I will use the term 'code' here in a general sense to refer not only to different language, but also to varieties of the same language as well as styles within a language".

Consequently, code switching (henceforth CS) can be seen as an alternation between two languages or two language varieties or even more. Even though this

linguistic phenomenon has existed before, however till the 1970's scholars and sociolinguists started to pay attention to CS and started to be attested in sociolinguistics due to Bloom's and Gumperz's (1972) efforts. In his book "Discourse Strategy", Gumperz (1982: 59) defines CS as: "the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or sub-systems".

In IC, knowing that it is a multilingual country where French is considered as the official language and used in all domains and in everyday speaking situations, the Ivorian dialects are characterized by a lot of French words and even expressions. 'Switching' is one of the common characteristics of Ivorian speech. In fact, the reasons that give rise to CS in everyday interaction of Ivorians are firstly the lack and insufficiency of all 78 varieties. For instance, there are some words that do not exist in many dialects like *Dioula*, *Baoulé* or *Bété*; hence, speakers have to use French. Another thing is that people constantly switch from their MT to French even with their family. They usually converse in their own dialect at home that might be characterized with a great number of French borrowings and French expressions. However, there are cases at home when they communicate in French because the children do not understand their own dialect or MT.

Most of Ivorian youth have acquired the habit of speaking French language in their everyday conversation. However in their everyday interaction, they switch from French to another dialect called 'le Nouchi' which is the most famous spoken dialect by young people. The reason why they switch from French to 'le Nouchi' is because their vocabulary in French is poor or they simply have bad French. Thus, switching and mixing for bilinguals are normally not different from using words which do not belong to the native tongue. Frequently, people utilize some foreign or borrowed words consciously or unconsciously from another language.

1.6. Borrowing

In sociolinguistics, borrowing refers to the inclusion and incorporation of words from one language to another. Thomason & Kaufman (1988: 21), explain borrowings in its narrow sense as: "to refer to the incorporation of foreign elements into the speakers' native language". These foreign words that are borrowed and added from one language to another are usually adapted to the morphological and phonological properties to make them adjustable and fit in the new language (Poplack, 1990). In addition, borrowing is the fact that the bilingual speakers produce foreign words and mixed them in their speech. Poplack (1989) in this respect, states, "Much of what had been called language mixing could more appropriately be called, borrowing", cited in Lyon (1996:59). Also, Grey and Kaufman (1988: 37) define borrowing as follows: "borrowing is the incorporation of foreign features into group's native language by speakers of that language: the native language is maintained but is changed by the addition of the incorporated features". In this point the bilingual one uses some foreign words all the time as his MT in his discussion. According to Grey and Kaufman, structural features may be borrowed, also phonological, phonetic and syntactic elements and features of inflectional morphology too.

Borrowing is actually an undeniable phenomenon in every culture in the world. Most of great languages have borrowed words from other languages in their vocabulary. For example, English language uses French words in its own vocabulary and vice versa. French and English also have borrowed words from Latin. These examples below will illustrate that fact.

Example of English words used in French:

- Babysitter:(une) - gardienne d'enfant

- Boss:(un) - chef; patron

- Break:(un) - pause; arrêt

Example of French words borrowed by English:

- Hypocrite: (a) - two-faced

- Marriage: (a) - wedding

- Rendezvous: (a) - meeting

Example of Latin words used in French and English language:

- Agenda : (un/an) - livret d'orde / notebook

- Alibi: (un/an) -prétexte / excuses

- A priori - dès le commencement / deductive

Mark (2009:243) also says: "borrowing is a technical term for the incorporation of an item from one language to another. These items could be (in terms of decreasing order of frequency) words, grammatical elements or sounds". According to Mark, borrowing is different from code switching, which assumes a skill of two or more languages and use much of rules of the languages being switched.

1.7. Overt and Covert Prestige

In sociolinguistics, 'linguistic prestige' is the degree of esteem and social value attached by members of a speech community to certain languages, dialects, or features of a language variety. According to Michael Pearce (2007), social and linguistic prestige is interrelated. In other way, the language of powerful social groups usually carries linguistic prestige; and social prestige is often granted to speakers of prestige languages and varieties. In IC, rather than the standard variety of a language, some

dialects are often stigmatized. They are regarded in a negative way as deviant cases of speech and are accredited with low prestige. The labels of 'good' and 'bad' French reflect the general attitude towards standard and non-standard varieties of the French language. Prestige, however, is not entirely equal to 'Standard'. In fact, any language variety, be it standard or non-standard, can have prestige among its speakers. Moreover, sociolinguists make a distinction between overt prestige (henceforth OP) and covert prestige (henceforth CP) to denote the degree of overall social acceptance of a speech variety.

First of all, OP is generally acknowledged as 'correct', and therefore, highly valued among all speakers of the language in society. It is acquired by those speakers who have command of a standard dialect that is socially defined as that spoken to gain social status within the wider community. It means, the standard variety in a community has OP. Focusing on Ivorian speech community, Lafage (1979) remarks that the French spoken in IC may be subdivided into three major varieties: the French of the elite or SF (having OP), the French of the educated, and the French of the less educated called also 'Popular French' (henceforth PF; having CP). Most of Ivorian speakers in community use the French of the educated and the PoF. However, few people speak the French of the elite that defines how they are gaining status in that community by speaking the standard language having OP.

Here is a table that will show differences between SF, French of the educated, and the PF in Ivorian speech community:

English Gloss	Standard French (OP)	French of the educated	Popular French (CP)
I do not know.	Je ne sais pas.	Je sais pas.	Ye sais pas.
I did not eat yet.	Je n'ai pas mangé.	J'ai pas mangé.	Yai pas mangé.

Table 1.1. Ivorians' Varieties of French

In addition, Grover Hudson (2000) explains that one uses unusually formal non-vernacular forms in vernacular contexts. For example, one will ordinarily say '*It's me*' to the question '*who is it?*' asked by a familiar interlocutor, but when asked the same question by one from whom one seeks prestige, the same speaker may say '*It is I*'. Similarly, except after prepositions Americans ordinarily say *who* in preference to *whom*: *Who did you ask?* Not *whom did you ask?* But in some circumstances, the latter may be substituted. Such usage is said to seek OP because the often dubious prestige one gets from such usage is ordinarily consciously noted, hence, overt.

On the other hand, Non-standard varieties are often said to have CP ascribed to them by their speakers. A specific, small group of speakers shows positive evaluation of and orientation towards a certain linguistic variety, usually without the speakers' awareness. CP is also that value attached to a particular dialect or minority group language by a subset of the community (e.g. local and ethnic group). Otherwise, the variety is usually not accepted in all social groups, for instance, PF and 'Le Nouchi' among IC speakers. In fact, PF is a reduced form of SF. It is characterized by no markers of tense, gender and number, and the deletion of the article (definite and indefinite). Its lexicon, loaded with borrowings, exhibits creativity and dynamism as well as 'Le Nouchi'. For many years, PF was thought to be and has been described as a 'corrupted variety', hence covert (see Lafage 1979; Duponchel 1979).

Moreover a standard dialect speaker of English who intentionally switches to use of social markers such as '*ain't*' and '*he don't*' is said to seek CP. Such prestige is covert because its elicitation will often not, if successful, be consciously noted. Deliberate use of taboo words such as *fuck* and *shit*, usage which tends to characterize male more than female speech, may also seek CP, but the strength of these as social markers makes this more difficult to achieve, explains Grover Hudson (2000).

To conclude, Walt Wolfram (2004) explains that, in the case of OP, the social valuation is based on a unified and widely accepted set of social norms, whereas with CP the positive social importance lies in the local culture of social relations. Therefore, it is possible for a socially stigmatized alternative in one context to have CP in another.

1.8. Linguistic Insecurity

The first major sociolinguistic works dealing with linguistic insecurity (henceforth LI) that we retain are those of William Labov, in his famous work *Sociolinguistics*. For Labov, LI is marked by a sense of fault produced by speaker through lack of confidence in the speech and especially by overcorrection. For Labov, everything demonstrates that the speakers of the middle-class are especially disposed to LI. This LI is interpreted into them by a really wide complex variety; through significant variances inside a given context; through a mindful effort of correction, and at last through responses strongly negative towards the way of speaking they acquired (Labov, 1976).

The concept of LI has advanced over time, by knowing diverse treatments by other authors. One of the most promoters of this modern approach was the French Michel Francard, who strived to lay the establishments for a modern hypothetical LI system. According to Francard (1997: 171-172) LI can be defined as :

> L'insécurité linguistique est la manifestation d'une quête de légitimité linguistique, vécue par un groupe social dominé, qui a une perception aiguisée tout à la fois des formes linguistiques qui attestent sa minorisation et des formes linguistiques à acquérir pour progresser dans la hiérarchie sociale[1].

For this French author, the state of insecurity, seen as an ambivalence of linguistic representations, lead speakers to resort to compensation strategies, such as attributing qualities to their native varieties which are denied by the dominant variety. By the same token, on the basis of Calvet (1993), it would be conceivable to speak about linguistic security when, for various social reasons, speakers do not feel challenged in their way of speaking, when they consider their pattern as the standard. On the

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[1] "LI is the manifestation of a quest for linguistic legitimacy, experienced by a dominated social group, which has a sharp perception of both the linguistic forms that attest to its minorization and the linguistic forms to acquire in order to progress in the social hierarchy".

contrary, there is LI when speakers regard their way of speaking as unattractive and have in mind another model, more prestigious, but they do not practice.

In particular, within the Ivorian society, many people show some difficulties and incapacity in situations where they must converse using French. This happens in all sectors of Ivorian society: In education, students feel uncomfortable and they lack confidence when they are speaking or writing in French. They express their anxieties and the fear of being wrong when using French, the language they are called to practice everyday at school. In politics, when it is time to speak, some politicians hesitate, trying to find their words and speak to the public without assurance and without convincing. Other politicians often claim not to dare to "confront" the audience because they do not feel highly prepared to it. On television, in press, on radio, otherwise in the media, some journalists have gaps and inadequacies that show the discomfort they are confronted during interviews or reports. In market or in the street, the situation sometimes seems surreal as customers and sellers can face permanent misunderstandings; some using a form of French diametrically opposed (the case of PF) to the others. The same phenomenon has been observed in street with young people showing their incapacity to express themselves correctly in French; hence, they use 'le Nouchi'. This phenomenon of LI is what prompted sociolinguists to study attitudes towards language.

1.9.   Language Attitudes

Language attitudes (henceforth LA) have always attracted scholars and sociolinguists attention through time, and been an area of heated debates among them. A formal interest in the issue of LA can be traced back to the past decades, when Crystal (1997: 215) describes LA as: "the feelings people have about their own language or the language of others." Otherwise, speakers can develop different attitudes towards their language as well as towards other ones used in other communities. For instance, some speaker may prefer to switch to another language in order to discuss a given topic rather than using their own language. They may feel ashamed or uncomfortable when speaking in their language or variety. As a

consequence, they avoid speaking in public with that language because they developed a negative attitude about it. Others may feel proud and self-confident and they encounter no problem to speak in their language or variety because they may associate a given quality or prestige to their language or variety.

Attitudes toward languages actually, may vary from one person to another as there are personal believes and subjective feelings, i.e., a certain quality may be attributed to a given code by speakers through considering it as positive or negative in a given society. In IC, for example, French is viewed by a category of people as a language of modernity and development. However, it may be classified in negative position by others. Also, many children from villages develop strongly, negative attitudes towards French because of the mastery of their MT even at school. Additionally, attitudes can be observed and identified only through people's actual behaviors. It means, people's attitudes towards a given language can be demonstrated through their reactions when they get into contact with speakers of that language as they may avoid them (negative attitude) or approach them (positive attitude). For supporting this, Hamers and Blanc (2000: 222) states that: "These value judgments express the stereotypes, attitudes and prejudices that members of a speech community have towards the speaker of another speech community and their languages".

Furthermore, people's attitudes towards languages may change through time and from one society to another as well. Some speakers develop positive or negative attitudes towards a given language or variety due to cultural, historical or ethnic reasons. Otherwise, speakers belonging to a particular group may associate a certain quality or prestige to a given language or variety. Namely, in the Ivorian context, people display positive or negative attitudes towards French and dialect. Some speakers tend to speak in French as they see it as the language of development and technology, while others prefer to speak in their own dialect which is their MT.

1.10. Conclusion

This chapter is an overview which aimed at treating the importance and the role of language in society by showing some sociolinguistic concepts and explaining them. Its aim was also to introduce the status of French in a multilingual nation which is IC. Reason why this chapter tackled these concepts such as overt and covert prestige (OP and CP), linguistic insecurity (LI) and language attitudes (LA) in order to figure out how much the French language is always challenged in Ivorian society. This chapter also involved an explanation of a set of relevant phenomena to the research and related to the Ivorian community as language varieties, code switching (CS), borrowing and bilingualism.

2.1. Introduction

This chapter sheds some light on the geography, the history of IC, and the linguistic repertoire of the country in which it illustrates; French as the official language, some varieties coming from French that challenge its status among Ivorians such as PF and Nouchi, and the ethnic groups that make IC a multilingual nation. Then, it will deal with the link between religion and languages.

2.2. Geographical Description of Ivory Coast

The Republic of IC is a member country of the African Union which is located on the southern coast of West Africa. Covering an area of 322,462 km2, it is bordered on the North by Mali and Burkina Faso, on the West by Liberia and Guinea, on the East by Ghana and the Atlantic Ocean on the South. Figure 2.1 clearly displays its location:

Figure 2.1 Ivory Coast Location in Africa

In 2017, the population of the country was estimated at 26,594,750 inhabitants. IC has actually two capitals; Abidjan, the economic capital with 4,707,000 residents

which represents 20% of the Ivorian population, and Yamoussoukro which is the official political and administrative capital with an estimation of 362,000 people. Although its official language is French, more than 78 other dialects are spoken daily in the country.

2.3. Historical Background of Ivory Coast

In 1842, the Protectorate Treaty of Grand Bassam was signed. In 1843, the IC expedition was an American naval expedition against Bereby people. IC officially entered a French colony on March 10th, 1893. Captain Binger, who left Dakar (current capital of Senegal) to join Kong, where he met Louis Marie Marcel Treich-Laplene, was the first governor. The capital of IC was at Grand Bassam. He negotiated border treaties with the United Kingdom (for Liberia) and later began a campaign that lasted until 1898 against Samory Touré, a Malinké warrior chief from present-day Guinea.

From 1904 to 1958, the country was included in the French West African Federation called French West Africa (AOF). It was a colony and an overseas territory during the Third Republic. Until the period following the Second World War, government affairs were characterized by the association which made the inhabitants of the colonies French subjects without the right of representation. Its capital is Bingerville until 1933, then Abidjan. During the Second World War, the Vichygarde Regime controlled the territory until the end of 1942: the AOF then rallied to the Algiers executive, and passed the following year under the authority of the French Committee of Liberation national. The Brazzaville Conference of 1944, the First Constituent Assembly of 1946 and the gratitude of France for the loyalty of Africans pushed for reforms from 1946. French citizenship was granted to African subjects, the right to organize politically was recognized, and forced labor was abolished by the law of April 11th that was proposed by Felix Houphouet-Boigny in 1946.

In August 7th, 1960, the independence of IC was proclaimed by Felix Houphouët-Boigny who became the first president on November 17th, 1960, as a result of an election. The political sovereignty was acquired in 1960; the Ivorian authorities

took some linguistic texts that establish French as an official language, to the detriment of local languages. But, the Ivorian and African languages retain their full strength against French[2]. These local languages go so far as to influence French, the only official language, to the point that it is born in the linguistic landscape of IC some forms of French, whose functioning differs from that of central and normative French. These migrations are causes of conflicts between populations, but above all, allow weaving many political and matrimonial alliances (cited by Vahou 2016).

2.4.   Description of the Linguistic Repertoire of Ivory Coast

People in IC community tend to use different languages and varieties in their daily life for different purposes, except French which is known as the official language and its related varieties such us PF and Nouchi. This country has many spoken dialects in its linguistic repertoire. This linguistic situation gives birth to a sociolinguistic phenomenon called Multilingualism.

2.4.1. French Language in Ivory Coast

The official language policy of Ivory Coast is stated in one phrase in the first article of the constitution: **« La langue officielle est le français »** (Vahou 2016)**.** In a large city such as Abidjan, French comes widely ahead of the languages learned as a first language and is only competed by the Dioula, but only in areas with a high Moorish population. In Abidjan and most urban centers, children are exposed early to different varieties of French depending on the ethnic up bring. The three dominant forms of French are SF, PF and Nouchi. First of all, SF is widely motivated by nationalist concerns. It is not only perceived as a neutral language that could politically integrate the diverse ethnic groups and ensure peace and national unity, but it is also seen as an international means of communication. Secondly, PF comes from a spontaneous and free appropriation of French. It is perceived to easier means of communication among Ivorian people. Thirdly, Nouchi is defined as a slang born in the early 1980s also called the "French of the street". It is

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[2] Cited by Kakou (2016: 23)

characterized at the lexical level by changes of meaning and borrowing from the Ivorian languages, and other foreign languages. Nouchi also uses the syntax of SF or popular Ivorian French.

In short, French in IC is both a vehicular language and a vernacular language. It is also spoken French that is particularized. Until the early 1990s, the school remained the preferred place for learning French in its academic form. This is no longer the case today because the street has taken over from the school. It is true that the number of speakers declaring to speak French is constantly increasing, but the general quality of the French language spoken is decried by Ivorian intellectuals. Most young people who have learned "French in the street" are convinced that their "Ivorian French" corresponds to standardized official French, but this French language used in IC tends to appear as a highly regionalized system to the point where the mutual comprehension between the two varieties of French can become almost nil. More than a million speakers use only a pidginized variety of French, officially called "Ivorian PF", but also "Nouchi French". A variety of French almost unintelligible for a non-Ivorian francophone, both the differences can be important phonetically, grammatically and lexically (from data collection).

2.4.1.1.   Popular French

While SF has not spread, its prestige has helped in the development and the spread of a non-native variety of French in the IC. It is this 'non-native' variety of the standard language which is called PF. PF, considered as one of the three French varieties of IC, is actually a reduced form of SF.

Lafage adds that while SF is spoken by only 0.5% of the total population of the country, the French of the educated (second variety), which is close to the standard form and understood without difficulty by native speakers of French, is spoken by 5.3% of the total population, and PF is spoken by 29.2% of the total population. The particularity of this variety is that; it is characterized by no markers of tense, gender and number, and the deletion of the article (definite and indefinite). Its lexicon, loaded with borrowings, exhibits creativity and dynamism (Lafage 1982).

For many years, PF was thought to be and has been described as a corrupted variety used by laborers, construction workers, and the like, in an employer-worker relationship, in order to put the messages across with efficiency and without regard for phonological, prosodic and syntactic norms. It was also believed to be essentially limited to the urban centers in the south of the country (Abidjan especially) (Lafage 1979; Duponchel 1979). Nevertheless, in recent years, PF has gradually established itself as a viable lingua franca. Hattiger, who has done extensive research on this subject, calls it **«un phénomène unique en Afrique francophone»** (1983, 27). It is no longer restricted to the lower strata of society since, as in the case of Dioula, the elite and the international community are taking a keen interest in learning and using it. This interest, which may have started as language play as suggested by Duponchel (1979), goes beyond the comical as many people realized that they have to know this variety of the official language for practical reasons. Thus, PF is in the process of becoming part of the competence of all those who want to get good bargain in the market place or relationship with their interlocutor. In fact, the use of SF (instead of PF) when addressing someone, a taxi driver or a policeman for instance, is often perceived as an offense and the speaker may be resentfully called: "*Monsieur Grammaire*" (Djité, 1989: 501).

Here are some examples of proverbs in PF illustrated by Kouamé (2014: 145-146) in table 2.1:

Proverbs in PF	Meaning in SF	Translation in English
En même temps est mieux. Hésitation égale à blessure.	Il faut battre le fer quand il est chaud.	Strike while the iron is hot.
Petit marteau casse gros caillou.	Les apparences sont trompeuses.	You can't judge a book by its cover.
Si tu dors, c'est pour toi qui s'en va.	L'avenir appartient à ceux qui se lèvent tôt.	The early bird catches the worm.
Je t'aime mais je me préfère.	Charité bien ordonnée commence par soi-même.	Charity begins at home
Si tu empruntes le chemin de « Je m'en-fous », tu te retrouveras au village de « Si je savais ».	Qui sème le vent récolte la tempête.	Sow the wind and reap the whirlwind.
Beaucoup de viande ne gâte pas la sauce.	Abondance de biens ne nuit pas.	There's no harm in having too much.
Il n'y a pas le temps.	Le temps, c'est de l'argent.	Time is money.

Table 2.1. Proverbs in PF and their Meanings in SF

Other expressions are also displayed in table 2.2. below:

Expressions in PF	Meaning in SF	Translation in English
Chauffer le coeur ou le rognon de quelqu'un.	Exaspérer quelqu'un.	Infuriating someone.
Ton coeur n'est pas témoin.	Dire à une personne qu'elle n'est pas sincère.	You are not sincere.
Mettre du sable dans la nourriture de quelqu'un.	Nuire à ses intérêts.	To harm someone' interests.
Serrer sa figure.	Se mettre en colère.	To get angry.
Laisser affaire/Tuer discours.	Pardonner.	To forgive.
Attraper son coeur.	Rester fort.	To hold on.

Table 2.2. Expressions in PF and their Meanings in SF

Regarding the aforementioned examples, it is important to say that although French was an imposed language in IC, it became now the subject of extraordinary appropriation by Ivorian speakers, what testifies the improvement of the vocabulary of PF. It can be said that the French language, obviously, has melted in the shape of Ivorian society (Kouamé, 2014).

Additionally, at the political level during elections, candidates can no longer project themselves simply as detached intellectuals and secure their election behind the magical shield of their fluency in SF. Now, they also have to demonstrate competency in and use either their native languages or one of these two lingua francas (Dioula or PF) in order to communicate efficiently with the masses and reach a larger audience. Consequently, the pressure to conform to the norm is decreasing and the speakers of PF feel less embarrassed to use it. Like Dioula, PF is highly a dynamic lingua franca. Therefore, the expansion and the use of PF in all parts of the country, including the rural area gave birth to a new dialect called Nouchi.

2.4.1.2.   Nouchi and its Linguistics Characteristics

The dynamism and the pressure of Nouchi in the linguistic field of IC are so strong that the school community is conquered. Nouchi completes, for the students, communicative and identity functions that neither the French they learn all at school, nor the Ivorian languages of their linguistic repertoire can satisfy and which go well beyond the attributed functions to this language of the young (Aboa, 2012). In fact, Nouchi also called **« Français de la rue »** is a slang born in the early 1980s. It uses the syntax of Standard or PF and it is characterized at the lexical level by changes of meaning and borrowing from the Ivorian languages and some European and African languages (Kouamé, 2013).

Nouchi, originally the language of the underworld and street kids, quickly became the privileged variety of young people in IC who claim it as a means of affirming their creative spirit and their desire for freedom (Lafage, 2002). Criticized by

some purists of the language, this language presents itself as a cultural phenomenon that expands in several areas namely the scientific, political, economic, cultural, educational, and media areas (Kouamé, 2013). It is very probable that Nouchi represents for young people more than a funny language and more than the desire to differentiate themselves, in linguistic system, to the generation of parents (hence, the categorization of the variety as a language of the young people). Indeed, Ivorians use this variety to play creatively with the language and to skirt the imposition of French language. Yet, the reason behind the emergence of this slang was studied by many sociolinguists. Among them, Goudailler (2002) explains that young people feel excluded by the dominant culture. The access to the world of employment, dominated by the standard language, would be closed to them. Therefore, they react to this "social fracture" by a "linguistic fracture" (Goudailler, 2002: 11).

Through linguistic forms such as Nouchi, young people show their will to differentiate themselves from the generation of their parents, and as a result, they manifest their autonomy by rejecting SF which is the language considered as legitimate. From this view, the creation and the highly use of Nouchi by young people in IC is due to their negative attitude toward SF. Consequently, the growth of this dialect within the country, can easily affect the reputation of French.

Linguistic Characteristics of Nouchi:

Nouchi represents today in IC, especially for young people, a kind of alternative to the French taught at school. This form of expression appears as a lingua franca ensuring the communication between Ivorian speakers, regardless of their educational level. In this research, we tried to give an overview of some characteristics related to this phenomenon. In fact, the area, in which the Nouchi marks its originality and its richness, is certainly at the lexical level. This dialect uses various methods of word formation in order to improve its vocabulary. It also uses most of the process of creating new words, from borrowed words of different languages (Aboa 2017).

Here are some lexical creation processes and borrowings observed in Nouchi[3]:

Composition: it is a process of creating a new word by the association of two words.

> **Je l'ai maga- tapé** ; « Je l'ai tapé par surprise »

> - I suddenly hit him.

> **C'est mon bras-môgô** ; **«** C'est mon ami »

> - He is my friend.

Truncation: it is a very productive process in Nouchi that consists of abbreviating words.

> « Poitrine » becomes **'poi'**

> - Chest

> « Frère de sang » becomes **'frè-sang'** ; meilleur ami

> - Best friend

> « Trafiqué » becomes **'tra'**

> - Fake

Suffixation: this process consists of adding a suffix to a word in order to create a new word. The main suffixes used by Ivorians are described as follows:

From Dioula suffix (-li)

> **Li:** example **'daba'** « manger » + **li** gives **« dabali » (nourriture)**

> - To eat ; food

From the French suffix (-er)

> **Er:** for instance **'gbas'** « fétiche » + **er** gives **« gbasser » (envouter)**

> - Fetish ; to bewitch

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[3] Some of these examples listed above and below, are extracted from « *La francophonie vécue en Côte d'Ivoire* » (Sabine Kube 2005) and from « *Le nouchi, phénomène identitaire et posture générationnelle* » (Abia Aboa 2017)

Borrowings from Ivorian languages:

  Soutra (« aider » in Dioula): "To help"

  Blô (from Baoulé « exagérer »)**: "**To exaggerate"

  Môgô (meaning « homme » in Dioula): "Man"

  Mousso (« femme » in Dioula): "Woman"

  Yako (« désolé » in Bété) : "Sorry"

Borrowings from English:

  Flo à la casse *(***flo** from the word *flow)* « rentrer à la maison »: "Going home"

  Enjailler *(*from the word *enjoy)* « s'amuser»: "To enjoy"

  Être lucké (lucké from the word *luck*) « avoir la chance »: "To be lucky"

  Être shap (**shap** from the word *sharp*) « être rapide et éfficace »: "To be fast"

Created words:

  Kpata (beau, belle): "handsome, beautiful"

  Daba (manger): "to eat"

  Être tchass (être fauché): "To be broken"

  Tchapa (raconter, parler): "To talk, to speak"

  Béhou (partir, fuir): "To flee, to go"

  Djidji (original): "Original"

  Dèbè (tomber): "To fall"

  Gbè (vérité): "Truth"

In terms of syntax, Nouchi usually uses simple sentences. These sentences are structured as follows:

  J'ai dèbè ; « Je suis tombé »

  - "I fell down".

  Il a zié mon mousso ; « Il a regardé ma copine »

  - "He looked at my girlfriend".

Le maillot est djidji ; « Le maillot est original »

- "The jersey is original".

According to Lafage (2002), Nouchi does not function according to its own syntactic principles. The order of the sentence is usually "subject + verb + complement", like in French. However, in Nouchi, we find the following phenomena observed in other varieties of French in IC, particularly in PF.

- Omission of « ne » from the discontinuous morpheme of negation « ne…pas »

Example: « Faut pas chauffer mon cœur » (Il **ne** faut pas m'énerver)

- Do not make me angry.
- Omission of personal pronoun « il »

Example: « Faut béhou là-bas » (**Il** faut partir ; hors de ma vue)

- Just get away from here.
- The use of the adverb « mal » to describe something or someone with persistence

Example: « Elle est mal kpata » (Elle est **très** belle)

- She is pretty beautiful.
- The use of the adverb of place « -là » as a definite determinant.

In fact, this specific use is still now present in all the French varieties in IC. It is one of the characteristics through which Ivorian speakers are recognized by the other francophone communities.

Example: « Môgô-là est mal shap » (**Cet** homme est très rapide).

- This man is very fast.

Additionally, there is what we can call "contextual meaning" in Nouchi. It is one of the main principles that make this dialect very interesting among Ivorians. In this principle, a word can have two or three meanings depending on the context in which it is used. For instance, the word "**daba**" that basically means « manger », means also « frapper ». Again, the word "**dèbè**" which is principally « tomber » can also mean

« arriver »; e.g. « Je dèbè chez toi », (J'arrive chez toi). Thus, it depends on the context a word is used and besides, this principle seems to be a coded language for Ivorians. This is why most of the Ivorian speakers appreciate Nouchi rather than the SF.

Considered as a linguistic and social phenomenon in IC that initially served as a coded language for uneducated young people, streets' kids, and young thugs in the city of Abidjan, Nouchi became today a vehicular language of many young Ivorians.

2.4.1.3.   Sociolinguistic Context of French in IC

IC, like most African countries that have reached their independence in the 1960s, chose French as the official language without debate or even a state of mind. The reason is that during the conflict for independence 'the linguistic demand' has never been a major concern of the leaders. Kouadio (2008) gives the reasons that would have motivated this choice; the new Ivorian authorities assigned two missions to the French people: firstly, the partnership of national unity and secondly, the development of the country through the world. In addition, Kouamé (2012) argues that the Ivorian government has chosen French as official language because they intended to use it as foreign policy support and the development of the independent country itself.

When they got their independence on August 7th, 1960, the State of IC chose the French as the official language. This language should allow this young state to be recognized internationally and to start its own development. French will then spread in all areas of public life; language of administration, education and vehicle of written and audiovisual information. French also has the role of constructing unity of many Ivorian communities because no other language in this society among the entire ethnic groups does play this role.

2.4.2. Ethnic Groups in Ivory Coast

IC is recognized as a multilingual country because of its linguistic diversity. In fact, in IC, the ethnic groups can be subdivided into four major groups: first, the Kwa-

Akan group originating from Ghana is located in the mid-eastern region and the southeast of the country. It is the most populous ethnic group and many of its family members are found in Ghana (Ashanti, N'Fanti, N'Zima) and North Togo. Second, the Kru group coming from eastern Liberia is situated in the west and the southwest. Third, the Mandé group owns the name of current day Mali (Mandingue), and they settled in the northwest. The fourth one is the Gur group arising from the Niger-Congo language family and situated in the northeast of the country (Figure 2). According to Greenberg (1966), all four language groups belong to the Niger-Kordofanian family as it is displayed in figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2. Ivory Coast: Distribution of Ethnic Groups

Moreover, according to Lafage (1982), each major language group represents the entire population of IC; the Kwa-Akan with 43%, the Kru representing 16%, the Mande with 25%, and 16% of the total population for the Gur (Lafage 1982). Also, each major language group has a dominant language. In the Kwa-Akan group, Baoulé is the dominant language with a total of 300,000 native speakers. In the Kru group, Bété is the dominant language with a total of 250,000 speakers. In the Mandé group,

Dioula is the dominant language with over 6,000,000 native speakers. In the Gur group, Senoufo is the dominant language with 276,000 speakers. Other languages such as Yacouba (Mande group) with 118,300 speakers and Agni (Akan group) having 400,000 speakers are also important languages as well as the Gouro which is spoken in the western center of the country. These only six spoken dialects account for 58, 03% of the Ivorian population[4].

From the point of view of their respective functions, we can distinguish three types of languages in IC: the ethnic languages, the regionally dominant languages, and the lingua franca. The ethnic languages are those languages that are limited to interactions between members of the family or members of the same ethnic group in the rural areas or the urban centers. Then, the regionally dominant languages are dynamic languages that are often used as mediums of inter-ethnic communication. They are learned as second languages by many speakers of other less important languages. A number of these regionally dominant languages such as Baoulé, Bété, Dioula and Senoufo are actually used in the media (radio and television). Finally, the lingua franca is a language that displays a greater dynamism than the regionally dominant languages. They are used on a larger geographic and functional scale. There are two lingua francas in the IC: PF that has already been portrayed and Dioula which is known as the most spoken dialect in the country.

2.4.2.1.   Dioula

Historically, Dioula is a dialect of Mandingo, a linguistic group which covers many countries in West Africa, including Burkina Faso, IC, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Senegal and Sierra Leone (Calvet 1982). It is mutually intelligible with Bambara and Malinké, the other two varieties of Mandingo. Although it was neglected like all the other local languages during the colonial period, Dioula was nevertheless recognized by the colonial administration as a useful medium of communication with

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[4] "The approximate numbers and percentages are chosen from *Dialectes Français d'Afrique: Français local Ivorien* (Wikiversité 2018)

https://fr.wikiversity.org/wiki/Dialectes_fran%C3%A7ais_d%27Afrique/Fran%C3%A7ais_local_ivoirien

the natives and was made the intermediary language between French and the local languages. Mainly used in the north and the center of IC, this dialect has rapidly spread to the rest of the country with the development of the infrastructures and of commerce.

Today, Dioula is generally perceived as an easy language to learn. Indeed, it holds a privileged position because it is used in the commerce as a vehicle language between Ivorians. Although it is the mother tongue of only 17.7% of the population, it would be spoken by 6.000.000 native and non-native speakers who acknowledge its important role as a lingua franca, especially in the commercial exchanges[5]. From this view, Dioula is the best candidate to be the second national language of IC front of Baoulé and Bété.

2.4.2.2. Baoulé

Baoulé (Ba Ou li), also called Baulé or Bawule, is a central tano language spoken in Ivory Coast. The Baoulé are Akan people living for their vast majority in the center of the country, near the cities of Bouaké and Yamoussoukro (the politic capital). Legend goes that in the 17th century the Baoulé left present day Ghana and traveled west into present day Côte d'Ivoire under the lead of the Queen Pokou. They represent about 23% of the population of the country (5 520 000 people), which makes Baoulé speakers the most important numerically ethnic group of the country, ahead of Bété and Senoufo[6] (respectively second and third ethnic group).

2.4.2.3. Bété

This dialect called Bété is the most prominent of the Krou group in IC. Bété speakers are both the largest population in the Krou world of IC, and the one that occupies its space in the densest way. It is actually spoken by about 800 000 speakers

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[5] *Côte d'Ivoire* (2018);http://www.axl.cefan.ulaval./afrique/cotiv.htm

[6]Wikipedia (2017); https://wikivisually.com/wiki/Baoul%C3%A9_language

coming from the center-west of IC. They migrated to the area in the 17th century. The main cities of the zone are: Daloa, Gagnoa, Soubré, Issia, Ouragahio, and Guibéroua. Bété is one of the Ivorian languages taught in formal schools, literacy programs and widely used in everyday conversation[7].

2.5.   Religion and Languages in IC

There is no predominance religion in IC. More than 38% of Ivorians adhere to Islam. Then Christianity follows especially Catholicism representing 22% and Protestantism with 5.5%. The rest of the Ivorian population, especially in the countryside, remained faithful to their traditional or tribal religions (17%). Finally, 17% of Ivorians belong to other religions[8]. In fact, it is important to note that many links exist between religion and languages in IC. Thus, the status of the French language, although prevalent, is not established in the religious system of the country. That is why some religions use local languages, Christians use generally French and Ivorian languages equally, Muslims use rather Arabic and Dioula.

2.6.   Conclusion

To sum up, this chapter illuminated the sociolinguistic situation of IC by considering the historical background which played a crucial role in shaping the actual linguistic state of the country. Along, when discovering the sociolinguistic situation of IC, it is very important to take into consideration the reputation of French in the country and at the same time to acknowledge its diverse varieties mostly used by Ivorian like PF and Nouchi that defy the status of SF. Additionally, the Ivorian society is viewed as a melting-pot of several spoken dialects among which, the dominant one

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[7] Africulture (2004):
http://africultures.com/livres/?no=3496&utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=446

[8] Côte d'Ivoire (2018); http://www.axl.cefan.ulaval./afrique/cotiv.htm

(Dioula) could be considered as the second national language of the country. Thus, Ivorian speakers may be generally multilingual people.

3.1.   Introduction

The third chapter is concerned with strategies and methods used for leading a research in order to collect data first, then to analyze and to interpret them. It aims at elucidating the attitude of Ivorians towards French in a chosen area of the country. Thus, this chapter will give first a general overview about the chosen sample population of Port Bouet community which was organized in three main categories; the young age, the middle age, and the old age. Then it will also introduce the three research tools used in collecting data; observation, survey and interviews. After, the main obtained results will be analyzed and interpreted.

3.2.   Sample population

The term "population" represents a broad distinct group of people targeted for a particular research or study and "sample" represents the subsection of the distinct group that participate in the research or study (Brown, 1988). Thus, in the current study, Ivorian speakers from one of the 10 townships, located to the north of Abidjan (economic capital of Ivory Coast) called Port Bouet are the population of interest. In this research, a sample of 64 respondents was collected from three respective age groups. The "Young Age" group (from 17 to 21 years old) comprised of 11 males and 10 females, "Middle Age" group (from 22 to 32 years old) including 10 males and 11 females and the "Old Age" group (from 45 to 64 years old) composed of 12 males and 10 females as respondents. Every respondent of the three groups held an educational background.

3.3.   Research Tools

The research tool used is influenced by specific factors that the research attracts. According to Beiske (2002), the subject determines the instrument, but time and costs influence greatly the instrument that suits the distinct research problem. Thus, in our research, observation, surveys and interview were the instruments employed to collect data.

3.3.1. Observation

Observation is a very important research tool, because it helped us a lot in confirming the answers that were collected from the survey. In any sociolinguistic investigation, observation is the central figure in describing and analyzing the use of language in social context. In our investigation, before to formulate questions for the survey, observation was the first tool employed to look at Ivorians' attitude toward French and also what is challenging the status of French among IC speakers and how.

3.3.2. The Survey

The survey is a highly effective instrument of research, that holds a set of written questions and other items used to collect and to solicit appropriate information for the desired analysis. In the opinion of Seliger and Shohamy (1989: 172), the survey is defined as: "printed forms for data collection, which include questions or statements to which the subject is expected to respond, often anonymously". As the research topic is about the status of French among Ivorians, a survey of 16 questions written in French was respectively administered to 90 educated participants classified in three respective age categories; that is, 30 participants (15 males and 15 females) per category. However, only 64 surveys completely fulfilled were collected.

The survey was divided into two sections; the first aimed at gathering general information about the respondents; gender, age, and profession. The second section contained questions related to the research project concerning the status of French among Ivorians and also their attitudes towards French language, through the use of the three kinds of questions: close-ended questions, multiple-choice questions and open-ended questions in order to answer the research questions.

3.3.3. The Interview

The interview is a verbal conversation between two people; the researcher and the informants with the objective of collecting pertinent information for the purpose of research. Also, interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind a

participant's experiences. The interviewer can actually get thorough information around the topic. Thus, in this study, a structured interview in French was used including 1 close-ended questions and 5 open-ended questions to figure out first, the reputation of the French language among Ivorians, second to evaluate the attitude of Ivorians towards French, and lastly to know their critical views about multilingualism in Ivory Coast. It has only been administered to seniors (4 males and 4 females) from 60 years old to more.

3.4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

In this part, we will analyze and interpret the obtained data.

3.4.1. Survey Analysis and Interpretation

The Surveys used in the current research were divided into two sections.

Section one: The first part aimed to gather general information about the respondents; their gender, age, profession, and also to know the number of fulfilled surveys.

3.4.1.1. Ivorian Speakers' Survey

Participants were randomly selected among a population of Port Bouet. They all have different social status (students, workers, employees, traders, and retired), different ages, different dialects, and of course they are from different genders. They were 90 in all, participated to answer the questions. In fact, the questionnaire itself was organized into 3 categories (see sample population, page 38).

The respondents of the questionnaire were put into categories following their gender, ages, and the survey' numbers given to them as can be seen in the tables below:

Table 3.1. Participants' Gender

1st Category		2nd Category		3rd Category		Total
Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	
15	15	15	15	15	15	**90**

Table 3.2. Participants' Ages

1st Category (Young Age)		2nd Category (Middle Age)		3rd Category (Old Age)		Total
Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	
From 17 to 21 years old		From 22 to 32 years old		From 45 to 67 years old		**90**
30		30		30		

Table 3.3. Participants' Occupation

	1st Category		2nd Category		3rd Category	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Students	14	15	10	07	00	00
Workers	00	00	04	04	08	08
Employees	01	00	01	03	02	02
Traders	00	00	00	01	01	03
Retired	00	00	00	00	04	02
Total	**15**	**15**	**15**	**15**	**15**	**15**

Table 3.4. Respondents' Survey

	1st Category		2nd Category		3rd Category		Total
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	
Given Surveys	15	15	15	15	15	15	90
Fulfilled Surveys	11	10	10	11	12	10	**64**
Unfulfilled Surveys	04	05	05	04	03	05	26

The participants were required to specify their gender, their ages, and their professions as the opening of the survey. This study is not intended to compare anything gender, age differences, or social status, therefore any influence from these variables was not taken into consideration and was minimized. Considering the 3 categories, the respondents were comprised of 45 females and 45 males (Table 3.1.). They ranged from 17 to 67 years old; from the first category to the third category.

Again, in the first category, both males and females, most of the respondents were students. In the second category, most of the participants were not only students, but also workers. The respondents of the third category were mostly workers, employees and retired as represented in Table 3.4. Also, they were supposed to fulfill all the questionnaires that were respectively given to them but, out of 90 given questionnaires in all, only 64 were fulfilled and 26 were not.

Section Two:

The second part is composed of 16 questions and concerned with only the 64 fulfilled questionnaires out of 90 given (see Table 3.4.):

Question 1: Quelle est votre langue maternelle?

The first question aimed at exploring the plurality of dialects in which belong the participants. The next table revealed the result obtained:

	1st Category	2nd Category	3rd Category
Males	3 Agni; 1 Bété 1 N'zima; 1 Appolo 2 Baoulé; 1 Abouré 1 Yorouba; 1 Malinké;	2 Agni; 2 Bété ; 2 Baoulé ; 1 Peulh ; 2 Malinké ; 1 Appolo ;	3 Agni ; 2 Attié ; 2 Bété ; 1 Abbey 1 Abouré ; 1 Dioula 1 Appolo ; 1 Baoulé ;
Females	3 Bété; 1 Attié; 2 Baoulé; 1 Abbey; 1 Malinké; 1 Senoufo; 1 Djimini ;	1 Agni ; 1 Dioula; 2 Guérré; 3 Abouré 2 Alladjan; 1 Avikam; 1 Adjoukrou;	3 Baoulé ; 1 Bété ; 1 Dioula ; 1 Abbey 1 Senoufo ; 1 Adjoukrou ; 1 Bambara ; 1 Koulango

Table 3.5. Respondents' Mother Tongue

In the table above, from the first to the third category, most of the participants both males and females belong to different spoken dialects. This fact shows the multitude of existing and spoken varieties in Ivorian Community.

Question 2: Aimez-vous vraiment la langue française ?

The results obtained were summarized in the following table in percentage:

	1st Category		2nd Category		3rd Category	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
YES	72,72%	90%	80%	81,81%	100%	80%
NO	27,27%	10%	20%	18,18%	00%	20%

Table 3.6. Participants' Admiration towards French

This question was asked: first, to know whether participants admire the official language of the country; and second to know their attitudes towards French language. As can be seen in the first category, female respondents have lot of admiration for French language more than the male respondents; which consequently proves the fact

that girls of the young age (from 17 to 21 years old) express themselves well in French more than boys in Ivorian society. They score 90% for their admiration toward French against 72, 72% of males admiration for the same language.

In the second category, the high degree of percentage 81, 81% indicates the females' admiration overlooked French against 80% for males' appreciation. This shows how most of the respondents of the middle age (from 22 to 32 years old), both males and females have positive attitude toward French language. Concerning the third category (from 45 to 67 years old), the table shows also a positive attitude of both male and female participants. However, mostly male participants have a high score of 100% for their admiration to the French language, while females score 80%.

Question 3: Comment jugez-vous votre niveau en français?

	1st Category		2nd Category		3rd Category	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
EXCELLENT	01	00	00	01	01	01
	01		**01**		**02**	
BON	05	03	04	09	05	04
	08		**13**		**09**	
MOYEN	04	07	06	01	06	04
	11		**07**		**10**	
MAUVAIS	01	00	00	00	00	01
	01		**00**		**01**	

Table 3.7. Informants' Level in French

Regarding the results obtained in the table above, and starting with the first category, the language grade "Excellent" and "Mauvais" represent each one of them 4, 76% on all informants of the young age. It appears as the lowest rate of this category. The level "Bon" affects 38, 09% of respondents with 5 males and 3 females. Then, the level "Moyen" is considered as the most important register of this category having a rate of 52, 38% including 4 males and 7 females. Analyzing the next category, the grade "Excellent" also represent 4, 76% on all participants of the middle age; which is

seen as the lowest rate of this category. The level of language "Moyen" is concerned with 33, 33% of respondents with 6 males and 1 female. The most important level of this category is the language register "Bon" which represents 61, 90% including 4 males and 9 females on the set of respondents. About the last category, the language' level "Mauvais" representing 4, 54% of the set, appears as the lowest rate of the old age. The next level is "Excellent" which includes 2 participants; 1 male and 1 female with a rate of 9, 09%. The two higher language registers of this category are: first, "Bon" including 5 males and 4 females with a rate of 40, 90%, and second the level "Moyen" which represents 45, 45% of the set with 6 males and 4 females.

Regarding this analysis above, it is important to deduce that the level of French language of informants from the first and the third category is "Average" while the respondents of the middle age are concerned with the language register "Good".

Question 4: Préférez-vous votre langue maternelle au français ?

	1st Category		2nd Category		3rd Category	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
YES	45,45%	60%	70%	18,18%	50%	60%
NO	54,54%	40%	30%	81,81%	50%	40%

Table 3.8. Mother Tongue' Preference rather than French

This question sought to check whether participants prefer their mother tongue rather than French language. In every category, views were divided between the two genders. Preferring their mother tongue rather than French, females in first category score 60% against 45, 45% of males while males' preference for French is represented by 54, 54% against 40% of female informants. However, in the second category, male respondents have a high preference for their mother tongue more than females with 70% against 18, 18%. Similarly, female respondents score highly 81, 81% against 30% of males for their preference to French. Lastly, in the old age category, views of male participants are equals to the extent that there are 50% of both sides while females

have 60% of them who prefer their mother and the remaining 40% for those who have a preference for French rather than their mother tongue.

Question 5: Acceptez-vous le français comme étant la langue officielle du pays?

	1st Category		2nd Category		3rd Category	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
YES	63,63%	70%	80%	90,90%	75%	70%
NO	36,36%	30%	20%	9,09%	25%	30%

Table 3.9. Acceptance of French as Official Language

This question aimed at showing whether the participants acknowledge the status of French in the country or not. As result, all of them males and females in each category have a high score in accepting French as the official language. The higher score among these categories comes from the middle age with a rate of 90, 90% for females and 80% for male informants.

Question 6: Pensez-vous que la langue française engendrerait certains problèmes dans la société ivoirienne? Si oui, lesquels?

This question aims at gathering quantitative (No) and qualitative (Yes) data about the status of French in a specific field. The results are presented in the following table and the qualitative analysis below the table.

	1st Category		2nd Category		3rd Category	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
YES	18,18%	60%	40%	00%	25%	20%
NO	81,81%	40%	60%	100%	75%	80%

Table 3.10. French as a Source of Issue in Society

The result shows that the majority of the respondents both males and females from the first to the third category do not think that French language could generate some problems in Ivorian society. The rates are 100% for females against 60% for males in the second category, 80% for females against 75% for males in the third category and 81, 81% for males against 40% for females in the first category. However, there are some participants in each category who think that French is a source of some issues in this society. First of all, in the young age category, the answer "Yes" represents 60% of female respondents with 6 girls out of 10 and at the same 18, 18% of males with 2 informants out of 11. Therefore, they (8) state different reasons, which are summarized in the following points:

- French creates misunderstanding.
- Mother tongues are rejected.
- Difficulty in speaking during job interview.
- Parents use it and transmit it to their children.
- People do not care about their mother tongues.
- French prevents us to understand other languages like English.
- French is not important in the business field.

Moreover, in the second category, only males score 40% with 4 respondents out of 10. Their reasons are mentioned below:
- French is an imposed language making the mother tongues disappear.
- Mother tongues are neglected.
- French generates incomprehension.
- French creates incomprehension and customs are neglected.

At final, in the last category, 3 men out of 12 say "Yes" with a rate of 25% and 2 women out 10 with a score of 20%. Their reasons are summarized as follow:
- Everybody does not understand French.
- French gives rise to a division between social classes.

- French produces illiteracy.

- French promotes the French immigration in Côte d'Ivoire.

- French is not appreciated by everyone.

To conclude, the result obtained shows that even if some informants think that French causes some affairs, the majority of them think it does not.

Question 7: Croyez-vous que la Côte d'Ivoire aurait pu choisir une autre langue plutôt que le français à l'époque colonial ? Si oui, laquelle?

This question is concerned also with quantitative (No) and qualitative (Yes) data about the Informants' choice of another language at the colonial era. The results obtained were summarized in the table 3.11 and under the table:

	1st Category		2nd Category		3rd Category	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
YES	54,54%	70%	50%	45,45%	75%	40%
NO	45,45%	30%	50%	54,54%	25%	60%

Table 3.11. Choice of another Language at the Colonial Era.

The preceded question was asked to know whether participants would have chosen another language rather than French during the colonization. The table 3.11 shows that the majority of the participants of the young age category said "Yes" with a high score of 70% of female and 54, 54% of male informants. In the second category, the highest score is about the answer "No" with a rate of 54, 54% for females and 50% for male informants. But, although the answer "Yes" appears as the lowest rate of this category with 50% of males and 45, 45% of female informants, it should be taken in consideration. Then, in the last category, the highest score responding "Yes" comes from males with a rate of 75% while only 40% of female participants share the same view.

To that end, from the first to the third group, the participants, both males and females specify different languages that could have been that language adopted by Ivory Coast speakers rather than French at the colonial era. These languages are summarized in the following:

- Portuguese

- English

- Kroumen (which is one of the spoken dialect in the country).

- Belgian

- Baoulé (one of the spoken dialect in the country).

- Latin

- Spanish

Question 8: Le fait que la Côte d'Ivoire soit une nation multilingue (*plus de deux langues parlées*) représente-il un problème pour le pays ?

The question aimed at gathering concise information about multilingualism in the country; whether it characterizes a dilemma for the country itself or not. The results were summarized in table 3.12 as follow:

	1st Category		2nd Category		3rd Category	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
YES	63,63%	30%	50%	18,18%	41,66%	30%
NO	36,36%	70%	50%	81,81%	58,33%	70%

Table 3.12. Multilingualism as a Problem in Ivory Coast.

According to the result obtained, it is only in the first category that the majority of respondents who claims "Yes" are males with a rate of 63, 63% against 30% of females. At the same time, the majority of female participants state "No" with a high score of 70% against 36, 36% of male respondents. In spite of that, in the second and third category, the majority of both male and female informants do not believe that multilingualism represents a problem in the country. Thus, they all get a high rate of 50%, 81, 81% (second category), 58, 33% and 70% (third category).

Question 9: Quel comportement la plupart des ivoiriens manifestent à l'égard du français ?

This question aimed at collecting qualitative data about Ivorian's attitudes towards French. The main answers given by the respondents (males and females) of all the categories were summarized below:

- Vulgarity
- Rejection, because they find French very difficult to speak.
- Carelessness
- They are good in misrepresenting French.
- They disapprove French.
- Linguistic complex
- Contempt, because they feel always slaves.
- Indifference
- They consider French as a necessary evil.
- They feel obliged to use French.
- Appreciation
- Respect
- Devotion
- Positive attitude

- They adopted French.

- They are comfortable with French.

- They are grateful.

- They feel proud to speak French.

All the 64 respondents answer this question in a rather objective way as can be seen in the points above. Some of them develop a positive attitude toward French. Those who expressed their negative attitude are the majority among the sample population. This shows how much French is seen by Ivorian speakers.

Question 10: Pensez-vous qu'il existe une catégorie de personnes se sentant obligées de parler le français?

	1st Category		2nd Category		3rd Category	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
YES	72,72%	80%	90%	63,63%	75%	80%
NO	27,27%	20%	10%	36,36%	25%	20%

Table 3.13. French as an Influential Language for Certain People

According to the result obtained, all informants both males and females from each category are unanimous about the fact that many Ivorians feel obliged to speak French. 80% is the higher rate of the young age category representing females and 72, 72% to represent males. Then in the middle age category, males score 90% while females score 63, 63%. Finally, 80% is the rate of female informants in the old age category followed by a rate of 75% representing males. From this, it is crucial to understand where the negative attitude of Ivory Coast speakers comes from.

Question 11: A votre avis, les personnes illettrées se soucient-elles du français? Si non, pourquoi?

The aim of this question was to grasp quantitative (Yes) and qualitative (No) information about the attitude of illiterate people in Ivory Coast community toward French. The next table and the analysis below revealed the result obtained:

	1st Category		2nd Category		3rd Category	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
YES	27,27%	50%	50%	63,63%	58,33%	30%
NO	72,72%	50%	50%	36,36%	41,66%	70%

Table 3.14. Illiterate People Caring about French

As the results show, on one side, the lowest rate (27, 27%) of the first group represents males defending the fact that illiterate people care about French. On the other side, females score 50%. In addition, the majority of participants of the second group both males and females support the fact uneducated people care about French with a score 50% (males) and 63, 63% (females). Also, this view was shared by males (58, 33) and females (30%) in the last group.

Despite that, many participants from every group with a high rate (Table 3.14.) think that illiterate people have negative attitude toward French. Their different justifications are summarized as follow:

- They are not interested.
- They find French very complicated.
- They prefer to privilege their mother tongue.
- They refuse to speak the language of the settler.
- French has not been taught to them.
- French is not important for them.
- They are not aware of the value of French.

- They do not understand French.

At final, most of the respondents from young age to old age category with a score of 53, 12% including 34 participants out of 64 (males and females) assume that illiterate people do not care about French in Ivory Coast hence, their negative attitude toward this language.

Question 12: Le gouvernement devrait-il inclure quelques langues locales (*ethnies*) dans le système éducatif ivoirien?

	1st Category		2nd Category		3rd Category	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
YES	90,90%	60%	60%	63,63%	66,66%	60%
NO	9,09%	40%	40%	36,36%	33,33%	40%

Table 3.15. Local Languages in the Educational System

In this question, informants were asked to give their position about the idea of including some Ivorian dialects in the educational system. And the majority of them (males and females) state that the government should incorporate local languages in Ivorian education system. Starting with the first category, the highest rate of 90, 90% represents males and 60% of females. Then, within the second category, the scores 60% (males) and 63, 63% (females) indicates the dominant position of respondents. The high degree of percentage 66, 66% (males) and 60% (females) reveals the positive view of participants in the third category.

Question 13: Existe-il certaines langues nationales qui seraient dominées ou inférieures? Si oui, citez-les.

The following question was designed to know if there are certain dialects among all the local languages of the country which are dominated by others. And then, we asked

respondents to mention whether they answer "Yes". The table 3.13 indicates the obtained outcomes:

	1st Category		2nd Category		3rd Category	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
YES (Specify these national languages)	45,45%	30%	50%	54,54%	41,66%	70%
	Agni; Nouchi; Kuya.	Sénoufo; Gagou;	Kroumen ; Dida ; Alladjan ; Avikam.	Godié ; Malinké ;	Neo; Krou; Koulango; Guérré.	Abron; Abbey;
NO	54,54%	70%	50%	45,45%	58,33%	30%

Table 3.16. Local Languages Dominated

The table shows the highest scores of both male (54, 54%) and females respondents (70%) in the first category answering "No". Regarding the second category, the percentages 50% (males) and 54, 54% (females) indicates that some local languages are definitively inferiors. Again, views were divided in the last category; while the majority of females answer "Yes" with a score of 70%, 58, 33% of male informants answer "No".

Focusing on all respondents (64; see table 3.1.3.), it is important to clarify that the majority of them (33 out of 64) with a rate of 51, 56% defend that it does not exist local languages that would be dominated or inferiors in Ivorian society. Yet, many of them (31 out of 64) from all categories with a rate of 48, 43% state "Yes" by justifying their answer.

Question 14: Y-a-t-il une autre langue ou dialecte qui peut être parlé(e) et compris(e) (*lingua franca ou langue vernaculaire*) mieux que le français par tous les habitants du pays ?

Question 14 aimed at checking whether it exists only one dialect well understood better than French among the 78 spoken varieties which can serve as vernacular

language. Four of these dialects mostly known were suggested to the respondents in order to help them answering. The table 3.14 indicates the obtained results:

	1st Category		2nd Category		3rd Category	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
DIOULA	05	01	03	03	04	06
	28,57%		**28,57%**		**45,45%**	
BAOULE	00	00	01	00	01	02
	00%		**4,76%**		**13,63%**	
BETE	00	00	02	00	00	01
	00%		**9,52%**		**4,54%**	
NOUCHI	03	08	04	06	06	01
	52,38%		**47,61%**		**31,81%**	
AUTRES	03	01	00	02	01	00
	19,04%		**9,52%**		**4,54%**	

Table 3.17. Another Dialect as Lingua Franca

It was necessary to ask this kind of questions to the participants in order to perceive according to them what spoken dialect that would deserve to assume the same status French does. From the obtained results, we notice that in young age category, "Nouchi" appears as the highest rate with 52, 38% of respondents (males and females). It is followed by a rate of 28, 57% to represent "Dioula" and the rest is concerned with "Others" (19, 04%) whose the answers of respondents should be summarized. Additionally, the majority of participants (males and females) of the middle age defend also that "Nouchi" (47, 61%) can assume the status of lingua franca in Ivory Coast. At the side of "Nouchi", many participants (males and females) of this category see "Dioula" as this dialect capable to replace French with a rate of 28, 57%. On the other hand, in the old age category, "Dioula" is seen as that language by the majority of respondents (males and females) with a score of 45, 45%, followed by "Nouchi" which represents 31, 81% of informants.

However, the participants were asked to specify which language they propose if this one is not part of those named. All the results of the three categories were summarized as follows:

- Abouré
- Agni

- Gouro

- Anglais

- Akrouba

In view of the above, from the first to the third category, respondents identified many local languages such as Dioula, Baoulé, Bété, Nouchi, and of course other dialects. But it is very important to acknowledge that one of them called "le Nouchi" which is found in the category of Ivorian languages confirms its position of 'leading language' to be also a lingua franca after French language.

Question 15: A quelle difficulté une nation multilingue comme la Côte d'Ivoire devrait être confrontée ?

Knowing that a multilingual nation is still facing some social issues, this question aimed at specifying the highest difficulty Ivorian society could tackle. Three suggestions were given to help respondents answering. The obtained results were summarized in the table below:

	1st Category		2nd Category		3rd Category	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Linguistic Influence	02	01	01	02	03	02
	14,28%		14,28%		22,72%	
Communication' Barriers	06	05	05	08	06	07
	52,38%		61,90%		59,09%	
Linguistic Complex	02	04	04	01	03	01
	28,57%		23,80%		18,18%	
Others	01	00	00	00	00	00
	4,76%		00%		00%	

Table 3.18. Kind of Problems in a Multilingual Nation

According to the participant's answers in all the groupings, Ivory Coast could confront to several concerns such as: linguistic influence, linguistics complex, and others which has been specified in the first grouping as "division". Then, the most high concern with a percentage of 52, 38% (first category), 61, 90% (second category), and 59, 09%

(third category) is the communication barriers. For respondents, multilingualism can be an obstacle to a social coherence in Ivorian society.

Question 16: Pouvez-vous nous donner une seule raison pour laquelle les ivoiriens ont leur propre français à eux (le français ivoirien)?

This central aim behind asking the last question is to know only one reason behind Ivorian's misrepresentation of SF or 'langue de Molière' which gave birth to a new variety named 'French of Ivorians'. According to Lafage (1979), this variety is called "Popular French". Consequently, the main reasons given by the informants (males and females) from the three classes were summarized in the following:

- To facilitate communication and comprehension between them.
- They feel comfortable.
- Lack of education.
- They misunderstand French.
- They find Standard French very complicated.
- They should reveal their own identity, not following everything from France.
- They neglect French.
- Ivorians are creative people.
- The existence of many dialects makes them find a common and easy way of communication.
- Ivorian people like to express themselves freely without imposed rules.
- They feel admixed to speak SF.

At final, all the respondents both males and females from all the categories answer this question; meaning that Ivorians are all aware of this misrepresentation of French language. Again, from young age to old age class, the majority of participants raised the point in which the reason behind this Ivorian's attitude is to facilitate

communication and understanding between them. That is why Hattiger (1983) attested that, it is a nonesuch phenomenon among all the French countries in Africa.

3.4.2. Seniors' Interview

In the same period of time, we conducted structured interviews with 8 seniors both old men (4) and women (4) from the same township. These participants were interviewed formally at home, in private space, and in public place. At this stage, the interview was given in French language in which the interviewees feel most comfortable. The seniors' interview was hold to obtain oral information about the status of French language among Ivorians, with a special focus on multilingualism in the country, as well as their attitudes toward French. In those cases, questions were specific to draw out responses from each perspective.

3.4.2.1. Admiration towards French

The first question is asking seniors to say whether they admire French or not. As result, we noted that most of the interviewees appreciate French language. One of them, a Senior Woman (SW1) smiling, answered**: « Oui, elle me fascine».** This shows their positive attitude most of them have toward French. However, 2 participants out of 8 answered "No" without telling us why. It was SW2 and SW4. A while, during the interview, we finally knew why they did not admire French.

3.4.2.2. Level in French

The second question aimed at judging the French level of the seniors. In fact, as seniors, we know that they have lot of experiences in society; they are supposed to know the status of French and its importance in Ivorian society. Therefore, many of the respondents judge their level "good" in French while some of them think it is "average. However, two of the interviewees answered that their level in French is not very good. This was the answers of SW2 and SW4 who answered "No" in the first question; one of the reasons that proves their negative attitude toward French.

3.4.2.3.   Choice between Mother Tongue and French

As far as the use of French is concerned with important fields in Ivorian society, this question was asked to see whether participants prefer French language rather than their mother tongues. But, it was surprising to all their answers to this question; they all prefer their mother tongue rather than French. Meaning, even the same who admire French, who have good level, prefer to choose their own dialect. In addition to that, SW1 who answered to the first question that French is fascinating says: « **C'est vrai que j'adore la langue française et que j'ai un très bon niveau, mais je choisirais bien ma langue maternelle[9]».**

This fact proves how much the old class shows the respect to their culture even if they like French language.

3.4.2.4.   Multilingualism as a Socio-Political Danger

Most of the time around the world, we observe that many multilingual countries face some problems in their society due to the diversity of languages. So, knowing IC is considered as one of these countries with 78 spoken dialects, we attempted through this interview to know if Ivorian community is concerned with this reality. As result, most of the participants support the fact that multilingualism is not really a danger for the country.

One of them (SW1) pertinently claims: **« Personnellement, je ne crois pas que le fait que la CI soit une nation multilingue représenterait un danger pour le pays, au contraire c'est une richesse et une beauté pour ce pays[10] ».**

Another one (SW4) was honest with us by answering**: « Franchement dit, je ne sais pas».**

---

[9] "It is true that I am fascinated by French in which I have a good level as well, but I would choose my mother tongue**".**

[10] "Personally, I do not believe that being a multilingual nation like IC would represent a danger for the country, but it is a wealth and a beauty as well for the country**".**

However, according to two interviewees, although multilingualism is such a blessing for IC, it is also a danger for the society. Among them, SW1 replies:

> **Etre une nation multilingue c'est peut-être beau, mais c'est aussi un danger socio-politique pour le pays dans la mesure où cela engendrerait des conflits ethniques, la division au sein du gouvernement et bien sûr certains peuples se sentiront isolés[11].**

3.4.2.5. Local Language as Lingua Franca

Via this question, seniors are asked to give their views about the existence of a local dialect which is able to play the role of a vernacular language in IC. On this point, views greatly differ. The majority of interviewees take the positive view by thinking that it resides some local languages that can replace French as a 'lingua franca', while few of them do not think so.

For the optimistic view, all of the respondents suggested "Dioula" which is the most spoken dialect in Ivorian society. It is usually used for trade and serves as a lingua franca especially in this field. In this respect, SM1 clearly argues:

> **Comme langue locale, je dirais le Dioula parce que de toutes les 78 ethnies parlées en CI, le Dioula est celle qui a le plus d'interlocuteurs. De plus, environ 70% du commerce en CI est détenu par les dioula ; ce qui oblige même les interlocuteurs d'une autre ethnie à comprendre et parler le Dioula[12].**

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[11] **"**Being a multilingual nation can be something good, however it is also a socio-political danger because it can generate ethnic conflicts, again division within the government and of course certain people will be isolated**".**

[12] **"**As local language, I would say Dioula because from all the 78 spoken dialect in IC, it remains the one with the most speakers. Moreover, about 70% of trade in IC is concerned with Dioula speakers; making even speakers of another dialect to understand and to speak Dioula**".**

Only SM3 among them presented another local variety called "Malinké" which also belongs to the 'Mande group' as Dioula does. On the other hand, a respondent clearly stated: **« Sans vous mentir, je ne sais pas»** (SW1).

For the negative view, SW2 replied:

> **Je ne pense pas qu'il existe une de nos langues**
> **capable d'assumer ce statut de langue vernaculaire.**
> **La raison est simple ; tous les ivoiriens préfèrent**
> **leur langue maternelle et aime affirmer leur origine,**
> **dès lors il serait quasiment impossible d'adopter**
> **l'ethnie d'autrui et l'utiliser quotidiennement[13].**

Comparing to the views of young people in the questionnaire, no senior during the interview suggested "Nouchi" as being able to replace French. This shows how much seniors do not care about Nouchi.

3.4.2.6.   French of Ivorians (Popular French)

The last question aimed at grasping critical thinking about the French of Ivorians commonly called Popular Ivorian French; that makes this society distinct from the other francophone nations. Actually, this was the interesting part of the interview. Almost all the respondents have a negative attitude toward this variety of French. Part of them, SW1 says: **« Ce français abrutit notre jeunesse dans le sens où celle-ci est en parfaite harmonie avec de vulgaires mots qui heurtent la société[14] ».**

In this same way of thinking, SW2 said: **«Ce français est difficile à comprendre sauf pour les jeunes gens[15]».** Also, SM2 answered by saying: **«Ce n'est pas éducatif pour la CI et pour la génération future[16] ».** To conclude, another senior responded:

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[13] **"**I do not think it exist one of our languages capable to assume the status of vernacular language. The reason is simple; all Ivorians prefer their mother tongue and they like also to assert their origin, so it would be almost impossible to adopt another dialect in order to use it everyday**".**

[14] **"**This French ridicules the Ivorian youth because it is related with vulgar words that affect negatively the society**".**

[15] "This French is very difficult to understand; only young people do**".**

[16] **"**It is not educational for the Ivorian society and for the future generation**".**

« **Je pense que ce n'est pas une bonne chose car elle donne une mauvaise image de l'éducation à nos enfants[17]** » (SM3).

However, only two interviewees are not against the PF in IC. One of them states: « **Je crois que c'est un phénomène qui doit être étudié par les sociolinguistes[18]** » (SW3).

3.5. Final Interpretation of the Main Results

After these detailed sections of data analysis, one must come to the stage of interpreting the findings in correspondence with the researcher's raised questions about the status of the French language in IC and checking whether the suggested hypotheses are confirmed or infirmed. It is worth repeating that the researcher has set three main questions to investigate the sociolinguistic situation in this country, and hence, three hypotheses were formulated.

Historically speaking, IC is known as a French colony in Africa; that is to say, the French language is the official language and holds a prominent status in the country. Moreover, though its status is acknowledged in the whole country, it differs among Ivorian speakers due to the negative attitudes they display towards its use. Thus, to explain this phenomenon, the three main research questions were formulated in this dissertation, and three hypotheses were also suggested.

Regarding the first hypothesis which claims that French is imposed to the Ivorian speakers because of the French occupation, the survey and the interview revealed that all the participants, starting from the first young category to the third old category, are aware that despite their preference for their mother tongues, French has been imposed to them. Many of them feel obliged to speak French because of its status in the country. As an answer to the 7th question of the survey, the percentage of choosing another language rather than French was high in the three categories. In addition, it has

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[17] **"**I think it is not a good thing because it shows a bad image of education to our children**".**

[18] **"**I believe it is a phenomenon that deserves to be studied by sociolinguists**".**

been shown that even among those who admire French in IC, some of them do not have the choice. Furthermore, this explains the attitude of carelessness manifested by most of Ivorian speakers towards the French language. Hence, the first hypothesis is confirmed.

Then, concerning the second hypothesis which the researcher has raised and which states that French maintains its status and serves as a lingua franca. This is one of the reasons why this language may never lose prestige in IC and among Ivorian speakers. In fact, the sociolinguistic context of French in IC is to make the country open to the world by using an international language. In this respect, using French seems like gaining prestige for many Ivorian speakers. For them, it is not a need; hence, linguistic insecurity is attested. These reasons prove the second hypothesis.

As a hypothesis to the third question in this dissertation, the researcher suggests that most of Ivorian speakers may exhibit negative attitudes towards the use of French due to the bond to their mother tongue. For the researcher, multilingualism in the country plays an important role in this negative attitude of people. Actually, the results obtained truly show that the main answers given by the respondents (males and females) of all the categories reject French, find it very difficult to speak, showing carelessness, indifference, contempt and some of them even consider this language as a necessary evil….etc. Added to these views, all informants, both males and females from each category, are unanimous about the fact that many Ivorians feel obliged to speak French. The survey and the interview revealed that all Ivorian speakers are proud of their origin. It means, they are attached to their mother tongue more than French. Also, they are wishing that the prominent dialect called Dioula gains more prestige to the extent of becoming first national language of the country beside French. In other hand, the language conflict that started in the colonial period between French and the local languages still exists. Many uneducated people do not feel at ease when they try to speak French. This is what Labov (1976: 183) calls "Linguistic insecurity". All in all, this is undoubtedly the justification for the negative attitudes of most Ivorian speakers towards French.

The results of this research work clearly portray the current sociolinguistic situation of IC. Many sociolinguists and scholars studied the special case of IC among all the French countries in Africa in order to understand and explain more the phenomenon. Among them, we can cite Aboa (2012), Lafage (1982, 2002), Djité (1989), Hattinger (1983), etc... They all investigated the importance of French in IC and how French is misrepresented by some varieties that originated from it, such as PF and Nouchi in IC. Otherwise, instead of gaining more prestige among Ivorian speakers, French contributes to creating new varieties that challenge itself.

3.6. Conclusion

This chapter was devoted to the practical part of the research work. It mentioned the case submitted to the study that represents Ivorian speakers from Port Bouet community, and then presenting the research tools used in collecting data; that is a survey and an interview. The last part dealt with analyzing and interpreting the obtained outcomes. At final, the results proved that although all Ivorian speakers are aware of the status of French as a very important way of communication and an established language in IC, most of them including especially the first and second category, demonstrated an attitude toward French; what completely affects the status of French among them. However regarding the interview, seniors showed a great interest for the French language. With regard to the Ivorians' attitude in general, it is necessary to notice that it is due to the many other spoken varieties present in IC among which we can cite Dioula and Nouchi.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Known as a French colony, Ivory Coast has always been in contact with other civilizations and opened to other countries around the world. In addition, its sociolinguistics situation has attracted many sociolinguists' interest due to its linguistic repertoire and mostly because of the attitude of Ivorians toward French. This fact prompted the researcher to ask the following question: What is the status of French in IC and among IC speakers? Then, we hypothesized that: As French has been imposed to the Ivorian society since the colonial period; it becomes the most prestigious and the official language of the country serving as a vernacular language among several other local languages that existed before its establishment. That is why many Ivorian speakers show their negative attitude towards the French language.

The present research work is divided into three chapters. The first chapter was dedicated to the theoretical part concerning a general definition of some sociolinguistic phenomena related to the Ivorian society. The second chapter dealt with the sociolinguistic landscape of Ivory Coast by describing its linguistic repertoire. Then, the third one was devoted to the practical part; it was concerned with the methodology, analyzing and interpreting data.

To tackle effectively the research problem, two research instruments were used: a survey and an interview that have been led by an observation. It is important to mention that the surveys were addressed to a sample population of a chosen township of Abidjan named Port Bouet in which the participants were divided in three categories. As for the interview, it was only administered to seniors. The outcomes were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. Therefore the results revealed that all the three categories of Ivorian speakers are aware of the prestigious status of French in the country. However, its status among Ivorian speakers differs for different reasons: many of them prefer their mother tongue rather than French. Some do not like French because it has been imposed to them, and others think that one of the spoken varieties could serve as lingua franca in the country. These reasons illustrate the main attitude

Ivorians manifest toward French; this attitude (carelessness) caused the misrepresentation of the French language that also gave birth to some variety known as PF and Nouchi mainly used by the young and middle age category. Thus, the collected data confirmed our hypotheses.

Regarding these results above, we might say that although French is the official language of IC and maintains its prestigious status in the country as well, its status among Ivorian speakers changes depending on their attitudes; otherwise the status of French is challenged by some other spoken varieties. Hoping to pave the way to further studies on this topic, it is important to state that the social change, linguistic policies, and didactic perspectives in IC should be the keys to face this particular sociolinguistic situation.

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Appendix 1 A

<div align="center">

Enquête pour Participants Lettrés

</div>

Cher (e), répondant (e)

Dans le cadre d'un mémoire pour le Master en Science du Langage (Anglais) à Tlemcen (Algérie), je vous prie de bien vouloir remplir ce questionnaire afin de collecter des données pour une étude linguistique sur l'utilisation du français en Côte d'Ivoire.

Section I : Basic Informations

Sexe: Masculin ☐ Féminin ☐   Lieu de résidence: ………………..

Age: …………. Profession: ………… Niveau d'étude: ……………….

Section II :

1. Quelle est votre langue maternelle?

………………………………………………………………………

2. Aimez-vous vraiment la langue française ?

   Oui   Non

3. Comment jugez-vous votre niveau en français?

      -Excellent

      -Bon

      -Moyen

      -Mauvais

4. Préférez-vous votre langue maternelle au français ?

   Oui   Non

5. Acceptez-vous le français comme étant la langue officielle du pays?

   Oui   Non

6. Pensez-vous que la langue française engendrerait certains problèmes dans la société ivoirienne?

   Oui   Non

Si oui, lesquels?

………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………..

7. Croyez-vous que la Côte d'Ivoire aurait pu choisir une autre langue plutôt que le français à l'époque colonial ?

Oui   Non

Si oui, laquelle?

……………………………………………………………………………

8. Le fait que la Côte d'Ivoire soit une nation multilingue (*plus de deux langues parlées*) représente-il un problème pour le pays ?

Oui   Non

9. Quel comportement la plupart des ivoiriens manifestent à l'égard du français ?

……………………………………………………………………………

10. Pensez-vous qu'il existe une catégorie de personnes se sentant obligées de parler le français?

Oui   Non

11. A votre avis, les personnes illettrées se soucient-elles du français?

Oui   Non

Si non, pourquoi ?

………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………..

12. Le gouvernement devrait-il inclure quelques langues locales (*ethnies*) dans le système éducatif ivoirien?

Oui   Non

13. Existe-il certaines langues nationales qui seraient dominées ou inférieures?

Si oui, citez les

………………………………………………………………………

14. Y-a-t-il une autre langue ou dialecte qui peut être parlé(e) et compris(e) (*lingua franca ou langue vernaculaire*) mieux que le français par tous les habitants du pays ?

- Dioula
- Baoulé
- Bété
- Nouchi
- Autre……………………………………………………………………

15. A quelle difficulté une nation multilingue comme la Côte d'Ivoire devrait être confrontée ?

- La domination linguistique
- Les barrières de communication
- Le complexe linguistique
- Autre …………………………………………………………………

16. Pouvez-vous nous donner une seule raison pour laquelle les ivoiriens ont leur propre français à eux (le français ivoirien)?

…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………..

Merci d'avoir collaboré(e)

Appendix 1 B

Survey for Educated Participants

Dear respondent,

As part of a dissertation for the Master in Language Studies (English) in Tlemcen (Algeria), please fill in this survey to collect data for a language study on the use of French in Ivory Coast.

Section I: Basic Information

Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐   Hometown: ....

Age: …………. Profession: .... Educational Level: ....

Section II:

1. What is your mother tongue? ....
   …………….
2. Do you really like the French language?

Yes   No

3. How do you rate your level in French?
   - Excellent
   - Good
   - Average
   - Bad

4. Do you prefer your mother tongue to French?
   Yes   No

5. Do you accept French as the official language of the country

Yes   No

6. Do you think that the French language would cause certain problems in Ivorian society?

Yes   No

If yes, which ones?

....
....

7. Do you think that Ivory Coast could have chosen another language rather than French in colonial era?

Yes   No

If yes which one?

  ....

8. Is multilingualism in Ivory Coast (more than two spoken languages) a problem for the country?

Yes   No

9. Which   attitude   do   most   Ivorians   show   towards   French?
....

10. Do you think there is a category of people who feel obliged to speak French?

   Yes   No

11. In your opinion, do illiterate people care about French?

   Yes   No

If not why?

....
....

12. Should the government include some local languages (ethnic groups) in the Ivorian education system?

   Yes   No

13. Are there certain local languages that would be dominated or inferior?

If yes, please quote

....

14. Is there another language or dialect that can be spoken and understood (lingua

franca or vernacular) better than French by all inhabitants of the country?

• Dioula

• Baoulé

• Bété

• Nouchi

• Other...

15. What difficulty may a multilingual nation like Côte d'Ivoire face?

• Linguistic domination

• Communication barriers

• The linguistic complex

• Other..

16. Can you give us a single reason why Ivorians have their own French (Ivorian Popular French)?

....
....

Thank you for collaborating

Appendix 2A

INTERVIEW POUR PERSONNES AGEES

1. Aimez-vous vraiment la langue française ?

2. Comment jugez-vous votre niveau en français?

3. Quel choix feriez-vous entre votre langue maternelle et le français ?

4. Pensez-vous que le multilinguisme représenterait-il un danger socio-politique pour le pays ?

5. Existe-t-il une autre langue capable de remplacer le français dans ce rôle de langue vernaculaire (lingua franca) ?

Si oui, laquelle ?

6. Que pensez-vous du *français populaire* communément appelé *français ivoirien* parlé en Côte d'Ivoire ?

Appendix 2 B

INTERVIEW FOR SENIORS

1. Do you really like the French language?

2. How do you rate your level in French?

3. What choice would you make between your mother tongue and French?

4. Do you think that multilingualism would represent a socio-political danger for the country?

5. Is there another language capable of replacing French in this role of vernacular language (lingua franca)?If yes which one ?

6. What do you think of Popular French commonly known as French of Ivorian spoken in Ivory Coast?

ملخص:

حصلت كوت ديفوار ، التي استعمرتها فرنسا عام 1893 ، على استقلالها في عام 1960 واعتمدت الفرنسية كلغة رسمية للبلاد.

على الرغم من عقدة النقص لديهم فيما يتعلق بوضع اللغة الفرنسية ومكانتها في البلاد ، فقد حافظت اللغات المحلية على قوتها ضد اللغة الفرنسية حتى لا تختفي. وبالتالي ، فمنذ هذه الحقبة حتى الآن ، أصبح وضع اللغة الفرنسية موضع خلاف كبير بين المتحدثين الإيفواريين

لذلك ، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى شرح كيفية فهم اللغة الفرنسية في كوت ديفوار ، وكذلك موقف الإيفواريين تجاهها. لتنفيذ هذه الدراسة ، تم استخدام ثلاث وسائل بحثية: ملاحظة واحدة كانت الأداة الرئيسية التي ساعدت في إعداد الأسئلة ، وتم توزيع استبيان على 90 مشاركًا من المتعلمين ينتمون إلى ثلاث فئات عمرية متميزة ، ومقابلة موجهة خصيصا إلى كبار السن في بلدية بورت بويت.

الكلمات الـمـ فـ تاحـ ية :

المتحدثين الايفواريين , المواقف اللغات المحلية , الفرنسية , الوضع

Résumé :

Colonisée par la France à partir de 1893, la Côte d'Ivoire (CI) obtint son indépendance en 1960 et adopta le français comme langue officielle du pays. Cependant, bien avant l'établissement de la colonie française en CI, plusieurs langues locales et africaines étaient parlées par tous les ivoiriens. Malgré leur complexe d'infériorité à l'égard du statut du français et son prestige dans le pays, ces langues locales ont gardé leurs forces contre le français pour ne pas disparaître. Ainsi, depuis cette ère jusqu'à présent, le statut du français est plus ou moins contesté parmi les locuteurs ivoiriens. Dès lors, cette étude vise à expliquer comment la langue française est perçue en CI, ainsi que l'attitude des locuteurs ivoiriens vis-à-vis d'elle. Pour mener à bien cette étude, trois outils de recherche ont été utilisés: une observation qui a été l'outil clé aidant à préparer les questions, un questionnaire distribué à 90 participants lettrés appartenant à trois distinctes catégories d'âge, et une interview spécialement adressée aux personnes âgées de la commune de Port Bouet.

Mots clés : Locuteurs ivoiriens, Attitudes, Langues locales, Le français, Statut.

Summary:

Colonized by France from 1893, Ivory Coast (IC) obtained its independence in 1960 and adopted the French language as the official language of the country. However, before IC officially became a French colony, many local and African languages were spoken by all Ivorians. In spite of their covert prestige face to the status of French and its prestige in the country, those local languages kept their strength against French as not to disappear. Thus, since that time and till now, the status of French is challenged among Ivorian speakers. Thenceforth, the present study aims at explaining how French is perceived in IC and also the attitude of Ivorian speakers towards this language as well. To carry out this study, three research instruments were used: an observation that helped in preparing questions, a survey addressed to a sample of 90 educated participants involving three different categories of age and an interview which was administered to seniors from the township of Port Bouet.

Keywords: Ivorian speakers, Attitudes, Local languages, French, Status.