

Towards a Sociological Analysis of the Project Education Integrated to Community in Côte d'Ivoire

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Abstract: In Côte d'Ivoire, the integration of national languages in the education system, begun in the 1970s and then resumed in 2001, aimed to reduce the rate of school wastage and failure in rural areas. After more than 15 years of experience, the fact is that despite presupposed advantages, this program is struggling to become widespread at the national level. This text intends to analyze the factors that limit the extension of the Integrated School Project (PEI) at the national level. Adopting a qualitative perspective, it shows that the bilingual school project is struggling to become widespread because of the different perceptions of the school between institutional actors and parents of students.

Keywords: Bilingual school, language policy, mother tongue, Côte d'Ivoire.

INTRODUCTION

Generally speaking, education is still a major issue for every countries. Accordingly, since independence, in African countries, considerable criticism was levelled formal education in Africa with the medium of the languages inherited from colonization. Also light was shed on an advantages the integration of tribal languages as teaching medium in the formal education. It was widely accepted that mother tongues would have positive effects on learners' academic performance [1]. The social imaginations that these languages are "poor" and "unsuited" to convey scientific concepts and that the adoption of policies in favor of them in ethnically diverse Francophone African countries could undermine the national unity that seemed to hinder were gradually deconstructed.

Experiences in which the results of the experiments conducted in a large number of African countries have largely contributed to the recognition that the relevance and quality of education necessarily implies the recognition and adoption of a language spoken by the beneficiary [2, 3].

To meet this requirement, Côte d'Ivoire, a Francophone African state characterized by ethnic diversity, began thinking about the development of local languages since the 1970s. This will is materialized by the creation of the Institute of Applied Linguistics of the University of Abidjan. This institute has to study the issues linked to the introduction of the national languages as teaching mediums in the Ivorian schools beside French according to article 68 of the law adopted on August 16, 1977 relating to educational reform [4]. Thus from 1980, experiments are conducted by the researchers of this institute, the most important of which are those of the regions of Korhogo and

Boundiali (north of Côte d'Ivoire), have proved very effective [5]. The Project Education integrated to community (IEP)[1] actually started en 2001 and provides for a basic education where two languages of instruction are used simultaneously: a national language and French. Ten languages were selected according to the administrative division of the time, in ten regions, among the sixty or so languages that are used in the country. Specifically, it aimed to reduce school wastage and failure rates in rural areas [2]. In order to encourage the support of rural populations, awareness-raising campaigns have been conducted by state authorities

¹The project Education Integrated to community was initiated through the decree N°0108/MEN/CAB du 13 November 2001

² In 2001the ministerial decree N°0108/MEN/CAB of 13 November 2001 relating to the initiation of a project for the integration of local tribal languages in the Government Body of pedagogy and in service training .

since 2001. In its design and implementation, the project should have three phases: experimentation; partial regionalization; the generalization. Before the implementation of the generalization, the first two phases must last respectively 7 and 4 years. In some Ivorian cities such as Adzopé (Southern Côte d'Ivoire), this program has had satisfactory results in terms of academic success at the CEPE [3] (24, 24% in 2009 and 75.60% in 2016) [6]. Today, the fact is that after more than 15 years of experience in Côte d'Ivoire, and despite its presupposed advantages, this program is struggling to become widespread at the national level.

What are the social factors that limit the generalization of the Project of the integration of education to community in rural areas?

The issue of factors limiting the introduction of mother tongues into the formal education system in Africa has already been addressed by some authors. Gueye, analyzing the structural blockages hindering the generalization of this system in Senegal, reveals that social representations associated with national languages are the determining factors (7). More specifically, it shows that they are perceived as elements of regression both in the field of social promotion and in that of intellectual development. Bouso, Yero, Samba, Elimane and Claverane and Souad also mention an imprecise language policy, a lack of awareness-raising policy, written production in these almost non-existent languages, inadequate teacher training (8-9). Bouso *et al* emphasizes that the introduction of mother tongues can undermine the credibility of the school and thus hinder the success of this project. For Napon, the main subversion to this project is the absence of a clear policy in favor of the use of the national languages and the attachment of scholars to French (10). According to Adjibodou, the question of teachers' performance in speaking in local languages can also be a blocking factor in addition to the other factors already listed [11]. Baba-Moussa highlights the dilemma of choice of languages. This dilemma is indicative of a tension between identity claims (everyone wants to learn his - or in his - language) in addition to the unavailability of didactic materials [12]. This study shows that Afro-Francophone countries that have integrated national languages into schools as a medium of education have faced major ideological, pedagogical, economic and political obstacles. The present text intends to analyze the factors that limit the extension of the Integrated School project to the community in rural areas in Côte d'Ivoire through three essential dimensions: i) the ideological referents that legitimize the choice of the mother tongue of teaching; (ii) relations to knowledge by the vernacular language; iii) the behaviors and practices of the actors.

³CEPE is the final exam before starting junior high school.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Methodologically, the study adopted a qualitative approach and questions the factors that limit the generalization of the project of integrating of education to community in Côte d'Ivoire. The city of Aboisso located in the south-east of Côte d'Ivoire has been chosen as the field of investigation, because there are the first schools chosen for the pilot phase of the project. Among them, two (EPP Krindjabo 1, EPP Ebouet 1) were accepted by the populations and the third (EPP Kouba) was not effective because of the refusal of the populations. The data were analyzed from thematic content to identify the significant units of articulation of PEI⁴ maintenance factors in its experimental phase. They were collected from individual interviews, focus group and direct observation. Interview guide, the documentary review and the observation grid constituted the collection tools for this data collette. The interviews related to the limiting factors of the PEI were conducted with - resource persons to be divided into 4 categories of actors: 6 members of the Ministry of National Education, 13 teachers (including a preschool), 3 village authorities and 7 parents of pupils. This whole methodology generated three sets of results.

RESULTS

- Choice of the most spoken vernacular language by estimation as a language of instruction: the gaps in a numerical logic

The linguistic matrix of the Ivorian education system presents two main areas marking different languages as teaching medium. These include French and Ivorian mother tongues. Far from making the history of the introduction of these languages in the education system, the integration of French in Côte d'Ivoire was made during colonization. This language has been classified as a vernacular and a vehicular language because of its particular use. The choice and expansion of the French through the school were justified by the need to train workers for the colonial enterprise. Politically and ideologically French, for the colonist, appeared as a means of accession to civilization during this time. This process has led to a kind of devaluation of local / tribal languages. It was only in the 1960s-1970s that African policies, particularly Côte d'Ivoire, turned to the revaluation of local languages and their use as teaching mediums [5].

Since then, the problem of the choice of mother tongues as teaching medium rises because of the varied and diversified linguistic landscape of the

⁴ PEI is the project to integrate education to community.

⁵ Cf. the articles 67 and 68 of the title VIII « les langues ivoiriennes », article 68 « l'introduction des langues nationales dans l'enseignement officiel doit être conçue comme facteur d'unité nationale et de revalorisation du patrimoine culturel ivoirien ».

country, with more than 70 local languages. Côte d'Ivoire has therefore adopted a criterion for the selection of national languages [6] and languages of instruction based on a numerical logic. Now in this context, 11 languages are recognized as national languages. Among them, 10 are chosen as the medium of instruction. They are Senufo, Baoule, Dioula, Bete, Agni, Dan, Attié, Guéré, Koulango, and Gouro. They were selected because of their significant value and the status. In fact, these languages are spoken by the majority of Ivorians per region. Through this rationality of hierarchisation of its languages in relation to the other local languages, it thus appears a numerical logic built around the number of people speaking the local language. We can cite the case of the Dioula language to elucidate this selection mechanism. Indeed, empirical data show that dioula is spoken by more than 70% of the population. Although it is the mother tongue of 14.8% of the Ivorian population, it is socially classified as a language very close to Malinké and Bambara. This proximity to these two languages reconfigures the percentage of people speaking Dioula. In this case, the digitization of users no longer takes into account the relations between mother tongue and ethnicity. Only social connections between Dioula - Malinké - Bambara are taken into account on the basis of a structural homology. Besides this, Dioula also owes its ideological position to its main use in commercial practices in Côte d'Ivoire.

However, while the numerical logic underlying the selection of vernacular languages is functional from a theoretical point of view. It is still not the case with regard to the implementation of the mother tongue in the schools selected for the project of integrating education to community. In some localities chosen for the pilot phase of the project, resistance from the local population shows that in a sociological way the dominance and the hierarchy of a language can not be built in a numerical way as carried out by the institutions in charge of the project. A language can be weakly spoken but sociologically dominant. And this in relation to the ethnolinguistic divisions carrying these languages. Generally, indigenous languages are still the dominant languages. Investigations in the region of Aboisso reflect the categorical refusal of a locality regarding the integration of the Agni language in education. In the Korhogo region, the speech of some respondents shows that some indigenous people are opposed to this project, since in this region the majority of the local population natural speakers of Senufo, Bambara and Malinké. The teaching medium used in the area is Dioula. On the issue of resistance of people opposed to the project, an official of the Ministry of Education (PEI) says: "

.we have been faced with difficulties in the area of Bouna ... you see there the landowners are Koulango,

⁶ Article 7 of the law n°2014-425 of 14 July 2014.

while the most spoken language is Lobiri. And there was opposition from these leaders because they cannot conceive of their children speaking Lobiri in class even though they understand and speak Lobiri correctly ".

The social structures of ethnic affiliations and different forms of tension that it raises must be analyzed and integrated as a selection criterion in the choice of languages of instruction. The non-generalization of the integration of mother tongues at the national level finds above all its explanation in this mode of language selection which is put to the test of the representations and forms of justification of the local populations.

Relationship to knowledge by vernacular language and opposition to the corresponding forms of justification

In the social imaginary language appears as an instrument of communication, with vocal signs specific to members of a community. Sociologically, it refers to a system of social relations that brings into interaction various categories of actors. So, whether national, local or imported, language in education structures the relationships to the knowledge of these actors. As part of this study, representations and justifications of two categories of actors are analyzed. These include institutional actors (village authorities and teachers playing the role of cordon between the state - population) and parents of students. The analysis of their relation to knowledge and the corresponding forms of justification reveal contrasts between them.

The village authorities and the teachers (link State - population)

Village authorities in the mode of governance of the project, are the actors enrolled in the process of sensitization of the local populations. In addition to knowledge transmission through the mother tongue and French, are responsible for raising awareness among parents of students. In this context of sensitization of the local populations, the institutional social groups present the bilingual school as an instrument of relay / substitution in the process of learning and valorization of the mother tongue. Thus, for them the vernacular language at school would be an answer for the population to the question of the social loss of the natives who do not speak their mother tongue. In a general sense and situated in the village context, any native who is unable to speak the language is automatically labeled as a "lost person". *For local families, "not being able to speak the language" is a disgrace for parents. This is as much disqualifying as devaluing for these families, to the point where this aspect is mobilized by local institutional actors to stimulate people's support for the project by enrolling their children in bilingual school. A village authority says,*

"... parents do not have time to teach Agni to their children at home, that's the real problem. I am an

intellectual like the director but why he sends his child to school! Because there are people who are there to better teach them that's why have the sendings to the bilingual school. An Agni child should speak the Agni fluently. Today our children no longer speak their native language, they speak only French language ... and when they come to the village when a wise man speaks they do not understand anything, they are lost ...

This discourse reveals the forms of justification of the promoters of the policy of integrating mother tongues into children's school education.

School appears as a space for language learning. This main form of legitimation contrasts the systems of representation of local populations and parents of pupils. This way of representing the bilingual school is not enough to mobilize people satisfactorily because some parents refuse to enroll their child in bilingual classes. According to survey data, only one-third of Agni's children in two-thirds of non-native / non-native children are enrolled for CP1⁷ at EPP⁸ Krindjabo 1 (Aboisso town). Such a sense given to education at the institutional level because in the Ivorian context and sometimes elsewhere, the perception of the mother tongue as a vernacular language is very often coupled with an apprehension of the future of the same language. It is built as a heritage in the process of patrimonialization of public goods. Yet when we look at the way in which the integration of languages into practice is governed, only three levels are concerned (CP1, CP2, CE1), language is more taken as a medium to facilitate the learning of French. For example, how to bring a child from a rural area who does not speak French to recognize the sounds of the French alphabet through sounds of words in the mother tongue and also to acquire the basics of mathematics.

It is therefore necessary to analyze parents' representations of school and the integration of the mother tongue. To expose the weaknesses of this main ideology mentioned above, which could explain the non-nationalization of the integration of mother tongues in education.

Parents opposed to bilingual school

Two systems of representation rise from the relationship to knowledge among parents of students. First and in opposition to representations of institutional actors, bilingual school denatures mother tongue. These refute the thesis that school would be adequate place where mother tongue is learnt. Because this is not given in all its purity, insofar as in Côte d'Ivoire it reveals

⁷ CP1 is the level 1 in the primary school. CP2, second level and CE1 is the third level of the primary school in the ivorian system.

⁸ EPP stands for State Primary School

different accents and pronunciations within the same ethnic group. In other words, pure language is a language that is by no means devoid of language and proverbs. For example, the respondents stipulate that Agni can be found in various types such as *sanwi and bona*. It may therefore happen that a teacher is a user of some Agni which is different from the local accent heard in area. That situation could change the learning of the language by the learner. However, the particular properties and characteristics of the language are transmitted during a long process of socialization and learning under parental control. *"I did not learn the Agni at school, but I was exposed to it by talking with my mother and with my environment. It made me speak the language. I participate to village meetings because I master the Agni"*. (The secretary of the village Ebouet). Command on the language thus allows an access to village political fields. This first level of apprehension of education produces a second level of justification of students parents. Their relationship to knowledge leads them to perceive the education as a channel of success and social differentiation. Far from being the right place to teach tribal proverbs and mother tongues, school is a social reproduction device that contributes to the literacy of individuals. It produces qualifications and more or less certified levels of skills among students. It is precisely at this stage and in the social imagination that the individual is capable of providing the responsibilities necessary for the functioning of society. A student mother reveals:

"... as a parent, we are very happy when our children after school finds a job. We did not go to school. Then, we have to grow farms. Agni is already spoken at home. So, when the child goes to school, we expect that he should learn French to have his diplomas and get a job so that he can takes us out of misery".

Such statements prove that education reflects a professional integration of the graduate. Generally, the motivation of these parents to send their offspring to school is guided by models of ascension like social mobilities instructed people from the same village who studied only in French. Such model of success is a reference for them and a desired course for children. In addition, the professional integration gives access to a certain prestige to the person and his family.

While the transfer of financial and cultural capital from family members explains the social success of some graduates inserted, others, on the other hand, testify to an accession of high social status, even though they are descendants of illiterate and less affluent families. In one or the other, the access to the functions through systems such as examinations and competitions manufactures, by means of the academic training, this social success. The inadequacy of forms of institutional justification with the expectations of the population is certainly a limiting factor, but the mode of management of the project at the state level is another.

Non-alignment of educational practices with vernacular linguistic areas

In most school systems in Africa, and no doubt in Côte d'Ivoire, education with mother tongue is confronted with a set of difficulties that have led to failure in some localities and in others to crisis in training or modification of teaching pedagogy. The main difficulty, is the exorbitant socio-economic cost (for the government) relating to the management of administrative arrangements, training of trainers and the development of training manuals. Even if the diagnoses show positive results of the schoolchildren's performance, the non-accompaniment of the policy by the appropriate means constitutes obstacles that teachers have to overcome to reach a certain efficiency expected of the political decision-makers and especially the parents of students. Such project governance at the macro level inevitably leads to dysfunction at the micro level. Here is an illustration through the words of the director of the school EPP Krindjabo 1:

"The materials are not suitable. So, we have no material. The only material that we have is this one for the CP 1 and CP 2. That disoriented the teacher that I am. , And we design materials on our own and find our strategies. Several times, we asked them to call us (who are in the classrooms) so that we can tell them our difficulties ... And for years we decarcated to produce results. They are there expecteing results from us. Students parents also are there they are watching us and expecting results ".

The lack of appropriate pedagogical materials affects teachers' method of reconceptualization and contextualization of the learning content. In addition, this has implications for the assimilation of the child. The child who has learned to know things in his language from CP1 and CP2 turns CE1 completely cut off from this learning experience. This step is the transition from the integrated system to the conventional system. This dysfunction means that after the CP2, the teacher is confronted with pupils with a poor in French literacy.

Another element that impedes the project and encourages parents non-adherence is the assignment of teachers in the project regions, without taking into account the vernacular language spoken by them. Decision-makers probably fear the regionalization of education, which is likely to weaken national unity. As a result, in bilingual schools there are teachers who do not speak properly or not at all the vernacular language chosen. In addition, there is the fact that State primary teachers in Côte d'Ivoire are trained in CAFOP [9]. The training received in this center only meets the requirement of classical and non-bilingual training.

DISCUSSION

The results reveal differentiated perceptions of the use of mother tongues at school between institutional actors and parents of pupils. Perceptions related to the bilingual school among these two groups of actors do not agree.

School perceptions of institutional actors give priority to learning mechanisms conducive to academic success. They are based on the idea that language education at the primary level in the formal education system and cooperation between school and parents can improve learning. On this basis, the institutional actors in the PEI project seek the contribution of parents of students. It is desired because it is perceived as a strategy to improve students' academic performance and reduce the rate of school failure in rural areas. Their perceptions of school and learning mechanisms focus on social actors who can facilitate or hinder school performance. Moreover, in the imagination of institutional actors, the exclusive use of French as a medium of instruction is a discriminating factor for rural learners in this school, which functions as a market where strategies for appropriating school qualifications are more or less rare. The introduction of mother tongues breaks down social barriers that do not favor the insertion and retention of rural learners in the school system and also to make learning processes in schools fair between rural learners and those of the urban environment.

On the other hand, those of students' parents remain marked by a predominance of mechanisms conducive to professional integration and social success. By the way, learning French at school is experienced as a resource that allows both to integrate, to stay in school and thus to acquire qualifications and skills for the future professional integration of students. The use of the mother tongue as a medium of education appears to be a social downgrade for their descendants, which is why they are not in favor of this project. This link which has been established between perceptions of languages and integration of mother tongues into the formal school corroborates Gueye's work [7]. French has more prestige in their imaginations, because it is perceived as the resource that will facilitate the insertion of learners into the labor market. These perceptions are underpinned by social but also economic logics. Consequently, the results of this study show that the question of the choice of languages is not only indicative of identity claims.

For them, school is one of the materials that not only serves to produce and symbolize the social differentiations between their descendants, but also between actors in the educational environment: those in the school educational environment and those in the family environment. They develop beliefs that these two groups of actors belong to two different social spaces based on the mechanisms of acquisition of skills.

⁹ Primary teachers training college

This categorization functions ideologically as a mechanism for legitimizing their (parents') competences and maintaining their monopoly in their area of intervention as far as education through the mother tongue is concerned. As a result, these actors are not favorable to the realization of this project, which corroborates the results of Adjibodou's work, with the only difference that this work reveals another equally important aspect [11]. Indeed, it highlights the fact that the issue of teachers' performance in expressing themselves in the local language, which is put forward by parents of students, is an ideology to hide the balance of power between them and the educational actors.

These results do not contradict the studies that mentioning that language policy is a blocking factor in the success of the project of integrating mother tongues into the formal education system [8,9]. But this work underlines that beyond these political aspects, the differentiated perceptions of school and learning mechanisms between parents and trainers are crucial. This explains why the teaching practices promoted by institutional actors do not attract parents.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, this study attempted to update the social factors that limit the generalization of the project of introducing mother tongues into the formal primary education system in Côte d'Ivoire. In terms of methodology, the qualitative approach adopted has led to the use of data collection methods adapted to qualitative studies such as interview, focus group and observation. The data collected were subject to a content analysis that yielded results.

First, the study shows that the method of selection of languages of instruction based on a numerical logic by the public authorities, is a structuring factor of the non-adhesion of the rural populations to the project of integration of the mother tongues to school. Their definitions of the dominant language do not match because those of the populations are not related to the most spoken language but rather to the status of the individuals who speak it. In addition, the results reveal that the perceptions of these local populations on the bilingual school are also structuring factors of the stagnation of the project. They are skeptical about the performance of teachers in the bilingual school and consider language teaching as an obstacle to the professional integration of learners. These two results, which reveal differentiated perceptions about the bilingual school between institutional actors and parents of students, are not inseparable from the non-alignment of education practices with vernacular linguistic areas, as indicated

in the third result. The discussion allowed discussing with the results of the works of other authors.

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