THE RELEVANCE OF FRENCH LANGUAGE
IN GHANA’S RELATIONS WITH
FRANCOPHONE WEST AFRICA

BY
RICHARD DANSO NIMAKO
(10505012)

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DECLARATION

I, Nimako Richard Danso, hereby declare that this dissertation is the product of an original research conducted by me under the supervision of Dr Boni Yao Gebe and that no part of this work has been submitted anywhere else for any other purpose, all references used have been duly acknowledged.

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RICHARD DANSO NIMAKO DR. BONI YAO GEBE
(STUDENT) (SUPERVISOR)

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Date ............................................ Date ..........................................

INTEGRI PROCEDAMUS
DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late Grandmother, Elizabeth Akosua Sarpomaa who contributed immensely to my education from primary up to the Bachelor’s Degree level until her demise on 14 May, 2000.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very grateful to all who in diverse ways helped me to come out with this product. Special thanks go to my family who gave me the peaceful atmosphere at home to produce this handy work. I also thank my supervisor Dr. B. Y. Gebe who keenly went through my work and gave the needed guidance from start to completion. I am very grateful to Lt Sylvester Adu Gyamfi of the Ghana Armed Forces Records Office at Burma Camp who gave me some useful reference materials for this work.

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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>ASF</td>
<td>African Standby Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>CE</td>
<td>Common Era</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COE</td>
<td>College of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMIS</td>
<td>Education Management Information System</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education (Ghana)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>OIF</td>
<td>Organisation International de la Francophonie</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>WASU</td>
<td>West African Students Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>WASF</td>
<td>West African Standby Force</td>
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ABSTRACT

African countries speak about a third of the world’s total languages. It is believed that there is an average of forty languages in every African country. In addition to the numerous indigenous languages on the continent are some European languages which are mainly English, French and Portuguese. These languages found their way into Africa through European colonisation which officially began with the Berlin Treaty of 1884/85 until it ended after the Second World War. One major legacy of the defunct European colonisation of Africa is the continuous use of European languages of English, French and Portuguese. West Africa is considered the most cosmopolitan when it comes to the presence of the European languages. All the three major European languages of English, Portuguese and French are found in the sub-region. Of the fifteen West African countries, eight are French speaking, five are English speaking and two are Portuguese speaking. Ghana, which is English speaking, is geographically surrounded by three French speaking countries of Togo, Burkina Faso and Cote D’Ivoire. For Ghana to be able to relate very well with them, it is believed that she should do well to acquire French language communication skills. This study therefore sought to find out whether the use of the French language was important for Ghana’s relations with her Francophone neighbours. It also sought to find out whether Ghanaians take the study of French language seriously and what challenges they encounter in an attempt to study French. The qualitative method of analysis was used to come out with the findings. Although the study could conclude that many Ghanaians see the French language important in their relations with the Francophone neighbours, French language education in Ghana is beset with problems. A really serious study would establish that Ghana does not have a pro-active French teaching and study programme in Ghanaian First and Second Cycle Schools. West African governments do not actively promote the teaching and learning of common languages across the sub-region. This study recommends that the Government of Ghana should provide the needed teaching and learning materials for French education at all levels so as to make the study of French attractive to students. She should enter into agreements with the neighbouring Francophone countries for them to supply her better qualified teachers to help in teaching the language in Ghana. The Ministry of Education should also do well to counsel students of the benefits to be accrued from being able to communicate in French so that they would be encouraged to study the language.
CHAPTER ONE

RESEARCH DESIGN

1.0 Introduction

French language is one of the Roman languages of the Italic sub family in Europe. The language is spoken in France as a mother tongue. It is also an official language for 29 countries which are literally referred to as la Francophonie. In 2011, French was deemed by the Bloomberg Businessweek magazine as one of the top three most useful languages for business, behind English and Chinese.¹ This makes French more widespread than Spanish, Portuguese and other prominent European languages.

In West Africa, out of the fifteen countries forming the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), eight are French speaking. The language spread to West Africa through colonialism which began with the partitioning of Africa by European countries at the Berlin Conference between 1884 and 1885.² Though these West African countries gained their independence from France in the 1960s, they still continue to use French as their official language just like many former colonies do all over the world.

Ghana geographically lies within an enclave of three Francophone countries which are the Ivory Coast (Côte D’Ivoire) to the west, Burkina Faso to the north and Togo to the east. Historically, Ghanaians have been interacting with all their Francophone neighbours in West Africa through trading, religious activities, marriages, sports and other social events. In all such dealings, the use of French language becomes very paramount.
Ghana’s first Prime Minister, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, in his first post-independence speech on 6 March 1957, declared: “The independence of Ghana is meaningless unless it is linked with the total liberation of Africa.” This declaration serves as a summary of Ghana’s future relations with her African neighbours. Pan-Africanism therefore became one of the pillars of Ghana’s foreign policy drive. Dr Nkrumah himself was a participant of the Fifth Pan-African Congress held in London in 1945. Ghana eagerly pursued an African liberation agenda by organising series of conferences home between 1958 and 1960 to strategise for that purpose. Many African freedom fighters who later became leaders of their new independent countries used to come for such conferences. Prominent among these were Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe who schooled and worked in Ghana, Patrice Lumumba of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Hastings Banda of Malawi.

After Ghana helped other African states to attain political independence, one of the major drives of her foreign policy was African integration. For Dr. Nkrumah, African nations were too small to stand on their own else they risked being neo colonised by the western powers. Nkrumah’s Ghana therefore entered into a political union with Guinea (Conakry) and Mali which was called the Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union. This was however strange because as someone touting for a complete African political unity, deference to federation should have been out of Nkrumah’s way. Nkrumah even criticised the East African countries of Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania for forming a similar union for different reasons. Nonetheless, those who were sympathetic to Nkrumah’s cause argued that the Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union was a stepping stone to the formation of the greater African union which Ghana under Nkrumah was pursuing. It should be noted that Guinea and Mali are both French speaking countries. Finally, Ghana’s objective of establishing an African political
union was given a big boost when on 25 May 1963, the Organisation of the African Unity (OAU) was formed in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The OAU since 2002 has been transformed into the African Union (AU).⁵

Apart from helping countries to attain independence, Ghana was also at the forefront of seeking peace in war torn countries. In the 1960 Congo (DRC) crisis, Ghana became the first African country to contribute peacekeepers to that country.⁶ It should be noted here again that Congo is also a French speaking country. After this period, Ghana has traditionally been contributing troops to help restore normalcy in several war ravaged countries in Africa.

Back home in West Africa, Ghana has been playing a dominant role in the sub-region’s integration efforts. From the formation of the Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union (1960-1963), Ghana also played an active role in the establishment of the ECOWAS.⁷ The ECOWAS was established in 1975 in Lagos, Nigeria. Ghana is a founding member of this organisation. Currently, all the West African countries are members of the ECOWAS except Mauritania which withdrew on 28 December 2000 for political reasons.⁸ The ECOWAS aims at fostering economic cooperation among member countries. In pursuance of sub-regional security, Ghana participated actively in ECOWAS’ peace support operations in Liberia and Sierra Leone in the 1990s when the two countries ran into civil wars. It is of interest to note that Ghana’s former presidents, Messrs Jerry Rawlings and John Kufuor were once Chairmen of the ECOWAS when they were in office. The current Chairman is also the serving Ghanaian president, Mr John Mahama. Another Ghanaian, Dr Mohammed Ibn Chambas, was also the Executive Secretary of the then ECOWAS Secretariat from 2002 to 2006.⁹
At the official level, Ghana’s relations with her Francophone neighbours have not been strong in spite of her membership of the ECOWAS and the AU. This is due to colonial divisive history and the Anglophone-Francophone rivalry which still exists at the governmental levels. This rivalry was caused by English-French language differences, lack of uniform economic policies and also the continuous influence of France over her former colonies, among others.

On the ground however, due to the presence of common ethnic groups in Ghana and the neighbouring Francophone countries, the relationships among the people are cordial. This has been made so because when the boundaries of Africa were being drawn, consideration was not given to ethnic identities. The ethnic groups along the international borders found themselves being divided between two or more countries. As a result of this, ethnic groups with same language, culture and traditional values are seen in Ghana, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso and Togo. Fanatics of ethnicity even place their ethnic identity over their national identity. This consequently promotes cordiality on the ground among the people.

1.1 Statement of the Research Problem

Given Ghana’s geographical location and historical relations with French speaking countries, the French language is very important to Ghanaians. However, not many Ghanaians can communicate in even basic French. As many Ghanaians are unable to speak French, entering into relations with the Francophone neighbours becomes difficult. For example in his State of the Nation Address to parliament on 13 March 2003, the then Ghanaian president Mr. John Kufuor confirmed the relevance of the French language in the following statement:
Mr Speaker, mastering of the French language is of such practical necessity, it must be put on the priority list. I can testify to this myself, Mr Speaker, from the constant embarrassment I come face-to-face with while I move around the sub-region. There are many times I wish I could do without translators in this era of ECOWAS. I do not wish this handicap on any Ghanaian Child.\textsuperscript{11}

In another development, a Ghanaian director of the African Centre for Languages, Mr. Paul Gaisie Arhinful said this about the relevance of French to Ghana’s relations with her neighbours:

If we do not intensify the teaching and learning of the French Language our children will be deprived of several benefits, including holding key positions on the international scene, especially in the Economic Commission of West Africa States (ECOWAS), African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN).\textsuperscript{12}

It is for these reasons that the relevance of the French language in Ghana’s relations with her French speaking neighbours becomes indisputable.

Whenever Ghanaian government officials, managers of private companies and enterprises, individuals and the general public are interacting with the Francophone neighbours communication becomes difficult because not many Ghanaians can communicate in French. This study therefore seeks to find out whether or not if Ghanaians learn the French language it would improve their relations with their Francophone neighbours.

1.2 Research Questions

- Does the French language play a role in Ghana’s trade relations with her Francophone neighbours?
- Do many Ghanaians take the study of French seriously?
- Can any factor(s) other than language influence Ghana’s relations with the Francophone neighbours?
- What policies can the Government of Ghana implement to encourage the study of the French language?
1.3 **Objectives of the Study**

- Establish whether or not the use of the French language is very important in Ghana’s relations with her Francophone neighbours.
- Establish whether or not Ghanaians take the study of French language very serious.
- Examine the challenges that Ghanaians encounter in the study of the language.
- Offer recommendations for the improvement of conditions that will enhance the study of French by Ghanaians.

1.4 **Scope of the Study**

The study concentrated on Ghana’s immediate French speaking neighbours of Togo, Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso. It basically emphasised Ghana’s economic and political relations at the governmental, departmental and individual levels with people of these countries. Occasionally, some examples and lessons were drawn from countries other than the three which were focused on. Few examples were also drawn from areas other than economic and political relations.

1.5 **Rationale of the Study**

Ghana is surrounded by the three French speaking countries of Togo, Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast. In the day to day activities of the Ghanaian, there is the high likelihood that he or she would meet a French speaking person to transact business or interact with. Again, Ghana plays a leading role in both the ECOWAS and the African Union (AU). These two politico-economic groupings have many French speaking countries as members. Also, out of the 54 countries forming the Africa Union, 26 of them are officially French speaking. In recent times also, Franco-Ghana relations have improved tremendously. French investments in Ghana have increased consistently since France started investing in the then Gold Coast (Ghana’s former name) in 1908. At the moment, it stands at about US$ 700 million annually and it is expected to increase in the near
Many of the French investments have their counterparts in the neighbouring French speaking countries and therefore have working relations with them. In some cases, personnel were transferred to work with some of these sister companies in the neighbouring countries. It is for this reason that this study was made to find out the relevance or otherwise of the French language in Ghana’s relations with her neighbours.

1.6 Hypothesis

The use of the French language would heighten Ghana’s relations with Francophone West Africa.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

This study was based on the theory of integration in international affairs. The theory explains how supra national governance has developed in international affairs. Integration in international affairs was well explained by Aston (2004) in his essay on how the theory of integration helps to understand the functioning of the European Union (EU). Although many factors have contributed to the effective functioning of the EU, theories of integration such as neo-functionalism and inter governmentalism together with other theories of integration appear dominant in the development of the EU. For an effective integration to take place in this modern era, there must be the strong presence of supra national institutions and strong inter states relations. The term neo-functionalism was first developed by American international relations scholars soon after WW II in the mid 1950s. It was developed to theorise the new forms of regional integrations which were coming up after the war. Later, the theory became more appealing to European political and economic integrations so it became more popular in Europe than even in America. Neo functionalism deals more with the process of integration rather than the end result of integration.
Inherent in neo functionalism is another concept called ‘spillover.’ This concept explains how one form of cooperation between countries leads to another. There are several types of spillovers: functional spillover, political spill over and cultivated spillover.\(^{17}\) The functional spillover is where cooperation in one area between countries leads to cooperation in another area to enable the first cooperation function effectively. The political spillover is where policies between countries become linked to each other not by necessity like the functional type but by mutual agreement between the states involved. Cultivated spillover is a kind of integration which results from countries delegating rights and privileges to same supra national institutions. Another example of neo functionalism is elite socialisation. This explains that people involved in policy making for same supra national institution would eventually develop loyalty and preference for the institution rather than their individual countries. The international elites would then convince the local elites to be more loyal to the supra national institutions and this would eventually generate mass shift of loyalty from national to supra national institutions. This is currently what is happening in Europe under the dispensation of the EU.\(^{18}\)

Opponents to neo functionalism argue that although it explained the development of integration in the 1950/60s, it failed to explain the collapse of certain forms of integrations during that same period. Three main criticisms are raised against neo functionalism. First, the elite socialisation theory is unimportant because citizens of states are aware themselves of the need to integrate rather than their elites telling them to do so. In modern times, countries are aware and appreciate the need to integrate and finally it is inter-governmental institutions and nation states that drive integration but not elites.\(^{19}\)

These criticisms notwithstanding, protagonists of neo functionalism are vindicated from one angle. Taking the EU as a case study, the introduction of the European Common Market marked the
beginning of more economic and political cooperation in Western Europe. This confirms the spillover effect propounded by the neo functionalists. An example is that the creation of the European Common Market has resulted in creating the European Court which has supremacy of the respective national courts of the EU member countries.\textsuperscript{20}

Another theory of integration which emerged as an answer to the weaknesses of neo functionalism is inter governmentalism. This theory began in Europe in the 1960s. The theory condemned the neo functionalism and federalist prediction that the then European Community (EC) was gradually becoming one state. This theory argues that integration is facilitated by interest and actions of nation states.\textsuperscript{21} It is influenced by neo realist theory on role of state and inter-state bargaining. The neo realists argue that in the anarchical international system, there is the potential for law and order and inter-state cooperation as a means of survival. The theory saw the EC as an institution which could reduce anarchy. The inter governmentalists assert that although nations had their individual sovereignty, it is in their interest to delegate some of the sovereignty to supra national institutions to enable them form integration.\textsuperscript{22} This is because integration would help them to solve their common problems.

Opponents of the liberal inter governmentalist argue that their focus is too narrow and does not take into account the day to day politics in the international system. It only concentrates on high profile policy changing cases that inevitably prove the theory correct. Opponents further assert that in cases where majority voting rather than international negotiations apply, liberal inter governmentalism may not give such clear results.\textsuperscript{23}
1.8 Literature Review

The Journal of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development (2014), affirms the international dominance of the French Language. At the moment, it is only ranked second to English as a national official language for countries on five continents. In terms of dominance, it is ranked the sixth most widely spoken language after Mandarin Chinese (spoken by over a billion speakers), English, Hindi, Spanish and Arabic. There are currently over 220 million French speakers worldwide. Europe accounts for 39.87% of the French-speaking population, 36.03% are in sub-Saharan Africa and the Indian Ocean. North Africa and the Middle East have 15.28%, America and the Caribbean have 7.66% and Asia/Oceania have 1.16%. It is a working language for many international organisations alongside English, Spanish, Russian, Arabic and Portuguese. For example it is one of the three procedural languages for the European Union (EU) alongside English and German. At the EU’s Court of Justice it is the only language used for deliberations. Also it is the only language of the Universal Postal Union (UPU). French is also a working language for institutions such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Other organisations are the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), and the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

French is as well a working language for the ECOWAS, the World Health Organisation (WHO), the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the Council of Europe, the AU, the World Anti-
Doping Agency (WADA) and the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA). At the
United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), French is also highly used.²⁷

In sports, French plays a special role in that it is an official language of the International Olympic
Committee (IOC) and by extension the Olympic Games itself. There is also the Francophone
Games now for only French-speaking countries. This was established in 1989.²⁸

In the area of economics, French again plays a big role. A study conducted by the Foundation for
International Development Study and Research (FERDI) in 2012 shows that if countries share a
common language it boosts their international trade by about 30% because the common language
factor would make it easier for businesses to move across borders. Already, Francophone countries
own 15% of the world’s wealth and 10% of its agricultural lands. If a non Francophone country
can have French as an official language, she could improve her economic relations with the
Francophone world, taking into account the common language factor.²⁹

In the area of communication, there are dominant French media channels like TV 5 Monde which
is viewed by an estimated 55 million people every week. There is also France 24 TV Station
viewed by 45.5 million people every week and the Radio France International is monitored by 40.1
million people every week. French also accounts for 5% of internet pages and ranks sixth of the
eight most widely used languages on the internet.³⁰

Although the journal did not concentrate on West Africa, with its revelation of how widespread the
French language is, one can safely assume that the language would be very useful for Ghana’s
relations in West Africa if she adopts it.

In a magazine published by France’s Ministère des Affaires Étrangères et du Développement
Internationale, ten reasons were given as to why French language is important to non French
First, the French language is spoken by over 200 million people worldwide on five different continents. The international association of French speaking countries, La Francophonie, comprises 68 different countries and governments. French is the second most widely learned language after English and ninth widely spoken in the world. French is also the only language taught in every country in the world in addition to English. France also operates the biggest network of cultural institutes in the world. Over 750,000 people are taught French language at such institutes. Knowledge of French language also opens doors for Anglophone investments and businesses in Francophone countries.

French is as well the language for cooking, theatre, architecture, fashion, visual arts and dance. Knowledge of French therefore gives one access to literature, films and songs in French language. Works and history of celebrities like Victor Hugo, Molière, Léopold Sendar Senghor, Edith Piaf, Jean-Paul Sartre, Alain Delon and Zinedine Zidane are mostly recorded in French. The UN, the EU, UNESCO, NATO, the IOC, the International Red Cross and many International Courts use French both as working and official languages. After English and German, French is the next language widely used on the internet. An individual’s knowledge of French therefore gives him/her the advantage of linking up with businesses, people, educational facilities and the various social events outside his/her country on the internet. Knowledge in French can also serve as a basis for learning the other Roman languages of Spanish, Portuguese and Italian. In the case of West Africa, Portuguese comes in mind. If Ghanaians learn French, it can serve as a basis for learning Portuguese also for many Ghanaians. This would give Ghanaians the additional advantage because Portuguese is also an official language for the ECOWAS, as well as West African countries of Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde.
According to a report from a research conducted by a French investment bank, Natixis, the French language could be the most widely spoken language in the world ahead of English and Mandarin in the next 40 years. It projects that the current 200 million French speakers could rise to 750 million by 2025 due to the fact that the language is spoken in world’s fastest growing populations, particularly in sub Saharan Africa. This report was later given a confirmation by a publication in the New York Times. The publication said that there is a growing French language renaissance in New York State’s public schools. Many of such schools now run bilingual curricula in English and French. The research also took into account that already French was an official language for the European Union, the International Olympics Committee and the United Nations. The Forbes Magazine has however disputed the outcome of this research because the research considered all the people of the countries where it covered as being able to speak French but this is not actually so on the ground. In many Francophone countries, it is only the educated who can speak French so their growth in population does not mean all the people will speak French.

According to the Economist, published on 2 April 2013, French is a language of international diplomacy. The magazine underscores the need to understand several languages to be able to forestall misunderstandings in international relations. According to the magazine, the Treaty of Wuchale of 1886 between Ethiopia and Italy for example did not work because of language difficulties. Whilst the Amharic version of the treaty stated that Ethiopia had a good measure of autonomy in her international affairs, the meaning in Italian language granted Ethiopia a protectorate to Italy with no flexibility. All these happened as a result of one verb making a permissive clause to Ethiopia whilst in Italian it was a mandatory one. This grammatical misrepresentation led the two countries to war in 1896 which Ethiopia won. The need to know international languages are therefore undoubtedly important in international relations to avoid
troubles. Perhaps, taking a cue from this in modern diplomacy, the EU spends a whooping € 300 million annually on translations at its meetings for its 23 different languages.\textsuperscript{40}

At the UN level, there is an intense competition between English and French. Mostly, treaties registered with the UN Treaty Series at New York are recorded in English whilst those taken at Geneva are recorded in French. According to the magazine, although French is spoken by fewer people compared to other UN languages like Mandarin, Spanish and Portuguese, it is still more preferable in international circles because of its wider enclave.\textsuperscript{41} It has also been a diplomatic language for over 100 years so its translation machineries are available and very effective. Also many African countries are officially Francophone so Anglophone African countries need to study French to ease relations with their Francophone neighbours. Many international organisations like the Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) which are mostly needed in the Third World prefer French to any other language.\textsuperscript{42}

In an essay entitled \textit{On the Importance of Knowing French} written by Bob Peckham of the Department of Modern Foreign Languages of the University of Tennessee, French language is very important in this post-colonial world. The language is among the principal languages of diplomacy and a host of international organisations. It is among the most important languages on the internet because of its many numbers of WWW pages. On the internet, it is more reliable in creating discussion list, connecting to many countries in the Southern Hemisphere and highly used in internet translator applications.\textsuperscript{43}

The French Community, \textit{la Francophonie}, is also growing steadily with current membership of 55 countries and 13 observers. In West Africa, it is an official language for the Republic of Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea (Conakry), Ivory Coast, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Togo. It is also an official language for Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, the Republic of
the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Gabon in Central Africa. It is again an official language for Djibouti and Rwanda in East Africa and Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco in the north. Yet again, is it an official language for Madagascar in the south of the continent. In all, about a quarter of Africa’s one billion people can communicate in French. This makes the language very key in diplomatic, political and economic communication on the continent. It must be noted however that in all these countries, the language is principally spoken by only those who have had formal education.

Adebayo (2001), in his book *West Africa’s Political Economy in the Next Millenium: Retrospect and Prospect*, traces the history of Ghana – Francophone relations from the 1960s. He credits Ghana’s first president, Kwame Nkrumah for motivating Guinea’s first President, Sekou Toure to wean his country from French grip after independence in 1958. Sekou Toure’s action led to mass agitation for independence in the then French West Africa. After independence, the West African countries have been fighting to enhance their sovereignty many times on group basis. They do this in the face of the Anglophone, Francophone and the Lusophone divide. The creation of common civil society and political platforms to fight post-colonial domination was pioneered by leaders like Kwame Nkurmah of Ghana, Léopold Senghor of Senegal and an intellectual Cheik Anta Dioup also from Senegal. West Africa up to the late 1970s therefore became a hub of black struggle against white domination. The first Pan African Congress on African soil for example was held in Accra, Ghana in 1958.

On 28 May 1975, West African countries formed the ECOWAS in Lagos, Nigeria. Although this organisation aims at bringing the countries together economically and politically, one main problem preventing this is the Anglophone – Francophone – Lusophone language barrier. Eight of the countries: Cote D’Ivoire, Togo, Republic of Benin, Senegal, Guinea (Conakry), Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger are Francophone. Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, the Gambia and Liberia are
Anglophone. Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau are Lusophone. Although there are different methods by which the Francophone and the Anglophone run their policies, the ECOWAS is doing its best to streamline some of these operations. Examples are the introduction of the ECOWAS Passport or Brown Card and the ECOWAS Travelers’ Check. ECOWAS is again pursing the ECOWAS Highway Project which is a Trans West Africa highway line. For Ghana to be able to participate effectively and enjoy the West African integration, French language becomes very important for her as an Anglophone country. Again, France undoubtedly still has a firm grip on the former colonies and this grip is transferred into her political and economic interest in West Africa along language lines. Many companies in Francophone West Africa for example are French owned and the language to do business with them is French. For Ghana to relate well with such companies, the use of French language becomes a key factor. Apart from the ECOWAS, one other major integration in the sub region is also wholly Francophone.

This integration is the Union Économique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine (UEMAO) which until 1994 was called the Communauté Économique des Etas de l’Afrique de l’Ouest (CEAO). In this era of globalisation, West Africans are poised to extricate themselves by promoting trade within the sub-region among the respective countries. For Ghana to do well in this area, she must have a considerable level of French language to be able to coordinate with the Francophone. Again, following the outbreak of civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone in the 1990s, the ECOWAS set up its standby military wing called the ECOMOG, to deal with these wars and similar ones that would occur in the sub-region in future. The ECOMOG is also mandated to operate in all ECOWAS countries be it Anglophone, Francophone or Lusophone. Since its inception, the ECOMOG has operated in Guinea Bissau and Cote D’Ivoire in addition to Liberia and Sierra Leone. Its updated form, the West African Standby Force (WASF) which is a subsidiary of the larger African Standby Force (ASF) by the AU is currently being formed. Once Ghanaian soldiers are going to operate
with their Francophone counterparts within the WASF and the AUSF, the need for Ghana having French language becomes very strong. One reason for this is that the ability to communicate in French would enhance the Ghanaian soldier’s inter operability with his Francophone counterpart.

Informal economic activities are more widespread in West Africa than any other part of sub-Saharan Africa. These informal activities span over virtually all aspects of economic life in the sub-region, both within countries and across borders. These activities take the form of currency changes along the borders, formation of community based savings club, and informal production structures which are basically cottage industries. It has been observed that women in particular carry out a lot of tasks in the informal sector both local and international. Whereas formal international trade within West Africa is estimated to be just about 5% of the sub regions’ total trade, the informal international trade is estimated to be at least three times this number. Again, this is normally carried out by women. Women from Ghana, Nigeria, Togo, Niger etc. for example travel across the borders to trade. Although there seems to be several problems facing such traders, the most prominent is the French-English language divide. Most of the women who cross the border to trade normally live along the borders so the presence of common languages along the West African borders is what facilitates their transactions. Moving further inland to trade, language becomes a big problem for the traders. For Ghanaians to be able to trade in the interior Francophone West Africa for example, knowledge of the French language comes in handy.

Again, there are many civil society organisations in West Africa which are Pan African in nature. One example is the West African Students Union (WASU) which was formed after WW II to agitate against colonial rule in West Africa. Also, due to the sub-region’s rapid spread of Western education, there are many professional groups such as associations of lawyers, doctors,
journalists and teachers. For Ghana to play a leading role in some of these activities, the need to master French language by Ghanaians becomes unquestionable.

In a publication by the French Embassy in New Zealand dated 29 August 2013 and titled *17 Reasons to Learn French*, there are many advantages for one to learn or communicate in French. In this modern era, speaking only one foreign language is not enough to cope with the dispensation of global village. Having at least one more language in addition to what one already has opens him or her to new personal and professional lives.\(^{54}\) One’s international relations improve by acquiring the skills to communicate in a new foreign language. French and English are the only two languages officially spoken by countries on six continents. French is thus a major language of international relations. According to the publication, it is the second most spoken language after English and overall sixth in the world after Mandarin, English, Spanish, Portuguese and Russian. The international organisation for French-speaking countries, *Organisation International de la Francophonie* (OIF), is made up of seventy-seven member states and governments. This means if a country takes French as a second language, it would have the advantage of having an easy link with all these countries for her economic and political relations.\(^{55}\)

France, the original speaker of the French language, also operates the biggest international network of cultural institutes. This means in terms of cultural promotion, a non-Francophone country that has French as a second language could benefit a lot from the use of the language.

With a host of French speaking countries in the world, any non-Francophone who acquires French would have a better economic chance of getting jobs, partnering French businesses, especially in the area of retailing, automobile, luxury goods, aeronautics, etc. France itself is the world’s fifth largest economy and due to her former colonial dominance, French economic investments are seen in all her former colonies, including Africa.\(^{56}\) French is also considered as a language of culture in
the international system. French language is therefore a key to many domains of life such as fashion, gastronomy, the arts, architecture and science. Any non-Francophone country which adopts French would have easier understanding with any of such cultural domains. Also, due to the presence of many African countries speaking French, the language comes in handy for anyone who wants to participate effectively in African politics and economy.

Proficiency in French is therefore desirable for any non-Francophone country which is a member of any of these organisations. French is also a language of today’s universal ideals like human rights and the fight against racism etc. These ideals were propagated in the 18th Century by the then enlightened philosophers including some from France. This was the time of the expansion of the defunct French Empire and therefore organisations which promote such ideals today have the French language as one of their official languages. There can also be many opportunities for exchange of ideas in the international world if one can communicate in French. For example, the language is very dominant on the internet which is a big platform for communication in this current international system. With the use of French, one can acquire new important relations on the internet.

In an African Trade Policy paper titled *French Language as a Tool for Trade Facilitation in West Africa* written by Aka Oku (2001), several reasons were cited on why French language should be studied by an Anglophone country like Ghana. West Africa comparatively is the most varied region in Africa in terms of language and economic development. This could to a large extent, be attributed to colonialism. In mathematical terms, 53% of West African countries are Francophone. Ghana won her political independence from the United Kingdom on 6 March 1957 and the Francophone from France in August 1960. Nonetheless, the colonisation by the European powers and the continual relationship with them especially between the Francophone and France has overshadowed the relations between Ghana and her Francophone neighbours. Fortunately,
West Africa formed the ECOWAS to generate good relations among themselves. However, this same language problem still continues to hinder the intended unity. For example, the ECOWAS aims at creating a common market for all its members. However, trade among member countries has always been low and one reason pointed out is the French-English-Portuguese language barrier. If Ghanaians learn French for example, it can expand their trade territories to cover a lot of the Francophone enclave in West Africa and even beyond.60

Ghanaian businessmen and women could communicate with their clients easily from such countries to promote their businesses. Contract negotiations would be faster and less costly because there would be no need for the use of interpreters. Trade integration would boost income in the sub-region and consequently the welfare of the people. The use of French by Ghanaian business men and women would improve Ghanaian businesses’ economies of scale and consequently become competitive in the global market.61 This is because they would have better economies of scale by accessing the Francophone market in addition to what they already have. This will make them stronger during WTO negotiations and in the end benefit the West African economy. The French language would contribute to price reduction as well, by helping importers to buy commodities from the nearest French speaking countries. This would reduce transportation costs, generate cheaper production which would lead to cheaper prices. Also by learning French, traders will access new opportunities in the Francophone countries, get more profit by comparing the prices before they buy, make better choices as a result of the presence of wider variety, and also get new partners from the Francophone countries in West Africa.62

If Anglophone countries in West Africa learn French, the number of transactions within the ECOWAS could increase and also more favourable agreements could be created. It could also increase transparency and therefore reduce scope of corruption within the organisation. Learning
French would also help to reform trade procedures and reduce transaction costs for the Anglophone.\textsuperscript{63} This could take place because an Anglophone importer would be able to understand a conversation and read the tariffs list from the Francophone border Customs officials to prevent being cheated. Finally, being a member of a major language group like French would improve the economic power of a country through expanded trade and exchange of ideas.\textsuperscript{64}

In an article written by Nathan Hoffman, a British writer, titled \textit{5 Good Reasons why French is Still an Important Language}, several reasons were given on the importance of knowing the French language. First, French language gives one insight into international food traditions. Many international dishes have their roots in French and therefore have French names as well.\textsuperscript{65} In many international hotels, one cannot help but encounter French dishes regularly. Although other national traditions like Spanish and Italian have good international food traditions as well, only the French has the likes of Escoffier, Brillat-Savarin, Curnonsky, and host of others which have been patronised regularly throughout the centuries.\textsuperscript{66} Knowledge in French will therefore make ordering many foods at international restaurants by Francophiles much less stressful. This means if Ghanaians gain knowledge of the French language, travelling for meetings and conferences or businesses in the Francophone countries will be more enjoyable when it comes to ordering foods. Intellectual domains such as philosophy, sociology, anthropology, linguistics, and even history itself have strong roots in France. Knowledge of French language will increase the understanding of anyone interested in the work of great French scholars like Descartes, Comte, Saussure, Sartre, Foucault, and many other great ones.\textsuperscript{67}

Communication will be easier for any Francophile in the international system. The population of Metropolitan France itself is 65 million people. Apart from that French is officially spoken in 29 other countries compared to Spanish for example which is spoken in 20 countries. Eighteen of
such countries are in Africa and eight within the ECOWAS enclave. A 2010 report by the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, indicated that at least 220 million speak French worldwide, 96 million of them in Africa. This accounts for almost 10% of its population. On country to country basis, French remains important to over 70 countries with 56 of them being members of the OIF. Any non-Francophone country speaking French will therefore have easier communication and therefore better relations with the Francophone.68

Apart from French featuring prominently in the language of food, culture, education, etc. it is also traditionally a language of diplomacy, something more related to this study. Treaties of all major international groupings like the UN, NATO, AU, ECOWAS etc. for example are translated into French. The UN agencies in Geneva prefer to do business in French more than any other language. For an Anglophone country like Ghana, French will therefore be a useful asset in her international relations.

According to a 2014 report by the Alliance Francaise de Cincinnatititled Why Learn French? French is a native language for over 200 million people and a second language for at least half of this number. In Europe, apart from France it is spoken in Luxemburg, Belgium and Switzerland.69 In the Americas, it is spoken in Canada (Quebec), Guyana and some Caribbean countries. It is the business language for the educated in parts South East Asia, North, West and Central Africa. This means should Ghana adopt French, her relations with the neighbouring African nations who speak French would improve.

French is an official language for the European Union (EU), the world’s largest economic union. The EU is made up of 25 nations with a population of 250 million people and a Gross National Product larger than that of the United States. French is also a language for the UN, NATO, ICRC and UNESCO.70 A non-Francophone country knowing French will have the advantage of linking up with millions of people and many countries also. Knowledge in French could also help one to
understand other Romance languages like Spanish, Italian and Portuguese. It should be noted that about 50% of the English vocabulary is derived from French. Since the need for effective communication is undisputable in international relations, French being international would aid any Francophile who can communicate in it. French is also a language of business. In the United States, more than 800,000 jobs require French speakers. In international business, over 2,000 American companies have their subsidiaries in France and over 600 French companies also have their subsidiaries in the USA. Some of these companies with dual locations in the USA and France include Renault, Du Pont, Hewlett-Pakcard, Xerox, Apple Computer, Michelin, Bic etc.\textsuperscript{71}

French musicians, fashion designers, film makers, poets, chefs and artists have also made a big impact on the international arena. Learning French gives one the opportunity to access all these areas which are also part of today’s international life. One can feel comfortable in the world of fashion, literature, music, filmmaking and international cuisine by knowing French. Recent American hit movies like \textit{Three Men, a Baby} and \textit{Point of No Return} are all reproductions of French movies. More relevant to this study is that in Africa, Burkina Faso every year hosts the African Film Festival in Ouagadougou which attracts stakeholders in the film industry including Ghanaians. Since Burkina Faso speaks French, knowledge in French by Ghana would make Ghana’s participation in this event more meaningful to her. This in the end would improve relations between the two countries.\textsuperscript{72}

French is also a language of many of world’s influential, religious and intellectual movements. Frenchmen like Jean Calvin helped to define Protestantism, François-Marie Arouet (Voltaire) championed Human Rights whilst Simone de Beauvoir was a renowned Feminist. Michel Foucault was the founder of post modernism.
French is also a language of tourism, something which generates great incomes for countries in recent times.\textsuperscript{73} If Ghana adopts French, Ghanaians can visit and enjoy places like Notre Dame de la Paix Basilica in Yamoussoukro in Cote D’Ivoire, and similar interesting places in Togo and Burkina Faso. People from such countries can also visit many tourist centres like the Kakum National Park, the Elmina and Cape Coast Castles and other nice places in the country. This will help improve economic and political relations between Ghana and these countries.

According to Wolff (2010), Africa alone has about a third of the world’s current languages.\textsuperscript{74} The total number of indigenous languages in Africa is estimated to be about two thousand out of world’s total of about seven thousand. On the average, there are about forty different languages in every African country. In addition to these indigenous languages are European ones which are basically English, French and Portuguese which came onto the continent by way of colonisation. Although European colonisation demised about sixty years ago, European languages are still very dominant in Africa with nomenclatures as \textit{lingua franca}, \textit{official language} or \textit{international language}. In practice, hardly more than 20\% of the African people use the so-called official languages in everyday life. Indeed 96\% of Africans are mother tongue speakers.\textsuperscript{75} Nonetheless, the European languages of French, English and Portuguese are still very important and more powerful because of love by the few powerful educated elite. The elites are those mostly needed for social and economic development so they are very powerful in society. Also in today’s international world, the European languages are the languages of commerce, politics and all factors of human relations.

Many of Africa’s opinion leaders and politicians are rather more adept in speaking the European languages than local ones and therefore have made the use of these European languages more important than the local counterparts. Africa is therefore divided geographically and linguistically as Francophone, Anglophone, Lusophone and sometimes Arabophone which is basically for the
north of the continent. In terms of language, countries in the north of Africa have a special case of speaking Arabic due to their heavy association with Islam and earlier territorial conquest by the Arabs. In modern times, Africans cannot do away with the so-called linguae francae in the international system even though compared to indigenous African languages they are fewer.

The figure below shows the levels of power of African languages and their classifications:

![Image of the African 'Polyglossia Pyramid'](https://example.com/polyglossia-pyramid)

Figure 1: The African ‘Polyglossia Pyramid’.

There is an interrelationship between language and development so since Africa and by contraction West Africa is multi lingual, an Anglophone country like Ghana needs to know any of the other linguae francae especially French which is very dominant in West Africa to be able to fare well in today’s international system. A group of enlightened educationists believe that education, language and development are interrelated and therefore there could be no development without the presence of education and language. Other educationists go a step further by adding communication as a factor for development. To them putting knowledge into practice is communication and communication by humans is almost exclusively verbal. This means whether a society is monolingual, bilingual or multilingual, there should be verbal communication before any development could take place. How can this be possible in a multilingual environment like West Africa? Unless one learnt several languages. It is for this reason that Ghana for example should
learn French in addition to English to improve relations with her Francophone neighbours to accelerate her national development.

The figure below illustrates the interrelationship between Education, Language, Communication and Development:

![Diagram illustrating the Development Communication Triangle]

Figure 2: The Development Communication Triangle.79

The relationship is further explained by the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEVELOPMENT</th>
<th>COMMUNICATION</th>
<th>LANGUAGE(S)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development is about verbal communication between stakeholders.</td>
<td>Modern development relies heavily on knowledge and information.</td>
<td>African countries rely significantly on foreign sources of knowledge and information, especially in the areas of science and technology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The knowledge and information comes to Africa through international languages which are not indigenous to the African continent.</td>
<td>For development ideas to take root in Africa and benefit from African creativity, development activities must involve the African masses, not only the elite; and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The goal of involving the African masses in development activities cannot be achieved through a national communication network (including education) based exclusively on non-indigenous languages.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3: Table showing relationship between development and communication80
No matter how development is defined, there is no way modern politics, economy, human rights, and many other human activities can be analysed without reference to language as an important factor. For example, the very fact that African education, political and economic policies do not take into account the language factor is the reason for Africa’s underdevelopment in her economic and social systems.  

Wolff continues by showing the relationship between economic development and language. He based on a weak theory by social scientists that multilingualism is related to poverty because many poor areas in the world like Africa and Asia are multilingual compared to Europe and North America which are richer. Fishman (1968) observed that “Linguistically homogeneous polities are usually more developed, educationally more advanced, politically more modernised and ideologically-politically more tranquil and stable.” Or, in the words of Pool (1972), “a country that is linguistically highly heterogeneous is always underdeveloped and a country that is developed always has considerable linguistic uniformity.”

In line with this, this study seeks to confirm whether or not language has much to do with economic and political development and by extension improvement in economic and political relations in West Africa.

1.9 Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study certain terms and their meanings are provided as follows:

**Accord de Cooperation** – Bilateral agreement between France and former colonies for some level of cooperation.

**Amharic** – The official language of Ethiopia.
Communaute Francophone Africaine - France alliance with former colonies by which she could retain some control over them.

Francafrique – French - Africa political alliance which aims at maintains post colonial ties between France and her former African colonies.

Mandarin - A traditional name for the Chinese national language.

1.10 Sources of Data and Research Methodology

Both primary and secondary sources of data were used. Unstructured interviews were used for the primary source of data whilst secondary sources consisted of books, journal articles and internet sources. Qualitative method of analysis was used to come out with the findings. The use of the qualitative method was necessitated by the fact that the data obtained were not statistically inclined and therefore using the quantitative method would not help much in the analysis. The analysis therefore took the form of comparisons, descriptions, explanations and narrations. Questions asked centred on whether French language was important in Ghana’s relations with her Francophone neighbours, whether Ghanaians take the study of French language seriously, and the benefit Ghanaians would get if they adopted French as a second official language. Also, there was a question on what role the government of Ghana should play to make French language education compulsory in the country. Two people each were randomly selected from the Embassies of Burkina Faso, Cote D’Ivoire and Togo in Accra for my interviews. This was because per the nature of their work, they would be able to give reliable information on Ghana’s relations with their respective countries. I also interviewed two people each from the External Relations Department from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Accra and also the Immigration Department at the Tema Harbour. This was also for the same reason that they could provide more reliable data for the analysis, based on the nature of their work.
For the secondary source, I used reports and newspaper publications on a similar study. For example, I used a joint Ministry of Education/French Embassy Report on the French language education in Ghana (2010), the Annual Report of the Canada’s Commissioner of Official Languages, Ottawa (2005) and the Today newspaper of 29 October 2010. These gave me data on the influence of the French language on Ghana’s external relations with the Francophone neighbours and role of the language on foreign relations of countries like the United States and Canada. In the end, all helped me to make comparisons and come out with my findings. Details of all these sources have been provided in the endnotes.

1.11 Arrangement of Chapters

Chapter One constitutes the Research Design which shows the arrangement of the work.

Chapter Two examines the use of the French language in West Africa.

Chapter Three examines the use of the French language in Ghana’s relations with Francophone West Africa.

Chapter Four provides the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations.
Endnotes

4. Ibid., p. 168.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., p 169.
11. Graphic Business of 18 Jul 12, p. 3.
26. Ibid., p. 2.
27. Ibid., p. 2.
28. Ibid., p. 3.
29. Ibid., p. 3.
30. Ibid., p. 3.
32. Ibid., p. 1.
33. Ibid., p. 1.
34. Ibid., p. 1.
35. Ibid., p. 1.
37. Ibid., p. 1.
38. Ibid., p. 1.
40. Ibid., p. 1.
41. Ibid., p. 1.
42. Ibid., p. 1.
44. Ibid., p. 8.
46. Ibid., p. 2.
47. Ibid., p. 3.
48. Ibid., p. 8.
50. Ibid., p. 27.
51. Ibid., p. 28.
52. Ibid., p. 29.
53. Ibid., p. 30.
55. Ibid., p. 1.
56. Ibid., p. 1.
57. Ibid., p. 1.
59. Ibid., p. 5.
60. Ibid., p. 6.
61. Ibid., p. 6.
62. Ibid., p. 6.
65. Ibid., p. 1.
66. Ibid., p. 1.
67. Ibid., p. 1.
68. Ibid., p. 1.
70. Ibid., p. 1.
71. Ibid., p. 1.
72. Ibid., p. 1.
73. Ibid., p. 1.
75. Ibid., p. 7.
76. Ibid., p. 9.
77. Ibid., p. 8.
78. Ibid., p. 8.
79. Ibid., p. 8.
80. Ibid., p. 9.
CHAPTER TWO

THE USE OF THE FRENCH LANGUAGE IN GHANA’S RELATIONS WITH FRANCOPHONE WEST AFRICA

2.0 Introduction

The French language as at today is the most dominant international language in West Africa on country by country basis. Eight out of the fifteen ECOWAS countries officially speak French. This means mathematically, 53% of the West African countries officially speak French. Although the language is not indigenous to West Africa, it has become more dominant than any of the indigenous languages in the sub-region. This chapter seeks to trace how the language came into West Africa and how it has dominated the international relations of the sub-region.

2.1 The Advent of the French Language into West Africa

Modern history of West Africa is recorded from the 9th to 13th Century CE. This was the era of great empires for West Africa. ¹ For example, there was the Ghana Empire, Songhai Empire and Mali Empire. These empires were formed by rich and powerful kingdoms whose only contact with the outside world was through trade. Geographically, there is the Sahara Desert to the north of West Africa, south of this desert is savanna grassland and further south is rain forest. Minerals like gold, diamond, and salt could therefore be produced in such kingdoms and sold to Europeans and Arabs.² The means of communication in these kingdoms were indigenous African languages. The first foreign language to be introduced to West Africa was Arabic through the trans-Saharan gold trade between the Maghreb and the kingdoms between the stated periods of 9th to 13th CE. Maghreb was an area found in the area of today’s Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. Originally, Arabic was not their language but they were conquered by the Arabs in the 10th Century and forced to accept Islam as a religion and Arabic as their official language.³ The Magrebs also later
brought Islam and Arabic to West Africa through trade. This marked the first phase of a foreign language coming into West Africa.

The second phase of a foreign language spread to West Africa was by contact with the early Europeans explorers. It was the Portuguese who first set the tone for European exploration into West Africa after the capture of Ceuta in North Africa in 1415. Europeans at that time were looking for a sea route to India to access a rich spice trade. It was the ambition of all major European nations at that time to discover the sea route to India. Portugal, under the command of Prince Henry the Navigator, set up a navigation school for that purpose. The Portuguese were more organised in their navigation endeavours than any other European country and therefore took the early lead in discoveries of new lands. In the first half of the 15\textsuperscript{th} Century, they discovered the then uninhabited lands of present day Madeira, Azores and Cape Verde. In 1446, they landed in present day Senegal and established a trading post there. They also reached Edina or Elmina in the Gold Coast (Ghana) in 1471. They moved further south of the African continent and reached the Congo estuary in 1482, establishing trade with the Kingdoms of Kongo and Ndongo. Between 1497 and 1498, they reached the East African ports of Mombasa and Malindi. The news of Portuguese discoveries of new worlds reached Europe as a motivation for other Europeans to follow suit. I will particularly focus on France from here because that is more relevant to this research.

French colonialist operations began in 1637 when an expeditionary leader, Claude de Rochforte berthed his ship in present day Senegal and built a fort, Saint Louis, at the mouth of River Senegal. He then explored the river 100 miles into the interior. Later, in the 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries, more French explorers followed Rochforte’s work and made settlements at Millicourie at the coast of present day Guinea Conakry and Assinié and Grand Bassam in Ivory Coast. By the 1820s, the
main European dominances in Africa were Portuguese Mozambique and Angola in the south, the French settlement in the coast of Senegal, and the British occupation in South Africa, Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast and the Gambia. By 1881, the French had extended their conquest to Algeria. Later in the same year, they extended their conquest to Tunisia, declaring it a protectorate. In the 1850s, the French started moving from the coast of Senegal to the interior. Their aim was to hit the Nile in the East of Africa. One after the other, they annexed the areas that would become their future colonies. In the 1880s, Dahomey was annexed by the French. In 1849, the French again found a colony of freed slaves in Gabon and started moving inwards of that country in the 1870s. The French statesmen then studied the African map closely and decided to move their explorers east from the River Niger and north from the River Congo until they could link up with their counterparts from Algeria at Lake Chad. This was their conception of a dream African empire from the Mediterranean to the River Congo.

By the 1870s, there were three main European powers in Africa, the Portuguese, French and English. From this period, the European attitude towards Africa changed. This was because they had then had a greater knowledge about the raw undeveloped continent through exploration, and therefore felt superior to the local Africans and also gained more desire to exploit their resources. Based on their contact with the African people which sometimes resulted in wars, their sentiments were whipped up to protect European missionaries and explorers, and also stop the Slave Trade on the continent. They also felt it a duty to educate, civilise and convert the African to Christianity. This led to the Scramble for Africa where European nations competed for territories on the continent for the mentioned aims. This scramble for Africa led to the signing of the Berlin Treaty of 1884/85 which partitioned Africa among European powers.
Following her humiliating defeat in the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, France embarked on a massive colonisation drive to restore her international prestige and confidence. Due to this, France had become the most active colonial power by the time of the Berlin Treaty and therefore acquired the largest area of territory under this Treaty. By 1900, the French African Empire was made up of Algeria and Tunisia in the north and Senegal, French Guinea (Conakry), Ivory Coast and Dahomey along the west coast. French Senegal comprised present day Mauritania and part of Mali, which was called French Sudan during the colonial days. French African dominance was sub-divided as French West Africa which comprised nearly all the Sahara and western Sudan; French Equatorial Africa comprised Gabon, Congo (Brazaville) and central Sudan (modern Chad). Other parts of the Empire included French Somaliland (now Djibouti) in East Africa, and also the present day Islands of Madagascar, Mauritius and Reunion in the south of the continent. After Germany lost the First World War (WWI) in 1918, her colony of Trans Volta Togoland (Togo) in West Africa was given to France by the League of Nations as a trusteeship state. Thus after 1914, full French West Africa comprised present day Republic of Benin (formerly called Dahomey), Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Upper Volta (Burkina Faso), Ivory Coast, Benin, Guinea (Conakry), Chad, Niger and Togo.

When France fell to the Germans at the onset of the Second World War (WWII), her possession of the territories became complicated. Two different governments were then formed in France, the Vichy French dominated by the German conquerors and the Free French made up of nationalists led by General Charles de Gaulle. However, when Germany lost the WWII in 1945, all the lost territories were returned to France. France had uninterrupted dominance over the West African colonies after WWII until they gained independence in August 1960. Earlier on in 1958, de Gaulle’s government had attempted thwarting the independence agitation by the African countries by forming the French Community. This was an organisation between France and the former
African colonies in which political independence would be given to the latter but they would still be linked to France in terms of foreign, economics, financial and strategic affairs. Guinea however rejected this new formation by France and instead opted for full Independence. Two years later, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, and Benin also withdrew from the French Community. With French colonisation in West Africa spanning even before the Berlin Treaty until August 1960, the French language naturally spread to West Africa and became an official language for the respective colonies. After the former colonies won their independence in 1960, all of them still continued to use French as their official languages up to today.

2.2 The Use of the French Language in International Relations in West Africa

West Africa has many indigenous languages, with majority of them being part of the Niger-Congo language family. Some of the major indigenous languages are Hausa, Malinke, Akan, Igbo, Yoruba and Fulani. Others are Wolof, Jolof, Bambara, Mosi, Ewe, Kru, Kpelle and many more. The multiplicity of languages naturally makes communication in the sub-region difficult. Due to European colonisation in West Africa which spanned over 100 years, European languages particularly French, English and Portuguese found their way into the sub-region. These languages eventually became official languages in the respective countries where the Europeans colonised. France had the lion’s share of the West African region and therefore the French language spread to cover that large area of French colonisation. At the moment, out of the fifteen ECOWAS countries, eight are former French colonies and therefore French speaking. This mathematically accounts for 53% of the West African states. Although West African countries won their political independence from the European colonial masters nearly sixty years ago, they all still use the European languages as *lingua franca*. This is because due to the multiplicity of languages in the respective
countries, the use the European languages ensure neutrality and therefore solves the potential problem of an ethnic group feeling rejected by its language not adopted as a national language.\textsuperscript{18}

At the global level however, the use of the French language is dwindling at the moment due to intense competition from English, Spanish, Chinese (Mandarin) and Arabic.\textsuperscript{19} However, in Africa the language is reinforced and entrenched due to the continuous link between France and the former colonies. It is a reliable expectation therefore that the future of the French language lies with Africa. During the 13th World Congress of the International Federation of French Teachers held in South Africa from 23 to 27 July 2014, the French Minister of La Francophonie, Madam Yamina Benguigui admitted that the future of French language was not bright in this modern globalised world. She, however, confirmed that the future of the language lies with Africa. She said as quoted:

\textit{By 2050, there will be more Africans making use of French as an official language and for inter-personal communication than French citizens in France.}\textsuperscript{20}

This is so because in Africa, learning French is seen as a way to boost one’s chances of getting employed especially in French, Swiss, Belgian and Canadian companies. At the same congress, Raufu Adebisi, a Nigerian professor who teaches French in the Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, northern Nigeria also confirmed the importance of the language to young African students. To him, the youths in Nigeria for example see learning French as a means to secure jobs in French companies.\textsuperscript{21} This means in spite of the global decline of the language, it is still vibrant in West Africa.

The main reason why French is vibrant in West Africa is the continuous Franco-West Africa cooperation which still strongly exists. At the end of the Second World War (WWII), the reality dawned on France to grant the African colonies their independence. This was because France, like Britain and other European powers, had been weakened economically by the war. They were
preoccupied with national reconstruction at home and therefore lost grip over the colonies. Although France initially resisted the agitation for independence by the African colonies, what she finally decided to do was to grant formal authority to the colonies and maintain an informal authority over them. The French president whose time the African countries gained their independence was General Charles de Gaulle. To be able to maintain France stranglehold on the former colonies, de Gaulle formed the *Communaute Francophone Africaine*.\textsuperscript{22} By this policy, France would grant independence to the African colonies but retain control of defence, monetary, foreign affairs and strategic mineral resources. In West Africa, all the countries accepted this policy except Guinea Conakry. This strengthened French presence in West Africa even after independence and therefore prolonged the use of the French language in the sub-region up to today. After independence, France went on to sign the *Accord de Cooperation* with the independent nations.\textsuperscript{23} This agreement confirmed the French dominance in many spheres of the African affairs. Areas like security, foreign policy, defence, diplomatic consultations of these countries were at the beck and call of France. Although this was revised in the 1970s to give more room to the African governments to operate, many of the African elites were already used to this and therefore found it difficult to practically reverse the French control over them.\textsuperscript{24}

After giving independence to the West African countries, all French presidents who came to power maintained close links with these countries. This practice has been carried on up to today. Many conferences and meetings are held regularly at both governmental and ministerial levels to ensure that the countries do not fall to any external influences other than that of France and also to protect French interests.\textsuperscript{25} It should be noted that one reason, other than those stated already, why France continues to remain in Africa is to promote her language and culture.\textsuperscript{26}
France continues to make economic and political capital in West Africa up to today. They do this by making the African elites who sign agreements with them feel comfortable whilst the masses suffer. They do not allow political awareness to grow and also they make sure they capture the commanding heights of the economies of these countries. For example, right after WWII when nationalism was blowing over all of Africa, France stifled the formation of political parties in the colonies. Few independent leaders had to form their political parties secretly in the colonies. Economically, up to today, many companies in these Francophone West African countries are all from France. What this means is that in this era of globalisation, privatisation and intense capitalism, if any non-Francophone country wants to establish a relation with a Francophone West African neighbour, having knowledge about French language is very desirable.

Following the loosening of French influence on Francophone West Africa in the 1970s, the nations gained some liberty to form alliances with their non-Francophone neighbours. This led to the formation of the ECOWAS in May 1975 which is still vibrant.

Also with the collapse of communism in 1991, France to a large extent toned down on her control over the Francophone West African countries. This is because the fear of communism coming into these countries was no more. These countries were now more free and ready to enter into relationships with their non Anglophone neighbours like Ghana, Nigeria, Liberia, the Gambia and Sierra Leone. Nonetheless, French is still the official language of these countries and they also form the majority in West Africa. For a country like Ghana, French is therefore very relevant in her relations with these Francophone countries.
2.3 The Behaviourists’ Perspectives on Second Language Acquisition and Bilingualism

Before the 1960s, the view on acquisition of a first language was purely dominated by behaviourist idea of habit formation caused by repetition, imitation and reinforcement of bahaviour.\textsuperscript{29} It should be noted however that in all cases a learner of a first language has no idea of a previous language but a learner of a second language has. Having the idea of a first language has both advantage and disadvantage for learning a second language. The advantage from the knowledge of the first language in learning the second language is called \textit{positive transfer}. The disadvantage aspect is called \textit{negative transfer} or \textit{interference}. For example, \textit{Kofi is going to school} in English will help an English speaker learning French to say correctly \textit{Kofi va l’école}. That is the positive transfer. An example for the negative transfer is, \textit{a black boy} in English could misguide someone to say \textit{un noir garçon} but in true sense the more correct French is \textit{un garçon noir}.\textsuperscript{30}

The Behaviourists also say that in trying to be bilingual, one can expose himself or herself to the problem of generalisation. What this means is that a learner of a new language may generalise the rules of the grammar of that language. In practice however, generalisations don’t work always and so every aspect of grammar should be studied the way it should be. For example, in French language every country whose name ends with the letter \textit{e} is considered feminine and therefore should take the feminine article \textit{la}.\textsuperscript{31} There is therefore \textit{La Côte D’Ivoire, La Guinea} and \textit{La France}. There are however exceptions to this. In all, 4 countries ending with \textit{e} are considered masculine and therefore take the masculine article \textit{le}. These are \textit{Le Mexique, Le Moxambique, Le Zaïre} and \textit{Le Martinique}. 
There is also the likely repetition of positioning of words in the new language as done in the first language. For example in English the expression *I am sorry* is correct. However, its direct version *Je suis pardon* is never said in French. Rather just one word, *pardon* is enough.32

It should be noted that although the French language is touted as the language of diplomacy, it is nevertheless very complex, full of twist and turns in terms of its grammatical structure. Peter Mayle (1992), an English author, describes the complexity of the French language as below:

“... It is perhaps because of these perplexing twists and turns that French was for centuries the language of diplomacy, an occupation in which simplicity and clarity are not regarded as being necessary or even desirable.”33

Mayle says that the classification of French nouns into masculine and feminine is nothing short of confusion. He questions why two rivers in France, that is, the *Rhône* River is masculine and the *Durance* River is feminine even though they are both rivers.

In the same vein, Alex Dreier, a former American diplomat says that in diplomacy, “Nuance and significant vagueness are essential, and French might have been invented to allow these linguistic weeds to flourish in the crevices of every sentence.”34 He admittedly says that in spite of this the French language is still beautiful, supple and romantic but still falls short of the international accolade as the “*cours de civilisation.*”35
Endnotes

4. Ibid., p. 18.
5. Ibid., p. 18.
10. Ibid., p. 27.
11. Ibid., p. 30.
12. Ibid., p. 31.
13. Ibid., p. 31.
14. Ibid., p. 35.
15. Ibid., p 35.
16. Ibid., p. 36.
23. Ibid., p. 47.
24. Ibid., p. 48.
25. Ibid., p. 49.
26. Ibid., p. 50.
27. Ibid., p. 53.
28. Ibid., p. 77.
30. Ibid., p. 20
31. Ibid., p. 23.
32. Ibid., p. 25.
34. Ibid., p. 1.
35. Ibid., p. 1.
CHAPTER THREE

AN ANALYSIS OF THE USE OF FRENCH LANGUAGE IN GHANA’S RELATIONS WITH FRANCOPHONE WEST AFRICA

3.0 Introduction

In doing the analysis of the use of French language in Ghana’s relations with Francophone West Africa, interviews were conducted at the Embassies of Burkina Faso, Cote D’Ivoire and Togo in Accra. Similar interviews were also conducted at the Tema Harbour and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Accra. Two people from each of these institutions were randomly selected to sample their views. Monsieur Ketto Aurien and Mademoiselle Matilda Pnanfa were interviewed at the Togolese Embassy. Madam Noufe Som Odette and Monsieur Aka Habib Romaric were interviewed at the Ivorian Embassy. Messrs Foreigna Owusu-Addo and George Arthur were interviewed from the Ghana Immigration Service Department at the Tema Harbour. Interviewees from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Burkina Faso Embassy did not want their identity to be disclosed. Relevant secondary sources from books, journals, newspapers and internet sources were also used for the analysis. The questions asked and the responses are analysed in the ensuing paragraphs. Findings of completed works on a similar study were also included in the analysis.

3.1 Importance of the French Language to Ghanaians’ Relations with the Francophone

Many Ghanaians cherish English as their official language and for that matter do not care about learning any other international language. To most Ghanaians, French is not really important to study because English is the leading international language in the world. However, the interview still sought the opinions of the people with regard to whether French language enhances Ghana-
Francophone relations. Respondents were of the opinion that French was important for Ghana in her relations with the Francophone countries because being able to interact very well in a common language especially the French language, would enhance relations with the Francophone neighbours. The people interviewed were of the opinion that if the language was made compulsory in the first and second cycle institutions, it would go a long way to build good relations with the francophone countries and therefore French is a very important language to study. Communication is one of the important tools that unite countries. In view of this a question was asked whether people could communicate in the French language. All the people at the Embassies could speak French. Two of the four Ghanaians interviewees from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Immigration Service answered in affirmative. They said they made conscious efforts to study French because they saw the language very important in West African affairs.

3.2 French Education in Ghana

In view of Ghana being geographically surrounded by French speaking countries, this study looked into how the language is being studied in Ghana. For the four Ghanaians interviewed, two said that they studied French up to the secondary school level. Of this one said he continued up to the tertiary level.

Ghana’s Ministry of Education in collaboration with the French Embassy in Accra has been making vigorous attempts since the 1980s to promote French language learning in Ghana. A great deal of attention had been paid to the training of French teachers in Ghana who would in turn teach future French language students. In this regard, three Colleges of Education (formerly Teacher Training College) in the Eastern, Ashanti and the Northern regions were designated as centres of French teaching and learning. These were the Mount Mary College of Education (Somanya, Eastern), Wesley College of Education (Kumasi, Ashanti) and Bagabaga College of Education.
(Bagabaga, Northern). Ten Regional Centres of Learning were also established to provide teaching and learning materials for French teachers and students. The centres were also responsible for monitoring and promoting the French language in Ghana. At the higher level, the French Embassy also supports students pursuing French language education and even sometimes sponsors some for oversees schooling.¹

3.2.1 French Education at the Junior High School (JHS) Level

According to the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) 2009/10 Basic Education Certificate Examinations (BECE) data, 70,000 sat for French exams in the said BECE. This marked an appreciable increase of 19 percent from the figures of the previous years, an indication that French education is gaining popularity at the lower level. Performance in the exams had also improved over the last three years for both boys and girls although girls had performed slightly better than boys. According to the data, the Greater Accra, Ashanti and Volta Regions were where French primary education is dominant and the three lowest regions were the North, Upper East and Upper West Regions. This notwithstanding, best performing regions have consistently been the Upper West, Greater Accra and Ashanti.²

A joint Ministry of Education and French Embassy research over the same period however suggested that there was the shortage of French teachers in the country at the Junior High School level. The research showed that in the Northern Region for example, out of the 174 French teachers in the public JHSs only 48 (28%) of them were trained teachers. Throughout the country, it was also discovered that some districts which do not see French as a priority convert trained French teachers to teach other subjects.³
3.2.2 French Education at the Senior High School (SHS) Level

According to a report by the Education Management Information System (EMIS), the number of SHSs offering French increased from 259 in 2007 to 283 in 2008. This however fell to 281 in 2009. The Ministry of Education (MOE, 2008) also asserts that the number of SHSs offering French is about 57% of all public SHSs. Between the 2008/09 and 2009/10 academic year, the number of students offering French at the SHS level in public schools increased from 36,827 to 71,768. This marks an increase of 51%. The Volta, Ashanti and Eastern regions have the highest number of SHSs offering French while the Upper East, Upper West, Northern and the Brong-Ahafo Regions have the lowest number of SHSs offering French. It should however be noted that at the national level, only 9% of the SHS students offered French as an option, to the remainder it was compulsory.

The MOE again said that in the whole country, the total number of students who sat for French in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) increased from 7,880 students in 2007 to 9,810 in 2009. This represented a 24% increase but the increment was skewed towards 2008 and 2009. The MOE also reported that only 38% of students sitting for the WASSCE within this period were males even though at the SHS level more males offer French than females at the initial stages. This shows that many male students drop French before the final WASSCE examination. The Ashanti, Eastern, Volta and Greater Accra regions have the largest number of students and Upper West, Upper East, Northern and the Brong-Ahafo regions have the fewest number of students sitting for French for WASSCE. On average, about 60% were able to pass (obtained grade A1-C6) for the period 2007-2009. Of this, females slightly outperformed the male students.
3.2.3 French Education at the College of Education (COE) Level

The joint MOE-French Embassy research revealed that this was not enough. Among the findings of the research was a recommendation from interviewees that there should be at least one specialised French COE in every region of Ghana. The study also found out that even in the specialised French COEs, French students only numbered about 20 - 30% of the student population. This patronage was due to the fact that many potential French students were afraid to pass the COE French exams and be sacked from the colleges so they avoided the French. Their fear was sparked by seeming weak foundation in French from the SHS and JHS levels. The study also revealed that there was no female student pursuing French in any of the specialised COEs. Again, teaching and learning materials for French in these institutions were in a very poor state. Even Mount Mary which used to be the best equipped COE did not have the needed teaching and learning materials. Though they and Wesley had some audio-visual aids, textbooks and CDs, most of them were found to be outmoded but Bagabaga did not have such aids at all. Moreover, French contact hours by the students were six hours per week which was too small. This picture does not look good for French education at the COE level.

3.2.4 French Education at the Tertiary Level

At the tertiary level, the study concentrated on the polytechnics and the five public universities. These were the Universities of Ghana (Legon), Cape Coast (UCC), Education, (UE, Winneba), Development Studies (UDS) and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). The study from the five public universities revealed that there were about 2,056 students taking French in the various French Departments for Bachelor’s, Master’s and PhD degrees. About 1,969 (96%) of these were studying for Bachelor’s degree. The study showed that Legon had the largest number of the students (about 45%) studying at its French Department. In all
the universities, a total of 2,667 were just taking French as a minor course. In total, 4,723 students were studying French at the nation’s public universities for both the major and minor programmes.\textsuperscript{12}

In the polytechnics, the study discovered that only few of the students were offering French courses especially those offering home economics. Even with this, the type of French being taught over there was too basic for a tertiary level.\textsuperscript{13} Ironically, the polytechnics had a good number of qualified teachers for French. In general, the study showed that French education at the polytechnic level was very poor.

### 3.3 Benefits of Acquiring French Language in Ghana

Over the years, French language had become a major drawback to effective communication for Ghanaians even on national platforms. In an era of intense globalisation, it is necessary to intensify Ghanaians’ awareness that English–French bilingualism is an economic and political advantage both within Ghana and beyond. The MOE should be motivated by the awareness and appreciation of the many proven benefits of learning an additional language to improve French language education in the country.

In West Africa where French and English have equal status as official languages, there are significant advantages to be derived from the ability to communicate in both languages. Furthermore, the benefits of learning an additional language are now widely acknowledged to extend beyond the traditional rewards associated with bilingualism, like getting jobs and making friends. A close look at the current international system shows that a country speaking more than one of any of today’s major languages would improve her international relations.
There is also the evidence that learning another language could help in the development of interpersonal and social skills. According to the 2004–05 report of the Commissioner of Official Languages, people “who master more than one language increase their self-confidence and self-esteem and are more at ease with others”.\textsuperscript{14} It must be noted here that good interpersonal skills are a good foundation to international relations.

French language is not just a tool for communication but can help in fostering friendships and also generate cultural and economic relations.\textsuperscript{15} Knowledge of French language could also enhance the work efficiency of Ghanaian Customs, Immigration and Police personnel who work at the borders. Ghana’s geographical location with neighbouring Togo, Cote D’Ivoire, and Burkina Faso and by extension trade and other ties makes it important for Ghanaians to make that individual effort to be able to communicate in at least basic French. French is the second most international language so having the ability to speak it could give one the job of an interpreter, teacher or a translator. For example, a survey has revealed that about 70\% of all American companies want to employ people who can communicate in both English and France.\textsuperscript{16} Apart from the economic advantages, there is also a high level of intellectual importance associated with the language. No matter how educated one is in the Anglophone world, he or she would be(0,6),(996,993)
3.4 How Ghana can Intensify the Study of the French Language

The French Embassy in Ghana has been supporting the Ministry of Education since the 1980s to improve French language teaching and learning at the basic, secondary and tertiary levels. One of the objectives of this gesture is to provide very qualified teachers who would in turn teach the French language at the various levels of education in Ghana. Three specialised Colleges of Education (COEs) have since been established in the Eastern, Ashanti and Northern regions to train future French teachers for basic and second cycle levels of education. The three COEs are the Mount Mary, Wesley and Bagabaga in Eastern, Ashanti and the Northern regions respectively. With some support from the French Embassy, the MOE also set up ten Regional Centres for the teaching and learning of the French language (CREFs) to provide in-service training to French teachers as well as providing French language resources for both teachers and students of French. The centres were tasked to monitor and promote the study of French in Ghana as the need be. Again, the French Embassy has been sponsoring international education for French language students in Ghana specifically to the Village au Benin in Togo. The aim of this oversees training is to enable Ghanaian French language students to have the opportunity to practise the language in a French speaking country.

In spite of this great move by the French Embassy and the MOE, according to the same research that they conducted they detected a gloomy picture about the future of the French language education in Ghana. The study focused on the scale and spread of French language teaching in the country. It also identified the roles Ghana should play to intensify the study of French at the various levels of education. The study showed that there was a shortage of French teachers at the JHS level. This had an obvious adverse effect on the quality of teaching and learning of the language at the Junior and Senior High School (SHS) levels. Most of the qualified trained...
teachers only preferred to stay in the cities and towns and would not go to the rural areas. In the Northern Region for example, only 48 out a total of 174 trained French teachers i.e., only 28% were teaching in the towns and villages. The rest were in the regional and district capitals. Out of the 48 trained teachers in the urban centres, 25 i.e., 50% were deployed in Tamale, the regional capital alone. The inability to train more qualified teachers means that there is shortage of them at the JHS level. This is more acute in the rural areas due to the fact that the few available ones also refuse to go there and rather prefer to live in the urban centres.

There was also the diversion of French teachers to teach subjects other than French by district education authorities, who did not see the study of French as a priority in their districts. This depletes the teacher manpower of French language at the JHS level. Responses from the interview conducted showed that for Ghana to be able to improve French language study, the government should come out with a policy to make it compulsory up to the SHS level.

It should provide more textbooks and other teaching and learning materials to boost the study of the language in Ghana. There should also be the conscious effort to promote the importance of the language among students, taking into consideration that Ghana is surrounded by the Francophone countries and therefore it is in the interest of Ghanaians to speak the language. Even the joint MOE-French Embassy research also recommended the immediate provision of more teaching and learning materials as well as more study periods for French in schools. The study recommended that French teachers be brought in from the three Francophone neighbours of Burkina Faso, Côte D’Ivoire and Togo. This could be done through a special arrangement with these countries by the Government of Ghana. Students should be given the opportunity to travel to Francophone countries so that they can learn the language better than at home. People should also be encouraged to set up French clubs in communities to promote the language. Teaching the language
at the JHS level should also improve in order to prepare students well for further studies at the SHS and tertiary levels.
Endnotes

2. Ibid., p. 8.
3. Ibid., p. 9.
4. Ibid., p. 9.
5. Ibid., p. 9.
6. Ibid., p. 9.
7. Ibid., p. 10.
8. Ibid., p. 10
9. Ibid., p. 11.
10. Ibid., P. 11.
11. Ibid., P. 11.
12. Ibid., P. 11.
13. Ibid., p. 12.
15. Today, 29 October 2010, p. 3.
18. Ibid., p. 8.
19. Ibid., p. 11.
20. Ibid., p. 9.
21. Ibid., p. 10.
22. Ibid., p. 20.
CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.0 Introduction

A lot of data, both primary and secondary was collected and analysed to prove or otherwise the hypothesis of whether Ghana adopting French as a second language would improve her relations with the her Francophone neighbours, especially Togo, Burkina Faso and Cote D’Ivoire which are the focus of this study. The primary data were collected from randomly selected personnel from the Foreign Relations departments of the Embassies of Togo, Burkina Faso and Cote D’Ivoire as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs office in Accra and the Tema Harbour. The secondary sources were from reports, papers and internet sources which were relevant to the study. The data were analysed qualitatively before coming out with the findings.

4.1 Findings of the Study

From the data gathered the hypothesis that French language could help improve Ghana’s relations with Francophone West Africa was upheld. Respondents were of the view that speaking a common language could improve relations and since Ghana is surrounded by Francophone countries, she adopting the French language could make her relations better with the Francophone neighbours. Some respondents even recommended that the language should be made compulsory in school up to the SHS level so that many Ghanaians could at least speak some basic French.

On the question of whether Ghanaians take the study of French seriously, the data obtained proved negative. Although the Government of Ghana with the support of the French Embassy in Accra is doing her best to promote French education, there is still a long way to go. At the JHS level, there
is an extreme lack of qualified French teachers across the country. In the Northern Region for example, only 48 out of the 174 teachers were trained to teach French language at the JHS level. To make matters worse, about a half of the trained teachers live in Tamale, the capital.¹ This means for the rest of the region, only 24 qualified teachers were deployed there. Countrywide, it is only very few JHSs mainly in the cities which offer French lessons to students. This, coupled with the shortage of qualified teachers, make French language education at the JHS level very weak.

At the SHS level the story was almost same as it was at the JHS level. Although the number of students offering French at the SHS level increased from 259 to 283 from 2007 to 2008 in public schools, it represented just 57% of all SHS enrollment over the period. Even with this, only 9% of the students were studying on optional basis. For the rest it was mandatory. This means the French language interest among students was very low. In the case of gender consideration, the study established that girls did slightly better than boys at the SHS level. Again over the period of 2008/2009, it was established that only 35% of boys who began the French language subject at SHS Form One finally sat for the WASSCE. This means a lot of the boys dropped it along the way. This shows that their interest in the subject was very low.²

At the COE level, only three colleges (Mount Mary, Wesley and Bagabaga) had specialised in training teachers to teach the French language. Even with this small number, the colleges were not well equipped to carry out their jobs. There was shortage of teaching and learning aids and even the few that were there were outmoded. Even in these specialised French institutions, only 20% of the students there offered French. This is because due to the poor nature of French teaching at both the JHS and SHS levels, many students who went to the COEs were not well prepared to take up French courses. For that reason they were afraid that they would not pass the COE French exams.
and be sacked from the colleges. This explains the very little enrolment at the COE level. Also French hours for the COEs were found to be too small, only six hours per week.\(^3\)

At the tertiary level, it was found that a total of 4,723 students were studying French at the nation’s five public universities. Looking at the overall number of students who study at these universities, the number for French language was too small. It was found also that it was only few people from Home Economics departments who chose to offer French. Even with this, the type of French taught there was too basic for tertiary level.\(^4\)

On whether French language would benefit Ghana should she adopt it, the finding was unanimous in favour of the adoption. Both responses from interviewees and secondary sources were highly in favour of Ghana adopting the French language. The finding indicates that in view of Ghana’s geographical location of being surrounded by only Francophone neighbours, the adoption of the French language is a matter of necessity to improve her relations with them. Also, on the international scene the French language is second to English in terms of spread. Therefore in this era of globalisation, an adoption by Ghana as a second official language would come in handy. If Ghana adopts French language in addition to English, it would give a great deal of advantage to the youth in the area of employment. They could get the opportunity to work in Francophone countries and in international organisation like the UN, AU and ECOWAS who use French as working languages.

The study also showed that the Government of Ghana needs to do a lot in terms of provision of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials to improve French language education. The government needs to work harder and train more French teachers especially for the JHS/SHS levels. They could do this by educating the youth on the importance of acquiring French language.
The government could also enter into agreements with the neighbouring Francophone countries to supply teachers to Ghana.

4.2 Conclusions

From the findings, it could be concluded that the French language is very important in Ghana’s relations with her Francophone neighbours. Also, in this era of globalisation, Ghanaians speaking French would benefit a lot in the international system. However, the study of the language in Ghana is beset with a lot of problems right from the JHS through the SHS to the tertiary levels. For example, teaching and learning materials are not available in the required quantities and even French teachers themselves are in short supply in the country. The few who are available prefer to stay in the cities and towns rather than in the villages. This has created an acute short shortage of the teachers in the villages.

At the tertiary level in general, not many students study French basically due to their weak foundation in French from the primary and secondary school levels. In the polytechnics, French language courses are not being taken seriously according to the findings. Only very few students in Home Economics departments read French. This is not encouraging for the future of French language education in Ghana because the polytechnics are one area through which many youths gain access to tertiary education in Ghana. The French language course not being strong at that level means a lot of youths who go through the polytechnics miss good French education. Also from the study, the Government of Ghana alone cannot do much to improve French education in the country. It needs the collaborative efforts from the people of Ghana and also outside assistance, for example from the neighbouring Francophone countries.
4.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- The Government of Ghana should improve the quality of French education at the lower level of the JHS and SHS by providing textbooks and other teaching and learning materials.

- The government should also enter into language education exchange programmes with the Francophone neighbours so that they could supply French teachers to Ghana and Ghana also to supply English teachers to them.

- The government should attract French language teachers to accept postings into the rural areas by giving them special incentives.

- The government should make it an educational policy for every Ghanaian student to study the French language up to at least the SHS level.

- The Ministry of Education should intensify counseling students on the need to study French to broaden their employment potential in international organisations.

- The Ghanaian people should also accept the need to learn French in view of their geographical location of being surrounded by only Francophone neighbours.

- Parents should also encourage their children to learn the French language just as they encourage them to learn other subjects because the reality is that the French language is important in West Africa.
Endnotes

2. Ibid., p. 10.
3. Ibid., p. 11.
4. Ibid., p. 12.
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