

Review

Linguistic effects of globalization: A case study of French for specific purposes (FSP) in Kenyan vocational schools

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The study of French for Specific Purposes (FSP) is a topical subject in this era of globalization. Kenya requires people who can communicate in French in the various specialized areas. It has become crucial in Kenya to respond to the French language needs of students learning tourism and hospitality among other domains which have already shown an increasingly important role in the economy of the country. A functional French has become a necessity in this case.

Key words: French for specific purposes, globalization, language needs analysis, communication situations

INTRODUCTION

Professional mobility is currently developing fast. People have increasingly found themselves working among multilingual groups, either in their own country or in foreign countries. Globalization, which opens up the world, has necessitated learning of other languages. Languages are therefore considered as tool of communication that facilitates interactions between specialists in the same area. FSP has now become a topical subject.

Language for special purposes is a formalized and codified variety of language, used for special purposes and in a legitimate context; that is to say, with the function of communicating information of a specialist nature at any level- at the highest level of complexity, between initiate experts, and, at lower levels of complexity, with the aim of informing or initiating other interested parties, in the most economic, precise and unambiguous terms possible (Picht and Draskau, 1985).

Finance and international trade presuppose international market and capital movement worldwide. This goes beyond national and linguistic frontiers. International relations, which are political, cultural and

economic, have increased in a particular manner. From regional and national markets, we are now in a global economy. Multinationals have also developed and require skilled personnel from all corners. Finally, the mass production of consumable goods necessitates a wider market across the world.

Taking into account internationalization of the economy, commerce and culture, languages have become very useful. Knowledge of these languages is part of the required capital first competition. There is therefore an imminent desire to learn these languages on the one hand for professional use and on the other for communication among individuals since language is a system of expression and communication belonging to a social group. It is important to look for a common language, much more practical for communication that can improve relations among the countries. At this stage, we can ask ourselves which French is relevant for Kenya in this era of globalization. A functional French is needed. Therefore specialized terms are needed to be used among specialists in the same discipline. In this case, we talk about French for specific purposes.

The nature of language is such that general language and special languages can be accommodated within one natural language: the fundamental characteristics of language are manifested both in English, language of chemical engineering, French and in the language of physics. The difference between general and special language is a difference of degree rather than kind: the degree to which the fundamental characteristics of language are maximized or minimized in special language. Special languages are used more self consciously than general language and the situations in which they are used intensify the user's concern with the language. It is therefore on the level of use that we have to look for more specific differentiating criteria (Sager, Dungworth and Mc Donald, 1980: 17).

Language has the potential of acting as a key allowing access to a new universe. In a certain way, the frontiers of our universe are linked to those of our linguistic knowledge. One who learns a new language opens himself/herself to a new cultural and linguistic system. In this case, the main function of a specialized language is to inform and to exchange a information on a specialized subject.

This article is based on a reflection concerning FSP that is putting it into perspective with the new realities brought about by globalization that has continued to grow. This study concerns first of all, the language needs, specifically the language competences required in response to personal and social needs. Secondly, we are interested in finding out how the Kenyan education system has tackled the language needs of students in the vocational schools as well as the role the institutions of higher learning should play in this regard. The library research method was used to collect the data.

NOTION OF GLOBALIZATION

Globalization is an expansion and harmonization of interdependence links between nations, human activity and political systems at the world level. This phenomenon touches people in all areas and the impact is being felt. It also evokes transfer and international exchange of goods, labour and knowledge.

Learning of FSP is a necessary condition for globalization for developing countries, like Kenya where multilingualism is wide spread. FSP can facilitate expansion and harmonization of human activities internationally through exchange of goods, knowledge, sharing of information, arts e.t.c. At the center of this formidable globalization movement, far-reaching exchanges are put in place. Languages are the essential vector and play a major role.

FSP, vector for development

For about 20 years now, the nature of demands for

French has changed. They are now oriented towards more professional French, more work oriented, that is for professional use. In fact, the enterprise is prescribing the linguistic training. This evolution has provoked an emergence of a need of recognition and validation of the languages acquired in the training. However, the fact is that ignorance of the languages in question is the main obstacle towards communication and in this case, to development. The acquisition of a foreign language gives one access to other ways of looking at the world and consequently, at a better understanding of the 'other'. In the global market which is the world today a 'foreigner' no longer exists. We speak of the 'other'. In fact, learning 'the language of the other' and expressing oneself in it has become a necessity.

Kenya has real language needs in FSP. When two people begin a dialogue on a topic in a domain that is known to both of them, they will straight a way use terminologies relevant to this domain; they will exchange information or give opinions on issues that will not be understood by those who are less informed on that particular topic (Balmet and De Legge, 1992:52).

The main objective of linguistic acquisition is the mastery of a language as a 'vector of development'. The French language as an instrument of training centered on the needs of the learners becomes the support language for development (Balmet and De Legge, 1992:41). In professional life, information should be passed on to those in authority, to colleagues and to clients, or also gather documents, to express oneself during meetings or enhance team work. Furthermore, one spends his/her time receiving information. Finally, it is important to be able to communicate about oneself so as to express ones projects, needs or shortcomings (De Sainte Lorette and Goetz, 2008:95).

In fact, in depth analysis by sociolinguists on the way language can be linked to society is indispensable when formulating programs on communications. It is obvious that it is evolution, political or technological, which results in effect on linguistic relations between professionals working together from different linguistic origins; on the intervention of the political sphere in the specific form assured at a given time, the diffusion of a language out of its 'natural' territory (Lehmann, 1993:58).

The importance of history and of the economy, the 'state of the world' and in particular the nature of relations between developed countries and developing ones, are evident in the expressions of the linguistic exchange. Language creates a sign of solidarity between members of a community. It is also useful as a factor of social integration and cohesion. Language is a sign and instrument of power including power that others have to give you an order, to question you, to furnish you with information, to obtain what you want, to protest or to read news. It can also represent political power as language of administration.

It has become important to talk about the aspirations

that have different groups of people related to the knowledge of languages. This socio-cultural phenomenon that is explained by various macro and micro political, technological and tourism related reasons, has been marked feature of industrial societies since the end of the Second World War (Renard, 1976:5).

Everywhere where language need is felt, a sort of consensus on the approach of the problem is found: language is no longer considered as a veneer of intellectuals full of foreign 'letters' but rather as a means of communication with others, a means of understanding of their socio-cultural universe, economy and politics. In as much as it is a communication tool, language is well recognized as a social practice (Galisson et al., 1980:14).

Every language is a possession both personal and shared, a representation of the world, a way of looking at the world. Language is no longer used only to transmit information but is also as a way of acting on the world. With globalization, we are in an era where economy develops very fast. This implies growing internationalization of exchanges for use and thus the need for oral competence directly useful in interpersonal and commercial exchanges.

The economic world is today conscious of the fact that lack of knowledge of languages can be a handicap to commercial negotiation. In this context, the spread of the French language finds its legitimacy, its equality with other languages; the fight for promotion of a language is today a defense for multilingualism (Cuq, 2003:72).

Economic and political factors give rise to innovations in teaching of languages (Saux cited by Baylon and Mignot, 2003:315). Learners are no longer concerned about knowing a language but rather being able to use it for communication purposes: understanding and being understood both orally and in writing. Languages have ceased being used for academic but are now for social and professional use. Study of the French language in Kenya should no longer be considered as a literary study but rather it should be linked to economic improvement of this country so that it can maintain its place as an international language. Language is viewed by the modern linguist as one of the ways of knowing the world (Cabr , 1998:85).

The socio-political-economic development of Kenya and its entry in the international market has led to new tendencies of teaching French with a marked difference between general French and French for Specific Purposes (FSP). FSP is in response to precise demand for training which necessitates focus on certain communication situations, and is characterized by urgency of the situation. FSP is the situation where the learners know where, when, how and why they have to communicate in French. The programmes of French oriented in the areas of specialization are located here. Only a detailed analysis of the demand and the needs of learners will enable one to determine if the needs of the linguistic training are really related to the domain and

when there is a problem with the specific linguistic content (Balm  and De Legge, 1992:51).

Each discourse is linked to its context of production (Specific contexts that are determined by the work domain in the case of FSP) and has its own characteristics that have to be analyzed so that it can be used again in a professional situation. It is important to remember that use of language varies according to the context. Thus, language use depends on the domain to which it is assigned in the society. By language for specific purposes, we understand a complete set of linguistic phenomena occurring within a definite sphere of communication and limited by specific subjects, intentions, and conditions (Hoffmann, 1979).

Enterprises look forward to training their staff not in general French but rather operational French in a professional context. Language teachers have to take into account these changes: whereas they were responding to general language needs, henceforth they have to turn towards professional language competences. In the teaching of FSP, it is the specific communication situation in which the learner will find himself that will determine the linguistic content to be taught.

The need and desire to communicate emerges from a given situation and the form as a communication content is a response to the situation. In effect, learning of language is as a result of influence of the society and includes socio-economic, cultural, political, educational and scientifically important events among others. This shows that there is need to establish a difference between 'learning a language' and 'learning to use a language' since language is an instrument of communication. FSP is therefore learning to use a language.

FSP and its pragmatic characteristics

Special languages are readily recognized as pragmatic and extra-linguistic subdivisions of a language. Certain difficulties arise when we attempt to explain special languages satisfactorily in linguistic terms (Sager et al., 1980).

Learning of FSP subscribes to the pragmatic perspective. It is not only the ability to show linguistic capability but also the language use of a speaker in a particular communication situation. In this case, the teaching has a characteristic of usefulness. FSP is not teaching or learning of French but rather it is learning French for a precise use or for doing something. It is French to enable one work and for the others to pursue studies (Tauzin, 2003:82).

A language that does not allow execution of precise tasks and which is not useful for development has its usefulness reduced. The question today is not only necessarily to know which French should be taught, but rather which competence. Language is no longer a

knowledge that a learner should acquire but rather mastery of know how in a situation (Bertocchini, 1989:76).

Importance presently accorded to communication places the public and their needs in language realization in the centre of methodology edifice: this is functional French. Learners no longer learn a language for the pleasure of learning. They envisage a use. It is no longer teaching language but rather language for a job by using specialized terminologies and vocabulary for the particular job. It is therefore necessary to motivate the learners by showing them the benefits they can hope to get by their mastery of French. Offer and demand are linked to the language market, just as they are in other markets. In this case, the linguistic training program has to respond to the language needs of the learners. Taking into account the real communication needs of the learners allows integration of all types of functional activities in the language class.

The language needs of the learners are determined in relation to speech acts that they will need to accomplish in precise communication situation. At present, studies are being carried out on the specifics of teaching of foreign languages to adults. The learner occupies an important place in the training process. There is therefore need to analyze the learners and their language needs to determine the linguistic content that should be proposed to them. It is necessary to pick out morphosyntactic and lexical aspects of the language (French) saying that it is not only teaching of the French language but rather teaching how to communicate in French.

Identification of the language needs of the concerned learners is a prerequisite for the formulation of programs such as 'linguistic immersion and French improvement', including training in French for specialization, visits to enterprises, meeting with experts in the particular domain (French for Business, French for Tourism, Scientific French, Technical French). It should be noted that it is the nature of the language needs that dictates the specific linguistic training.

The expression 'language needs' refers to what is directly necessary to an individual in the use of the foreign language to communicate in his specific situation as well as that which he lacks at a particular moment for this use and which he has to overcome by learning (Cuq and Gruca, 2005:141). For training to take place, there must first be information and that this information must be of use.

Concerning the language needs analysis, it corresponds to the real preoccupation of the learner, that is those that are related to what the learner will have to do outside the classroom with the French language.

The French language should play a big role in the development of Kenya. Due to this, it is necessary to come up with communication situations, participants, their status and their roles, the topics, speech acts and notions, learning aids and modes of communication. The

list of words, presentation of morphosyntactic structures, phonetic rules, examples of intonation, spelling rules, and all elements that are used to describe a language as a form. These are the starting points of linguistic program descriptions.

If the learner is made aware that French as a foreign language can be used in topics taught in his/her other lessons, the learner will probably be conscious of the practical usefulness of the French language as a means of communication. The French language will thus be of practical use. The learner of FSP is required to ask for information, services. He/she has to understand the answers given to him/her or listen to a conversation, and he/she will be able to read useful notices. More often, these speakers form a category of bilinguals of chance. Their use of French is occasional and is limited to the context where the importance of communication is relaying the message.

In the modern practice of teaching FSP, the objective to achieve is easily defined. It is formulated in terms of communication; that is to acquire more expertise than simple knowledge. The learner of FSP is no longer asked to formulate grammar rules rather he/she is asked to express himself/herself and understand others, either orally or in written. In all instances, the trainer should assist the learners to express themselves in French by taking into account the linguistic acquisitions. It is thus necessary to write down specialized vocabulary, sentences or responses that are the most useful.

But since communication takes place through language, it results in use of words, morphological and syntactic forms, structures, utterances, whereas language communication is essentially a phenomenon of exchange, intervention, action and interaction, negotiation which combines all these elements into discourses and texts (Richterich, 1985:21). Through this, language supposes not only to take into account speakers' competence in general but also the way he/she uses it in concrete communication situations and in the society. The speaker adjusts his expressions in specific communication situations by use of different function words or language registers as dictated by the communication situation. Finally, teaching learners terminology related to their respective disciplines during their university or professional studies is one of the best guarantees of change however latent, of linguistic habits (Cabr e, 1998:96).

From the point of view of terminology, therefore, the lexicon of a language consists of the many separate subsystems representing the knowledge structure of each subject field or discipline. Each knowledge structure consists of various interlinked concepts (Sager, 1990: 13).

FSP: a subset of French as a foreign language

It is important to note that FSP is not a separate domain

from French as a foreign language. It can be considered quantitatively as a sub-field of French as a foreign language, by determining what can be taught, and qualitatively, as the highest expression of communicative methodology (Mangiante and Parpette, 2004:159). It is a specialized subset of the larger domain that is French as a foreign language. FSP is a linguistic training; it can be affirmed that every learner disposes, among the words of the general language, other words that are restricted to specialized areas. The FSP course in the chosen domain allows the student to acquire a technical vocabulary as well as mastery of the jargon used in a particular profession. The student therefore has the real advantage in his future search for employment. The orientation centered on linguistics considers the terminology as being part of the vocabulary of the language, and the language of specialty as a sub-system of the language in general. The terminology is related closely to the domain of specialty, therefore is part of specialized vocabulary.

FSP, which advocates for specialized communication, differs from general communication in two aspects: use of specific terminology and the type of written and oral texts that it produces. Use of normalized terms contributes to efficiency in communication between specialists. Specialized texts are characterized by conciseness, precision and adequacy.

STATE OF FSP PLACE IN KENYA

The current study was carried out in Kenya. As in all other African countries, Kenya has a large ethnic variety: 42 tribes. Each person from these tribes, in addition to his/her mother tongue, speaks English, Kiswahili and perhaps his/her neighbours' language. Each individual is thus bilingual or multilingual. To all these languages, is added a foreign language, and in this case, French. These ethnic groups are actively involved in nation building and due to this, they need French to accomplish their task. They are in contact with foreigners from French speaking countries who visit Kenya. They also travel to foreign countries for various reasons such as studies, jobs, commerce, international co-operation, conferences, workshops, etc.

In general, the linguistic policy is defined by the choices made by those in power to regulate the correlation between the society and its languages. In Kenya, the reform policy and the opening to the outside world has contributed to manifestations of new demands for specialized linguistic training. The teaching of French as a foreign language is for sometimes marked by a strong development of training in FSP. Therefore, this was later progressively integrated into the teaching programmes and today, they are prevalent in many training programmes in French in various universities and professional institutions. This phenomenon contributes to the dynamism of the French language and allows its

adaptation in different domains of knowledge.

The entry of foreign languages in the Kenyan education system does not go beyond the 1960s. First of all French and German were fitted into the education system during the time when it was most stable and when the education policy was well grounded (Choka, 2004: 30). French is studied in Kenya as a foreign language and it does not enjoy a particular francophone environment.

The French language is being taught in Kenya for the last 50 years (Alliance Française, 2006). Kenya possesses a well established network of institutions, curricular and extra-curricular for the advancement of FSP: Alliance Française, universities, professional institutions or vocational schools. FSP is increasingly present at higher levels in the tertiary education. To evoke the place of FSP in Kenya is to put into perspective the multilingual situation of this country where more than forty local languages exist along with French. Promoting French in Kenya is obviously in defense of the linguistic diversity which is an asset for its development. Kenya is a turntable for Africa in general and for East Africa in particular. In this strategic position, Kenya needs French for its integral growth.

The question regarding the future of FSP, which is largely promising, in this era of globalization, is no longer beyond its players. They are in a position to work out diverse responses, propose strategies to adopt, come up with plans which will stir people into action, political actions, language use, and intervention towards social demands, media support and development of the French offer.

Today, teaching of FSP in colleges and universities in Kenya seeks to have what teaching of foreign language to adults has had for a long time. FSP has, without doubt its place in Kenya's linguistic space. Taking into account the usefulness of French, Kenya has adopted it for diplomatic links, free exchange of goods and movement of people, to assure contact services with the French world. The growth of the tourism sector has also contributed to adding value to the status of French. Preference of French as a foreign language has therefore flourished.

French has for a long time had a certain consideration in higher learning because it is the most taught language in many professional_vocational schools or technical colleges, training colleges for teachers and in the six public universities (University of Nairobi, Kenyatta University, Moi University, Maseno University, Egerton University and Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, and their constituent colleges as well as in some private universities notably USIU (United States International University) CUEA (Catholic University of East Africa), Daystar University, Baraton University of East Africa. In most cases, it is FSP which is offered in these institutions taking into account its importance in this era of globalization.

The current period in Kenya is more and more

conducive to a reflection on the content of language for a specific public, as evidenced by the many events, seminars and publications on languages of specialties. This new scientific impetus is as a result of an increase in demand for courses and training in French for professional use. Internationalization of exchange, opening towards French markets and specialization in France has constituted a lot of motivation for a new group of more demanding learners, having learnt many languages before registering in the French course and demanding shorter courses, more goals oriented, towards results oriented professionals.

Considering the wishes of the public and individuals requesting for linguistic training led to a new interest of analysis of needs, in the teaching of languages. We thus speak of language needs of a group, public, individuals and the consideration that an in depth analysis of these needs will allow a better adjustment of the linguistic training requested in relation to globalization.

Everywhere today, the society is undergoing vast changes. It is at a fast rhythm that scientific discoveries are giving us a more detailed and in depth understanding of the world that surrounds us and the industries founded on research that continue to grow apply this knowledge more rapidly to all domains of life. Not only have individual trips and transport of merchandise transformed mobility, even at the international level but exchange of ideas and information has practically become instantaneous and unlimited geographically. FSP has a big role to play in Kenya, in these aspects.

FSP continues to give an added value on the context of internationalization in socio-politico-economic exchange. Students, researchers, executives and directors from foreign countries experience both in class and place of work, the need to access intricacies of the French language so as to understand the thoughts being expressed. In order to speak at a congress, at a conference or seminar, to write a scientific text in French, interact with somebody in a particular domain, one has to adhere to specific rules.

FSP has become indispensable in Kenya, for example, to respond to the needs of the tourism industry which has already announced an increasingly important role in the country's economy. With the aim of providing qualified staff, the Kenyan government decided, since 1969, to integrate learning of foreign languages, among others, French, in the training designated for students of hotel management at the Kenya Polytechnic Nairobi. In 1975, this training was extended to Kenya Utalii College (Choka, 2004:31). From then on, this college confers certificates and diplomas to students who have learnt French be it in hospitality, restaurant or travel agency.

Each year, approximately 200 students complete their studies at Kenya Utalii College, after having learnt French for two years. Since 1975, the year when the college begun, about 3000 people trained in FSP, contribute in terms of communication between the French or French

speakers and Kenyans at the level of tourism, in the hotel industry and restaurants. Many tourist agencies, hotel institutions and restaurants use this argument for publicity reasons. Hotels and other tourist establishments are the main employers of these finalists. It is worth noting that Kenya Utalii College also offers a linguistic training program for personnel already working in these institutions.

Many institutions in Kenya, public and private, with the aim of responding to the market requirements, offer French for International Relations and Diplomacy, Secretarial French and Public administration, French for business, French for journalism, medical French, etc.

With the rise of globalization, societies are faced with a new international push, necessitating development of their services in different countries. FSP, in regard to globalization, emphasizes the place of French in the world of work. The globalization phenomenon is a driving force for FSP.

Growing internationalization of daily life requires taking into account communicative capacity linked to cultural mastery. The time for linguistics is in the process of being achieved because the place of languages in societies is in itself in the process of changing (Porcher, 1995: 69). At present, functional French is taking up a place of choice.

In the last centuries, linguistic needs of learners have changed. Developments in the technological world have had a big impact on all aspects of life. With the advent of globalization, the need for FSP is unavoidable.

We are in a culture differentiated by types of practices, disciplines, specialties and jobs. However, the dynamics of globalization presently taking place tend to disturb the distinctions made in the past. Learning one or more foreign languages is no longer contestable for individuals who consider themselves cultured, but professional obligation related to carrying out of various jobs.

It is important to closely examine what is becoming of communication of specialty and specialties in the process of integration of the present globalization: what are the significant changes brought by globalization in communication of specialty? How can these changes be integrated in the teaching of FSP in Kenya? Every activity is anchored in a centre and access to the culture could be done well today in a society accepted by the way of a practice in a domain of specialty and not only by way of the general or of the basics, with its values of reference and its practices.

The main effect of globalization goes beyond general increase in exchanges, a deconstruction/reconstruction of limits between specialties and in relation to the general culture (and language). The cause would be the diffusion of technologies and intensifying of exchanges, with regard to culture. In regard to exchanges, what concerns us is communication of specialty in the teaching of languages in general and FSP in particular.

The term globalization refers to 'an extension of an

activity, of a technical, of a problem of a language (among other examples) at the level of the planet,' then 'the multiplication and intensifying of interdependences at the world level' and also 'a process... an englobing organic movement' (Revue and Mars, 2003:4). In this way, the uniform practice of activities such as in medicine, chemistry, architecture, computer is spread over the whole planet. It is the same for tourism, banking, finance, international relations, teaching of languages.

Languages have become goods of use, socially, marketable and professional, which are of interest to learners who only want to understand and be understood. Mastery of linguistic tools is certainly a significant characteristic of efficacy of a strategy of communication. It is worth noting that the present Kenyan context is favorable with the realization that mastery of French is considered a real professional competence in the cadre of professional assertion. It is necessary to valorize mastery of French as it is a factor of personal development and socio-economic promotion.

Learners of FSP in Kenya need to acquire practical linguistic knowledge that can directly be used in their cadre of employment or profession; this is to say French should be taught so as to be able to do something else with it and not simply for the sake of learning it. They learn FSP for a specific use in specific contexts. In other words, being conscious of the usefulness of lessons in FSP is a motivating factor for these students.

Conclusion

Kenya is in the process of re-inventing itself and addressing economic and social recovery in which the French language could become useful. As a language of exchange and exposure, French could take its place in the many sectors of life. In summary, there is thus a real interest in learning FSP today.

Society, along with its educational structures, is evolving rapidly. With time, motivations change and the needs become more precise or are transformed. The French language will only remain alive in Kenya if it responds to the needs of the society in general and to those of the learners in particular. The domain of usage of a language is motivated by the nature of the social structure and is determined by the economic, political and ideological forces among others. Consequently, these forces act on the language behavior of an individual. It is today opportune to 'live French' everywhere in the world: language of interpersonal and intercultural dialogue, language of communication, of solidarity and for co-operation, scientific and technical language. FSP, faced with globalization should emphasize on the place of French in the world of work. It is through this that the vitality of FSP can be manifested in Kenya.

If we realize that Kenya has an economy that largely

opens up to the outside world, it goes without saying that in these exchanges, the francophone countries would take their rank more easily if there are speakers of the language on the ground. It is certain that in this country which is undergoing transformation, hence new priorities will be needed. For instance, those which will ensure the country are not cut off from the rest of the world.

In the present context, FSP has all the chances of becoming an important language of exposure and exchange. Despite this, FSP continues to cause problems to learners because of inappropriate linguistic contents, methods of teaching and lack of teaching materials.

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