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**SINZANG**

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COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

**Peleforo GON COULIBALY University**

**Côte d'Ivoire**

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## EDITORIAL

Among the Senufos from the north of Côte d'Ivoire, the sacred grove is called "Sinzang". The first of these would date from the time of the patriarch and leader of Korhogo SORO Zouakagnon (1840-1894). It is the tutelary space of the initiatory institute of the secret society: the Poro. These sacred forests exist in all the villages of the region and are highly protected and managed. The proof is that in their midst, adolescents perform the rite of passage leading them to the age of maturity. The "Sinzang" is also the centre of intergenerational knowledge transmission. Thus, the teaching of ancestral knowledge, ontology and cosmogony- contributing to the future spiritual, moral and social formation of the Senufo elite-is associated with this pantheon.

In line with this pedagogical and academic logic, the SINZANG Journal aims to promote African and Western humanities in Literature, Language, Communication and Education Sciences. To do this, it is part of a process of promoting the reflections and studies conducted by Teachers-Researchers and Researchers for the sustainable development of society.

As distinctive signs of "Sinzang", Jacqueline DELANGE, in *Arts et peuple Sénoufo de l'Afrique noire*, identifies among others the huts, earth cones and statues (masks). The visual identity of this magazine presents two masks, one symbolizing ancestral knowledge and the other Western science. The two facing the entrance of a sacred hut express the encounter of diverse knowledge put at the service of humanity. *In fine*, they export to other horizons, hence the idea of huts in perspective.

SINZANG is a pluridisciplinary and biannual peer-reviewed scientific journal. It is published in English and French but also accepts work written in German and Spanish. Moreover, depending on the requests made at the discretion of its review committee, it may issue special thematic publications and conference proceedings.

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#### **ÉDITORIAL**

Chez les Sénoufos du nord de la Côte d'Ivoire, le bosquet sacré est communément appelé « Sinzang ». Les premiers du genre datent de l'époque du patriarche et chef de Korhogo SORO Zouakagnon (1840-1894). C'est l'espace tutélaire de l'institut initiatique de la société secrète : le Poro. Lieux fortement protégés et aménagés à l'envi, ces forêts sacrées existent dans tous les villages de la région. La preuve en est qu'en leur sein, les adolescents effectuent le rite de passage les amenant à l'âge de la maturité. Le « Sinzang » est aussi le haut lieu de la transmission de la connaissance intergénérationnelle. Ainsi, l'enseignement du savoir ancestral, de l'ontologie et la cosmogonie-contribuant à la formation spirituelle, morale et sociale de l'élite Sénoufo de demain-est associé à ce panthéon.

S'inscrivant dans cette logique pédagogique et académique, la Revue SINZANG ambitionne de faire la promotion des humanités tant africaine qu'occidentale dans le domaine de la Littérature, des Sciences du Langage, de la Communication et de l'Éducation. Pour ce faire, elle s'inscrit dans une démarche de vulgarisation des réflexions et des études menées par les Enseignants-Chercheurs et des Chercheurs pour le développement durable de la société.

Comme signes distinctifs du « Sinzang », Jacqueline DELANGE, dans *Arts et peuple Sénoufo de l'Afrique noire*, identifie entre autres les cases, les cônes en terre et les statues (masques). L'identité visuelle de cette revue présentant deux masques, l'un symbolisant le savoir ancestral et l'autre la science occidentale. Les deux se faisant face à l'entrée d'une case sacrée expriment la rencontre de connaissances diverses mis au service de l'humanité. In fine, elles s'exportent vers d'autres horizons ; d'où l'idée des cases en perspective.

SINZANG est une revue pluridisciplinaire à comité de lecture et scientifique. Elle est bilingue : éditée en anglais et en français. Mais elle accepte également les travaux écrits en allemand et en espagnol. C'est une revue semestrielle,

tenant deux parutions l'an. Au demeurant, elle peut procéder, selon les demandes ou les sollicitations formulées à l'appréciation de son comité de lecture, à des parutions spéciales thématiques et à la diffusion d'actes de colloque.

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**  
**TABLE DES MATIERES**

**1. A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY OF BAOULE ANTHROPNYMS**  
.....Ange Alex Kouassi NGUESSAN (Côte d'Ivoire) \_ P.1-12

**2. TOWARD THE USE OF NUMERAL QUALIFIERS IN YORUBA: DISCOURSE IN IFÁ CORPORA, IBEJÌ, PROVERBS, INCANTATIONS AND COUNTING SYSTEMS IN YORUBA**  
.....Oluwole Tẹwogboye OKEWANDE (Nigeria) \_P.13-35

**3. LE GROUPE NOMINAL (GN) EN CONTEXTE DE COVID-19: DE LA MOBILISATION DES RESSOURCES LINGUISTIQUES À LA CRÉATION LEXICALE**  
.....Alain Blaise MBELLA NTOUBA (Cameroon) \_P.36-49

**4. EXPLORING SUPERVISION PRACTICES IN RIVE DROITE SCHOOL DISTRICT MADRASAS OF BAMAKO**  
.....Adama COULIBALY and Sory Ibrahim KEITA (Mali) \_P.50-66

**5. LINGUISTIC CARVING OF SOCIAL POSITION**  
.....Edmond OSSOKO (Cameroon) \_P.67-79

**6. THE COMMUNICATIONAL SUBTLETIES IN CONSTRUCTING SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOR CHANGE MESSAGES FOR THE INTEGRATION OF ISLAMIC SCHOOLS IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE.**  
.....Vahama KAMAGATE and Wandja TUO (Côte d'Ivoire) \_P.80-94

**7. PATRIARCHY, DETERMINATION AND WOMEN'S SUBORDINATION: A REFLECTION ON WOMEN'S NEGOTIATION OF IDENTITY IN NGUGI WA THIONG'O'S COLONIAL NARRATIVES**  
.....Kouakou Guillaume YAO and Alama OUATTARA (Côte d'Ivoire) \_P.95-108

**8. L'ENJEU DU DEICTIQUE « I » DANS LE JEU NARRATIF DANS QUELQUES ROMANS DE JACK LONDON**  
.....Yao Markos KOUASSI and Gnanda Béatrice ANGHU (Côte d'Ivoire) \_P.109-125

**9. PROVERBE DANS LE CONTE AFRICAIN, UNE STRATEGIE ARGUMENTATIVE: LE CAS DE LES CONTES D'AHMADOU-KOUMBA DE BIRAGO DIOP**  
.....Sévérin Kaménan KINIMO (Côte d'Ivoire) \_P.126-133

**10. DE LA BILATERALITE D'INCIDENCE ENTRE LES PARTIES DE LA LANGUE : APPORT ET SUPPORT SEMANTICO-SYNTAXIQUE ENTRE LE VERBE ET LE SN SUJET**  
.....Martin Brice AKONO (Cameroon) \_P.134-149

**11. LES ADJECTIFS NUMERAUX EN FRANÇAIS ET EN YORUBÁ : UNE ETUDE CONTRASTIVE ET IMPLICATION PEDAGOGIQUE EN CLASSE DE FLE EN MILIEU YORUBÁ DU NIGERIA**  
.....Akinwumi Lateef AJANI (Nigeria) \_P.150-161

**12. RUMEUR EN MILIEU SCOLAIRE. ENTRE CONSTRUCTION, DECONSTRUCTION ET RECONSTRUCTION IDENTITAIRE: ETUDE DE CAS DES COLLEGES MONTHE, ETOILE ET DES ETABLISSEMENTS DE LIMBE**  
.....Lénée Bertèle ABOMO (Cameroon) \_P.162-175





**THE COMMUNICATIONAL SUBTILITIES IN  
CONSTRUCTING SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOR CHANGE  
MESSAGES FOR THE INTEGRATION OF ISLAMIC SCHOOLS  
IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE**

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**Abstract:**

Local and rural communities in developing countries are very often faced to the fact that awareness messages in social and behavior change process are designed and conveyed in the official language of the country. In Côte d'Ivoire, it is French. The approximate translations into local languages compromise the understanding of messages and give meanings that thwart the success of development initiatives within community. The current study is an empirical research that highlights translation constraints, in the designing of the national strategy of Islamic school integration in the national education system. The study puts in evidence the misunderstanding built and maintained by the translation of «école» and «intégration» from French into Jula. The study uses direct participant observation and literature reviews.

**Key words:** Social and behavior change; Language; Translation; Community Engagement

**LES SUBTILITÉS COMMUNICATIONNELLES DANS LA CONSTRUCTION DES  
MESSAGES DE CHANGEMENT SOCIAL ET COMPORTEMENTAL POUR  
L'INTÉGRATION DES ÉCOLES ISLAMIQUES EN CÔTE D'IVOIRE.**

**Résumé:**

Les communautés locales et rurales dans les États en développement sont très souvent confrontées au fait que les messages de sensibilisation dans les processus de changement social et de comportement soient conçus et véhiculés dans la langue officielle du pays. En Côte d'Ivoire, c'est le français. Les traductions approximatives dans les langues locales compromettent la compréhension des messages et donnent des significations qui contrarient le succès des initiatives de développement au sein des communautés. La présente étude est une recherche empirique qui met en évidence les contraintes de la traduction des messages de sensibilisation dans le cadre de la stratégie Nationale d'Intégration des Enfants des structures islamiques d'éducation dans le système éducatif officiel. L'étude fait ressortir le quiproquo construit par la traduction de « école » et « intégration » du français en Dioula<sup>48</sup>. L'étude recourt à l'observation participante directe et la revue documentaire.

**Mots Clés :** Changement social et comportemental ; Langues ; Traduction ; Engagement communautaire

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<sup>48</sup> Dioula in French or Jula in English is a transborder ethnic group based in Mali, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, etc

## Introduction

Social and behavior change is an emerging approach in communication applied to development or to development communication. “Previously known as behavior change communication (BCC), SBCC<sup>49</sup> is “the strategic use of communication approaches to promote changes in knowledge, attitudes, norms, beliefs, and behaviors” HC3 and USAID (2016). It aims to engage communities in solving and addressing their problem and bringing about change by the community and for the community. In fact, “behavior change ensures the safe, effective, and sustainable use of the services provided, helping change norms that can transform communities” M. A. Herrick et al. (2021, p.5).

Language and culture play a key role in that process. One of the main factors establishing relationships between local or rural communities and the development providers is language. Very often, in Côte d’Ivoire, projects are designed or implemented in the country official language<sup>50</sup>, which is in most of the cases, a language not written or spoken by the target community. The weakness of local non written language is because,

in society almost exclusively geared towards oral transmission of knowledge, as they prevail in rural areas of less developed countries, communication failures fatally occur at the junction from dominant (written) to peripheral languages (often characterized by the absence of a written tradition); whether in formal learning (seminars, workshop) semi formal (expert facing local actors), or informal learning (field encounters) environments ( T. Bearth et al., 2014, p.4).

On the way, “many cross-border languages such as Manding, Fulfulde, Hausa and Jula remain in the shadows and have not received any particular attention from regional, sub-regional or continental bodies” H. Tourneux (2008, p.19).

And yet,

many African languages used as lingua franca would have gained ground: Wolof in Senegal, Bamanan in Mali, Jula in Burkina Faso and Côte d’Ivoire, Hausa in Nigeria, Niger and Ghana, Fulfulde in Cameroon, Sango in the Central African Republic, etc H. Tourneux (2008, p.12), if they were used as official languages.

Leveraging these existing local or African languages in social development project assessment, designing, and implementation remains a key factor in deepening meaningful community engagement.

In Côte d’Ivoire, as in “many African countries, French has currently the status of official or co-official language” M. Diki-Kidiri (2004, p.65). Social and behavior change messages are often communicated in the official language of the country. Into this current case study, the target group uses Arabic and Jula as learning language and lingua franca. Therefore, when

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<sup>49</sup> Social and Behavior Change Communication

<sup>50</sup> Country official language is generally a colonial inheritance.

translated in Jula, the messages designed in French can bring about a misunderstanding and compromise the acceptance of the Social and Behavior Change message.

This study is therefore an empirical one. **It aims to understand the influence that translation and precisely translation from French into Jula could have on the target community knowledge and perception.** During the designing of the project of national strategy of Islamic school integration in the national education system, the project documents were written in French, the official language, and the outreach messages also.

**A dialogue initiated by Indigo and Interpeace International, two non-profit organizations specialized in conflict management and peace building, and workshops led at the countryside in Man, Soubré and in Abidjan, put in evidence that there was a mismatch between the written message in French and the translation into Jula.** Jula, as H. Tourneux (2008) explained, is a lingua franca spoken in Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire. Jula is not written, it's like a variant of Bamanan in Mali, which has now a written form called: the "N'Ko". The understanding of the translated outreach messages gives a meaning that compromises the expected changes among the target community. Thereby, in that perspective, how did the translation affect the target group's understanding of the messages' meaning during the designing of the national strategy of Islamic school integration into the national education system in Côte d'Ivoire?

Social and behavior change message designing in local or rural community may include and take into account language not only in its structure of words and phrases but notify that "the words and phrases use in development are instruments of power and reflect relationships" R. Chamber (2007,.p.120).

## **1. Method and materials**

### **1.1 Theoretical reference**

Abolou (2020), in the examination of linguistic interactions in the development of behavioral change messages, highlights three models that are relevant to this study: "the Northern Language (NL) model, the Southern Language (SL) model, and the Northern Language/Southern Language interface model" C.R Abolou (2020, p.43). According to this typology supported by himself Abolou (2008), Ayo Bamgbose (1998); Thomas Bearth (2008, 2007, 2000), Kwesi Prah (1995) and Jacques Silué (2000), these models contribute to the understanding and appropriation of the message in the dynamics of social and behavioral change communication. The nature of language, whether of colonial or foreign heritage (English, Arabic, Spanish, French, Portuguese etc.) or local (Hausa, Mandingo, Fulani etc.), and the perception of semantic contents from one language to another in a development

communication context influences the understanding or acceptance of the message within communities.

Explaining these models that underpin the theoretical referencing of the present study, Abolou (2020) describes the Northern Language model as the one that “promote Northern Languages (French, English, Spanish, etc.) in awareness campaigns. These languages draw knowledge, practices and attitudes that local people must appropriate to adopt the new behavior” C.R. Abolou (2020, p.43). For him,

In this model, programs are designed, developed, and disseminated in the languages of the North, creating a cognitive insecurity that produces behavioral entropies. Decoding is done either in Northern or in Southern languages. The decoding in Northern languages is conducted by the more or less literate urban populations.(C. R. Abolou, 2020, p.43).

The Southern Language Model, then, is a model that takes

“southern languages upstream and downstream into account in outreach programs. It analyses participatory strategies where the language of the South must, according to Cool Robinson (1998; 248) “find its place in a participatory intervention to development”” C.R. Abolou (2020, p.45).

Thus,

the transmitter, in this model, represented by the secondary target is composed of opinion leaders (village leaders, religious leaders, age deans, etc.). It identifies needs, plans for new behavior, formulates awareness messages in Southern languages and disseminates them through traditional media (griots, palaver tree, drums). The primary target (at-risk population) voluntarily adheres to the message that induces behavioral change (C.R. Abolou, 2020, p.45).

The Northern Language/Southern Language interface model, as far as it is concerned, “is part of a broad anthropological perspective where the languages of the South and those of the North are essential to the development of the human being” as argued by Diki-Kidiri (2004).

This reconciling model of the two preceding

finds its justification in the variety of sources of knowledge. It integrates the local, supra-local (national) and global dimension in social campaigns. The NL/SL interface dilutes linguistic and cognitive boundaries. Intercultural translation is accepted to facilitate the passage from a message to another inversely according to the onto-terminological approach, Abolou (2011). Which is based on an expert system that aims to provide translators with universals of well-being that are non-exclusive, not rival, and cumulative Foray (2000) (C.A. Abolou, 2020, p.46).

Therefore, these models are the basic reference in analyzing the communicational subtleties in designing social and behavior change messages from French as an international language into Jula as a local language. In the context of Islamic school integration in the national education system, three languages are in interaction: Arabic, French, Jula. Arabic is the teaching language, French the official one and Jula as the most spoken among the target community.

## 1.2 Methodology

This current case study is a qualitative one based on participative research. During the assessment of the communication strategy supporting Islamic school integration in the national education system, an initial dialogue has been led among the target communities in Man, Soubré and Abobo in December 2020. Then, three workshops were organized with the European Union and UNICEF as partners. It allows to evaluate the different model of message designed and examine if these messages were relevant or not. Man, Soubré and Abobo-Anyama have hosted these workshops because of their coverage of Islamic schools. In these communities also, the challenge of Islamic school integration in the national education system and the communication issues prevailed more.

The study refers to participant observation focus on the different messages' proposal; literature review; data collecting technique. Outreach messages proposed to engage communities in a social and behavior change campaign were shared through a PowerPoint presentation and explained. With the facilitator, community relay interacted by asking questions, presenting queries, and debating on the substance and the form of messages. The consisted of reading were the study report of international organization Interpeace/Indigo Côte d'Ivoire and the minister in charge with national education publications and reports. The processing of this data was done from a content analysis that allowed us to build the corpus of our analysis.

## 2. Results

### 2.1 The set of messages

The messages developed in a social and behavior change communication process aim to bring change. Entailed by the discussion raised during the initial dialogue conducted by Indigo Côte d'Ivoire<sup>51</sup> in Man, Soubré and Abobo, **two level of messages have been settled: the first one about knowledge, and the other one about perception.**

Concerning the knowledge factor in understanding Islamic schools' integration in the national education system, we realize that target group needs to clearly know the contents of the strategy. They should know the history and the context, its objectives and advantages, the stakeholders, the opportunities for the Islamic schools' attendees and the educational courses and curriculum should be well known. The challenge here was to share the appropriate information among community members, Islamic school owners and workers, even the pupils attending the Islamic schools. As far as they are concerned, the Islamic school attendees must engage in the different steps of the strategy.

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<sup>51</sup> Indigo Côte d'Ivoire is a peace building Non-Government Organization specialized in inclusive dialogue and participation.

The initial dialogue within communities' highlights different messages that help deepen or broaden the different stakeholders' knowledge by defining the type of knowledge, the key message to share and the argument to support the messages. The type of knowledge helps to define the characteristics and the concerns of the message. The key message represents the main idea thought suitable to settle the government and its partner's actions. Moreover, the arguments developed allow explanation of the key message. Other information' were also provided to support the key messages with illustrations and examples. (Table 1)

Table 1: key messages

<b>Type of knowledge</b>	<b>Key messages</b>
Background, Context, Integration Strategy Visio	The National Strategy for the Islamic school integration in the national education system is the Government initiative, which aims to ensure that children of Islamic Structures of Education acquire the common base of knowledge, skills, and culture (to be able to read, write and count in French) while preserving religious education and learning Arabic).
Integration Objectives	By 2025, the teaching of the official curricula and religious education will provide all children in Islamic schools with quality learning that enables them to contribute to socio-economic development and foster social cohesion
Benefits of Integration	Integration aims to provide equal opportunities and varied choice of socio-professional pathways (Imam, Religious guide, manager, mechanic, etc.) through a diversified curriculum.

Source: Initial Dialogue Report, 2020

In addition to the target group knowledge about the strategy, proposed messages should also contribute to the deconstruction of bad opinion and perception about the integration strategy. People may be aware of the strategy of Islamic school integration and build their own negative mind about. The initial dialogue allowed participants to express their perceptions of the social diversity that the process of integration and sweetening of the religious training program and the Arabic language brought about. Table 2: Massage to convey.

Type of perception	Key messages to convey
- Girl's way of dressing -School environment -Mixed gender - Social mix induced in the school environment with different child profiles	“The State of Côte d’Ivoire is secular. It does not prohibit the practice of religion. So far in Côte d’Ivoire, there is no law on the secular nature of the State. A national debate is planned to determine the secular nature of the State in Côte d’Ivoire.” “Integration does not mean the secularization of the Islami schools, which are intended to retain their denominational character, but in compliance with Ivorian Law.” “The management of authority or discipline is the responsibility of the school administration by creating the institutional capacity to meet these challenges.”
Perception of a drop in knowledge, know-how-to-be, know-how and how to do things.	Integration aims to combine religious education with the formal curriculum but does not call religious education into question. The Muslim community is involved in harmonizing the curriculum

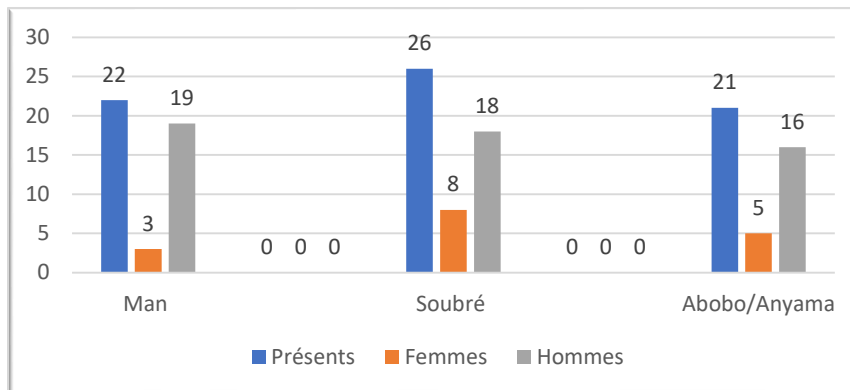
Source : Initial Dialogue Report, 2020

Above the knowledge, taking into account the threat and the perceived challenges is relevant in a social and behavior change process. In this case study, the target group stays in dread of different factor like respecting schoolboys and girls dressing code according to Islamic value, and even religious and behavior discipline. So, to widen the opportunities for success, message management becomes a key component of the strategy governance.

## 2.2 Lesson learned

In this case study, three workshops have been led in three different regions as specified above. The low rate of women participating in these dialogues’ session and lack of opportunity to share their view about the messages and argument that supports community involvement in the strategy is more perceivable. With an average rate of 22,46% of presence, women global participation rate was 23,20% against 76,80% for men (Graphic 1).

Graphic 1: Women participation



Source: Study data, 2021

The messages suggested during these different sessions of dialogue within communities, emphasized the translation in Jula of two words: in French: “l'école” and “intégration”. Outreach campaign is generally led in French as the official language spoken in the country. So, all the documents are written in French. **During the interactive sessions', people used to translate “école” from French to the Jula by “Nanzra kalan”,<sup>52</sup>𐎎𐎗𐎒𐎗𐎒 𐎎𐎗𐎒𐎗𐎒. In considering socioreligious and linguistic understanding parameters, “Nanzara kalan” for the target group, means “Christian studies”, “Nanzara” from Nazareth (English) or الناصرة (Arabic).**

This translation creates a semantical mismatch in the mind of the target group and thwarts the understanding of the message and compromise communication. The integration strategy consists in making children attending Islamic School benefit from the common base of knowledge, competence, and culture. Then the key message in designing the national strategy of integration of the Islamic school in the national education system aims to engage the target group on the opportunity in learning both the official school program and the Arabic and religious programs.

As the translation is done, the outreach message happens to be requesting the target group to add “Christian studies” to the Islamic studies they used to have. Yet, it is to teach the children of Islamic schools, the official program and not the program of Christian education. So, this misunderstanding that grew from the conversation betrays the real meaning of the message. That becomes an obstacle of the message to reach the agreement of the target group due to the imperfect or unsuitable translation. The translation of the word « école » from French

<sup>52</sup> Phonetic translation in Bamanan, local language written in Mali, so closed to Jula.



into Jula by “Nanzara kalan” reinforces the target group fear and the bad perception about the strategy of integration. Then, the mastery of communication subtleties by co-construction messages in supporting the integration of Islamic school in the national education one played a key role in preventing false information diffusion or growing bad perception. One participant while appreciating the way of translation quotes that:

The Consultant outlined terminology that impressed me personally. The precision of the word «Nanzarah kalan»; it is very important to understand it. It was difficult for the children of my generation to go to official school. Those of them who went to official school mostly became executives and I am there as an imam without great means. I went to Koranic school here. With the difficulties I went to Mali where I learned for example geography and natural sciences in Arabic. On my return the parents wondered if secular subject that I learn would have had changed direction in the training by opting for the «Nanzarah kalan».” (Data from the study, 2021).

Concerning the expression in Jula “ka yèlèmani do”, “ካላ ሃይለማኑስ ደወ”. It is the translation of “Intégration” from French into Jula. So, that expression was used by some community relay to describe the scope of the strategy. It was expressing the innovation in the process. In fact, the strategy of integration was about to include with the Arabic and religious learning, the country official education program. The strategy also aims to strengthen Arabic and religious teachers’ capacities by improving their pedagogical approach. So, some of the community relay consider these actions as change. **Therefore, to express that in the local language Jula, they say “ka yèlèmani do” which means not only to bring change but also to disrupt the traditional Islamic system.**

Indeed, these translations consolidated the apprehension or fears of certain target audiences to go or not to the integration of children or Islamic school initiated by the Government and its partners. The translation from a language to another very often reduces or amplifies the message meaning. In this study case, the understanding of the translation of “ka yèlèmani do” in the mindset of the target audience amplifies the meaning and create discrepancy between the real will of the Government and its partners and the understanding of the target group. The appropriateness of the translation in a context of social and behavior change in multilanguage environment, or from North language to South language must be more considered to avoid misunderstanding and compromise the engagement of the community.

### 3. Discussion

#### 3.1 Local language in social development designing

Social and behavior change (SBC) succeeds when a strategic communication intervention is built on trust among the different stakeholders. That interaction goes beyond the technical model of communication “Sender – Message - Receiver”, described by Shannon and Weaver (1949). The SBC takes in account the environment and socio-cultural realities. That process is

closer to the socio linguistic and psychological model of communication as developed by Roman Jakobson (1963), Dell Hymes (1962) and T. Newcomb formalized from the work of F. Heider (1958). Consequently, in that perspective, communication is not linear but interactive.

In constructing SBC messages, translation constraints, according to the study, increase misunderstandings and mistrust about the strategy of Islamic School Integration in the national education system and bias is introduced into the communication. This could have had a negative impact on the success of the government's initiative. Therefore, it becomes relevant that development designing in developing countries may take into account the local language as a factor of creating trust among different stakeholders. And also providing for meaningful communication. This is the reason why “ the language issue in development cannot be dismissed as trivial, nor can it be reduced to an epiphenomenon of its historical, social, or cultural context” T. Bearth et al. (2014, p.3). Language becomes a full part of development designing. “It is through language and culture that the operational values and mindset of a community is established and reflected in their ways of thinking, behaving and interacting in the outside world” T.E. Ca et al. (2016, p.538).

The message designing in the social and behavior change context, “requires conforming or changing established sets of conduct and social behaviours that society recognized and accept as part of their life style” T.E. Ca et al. (2016, p.537). Language thus becomes a tool for facilitating and a means for change management. For that purpose, it is very important to notice that “in language we coordinate our behaviour, and together in language we bring forth our world” F. Capra (1996, p. 290). So, language in development process, is an asset to speed up development success in local or rural community.

Indeed, “no one would seriously deny that the African language landscape displays a fairly high linguistic heterogeneity” J.S. Silue (2015, p. 794). But the matter is that in most of the African countries, local languages are not recognized as official one. That has been “one of the many tasks that the newly independent countries of Africa faced in the early 1960s was the choice of an official language” H.M. Batibo (2007, p.12). In fact, “with approximately 2500 languages (or 30 per cent of the world's living language), Africa is one of the most linguistically diverse continent” Ndhlovu (2006, p.137), whereas, it “counts less than 30 official languages” H. Tourneux (2008, p.19). In Côte d'Ivoire for example, a former French colony, French has been quoted in the Constitution as the official language (Constitution, 2016, Art 48.).

It is certainly obvious that “African languages resources and their place in African development are unrecognized and little documented or researched in the context of African studies” Ndhlovu (2006, p.137). As Djité (2008) argue in supporting that idea

no matter how one defines development, it cannot be achieved without reference to language as an implementing factor, and real development is not possible in Africa without the integration of local languages and the full participation of all her human capital (P.G. Djité, 2008, p.16).

The fact that most African countries gave priority to the foreign language as official one compromised the effectiveness of some development project. Language becomes an obstacle and that situation creates some mismatch between the message, its purpose, and the understanding of the target community. As mentioned by Tourneux (2008)

Issa Diallo interest himself in the technical manners that are taught during internships offered to rural people in Burkina Faso. The fact that they are mainly provided in French, a language that neither farmers nor cattle breeders master sufficiently, has a direct impact on their effectiveness H. Tourneux (2008, p.17).

It is relevant that the use of the local language not as a working language compromises the process of social and behavior change communication. In short, “no development project can avoid anchoring in the local language and culture” (H. Tourneux, 2008, p.14).

Local languages are very often said to be a problem, the “multiplicity of African languages is often seen as a bane of African unity, whether at the national, regional or continental level” as P.T. Zeleza (2006, p.20) enlightened. Whereas, the

diversity of language is an asset: it helps build cohesion in small community and sustains unique cultures[...]the rich variety of linguistic idioms carries with it an equally rich variety of cultural forms an ways of thought, and maintains for humankind a diversity of devices for coping with the uncertain challenges of human existence. (F. Ndhlovu, 2006, p.137).

In short, language remains a key component in the management of development within communities. And effectively, “more attention to the role of language choice in development and in the acquisition of knowledge would be highly appropriate.” B. Trudell (2009, p. 79)

### **3.2 Low reliance of local language and translation risk in social and behavior change message designing.**

Constructing messages in the dynamic of social and behavior change supposed that the message designer, and the implementing community are on the same level or understanding. The message therefore is not just an idea from the expert but shall meet the local culture and community understanding for perfect communication. So, when the local language understanding is not taken into account during the designing, the effectiveness of the message within the target community is affected.

In the partnership with Non-Government Organizations or International organization, “social development concepts are framed using international languages (English, French, Spanish etc.)” Ca et al. (2016, p.538). That option of language choice, which is a part of the colonial heritage, weakens the reliance of local language as a factor of common understanding and communities’ involvement. In most of the context, in leading development process, the “role of language in development and social change is largely underestimated”. Whereas, “verbal communication is the central instrument with which knowledge is transformed and innovation takes place” (Volkswagen Foundation, s. d.).

Real development concern “is about people taking control of their own lives expressing their own demands and finding solution to their problems” T.E. Ca et al. (2016, p.536). It also happens in some project leading that “success and failure are explicitly linked to the degree of involvement of the poor in the decision making process” T. Bearth (2008, p.35). In that context, how do developers share development vision, principles, and strategy within the community when the members of the community do not understand the language they are spoken? How to enhance development within the community, when the working and spoken language represent an obstacle, between development bearers and development beneficiaries? Developing process with community implies broadening their possibilities and means because “achieving human development is linked to freeing people from obstacles that affect their ability to develop their own lives and communities” T.E. Ca et al. (2016, p.586). So, discussing development in local language becomes an opportunity for community empowerment.

In the cases that language becomes a boundary in development designing or implementation, translations become the main way of reaching target group. Translation is as follows “a means of interlingual communication”. Translation or the practice of translation “is a set of actions performed by the translator while rendering the source (or original) text (ST) into another language” G.M. Kuzenko (2008, p.227). According to the current case study, in Côte d’Ivoire, the official spoken, and written language is French. The national strategy of Islamic school integration in the national education system document were written in French. And the campaigning message were also proposed in French. It is generally “presumed that the translation has the same meaning as the original text”. So, in principle, “no exchange of information is possible if there is discrepancy between the transmitted and the received message” G.M. Kuzenko (2008, p.227 ). The message co-construction through the initial dialogue and three different workshops presented a discrepancy between the written message in French and its translation in local language called Jula.

T.E. Ca and Al. (2016) describe the risk of mismatching message during translation as a lesson learned

In the execution of the family planning project, spacing was misleading of many rural women. This had nothing in connection to age differences between children as intended in the objectives of the project. The concept of spacing children was taken to mean letting children sleep spaced out in different rooms T.E. Ca et al., (2016, p. 537).

Message translation effectiveness from a language to another may take in account the literal, cultural and artistic factors: literal “translation matches only words”, “cultural translation focuses on matching contexts” and “artistic translation focuses on matching relations” I. Corina (2021, p.473). When the translation takes these factors into account, the risks of misunderstanding or manipulation are mitigated and the communication is fair.

## **Conclusion**

Language in social development context, is a means of transporting information's and meanings from a transmitter to a receiver. It remains a key component in social and behavior change communication process. It is also, with the culture, an identity marker. Development partners even government used to frame development project in the country official language, which, in most of the case in Africa, does not meet the local or rural one. This obstructs the real involvement of the target community in the decision-making process. Furthermore, implementing and monitoring social development projects within community require a common understanding. The availability of the local language thus builds a kind of bridge between people and creates recognition in what is done or achieved for their well-being.

This study puts in evidence, in a communication situation, the interaction between the choices of the language, the translation process, and the influence on the target group understanding and perception. So, the initial dialogue and workshops led within the target community brought about information that help mitigate bad perception about the national strategy of integration of Islamic school in the national education system. The team in charge of implementation is now aware of the misunderstanding that the outreach messages translated from French to Jula was creating among the community. In fact, the translation in Jula given by the target community relay and religious leaders to the words “*école*” and “*intégration*” was sufficient to lead to the failure of the government and its partner's initiative in supporting children from Islamic school to benefit from the national education system curricula.

This study, once again, shows the relevance of participatory communication approach in development project planning. Involving target community in the process of decision making, by considering and taking in account their language and culture, contribute highly to reducing gap between social development projects results and the target community development expectations. When the development project meets the target community

needs, it is an asset for participation. Then, when community members understand and discuss in the local language, participation becomes effective, and the community engagement becomes more meaningful. In the dynamic of community engagement, considering local language is an opportunity in development project designing and implementation. In any case, when linked to their culture by suitable translation or writing, the lingua franca becomes an escapable means of community empowerment for sustainable development.

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