

# TELEVISION PROGRAMME AS AN EXTRA-TEACHING INPUT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING: A THREE-MONTS EXPERIMENT WITH LEARNER-VIEWERS

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## Résumé

*La présente étude a pour objectif d'analyser l'impact de l'émission « Hello » de la Radiotélévision Ivoirienne 2 (RTI2) sur l'acquisition du vocabulaire et le développement de l'écoute en Anglais chez les téléspectateurs. Autrement dit, à quel point cette émission en Anglais peut-elle contribuer à l'amélioration des aptitudes communicatives des téléspectateurs en Anglais, langue étrangère. Pour ce faire, nous avons eu recours à un procédé expérimental avec quatre (04) apprenants de niveau moyen comme échantillon. Ainsi, un prétest et un posttest ont été réalisés sur un groupe unique de participants. Les résultats de l'étude montrent que regarder l'émission « Hello » régulièrement peut aider à l'amélioration des aptitudes communicatives des apprenants en Anglais, langue étrangère. Toutefois, il serait judicieux, non seulement, de prendre en compte les besoins des apprenants dans la conception desdits programmes, mais aussi les besoins d'apprentissage tels que le matériel didactique et pédagogique, le rôle des instructeurs dans le programme.*

**Mots clés :** *cours de renforcement, RTI2, Emission « Hello », téléspectateurs, apprentissage.*

## Abstract

*This paper is intended to investigate the effects of the Ivorian RTI 2 program "Hello" on the development of vocabulary and listening proficiencies of the viewers. It tries to show the extent to which watching the RTI 2 program "Hello" can help improve EFL learners' language abilities. An experimental design, with four participants (intermediate learners) has been applied in the study. accordingly, a pre-test and a post-test have been used in a one-group experiment to conduct the study. The findings show that this TV program can be an actual source for the improvement of the learner-viewers' English language proficiency, if well designed. Therefore, it is advisable to emphasize, not only, the learners' needs, but also the learning needs such as the Didactic and pedagogical materials, and the chief role of educators in the program.*

**Key-words:** *extra-teaching input, RTI2, program "Hello", Learner-viewers, language learning.*

## Introduction

For years, English has assumed the position of dominant language from all over the world. Its influence spans multiple areas: education, science, technology, art, trade and politics. No country in this current world can manage without this language. It is the language of global communication. English is the most widely spoken language worldwide, with 1.5 billion speakers (Myers 2005). The position of leadership of this language has triggered a great deal of interest from countries and governments which give it a prominent place in education. This view is shared by Coleman et al. (2013), who posit that in Africa, several countries recognizing the importance of English ‘want to make the learning and teaching of this language in their education systems as effective as possible, responding to demand from their citizens who wish to have access to the information, education and economic opportunities in a globalized world.’ (H. Coleman et al., 2013, p.1).

However, in the light of the primordial place of English worldwide, some countries are not privileging the promotion of English in their educational system. This is generally the case of African French speaking countries. Several factors account for this situation like the co-existence of several other languages. In Côte d’Ivoire for instance, authorities have reported the existence of more than 60 local languages throughout the country. As J. Kouassi (2010, p.5) asserts, “In a context of multilingualism, the learning of foreign language is being confronted with particular difficulties related to the presence of a multiplicity of languages, each language possessing its own specificity”<sup>1</sup>. Thus, the use of English as foreign language (EFL) in Côte d’Ivoire, is mainly limited to formal settings at universities, language institutes or language classrooms. Also, the didactic environment in the Universities does not provide learners with required conditions for effective learning (inappropriate didactic tools, lack of adapted language laboratories for oral practice).

Today, technological breakthrough has changed the face of the world in language acquisition. The classroom is no longer a student’s

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<sup>1</sup> Dans un contexte de multilinguisme, l’apprentissage d’une langue étrangère se heurte à des difficultés particulières liées à la présence d’une multitude de langues qui ont chacune leur spécificité.

primary source of interaction so far as teaching English is concerned. Learners can now receive input from a wide range of sources beyond what the teacher gives them (reading articles, chatting on social media and watching Television (TV) programmes). “TV and radio are able to do what the classroom teacher can never do and that is to present language together with a great deal of its extra linguistic environment” (R. Gowon, 2009, p.97).

In fact, the spread of broadcast media especially TV and multimedia (internet...) in recent years has allowed people from all over the world to interact, educate, entertain, share information and communicate easily. Since its appearance in the early 1960's following the independence of many African French speaking countries, Television aims to inform, educate and entertain people. If traditionally, Television was perceived not to be particularly beneficial to literacy development, this viewpoint about its effects on language development has shifted positively over time. This is the case with the Ivorian television channel *Radio diffusion Television Ivoirienne 2 (RTI2)* which is weekly broadcasting an English teaching programme called 'Hello'. Therefore, the objective of this study is to show the impact of RTI 2 programme 'Hello' on the acquisition of the English language skills. In other words, to what extent can RTI 2 programme 'Hello' favour acquisition of the English language by viewers? To answer this query, an experimental design in the form of one-group pre-test and post-test design, using quantitative and qualitative approaches, was applied.

## **1. Literature Review**

### ***1.1. TV and language skills development***

The diversity of TV materials can be a rich source of language input. From news programs to entertainment via magazines, movies and documentaries, TV holds a key stake and plays a major role in learning foreign language. According to Flint quoted by P. Mfurankunda (2005),

Television is often the best source of current vocabulary, pronunciation, and idioms. Another merit of television involvement in the language class is the way it helps early stages of language

acquisition. When children learn new words, they need to associate the new item's pronunciation with its spelling.

In this perspective, TV can reasonably be granted the role of developing language skills such as reading, writing, speaking and listening.

#### ***a- TV and the listening skill development***

Unlike radio which broadcasts only through audio communication system, Television combines both sound and image. The imagery that accompanies the aural input programs bridges the gap of unconnected themes, speeds up the process of comprehension. In other words, strong receptivity may also be linked to the ease of aural processing that visual accompaniment implies. Video can fill in gaps in aural comprehension which at once affects and empowers the language learner. "Listening comprehension studies have found that the imagery associated with video can lead to increased comprehension (M. Rodgers, 2013, p.5)". Sherrington cited by P. Mfurankunda (2005) argues that "television touches upon the listening skill in that the viewer's comprehension depends on the degree of integration of sound and vision". He further underpins that "the medium of television fits with receptive skills (.....) watching any television program itself involves a receptive ability on the part of the viewer, to understand what he sees and hears".

Learners with low levels of English language who are regularly exposed to appropriate audio-visual programs such as selected news sessions can develop their listening skills. As P. Mfurankunda (2005) puts it forward:

EFL learners' insignificant improvement in listening skill might be related to their insufficient amount of exposure to audio-visual news. Classroom materials which were used in that particular EFL context to enhance listening comprehension were not sufficient enough to help the language learners cope with rapid speech.

In addition, authentic materials have proven to be effective in ameliorating skills in foreign language learning through audio-visual programs. For Bahrani (2013), authentic language materials refer to “spoken or written language materials that have been produced in the course of real communication and not specifically produced for the very purpose of language teaching” (p.68). As a matter of fact, most of the types of audio-visual programs are considered to be authentic language materials which have the potential to provide the necessary language input for SLA/ELF in informal setting by indirectly involving the language learners in the language learning process. Always with T. Bahrani (2013) we learn that “exposure to audio-visual news language input has the potential to improve the listening skill because different newscasts bring reality into the classroom and enable the students to focus on substantive issues” (P.70). In fact, watching TV serials programs helps encounter new utterances and expressions depending on the genres or the jargons. Meeting new lexicon on a regular basis through TV show can result in ameliorating the comprehension of target language and provide learners with a wide flow of information.

### ***b- TV and the speaking skill development***

One of the irrefutable gains provided by TV is its positive effect on the oral production of the viewers. The learning of new words and expressions not only enriches vocabulary but also ameliorates the speaking abilities. For instance, R. Gowon (2009) supports that “the television and radio had an effect on the spoken expression of students” (P.102). Indeed, authentic materials like movies, song etc. can strengthen the direct relationship between the language classroom and the outside world for students. For E. Kadzro (2016), “The use of films has fostered the rise of oral aptitudes of learner, especially through focus on dialogues” (p.38). That is, learners can easily remember what they watch on TV. Yet again, films can lead to speaking and writing drills. In the same line, ‘Learners can not only hear how native speakers speak, they can observe and learn how they behave when speaking. That naturally makes video irreplaceable for teaching speaking and listening’ (M. Rossafri, 2014, p.2).

When lessons are focused on comprehending, language learners tend to concentrate more on content and meaning rather than the language itself. This offers the language learners a valuable source of authentic

language input, so that they are not exposed only to the language presented by the text and the teacher. The existing environment and realities of native speakers also account for the motivation, confidence and excitement of the leaning. The learner viewers discover new words, expressions and words pronunciation etc.

Also, views from scholars converge to acknowledge that spending time on extramural activities (family, society, TV etc.) in English has a positive effect on learners' oral skills. On the whole, TV appears in extramural tasks, to be the first vehicle for oral proficiency increase when its programs are appropriately designed to fill in the needs of the viewers. This causes R. Gowon (2009), to assert that "Students tend to learn how to speak well from TV, their family's and school, and respectively (...) TV surpasses the family and school in terms of influential speaking" (p.102).

### ***c- TV towards writing and reading skills development***

Caption is undoubtedly crucial in ameliorating viewers' listening and speaking skills as well as in enhancing their capacities to write and read. Authentic input provided by captioned shows and movies are of paramount importance in the development of incidental reading vocabularies. Some studies demonstrate that viewers learn a little from FL movies with no subtitles than those which are accompanied with captions. They are motivated and attracted by captions. Evmenova et al. cited by A. Brann (2011) reveal that

An inexpensive way to help build the foundational reading skills of students is through the use of closed-captioned and subtitled television shows and movies. These supports can help boost foundational reading skills, such as phonics, word recognition, and fluency, for a number of students.

In fact, closed captioning can be a valuable literacy resource for the entire world. It can provide toddlers, pre-schoolers, struggling students, low literacy adults, and even second language (L2) learners with the opportunity to connect spoken dialogue with the printed word. Captions have strengthened many areas of reading proficiency

for students with learning disabilities, for beginning readers. Video show has one more advantage that makes it usable not only for developing speaking and listening skills but also for stimulating the development of reading and writing. As underlined above, with instructional TV, programs to really foster reading comprehension input, have to meet the needs of the learners. Since the different linguistic skills are interrelated, programs contents need to be given more attention and directives. F. Maine, (2015) discovered that “interventions targeted at supporting Oral Language had significant long-term benefits to reading comprehension” (p.5).

### ***1.2. The Communicative value of TV programs***

The outstanding feature of programs such as video films is their ability to present complete communicative situations. The combination of sound and vision is dynamic, immediate, and accessible. This means that communication can be shown in a context, and the many factors in communication can be perceived easily by viewers and language learners. The speakers in dialogues can be seen and heard; other participants in the situation can be seen. This is known as authenticity of the material in language. For T. Bahrani (2013),

Authentic material offers language learners the opportunity to deal with a small amount language input which contains complete and meaningful messages. Moreover, authentic language materials help language learners to notice the immediate relevance of what they do in the classroom to what they need to do in the real-world communication. (T. Bahrani, 2013, p.70)

Another advantage of using authentic materials, still according to Bahrani (2013) is

The comfortable environment that these materials create for young children. Authentic language materials are more appealing to the language learners than non-authentic language materials because of their objective to communicate a message rather than emphasize particular aspects of the target language (T.L). (T. Bahrani, 2013, p.70)

The main advantage of using video program as a technology for language teaching is considered to be its ability to present and immerse learners into complete communicative situations (Lonerger, 1984). As it can be seen, the communicative value of TV programs resides in the authenticity of the various materials that they offer the learner-viewers. This authenticity of the teaching / learning materials is of paramount importance in language learning and acquisition. Authenticity is a key aspect of the communicative view of language. In this perspective, it is argued that texts which are taken from newspapers, magazines, and tapes of natural speech taken from ordinary radio or television programs, are called authentic materials or communicative tasks or activities.

### ***1.3. Theories underpinning the study***

we know that all human beings need to communicate in order to express their ideas, feelings and thoughts. It means that human when interacting, refers to his background knowledge for effective communication. This does not call necessarily for the mastery of the linguistic rules. Activities with communicative purposes are helpful for breaking down barriers, finding information, expressing ideas about oneself and learning about culture. This calls on communicative competence and the theory of constructivism to be the basic theories for the present study.

The term communicative competence was coined by Hymes (1972) and referred to the implicit knowledge of a language and the ability to use it appropriately. This concept was proposed as the disapproval at the concept of Chomsky's idealized ideas of purely linguistic competence. Chomsky proposed linguistic competence was as the only theoretical foundation of methodology of English language learning, teaching, and assessment. However, the term communicative competence was suggested to alter Chomsky's notion of linguistic competence into a broader and more genuine concept of competence. Sabri et al. (2018, p.303) define communicative competence as "the ability that allows the person to communicate in order to fulfil communicative needs". Indeed, the concept of communicative competence embraced language competence not only as an essential

linguistic competence but also as the ability to utilize linguistic competence appropriately in various communicative contexts.

The basic claim of constructivism is that people learn by using what they know to construct new understandings. As people solve problems and discover the consequences of their actions through reflecting on past and immediate experiences, they construct their own understanding. Learning is thus an active process that requires a change in the learner. This is achieved through the activities the learner engages in, including the consequences of those activities, and through reflection. People only deeply understand what they have constructed. This actually goes in line with the use of audio-visual materials in foreign language learning and acquisition.

## **2. Methodology**

The research design adopted for this study is an experimental design using both quantitative and qualitative approaches with a single group of participants. A purposive sampling method was used to select the participants in the study. The sample consists of 04 participants (intermediate learners) who show interest in learning English and can basically express themselves in English. A pre-test and a post-test were used in the study, and based on two main aspects of language (vocabulary development and the listening skills development).

### ***2.1. Procedure of data collection***

As it is a one-group experiment, three steps have been followed for the collection of the data: **1)** administration of the pre-test, **2)** the treatment, and **3)** administration of the post test. Before starting the treatment phase, participants were pretested both in vocabulary and listening comprehension. The listening pre-test consisted of a video clip projection followed by a test of comprehension. The vocabulary pre-test consisted of matching words to pictures and completing a dialogue with corresponding words. The treatment phase took over three (03) months during which the participants watched eight (08) video clips, corresponding to eight (08) class sessions. Then to provide ground for comparison, participants were post-tested. The listening

post-test was the parallel form of the pre-test. For the vocabulary post-test, participants were asked to complete sentences and match words to corresponding pictures.

### ***2.2. RTI 2 program “Hello”***

From the perspective of Informing, educating and entertaining, RTI2 performs a program grid at the intent of every layer of the society and which comprises News, Music, Magazines, Sport, Entertainment, Documentary, Movies, etc. It reflects the living conditions of the population. Indeed, the program “hello”, presented by Janvier Zié Douka, a Master graduate, is an Ivorian television program intended to help viewers cope with resources for learning the English language in a more relaxed atmosphere when watching television. This program has been selected as the independent variable of the study. Therefore, it is question of evaluating its efficiency in fostering the viewers’ English language ability.

## **3. Presentation of the data and analysis**

### ***3.1. Results of the vocabulary tests***

This table reports the pre and post-tests marks of the vocabulary test administered to the four participants that took part in the experimentation in order to evaluate their performance. Thus, the pre-test was administered to evaluate their background knowledge in English before submitting them to the treatment process. After the treatment was completed, the participants were submitted to a post-test to gauge the impact of the RTI 2 program “Hello” on their communicative ability in English. The following table displays the related results.

N °	NAMES	MARKS		PERFORMA NCES
		Pre- test	Post- test	
1	K. A. F	6	9	+3
2	K. K. F	9	12	+3

3	O. D	3	3	00
4	S. K. M	6	12	+6

The table shows that in the vocabulary pre-test, the group registered marks going from 5 to 9 out of 20, while in the vocabulary post-test, the scores rise from 6 to 12 out of 20. Indeed, three (03) participants registered a rise in their mark:

**K. A. F** obtained 7 out of 20 in the pre-test. That represents 35%. And he scored 9 out of 20 in the post test, that is to say 45%. He performed an increase of 10%.

**O. D** got 5 out of 20 (that is 25%) in the pre-test and scored 7 out of 20 (that is 35%) in the post-test. He made a rise of 10%

**S.K.M**, with a score of 9 out of 20 (That is 45%) in the pre-test performed an increase of 60% in comparison with the post-test score of 12 out of twenty.

Only **K. K. F**, remained stable with a score of 7 out of 20 in the pre-test and post-test. This linear configuration represents 35% of the score.

### ***3.2. Results of the listening tests***

To evaluate the performance of the participants in listening comprehension, before and after the treatment, the same procedure was followed like in the vocabulary tests. The following table displays the pre and post-test marks obtained by the participants in the listening tests.

N°	IDENTIFICATION	MARKS		PERFORMANCES
		Pre-test	Post-test	
1	K. A. F	7	9	+2
2	K. K. F	7	7	00

3	O. D	5	7	+2
4	S. K. M	9	12	+3

The marks in the listening comprehension pre-test go from 3 to 9 and from 3 to 12 for the post-test.

**K. A. F** got 6 out of 20 in the pre-test (that is 30 %), and he scored 9 out of 20 in the post test (that is to say 45%). He made a rise of 15%. Only **K.K.F** had 9 out of 20 (that is 45%) in the pre-test and scored 12 out of 20 (that is 60%) in the post-test. He performed a growth of 15%. **S.K.M** scored 6 out of 20 (that is 30%) in the pre-test and 12 out of 20 in the post-test (60%), that represents 30% of growth.

**O. D** remained steady with the same pre-test and post-test mark; that is 3 out of 20 which represents 15% of the score.

In the light of these results, the scores performed by the group both in vocabulary and listening comprehension after the administration of the post-test revealed that TV program as instrument of promoting English language can be a valuable source of language input when it is well designed and intends to meet the needs of the learners-viewers. Moreover, in order to strengthen the conclusions of the treatment, the participants were also interviewed in order to elicit their perception of viewing the instructional programme and to triangulate data.

### ***3.3. Participants 'interview on the TV programme***

At the end of the experimentation, the 4 participants were interviewed. They were interrogated on their perceptions about the content, the activities and the objectives of the program 'Hello'. In order to decipher the analogy between the result collected and their reactions, a summary of their answers is expressed in the following:

**K. A. F:** I know the programme 'Hello', I watch it programme sometimes. This is a good English programme. Besides being attractive, it offers us a real authentic opportunity to improve some skills that we find it hard to deal with before. The authenticity and

originality of speech is of great help. But it should be more regular on the channel so that we may learn more.

**K. K. F:** I've heard about this programme, but never watch it. This programme is welcome. It is the only programme that promotes English through TV that I've ever known. Thanks to this programme, I have discovered a lot of words.

**O. D:** I watch the programme and I am happy. It is really attractive. English is a subject I dislike because I find it difficult. But the programme has helped me to acquire many new words and understand that I can speak English. Such a programme should be broadcast every day to help students cope with their difficulties.

**S. K. M:** Truly, I know the existence of the programme, however I never watch it. What I deeply love in this programme is the section dedicated to listening comprehension. But there are too much activities. I think we should delete some activities and focus on what the viewers need to improve his English. I mean speaking and listening skills. The subtitles and captions are also of great help.

## **4. Findings and discussion**

### ***4.1. Findings***

The major concern investigated in this paper has been the effects of RTI 2 program 'Hello' on the English language proficiency development of the learner-viewers.

The overall research findings of this study indicate that learners 'viewers have gains from the pre-test to the post-test both in vocabulary knowledge and listening skill scales. This points out the positive effect of the programme 'Hello' in developing the English proficiencies of the participants. Also, participants showed no decline in marks after the post-test administration in comparison with the pre-test. In addition, two participants found the programme's activities attractive. One encourages the use of subtitles for it is of great help in the comprehension process. Also, one participant opined that there are

too much activities in the programme and that some of them should be removed. Another one salutes the programme for it meets his learning needs. Finally, a participant really appreciates the programme because of the use of authentic material.

The study discovered that most of the participants know and appreciate the programme 'Hello'. But they regret that it is broadcast only every week. The periodicity of the programme doesn't allow an easy input because of its irregular contact with learners. They wish that such a programme should be steadier on the channel. Two of them wish it to be broadcasted every day for a strong good learning. As a whole, the four participants made good performance as set out in the analysis of the data. Therefore, the use of TV can have a positive effect in learning EFL when it is well-designed and meets the needs of the learner-viewers.

#### ***4.2. Discussion of the findings***

The results suggest that a great exposure to TV can help participants achieve listening higher comprehension test score. They were partaking between two and three sessions per week. This goes in line with the assertion of Gaskill cited by P. Mfurankunda (2005) who said that "EFL learners' insignificant improvement in listening skill might be related to their insufficient amount of exposure to audio-visual news". This is also the opinion of Brinton quoted by T. Bahrani (2013) when he writes that "exposure to audio-visual news language input has the potential to improve the listening skill because different newscasts bring reality into the classroom and enable the students to focus on substantive issues". In addition, the same T. Bahrani (2011) quotes that "using TV and radio news utterances as teaching material has proved effective on improving listening comprehension of EFL learners having difficulty in dealing with comprehending news utterances".

Vocabulary positive scores also revealed the good effect of TV exposure on learners Knowledge. This result is in parallel with the idea supported by Rice cited Close in the following words 'pre-schoolers acquire new words with sufficient exposure (...) television is well suited to language learning'. In addition, a recent literature reviewed by Naigles and Mayeux

(2001) concluded that “children learn vocabulary and extend understanding of familiar words through educational TV contact.”

The findings also reveal that the presence of captions helped participants of the experiment attain positive listening comprehension test marks. This finding is supported by many researchers who show a great deal of attention to captions and subtitles effects on learning. In fact, Danan cited in Karakas (2012) argues that “Audio-visual materials enhanced with captions or subtitles may function as a powerful educational tool in many ways. For example, they improve the listening comprehension skills of L2 learners”. Moreover, T Bahrani (2013) advocates that “exposure to movies with English subtitles helped intermediate students in EFL context to develop their listening comprehensions significantly. Other scholars highlight the cooperative support of subtitles even for intermediate learners to whom English is the first language. In fact, according to Hayati and Mohmedi cite in T. Bahrani (2013) “for low and intermediate language learners, watching a movie with the first language subtitle is beneficial for the better comprehension of the film because low and intermediate level language learners may have limited range of vocabulary items.” In the same line, Bird and Williams cited by K. Hosogoshi (2016) argue that “orthographic input does not interfere but rather facilitates auditory input processing, thus suggesting efficacy in captions and subtitles for listening comprehension”.

The outcomes of the test administration also depict the authentic materials as being a substantial source of vocabulary input. Blachford consider audio-visual news (...) to be a rich source of vocabulary input because the recycling feature of the vocabularies can help language learners build their lexicon (T. Bahrani 2013). Also, participants appreciate the originality and authenticity of the materials which elicit their interest and facilitate their learning. A view in line with that of Zoghi, Moradiyan, and Kazemi cited in Nasim Ghanbari et al. (2015). He led an investigation that indicates that majority of the students preferred using authentic materials for vocabulary acquisition because by using authentic material students dealt with outside, real world, they became interested when dealt with real language, became familiar with the culture of target language, and authentic materials increased their motivation for learning second language. Another factor fostering the input, well appreciated by learners is the original context some sections.

## Conclusion

The present study aimed at investigating the effects of RTI 2 programme ‘Hello’ on the English language proficiencies of the viewers and make suggestions on how this programme could better enhance the English language aptitudes of the learners. It was guided by the following research question: to what extent can the RTI 2 TV programme ‘Hello’ enhance the English proficiency of its viewers? An experimental design was applied to answer this question.

The results of the investigation indicate that TV programmes have the potential to provide the necessary input for language development particularly in EFL contexts where social interaction as a source of language input does not exist or is limited. In fact, the outcomes reveal that the programme “Hello” brought by RTI 2 has a significant impact on vocabulary and listening comprehension proficiency of the viewers. This proficiency enhancement is subordinated to the programme design whose activities are suitably structured. That is, the content must be suitable for the students’ learning needs and also the different student cultures. The language level of the video should be appropriate for the level of the class for the instructor not to devote too much emphasis on over-explaining. Other important factors to consider are the linguistic components, and how they can be integrated as part of the course curriculum, or as a whole. Teachers must be confident and competent when handling the video programme equipment. Educators, in the overall, must develop more research projects seeking the effectiveness of video subtitles on other components of the language in the process of learning EFL for a more effective language input and a better promotion of English language through TV in Côte d’Ivoire, a Francophone country.

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