



Promoting French language is important — Education Minister

DR Matthew Opoku Prempeh, the Minister of Education, has said there is the need to promote the French language across the country.

He said a study conducted by the Foundation for International Development Study and Research revealed that if countries share a common language it boosts their international trade by about 30 per cent.

He said this was because the common language factor makes it easier for businesses to move across borders.

Dr Opoku Prempeh said this in a speech read on his behalf at the launch of French E-Learning Platform (FeLP), initiated by Espace Francophone Ghana in partnership with Crystal Galaxy College and Metlite.

The platform aims at providing Ghanaians and other Anglophones with a modern and convenient tool for the learning of French, whereas, learners would be assisted by an online network of both Ghanaians and non-Ghanaian tutors.

Dr Opoku Prempeh said President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, a fluent French speaker, strongly believes that

bilingualism was part of a quality education and represents an asset for access to employment especially multilateral businesses.

He said whereas formal international trade within West Africa is estimated to be just about five per cent of the sub regions' total trade, the informal international trade was estimated to be at least three times this number with people travelling across the borders to trade.

He said although there seems to be several challenges facing such traders, the most prominent is the French-English language divide, as such, if Ghanaians learn French, the number of transactions within Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) could increase.

He said the ability to communicate in multiple languages was becoming more and more important in the increasingly integrated global business community, and that French was one of the important global working languages.

"Of course, English being our official language gives us important leverage, but to go the extra mile to acquire language skills in French puts us at an extra advantage," he added.

Mr Alain Ferolle Mboungou, the Platform Coordinator, said

the course to be offered on the platform is meant for adults with a good command on the English Language already, and that it was divided into three modules; beginner, intermediate and proficiency.

He said in a bid to provide Ghanaian professionals or students with a modern and convenient tool for the learning of French, Espace Francophone Ghana and Crystal Galaxy College entered into a tripartite with Metlite, to create a Ghana based French E-learning platform of the very latest international standard.

Mr Mboungou urged the public especially students not to learn compulsively; adding that "the best way we believe, is to learn gradually and consistently from the beginning to the end".

Mrs Julie Fournier, Cooperation Attaché at the French Embassy, in an interview with the Ghana News Agency also stressed the importance for Ghanaians to learn the French language.

She said there were different ways of learning; attending classes as many people do or go beyond the traditional ways of learning French which was learning online, adding that "I am happy to see that in Ghana there are more initiatives in terms of learning online".

Mrs Fournier said many are in



•Dr Matthew Opoku Prempeh

interested in the language, however, some may have had some bad experience when they were in junior high or senior high schools.

She said however, more Ghanaians were aware that if they want to have an advantage on the job market or make a difference, they needed to speak French.

"I think the awareness is here, but sometimes people may lack time to attend classes; it is interesting to have different types of learning and teaching, so you can go to Alliance Francaise and attend classes but to compliment that you can follow online courses," she added. —GNA