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Education Stakeholders' Attitudes Towards the Use of Dɔ̀gɔ̀sɔ̀ as a Language of Instruction: The case of the Municipality of Koro, Mopti Region, Mali

Dr Aldiouma Kodio
Faculté des Lettres et Sciences du Langage (F.L.S.L.)
Université des Lettres et sciences Humaines de Bamako (U.L.S.H.B.)
Email: aldioukodio@yahoo.fr

Abstract

The use of national languages as subjects and media of instruction in primary education has always been a major concern for the various education authorities in Mali. The diagnosis of the educational system made in 1962 revealed that the use of French only in education was a major handicap (Naparé, 2009). To date, the problem still remains, for pedagogical innovations generally stop at the experimental phase in Mali. This study therefore sought to explore the stakeholders' attitudes on the use of Dɔ̀gɔ̀sɔ̀ as a language of instruction in the primary schools. Focused group discussions and interviews were used, as the main research instruments, to gather the data from in-service teachers from bilingual curriculum schools, school directors, and students' parents in the municipality of Koro. At the end, the findings revealed that the education stakeholders' attitudes about the use of national languages in basic education are mixed but rather positive.

Key-words: Bilingual Curriculum, Dɔ̀gɔ̀sɔ̀, Education Stakeholders' Attitudes, Language of Instruction, Mother Tongue, National Languages.

Résumé

L'utilisation des langues nationales comme matières et médium d'enseignement dans les écoles primaires a toujours été une préoccupation majeure pour les différentes autorités éducatives du Mali. Le diagnostic du système éducatif réalisé en 1962 a révélé que l'usage du français uniquement dans l'enseignement était un handicap majeur (Naparé, 2009). A ce jour, le problème demeure, car les innovations pédagogiques s'arrêtent généralement à la phase expérimentale au Mali. Cette étude se propose donc d'explorer les attitudes des acteurs de l'école sur l'utilisation du Dɔ̀gɔ̀sɔ̀ comme langue d'enseignement dans les écoles primaires. Des discussions de focus groups et entretiens ont été utilisés, comme principaux instruments de recherche, pour recueillir les données auprès des enseignants et des directeurs d'école bilingues et des parents d'élèves du cercle de Koro. Enfin, les résultats ont révélé que les attitudes des acteurs de l'éducation vis-à-vis de l'utilisation des langues nationales dans l'enseignement fondamental sont mitigées mais plutôt positives.

Mots-clés: Attitudes des acteurs de l'éducation, Curriculum, Dɔ̀gɔ̀sɔ̀, langue d'enseignement, langue maternelle, langues nationales.

Introduction

Mali decided to drop the colonial educational system that was not likely to contribute effectively to the socio-economic development of the country. During colonization, the academic training was essentially structured on the satisfaction of the colonizers' needs. It mainly aimed at training junior officers playing the role of intermediaries between the colonial administration and the population. To remedy this problem, the Malian authorities of that period undertook a vast reform of the educational system in 1962 which recommended inter alia, the use of the mother tongue as a language of education as soon as the conditions would allow. The reform aimed at achieving such objectives as mass and quality education; an education that decolonizes the minds and rehabilitates Africa and its own values, etc.

To break away from the colonial system of education that gave colonized peoples little chance for cultural, political, and economic development, Kembo (2000, p. 286)) advocates: "If people of Africa want to give themselves a realistic opportunity to develop to their full potential educationally, economically, and politically, and to contribute to the resolution of their many problems, the issue of language in education must be addressed". This implies that solving Africa's problems requires the use of its native languages as a subject and medium of instruction. The colonial approach to education, not taking into account the socio-cultural realities of African societies, was not appropriate to the needs of African countries in terms of teaching and learning. It emphasized the values of the colonizers to the detriment of those of the colonized. The instruction took place solely in the language of the colonizers, deemed superior to African indigenous languages. For this reason, from independence up to now, Mali has paid particular attention to the promotion of its national languages. As a result, it has become imperative to introduce the teaching of national languages into the educational system in order to improve the quality and relevance of learning.

The problem of the study is that the use of the French language as the only medium of instruction is one of the factors that have led to higher failure and drop-out rates of many students in Mali. The issue of the language of education still remains unsolved because instruction in the Mother tongue is not yet effective in all the primary schools in Mali.

Research indicates that no country can develop sustainably without developing its own language (Couez and Wambach, 1994). The native languages of a country are the undeniable tools for its development. Only the promotion of national languages ensures the attainment of development goals. For example, teaching children in their mother tongue alongside a second language, allows the language skills to be transferred more easily. The development of these skills can also facilitate the mastery of oral and written skills in the second language. It is a powerful tool for transmitting knowledge and improving the quality of education. It is in this context that Mulengua (2000), the Zambian minister of education, captures: "..., no country can develop using a foreign language that its people do not understand well." Therefore, it is obvious that no country can develop with a foreign language.

In addition, during the celebration of the International Day of Mother Tongue in Mali held on February 21, 2004, Haidara (2004) echoed in the same vein, using the words of Joseph Poth (1997, p.5), on the justification of mother tongue instruction with the following:

The child is as comfortable in his mother tongue as in the arms of his mother. Denying him the opportunity to use the linguistic support with which he is familiar and, which is suited to meeting his basic needs of expression and creativity, school places him, at the same time, « in a deadlock» or «regression» situation."¹¹³.

The foregoing actually emphasizes the pressing need for the use of national languages as media of instruction. In addition, Maurer (2010) observed that students' poor achievement in schools is due to the exclusive use of French as the medium of instruction. He states: "The student's first language exerting a crucial influence on his/her cognitive and affective development, its use in primary education fosters fundamental learning and makes it easier to progressively acquire a second or foreign language."¹¹⁴(p.7).

¹¹³L'enfant est à l'aise dans sa langue maternelle comme dans les bras de sa mère. En lui refusant donc la possibilité d'utiliser le support linguistique familial apte à répondre à son besoin fondamental d'expression et de créativité, l'école le place du même coup "en situation de blocage" voire de "régression.

¹¹⁴ La langue première de l'élève exerçant une influence déterminante sur son développement cognitif et affectif, son utilisation dans l'enseignement primaire favorise les apprentissages fondamentaux et rend plus aisé l'acquisition progressive d'une langue seconde ou étrangère.

Therefore, the author reveals that students who study in their mother tongue are more successful than those who attend classic schools where teaching is delivered in French. Besides, mother tongue instruction can help reduce school failure and drop – out. Also, the above quote discloses that the transition from mother tongue / national language to French works normally.

Furthermore, Jean Dard, a French teacher, who arrived in Senegal in 1816, during colonization, advocated for mother tongue instruction. He had the firm conviction that the mother tongue promotes more knowledge construction strategies. His conviction is supported by present day researchers. For example, Cummings (2001, p.8) in a study commissioned by UNESCO (2007) supports the theory of the use of mother tongue according to which the acquisition and consolidation of academic skills in the language that one masters well (the mother tongue), facilitates other tasks of acquisition in the second language in situations of bilingualism. Ouane & Glanz (2011) in a World Bank report on education, points out the following advantages of teaching in the African languages, “Education in the first language helps (i) improve access and equity; (ii) improve learning outcomes; (iii) reduce repetition and dropout; (iv) exploit some socio-cultural benefits; and (v) reduce overhead costs”. Here, we note that the benefit of mother tongue instruction is invaluable. For this reason, teacher-training in the didactic of mother tongue instruction and their equipment with appropriate instructional materials must be emphasized.

Similarly, Traoré (2001) also argues in the same vein, “The use of African languages as part of an active pedagogy promotes and strengthens the learning capacity of students. In general, this educational innovation helps improve academic efficiency” (p.206). Despite the prevailing insufficiency of the financial resources, there is an imperious necessity of intellectualizing African languages. Prah (2009, p.103) warns, “Any language which developmentally stands still has taken the first step to extinction. This is the fate which awaits most, if not all, of our languages if we do not proceed to intellectualize and develop them”. In this perspective, the Ministry of education has developed various teaching programs and modules of initial and in-service training specifically for different categories of teachers (IFM¹¹⁵ graduates, contract teachers recruited under SARPE¹¹⁶, and community school teachers). This means that many efforts have been devoted to the promotion and enhancement

¹¹⁵ Institut de Formation des Maîtres (Institute of Teachers’ Training)

¹¹⁶SARPE (Stratégie Alternative de Recrutement du Personnel Enseignant / Alternative Strategy for Recruiting Teachers)

of Mali's national languages, their status, as well as their functions. However, education stakeholders' attitudes on the use of Dɔ̀gɔ̀sɔ̀ as the language of education in the Dogonland have not yet been the subject of in-depth research. This study attempts to bridge that gap. The purpose of the study is to analyze the education stakeholders' attitudes towards the use of Dɔ̀gɔ̀sɔ̀ as a language of instruction in the municipality of Koro in the Dogonland. To be able to attain such a purpose, the specific objectives of the study include the following:

- (1) to investigate on the profiles of curriculum teachers and their mode of recruitment in the municipality of Koro;
- (2) get an insight into the attitudes of education stakeholders towards the use of Dɔ̀gɔ̀sɔ̀ as a language of instruction;
- (3) to explore the main difficulties encountered by bilingual curriculum teachers.

On the basis of the aforementioned objectives, the following research questions are appropriate to guide the study:

- (1) What are curriculum teachers' profiles and how was their mode of recruitment in the municipality of Koro?
- (2) How do education stakeholders perceive the use of Dɔ̀gɔ̀sɔ̀ as a language of instruction?
- (3) What are the main difficulties encountered by curriculum teachers?

1. Methodology

The current study is carried out in the Dogonland in Mali. It analyzes the teaching practices of the Dɔ̀gɔ̀sɔ̀ language within the framework of the bilingual curriculum in the municipality of Koro, Mopti Region. The study explores the attitudes of the education stakeholders with respect to the implementation of the bilingual curriculum.

1.1. Research Design

This research employs a Mixed-method approach. A mixed-method research is defined as those studies that include at least one quantitative strand and one qualitative strand (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). Structured interviews and focus group discussions are used in the qualitative portion to gather data; and to supplement the qualitative data, a cross-sectional survey was used to collect the quantitative data. This study was conducted in the municipality of Koro in the Mopti region.

1.2. Sample and Sampling Procedure

The participants of this research are classroom teachers, school principals, education support center's advisors (CAP advisors) and students' parents. These participants are also considered as the main stakeholders responsible for implementing the bilingual curriculum. The

participants were purposively selected from eight schools implementing the curriculum in the municipality of Koro. They include the School Siaka Dama A and Siaka Dama B, School Djibril Barry I, School Gourou Anaye, school K. Barthelemy Togo in Dangatene, School of Toroli, Public school of Bondo and School of Madougou. From these schools, 54 participants were selected including six CAP advisors and eight school Principals. CAP advisors were selected because of the role they play in the monitoring of pedagogical activities of teachers and directors, and the support they provide to the latter for the successful implementation of the curriculum. In addition, we designed and sent a survey questionnaire to 60 parents who could read and write. Then, we organized two focus group discussions with both literate and illiterate parents. The participants of this study include both men and women who were sampled according to profiles and experience as detailed in the table below.

Table 1: Sample Selection and Gender

Schools and CAP	Gender		Profiles	Status
	Men	Women		
K. Barthelemy Togo of Dangatene,	4	2	IFM IPEG SARPE Other	Conventional teachers Contractual teachers Civil servants
Madougou	4	3	IFM IPEG SARPE Other	Conventional teachers Contractual teachers Civil servants
Toroli	4	2	IFM IPEG SARPE Other	Conventional teachers Contractual teachers Civil servants
Bondo	2	2	IFM IPEG	Conventional teachers

			SARPE Other	Contractual teachers Civil servants
Siaka A	4	3	IFM IPEG SARPE Other	Conventional teachers Contractual teachers Civil servants
Siaka B	4	3	IFM IPEG SARPE Other	Conventional teachers Contractual teachers Civil servants
Gourou Anaye	4	2	IFM IPEG SARPE Other	Conventional teachers Contractual teachers Civil servants
Djibril Barry I	4	1	IFM IPEG SARPE Other	Conventional teachers Contractual teachers Civil servants
CAP Madougou	1	1	IPEG	Civil servant
CAP Dioungani	1	0	IFM	Civil servant
CAP Koro	1	2	IPEG	Civil servants
TOTAL	35	23		
	54			

Source: Field data

1.3. Research Tools

Three main research tools were used in this study to collect data: Interview, Focus Group and Survey. In fact, ten school principals and six CAP advisors were interviewed. Interviews allowed us to get important information that could not be obtained otherwise. Two focus group

discussions were organized with classroom teachers in two schools and two other focus group discussions were held with students' parents. Each focus group discussion comprised of eight participant teachers and parents. It was conducted with the participants in two schools (School Siaka Dama A and school of Madougou). The focus group discussion (FGs) session started with an introduction of the members and the different topics for discussions. Then, the main points were reviewed for informants to make comments on. Focus group discussions are useful when the occasion to meet separately with every participant is difficult. The survey questionnaire was designed and administered to all the 54 participants. It helped us to supplement and corroborate the data gathered qualitatively. All the participants were first briefed and were then explained the purpose of the study. The participant consent was a prerequisite step to their participation and we assured them that all information collected would be kept confidential. Both the FGs discussions and interviews with the participants were mainly focused on the stakeholders' attitudes on the use of Dɔ̀gɔ̀sɔ̀ as the language of education.

1.4. Data Analysis Methods

All the interviews were recorded in French and then translated into English. The data from the focus group discussions with teachers and students' parents were also recorded, transcribed, and hand written. Themes were generated from the interviews and focus group discussions and further used in discussing the findings of the study. Such themes include the stakeholders' attitudes on the use of Dɔ̀gɔ̀sɔ̀ as the language of education, teachers' training and curriculum implementation. Finally, the data from the questionnaire were analyzed in form of tables with the Sphinx software. They served to supplement the main qualitative data. Multiple data collection methods were employed in order to strengthen the validity of the research.

2. Results and Discussion

The knowledge of the attitudes of the education stakeholders is an important aspect of analyzing the success or failure of a language innovation. Success at school is achieved with a good initial training and continuous professional development programs for the teachers. Even so, their attitudes may depend on their teaching profiles, status, and initial and continuous professional development training on the bilingual curriculum. That said, attitudes are factors that may affect teachers' performance.

2.1. Results relating to the first research question: What are curriculum teachers' profiles and how was their mode of recruitment in the municipality of Koro?

In Koro, teachers have different profiles. All of them did not graduate from institutes of teachers' training or college. A significant number of teachers 45 out of 54 surveyed graduated from IFM; two (2) teachers (3.7%) graduated from IPEG¹¹⁷; seven (7) teachers i.e. 12.9% graduated from other schools as displayed in table2.

Table 2: Teachers' profiles

School attended	Nb. Cit.	Freq.
No response	00	00.0%
IFM	45	83.3%
IPEG	02	3.7%
Other	07	12.9%
TOTAL OBS.	54	100%

Field data

As highlighted in table 2, a good proportion seven (7) teachers corresponding to 12.9% did not graduate from a teacher-training institute. Several CAP advisors and school directors have confirmed this fact. Pascal Dara, CAP advisor makes clear that the curriculum schools in Koro are facing a serious problem of lack of qualified teachers. He points out that some teachers graduated from IFM, but they don't know much about the curriculum implementation. Most of the schools of the CAP are community schools. With the policy of "one village, one school", the CAP and the local authorities have hired people without qualifications to teach in schools. In support of the above, Mr Niangaly, 6th grade teacher at Siaka Dama argues, "There were also graduates from Universities and higher educational institutions, who, due to unemployment, have started teaching." Besides, Mr. Somboro, CAP advisor, expressed regret in regard to the fact that the NEF policy allowed so many unqualified people to teach in schools leading to the current situation. The following extract describes the teaching profiles and the mode of recruitment.

Researcher: What is the profile of your teachers?

Mr. Somboro: Most of our teachers graduated from IFM. But there are those who came with the "DEF" Diploma and have integrated the civil

¹¹⁷ Institut Pédagogique d'Enseignement Général / Pedagogical Institute of General Education

service. Others, shop keepers, electricians, accountants, building technicians, all teach either in the classic system, in the curriculum, or in Community Schools. It is the policy of the NEF, “One village, One School” that entailed this. It was to fill the need for teachers that was felt everywhere (Interview with Mr Madou Somboro, CAP advisor).

Both Mr. Niangaly and Mr. Somboro have mixed opinions about teacher profiles and their mode of recruitment. The lack of qualified teachers made that happen. This research shows that all the curriculum teachers don't have the same status as indicated in the table below. A significant number of teachers 36 (66.6%) are contractual teachers; 12 teachers i.e. 22.2% are civil servants; and six teachers corresponding to 11.1% are conventional teachers. Table 3 below displays the status of curriculum teachers.

Table 3: Status of Curriculum Teachers

Status of curriculum teachers	Nb. Cit.	Freq.
No response	00	0.0%
Conventional teachers	6	11,1%
Contract teachers	36	66.6%
Civil servants	12	22.2%
TOTAL OBS.	54	100%

Field data

In Mali, especially in the education sector, the authorities had to resort to several kinds of teachers to fill the need for teachers at a given time. So, concepts like volunteer, conventional, and contract teachers have emerged to particularly categorize teachers.

3.2. Results relating to the second research question: How do education stakeholders perceive the use of Dɔgɔsɔ as a language of instruction?

The study came up with a number of findings in relation with how the various education stakeholders perceived the use of Dɔgɔsɔ language as a medium of instruction in the municipality. The use of national languages in the teaching / learning process is of interest at more than one level. It is observed that learning to write, read, and calculate in the Dogon language is generally perceived as useful and rewarding. Actually, the majority of parents' responses are favorable to the curriculum approach used in schools. The opinions on the schools implementing the curriculum are mixed but rather favorable. In this way, curriculum benefits from a good adhesion of the school stakeholders that we surveyed and interviewed. The table

below illustrates parents’ attitudes about the curriculum. Between the curriculum and the classic systems, which one do you prefer?

Table 4: Choice between the curriculum and the classic systems

Choice between curriculum and classic system	Nb. cit.	Freq.
Curriculum	35	58.3%
Classic	25	41.7%
TOTAL OBS.	60	100%

Field data

Thirty-five (35) parents (58%) preferred the curriculum approach against 25 or 41.7% who are for the classic system. As the data show, the opinions are mixed. The twenty-five (25) (41,7%) of parents who have chosen the classic system may have been influenced by the fact that French is more valued than the mother tongue in the sphere of politics and economy. They may have also reacted to the consequences of the bad implementation of the curriculum by some teachers. It has to be noted that in Mali, French being the official language, candidates at the civil service pass the entrance test in French, not in the mother tongue. Besides, some parents resented the discontinuity of the curriculum in the middle school where French is the only language of instruction. Students who started their schooling in their mother tongue find themselves faced with difficulties as their level in French is low. So parents might also think that this discontinuity can delay their children’s academic progress.

The stakeholders who have positive attitudes about the curriculum justify their position on the basis of the rationale of the use of mother tongue instruction which makes the learning process of the children much easier. Learners feel secured in the language they are familiar with, especially if that language is also used at school. This becomes a pride for parents and community members who see their culture valued through its use and representation in print with local artifacts. On the contrary, parents who have negative opinions justify their standpoints on the bad implementation of the approach by teachers who do not speak the dialect of the students, have not been well trained or are unwilling to teach in the mother tongue. Focus group discussions with parents (Siaka Dama “A” and Siaka Dama “B”) allowed us to get an additional insight into their opinions on the use of Dɔgɔsɔ. What follows are statements from participant parents' attitudes about the curriculum, “We want our children be taught in Dɔgɔsɔ.” “If Dɔgɔsɔ will not hamper their learning of French language, we want our children to be

educated in both languages.” Discussions also pertained to the disappointments regarding the lack of teacher training needed in the bilingual school.

As a result, some parents feel that the curriculum is a good initiative but not profitable because teachers are poorly trained in the approach and the French language remains the sole language of recruitment for the civil service. The analysis of the various data shows that there has never been any question of substituting Dɔ̀gɔ̀sɔ̀ with another national language. Besides, research findings note no desire to use another dialect more widely understood, other than the standard dialect Tɔ̀rɔ̀sɔ̀. In some areas, students may not fully understand the standard dialect, thus preventing the expected effect to occur. Such a situation could make teaching more difficult in some areas where the dialect of the children does not have a strong intelligibility with Tɔ̀rɔ̀sɔ̀. In practice, Tɔ̀rɔ̀sɔ̀ is not the only dialect used in classes everywhere. Depending on the situation, the teacher alternates with s/her mother tongue, or with that of the children. Few people are against the use of Tɔ̀rɔ̀sɔ̀ notwithstanding the lack of instrumental motivation in this dialect. To mitigate this issue about the standard dialect, the education support advisors authorized in-service teachers to use the dialect of the learners’ environment to maximize the outcome. They advocated the continuation of the curriculum teaching while emphasizing initial and in-service teacher training. Overall, the data from the focus group show that parents are informed about the introduction of both Dɔ̀gɔ̀sɔ̀ and the training of teachers to teach it in their schools.

Moreover, parents have understood that students who are in curriculum schools do not envy their classic classmates. The following table explicates such a reality in tandem with the below question: Have you enrolled your children in the curriculum school by will or constraint?

Table 5: Choice of Enrollment of Students

Choice of enrollment	Nb. cit.	Freq.
Constraint	22	36.7%
Will	38	63.3%
TOTAL OBS.	60	100%

Field data

A good number of parents 38 (63.3%) affirmed to have enrolled their children in the curriculum school by will against 22 or 36.7% who indicated that they enrolled their children by constraint. The fact that 63.3% of parents have enrolled their children by will means that the curriculum has real advantages in the eyes of these parents, and that it can help prevent students from dropping out. In addition, instruction in the mother tongue makes the transfer of skills

easier as the children learn best in their own language. The reason why 22 (36.7%) of the parents indicated that they enrolled their children in the curriculum school by constraint might imply that their children do not speak the dialect used to teach them. It might also be the case that these parents are recently posted or relocated in the area of Koro, so they have no choice but to send their children to the closest school they find which could be a curriculum one. Parents' attitudes as disclosed by principals and teachers are positive and negative depending on the schools and the performance achieved by the children. In an interview with Principal Jules Togo, School K. Barthelemy Togo in Dangatene, expressed positive feelings about parents' satisfaction with the teaching of Dɔ̀gɔ̀sɔ̀ in the following comment:

Parents are happy that Dɔ̀gɔ̀sɔ̀ is taught in their schools. They often ask us to train the teachers. When teachers are not trained, they cannot implement well the method to enhance students' understanding. No need to say that if students are not well taught in the primary level, they will have problems in the middle school. Therefore, they will tend to drop Dɔ̀gɔ̀sɔ̀ while they are not good enough in French. Despite all this, parents are for the teaching of Dɔ̀gɔ̀sɔ̀. Their concern, however, is whether the teaching of Dɔ̀gɔ̀sɔ̀ will continue in the middle school.

The table below gives details about parents' attitudes of the quality of curriculum teaching.

Table 6: Quality of Curriculum Teaching

Quality of curriculum teaching	Nb. cit.	Freq.
Bad	13	21.7%
Fairly good	38	63.3%
Good	7	11.7%
Very good	2	3.3%
TOTAL OBS.	60	100%

Field data

Thirty-eight or 63.3% of parents think that the quality of the curriculum teaching is fairly good. While 13 parents (21.7%) find the curriculum bad, a minority, only seven parents rated it good. Overall, the attitudes given to the quality of the curriculum teaching implies that a number of conditions are to be met for the good implementation of the system. These include the upgrading of teachers' level of competence through refresher courses and the allocation of didactic materials appropriate to the teaching of the curriculum.

Finally, many critical conditions determine the stakeholders' attitudes regarding the implementation of the bilingual curriculum in the municipality of Koro. This research looked at the academic dimensions such as the success level, teachers', training, instructional resources, etc. Comparing the classic system to the curriculum one, Mr. Sagara, CAP advisor, finds that the students of the "curriculum" are not lagging behind their peers of the classic system. He supports, "Undoubtedly, in the curriculum system, students face some integration problems at the beginning; they are put on the side line, but over time, it becomes clear that students of the classic system are not more knowledgeable than their curriculum counterparts". Therefore, the curriculum system should be supported.

2.3. Results relating to the second research question: What are the main difficulties encountered by the curriculum teachers?

The study revealed that the main difficulties encountered by the curriculum teachers are among other the lack of initial teacher training which is very insufficient, irregularity of class visits by CAP advisors for monitoring, planning, transition from Dɔ̀gɔ̀sɔ̀ to French, transcription. The in-service teacher training is structured around a three-level module (Referentiel du Curriculum¹¹⁸). In the level I curriculum, teachers are introduced to transcription and writing in the national language. The level II curriculum strengthens their writing skills in the national language through written production. Finally, the level III curriculum is that of consolidation which improves skills in the national language. The duration of the training for each level is just three weeks and is somewhat devoted to national languages. The following statements were made during the focus group discussion with participant teachers in Madougou, "Training in the national language clearly leaves to be desired," and "the instructional resources relating to the Dɔ̀gɔ̀sɔ̀ language are not readily available and accessible." It has also been elucidated, "Apart from the notes taken during the training courses, we do not have reference documents to strengthen our knowledge acquired in the field of national languages."

Within the same scope, at School Djbril Barry, the teachers interviewed lamented on their main difficulties in these terms, "We have not been trained in the curriculum;" "We have problems in lesson planning, teaching methods, and assessment;" "We need to be trained in the

¹¹⁸Curriculum benchmark, Level 1, 2, 2011).

curriculum methodology in order for us to cope with the switching from Dɔ̀gɔ̀sɔ̀ to French.”Similarly, Mr. Niangaly, CAP advisor, deplored on the dearth of teachers trained for the teaching of Dɔ̀gɔ̀sɔ̀ when he says, “In Koro, 90% of teachers are not trained in bilingual curriculum; they are the latest graduates from IFM; so they will not be able to implement correctly the curriculum unless they get continuous in-service training.” In addition, Jules Togo (school principal, K. Barthelemy Togo in Dangatene also insists on teacher training, “We need to train teachers in Dɔ̀gɔ̀sɔ̀, “We need to train those who have the Level one and Level two”, he says, “If the teacher is trained in Level one and not in Level two, he will always have problems in implementing the concepts of level two and three”. He also stressed the need for CAP Advisors to constantly monitor the work of the teachers in curriculum schools. This way they may be able to pinpoint teachers’ weaknesses and fix them without delay. Conversely the data from the survey indicate that CAP advisors do not visit classes very often. The frequency of class visits by CAP advisors is provided in the table below.

Table 7: Frequency of Class Visits by CAP Advisors

Visit by CAP advisors	Nb. Cit.	Freq.
Very often	5	9.2%
Often	26	48.1%
Rare	18	33.3%
Very rare	3	5.5%
Not at all	2	3.7%
TOTAL OBS.	54	100%

Field data

Data in the table above indicate that a great number of teachers, 26 out of one fifty-four (54) declared that the CAP advisors often visit them. However, a significant number of teachers 18 or 33.3 % affirmed, on the contrary, that the visit by CAP advisors is rare and three teachers or 5.5% find that it is very rare, and two teachers or 3.7% said they never get visited by CAP advisors. It should be noted that five teachers or 9.2 % admitted that CAP advisors visit their classes very often. The data from the table show that CAP advisors do not monitor teachers’ activities correctly and regularly. If teachers’ activities are not well monitored and supported, if schools are not equipped with adequate resources and teaching materials, the curriculum implementation becomes difficult. Even so, it happens that an advisor appointed to monitor teachers in curriculum has not himself received the training required to carry out this job.

Moreover, Abdramane Togo, school principal in Toroli, opined that few teachers in his school received the training and described the problem in these terms: “All my teachers are not trained in the curriculum. They are trained neither in curriculum nor in convergent teaching. The big problem lies in training.” The lack of appropriate teacher training is also raised by Mr. Esai Douyon (school principal in Madougou, who echoed the foregoing in these terms: “The major problem that teachers face in my school is the lack of training. Given that training is the base, the method would have been better implemented if many teachers had been trained”. In other words, we can easily perceive from the findings that the main difficulty is the lack of initial and professional development training.

Mrs. Rachel Togo, 5th grade classroom teacher, School Guru Anaye, continues in the same vein, “The use of Dɔ̀gɔ̀sɔ̀ produces positive effects when teachers are well trained. Our problem is that the one who is supposed to train others does himself not have much knowledge of the curriculum; then how will he manage to teach another person? The trainer must be trained first for a better result”.

On the basis of the present study, findings were inconclusive on teachers’ attitudes about the implementation of the curriculum and the Government’s preparedness for it. Most teachers recognize the rationale for the use of Dɔ̀gɔ̀sɔ̀ as medium of instruction in the curriculum program, but lamented on a number of unfulfilled conditions without which the implementation of the program would be doomed to failure. These conditions are not only limited to the holding of initial and continuous professional development training sessions, but also the availability of adequate instructional materials, appropriate text books, good monitoring, assessment of the curriculum classroom teachers’ activities by CAP advisors, funding of the training program, and curriculum generalization, etc.

Last but not the least, there is a dialectal diversity in the Dogonland where AMALAN has identified 17 dialects. The choice of a dialect for the whole Dogonland poses problems. In addition, there are the Bamanan, the Mossi, and the Fulani people especially in Koro; though a minority, they find themselves compelled to learn in Dɔ̀gɔ̀sɔ̀, a language that is not their mother tongue. Nevertheless, teachers need to be trained and correctly monitored in order to achieve their full potential.

Conclusion

In conclusion, education stakeholders admit that the ways the teaching of Dɔ́gɔ́sɔ́ as the language of education benefits the students are various. The use of home language develops students' critical and literacy skills and get them more involved in the learning process. It also develops their social and cultural identity while linking home to school. Besides, when home language is used as the medium of education, students take good ownership of the curriculum. However, several factors affect teachers' attitudes on the implementation of the curriculum in the municipality of Koro. The mismatch between initial training at IFM and employment poses tremendous problems to curriculum teachers. Consequently, many teachers have difficulties with the teaching of Dɔ́gɔ́sɔ́. The lack of appropriate instructional materials and continuous professional development training of curriculum teachers constitute obstacles for the curriculum implementation. In addition, findings show that teachers' activities are often not well monitored and supported, which makes teaching job difficult. Other difficulties that teachers encounter include but are not only limited to lesson planning, assessment, strategies and methods of teaching the curriculum. In addition, education stakeholders perceive that the mode of teachers' recruitment does not meet educational standards in a manner to promote quality education. The availability of appropriate instructional materials and the organization of regular continuous professional development training sessions for teachers leave much to be desired. Further, education stakeholders regret the fact that national languages are not yet integrated into the study program at IFM. Finally, it can be argued from the foregoing that the education stakeholders including CAP advisors, school principals, classroom teachers, and students' parents have mixed opinions but rather positive.

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