

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES IN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN BURKINA FASO

QUESTIONS POLITIQUES ET ÉCONOMIQUES DANS L'ENSEIGNEMENT DES LANGUES AU BURKINA FASO

F. Emilie G. SANON/OUATTARA

Université Joseph Ki-Zerbo de Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

fegsanon@yahoo.fr

Abstract : This paper deals with the issue of language teaching in Burkina Faso's schools. It relies on economic theories according to which language is considered as a resource. It draws on the hypothesis that any subject taught at school is attuned to a given objective. It tries to understand the presence and absence of languages taught in the education system. The methodology used is mixed. It relies on studies carried out in the field of language teaching in Burkina Faso, surveys among the technical staff of the ministry of education and a workshop held in Ouagadougou on language and teaching issues. The results show that no guidelines based on independent and autonomous decisions are provided for the choice of languages in the education system. No study was conducted to judge the rationale behind language choices or to assess their implementation. Language choices are tightly connected to the funding of the education system with no clear objectives. The country seems to be following a global trend imposed by funding institutions, which implies that the economic theories suggested to support language policies are proven in the case of Burkina Faso, even though the notion of rationality does not appear clearly at the level of individuals.

Key-words : Teaching - Languages - Politics - Economics- Burkina Faso

Résumé : Cet article traite de la question des langues enseignées dans le système éducatif du Burkina Faso. Il s'inspire de théories économiques qui considèrent la langue comme une ressource. Il part du postulat que toute matière présente dans un programme éducatif vise un objectif précis et tente de comprendre la présence et l'absence de certaines langues dans le programme d'enseignement du Burkina. La méthodologie utilisée est mixte. Elle se sert des études déjà effectuées dans le domaine de l'enseignement des langues étrangères, d'enquêtes de terrain auprès des personnels habilités, et d'un atelier organisé à Ouagadougou sur les questions de langues et d'enseignement. Les résultats obtenus indiquent qu'il n'existe pas de directives claires et cohérentes au Burkina Faso, basées sur une planification autonome et indépendante. Aucune étude n'a été menée pour juger du bien-fondé des choix linguistiques ou pour évaluer leur mise en œuvre. Les choix linguistiques sont étroitement liés au financement du système éducatif, sans objectifs clairs. Le pays semble suivre une tendance globale imposée par les institutions de financement, ce qui sous-entend que les théories économiques proposées pour soutenir les politiques linguistiques sont avérées dans le cas du Burkina Faso, même si la notion de rationalité n'apparaît pas clairement au niveau des individus.

Mots clés : Enseignement - Langues - politique - économie- Burkina Faso

Introduction

Language issues have always been problematic in multilingual countries. The language of instruction, the official language are linguistic choices that have to be necessarily made to regulate life. As De Shutter (2007 : 17 quoted by Wickstöm et al., 2018 : 5) rightly puts it, "in making policies on, among other things, education or simply courtroom practices, States unavoidably have to make linguistic decisions. (...)". There is no zero option in the field of language policy. Choosing languages is an unavoidable and tedious task. This complexity is often amplified by the fact that any option means surrendering to others, with all the implications attached. The situation is more crucial in former African colonies where many local languages coexist in addition to the colonial one.

The schooling system of Burkina Faso was inherited from colonisation, with its format and contents, including languages. Hence, Latin, English, German, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, Italian have all been or are still taught in Burkina Faso's primary and secondary schools as part of the official programme. It has appeared more and more evidently that "in a knowledge economy, education is the new currency by which nations maintain economic competitiveness and global prosperity" (USAID blog archives).

To acquire education is to cultivate oneself, to nourish one's mind, to develop at the individual level first and then to allow the community to develop. Globalisation and a greater quest for rationality in the management of resources have accelerated a process that has been going on for some time: market economy. The law of supply and demand regulating this economy involves the field of education despite attempts by States to intervene. School has been "commodified". It has a cost and needs to be made profitable afterwards. Thus, several states have undertaken reorganisations in their education system to allow it to be competitive, operational, profitable for the graduates and the community. The design of an education programme at the national level should therefore aim at clearly-defined objectives visible in the choice of the subjects to be taught, the teaching methods and the tools necessary to achieve the objectives.

The objective of this paper is to examine the issue of languages in the education system of Burkina Faso, drawing on an economic approach according to which language is considered as a merchandise, a resource with an economic value (Wickström 2018, Grenier 2019). Based on this approach, we want to describe the use of languages in the education system, the process of introduction some languages into the curricula and inversely that of withdrawal of some languages from the curricula.

This paper is prompted by the following observation: 1) in Burkina Faso, French is the official language and the language of instruction from primary to tertiary education in State-owned schools. 2) studies have pointed out the relevance of teaching in local languages (Malgoubri 2011, Napon 2001, Nikiema and Kaboré-Paré 2010); 3) the Ministry of Education has recently changed its name to include the "promotion of local languages" in its official denomination; 4) still, local languages are hardly mentioned in school curricula: instead, a foreign language, namely English appears in all general education programmes, in addition to English, for those majoring in literature (A4, A5) at the Baccalaureate exam, German is imposed (arrêté numéro 2013-180/ MESS/SG/UO du 13

mai 2013 fixant les épreuves des séries et options du baccalauréat de l'enseignement du second degré); before the implementation of the aforementioned decree, candidates had the choice between German, Spanish, Italian and Russian, then in 2013, all the other subjects gave way to German alone as the only second foreign language provided.

This leads us to ask the following research questions :

- What role does the teaching of languages play in the Burkinabe education system ?
- What are the challenges of language choices in the education system ?

We want to draw on economic approaches to conduct our analysis (Wickström et al. 2018, Grenier 2019). Language is referred to in terms of "economic rationality", "economic value of languages", which clearly suggests the link between language and economy. Bourdieu (1982) openly speaks of languages in terms of "market", "profit", "economic exchange" in his analysis of the sociology of language. Wicktröm et al (2018) make an economic analysis of language policies, more particularly those related to education, comparing language to a material merchandise, with an economic value. Barreteau (1998), Grenier (2019) and the European Commission (2012) in turn evoke economic arguments to justify language policies, especially in the field of education. Our choice of this approach is underpinned by the fact that in multilingual and underdeveloped contexts like Burkina Faso's, the framework of our study, the connection between language policies and economic theories is more relevant.

The European Commission recommends to its nationals to teach two foreign languages in addition to their mother tongue in order to create "a viable and inclusive economy", linking the questions of competence, employability and growth to that of language :

Europe's vision for 2020 is to become a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. Therefore, improving the outcomes of education and training and investing in skills in general – and *language skills in particular* – are important prerequisites to achieve the EU goal of increasing growth, creating jobs, promoting employability and increasing competitiveness. The ambition is to achieve better functioning of EU labour markets, to provide the right skills for the right jobs and to improve the quality of work and working conditions. In this context, foreign language proficiency is one of the *main determinants* of learning and professional mobility, as well as of domestic and international *employability*. Poor language skills thus constitute a *major obstacle* to free movement of workers and to the international *competitiveness* of EU enterprises. [. . .] it is clear, however, that the benefits of improved language learning go well beyond the immediate economic advantages, encompassing a range of cultural, cognitive, social, civic, academic and security aspects.

(European Commission, 2012 : 4).

Languages are seen as engines of development in that they allow mobility, greater employability of graduates, which, in turn, creates a viable, sustainable and inclusive economy. The languages involved there are the local ones in addition to two foreign ones, which differs from what is going on in Burkina Faso.

1. Methodology

Our methodological approach is mixed. It is based on the existing literature on education issues, national decrees and the general law on education. Surveys are also conducted and questionnaires administered.

We are inspired by works such as "An Economic Approach to Language Policy and Economic Justice : Economic, Philosophical and Sociolinguistic Approaches, edited by Wickström, Templin, Gazzola (2018), "Contesting French West Africa : Battles over School and the Colonial Order 1900-1950" by Gamble (2017), and "Quebec's Language Policy and Economic Globalisation : Language Problems and Language Planning" by Grenier (2019). Barreteau (1998), Bigirima (2018) also provides us with an important contribution regarding the analysis of our data. "Eduquer ou Périr" by Ki-Zerbo (1990) is relevant for a good understanding of the issues raised in this paper. In addition to these works, we have also made use of the various decrees related to the organisation of national examinations in Burkina Faso and the guidelines sent to the various inspectorates, because they constitute a reliable source of the contents and objectives of the programmes taught in Burkina Faso.

Two research assistants were hired to carry out the interviews and surveys targeting the staff in charge of education between January and February 2021. A correspondence was addressed to the Ministry of Education in that respect. Authorisation was given and choice of the people to be interviewed was made by their hierarchy on the basis of the questionnaire that was attached to the correspondence. We were directed towards three structures whose directors were kind enough to receive our assistants : the Directorate-General for Educational Research and Innovation (DGREIP), the Directorate-General for Educational Supervision of Initial and Continuing Education (DGEP) and the Permanent Secretariat for the Promotion of National Languages and Education to citizenship (SP-PLNEC). Answers provided during the various interviews constitute reliable sources that will be used for our various analyses. After these field surveys, a workshop was organised in July 2021 at Joseph KI-ZERBO University for the restitution of the results. All the interviewees were invited ; they all made presentations together with other secondary education inspectors from the DGEPPIC. Researchers and students interested in the issue made valuable contributions. This was an additional opportunity to ask questions and refine the various answers obtained during the surveys. The limits of such workshops and surveys lie in the fact that the interviewees are obliged to say what is politically correct and to stick only to official reasons, even if during informal discussions they express their deep convictions which are often different.

2. Results

2.1. *Education Programmes : Objectives and contents*

The current format of formal school in Burkina Faso emanates from the work of catholic missionaries who subsequently handed it over to the colonial administration. It met a specific need at that time, which was to carry out a general development project for

the territories of the colony, based on the education of the colonised. In that respect, we can read in Gamble (2017: 6) the following:

"William Ponty resolutely declared to his administration: I repeat that education is, to my mind, the most effective means to which we can resort to ensure the rapid development from all standpoints, of this land and of the influence that we wish to exercise here . Ponty was hardly the only official to view schools as a central driver of the entire colonial project "(Gamble 2017: 6).

The coloniser had realised that school could help him achieve his goal of domination. What was at stake was that the contents of the programmes to be offered to black and French students were to be the same. Conflicting views led to a rudimentary education with a defined purpose. "The more practical and rudimentary education is, the more useful school will be; it's a matter of turning young natives into workers who speak and write French" (Gamble, 2017: 25).

It was therefore necessary to offer a rudimentary education to the natives, which included, according to the decree of 1903, French, Arabic (for Muslims), reading, writing, elementary mathematics, the metric system, geometry, drawing, modern and contemporary history in connection with the regions concerned (ibid. 26). This decision was taken after they realised that it was difficult to transpose the education system of the metropolis to Africa. It was decided to offer two types of education : one targeting French nationals and the other targeting the colonies. This historical insight sets the scene to examine the laws of Burkina Faso in the field of education. Law 013-2007 / AN "*loi d'orientation de l'éducation du Burkina Faso*" (2007), covers all levels of education , from primary to higher education. Under chapter II dealing with general principles, article 10 provides that the "teaching languages used in Burkina Faso are French and local languages, in the pedagogical practices as well as in assessments. Other languages can be used as subjects and languages of instruction in accordance with the regulations in force." (my translation).

In chapter III, objectives and purposes of the education system, article 13 stipulates that "the Burkinabé education system aims to "make the young Burkinabé a responsible, productive and creative citizen". Chapter 14 states that the Burkinabé education system aims to "make the individual acquire skills to face the problems of society, to provide training adapted in its content and methods to the requirements of economic, technological, social and cultural development that takes into account the aspirations and value systems in Burkina Faso, Africa and the world ". These provisions are vague and do not mention the contents, nor the subjects to be taught.

If we refer to the official programmes applied in schools in Burkina Faso, we can assert that the main subjects taught at the primary level are French (split up in several subjects), mathematics, life and earth sciences, history and geography of Burkina Faso and Africa. No noticeable change is made at this level compared to the 1903 programme in the colonies. Still, article 21 of the "*loi d'orientation de l'éducation*" provides that basic teaching (which is primary teaching) aims at among other things "cultivating in children a sense of respect for themselves and others, their identity, their language, their cultural values and

the national values of the country". At the post-primary level, physical sciences, foreign languages such as English and sometimes German are added. In secondary school, in addition to English which is omnipresent, other subjects are added depending on the options. The first modern language and the one taught at all levels of education is English, introduced since 1947 long before independence (Compaoré 2021). It is taught at post-primary, secondary, technical and vocational school without there being any text that imposes it as the language to be taught (Millogo, 1981: 20). Its introduction from the CE1 class (first year elementary course, third class of primary school) is planned as part of the ongoing curriculum reform (idem). German appears in A4 option and in professional baccalaureate. Likewise, from the third year of primary school, it can be used as an optional second modern language for pupils who do not want the "physical sciences" subject to be attributed a coefficient 4. Spanish has been introduced along with German in post-primary and secondary education since independence. Unfortunately, the number of teaching staff has decreased due to the nationalisation of staff but also a lack of a breeding ground (Compaoré, 2021). Arabic is taught as an optional second modern language like German at the formal post-primary. Franco-Arab education is provided in public and private schools, especially in areas with low enrollment rates. Italian was introduced into private denominational education, especially in some catholic congregations. Russian was introduced during the revolutionary period which ran short due to the fall of the Berlin Wall and changes in diplomacy both in Burkina Faso and Russia whose policy differs from that of the former Soviet Union (Compaoré 2021).

There was no specific text governing the teaching of modern languages in Burkina Faso. As early as 1975, English teachers had attempted to define objectives for the teaching of English as a language of communication (Rouamba, 1981). Circular n ° 105 / MENAC / ICESD of December 1, 1983 defines the new orientation of the teaching of modern languages in these terms: "From now on the teaching of modern languages: German, Arabic, English, etc., should aim primarily at knowledge and a certain familiarity with the civilisation and literature of the peoples whose language is studied and the acquisition of a certain linguistic competence. This means that the objective of this teaching must be not only the mastery of the rules of the language, but also and above all the power to communicate normally in the said language. This teaching should be practical and immediately profitable. "This circular can be considered as the first clear directive on the teaching of foreign languages. With the reforms in the ministries, in particular the merging of the two ministries (national education and secondary and higher education), programmes development was entrusted to another directorate, in particular that of research and pedagogical innovations from 2016. According to the head of the English inspectorate, Mr. Zouré Christian interviewed in February 2021, the current teaching programmes date back to 1990. There was no programme as such but a list of grammar points to study. In 2010, instructions were given to insert emerging themes in the curricula at secondary level. In the new programmes that are awaiting to be formalised, it is emphasised that:

In modern language 1 (English), the target output profile is that of a learner capable of using the language as a tool for communication, comprehension and production in the school and academic context on the one hand, and on the other hand, in common situations of interaction in social and professional life, both orally and in writing. This profile, which is that of an autonomous and responsible person in his/her social and professional life, will privilege the communicative aspect (my translation).

It should be noted that this content has not fundamentally changed compared to that of 1983, even if there is a specific mention of professional life.

2.2. *Resources used*

The resources used for the teaching of these languages are diversified. Initially, it was mostly European teachers who provided the teaching. When they left, languages experienced diverse degrees of success. The British Council has contributed to the training of teachers of this language through the provision of documents and internships. Teaching is now provided by nationals, trained and paid by the Burkinabé State. They are 4,171 (see table below).

The German government through the Goethe Institute organises training courses in Burkina Faso and Germany for German teachers. It provides support in teaching materials, organises sub-regional meetings for exchange between teachers. There are qualified teachers of German trained in Burkina and foreign universities, supervisors trained at ENSK. Programmes, textbooks and an official didactic device for the teaching and assessment of spoken and written language are provided by the German government. The teaching of Russian and Spanish has been gradually weakened due to the scarcity of qualified personnel. Unlike German, the other European languages (Spanish, Italian, Russian) do not have their own teaching staff, nor official textbooks, programmes, teaching and assessment systems.

The current numbers of language teachers in Burkina Faso are as follows:

Teaching staff

Sex	English	German	Arabic	Spanish/Italian /Latin	Total
Female	717	229	4	1	951
Male	3454	452	47	9	3962
Total	4171	681	51	10	4913

Source : Compaoré, July 2021

2.3. *Language selection process*

The Ministry of National Education is the body empowered to give directives on the languages to be introduced and withdrawn from the programme. It relies on the country's general orientation policy for the language of instruction. For the rest, our study did not allow us to determine precisely how the process unfolds. All the people surveyed, despite their privileged position in the administration, declared that they did not master the process. They just make the observation that the languages taught are those which have always been taught since colonial times. It therefore does not seem appropriate to speak of choice. No study on the relevance of their presence in the school programmes of Burkina Faso has been carried out so far. No official opinion motivated by preliminary studies or reports was issued on this subject. The question seems taboo and none of the people interviewed seemed to know where the decisions come from. They just said "we were told to do so". As to the question of who made the decision, the answer was elusive. They nevertheless attempt an analysis based on their own observations to explain the situation of the languages taught in the education system. What emerges is that there is a continuation of the work undertaken in colonial times, which is justified by the availability of teaching and supervisory staff, the motivation of the actors and the quality of diplomatic relations that Burkina Faso maintains with the countries whose languages are taught. In addition, some of the languages taught so far are the languages of the United Nations, like English, Spanish and Arabic even though the last two languages were subsequently discarded when relations between Burkina Faso and the countries speaking those languages crumbled. Spanish and Russian corresponded to the choice of the leaders of a time in Burkina Faso when students were sent to Cuba and the Soviet Union especially during the revolutionary period. Arabic, which had been ejected from the system, is repositioning itself under pressure from Arabic-speaking partners with the opening of the department of oriental languages at Joseph KI-ZERBO University, which is a sign of a bright future for this language in Burkina Faso. Throughout the world German is less spoken than Arabic and Spanish. It is not an official language of the United Nations either. The exchange load between Burkina Faso and Germany is not more important than the one with China; Still, this language is resilient in Burkina Faso's education system. The status of the different languages on the international level, as well as the economic power of their speakers also matter in the balance of choices. The use of western languages in the education systems in Africa seems to be encouraged by the World Bank, which is considered as a technical and financial partner : "The World Bank recognises that fluency in imperial languages may help promote political stability and build national unity as well as serve economic purposes " (Mazrui, 2003 : 87). This opinion matters to a great extent.

The question that naturally arises here is : why are local languages inexistent in the education system ? The permanent secretary in charge of the promotion of national languages and citizenship education who was invited to the workshop did not provide a satisfactory answer to this question.

The concluding results of the pilot phase of experimentation of bilingual schools tested in Burkina Faso, the successful experimentation of the integrative pedagogical approach

(API) which promotes national languages in education, the change of denomination at the ministry of national education since 2019, which explicitly introduces "the promotion of national languages" in its official name, all failed to be sufficient arguments in favor of the introduction of local languages in the educational system. Basic education, according to the above-mentioned law, aims at providing the "sense of respect for children's identity, language, their cultural values (...)". Still, the choice fell on English to be introduced into the education system of Burkina Faso from CE1 (third year of primary school) in the framework of the on-going school reforms. How was this selection made, who made the decision? The interviews failed to provide answers. The presenters at the workshop repeated the information but failed to specify how this decision was made and who made it. They had non-official answers that they did not want to share.

3. Discussion

Language has always been a privileged instrument of communication. In itself, it is an object of affirmation of an identity, but also of domination. The precedence of European languages in African education curricula is no accident. The names "Francophone Africa", "Anglophone Africa", "Lusophone Africa" derive from the political and economic subdivision of Africa which was operated in Berlin in 1884-1885. The economic factor was already in full view. It is clear that the teaching of a language can aim at cultural and scientific openness. It gives a second pair of eyes which allows the world to be seen through the other's glasses. Learning a language is equivalent to learning the culture of its speakers, to love the country, to create a relationship of trust for future exchanges. The amount of energy displayed by the countries whose languages are taught suggests that the arguments must be strong and include economic ones. Language is a currency and a resource offered for consumption. Competition between languages to take up all the space is present.

Advances in all fields, literary, scientific, cultural, technological have been made possible due to the openness to foreign languages. However, in the case of Burkina Faso as in the other colonies, these languages were presented as unifying Africa against the "dangers" of the multiplicity of African languages. They would save Africa from itself. (Wa Thiong'o, 2003).

The absence of African languages in educational programmes is difficult to justify from a ground other than economic. Language as a resource is productive and those who use it expect to reap dividends. So far, local languages have been struggling to be valued. English and French have imposed themselves by assimilationist policies on both sides. Speaking correctly the language of the coloniser has always been perceived, as a sign of intelligence, and a passport to other sciences (Wa Thiong'o 2003: 73) and therefore to economic benefits. In curricula development, all subjects taught are included when they are judged to be in line with the needs of society and the requirements of the moment. It is up to curriculum development experts to determine the needs of a particular group of learners, to set the objectives of a particular language for the programme, to choose the

teaching methods to be implemented for the programme so as to meet the objectives and evaluate results (Richards 1985).

For the specific case of Burkina Faso, one can legitimately wonder why these preliminary and subsequent analyses did not take place. This would have made it possible to measure the impact of language teaching in relation to the objectives set and the resources committed. We have seen above that the State of Burkina Faso has been paying in 2021 at least 4,171 English teachers and 681 German teachers for the same period. Teachers in the private sector by far exceed this number if we compare the number of public schools with those of private ones. The financial investment is huge for an "uncertain" result. In the absence of another reliable means of assessment, we have attempted to examine the marks in English and German at the last three sessions of Bac examination. Even though we are aware of the fact that this only means is not sufficient to measure the impact of language teaching, it gives a good idea of the investment - gain ratio.

Year	Options	Subject	Average of marks	0 < 6	6 < 8	8 < 9	9 < 10	10 < 12	12 < 14	14 < 16	> 16
2021	A4	Written English	8,06	24,59	22,52	11,03 %	9,58	15,81	9,27	4,64	2,68
	A4	Spoken English	11,17	2,19	8,75	9,21	8,74	25,40	22,71	15,20	7,80
	A4	Written German	7	41,96	20,22	7,90	6,29	9,86	6,52	4,09	3,16
	A4	Spoken German	12,27	1,30	4,23	4,84	6,25	22,04	26,10	21,44	13,81
	D	Written English	8,57	23,29	18,32	9,63	9,17	16,66	11,35	6,64	4,93
2020	A4	Written English	7,74	25,60	24,78	11,97	9,88	15,17	7,61	3,25	1,75
	A4	Spoken English	11,52	1,87	6,87	7,67	8,02	24,34	24,70	17,55	8,99
	A4	Written German	6,09	51,66	18,55	7,11	5,28	8,71	4,71	2,57	1,42
	A4	Spoken German	12,05	1,84	5,28	5,22	6,60	22,61	25,27	20,29	12,89
	D	Written English	7,95	28,16	21,70	9,96	8,45	14,18	8,97	5,31	3,26

Year	Options	Subject	Average of marks	0 < 6	6 < 8	8 < 9	9 < 10	10 < 12	12 < 14	14 < 16	> 16
2019	A4	Written English	7.79	24.11	23.99	12.00	10.65	17.21	8.30	2.89	0.76
	A4	Spoken English	11.21	2.33	9.02	8.87	8.25	24.46	23.74	15.06	7.0
	A4	Written German	5.32	60.07	19.54	6.06	4.38	6.01	2.55	0.98	0.40
	A4	Spoken German	11.61	2.89	7.34	6.60	7.31	23.18	23.87	18.04	10.77
	D	Written English	9.64	12.75	16.15	10.02	10.21	29.67	15.3	8.98	5.92

N.B. : all the values given in the columns of marks are in percentage

A= Arts

D=Mathematics and Science

Source: Office du Bac, September 2021

The percentages given are calculated on a total of more than 58,000 candidates in option A4 in 2021, and more than 78,000 in option D. These figures are respectively around 48,000 and 63,000 in 2020, 42,000 and 55,000 in 2019. We have given the round figures because the number of candidates present differs from one subject to the other but it is always above the figures given here.

It can be seen from this table that the performance of learners in writing needs to be consolidated. Those of speaking seem better according to these statistics. However, the increase in number of language and translation centres in Burkina Faso is evidence that there is a gap to be filled in spite of the resources used. In all cases, the State's investment seems out of step with the results obtained on the ground. The case of German is especially worrisome because this language has received and is still receiving a lot in terms of training and teaching material from the German government. Why are these languages still present in the programme with so little satisfaction ?

European languages have always been seen as languages of power, social prestige and economic opportunity (Buzzazi and Foldari 2018). This is often clearly proclaimed for English today. In addition, the policy of assimilation of the colonies, especially the French

ones, reinforces the prestige of Western languages vis-à-vis African languages. Despite the number of studies carried out in the field of education giving evidence of the advantages of teaching in local languages (Unesco, 2000), the current situation of languages taught in schools is difficult to understand. Local languages have been devalued by the overestimation of other so-called international languages, in this case English.

Devaluation of the indigenous language is the flip side of the high value placed on English and other international languages. If English is the "language of opportunity," then any time spent speaking and studying other languages is opportunity lost " (Zsiga et al. 2014 : 6).

Economic and political domination goes through another type of domination, which is mental domination. "Economic and political control can, never be complete or effective without mental control. To control a people's culture is to control their tools of self-definition in relationship to others. (Zsiga et al. 2014: 16). For Wickstöm et al (2018: 16), this desire for cultural domination in the long term leads to domination over future generations. "One might also see the language as a carrier of cultural values that one wants to be known and adopted by other individuals as well as by future generations".

We can affirm with Bigirima (2018: 19) that "The educational institutions constitute a privileged ground where the partisans of various ideologies confront each other ; they then become a place of productions of representations and identity positions.

The educational institutions constitute a privileged ground where the partisans of various ideologies confront each other, therefore a place of production of representations and positions.

Therefore, the choice of languages and programmes to be taught is necessarily determined by ideological foundations. This is why languages and educational policies are complementary. Bigirima (2018) goes on to say with Dridi (2016) that it is through education that the teaching and promotion of language and culture will be seen as the expression of political power. He concludes by saying that each government is called upon to take adequate measures to clarify the role that language education must play in order to participate in the construction of the identity of a plurilingual society.

It appears that the choice of languages in education is far from trivial. It is at school that all the socio-cultural models and policies that learners draw on to build their identity emerge. For Thaalibi (2000), school appears not only as a place of inculturation of the child with multiple values of universal rationality, but also as an institutional space for learning the national characteristics of collective identity.

In addition to the traditional issues underlying the language choices of countries, we strongly affirm the link between language policies, those of foreign language teaching, and economic and sociolinguistic questions (Gamble 2017).

Another economic factor bearing on the language is induced by the international media guided by globalisation. These media have become more visible, and for a marketing perspective, the single language choice is seen to be advantageous. Not only do they help devalue Africans, their languages and cultures, but also they have succeeded in making Africans have the same feelings of rejection of themselves (Zsiga 2014: 6).

The result of such media imaging, she argues, is not just that Americans and Europeans devalue African languages but also that Africans devalue their own languages: "If nothing else, it has led the African elite to despise everything African, their languages being the clearest example." Pandey further wonders, provocatively, if such cinematic devaluation has a bald economic motive, because a monolingual society (preferably one where everybody speaks English) would be better from a marketing perspective (Zsiga 2014:6).

The law on education in Burkina Faso that we have cited above clearly mentions that training must be adapted to economic, technological, social and cultural developments taking into account the aspirations and value systems in Burkina Faso and in the world. The rush for conventional languages can be considered to meet the last requirement. Globalisation can justify the introduction of foreign languages in the education system. However, the total absence of local languages in the Burkinabe education system is not understandable.

We say with Wickström et al (2018) that in an economic analysis, the benefits of a policy must be measured with the individual benefits. Thus, the quality, the value of goods differs from one individual to another. There are a number of individual goods that become available through learning a language. The individual can benefit from learning a language through literature, films, life or work in the countries where the language is spoken. It becomes illusory to speculate on the best policy to follow to achieve each speaker's goals.

Economic theories provide a good justification for public intervention in a linguistic environment. Evaluating the benefits of a policy is equivalent to determining the cost-benefit ratio, what the individual is willing to pay to enjoy the benefits of a certain policy called "consumer surplus". The propensity to pay for a policy depends on the linguistic environment. The status of languages can play on the prestige and pride that one can have in mastering them. According to Wickström et al (2018: 35), the economic factor induces a policy of assimilation : "... educating the young in a little-used language limits their opportunities on the labor market and is an argument for limiting the opportunities of using minority languages, forcing assimilation into the majority community ".

Another way to measure the effectiveness of a policy is to compare the cost of a policy to the results achieved. "Policy makers employ economic arguments to justify their language policy choices and / or recommendations" (idem). In Burkina Faso, apart from French, the foreign languages taught have hardly produced skills for the labor market except for the teachers of these languages.

The European Commission rather uses the expressions "language competence for employability, mobility and growth", all this consolidates the economic arguments which we defend.

In Burkina Faso, the logic behind the use and teaching of languages, all foreign, is very difficult to define. The promotion of local languages is carried out through the signing of decrees but their enforcement never goes through. The very addition of the expression "promotion of national languages" to the name of the ministry was, according to some

allegations, required by the technical and financial partners and one may wonder for what purpose. That sums up all the complexity of the issue. Partners do not have the same weight and their languages do not have the same prestige. The quality of the diplomatic relationships between Burkina Faso and China could lead to the introduction of Mandarin into educational programmes, which is not the case yet.

Without judging of the relevance or not of the presence or the absence of certain languages in the education system of Burkina Faso, we affirm that the most important thing is to have self-made policies, to measure their implications and to give oneself the means to achieve one's own objectives. To do this, we recommend regular evaluation of educational programmes in terms of cost and long-term impact on the type of social development desired. It would also be desirable that appropriate measures be taken to clarify the place that language education should have in the education system in order to effectively participate in development objectives without creating alienation. According to Inspector Zouré, analyzing the needs of learners is not done collectively but through individual experience. In addition, the programmes developed by technical staff are not always experimented to allow reframing before the change of direction. Burkina Faso then appears as an open-air laboratory where all educational experiments are carried out. The integrative pedagogical approach which gave pride of place to national languages has been replaced by the competence-based approach which has not been evaluated and which is in the process of being replaced by the communicative approach (Zoure 2021, Compaoré 2021). They link these pitfalls to the problems of financing education. Once again, the economic argument is put forward.

Conclusion

Designing an education programme is crucial because it gives the direction a country wants for its citizens. The choice of the language of instruction and the languages to be taught has a lot of implications that go beyond the objective of competence that can be sought. The issue of languages is particular because language is a resource, and the vehicle of other skills. In that sense, it can be considered as a commodity. Teaching foreign languages is not bad as long as it does not come at the expense of national languages. The economic factor remains relevant both for the learners and the countries whose languages are taught. However, it seems to weigh more for the latter. If the 'national language' 'resource' is not salable, policies should be genuinely geared in this direction. There are economic factors which govern the choice of languages to be introduced into the education system. However, in the case of Burkina, it is difficult to identify with precision the objectives pursued by the language teaching programmes and their impact on personal and community development. Decisions on language policies and language planning must be taken by governments and the competent services responsible for developing curricula. Languages to be taught or withdrawn from the curriculum of a given country generally aim to solve a problem posed in society. Bad language planning can lead to the opposite effect, that is, it can create more problems than it solves. We assert

with Zsiga (2014: 6) that "knowledge of quintessentially economic concepts such as "competitiveness" and "employability", therefore, are necessary to properly understand and interpret discourses on language policy and to critically analyse them in the light of theoretical and empirical results available in the language-economics literature. Foreign language proficiency is said to be one of the main determinants of learning in general and professional mobility". Therefore, poor language competence is seen as a major obstacle to free movement of workers and to international competitiveness. Are these arguments relevant enough to completely replace local languages by foreign ones? Foreign language skills may impact mobility but do they have an impact on employability? What can be the specificities of different countries? These questions need to be considered and adapted by each country concerned with the role of school programmes in education.

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