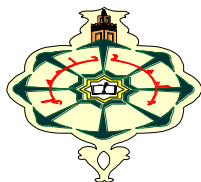


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University of Tlemcen  
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Department of English

**TOWARDS A MOTHER TONGUE-BASED  
BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN BURKINA FASO:  
PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' ATTITUDES  
TOWARDS FRENCH/LOCAL LANGUAGES  
INSTRUCTION**

Dissertation submitted to the Department of English as a partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of Master in Language Studies

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**Academic Year: 2018-2019**

## **DEDICATION**

In memory of my beloved father

To my dear mother

To my precious family, relatives

To my friends

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## **ABSTRACT**

In most African countries, many children live in communities where the language of schooling is rarely, if ever, used at home. Burkina Faso is no exception. As a matter of fact, the national policy on education in Burkina Faso calls for a multilingual education policy involving the instruction of the child's mother tongue. Despite this, this policy has not been effectively implemented nationwide. Given the important role teachers play in educational reforms, this paper reviews the problems and challenges of bilingual education in Burkina Faso, with a focus on primary school teachers' attitudes towards mother tongue based bi/multilingual education, as well as their ability to engage in such an education reform. The present work also suggests ways in which policy makers and education authorities can prepare and equip instructors for a successful implementation of bilingual programmes in the country in order to ensure the maximum benefit for learners and the entire nation. To measure teachers' attitudes, the study draws on the responses of thirty primary school teachers from four different regions in Burkina Faso. The results revealed that the respondents have positive attitudes towards mother tongue based bilingual education and would be ready to apply it in schools. Indeed, they prefer to use both French and the learner's mother tongue for teaching. They are not positively disposed to use only one of these languages. The findings also showed that the majority of the respondents want the use of the Mother tongue beyond the first three years of primary education.

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## LIST OF ACCRONYMS

3E: Espaces d'Eveil Educatifs

ADEA: Association for the Development of Education in Africa

AU: African Union

BEP: Bilingual Education Program

BEPC : Brevet d'Etude du Premier Cycle

BLE: Bilingual education

CEP: Certificat d'Etude Primaire

CM: Cours Elementaires

EFA: Education For All

EPB : Ecole Primaire Bilingue

FIA : Formation Intensive Alphabétisation (illiteracy intensive formation)

FONAENF: Fond pour l'Alphabétisation et l'Education Non Formelle (Fund for Literacy and Non-Formal Education)

IL: Interlanguage

IOF: International Organization of the Francophonie

L1: First language, or mother tongue

L2: Second language or foreign language

MEBA: Ministère de l'Education de Base et de l'Alphabétisation (Ministry of Basic Education and Literacy)

MLE: Multilingual education

MT: Mother tongue



MTB-BLE: Mother tongue-based bilingual education

MTB-MLE: Mother tongue-based multilingual education

NGO: Non -Governmental Organization

OSEO: Oeuvre Suisse d'Entraide Ouvrière (Swiss Organisation for Workers' Solidarity)

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Sustainable Development Goal addresses the global challenges faced in Africa, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, peace and justice with the objective of achieving a better and more sustainable future for all. For this goal to be achieved, education has been given a priority. In fact, education is and has always been considered critical in shaping the lives as well as developmental agendas of people in Africa and elsewhere. In Burkina Faso, the government has put education at the centre of attention and particularly basic education. However, despite efforts made to improve education, the country still fails to achieve universal basic primary education. A government-sponsored national evaluation study of the education system in Burkina Faso (1994) revealed that it was costly, inefficient and not attuned to the social and economic realities of the country. These problems undermined access to quality education as well as national development efforts. Many factors can explain these education related issues, but the most important factor remains the language of instruction.

More than 50 years after independence, French is still the only language used for instruction in Burkinabé schools. As soon as children get to primary school, they are confronted with a foreign language and everything that goes with it. Yet, the UNESCO has encouraged mother tongue instruction in early childhood and primary education since 1953 (UNESCO, 1953). In addition, Kosonen (2005) cited in Jessica Ball (2014) emphasized that when children are offered opportunities to learn in their mother tongue, they are more likely to enrol and succeed in school. Thus, conscious of the necessity of rethinking the national education, the government and its development partners have, in recent years, made concerted efforts to reform the education system. Part of the solution involved instituting strategies which encourage the use of both French and national languages as media of instruction in schools.

Mother Tongue -Based Bilingual Education (MTB-BLE) was then introduced to education in form of experimentation. Many years have passed since bilingual education proved its effectiveness. Yet, it is still not integrated in the national education. This can be attributed to the fact that conditions are not gathered in terms of human resources as well as material resources. Educators, who are of great importance to this reform, have different attitudes towards Mother Tongue- Based Bilingual Education.

## General introduction

The aim of this research is to investigate the introduction of mother tongue- based bilingual education in Burkinabé primary schools with a focus on the attitudes of primary school teachers towards this project. Hence, to help achieve this goal, the following research questions have been formulated:

1. What are the attitudes of Burkinabe primary school teachers towards mother tongue-based bilingual education?
2. Are primary school teachers in Burkina Faso able to teach using both national languages and French?
3. What are the measures that should be taken by policy makers to prepare teachers for a successful mother tongue-based bilingual education program?

According to experiences that have already been undertaken and general observation of the present situation in Burkina Faso, the following hypotheses are put forward:

1. Primary school teachers' attitudes towards mother tongue-based bilingual education are positive.
2. Primary school teachers in Burkina Faso lack serious relevant training and equipment required to teach in local languages. Therefore, they are not able for a mother tongue-based bilingual education.
3. For a successful mother tongue-based bilingual teaching programme, there is a need for relevant training for teachers, adequate teaching materials and high awareness.

Consequently, a survey dealing with primary schools teachers was designed. Data was collected from a sample population which was composed of primary school teachers from different regions. The research relied on a questionnaire sent to primary school teachers as research instrument. The results were analysed on a basis of a mixed approach combining qualitative and quantitative methods.

To carry out this survey research, the present work is divided into three chapters. The first chapter attempts to review the literature on mother tongue-based bilingual education and provides the theoretical background for this investigation. The second chapter seeks to draw a description of mother tongue-based bilingual education as it relates to the multilingual context of Burkina Faso. The third chapter is concerned with methods and procedures used to collect data. It also tries to provide an analysis, an interpretation and discussion of collected data.

## **General introduction**

Furthermore, the chapter seeks to answer the research questions by confirming or disconfirming the research hypotheses, and then concludes with the research results

**CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW****1.1. Introduction**

In recent years, research on first acquired language instruction has gained importance, particularly in Africa where ex-colonies still use colonial languages for schooling at the expense of local languages. The present chapter tries to review some of the existing literature on mother tongue-based bilingual education. It aims at creating a context for this research work by helping create a certain familiarity with the notion of mother tongue-based bilingual education, its advantages as well as challenges and stakes related to the implementation.

**1.2. Definition of MTB-BLE and related terms and concepts****1.2.1. Mother tongue-based bilingual education**

Many children in the world learn in a language that is different from their home language. Yet, research shows that children learn best in a language they already understand (UNESCO, 1953, 2016). Therefore, there has been more and more support for the claim that children should start their instruction in their mother tongue. This is called mother tongue-based bilingual education, henceforth MTB-BLE. Several high-level meetings and conferences have concluded that there is an urgent need for African States to adopt specific policies on the use and promotion of mother languages. Among others, the Intergovernmental Conference of Ministers on Language Policy in Africa organized in March 1997 in Harare, Zimbabwe, by UNESCO, the International Organization of the Francophonie (IOF), and the African Union (AU); and the African Conference on the Integration of African Languages and Culture into Education, in January 2010 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

Mother tongue-based instruction generally refers to the use of the learners' mother tongue as the primary medium of instruction. It differs from "Mother Tongue Instruction" which refers to the teaching of the mother tongue itself as a subject matter. It is based on the assumption that children learn best and quicker in their mother tongue which prepares them to learn more languages in the future.

### 1.2.2. Bilingualism/Multilingualism

The area of bilingualism is interdisciplinary. It has therefore been studied from different perspectives, namely linguistic, educational, psychological and sociological. Many definitions have been put forward by scholars. Bloomfield (1935:56) defines bilingualism as “a native-like control of two languages”. However, this definition seems to be too restrictive as it includes only perfect bilinguals. In contradiction to his definition, a more flexible definition has been suggested by McNamara in 1967 when he pointed out that a bilingual can be defined as “anyone who possesses a minimal competence in only one of the four language skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing, in a language other than his mother tongue”. Between these two extremes, there exists a whole array of definitions. For instance, the one proposed by Haugen (1953:7) which focuses that multilingualism begins “at the point where the speaker of one language can produce complete, meaningful utterances in the other language”. Weinreich (1953:1) also refers bilingualism as “the practice of alternately using two languages”. Moreover, Diebold (1961:111) sees bilingualism as “any contact with possible models in a second language, and the ability to use these in the environment of the native language”.

Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that none of all definitions provided is generally accepted. Instead, multilingualism is generally considered as the use of more than one language or competence in more than one language. The term bilingualism can refer to either the language, or the competence of an individual or to the language situation in an entire society or nation. Burkina Faso can be considered as a *de facto* multilingual country since there exist several languages both local and foreign and most people speak at least two languages. Finally, although some people may draw a distinction between multilingualism and bilingualism, the two terms are used interchangeably throughout this research paper.

Multilingualism arises from the simple need of people with different linguistic backgrounds to communicate. In fact, multilingualism develops when languages get into contact as a consequence of socio-economic or political events. Some of the main and well-known factors underlying the rise and development of multilingualism in Burkina Faso are war and colonization, migration and settlement, religion, the media, and the needs for trade and business.

### 1.2.3. Mother tongue (MT)

Also called first language, native language (hereafter referred to as MT or L1), the term mother tongue refers to a language a person has been socialized with since birth. It is the first language a person acquires and grows up speaking as a child, not only the first language according to the time of acquisition, but the first with regard to its importance and the speaker's ability to master its linguistic and communicative aspects. However, in Burkina Faso, as it may be the case in other countries, the term mother tongue is used to refer to the language of one's ethnic group, whether they are a native speaker of that language or not. This is why in some cases first language is replaced by language of the immediate community (LIC). The first language of a child is considered to be part of the personal, social and cultural identity. Indeed, explained by Sapir (1929) in his work with Worth, Language and culture are interrelated. They recognize that human language can be considered as culture's most important feature since complex human culture could not exist without language and language could not exist without culture. They also emphasise that language is the medium through which the child acquires some cultural values and does some cultural activities.

### 1.2.4. Language of instruction

A language of instruction refers to the language used for teaching of the basic curriculum of the educational system. It is not to be confused with language teaching (language to be taught) where the grammar, vocabulary, and the written and oral forms of the language constitute a specific curriculum for the acquisition of a language. The UNESCO (2016) acknowledges that the choice of the language of instruction is of tremendous importance for the effectiveness and success of education since research shows that being instructed in a language one already understands makes learning easier and quicker. In some countries, only one language is used for instruction (usually the official or majority language) while in others, several languages serve as media of instruction, thus giving local or national languages an important place in schooling. Learners whose mother tongues are not the same as the national or local language are often considerably disadvantaged in the education system (Bialystok, 2001). This is the case of most if not all children in Burkina Faso who are taught in French from the first day of their schooling, although they may have never heard, or spoken a word of this language before.

### 1.2.5. Linguistic rights

Sapir (1929) observes that language is not a mere instrument for communication and learning. It is also a symbolic system that shapes cultural identities, values and traditions. In this respect, the United Nations reminds that it is essential to peaceful cohabitation, to respect the languages of people belonging to different linguistic communities. This accounts for both majority groups and minorities (whether traditionally resident in a country or more recent migrants) as well as indigenous people. Therefore, Linguistic rights stated by the United Nations defend the rights of individuals or groups to choose their language or languages for communication in both public and private spheres. They incorporate the right of indigenous peoples to use their native languages and preserve oral traditions, to provide education for children in their own languages and to establish media in their own languages. Concerning education, the following rights have been established:

- The right to schooling in their languages
- Access to the language of the larger community and to that of national education systems.
- Inter-cultural education that promotes positive attitudes to minority and Indigenous languages and the cultures they express.
- Access to <sup>1</sup>international languages.

The educational rights that have been formulated in international agreements for migrant workers and members of their families stipulate that:

- Opportunities should be created for teaching children in their own language and culture.
- The integration of their children should be facilitated by teaching the language used in the school system.

### 1.2.6. Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

The term Second Language Acquisition refers to both learning a language subsequent to the first language (L1), and the process of learning that language (L2). SLA itself is highly

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<sup>1</sup> A language used beyond the borders of the country where it belongs by people from different linguistic background and for different purposes.



complex in nature and researchers have different backgrounds. Indeed, SLA's emergence came from Linguistics and Psychology and their subfields in Applied Linguistics such as Psycholinguistics, Sociolinguistics and Social Psychology. The field of research investigates how people reach proficiency in a language other than their mother tongue. The understanding of the process of SLA raises questions like:

- 'What do L2 learners come to know?
- How do L2 learners acquire knowledge?
- Why are some learners more successful than others?' Saville-Troike (2005:2)

There are no simple answers to these questions and scholars from different academic disciplines have come to the conclusion that there is no full agreement among SLA researchers. However, several theories have been put forward for SLA and one of the most influential is the theory of interlanguage (IL). Interlanguage is a term that describes the language that the learners of second and foreign language acquire in their learning process from their native language (L1) to the acquisition of the target language (L2) Selinker (1972). The theory of interlanguage is generally credited to Selinker, an American professor of applied linguistics though he was inspired by Corder's (1967) error analysis which attempted to examine and classify the errors of language learners. According to Corder (1967), language development is a combination of several factors, including nature of input, environment, internal processing of the learner, and influence between L1 and L2. Thus, he explains that interlanguage tries to determine if there is a continuum in the internal grammar of learning additional languages, and through research, resolve if learners acquired L2 in much the same fashion as L1. Ultimately, there would be similarities, but also differences. IL is thought of as a third language that is unique to the individual learner, which is composed of elements from L1 as well as from L2. The learner is in a limbo state as far as language is concerned because it neither mirrors L1 nor L2. As it is observed by David Crystal (1997: 249) "[Interlanguage] reflects the learner's evolving system of rules, and results from a variety of processes, including the influence of the first language <sup>2</sup>(language transfer), contrastive interference from the target language, and the overgeneralization of newly encountered rules." Therefore,

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<sup>2</sup> By linguistic transfer, we mean what the learners carry over to or generalize in their knowledge about their native language (L1) to help them learn to use a target language (TL).

interlanguage is a language proper to the learner. In short, first language acquisition is determinant in acquiring a second language.

### **1.2.7. Bilingual/Multilingual Education (B/MLE)**

Bilingual/Multilingual Education refers to the use respectively of two or more languages as media of instruction. In 1999, in the General Conference Resolution 12, UNESCO used the term “multilingual education” to refer to the use of at least three languages, the mother tongue (L1), a regional or national language and an international language in education. The resolution supported the view that in order to meet the needs of particular culturally and linguistically different communities and to allow an overall and national involvement, bilingual education was the key. In regions where the language of the learner is different from the official or national language of the country, a mother tongue instruction is possible through bilingual or multilingual education, leaving simultaneously the opportunity for the learners to acquire languages used in larger areas of the country and the world. This additive approach to bilingualism is different from the so called subtractive bilingualism which aims to move children on to a second language as a language of instruction to their L1 expense. Bilingual education involves teaching academic content in two languages which is different from education in two subsequent languages. A bilingual education can only succeed if the sociolinguistic situation is carefully considered and the model is appropriately selected.

### **1.2.8. Language Retention**

Many factors determine a child’s retention of his mother tongue while acquiring an additional language. It has been demonstrated that if children are taught six to eight years in their mother tongue, they will reach the literacy level and the verbal proficiency required for academic achievement in secondary school. Some of the most important factors that help children whose first language is not the language of instruction in the retention of their mother tongue are as follow:

- Progressive use of their mother tongue with their family and community to discuss topics which are more complex than household matters. It is crucial to give children the opportunity to expand their vocabulary in their first language and make meaning out of the interaction, by exposing them to as many words as possible in the first language.

- Continuous formal instruction in their first language to develop reading and writing skills.
- Exposure to positive parental attitudes to mother tongue preservation and maintenance not only as a marker of cultural identity, but also for certain instrumental purposes such as boasting local economy or global trade. In his study of Chinese-English bilingual pre-schooling, Lao (2004) argues that mother tongue education cannot be achieved without parents being fully engaged. Respecting these conditions is important because, if MTB-BLE is offered under favourable conditions, it will carry out tremendous advantages.

### 1.3. Advantages of mother tongue-based bilingual education?

There are many remarkable benefits related to MTB-BLE:

- **Provides equality of opportunity and success for all children:** It has been demonstrated that when instruction is conducted in children's home language, there is a chance to reduce discrimination of children from minority communities and increase enrolment and children are likely to 'fit in' and stay. The enrolment rate in Burkina Faso is one of the lowest in the World. A MTB-BLE would help enhance school enrolment rates and reduce children's dropouts from school. Kosonen (2005)

- **Parents are more likely to participate in their children's learning:** teaching in local languages makes parents feel they can actually take part in their children's education as they will be able to communicate freely with their teachers about school issues and help them at home if needed. Benson (2002)

- **Improves the quality of education:** The 2005 Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report emphasized the fact that the choice of the medium of instruction and of language policy in schools was a critical determinant of the effectiveness of education. Recent research, such as (Kone, 2010), (YARO, et al. (2011), Saville-Troike (2005), has shown that students who are taught in the same language spoken at home and the community for the first 8 years of their lives, develop better language abilities in other languages and even do better in other areas of study. This may be due to the fact that teachers and children interact in a language they are familiar with. As a matter of fact, children grasp easily the content of the course as they are used to the vocabulary. Some scientists including Bialystok (2001) hypothesise that it might have to do with overall brain development.

- **Children develop better thinking skill:** researchers such as Cummins, J. (2000), King, K., & Mackey, A. (2007), Bialystok, E. (2001) and others have approached the question of mother tongue based instruction and have argued that, education in learners' mother tongue can significantly improve their mental ability.

- **Language affects thought:** another reason, but not the least, why MTB-BLE should be promoted is that there are certain thoughts of an individual, concepts or beliefs in one language that cannot be understood by those who live in another language community or speak a different language. They can only make sense in one's mother tongue. (See Linguistic Relativity). The way people think is strongly affected by their native languages (Sapir 1929). Therefore, children must be taught in their own languages or they may lose years of thought processes.

- **Protecting and preserving local language:** the linguistic and cultural diversity of Burkina Faso constitutes a valuable resource and offers potential for maximizing creativity and developing skills in development activities, provided that this diversity is viewed positively and is well managed. Mother tongue education helps in the promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism by fostering positive cultural values. The efficient way to protect a language from dying is to include it in education by teaching it or through it. A language protected is equal to a culture preserved.

The above features have been summarized by UNESCO (1953) in the following statement:

It is axiomatic that the best medium for teaching a child is the mother tongue. Psychologically, it is the system of meaningful signs that in his mind works automatically for expression and understanding. Sociologically, it is a means of identification among the members of the community to which he belongs. Educationally, he learns more quickly through it than through an unfamiliar linguistic medium.

#### 1.4. MTB-BLE approaches and models

There has been steady growth in opportunities for children to start school in their mother tongue (called home language, or L1), in various forms of mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) (UNESCO 2016). Below are examples of mother tongue based teaching models employed in most countries where BLE is introduced.

Table 1.1: Models of BLE adapted from UNESCO (2012)

<b>Early Exit Transitional model or Bridging</b>	Instruction is conducted in both mother tongue and dominant languages with mother tongue used within the first years of primary education (between grade 1 and grade 3), and the dominant language introduced after at least three years of schooling, through an abrupt transition.
<b>Additive Bilingual instruction</b>	After L2 has been introduced, L1 instruction continues, often as a subject of study, to ensure on-going support for children to become academically proficient in L1. This is also called maintenance bilingual education.
<b>Late Exit Transitional model</b>	L1 is used as medium of instruction throughout the whole primary education. (until grade 5 or 6) and the switch to L2 instruction happens after a child has become fully fluent academically in L1

Observably, in most countries where MTB-BLE is implemented, the early exit model is usually applied. In the middle of primary school, children are asked to jump abruptly from home language to a language that is unknown to them. Yet it has been demonstrated that for the bilingual education to provide good results, children have to be instructed in their L1 as long as possible. If MTB-BLE is delivered well and within a long period of time (throughout primary school) children can end up becoming bilinguals. The cases of Ethiopia (Heugh, 2011) and <sup>3</sup>Eritrea (Walter & Davis, 2005) are good evidence. The longer the mother tongue was used as the primary language of instruction (up to 8 years) in a multilingual classroom, the better national examination results.

However, if the L1 is used as a medium of instruction for only three years, then the switch to the dominant language occurs, the result is not likely to be as positive in these

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<sup>3</sup> Eritrea is a linguistically diverse country with 3.6 million inhabitants belonging to nine different language groups, representing three language families and three different scripts and all nine Eritrean languages and the three scripts are used in elementary education throughout the country (Department of Education, 1991).

countries or other places worldwide (Ball, 2010; Heugh & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2012; Walter & Benson, 2012). This transition does not facilitate the conduct of summative assessments in mother languages, a drawback that contributes significantly to a lack of motivation on the part of the entire educational community (for example, learners, parents, teachers, etc). In fact, although this is a better alternative to not teaching in the mother tongue at all, the objective is rarely to make children become literate in their mother tongue. Certainly, the early exit approach does ease students' entry into classroom instruction, but it does not build upon research about the necessary conditions for cross-linguistic transfer of literacy skills. It thus cannot produce skills that readily transfer to becoming literate in additional languages (Cummins, 2009; Heugh, 2011).

### 1.5. Challenges related to MTB-BLE

Nowadays, most researchers and educational actors unanimously acknowledge that MTB-BLE is the best approach for brilliant teaching results; however, its implementation encounters a number of challenges which are not the easiest to overcome. To start, Benson (2004) argues that one challenge that may be faced in mother tongue based schooling is human resource development. Human resource development according to her, involves teachers' training. Benson mentions the difficulty to find teachers who are competent in the two languages, especially in L1, explaining that this is the main cause of the government hiring unqualified instructors when implementation is done in the whole nation. Therefore, she suggests that teachers' training should not be carried out without appropriate in-service and pre-service training. In addition to that, Benson (2004) cites linguistic and material development. According to her, there are problems in the implementation sometimes because the actors of the implementation are not able to find an agreement in the distribution of resources. Therefore, time and resources should be given priority. Enough time should be given to educators and community members to work together with linguists in the production of materials. Moreover, Danbolt (2011) suggested another challenge which concerns attitudes toward languages. As he sees it, attitudes, both from the user and those who do not know the language, play an important role in language learning and use, be it one or two languages. A positive attitude develops a feeling of appurtenance and identity. Skutnabb-Kangas and McCarty (2006) support this view when they assert that a positive consideration for a language is directly related to the sentiment of being home with that language. Consequently, he explains that teaching students in their mother tongue will make them at ease with school and teachers. They will feel comfortable and encouraged to participate in the classroom and

be involved in their own learning. Furthermore, Malone (2012) enumerated seven challenges in planning, implementing and sustaining an excellent mother tongue-based education. They include linguistic diversity, absence of concrete orthographies, shortage of mother tongue speakers with teaching materials, deficiency in written literature, various mother tongues, large class sizes, and lack of curriculum and instructional materials. Apart from this, we can cite the poor coordination among government organisms, misconceptions and differences in the knowledge about mother tongue-based multi-lingual education. There is also parental misunderstandings of notion of mother tongue-based multilingual education, worries among public school teachers about the risks of becoming jobless, readiness of parents to send their children to schools with the dominant language as medium of instruction, making MTB-BLE inclusive for all since it is aimed for non-dominant languages speaking children only, and the unequal allocation of financial resources from agencies.

### **1.6. Conclusion**

This chapter has attempted to narrow down the concept of mother tongue based bilingual education and its different aspects in order to set a theoretical background for this research. Clearly, teaching children in their first language remains the best option to guarantee quality and equality in learning and to assure a nation's development. However, the challenges to overcome are as real as the benefits to enjoy, and the government of Burkina Faso and governments of the countries concerned with this project should become aware of this and put their commitment and work into it in order to increase their chances of success in the implementation mother tongue-based instruction.

**CHAPTER TWO: MOTHER TONGUE-BASED BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN BURKINA FASO****2.1. Introduction**

While the first chapter presented the concept of mother tongue-based bilingual education in a general context, this second chapter deals with the subject as it specifically relates to Burkina Faso. Thus, a brief presentation of Burkina Faso's linguistic and education policies from pre-colonial period to the present days will be provided. Then, an analysis of the education reform calling for mother tongue-based bilingual education along with lessons learned will be given. In addition, there will be an attempt to present aspects of such a bilingual program in the multilingual context of Burkina Faso while determining its feasibility.

**2.2. Overview of languages and education in Burkina Faso**

Burkina Faso is a landlocked country located in Western Africa. The country is bordered in the north by Mali, in the East by Niger, in the Southeast by Benin, in the South by Togo and Ghana and in the Southwest by the Ivory Coast. With a superficies extending to 274000 square kilometres, Burkina Faso counts a population of about 19 034 397 (according to the census of 2016) divided into 70 ethnic groups.

**2.2.1. Burkina Faso's linguistic landscape**

Like most African countries, Burkina Faso is a multilingual and a multi-ethnic country where an estimated number of seventy (70) languages are spoken. Among these languages, about sixty six (66) are indigenous. These languages are native to the country and are spoken as mother tongues or home languages by groups of people. These languages are considered as part of their culture and identity. Some traits of their traditions and customs are preserved through them.

French language, although spoken by only 15% of the population on a daily basis, is the official language of Burkina Faso. The language was introduced in 1919 during the French colonization. It is the language of public services, administration, political and judicial institutions as well as the mass media. It is the primary medium of instruction in the country's schools.



In addition to French, there exist three other languages (Mooré, Dioula, Fulfuldé) that are recognized as national languages and are used more widely than French. The first of these is Mooré, the language of the Mossis people, spoken by at least 50% of the population in Burkina Faso. Mooré is a Gur language, part of the Oti-Volta branch of languages and in a larger sense, part of the Negro-Congolese language family. The language is spoken mainly in the central region of Burkina Faso, especially around the capital of Ouagadougou. Mooré is also spoken a bit everywhere in the country, because of the mobility of Mossis, and has many dialects such as Yaadré, Busumbi, Taolendé, Saremdé, Zaoré, Yaandé and many others. Then, there is Dioula or Jula which is a mande language spoken by 4.4% of the population of Burkina Faso. It is an important trade language and serves as a lingua Franca along with Mooré. Dyula is mainly spoken in the Western part of Burkina Faso, and in neighbouring countries like Mali (is mutually intelligible with Bambara) and in Ivory Coast.

Another national language is Fulfulde also called Fulani. Fulfulde comes from the Senegambian branch of the Niger-Congo language family. Mostly used in the East and North of the Country, Fulfulde is spoken by about 8.36% of the population. All these languages are used on a daily basis. However because of the shadow of French, these languages and the other ones are allocated the status of dialects. Indeed, although the law on national education orientation (1996, p.7) insists on the fact that in Burkina Faso, <sup>4</sup>“the languages of instruction are French along with national languages”, French occupies the entire pedagogical field to the detriment of national languages which are then relegated the linguistic transmission (indigenous languages’ teaching) in particular in the informal education.

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<sup>4</sup> (my own translation) « Les langues d’enseignements sont français et les langues nationales » page 7 de la loi sur l’orientation de l’é ducation national de 1996

Ethnic composition (2010)

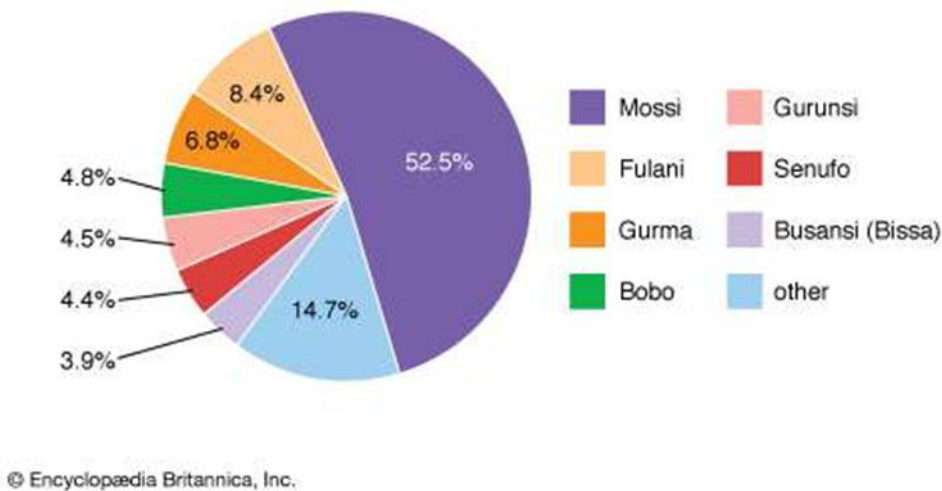


Figure 2.1: Ethnic composition in Burkina Faso

## 2.2.2. Historical background of education in Burkina Faso

### 2.2.2.1. Traditional Education

Traditionally, schooling in Burkina Faso consisted in what is called indigenous education. The type of education prevailing in Africa before the arrival of the colonizer focused, on one hand, on teaching technical knowledge, models, methods and content within non-formal educational systems, and on the other hand, on revealed knowledge mainly through formal teaching methods and often secretly through initiation rites and direct instruction. Children were taught in their own language traditional activities and apprenticeship and skills needed for daily life such as agriculture, breeding, craft etc. In the absence of written records, knowledge was transmitted orally through story telling based on everyday experience, songs, dance, drama, poetry, music, tales, oral literature etc. However, the question of educational inequity has roots in the old traditional education. The concepts of male and female roles at that time influenced family and community investments in children's education. On the one hand, boys were oriented toward activities outside the domestic sphere and as future financial providers, and will have the advantage of being sent to mentors for initiation and learning. On the other hand, girls were more confined to domestic activities. Actually, girls did not have the right to the same initiation rites reserved for boys. A girl started at an early age to help her mother with looking after younger children, assist in food preparation and other household activities. This was supposed to prepare her to her future responsibilities as a housewife, spouse or mother. For this reason, the mother who constituted

the primary model for her daughter taught her everything a woman was supposed to know through everyday domestic tasks advice. Despite the archaic methods that were employed, traditional education was completely effective and costless. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that education offered by the community was comprehensive such that it provided training in physical, character, intellectual, social and vocational development. In this way, learners were taught all they needed to know to become functioning adults, without being obliged to leave completely the work force.

### **2.2.2.2. Colonial education**

When the colonizers first introduced the European education system in Burkina Faso, it was mainly in the form of missionary schools. As Sanou (1987, 34-35) argues, the first private schools in Burkina Faso were missionary schools. A school for boys was built in 1900 and another one for girls in 1902. Given that the goal of missionary schools was to train literate believers in Christian faith, colonial administration limited them to teaching only religious subjects until 1922 when they were allowed to include general subjects. Teaching was conducted in French as Europeans were convinced about the advantages and superiority of a teaching of French in French. Children from less fortunate families were sent to school to add to the list of children recruited by missionaries while those from opulent families had the opportunity to be employed by the government to serve as interpreters between French people and natives. 'The first public schools appeared around 1906 while the missionaries were closing theirs due to lack of financial support' (Sanou1987, p.34).

### **2.2.2.3. Post-colonial education**

Even though the country had come a long way since the introduction of modern western type of education, postcolonial education did not know any radical change from the education laid during the colonial period. In fact, since independence in 1960, all the governments that ruled the country have laid emphasis on education, and particularly basic education has been considered as a top priority. Yet, like most sub-Saharan African countries, the essential features of the educational systems were kept namely the language of instruction. Thus, education in Burkina Faso is structured in much the same way as in the rest of the world: pre –primary, primary, secondary, and higher education. Pre-primary education of children aged 3-6 is limited to major towns. Primary school lasts six years and ends with a primary school leaving certificate CEP (Certificat d'Etude Primaire). Secondary school is divided into two cycles: the first cycle (junior secondary school) lasts 4 years and leads to the

junior secondary school degree BEPC (Brevet d'Etude du Premier Cycle). The second cycle lasts 3 years and ends with the secondary school leaving degree (Baccalaureate). Higher education is provided by four public universities, and a growing number of private colleges. Informal Education covers adult literacy and related programmes designed for adolescents who could not attend formal education.

### **2.3. Mother tongue-Based Bilingual Education (MTB-BLE) in Burkina Faso**

#### **2.3.1. Education reforms**

Burkina Faso has one of the lowest literacy levels in the world with a high rate of drop-out, repetition among learners at all levels of instruction. However, despite the huge challenges, education has always constituted the centre of attention of the government of the country. In their concern to guarantee access to quality education as well as to support national development efforts, and in the awareness of the importance of national languages in the provision of quality education, the government and its development partners have lately made concerted efforts to bring reforms to the education system.

One of these innovations was the use, as mediums of education, of three national languages: Fulfulde, Dioula and Mooré. It was the first time that national languages were used in the system of formal education. The innovation began in 28 experimental schools principally established in rural areas. The pupils' first promotions went until the fifth year (CM1). However, the reform was stopped in 1984, without any evaluation. Nikièma, N. & Kaboré, p. (2010, p. 21).

#### **2.3.2. The Bilingual Education Program (BEP) in Burkina Faso**

The Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) at the African Conference on the Integration of African Languages and Cultures into Education held in Ouagadougou in 2010 argued that school ineffectiveness is to some large extent attributed to the fact that African students are required to become literate, learn content and pass examinations in a language that they often neither master (in listening / speaking) nor practice (at home / among peers). Since 1994, the government of Burkina Faso in collaboration with the Swiss Organisation for Workers' Solidarity (OSEO) through the Ministry of Basic Education and Literacy (MEBA) have been implementing the BEP in Burkina Faso. The first experiences were conducted in the primary schools of two villages: Nomgana and Goué. Initially, the project was conceived and implemented as an informal adult literacy and rural development program inform of small-scale farmers. The adult literacy program provided

satisfying results that it persuaded state officials and policymakers to adapt and expand the program into a broad-based intergenerational education program with all age groups above nine years (who had therefore passed the age to be recruited in the primary school, while being too young to integrate the centres of literacy for adults) as target population. About this, Nikièma, N. & Kaboré, P. (2010, p. 25) declares:

In order to bring solutions to the delay shown by these children, and taking into consideration the fact that they were psychologically riper, it was decided that children would be given a four years schooling instead of six year standard schooling. 55 children were recruited and taught reading and writing in Mooré by the association according to the method of the elimination of illiteracy intensive formation (FIA) then in progress; the instructors were selected and trained in an intensive way during school holidays. The didactic supports were worked out and the experimentation engaged using Mooré, the language of the area, during the first two years for the first trainings, as they learned French.

The BEP currently constitutes a bond between formal and non-formal education and is being implemented in all 13 regions of the country. It employs French and national languages as the medium of instruction. The main objective of the BEP is to come up with solutions to the problems associated with access to equality of opportunities, quality and relevant education in the country.

The BEP is mainly supported by the Government of Burkina Faso and the Swiss Cooperation. The program also receives support from the Diakonia NGO, the Catholic Church, and the Fund for Literacy and Non-Formal Education (FONAENF) for the AFI method, and the ADEA (Association for the Development of Education in Africa) who provide technical and financial backing for the assessment and evaluation of the BEP.

### **2.3.3. Aims and Objectives**

The BEP was principally meant to increase access to education for all people and to improve the quality, relevance and effectiveness of basic education in Burkina Faso through the use of national languages and French. It also plays an important role in the fight against illiteracy and to use literacy skills to combat poverty as well as in the promotion of development based on the country's socio-cultural values and realities. In addition, it aims at reinforcing the status of national languages and to promoting the creation of bridges between formal and informal basic education.



Figure 2.2: Children reading and calculating in both French and Mooré

#### 2.3.4. Implementation Approaches and Methodologies

The development and implementation of the BEP must be based on solid strategies; the Burkinabe government put emphasis on teachers' training and the production of appropriate didactic/instructional materials in the eight major languages. In order to meet the literacy and skills development needs of learners and to upgrade the effectiveness and efficiency of the bilingual approach, teachers in bilingual schools receive additional and specialised language training over and above the standard teacher training curricula.

The development and planning of the programme is based on professional research and needs assessment studies which involve the active participation of all national and local stakeholders including, most importantly, community members who are often side-lined from such processes. Active community involvement in programme development creates a strong sense of ownership and responsibility among the people, which makes the mobilisation of learners an easier task. In addition, community members will also monitor the actual implementation of the programme in their localities.

The provision of bilingual education under the BEP is organised according to age groups, reflecting a progression of literacy learning and learning needs from early childhood to adulthood. In line with this structure, BEP is implemented using both the formal and non-formal approaches. The BEP is sub-divided into two broad components: the formal and non-formal basic education. The formal basic education component of the BEP has three age-based levels of learning and instruction for children and young people aged between three and 16 years old and these constitute the age-based bilingual educational continuum.

### **2.3.5. Bilingual primary schools in Burkina Faso**

Bilingual primary schools or Ecoles Primaires Bilingues in French (EPB) in Burkina Faso have emerged since the years 1995/96 and concern children in the age group between seven and twelve (7 and 12). In the EPB schools, children not only learn in both national languages and French, but they take part to promotion of productive and cultural activities.

The EPB programme was mainly aimed to make children ready to take part to the development of the nation by promoting the integration of learning and production activities. It also constituted an attempt to conciliate the education process and the societal expectations while simultaneously motivating local communities to be involved in the education system and the activities of the schools by encouraging the use of positive local cultural values, norms and practices into the learning system. Furthermore, was meant to help learners make use of the competences they acquired in national languages to excel in their learning process as well as to guide them towards better literacy in both national languages and French the official language of the country and an important international language. The EPB also had the objective of helping reduce the gap between formal and non-formal education. Pupils attend the EPB schools for four to five years and in grade four and five, the examination follows the same strict rules as the standard schools so that pupils would be prepared for the final primary school examination. For the proper operation of the program, schools were continually monitored and assessed by teachers in charge and external professional evaluators as well as several actors and institutions namely: The responsible agency for basic education (Circonscription d'Education de Base) assures a close monitoring once per term. An assessment is made by the regional Teacher Training Team once per term; a regional evaluation is conducted by the MEBA/OSEO team once per term, and teachers and teacher trainers from the same region attend regular area meetings.

### 2.3.6. Evolution of the Program

Bilingual education has evolved since the appearance of the first schools. It is a continuum today going from the preschool areas of educational awakening or 3E (espaces d'éveil éducatif) to specific multilingual secondary schools, passing by the bilingual primary schools (EPB). Bilingual primary education (EPB) now concerns children from 7 to 12 years old and has as main objectives to link the act of learning to the act of production, to associate school with the area by integrating positive cultural values in school syllabuses and allowing local communities to be involved in school, to use and to promote knowledge of the child in a national language, to promote the acquisition of literacy skills in this language. While EPB covered at first the whole territory and only one national language (Moore), it currently concerns eight national languages, each being equipped and documented (textbooks of pupils, guides of the master) for different disciplines and different grades. These languages are: Dagara, Dioula, Fulfulde, Gulmancéma, Lyélé, Mooré, Bissa, and Nuni. Other languages are on the way to being introduced. This shows the important research work performed by the linguists to reach such accomplishment. Production is part of the programme of these schools and the choice of the type of production is made locally (gardening, joinery, breeding, agriculture etc. depending on conditions). Moreover, local cultural activities are included and they are delivered by the parents (tales, proverbs, music, dance, etc.) according to possibilities.

### 2.3.7. Evaluation of the bilingual program

BEP provided excellent results which had a deep and positive impact on the whole educational system as well as on the quality of life of the beneficiaries. The key indicators of the impact of PEB are detailed below.

In the first place, the bilingual approach of education turned out to be financially more profitable than the classical system. For instance, Korgho (2001) in a comparative study conducted demonstrated that the bilingual schools are less expensive than the classical schools: for a bilingual school of Nomgana, the medium unit cost of the education of a graduate of the Certificate of primary education (CEP) is about 455 388 FCFA (922.373 USD), versus 3 879 396 FCFA (7857.723 USD) in a classical school – a difference of 3 424 008 frank CFA (6 935,357 USD). Next, the curriculum of the BEP has the particularity of covering the content of the program of the classical schools in four or five years instead of six making learners gain in time.



Afterwards, the bilingual schools also turned out to be more efficient than the classical schools as far as the acquisition of competences is considered. Children learn quicker and easily as they study in a language they are familiar with. Soundings have shown that the rates of success in the final primary school examination of the pupils in bilingual schools are in general above national average, although the program of these schools only lasts four or five years and although the examination is entirely written in French and intended for pupils who spent at least six years at school. Thereafter, thanks to the Knowledge that they have about songs, dances and traditional stories, as well as their mastery of the local musical instruments (tam-tam, African xylophone, castanets, flutes, etc.), the pupils from the bilingual schools obtain remarkable if not the best results during competitions organised by the regional authorities of primary education. Nikièma, N. & Kaboré-P. (2016)

Then, the BEP contributes to the reduction of unemployment by giving many children and young people opportunity to acquire professional skills. In fact, most beneficiaries of the BEP, and most particularly the small farmers, succeeded in putting in benefit knowledge and competences acquired in various socio-economic domains such as health (hygiene and feeding) and agricultural production (breeding and farming). Competences acquired across the program therefore allowed these beneficiaries to spread their productive activities of means of subsistence, or to join easily the workforce, and therefore to increase the income of their family. It, thus, allowed an improvement of living conditions and gave parents the possibility to afford the education of their children.

As far as the family is concerned, the existence of the 3E programmes drove to an improvement of quality of education and of care that parents give to their children. It, then, led to a decrease of infant mortality. The centres which welcome the young children also liberate the parents, and more particularly the women, who can participate in other productive activities.

Moreover, Parents support more and more education and encourage their children to go to school, because they themselves benefited from their literacy skills. This increased the overall literacy rate and girls schooling in particular.

In addition to that, the program also improved social cooperation within communities as well as the organisation and the management of community activities for development. However, some community groups asked for training in French because they need to communicate with official organisms. All in all, at this point, the question should no longer be

whether bilingual education based on the first language is good or not, but how it can be successfully implemented.



Figure 2.3: children practicing cultural activities at school

### 2.3.8. Challenges faced by bilingual education in Burkina Faso

The BEP has proven to be efficient in that it favoured equality of chances to education for all as well as the quality of education. However, it was noticed that the efficient implementation of the program was hindered by a certain number of challenges.

- The choice of language(s) to be introduced for teaching. The linguistic diversity is not a handicap for bilingual education. However, the problem starts when in the same classroom pupils from different ethnic groups speak different languages that are different from the language of instruction. Another problem is when the teacher speaks a different from student as it is frequently found in Burkina Faso's schools. Choosing a language means that children whose mother language is not the medium of instruction are still being educated in a language that is not their own even though it is a local language.
- Hostility and ignorance towards the national languages are two attitudes that are spread in the system of formal education.
- The resistance some schools and/or teachers show to cooperation with local communities and development facilitators in promoting the growth of the education system

- The huge disproportion between available resources and high demand in the place as well as the lack of well-trained human resources to effectively implement the bilingual approach to education across the sector.
- The lack of expertise to make of national languages an effective instrument for bilingual education and the great challenge of adapting and integrating national languages into the educational system.
- The fact that official examinations do not take into account national languages or disciplines relating to culture and production.
- The high level of poverty that limits the ability of parents to finance the education of their children.
- The absence of commitment from the government.

All these challenges do not facilitate the way towards a mother tongue based education. Nonetheless, with willingness, commitment, and a lot of work, Burkina Faso can succeed in what seems impossible today.

### **2.3.9. Teachers' attitudes towards MTB-BLE**

Teachers' attitudes and beliefs are very important to the education and achievement of their students. Depending on the teachers and schools, these attitudes and beliefs can become ingrained early in their career and vary considerably. The attitudes teachers hold influence their perceptions and judgments, which, in turn, affect their behaviour in the classroom. To say it differently, their attitudes can significantly affect their teaching practices and methods. Unfortunately, despite this urgent need for research on teachers' attitudes towards MTB-BLE, research on this issue in Burkina Faso is very scarce. Genuinely, there is little known empirical study that has investigated this issue. The few studies that have been found only address language attitudes indirectly, but do not focus mainly on attitudes towards BLE, let alone teachers' attitudes towards it. Still, some researchers like Kouraogo and Dianda (2008) in their investigation found that while people in Burkina Faso may show positive attitudes towards local languages and MTB-BLE, these positive attitudes may be discouraged by strong opposition from teachers. It is regretful that despite the potential benefits of BLE, some teachers and intellectuals, the very people who are supposed to understand the usefulness of the use of national languages in education do not favour its implementation. Globally, results of research on language attitudes in Burkina Faso are

encouraging. However, due to the rareness of studies that have investigated in this area, it cannot be predicted with certitude what the results of the present study will be.

**2.3.10. Conclusion**

In brief, this chapter has tried to present the way MTB-BLE has been dealt with in Burkina Faso. It has also summarized the lessons learned through the experimentation that were and have been being conducted. In short, even though the country has failed to implement MTB-BLE nationwide, the effectiveness of the bilingual teaching approach has been confirmed. Still, a lot of parameters have be taken into account and be improved in order to see better results.

## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Introduction

The purpose of the current study is to measure the attitudes that primary school teachers hold towards mother tongue-based bilingual education and their readiness for the application this project in schools in Burkina Faso. While the previous chapters put emphasis on the theoretical side of this study, the present chapter focuses on the practical side. Actually, this section offers an account of the methodology used to conduct the investigation. Therefore, an explanation of the research instruments is provided first, followed by a brief description of the methods of sampling, data collection procedures, data analysis and finally the discussion of the results.

### 3.2. Sample population and sampling procedure

In order to gather data, a sample population consisting of 30 public primary school teachers was chosen. Using probability sampling method, the participants were randomly selected in a way to respect diversities in terms of ethnicity, region of service and teaching experience. The majority 19 are Mossis. The remaining includes 4 Peulhs, 2 Dagaras, 3 Senoufos and 2 Samos. The 30 respondents are shared between five different regions of the country (region here refers, not to the region of origin, but the region of service). Among the participants, 13 come from Central Plateau, 2 from the South-West, 2 from the Centre, 5 from the West and 8 from the Centre-West. Among the 13, 5 have between 5 and 10 years of experience, 5 have between 10 and 20 and 3 have more than 20 years of experience. It should be noted that only 5 of those teachers have received training relevant to BLE. Understandably, though all participants share the status of primary school teachers, they diverse in different ways that could balance the research data.

### 3.3. Research Instrument

The data were collected by means of a questionnaire. The questionnaire is practical in both data collection and analysis. Besides, a questionnaire can be easily handled no matter the distance separating the researcher and the respondents with limited effect on data validity and reliability. The most important factor that has influenced the choice of the questionnaire for data collection in this work is because the researcher could not be on the field study to collect data herself. The questionnaire was designed to gather quantitative and qualitative data. Accordingly, different types of questions were used, namely:

- Close-ended questions: These types of questions are useful to discover participants' spontaneous answers. Besides, they are controllable, easy to analyse and allows quantitative data. Questions 8, 9, and 10 (see appendix) are examples of close-ended questions. The informants were asked to choose the appropriate answer without giving any explanation or justification. Obviously, close-ended questions are limited as they reveal neither the thinking process of the informants, nor their understanding of the questions. Therefore, the questionnaire was balanced by open-ended questions.
- Open-ended questions are very important as they engage the informants in reflexion before formulating the answer although this question structure gives the respondents more freedom and consequently increases the risk of irrelevant details or answers for the researcher. Thus, the researcher can get information about opinions and attitudes of the informants. Nevertheless, missing or incomplete answers are characteristic disadvantages of open-ended questions because they are time-consuming and require more effort from the respondents. In this questionnaire, the questions 12, 13, 14, and 15 are formulated in open-ended form.  
Question 12: According to you, what are the barriers that hinder the success of bilingual education in Burkina Faso?
- In order to balance the drawbacks and the benefits of the two last types the mixed question structure is advantageous. The respondents are given the choices, but also possibilities to justify their answers, just as in the following example from the questionnaire.  
Question: 6) Have you heard about mother tongue based bilingual education? YES  
NO  
If yes, are you for or against it? Why?

The questionnaire was primarily written in English and then translated into French in order to give the informants the possibility to answer in a language they feel at ease with.

Then, the questionnaire was designed using Google Forms which is practical for a remote research.

The questionnaire comprises three parts: The first part concerns personal information. The goal of this part is to establish the background information of the subjects such as the grade they teach, the region where they are in service, their ethnic group and their experience in teaching.

The second part deals with linguistic appurtenance. This part is set to bring into light the linguistic diversity and individual multilingualism and the place they accord to each language. It also addresses the linguistic differences that teachers show sometimes in the localities they teach. It consists of five questions: 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Question 1: Question 1 focuses on linguistic knowledge of the informants. It aims to know how many languages the informants speak. All languages are concerned including mother tongue and other local language, the official language of the country as well as foreign languages. The informants are given the possibility to list those languages.

Question 2: This question is an extension of the preceding one as the latter deals with the languages previously cited. It aims to know if informants are fluent in the languages these languages.

Question 3: Local/National languages are important in this research. Therefore, this question is dedicated to discover which one(s) of the languages having the status of national languages the informants speak.

Question 4&5: The two questions concern language(s) of instruction. BLE consists in the use of the L1, along with the official language. Thus, the objective is to investigate which language (s) teachers use for interaction with learners during and after class and vice versa. These questions serve a double purpose because the answer of the informants to the questions may reveal the reasons underlying their use of French only, or L1 along with French as language of instruction.

The third part of this questionnaire concerns informants' attitudes towards MTB-BLE. In fact, attitudes are of crucial importance in this research. Consequently, this section of the questionnaire introduces the main topic of the research MTB-BLE to respondents with the aim of discovering their attitudes toward regarding the concepts. The section consisted of a total of ten questions compose this section.

Question 6: This question asks the respondents about their knowledge about BLE. The aim is to know how much the question of MTB-BLE is well known to primary school teachers in general.

Question 7: In this question, informants are asked to give their position as far as MTB-BLE is concerned. From social data, it has been noticed that some prefer to use the mother tongue of the learners in the teaching process. Teachers were given to choice to align as proponents or as opponents as well as to justify their position. This question is important to this work since it reveals the purposes or benefits for which the informants need to use both the mother and French. Besides, in the domain of education, teachers occupy an important role in the success of any educational reform. Question 8 is an extension of question 7 in that it allows respondents to speak about the advantages and also the disadvantages of MTB-BLE in details.

Question 9&10 are formulated to check out the opinions of informants about local languages in Burkina Faso, and the possibility they can be effectively used for teaching in primary school along with the powerful language which is French.

Question 11&12: Part of this work consists in discovering whether Burkinabe primary school teachers are ready to run successfully a MTB-BLE program. Hence, question 11&12 help show if teachers would accept to collaborate or if they feel they possess the potential necessary to execute such a reform.

Question 13, 14&15 respectively allow enumerate barriers that can hinder the success of a BLE program in Burkina Faso, to situate the responsibilities of stakeholders and educators in the realization of the program. The main objective is to depict what is on stake with the implementation of MTB-BLE in order to allow actors those responsible in such case to propose solutions and ideas to overcome obstacles. The questionnaire ends with an opening in order to give informants the freedom to give suggestions or any additional ideas that may help. As a matter of fact, teachers being actors on the playground have experience on the subject and saw different changes.



### 3.4. Data Collection procedure

As previously mentioned, the data were collected by means of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was carried out through internet. A link was created via Google Forms to edit questions. Two first examples were sent to three teachers know by the researcher working in three different regions. These three teachers were asked to complete the questionnaire and transfer it to their colleagues. A limit of ten informants per region was fixed and they all answered the complete questionnaire. However, few of them were asked to restart because there were ambiguous answers. The questionnaire was distributed through social media and they were supposed to answer directly online. This tip was intended to facilitate the analysis of data. However due to some technical issues, some respondents were obliged to print their answers and send it on a puff file. It took three weeks to the researcher to collect data from all informants.

### 3.5. Data Analysis and Discussion

In this section, only the analysis of the collected data will be provided. The interpretation and discussion are given at the end of the chapter.

#### 3.5.1. Questionnaire

##### 3.5.1.1. Participants profiles

As mentioned earlier, 30 informants were selected to be the sample of this sample. The majority of those informants have an experience of 10 to 20 years in teaching.

Table 3.1: Experience of participants

Years of experience	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency
5-10	9	30%
10-20	15	50%
20 or more	6	20%

It is important to specify that in addition to their standard teaching experience, two of the participants have received a special training in bilingual education. Participants were from five different ethnic group including (19) Mossis, (4) Peulhs, or Fulanis, (2) Samos, (2) Dagaras, and (3) Senoufos.

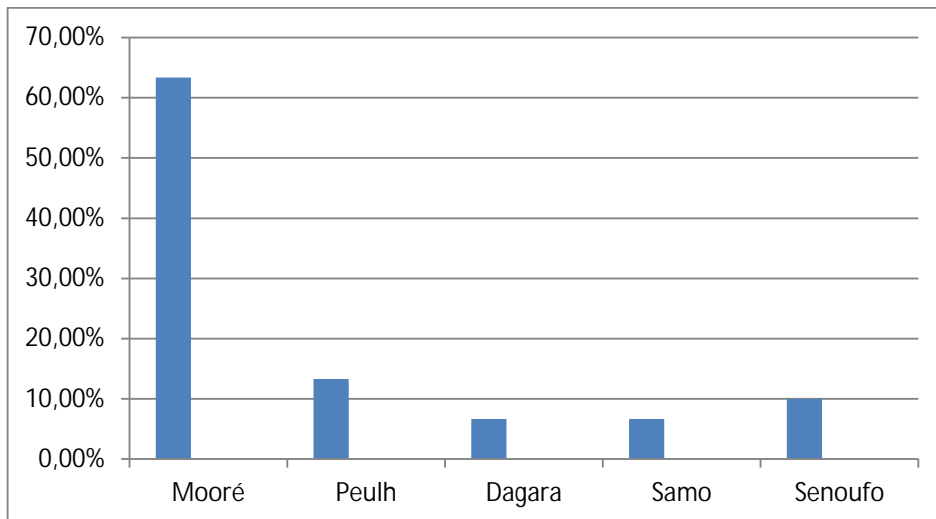


Figure 3.1: Participants ethnic groups

Given the plurality of languages in Burkina Faso, attitudes towards the use of local languages in education may depend on regions. Indeed, only three languages were initially chosen for instruction. Nowadays, five other languages have been added. People living in regions where none of the eight languages is spoken are likely to present negative attitudes towards teaching in mother tongue. Likewise, teachers working in regions where the language of the community differs from their own first language may present different attitudes. For this reason it seemed reasonable to include participants from different regions. There were 13 participants who were assigned to the region of the Plateau Central, 2 to the south-west, 3 to the Centre-north, 5 to the Centre, 8 to the West as it is shown below.

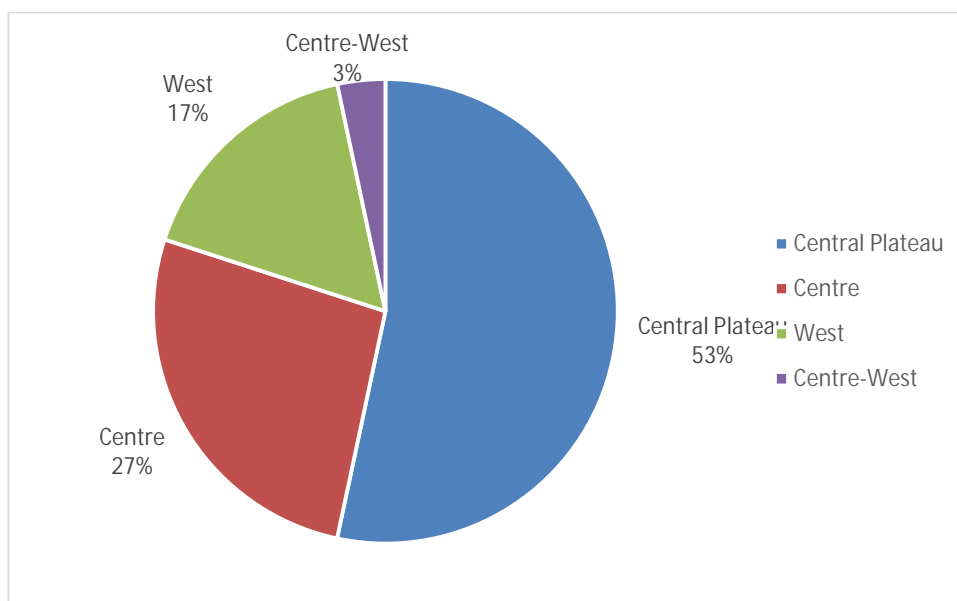


Figure 3.2: Participants' regions of service

The grade taught is useful because the extent to which teachers use learners' L1 or French for interaction is tightly related to the students' level or class grade. Among the sample, 12 participants are teachers of CP, 9 teach learners of CE and 9 teach CM students.

Table 3.2: Level of class (grade) taught

Grade	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency
CP	12	40%
CE	9	30%
CM	9	30%

### 3.5.1.2. Participants linguistic characteristics

The results revealed that all participants were bilingual (they speak French in addition to one or two local languages. Everybody claimed to have a native-like degree of fluency in their L1 most of them (63.33%) being native speakers of Mooré. While 86.68% of the informants claimed to speak at least one of the three languages labelled national languages, 13.32% did not speak any of these three languages.

- **Interaction with teachers in classroom setting**

In Burkina Faso, French is the language of instruction, the language used in the classroom between teachers and students for lectures. Nevertheless, it has been noticed that local languages are reported to be occasionally used for clarifications or discussing lessons with children. Besides, results showed that the choice of the language of instruction depended not only on the linguistic mastery of the teachers and pupils, but also on the grade concerned. Thus, 19 participants answered that they prefer to use the L1 of pupils along with French for both classroom interaction and outside, 9 participants (all holding CP learners) focused that they use only French for classroom classroom interactions as either they do not share the pupils' L1 or the learners themselves have different L1. There are 2 participants who use only learners' L1 for interactions. Besides, 18 informants answered that their students used French and L1 to communicate with them during classroom works while 8 said their students used principally their L1 to interact with them and 4 said their students used French only to communicate with them during lectures.

Table 3.3: Language used by teachers and pupils for classroom interactions

	French	L1	French plus L1
Teachers	9	1	19
Pupils	4	8	18

- **Interaction with teachers outside classroom setting**

Although there is a change in the context, the situation remains almost the same. French and the children L1 remain the languages of interaction between the teachers and the pupils outside the classroom. Normally, French is the language used to perform formal speech, but since the children are not enough familiar with the French language, they have recourse to their L1 one to express themselves while conversing to the teachers and teachers also use the same L1 to make sure they are being understood. Likewise, children sometimes reply using their L1 whenever they find words or by mixing the two languages.

The data also revealed that the use of French between teachers and students was scarcely present and progressively increased as they moved in grade. Indeed, while teachers of CP said that they preferred to use principally L1, those in CE and CM used both L1 and French for interactions. However, there is no absolute line since in some classes, the teachers and students are limited by linguistic differences (the teacher does not understand the pupils L1 or some children grown up with French as L1).

### 3.5.1.3. Attitudes towards MTB-BLE

In this section, teachers expressed their thoughts concerning MTB-BLE and the way they value it. These attitudes vary according to the knowledge they have about it.

- **Knowledge about BLE**

In order to present any kind of attitude towards a particular subject, one needs to have certain knowledge about that subject. The totality of the informants (100%) said they were informed about bilingual education.

- **Attitudes towards BLE (pros or cons)**

The research revealed that teachers show favourable attitudes towards MTB-BLE. On the one hand, 96.66% presented positive attitudes towards BLE. The overall argument focused that learning subject matter in the first language is helpful because it allows students to understand subject matter better when it is taught in French. They also argued that literacy transfers across languages. On the other hand, 3.33% said to be against because linguistic interference slows down acquisition.

- **Advantages and disadvantages of BLE**

All informants (100%) agreed that BLE had many advantages. First of all, it is a key factor in the improvement of the quality of education as it favours the school integration of children, the quick acquisition of knowledge and eases the acquisition of a second or foreign language. Then, respondents also included that a BLE decreases the linguistic barriers between children and teachers making classroom interactions easier. Moreover, BLE allows for a reduction of the costs in terms of infrastructure and helps save staff (instructors) and time (five instead of six). For instance, children in classical schools count only until 20 in CP1 while those in bilingual schools attain 999. BLE also helps maintain the motivation of learners and teachers and to encourage the implication of parents in the education of their children. Furthermore, language is part of culture; therefore, a bilingual education brings into cohabitation two cultures while simultaneously promoting the local culture(s) through cultural activities. To add to this, it was mentioned that learners in bilingual schools are not limited to formal learning of writing and reading. In addition to that, they have the opportunity to learn and practice manual activities or other such as breeding, agriculture...relevant to their environment. Some children may come out developing professional or lifelong skills.

As for the disadvantages, they are as important as the advantages. Only one informant answered that they did not find any disadvantage to BLE. As for the remaining 29 teachers, they listed a number of reasons why a BLE would not be appropriate for a successful education, namely, the fact that there is no opportunity after the primary school. Actually, the BEP does not go over the primary cycle. They also mentioned linguistic transfer as a negative fact resulting from BLE emphasizing that the negative transfer between L1 and L2 slows down the acquisition of knowledge and decreases the pupils' proficiency in L2 (French). The fact that the national examination was entirely conducted in French without taking into account the national languages was also mentioned. Finally, there are limitations as far as

science and technology. Truly, local languages do not allow pupils to have access and take advantages of science and technology which are indispensable nowadays. They also added that BLE require a lot of resources (human, material, and financial) due to the extra activities.

- **Do you think local languages of Burkina Faso can be effectively used for primary school instruction?**

The effectiveness of African languages as means of instruction have long been contested with the argument that they are not developed enough. The research data showed that the opinions of primary school teachers are in majority in contradiction with this view. Indeed, 93,33% of the informants believe that Burkinabe local languages can be effectively used as media of instruction in primary school while only 6,66% answered they did not think that these languages could effectively play the role of media of instruction.

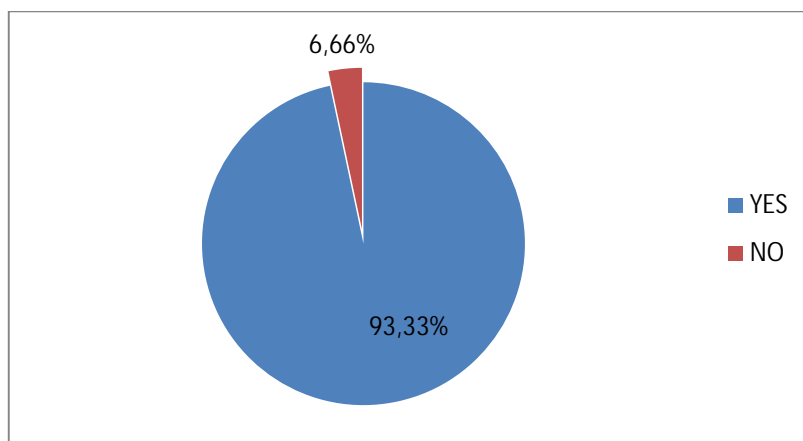


Figure 3.6: Teachers' opinions on the effectiveness of local languages as media of instruction

- **Should Burkinabe government introduce BLE in primary schools?**

Just like the preceding question, the majority of answers went in favour of the implementation of a BLE programme. The analysis showed that the same informants (93.33%) who showed positive attitude towards the use of local languages as media of instruction also focused that the government should introduce BLE in primary education. On the other hand, the 6.66% of the informants were not in favour of the implementation of a BLE.

- **Teachers' ability to teach using local languages**

The success of the MTB-BLE depends greatly on teachers since they are the ones who put into application the educational reform. Among the respondents 96.66% of the respondents answered that if ever the MTB-BLE was implemented they would be able to teach using simultaneously French and the L1 of the learners while 3.33% would not be able to teach children by means of both their mother tongue and French. Obviously, the majority of teachers feel themselves able for a MTB-BLE. However, their willingness and motivation must be supported by a relevant training to provide them with the skills and competences necessary to function effectively.

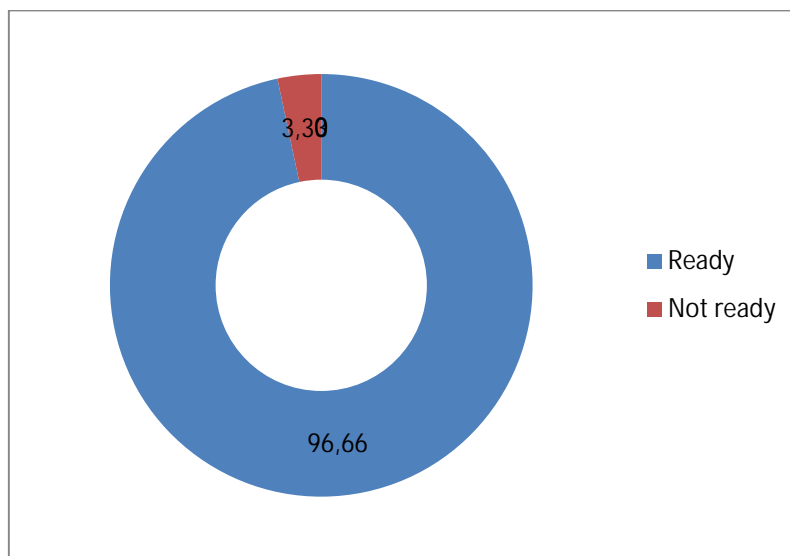


Figure 3.7: Ability of teachers for a bilingual education

- **Do primary school teachers possess the necessary competences to function effectively in a MTB-BLE system**

As previously mentioned, instructors are of tremendous importance in any educational reform. Therefore it is crucial for them to be well equipped for the tasks they are assigned to. In this case, since they are required to transmit knowledge using at least two languages (learners L1 and French), some skills, knowledge and strategies are necessary. The findings indicated that primary school teachers have the necessary competences to function effectively in a MTB-BLE system. According to the majority of the respondents (90%), primary school teachers are competent enough and have the skills required to teach in a bilingual context. Nevertheless, special training needs to be added to the standard teacher training in order to complete their skills and prepare them. As for the 10%, they remained

sceptical concerning the question. They believe that teachers are not competent as they need to be to teach in a multilingual context.

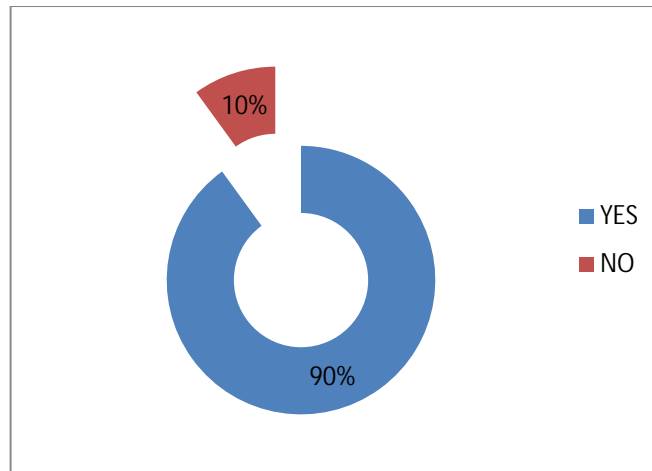


Figure 3.8: competences of informants to function effectively in a multilingual context.

- **Obstacles to MTB-BLE**

Although Burkinabe National Policy on Education provides for a multilingual policy involving the learning of a child's L1 or language of the immediate community (LIC), the actual realization of this policy is still absent. In fact, many obstacles hinder the promotion and implementation of a multilingual teaching policy. The analysis of the participants' responses allowed investigate some of these obstacles which included, firstly, the lack of sensitization for education actors (namely teachers) and parents. Actually some teachers and parents have negative attitudes towards local languages. As a result, children grow up without speaking their community languages or L1 because they do not speak it at home. Those parents are convinced that local languages do not guarantee any professional opportunity to their children after school and that French is the language that will open for them doors to success. Some parents even withdraw their children from schools once they hear that children are taught in their mother tongue to bring them to French monolingual schools. In the same way, there are teachers who present negative attitudes towards teaching in national languages and therefore show little motivation in putting such reform into application. This is the result of lack of information and experience on the subject. That is why is crucial to start by sensitizing and changing the minds by presenting the advantages and benefits related to a MTB-BLE. Secondly, there is the linguistic diversity which is not very easy to handle. As it has already been presented in the first chapter, Burkina Faso is a multilingual country where an estimated seventy languages are spoken. This linguistic diversity hinders the successful



implementation of a bilingual education not only by making the choice of the languages of instruction difficult, but also by creating linguistic barriers between instructors and learners or between learners and their learners. This situation does not favour teaching in L1 nor does it ease communication and classroom interaction. To these two obstacles, can be added the question of teacher training which constitutes a central issue. In fact, teachers need not only to be provided relevant training in addition to the usual training they receive, but they also need recycling, as well as to be followed by all stakeholders regularly. Moreover, the findings revealed that the lack of teaching and learning materials in the national languages constitutes a serious obstruction. Thus it becomes indispensable to produce relevant materials and promote translation from French into local languages and vice versa. Last but not the least, the participants did not omit to mention the fact that the Burkinabe government does not seem truly engaged in this battle. It's been a while since local languages have been given the status of languages of instruction along with French. Yet, nothing concrete has been undertaken to put this initiative into practice. The informants all seem to be convinced that the first step must come from the government. It is necessary to reaffirm firmly the commitment of governments to the promotion of Burkinabe languages in literacy and education. There is a huge gap between policies stated in government policy documents and language policies and education implemented. To achieve their goals, political leaders must not only have the political will, but they must also allocate funds to support literacy and basic education.

- **What should policy makers undertake to**

It is obvious that teachers represent the most important actors in this type of reform. However, they need to be fully supported in order to facilitate their profession and make their effort. The informants were unanimous concerning the actions policy makers should undertake to accompany teachers for a fruitful basic education, even though express differently. First of all, they should conduct awareness campaigns on the merits of bilingual education to improve attitudes. Then, they should choose the languages to be taught while working on the transcription of other languages. As explain in the previous lines, they must assure teachers' training and equip them with the materials required for their work. In addition, they should begin by establishing a fixed education policy in favour of national languages. Moreover, they should generalize bilingual education at the national level. Finally, the fight against fund embezzlement which slows down every development must be taken in rigour.

- **Teacher responsibilities in the promotion of local languages and their use in primary school education.**

To the question of responsibility, different suggestions have been formulated by respondents. Among others, one can mention effective implementation of what will be decided by policy makers, favouring children learning of their L1 by employing to teach in classrooms and ensuring that learners remain motivated in their learning. Besides, it is worth mentioning that one participant suggested that teachers should read a lot and be informed about BLE. This way, they will raise their own awareness and help later to raise others' awareness on the subject. Generally, participants agreed that teachers are the pillars in the domain of education and they have the responsibility to put commitment and motivation into it to obtain the best results possible.

In conclusion, though differences of attitudes have been observed between informants, the overall attitudes are positive. Primary school teachers in Burkina Faso are informed about and have attitudes towards and show readiness for MTB-BLE. They recognize the advantages related to the use of mother tongue in education since most of them usually have recourse the learners L1 to teach lessons or during classroom interaction. However, scepticism to the use of Burkinabe local languages as subjects of instruction and learning is not completely inexistent due to the large amount of challenges to be met.

## **2.6. Discussion of results**

This modest work was meant to explore how primary school teachers in Burkina Faso could contribute to the success of MTB-BLE in primary school. Thus, much focus was put on teachers' attitudes towards teaching in L1, and how difficulties and lacks faced by those teachers as far as BLE is concerned could be addressed and solved.

The results of this study showed that there is strong acceptance for the rationale underlying mother tongue-based bilingual education. This confirms the first hypothesis established in the beginning of the work. The teachers agreed that developing literacy in the first language facilitates the development of reading and writing in English, and that subject matter instruction in the first language helps the child learn subject matter better in English. In addition, there was support for the principles underlying continuing bilingual education: subjects accepted the rationale that advanced first language development led to practical

advantages, superior cognitive development, and agreed that maintaining the first culture of the child was a good idea.

Support for actual participation in bilingual education was positive. Relatively few respondents opposed to children developing literacy and learning subject matter in the first language in primary school (less than 4%), but the majority, more than half approved of it, with a substantial percentage saying they were for it.

It has been noticed that some teachers support the principles underlying BLE, but do not show support for the actual program. The reasons for this divergence need to be examined. The most apparent is that some teachers might be in agreement with some of the rationale while rejecting others, and support for the program might require full agreement with all underlying principles. There are other reasons that could influence teachers namely concern about job security, observation of misapplications of the principles and/or ideological and sociocultural considerations. Nevertheless, it can be concluded that there is considerable support for the underlying philosophy of bilingual education, and only a minority actually stand against bilingual education programs. Clearly, when teachers express their opposition to bilingual education, it is not mostly a disagreement with the underlying philosophy. Therefore, they must be given opportunity to justify their position.

The analysis also revealed that those who had received some supplementary training strongly supported bilingual education. Similarly, those who shared the same L1 with their pupils tended to present positive attitudes. Consequently, these results hold the hypothesis that those who have more knowledge about bilingual education support it more. The data presented here did not allow us to determine if training is the origin of this support. However, it is obvious that a good teacher training does make a difference. Further research needs to be undertaken to elucidate this point.

Furthermore, in contradiction to what the researcher had hypothesised, the results also suggest that teachers are ready to embark in a bilingual education except for the less than 4% of participants who focused not to be ready for such an education approach. They believe that Burkinabe local languages can be used in schools as subjects and media of learning. Many of them are even already using teaching in French while having recourse to learners' L1 according to situation. They considered that they have the skills and competences necessary to conduct a BLE, except for the skills that can be acquired through special BLE training. In fact, this consideration allowed us to deduce that according to teachers, knowledge and skills

related to MTB-BLE constitute special competences that are not included in their standard teacher training. Therefore, competence and performance as teachers should not be valued in terms of their Bilingual teaching abilities. As they see it, it is all a question of training. They understand the merits of BLE as well as their responsibility in its proper implementation. They are ready to act provided that the government and policymakers play their role by taking concrete actions. The actions include sensitization not only of teachers, but also of the target population (parent and community members and learners), establishment of laws in favour of local languages and working on their strict application, relevant teacher training and the production of adequate materials (teaching manuals, learning books, translations) . In sum, it is a question of making every effort to promote national languages and their introduction into education. The success of this educational reform depends on the commitment and actions of all actors.

### **3.6. Suggestions and Recommendations**

In order to reduce the impact of these challenges on the BEP, and make the reform more effective, the following suggestions may constitute useful strategies. First of all, community demands need to be given feedbacks (demand-driven approach) – this strategy involves providing bilingual education to communities that have requested it. Then, the participation of other actors in the education system should be encouraged and the local communities empowered by giving them the means to support the use of local languages in schools. In addition, the teachers and teacher trainers need to be provided refresher training in the workplace with particular emphasis on bilingual education modules. Moreover, it has become urgent to improve the image of national languages not only by adopting laws aimed at strengthening the integration of national languages as well as cultural and productive studies in national examinations and competitions, but also by putting them into vigour. In this regard, the adoption of an explicit language policy that recognizes the value of mother languages is, for example, an essential element in the framing of decisions on educational reform. It can serve as both an incentive and a stimulus for research, while at the same time, promoting ownership by communities and the administrative and political authorities of the process of integrating mother languages into the educational system. Furthermore, dealing with the choice of the language(s) to be taught, some suggest on the one hand that the choice of language should be decided at school and community level and that the people themselves make the choice of which languages to use. It is argued that this approach will most realistically reflect the languages used in the community. But not all languages can be taught

or used to teach in schools because of the lack of a written form. This is why other,s on the other hand, suggest that the choice be made on which language(s) will be used and the other communities will have to adopt. This linguistic imposition is also less likely to content everyone. However, it is obvious that it is difficult to promoting all the mother languages of a country at the same pace in education, especially at the secondary and higher levels. Overreaching may mean falling flat on one's face. We would rather suggest going step by step. One strategy would be to begin with certain languages, without this implying a policy of exclusion, with the risk of replacing colonial monolingualism by African monolingualism. Rather, the process should allow for a pattern of language development that would permit other languages to progressively take their place in an orderly manner at different levels of education. In order to motivate and encourage children, parents and teachers in learning and using their first language or mother tongue, the authorities could organise games and competitions nationwide that employ local or national languages. This could be linguistic transcription, spelling, translation between local languages or any other activity.

### **3.7. Conclusion**

This chapter has given account of the research methodology used to conduct the present investigation. A brief description of the participants, research instruments and data collecting procedure were offered. Then, data collected via the questionnaire have been analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. After that, the results have been discussed in the light of the literature of language in education approaches and in reference to the pre-determined hypotheses. Lastly, after the analysis of the collected data some solutions have been suggested to help solve or attenuate the problems listed.

### GENERAL CONCLUSION

African languages have long been denigrated on the grounds that they are not sufficiently developed. For this reason, in many education systems in West Africa, French remains the main language of instruction and the vast majority of children receive instruction in a language that is unfamiliar to them. This seriously compromises their chances of learning and by the same occasion, slows down the countries' development. For the sake of providing the learners with education empowering them with tools, skills, and competencies that will allow them to face real life situation, and to be active, effective, and productive citizens, the education system of Burkina Faso underwent different reforms which the most current and up to date is MTB-B/MLE. The latter aims at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of both the teaching and learning process. Mother language instruction is a part of the broader vision for the diversification of education and for more dynamic lifelong learning, and contributes to the attainment of the objectives of the 2030 Global Agenda and Agenda 2063 of the African Union, on education and development. Nevertheless, many challenges remain. These challenges are most frequent in linguistically diverse regions like Burkina Faso. This study sought to investigate teachers' attitudes towards teaching and use of mother tongue as language of instruction, and their ability to apply it.

The research was divided into three chapters. The first one dealt with theoretical considerations of MTB-BLE. The second chapter gave a bird's eye view on the situation of Burkina Faso as it relates to MTB-BLE and its implementation in primary schools. In the third chapter, relevant data were collected, analysed and interpreted and discussed.

Through designing and conducting an exploratory case study, and after the analysis and triangulation of data collected from different sources by means of questionnaire (a questionnaire for primary school teachers), the first hypothesis was confirmed while the second one was infirmed. Indeed, the results revealed that primary teachers in Burkina Faso globally have positive attitudes towards BLE. The participants' answers revealed that teachers are able to engage in BLE if it were implemented in opposition to what the researcher had hypothesised. Additionally, it has been revealed that teachers count on concrete decisions and actions from government and policy makers to assure the success of the implementation of bilingual education. These actions include raising awareness among teachers, parent and community members and learners) concerning the benefits of BLE. In addition, it has been suggested the institution and reinforcement of laws that promote local languages and their

introduction into education. Furthermore, there must be provided relevant teacher training and adequate materials (teaching manuals, learning books, translations).

The research seems to endorse the notion of mother tongue based bilingual education, and teacher significance in Burkinabe primary schools and the education system in general. Our argument is attached to the belief that understanding the rationale underpinning MTB-BLE and instructors' significance would probably provide teachers and practitioners with the necessary knowledge to choose among a wide set teaching approaches, strategies and methods to ensure the effectiveness of teaching practices and therefore attain the goals of educational reform. Actually, preparing and equipping teachers are integral components of this research and constitute a stepping-stone to enhance bi/multilingual and quality basic education in Burkina Faso.

This research, which was a humble trial to contribute to current debate surrounding mother tongue based bilingual education and its role in guiding shaping reform of educational system, remains insufficient and incipient as the researcher has only skimmed superficially the issue under investigation. Indeed, investigating a specific situation or phenomenon in the Burkinabe basic education context was a serious challenge due to the impediments that hindered the work. Exploring teachers' attitudes and readiness for a teaching based on learners' first language was in some instances a daunting task for some reasons. The teachers themselves were the most frustrating factors in this study as the researcher had to face a serious lack of willingness on their part to participate in this study. Indeed, finding the sample was not easy. In addition to that the initial plan of the researcher to conduct interview with a general inspector was a dream and remained impossible. In fact, they were reluctant and distrustful although the researcher explained repeatedly the objectives of the research. This raised a number of questions about the extent to which the educational authorities are ready to open the door for a serious and fruitful discussion to overcome the issues the Burkinabe educational system suffers from. Moreover, the fact that the research area was not directly accessible to the researcher led her to conduct a remote research (from Algeria) which made things more challenging. Indeed, the researcher entirely depended on internet and social media which the irregularity and sometimes inaccessibility limited her. For the same reason, the questionnaire proved to be the only practical research instrument as an observation or an interview would require more contact with participants. However, it is ethical to mention that the research had limitations and that many aspects were neglected either because of the researchers unawareness of such issues as part of his non perfectionist human nature, or for

## **General Conclusion**

some objective reasons. It must be kept in mind that there is more than one factor which could play in the limitation of data. These factors include the nature of the topic being tackled, the research methods and instruments employed, the sample population as well as the context and conditions in which the study is undertaken. Truly MTB-BLE is a diverse, dynamic and difficult concept to define in only few words, terms and entities as it is governed by a variety of principles provided by several researchers in this area. Thus, in this multidimensional topic, it would probably be impossible for this research to cover every aspect as it is the case. Besides, the research method and the sample population have also contributed to limit data. One of the reasons why case study research is criticized is that it is not easy to generalise the research results, especially with an approximately small sample. In fact, a sample composed of thirty teachers does not guarantee any attempt to generalise the findings or to extend them to a larger population like the one of primary school teachers in Burkina Faso. Nonetheless, the findings allowed to know more about the teaching practices inside Burkinabe primary schools and to depict the obstacles teachers face day- to- day. This research could encourage further study on another nationwide debate on how to improve the educational system in order to guarantee creative and productive citizens. As a conclusion, despite the fact that the objectives of the present study were reached quite satisfactory, the question of time limitation issue has led to the restriction of the work by limiting it to primary school teachers' attitudes. However, it would be very interesting if future researchers could try to investigate learners' parents' attitudes and opinion concerning MTB-BLE since they are also decisive actors in children education.



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**APPENDIX: QUESTIONNAIRE**

Ladies and gentlemen,

As part of my graduation memoire, in master 2 English language sciences option at the university Abou Bekr Belkaid of Tlemcen in Algeria, I am pleased to submit the following questionnaire in order to obtain your answers to the various questions raised. The memoir is entitled *“The Attitudes and Readiness of Primary School Teachers towards Mother Tongue-Based bilingual education (French plus national languages) in Burkina Faso.”* The answers you provide to this study will be of crucial contribution to the success of our research. I would also like to assure you of the respect of confidentiality in the processing of the data you will place at our disposal while specifying that they will be exploited for academic purposes. You are kindly requested to answer the following questions Thank you in advance for your collaboration and availability.

**Part 1: Personal Information**

Years of experience in teaching:

Grade taught:

Region of service:

Ethnic group:

Special training in MTB-BLE    yes        No   

**Part 2: Linguistic knowledge**

1. How many languages do you speak?

One    Two    Three    More

Specify them: .....

2. Are you fluent in all languages you mentioned?    Not fluent .....

Fluent.....Average fluency.....Very fluent.....

3. Mooré, Dioula and Fulfuldé are considered as national languages. Which one of the three do you speak fluently?

.....

4. Which language (s) (mother tongue or French) do you use to interact with pupils:  
During classroom lessons: .....

Outside the classroom: .....

5. Which language do pupils use to interact with you:  
During classroom lessons? : .....

Outside the classrooms? : .....

**Part 3: Teachers' attitudes and readiness towards MTB-BLE**

1. Have you heard about mother tongue based bilingual education?

YES..... NO.....

2. If yes, are you for or against it? Justify your answer

.....

3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of mother tongue based bilingual education?

.....

4. Do you believe that burkinabé national languages can be effectively used in primary school syllabus as media of instruction? YES.... NO....

5. Do you think Burkinabe schools should adopt mother tongue based bilingual education? YES.... NO....

6. Do you think you would be ready (apt) for a bilingual education if it were to be implemented? YES.... NO.....

7. Do you think primary school teachers have sufficient skills to teach effectively in national languages? YES..... NO.....

8. According to you, what are the barriers that hinder the success of bilingual education in Burkina Faso?

.....

9. What should policy makers undertake in order to provide primary school teachers with adequate tools for a successful mother tongue based bilingual education?

.....

10. As a teacher, what do you think teachers can do to promote the use of mother tongues as medium of instruction along with French?

.....

11. Other suggestions:

.....

**Thank you for your collaboration!**



## Summary

This research work consists in investigating primary school teachers' attitudes towards mother tongue-based bilingual education. The aim was to find out teachers' position as far as bilingual education in primary schools is concerned. The study also sought to assess their abilities to engage in such a reform and to suggest solutions to help prepare and equip them consequently. To achieve this goal, a survey research was conducted, using on a questionnaire as a main research instruments. The obtained results revealed that primary school teachers have generally positive attitudes towards mother tongue-based bilingual education. The findings also revealed that teachers have the ability to function effectively in bilingual schools. However, there is a definite need for concrete actions from the government and policy makers. These include providing relevant training for teachers, developing teaching/ learning materials and awareness raising.

**Keywords:** Teachers, Attitudes, Ability, Mother Tongue, Bilingual, Primary Schools, Burkina Faso.

## الملخص

يحاول هذا البحث دراسة اتجاهات معلمي المدارس الابتدائية بخصوص التعليم الثنائي اللغة القائم على اللغة الأم. وكان الهدف هو معرفة موقف المعلمين فيما يتعلق بالتعليم الثنائي اللغة في المدارس الابتدائية. تسعى الدراسة أيضاً إلى تقييم قدراتهم على المشاركة في هذا الإصلاح وبالتالي إلى اقتراح حلول للمساعدة في إعدادهم وتجهيزهم. لتحقيق هذا الهدف، تم إجراء بحث مسح باستخدام الاستبيان كأداة بحثية رئيسية، فكتشفت النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها أن معلمي المدارس الابتدائية لديهم مواقف إيجابية بشكل عام تجاه التعليم الثنائي اللغة القائم على اللغة الأم، وبيّنت أيضاً أن لديهم القدرة على العمل بفعالية في المدارس ثنائية اللغة. ومع ذلك، هناك حاجة مؤكدة لاتخاذ إجراءات ملموسة من جانب الحكومة وواضعي السياسات وتشمل توفير التدريب المناسب للمعلمين، وتطوير مواد التعليم والتعلم ورفع مستوى الوعي.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** المعلمون، المواقف والقدرة، اللغة الأم، ثنائية اللغة، المدارس الابتدائية، بوركينا فاسو.

## Résumé

Ce travail de recherche consiste à étudier les attitudes des enseignants du primaire à l'égard de l'enseignement bilingue sur la base de la langue maternelle au Burkina Faso. L'objectif était de connaître la position des enseignants en ce qui concerne l'enseignement bilingue dans les écoles primaires. L'étude visait également à évaluer leurs aptitudes à entreprendre une telle réforme et à proposer des solutions pour les préparer et les équiper en conséquence. Pour atteindre cet objectif, une enquête a été menée en utilisant un questionnaire comme principal instrument de recherche. Les résultats obtenus ont révélé que les enseignants du primaire avaient généralement une attitude positive à l'égard de l'enseignement bilingue/langue maternelle, ainsi que capacités de fonctionner efficacement dans les écoles bilingues. Toutefois, il est absolument nécessaire que le gouvernement et les décideurs prennent des mesures concrètes. Ces mesures consistent notamment à dispenser une formation appropriée aux enseignants, à élaborer des matériels pédagogiques et d'apprentissage et à sensibiliser le public.

**Mots clés :** Enseignants, Attitudes, Aptitude, Langue Maternelle, Bilingue, Écoles Primaires, Burkina Faso.