



Mauritanian Teachers' Perspectives on Bilingual Program: Attitudes and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore Mauritanian primary and secondary teachers' attitudes toward the bilingual education program in Mauritania. It also aims to investigate the challenges faced by teachers and students in this program. Mauritanian teachers may be more likely to have negative attitudes towards the bilingual program due to the challenges they face in implementing this program. A mixed method approach was adopted using an explanatory sequential design. A Google Form survey was distributed via WhatsApp to 103 Mauritanian primary (n=53) and secondary (n=50) teachers. Additionally, to collect more in-depth data, 6 teachers were interviewed via recorded WhatsApp calls. The interview participants were 3 primary teachers and 3 secondary teachers. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics in Excel while qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings indicate a negative Mauritanian teacher' attitude toward the program's effectiveness in improving student levels. Teacher participants suggested that students' engagement with this program is limited, and they face difficulties adapting to the foreign language, French. Participants also reported that this program is facing many challenges. These main challenges are: inadequate teaching resources and materials, inappropriate infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, and a lack of effective teacher training specially in professional development. To overcome these challenges and make the Mauritanian bilingual program more effective, the study emphasizes the urgent need for policy-makers and educational authorities to take adequate action to address these issues.

Keywords: Bilingualism; Bilingual education; Teacher' attitudes; educational reforms; educational strategies

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INTRODUCTION

Since Mauritania gained independence from France in 1960, French remains prevalent in the country's educational system with more study hours and subjects taught compared to other languages. Even though Standard Arabic is the official language according to the constitution, French still holds significant status in government documents and daily administrative tasks. Most official correspondence and reports are written in French (El Bekkay, 2021).

In Mauritania, the educational system has undergone significant changes since the era of French colonization. Before the French arrived, Mauritaniens mainly had Islamic schools locally referred to as "El Mahdara." This traditional system primarily focused on teaching the Arabic alphabet, Quranic verses, and Sharia principles. When the French came, they introduced modern schools and mandated the learning of French compelling Mauritaniens to acquire proficiency in the French language (Taine-Cheikh, 2004).

After independence, the Mauritanian educational program witnessed six main reforms. The first reform occurred before the complete independence in 1959, after Mauritania wrote its first constitution as an independent country (Naciri-Azzouz, 2024). This reform added Arabic alongside French in Mauritanian primary and secondary schools. Previously, French was the dominant language, and Arabic had only 6 hours per week. The 1959 reform increased the value of Arabic, and it was taught for 10 hours per week instead of 6 (Ould Zein, 2010).

In 1967, a second reform was made following protests by Black Francophone Mauritaniens against the government's decision to mandate Arabic classes for all Mauritaniens starting from primary school, as it had previously been optional for non-Arabophone Mauritaniens. The government then decided to maintain the bilingual system, dividing it into two paths: one with most instruction in Arabic and the other in French (Ould Zein, 2010).

In 1973, a third reform was implemented in the Mauritanian educational program: the Arabization policy. The government of Ould Daddah, the first Mauritanian president, decided to change the educational system to make Standard Arabic the main language of teaching in primary school, with French being taught only from the third year of primary school. Nevertheless, bilingualism remained in secondary school, and this policy maintained two types of education: one where Arabic was the main language of instruction and the other where French was the main language of instruction. However, this did not improve social cohesion and contributed to more ethnic division (Ould Zein)

After the coup against Ould Daddah in 1978, a new reform was implemented in 1979, the fourth in the history of the Mauritanian educational program. Pular, Wolof, and Soninké were recognized as national languages. Still, French and Arabic remained the dominant languages in education, and two tracks of education existed. The first was an Arabic track for Moors (Arab-Amazighs), where Arabic was the dominant language, and the second was a bilingual track where French was the dominant language. This track was often chosen by Black Mauritaniens (Ould Zein, 2010).

The fifth reform was launched by President Maaouya Ould Taya in 1999. The main objective of this reform was to unify the country and to open it to the world. All Mauritaniens had only one option: to educate their children in a single program that mixed Arabic and French. Scientific subjects such as Maths, Science, and Physics were taught in French, whereas Humanities such as Islamic studies, History, Civics, and Geography were taught in Arabic. Another change was the introduction of English language teaching starting from middle school, after it had previously been taught exclusively in high school in all the previous reforms (Ould Zein, 2010).

In 2022, the Mauritanian parliament voted for a new reform. This reform stated that Arabic and French would be taught in the same way as in the 1999 reform. However, the new aspect was that French would be gradually phased out, and Arabic would become the dominant language of education at both primary and secondary levels. Another entirely new addition to the reform was that all Mauritaniens would learn at least one national language. This meant that Arabophone Mauritaniens would learn one of the non-Arabophone languages, and vice versa, starting in primary schools (Mauritanian News Agency, 2024)

According to Bialystok (2018), bilingual education has been an educational option in many countries for over 50 years but it remains controversial, especially in terms of its appropriateness for all children. For instance,

bilingual education in the United States has been a debated topic since the country's founding, with discussions often characterized by political language and arguments. (Nieto 2009; Ovando 2003; Bialystok 2018)

A reference survey on illiteracy in Mauritania showed that nearly 182 000 Mauritanian children are out of the education system in the year 2008. They are between the age of 6 and 14. 75% of them never attended school while 25% of them drop out of school. This means that three out of ten children do not finish primary school (United Nations, 2022). These percentages highlight the fact that education in Mauritania face multiple challenges including the languages used for instruction, the infrastructure, social factors and teachers 'training.

The current state of bilingual education in Mauritania falls short of anticipated standards, underscoring persistent challenges and the need for further enhancement. Examining the attitudes of teachers towards educational programs is crucial as they play a pivotal role in the success or failure of such initiatives. Investigating their perceptions of the Mauritanian bilingual program can shed light on the challenges they encounter.

This study aims to explore Mauritanian primary and secondary teachers' attitudes toward the bilingual education program in Mauritania and to investigate the challenges faced by teachers and students in this program.

The research questions guiding this study are:

1. What are Mauritanian teachers' attitudes toward bilingual education in Mauritania?
2. What are the challenges faced by teachers in the Mauritanian bilingual program?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teacher'Attitudes Toward Bilingual Program

Several international studies have explored teachers' attitudes toward bilingual education. These studies revealed a mixture of support, challenges, and inconsistencies in understanding the nature of the program and its main objectives. Morocco and Mauritania share a similar educational situation: both countries were colonized by France, and French is integrated into their educational systems. Additionally, both countries implemented the Arabization policy for a period of time and then abandoned it. Morocco's educational system combines traditional Quranic and modern pre-primary education, focusing more on religious Arabic linguistic knowledge in Quranic education and on Arabic, French, and civics in modern pre-primary school. Pupils are introduced to a first foreign language, which is French (Llorent-Bedmar, 2014). The evolution of French in Moroccan education has repeatedly changed over time (Bahmad & Lemssiah, 2024).

Similar to Mauritania, The United States is a multilingual country and adopts a bilingual education program. American teachers' attitudes towards the program are divided; some teachers highlight the importance of using mother tongues to deliver instructions (Peron, 2022). Nevertheless, other American teachers have positive attitudes towards the program. They acknowledge the cognitive and cultural benefits of bilingualism in America. Pontier and Ortega (2021) also pointed out this contradiction. They found that some teachers do support the program's ideology, but their classroom practices often reflect their preference for using the dominant language (English).

Studies in China present a positive picture. Chinese teachers value the program and find it beneficial. Nevertheless, teachers expressed concerns about the way the program is implemented (Lui & Chong, 2023; Wang, 2021).

In Turkey, teachers recognize the value of bilingual programs, but they reported that the program lacks the necessary teacher training to adequately implement it (Öztürk, Müller & Brown, 2023). Moreover, the study by Dikiltaş et al. (2023) revealed teachers' support for translanguaging in preschool classrooms, viewing it as beneficial.

Not very far from Turkey, primary school teachers in Saudi Arabia appreciate the role of bilingual programs, but they reported that they struggle with integrating creativity into the teaching process due to weak pedagogical training.

In Thailand, the study by Yeh (2023) reported that the program is not clearly defined in the country, which has led to fragmented and inconsistent practices among teachers. Similarly, Oh and Mancilla-Martinez (2021) found that teachers who clearly understand the program and value it believe that the program is very beneficial to students in their academic achievements, whereas those who hold negative views toward the program see that its contribution to academic success is low.

The reforms have caused the Mauritanian program to fall short of achieving any noticeable success in Mauritanian education (Mohamed Ahmed, 2021).

Based on the previously mentioned findings, it could be said that Mauritanian teachers who have low expectations about the bilingual education program are more likely to face challenges in achieving successful outcomes in their teaching. This pessimistic outlook may limit their ability to effectively implement the program and support their students' learning. Overcoming these low expectations and adopting a more positive attitude towards the program could potentially lead to better teaching experiences and improved student achievements.

Teachers' willingness and involvement in helping their students understand the content taught in foreign languages, which are very different from their mother tongues, is crucial for the successful implementation of a bilingual program. The level of students' engagement in the educational program highly depends on the teachers' teaching methods and class planning. If the teacher views the program negatively, there will not be any improvement in the students' levels.

Challenges in Bilingual Education Programs

The 1999 Mauritanian bilingual program reform copied preexisting models, but its effectiveness has been more negative than positive on Mauritanian students. It is worth mentioning that Mauritania's education system has gone through mainly 6 reforms since gaining independence. 1959, 1967, 1973, 1979, 1999 (Ould Zein 2010). A new reform was implemented 2022 (Mauritanian News Agency). The pre 2022 reforms often focused solely on one language or resulted in a divide between Arabic and French schools. Figure 1 demonstrates the program historical timeline.

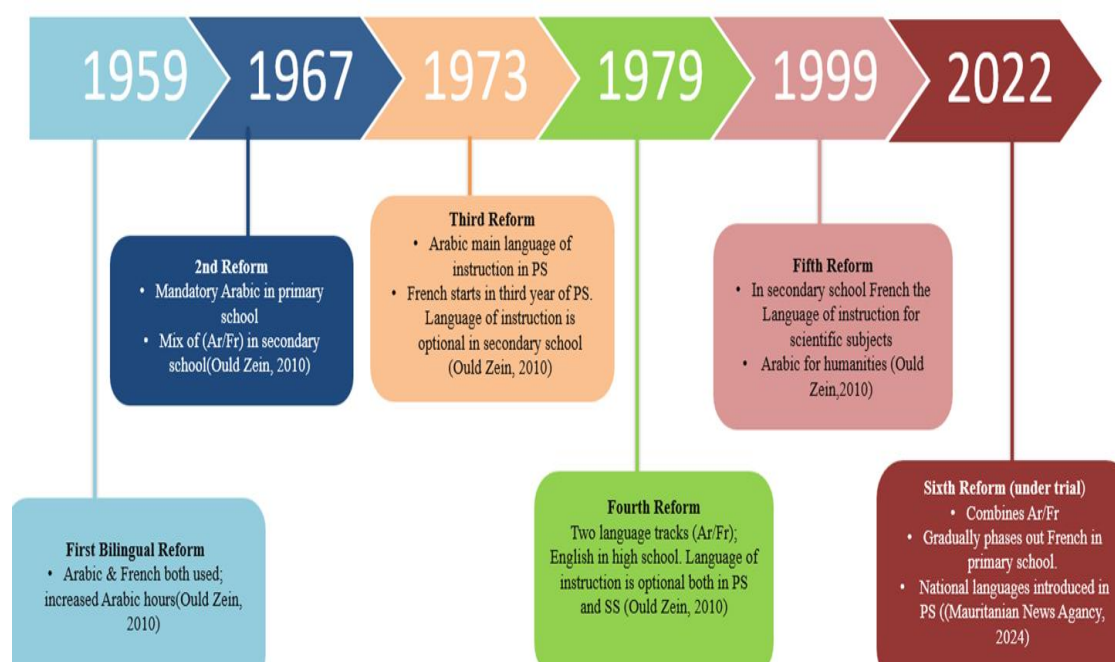


Figure 1: Mauritanian Bilingual Education Reforms

Moreover, the absence of comprehensive reforms worsened the situation, leading to fewer graduates proficient in either language or advanced studies (Al Hassad, 2010).

Dual language educational programs, a variety of bilingual programs, have proven to be effective for both native English speakers and English language learners. However, multiple challenges have hindered the quality of dual language program implementation. These challenges include issues related to the program design, curriculum accountability, and the instruction provided by teachers. Other challenges are caused by the lack of development in bilingual programs (Lindholm-Leary, 2012).

In Indonesia, a qualitative study conducted by Lee (2024) identified several challenges in the bilingual program. The study found insufficient teacher training readiness and a lack of support from the school administration and families. These challenges have a negative impact on students' language development. In the United States, the main challenges reported by Najarro (2023) were financial problems, like the cost of teacher training, and linguistic barriers, as the curriculums are originally designed for monolingual English native speakers; therefore, teachers who are not native English speakers face challenges adapting to the program.

In Mauritania, the challenges faced with bilingual programs focus more on the financial and the economic aspects. Such challenges especially with regards to the salaries of teachers and the educational infrastructure influences the quality of public education. (Zaid, 2019)

Education in Mauritania has evolved through various phases and changes, but these changes have not been of much help to the students of Mauritania as there are issues regarding proper enforcement of the language policies in the education system. Such ineffectiveness is manifested in the dismal performance of Mauritanian students in the national exams and competitions. While it is true that primary education is made available at no cost, the authorities of Mauritania are unable to furnish financial resources to educate children over 14 years. As a result, the rate of education falls for children in this age bracket whereby parents are unable to provide for the schooling costs. Adult illiteracy rate in Mauritania is rather worrying with the figure reaching 60.1% in year 2000 and women constituting a major percentage of the illiterate people (Jarrah, 2023).

The use of French alongside with Standard Arabic in schools in Mauritania is part of a controversy in the education system. Many Mauritaniais oppose the introduction of French quite simply because they feel it is the language of the colonizers and some Mauritaniais do not consider it as a national language. But in turn other Mauritaniais consider it important because it is a language spoken at a high level in Africa, especially in business and administrative matters.

Bilingual education can offer significant benefits. In today's world, knowing foreign languages has become increasingly essential for many people (Veliyeva, 2015). Veliyeva highlighted the challenges that learners might encounter when trying to master a second language. To address these difficulties and support students' language development, it is important to provide appropriate resources and support within bilingual education programs.

In the environment of Mauritania in which French is considered mostly a foreign language by the students, there are embedded numerous hurdles in the psychology of learning French. These obstacles relate to the gap between the French language and the students' native languages. Given what we know from Veliyeva (2015) that a systematic and ordered approach to bilingual education is necessary. The pressing nature of this psychological challenge is clear. Psychological issues need to be considered in implementing bilingual education, and the learning process should be adapted according to students' psychological characteristics of different ages in the case of Mauritania.

Porter, Cano, and Umansky (2023) discuss the challenges in providing comprehensive bilingual education services for English learners (EL)-classified students. They propose incremental policy actions at federal, state, and local levels to promote bilingual education as the standard for EL-classified students in the United States of America. They encourage the government to invest in a multilingual educator workforce and provide guidance for high-quality bilingual education programs. According to Porter, Cano, & Umansky (2023), state governments can support multilingual educators and assist local education agencies in developing effective bilingual education programs. They suggested that local agencies are urged to collaborate with other entities to support multilingual educators and prioritize linguistically diverse students and families.

Similar to the recommendations by Cano & Umansky (2023), Mauritanian teachers require government support to improve bilingual program effectiveness. Equally, the Mauritanian government must support bilingual teachers, whom it considers leading players in overcoming the obstacles facing these programs. In addition, cooperation with foreign agencies would provide resources and expertise on how best to teach bilingualism in Mauritania. Supporting and partnership with external entities will indeed help the Mauritanian government to know the areas of their need as well as the areas where their support can contribute to the success and sustainability of bilingual programs in their country.

Gap in the literature

By investigating Mauritanian primary and secondary school teachers' attitudes towards the program and the challenges they face, this study makes a novel contribution to the educational field as, to the best of our knowledge, no previous studies have tackled this issue. Therefore, this research has the potential to contribute new knowledge to the field of bilingual education.

METHOD

The study employs a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a more illustrative and comprehensive understanding of the topic. Purposive sampling was used to selectively choose primary and secondary teachers, as well as inspectors, who are directly involved in bilingual education. This study used Excel to analyze quantitative data. Therefore, figures and percentages were used to show the findings. To collect the data, a digital Google Form questionnaire (Structured questionnaire) was oriented to Mauritanian primary and secondary teachers. Qualitative data were collected through online interviews conducted via WhatsApp calls. The questions in the form were written in English, and they were

translated into Arabic and French as well to facilitate understanding of the questions. The questionnaire and the interview guide included 2 main sections. The first section included a description of the questionnaire and its aims while the second question included 12 items. The first section of the questionnaire and the interview guide contains five items focuses on obtaining informed consent from participants and collecting basic biographical data. These items include questions about the teachers' gender, their teaching level (primary or secondary), the name of the school they teach in, and the language(s) they primarily teach with. This leads to the second section of the questionnaire and the interview guide, with eight close ended questions aimed to measure the research objectives. These questions are designed to investigate Mauritanian teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness of current bilingual education programs, the level of student engagement in these programs, the adequacy of provided resources, and the challenges encountered in implementing bilingual education.

Demographic information is presented in the following tables (1; 2; 3; 4; 5, 6):

Questionnaire Participants

Table 1: Gender

Male	Female
54	49

Table 2: Teaching level

Primary Level	Secondary Level
53	50

Table 3: Teaching Language

Standard Arabic	29
French	33
English	16
Bilingual (Arabic & French)	25

Interview Participants

Table 1: Gender

Male	Female
3	3

Table 2: Teaching level

Primary Level	Secondary Level
3	3

Table 3: Teaching Language

Standard Arabic	1
French	2
English	2
Bilingual (Arabic & French)	1

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Mauritanian teachers' attitudes toward bilingual education programs

The majority of teachers find the current bilingual education to be ineffective as Figure 2 demonstrates:

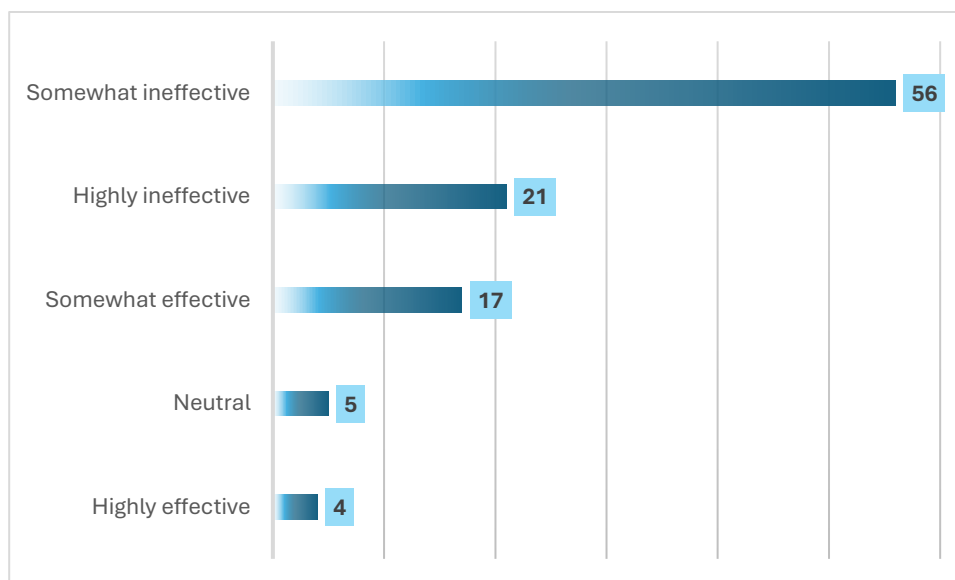


Figure 2: Teachers' perceptions of the bilingual program effectiveness

The results of the study revealed that a good percentage of respondents view the current program for bilingual education in Mauritania as not effective. More specifically, 54.4% feel that it is somewhat not effective and 20.4% feel that it is highly not effective. A smaller percentage, 16.5% of teachers, find the program somewhat effective.

1.1. Mauritanian students' level of engagement in the bilingual program

The level of Mauritanian students' engagement in the Mauritanian bilingual program is considered to be low as Figure 3 illustrates:

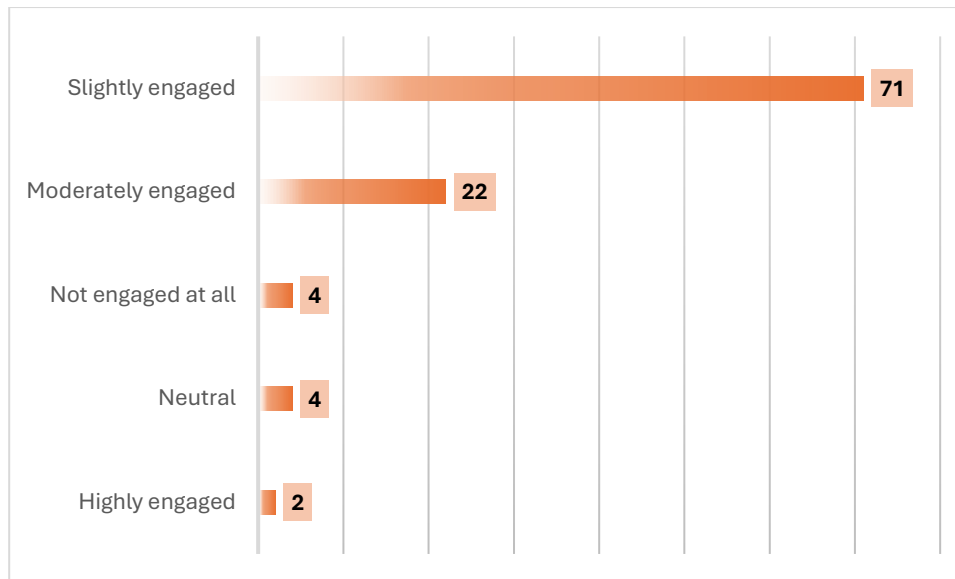


Figure 3: Teachers' perceptions of students' engagement in the bilingual program

The study found that student engagement in Mauritania's bilingual education program varies. Most teachers (68.9%) reported low levels of engagement, while 21.4% reported moderate engagement. Only a small percentage (1.9%) of teachers observed high levels of engagement.

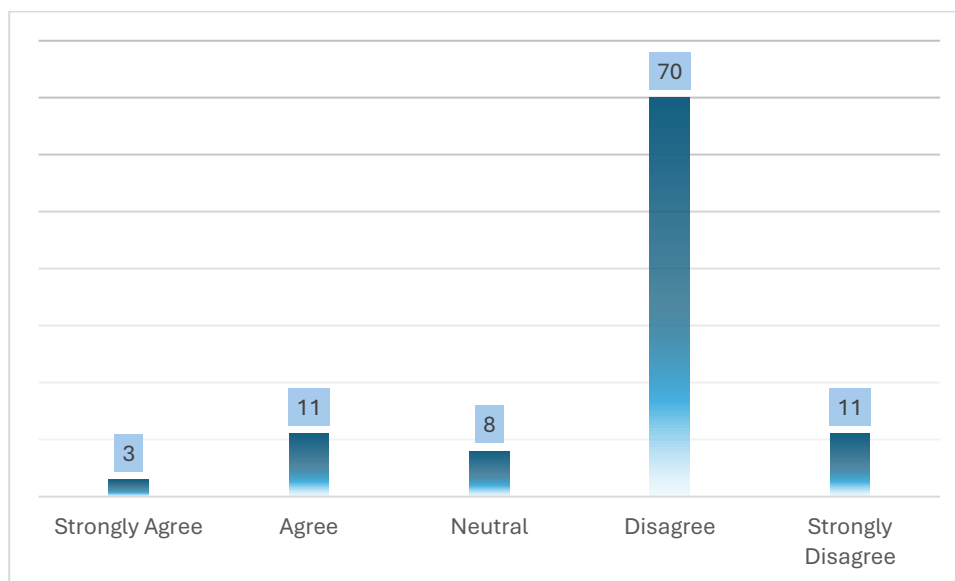


Figure 4: Teacher perceptions of the statement: "The current bilingual education program adequately prepares students for future academic and professional endeavors."

The majority of teachers (68%) disagree with the statement: "The current bilingual education program adequately prepares students for future academic and professional endeavors". 10.7% of the participants strongly disagree with the statement. It is worth mentioning that 10.7% of participants agree that the current bilingual program prepares students for future academic and professional achievements.

Interviews findings

Theme 1: Teacher Perceptions of Policy Instability and Poor Implementation of the Program

Most participants expressed that the policy of the program is conceptually positive, but it lacks adequate implementation and management.

Interviewee 2 (Inspector and former primary teacher) answered the question, "What is your opinion regarding the effectiveness of the current bilingual education program in Mauritania?" by saying:

"It was meant to be a good program...[but] it is an unstable program...The government changes its decisions from time to time."

Theme 2: Mixed Attitudes Towards the Program Effectiveness

Interviewee 1 (Secondary school teacher) answered the same question by saying:

"The program is... facing struggles and problems, but it is going on the right path."

Interviewee 5 (Secondary school teacher) also stated:

"The program is failing. The students I'm teaching don't have any foundational knowledge."

These contrasting opinions reflect teachers' divided perceptions of the program's effectiveness.

Theme 3: Teacher Perceptions of Student Engagement in the Program

Interviewee 3 (Primary school teacher) answered to the question "How do you perceive the level of engagement of students in the current bilingual education program?" by saying:

"It is a bit hard to ask a primary school student to be fluent in two languages."

"Some students benefit... while others benefit less depending on their environment."

Some teachers stated that students' success and engagement in the program is highly related to their family background and the support they receive outside of school.

Interviewee 4 (Primary teacher): "One group has a good level... comes from somewhat educated families... The other group is very weak."

Theme 4: Teacher Perceptions of Student Preparedness in the Current Bilingual Program for Future Academic and Professional endeavors

Interviewee 6 (Secondary school teacher) replied to the question: "In your opinion, does the current bilingual education program adequately prepare students for future academic or professional endeavors?" by saying:

"In fact, no. I don't think so because as I said the results of the program show that students are weak and this is probably because of the way the program is...[inaudible]."

Interviewee 5 a secondary school teacher answered the same question by saying:

"Not at all, because they have this language barrier. You know that for higher education, you will need foreign languages. In Mauritania, we consider Arabic to be the official and national language this implies that we should have a language to be open to the outside world. I believe that this language, even if it's not French, is definitely English, so that students would evolve more. I noticed that the main issue is that students are not learning an openness language with which they would continue their higher education."

2. Challenges facing Mauritanian bilingual education program

The primary challenges facing bilingual education in Mauritania include a lack of adequate teacher training, professional development limited availability of teaching materials, etc. as illustrated by Figure 5:

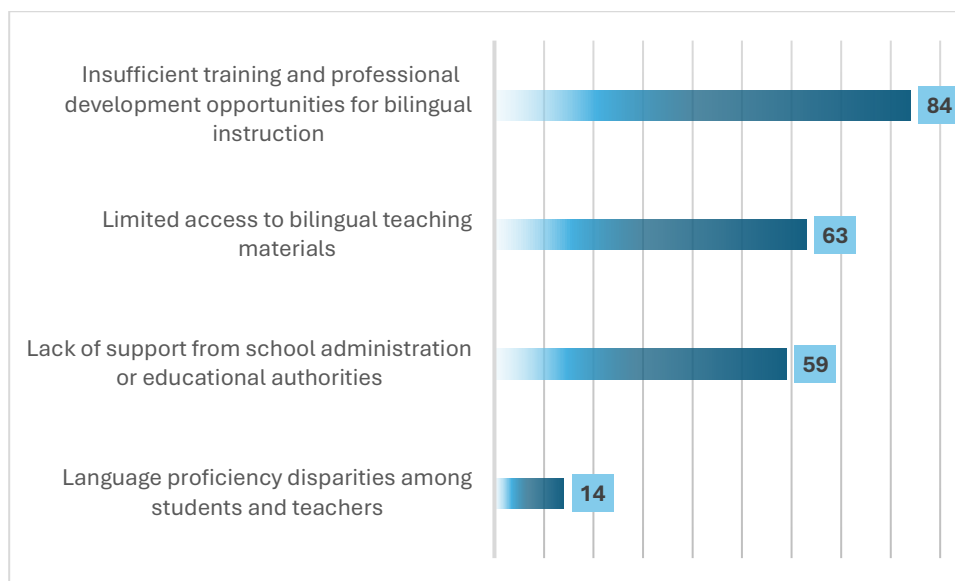


Figure 5: Teacher's perceptions of the challenges in Mauritanian bilingual program

The study found that the most significant challenge in Mauritania's bilingual education program, according to 81.6% of respondents, is the lack of adequate training and professional development for bilingual teachers. Additionally, 61.2% highlighted the limited availability of teaching materials, and 57.3% identified a lack of support from school administrations and educational authorities. Language proficiency disparities between students and teachers were identified as the main challenge by only 13.6% of respondents.

Interviews findings

The interview results indicated comparable findings; the interviewed teachers commonly observe that the primary challenges facing teachers in this program include inadequate teacher training and the lack of teaching resources provided by the government, resulting in low levels of both teachers and students.

The infrastructure and the resources provided to support the implementation of bilingual education in Mauritania are perceived to be the main challenges faced by teachers as Figure 6 demonstrates:

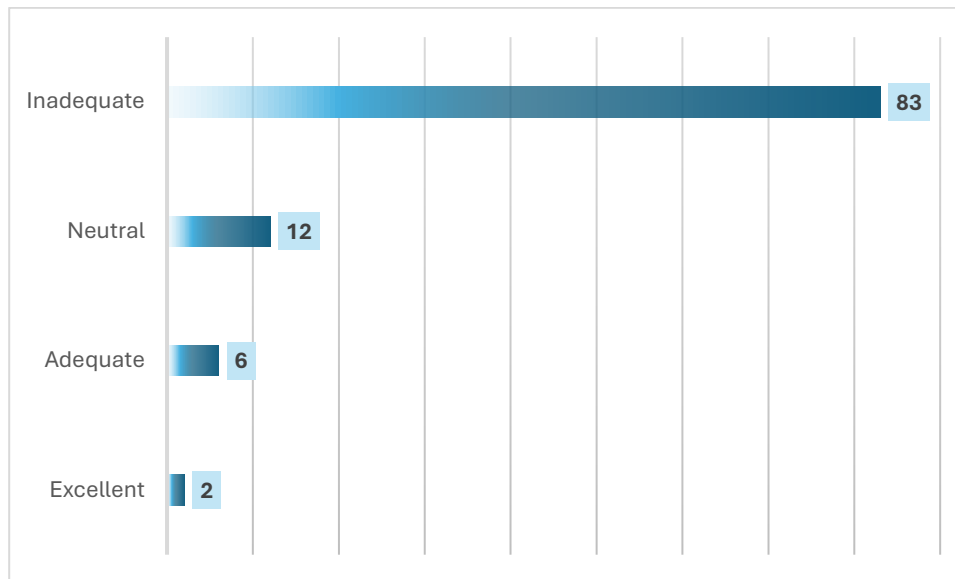


Figure 6: Teacher's perceptions of the adequacy of infrastructure and resources provided to support bilingual program

The study reveals that 80.6% of respondents perceive the infrastructure and resources provided to support bilingual education in Mauritania as inadequate. A minority, specifically 11.7%, provided neutral responses. Merely 5.8% of respondents believe that the infrastructure and resources are adequate. Only 1.9% rated them as excellent.

Theme 1: Lack of Resources and Infrastructure

Teachers' pointer out the lack of important resources such as teaching materials, classrooms with enough space and appropriate funding as the main challenges they face in the program

Interviewee 2 (Inspector and former primary teacher) answered the question "From your prospective, what is the most significant obstacle hindering the successful implementation of the current bilingual education program in Mauritania." by saying: "The main challenge... is the overcrowded classes and lack of resources"

Interviewee 1 (Secondary teacher) answered the same question by saying:

"The resources provided are still facing some struggles."

Theme 2: Inadequate Teacher Training and Support

Teachers when answering the question about the main challenges in the successful implementation of the program emphasized on the need for teacher continuous training

Interviewee 1:

" There is a lack of training. Most teachers do not receive continuous training... Teacher training should be continuously."

Interviewee 2

" Teachers are in need of financial improvements... All these challenges put teachers in inappropriate circumstances."

This theme show the professional and motivational challenges teachers face i the program

Theme 3: Linguistic and Sociocultural Barriers

Interviewee 4 (Primary school teacher) answered the question of what are the challenges that teachers face in the program by saying:

"The main challenge is teaching this foreign language to those who not native speakers.... the majority of Mauritians are more familiar with Arabic"

"If the student isn't given enough time... and their families do not help... they will not benefit."

Interviewee 5 (Secondary teacher):

"The first one is language basics. For example, a student who finishes primary school and has a weak level in French."

This theme highlights the linguistic mismatch and the limited home support provided to the student specifically among students from Arabic-speaking backgrounds.

The present study explored Mauritanian primary and secondary teachers' attitudes towards bilingual education in Mauritania. While some teachers do acknowledge the program potential, others express some concerns about the practice of the current program. Many note that proper proficiency is indeed not attained in either of the two languages and that changes need to be made in the design and implementation of the program itself.

Teachers also blame the system and societal problems. For instance, not all students get reinforcement at home due to the lack of support from parents in rural areas. Corruption within the education system, a shortfall in training teachers, and inept inspection complete the perfect storm of system failure. Teachers on the other hand feel that bilingual education in its current form is not working as it should in theory, as the students appear not to be proficient in either language.

The dissatisfaction expressed by Mauritanian teachers with regard to the bilingual program, combined with allegedly low student engagement in class, stresses the important need for guidance and training that would provide adequate preparation for such programs. In addition, their doubts as to the program's contribution to students' future academic and professional achievements point to an issue to be seriously considered. This dissatisfaction and lack of confidence in the program's effectiveness affect not only the morale of the teachers but also raise a red flag in concern for the students' educational outcomes and their long-term success. Therefore, more attention has to be paid toward training teachers with clear guidelines and support mechanisms in place to ensure a response to such concerns, therefore enhancing the effectiveness of bilingual education initiatives in Mauritania.

In sum Mauritanian primary and secondary teachers' attitudes are commonly negative as the majority perceive it as ineffective in improving students' academic achievement and their learning outcomes.

The challenges in bilingual education in Mauritania are numerous. The first challenge is the actual state of teacher training and professional development courses, which is in a weak state. If teachers are not trained, they will not be able to provide efficient bilingual education; once again, this might create a negative effect on the quality of instruction and learning of the students. This kind of training would furthermore be complemented by the availability of teaching materials which is very crucial to offer general and interesting lessons to students.

The weak infrastructure and teaching adequate resources create a serious challenge in front of teachers and in front of the effective implementation of bilingual education in Mauritania. Another main challenge that educators' face is the inability to get a sufficient number of qualified teachers proficient in both languages required for bilingual instruction.

Concerns expressed by teachers about salary and educational infrastructure have been cited by Zaid (2019). These correspond to the results that were presented earlier in this paper, as poor financing and infrastructure were listed as the main challenges to the realization of bilingual education programs. The

discontent exhibited by the Independent Union for Secondary Education shows how far-reaching these challenges are. Teachers protests and demands to raise their salaries is clear evidence to this challenge.

This is strongly related to Lindhom-Leary 2012 argument that bilingual programs have proven to be effective. However, there are many challenges in these programs. These challenges according to Lindhom-Leary include the inadequate design of the program itself, curriculum accountability, and the instruction provided by teachers. It can be then concluded that the context where the program is applied give a better understanding to the nature of these challenges. For instance, the fact that financial challenges might not cause a big problem in developed countries who adopt this program, but the other hand they are very present in the Mauritanian contexts and that is due to the economic situation of the under-developed country.

CONCLUSION

The insights provided by teachers highlight the complexities and challenges within the Mauritanian education system, particularly regarding bilingual education. While the concept of bilingual education holds promise in theory, the practical implementation falls short of expectations. The findings indicate that students are not achieving fluency in both Arabic and French, suggesting a need for significant improvements in the program's design and execution.

Moreover, the broader issues within the education system, such as lack of teacher training, inadequate resources, and corruption, exacerbate the challenges faced by both educators and students. Without addressing these underlying issues, the potential benefits of bilingual education remain unrealized.

Implications:

Based on the findings, several strategies need to be implemented to address the challenges in the education system:

Conduct comprehensive research: Conduct in-depth research to assess the effectiveness of the bilingual program and identify specific areas for improvement.

Invest in teacher training: Provide teachers with continuous professional development to enhance their skills in language instruction, classroom management, and technology integration.

Equip teachers with technology: Provide teachers with access to technological tools to support their teaching efforts and promote innovative learning experiences.

Increase teacher salaries: Implement policies to increase teacher salaries and improve working conditions, attracting and retaining qualified educators.

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