

Amazigh Language in Education Policy and Planning in Morocco: Effects of the Gap between Macro and Micro Levels of Planning



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ABSTRACT: It has been almost two decades now since the Amazigh language has been integrated in the Moroccan education system. Morocco decided, after the King Mohammed the sixth famous speech in Ajdir in 2001, to make Amazigh language officially taught in Moroccan schools. Amazigh language started as a school subject in 317 primary schools in 2003, with the hope of covering all the Moroccan schools in 2010. However, the reality nowadays is completely the opposite. Even after another decade Amazigh language covers only 5% of Moroccan schools. This state of fact shows that there is a wide gap between official discourse at the macro level about the Amazigh educational policy and the implementation of this policy at the micro level. The objective of this paper is to investigate the manifestations and effects of the gap between macro and micro levels of language policy and planning concerning Amazigh language in Moroccan education system. The central questions that this paper is trying to answer are the following: i) how is the gap between macro and micro levels of language policy manifested in the Amazigh education policy? ii) How does this gap affect the status of the Amazigh language in Moroccan primary schools? To achieve the focal objective and answer the central questions of this paper, first we will analyze the vision of the policymakers at the macro level to enact the full integration of the Amazigh language in Moroccan schools. Second, to tackle the implementation part of the Amazigh education policy at the micro level, a questionnaire is addressed to Amazigh language teachers at primary schools. The focus of the questionnaire is twofold: a) have a clear image of the situation of Amazigh language at the micro level. b) Derive the challenges that hamper the implementation of the macro level policies at the micro level.

KEYWORDS: Amazigh language, education policy, macro planning, micro planning, teachers.

INTRODUCTION

Amazigh integration in the Moroccan education sector has been launched since 2003. This initiative is characterized by a very slow progress given the current situation of teaching Amazigh language and the number of hindrances and obstacles that block its overall objective to cover all Moroccan schools. According to the last statistics released by the Ministry of Education, up to April 2021, Amazigh language is taught only to 20% of primary school students, which equals approximately 500¹ thousands of Moroccan students studying in primary schools. This number represents only 5% of the whole number of students enrolled in the three levels in Moroccan schools. Therefore, covering all the three levels seems to be a challenging task.

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the status of teaching Amazigh in Moroccan schools. Specifically, it tries to shed light on education policy and planning at the macro level and its realization and implementation at the micro level. The main focus is to prove that the current situation of the Amazigh language in Moroccan schools results from the gap between the macro policies designed at the central level and their implementation at the micro level.

The article is divided into two main parts: the first is theoretical, and the second is practical. The former tackles two significant points: a) new approaches in language policy and planning and b) Amazigh in Moroccan education policy. The latter part is going to discuss the status of teaching Amazigh language in Moroccan schools. The focus will be on describing the real situation of teaching Amazigh language in the Moroccan primary school. A questionnaire is addressed to more than one hundred Amazigh teachers to see the extent to which the macro policies are realized at the micro level. As well as to have a clear idea about the challenges and factors that hinder the teaching of Amazigh language, which are undermined at the macro level. In the discussion

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section, we will shed light on the manifestations of the gap between the macro policies and their implementations at the micro level and how this affects the status of teaching Amazigh.

A. New Approaches in Language Policy and Planning

The field of language policy and planning has known basic changes since its inception in the 60s of the last century. It has seen gradual change in terms of its objectives, its conceptual frameworks and methods employed by researchers to contribute in the development of the field. Ricento (2000) divided the evolution of the field into three main distinguished stages: the early stage, the intermediary stage, and the critical language policy stage. He based his account on the assumption that each stage is different from the others given the combination of three main factors, namely the macro-sociopolitical, the epistemological and the strategic. One major distinction that distinguishes the early stage from the two other subsequent ones is the emergence of other levels of planning in addition to the predominant macro level. This led to the reconsideration of the whole theory of language policy and planning, paving the way for investigating new concepts such as microplanning, local contexts and agency. In the following we will try to shed light on the characteristics of both macro and micro levels of planning, their differences and their intersections.

a. Macro language planning

According to Baldauf (2006, p.147), language planning is “normally thought of in terms of large-scale, usually national planning, often undertaken by governments and meant to influence, if not change, ways of speaking or literacy practices within a society.” It includes four major types of planning: status planning, corpus planning, language in education planning, and prestige planning. This account represents the macro approach to language policy and planning because it is a deliberate planning designed by decision makers at the central or governmental level and issued for implementation in other sub levels. It entails a top-down exercising of power.

The focus of macro language planning was driven by the confluence of three main factors that were predominant in the early language planning stage. The first is related to the independence of many countries and their desire to build up new states. The second is represented in the predominance of structuralism as a paradigm of research in social sciences. The third factor has to do with the spread of the belief that planning could help to solve the language problems faced by the newly independent states, as most of them are characterized by the existence of many languages within their borders (Ricento, 2000, p.197).

Based on the previous analyses provided by the leading figures in the early language planning period (Fishman, Ferguson, Das Gupta 1968; Rubin and Jernud 1971; Haugen 1966) and on more recent critical discussions (Tollefson 1991; Pennycook 1994), Ricento (2000, p.199) summarized the work in this period in terms of four major points:

1. The goals of language planning were often associated with a desire for unification (of a region, a nation, a religious group, a political group or other kinds of groups), a desire for modernization, a desire for efficiency, or a desire for democratization;
2. Language was characterized with a resource with value, and as such, was subject to planning;
3. Status and corpus planning were viewed as ideologically neutral (although not without complications);
4. Languages were abstracted from their sociohistorical and ecological contexts (ahistoricity and synchrony). (Ricento, 2000, pp.199-200)

These characteristics reveal that early language planning is based on a number of premises. First, it consolidates a monoglossic language policy, which is based on the ideology of one nation one language. Ricento (2000, p.198) showed that during this era great emphasis in status planning was devoted to the selection of a national language for both nation building and modernization. Western sociolinguists supported the idea that there should be two poles in the linguistic market in terms of language use. The major European languages (English or French) ought to be utilized in formal and specialized domains while the local (indigenous) languages in informal domains. This policy is widely applied in many African states after the independence. It is referred to in the linguistic literature as diglossia (Ferguson, 1959).

Second, according to Ricento (2000,p.198), the widely held view among western sociolinguists that linguistic diversity hinders national development while linguistic homogeneity is linked to modernization and westernization played a significant role to shape the field of LPP in the early period. The new states' aspiration to build up successful nations depends on three main conditions. The first is related to establishing unity among the different groups of a state, especially at the cultural and ethnic level. Second, the citizens of the state should share or have in common a linguistic identity. Third, the language that is selected for a nation should be a 'developed' one. That is to say, a national language should be written, standardized, and able to respond to the requirements of technological and social advancement. Seeking linguistic and political unity lead to undermining many local dialects. They were degraded and considered 'undeveloped'. So, their use is limited to less prestigious and informal contexts.

Third, this approach is considered non-political. Its overall objective is to solve language problems of the new states. It considers language as a “subject to planning because it is a resource that is and can be valued”, as stated below in a definition provided by Das Gupta and Jernud in 1971 in their widely influential book in the history of language planning:

This paper outlines an approach to language planning as decision making. We do not define planning as an idealistic and exclusively linguistic activity but as a political and administrative activity for solving language problems in society. Public

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planning, that is, orderly decision making about language on a national level, is motivated by public effects of some language problems and by the social context. We maintain that language is subject to planning because it is a resource that is and can be valued. Aspects of language code and language use can be changed to better correspond to the goals of society. (Jernud & Das Gupta, 1971, cited in Nekvapil, 2011, pp.875-876)

Based on the definition above, Nekvapil (2011) notes “that it was economic thinking that was influential”. The ultimate goal of solving language problems was to help the developing nations to have economic prosperity. Planning was depicted as a series of rational steps (fact-finding; planning goals; strategies and outcomes; implementation; and feedback), conducted in “concrete social contexts”, often in “situations of limited material and human resources”.

Moreover, Nekvapil (2011, p.876) reveals that another basic premise of classic language planning is that language planning takes place at the macro level and the plans are implemented at the other levels for the sake of promoting the development of the whole society. The intended goals are designed at the state (or government) and it is considered the sole actor.

b. Micro language planning

The appearance of micro language planning and recognition of its role in language planning was in 1990s (Liddicoat and Leech, 2014, p.1). This recognition was the outcome of the development in the theory of language planning represented in the shift from the positivist paradigm to the critical approach to language planning. This shift led to the reconsideration and rethinking of two major points: the first is that language planning does not occur only at the macro level, but also in the meso and micro levels; the second is related to the notion of agency. This means that addition of other levels of planning entails reinvestigation of the agents who has power to impact change in these micro language policy and planning contexts (Baldauf, 2006, p.147).

Liddicoat and Baldauf (2008, p.3) revealed that the definition provided in the literature for language planning consolidates only the macro-level planning, whereas it ignores the micro-level one. They stated that “most definitions of language planning presuppose deliberate planning by an organized body enjoying either legal or moral authority such as government agency, commission or academy”. This “legal or moral authority” belongs normally to macro-level institutions run by nation-states. This approach to language planning stresses that research should be conducted under a framework which views power as a top down process. In this concern, such view of power is believed to be central for “understanding decision making about language”. Liddicoat and Baldauf criticized how this view of power acts as a “delimiting agent for constituting the focus of language planning research”. They consider this fact as problematic for a number of reasons.

First, “deliberate planning of language issues” entails a direct causal relationship between the decisions undertaken at the macro level and the results of language planning. Liddicoat and Baldauf (2008, p.4) contends that this point is questionable because it does not provide for other factors that are independent of the decisions made at the central level such as whether the plan itself is accepted by society or not and the unclear nature of the results of language planning. These outcomes are not necessarily caused by the deliberate planning but they may be due to unplanned language planning activities. Therefore, delimiting the scope of language planning only in terms of deliberate planning is not practical to grasp the realities of language planning. Macro level plans implementation is more dependent on the role of the “local contextual agents”, as they have impact on “how macro-level plans function and the outcomes that they achieve”.

The second reason has to do with its view toward the notion of power. It does not tackle in detail the application of power in speech communities and how it is produced in issues of language. According to Liddicoat and Baldauf (2008, p.4) “all social groups involve technologies of power through which the actions of social agents are shaped”. This means that power has a great impact on behaviours of people in society through different power mechanisms. They assume that the concept of power should be broadened to encompass not only “the ability to dominate but also the ability to shape behaviour of others”. Therefore, power should not be viewed as a sort of imposing certain norms on people but as ways of making them “act on their own volition in particular ways”. In this way power plays a fundamental role in shaping people’s behaviours through “subtle operations on their choices”, but not through enforcement and coercion dictated by the power of institutions. Liddicoat and Baldauf (2008, p.4) referred to Carspecken’s (1996) strategies- *charm* and *contractual power*- as examples of these subtle operations required in this new approach to power. *Charm* is defined as “the ability to use culturally understood identity claims and norms to gain the trust and loyalty of others”, while *contractual power* is depicted as “an agreement specifying reciprocal obligations between parties”. Macro-level planning hence is inadequate to account for the complex nature of language related processes under a more deepen approach to power.

The points discussed above highlight that language planning at the micro or local level is a very essential segment of the whole language planning process. It deserves ample investigation in two ways: first, in relation to the implementation of the macro-level planning; second, as an area of research of its own (ibid).

The shift of focus in language planning from the macro to the local levels of planning is informed by two main major points. On the one hand, it comes as a result of the new tendency calling for “democratisation of decision-making in social sciences in general which recognizes the impact of power asymmetries on policy outcomes”. The call for democratisation of decision-making results from the fact that national-level power structures lost legitimacy in local contexts. The latter’s needs cannot be remedied by the

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decisions taken at the central level, but by ones that are local in nature. The second informant of this shift to the micro-level planning stems from the perspective of devolution. For instance, in education, local communities are in charge of the whole part of the decision-making (ibid).

c. Agency in Language planning

The notion of agency is central in the dichotomy of macro vs. micro levels of language policy and planning. The agents at the macro level are often represented by the decision makers who belong to government institutions but at micro level they differ from one context or domain to another. Harmman (1999, cited in Liddicoat and Baldauf, 2008, p.5) assumes that micro level approach encompasses a variety and a large number of agents within the speech community due to the diversity of potential groups need to engage in language such as “a local committee deciding to use sign language interpreters, interest groups disseminating their material in multiple languages, or workplaces with multilingual populations”. In addition, Spolsky (2004, 2009) talked about agents as belonging to different domains of language policy. These domains range from micro level (families, schools, religious organisations, the workplace, local government) to the macro level (supra-national groupings, and politics).

d. Micro language planning agents

Based on Harmman (1990), Liddicoat and Baldauf (2008, p.5) notes that there are three well-documented agentive groups at the micro level: first, individuals and small groups of individuals are the main agents of language planning at the very micro level. They provided a range of examples for this category. For instance, Eliezer Ben-Yahuda’s impact on the revival of Hebrew is a very popular one. His outstanding triumph to make his son to be first-language speaker of Hebrew alongside developing many new lexical items are often considered the first steps in the revival of Hebrew.

The second category of agents in micro language planning is represented by cases where the work of language planning is done not by a single individual; it is the outcome of successive efforts of individuals. This category is exemplified by the revival of Cornish. Liddicoat and Baldauf (2008, p.5) revealed that Henry Jenner (1904) paved the way for other linguists to contribute in the revival of Hebrew. His book the Handbook of Cornish Language (1904), in which he set up a standardized spelling and grammar for Cornish, is a fundamental reference on which others depended such as Morton Nance to come up with a more developed form of Cornish.

The third category of agents which has been proved to play key role in local language planning for communities is organisations. Liddicoat and Baldauf (2008, pp.6-8) divides these organisations into different types according to their general objectives and focuses. The first type that was mentioned is literature oriented institutions. However, they do not focus on language, but they have a heavy impact on shaping languages and language use (e.g Society for Frisian Language and Literature). The second type is organizations which target from a broad perspective language and culture maintenance. Religious bodies such as protestant missionaries in the nineteenth century, as well, are considered language planning agents. Last but not least, local education community groups are also included within the list of agents who play a fundamental role in micro language planning. The purpose of these groups is usually to remedy prevalent in “mainstream provision” or to stand against the discrimination consolidated by the macro language planning policies.

The objective of this section has been to highlight that agency in language planning is not restricted to “government bodies”, but there exist other agents at the micro level. The latter play a primordial role in the implementation of the macro policies. This state of fact necessitates a change in our view of power from a top-down perspective into a participatory one. Macro level policies success depends much more on a “distributed relationship of power”, not on coercion, enforcement and political dominance. The different agents discussed above imply that “in some cases, the power involved is that of a charismatic individual or group that affects opinions of those around them and in so doing affects their actions and behaviours...” (Liddicoat and Baldauf, 2008, p.9).

e. The interaction of the macro and the micro levels of language planning

Liddicoat and Baldauf (2008, pp.10-11) argue that, however there are many differences between macro and micro levels of planning as has been shown in the sections above, but in reality it is difficult to distinguish between the two. They note that what takes place in many local sites is associated to the macro level. The interactions between levels are complex. They revealed that “the interactions between the micro and the macro, between the local and the national can operate in different directions”. This implies significant major points: on the one hand, micro language planning activities can have an effect on macro decision making. For instance, the case of Frisian shows that gaining an official status in Netherlands is in part the result of efforts of “local groups of enthusiasts” who took the initiative Frisian language planning at different local levels. Such efforts are represented in creating the linguistic resources of Frisian and establishing its prestige within the local communities. Such this initiative does not happen in a vacuum. It is true that it takes place within the local ecology of the language, but these local ecologies is part of and affected by the broader ecologies. On the other hand, macro language planning decisions implementation at local contexts depend on local conditions. A macro- level institution can set the guidelines and expectations of how languages are used in the local communities, but the way this is put into practice relies on decisions taken at other levels. The nature of the local context usually affects the macro-level policy. It cannot be implemented directly without modifications dictated by needs of the local context.

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B. Amazigh language in the Moroccan education policy

The status of the Amazigh language in the Moroccan education policy can be characterized in terms of two different phases. The first phase dates from 2003 until the official constitutionalisation of the language in 2011 and the second phase lasts from 2012 up to now. In the following, we will try to discover the characteristics of each period and analyse it.

a. From 2003 to 2011

This period is marked by the issuance of ministry circulars targeting different aspects of the integration of the Amazigh language in the Moroccan schools. The Ministry of Education issued almost eight circulars during this period. The first one was in 2003 and the last was in 2008. These circulars address three main aspects: integrate the Amazigh language in the education system, provide training for teachers, and establish the main guidelines to make the Amazigh language cover all the Moroccan schools.

The overall objectives of these circulars are culminated in the last one issued by the Ministry of Education on 26th September 2008. It sets the general guidelines for the generalisation of teaching Amazigh in Moroccan primary schools. It presents a set of procedures and measures to be enacted at the central, regional, provincial, and local levels.

On the one hand, at the central level, two measures should be taken. First, activate the joint commission that is in charge of coordination between the Ministry of Education and IRCAM. Second, all the directorates will work on developing their perceptions, plans and administrative procedures, which would contribute generalizing the teaching of Amazigh language in primary schools, in terms of the curriculum, textbooks, pre and in-service trainings, and evaluation of the progress of teaching of the Language.

On the other hand, at regional, provincial and local levels, committees will be set up to take charge, monitor, evaluate, coordinate, organize continuous trainings and ensure the acceleration of the generalization process. These committees, as well, prepare reports and hold meetings to discuss the problems related to the teaching of Amazigh language to take immediate decisions to solve these problems.

In addition, according to the circular, a number of other measures and procedures should be put into action to facilitate the generalisation of teaching Amazigh language. a) Enhance the spread of teaching Amazigh language to cover private primary schools. b) Provide professional teaching trainings for private school teachers similar to their counterparts in public schools. c) Nominate qualified teachers to teach Amazigh language taking into consideration the number of classes; if it is less than eight classes, the teachers can work in more than one school. d) Ensure that Amazigh language supervisors and teachers work the same number of hours as the teachers and supervisors of other subjects. e) Organise training workshops in Amazigh language for the administrative staff in parallel with the workshops designed for Amazigh teachers. f) Organise at least three training sessions every year for the Amazigh teachers. Each session lasts at least five days. g) Organise training sessions for the regional, provincial and local committees to allow them to monitor and track the generalisation plan to teaching Amazigh.

Moreover, the directors of public and private schools are urged to put into practice a set of measures. 1) Be flexible in assigning classes to teachers. 2) Abide by the three hours allotted for teaching Amazigh language per-week, taking into consideration the specificities of each school. 3) Avoid teaching the same levels by the same teachers for a long time in order to involve all the teachers benefited from the trainings and ensure the continuity of the generalisation of teaching Amazigh vertically (new classes) and horizontally (new levels). 4) adopt the same evaluation procedures used for other school subjects to Amazigh language and ensure the performance of students is assessed taking into account all the components of and skills involved in teaching Amazi

b. From 2012 to now

This era represents the period after the constitutionalization of the Language in 2011. Theoretically speaking, the situation of teaching Amazigh language should have been improved due to the official status of the language but the reality is almost the opposite for different reasons. Lack of a political will remain the most prevalent factor. The fact that the Moroccan government was led by the Islamic party Justice and Development (PJD) for 10 years affected the process of teaching Amazigh language and its aspiration to cover the Moroccan schools. The whole status of the language was in a pending situation for eight years waiting for the publication of the Organic Law that would enact the official character of the language.

The section specified in the organic law for integration of the Amazigh language in the education sector is presented as the second one. It is composed of six articles. The aim of these articles is twofold: first, explain how Amazigh language is going to be integrated in the Moroccan education sector; second, highlight the basic principles and guidelines that underline education policy concerning the Amazigh language.

First, the Article 3 in the organic law stresses that teaching Amazigh language is meant for all Moroccans without exception. This statement goes hand in hand with the Moroccan constitution in 2011, which insisted in article 5 that Amazigh language is a common national heritage of all Moroccans. So, it is a symbol of unity not of division. In addition, teaching Amazigh to all Moroccan people implies that school will play a significant role in the protection, maintenance and spread of the language. The more it reaches many people, the more it becomes protected and accepted in society.

Second, the Article 4 stipulates that integration of the Amazigh language in the education sector will take place in a gradual manner by the coordination of ministry of education, the National Council of Languages and Culture, and High Council of Education, Training, and Scientific Research. As well, it contends that teaching Amazigh language will cover all the school levels

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starting from pre-school to high school. It is worthy noting that up to now Amazigh language coverage for all levels is still a dream even after 19 years since it has been integrated. It has not yet reached half of the Moroccan primary schools. The number of teachers recruited in the last five years is very low. It does not exceed 1000 teachers because the number of the Amazigh teachers recruited annually is less than 200 (cf. announcements by Regional Academies for Education and Training for recruiting contractual teachers in 13 January 2018 as an example). So, the number of students benefit from the teaching of Amazigh language every year is almost 500 thousand students. This number represents only 5% of the students enrolled in all the school levels.

Third, article 5 sheds light on the regional difference that distinguishes Amazigh language in Morocco. It highlights that the different Amazigh dialects can be used alongside Arabic to facilitate the teaching of some subjects in pre-school and primary school especially in Amazighophone areas. This is in fact an important step given the effect of absence of mother tongues at school on the integration of students in the teaching learning process. Amazigh children in their first contact with school, they do not speak any other language except their mother tongues. Therefore, allowing and encouraging teachers to use local varieties is of great benefit for the students and for the Amazigh language itself. When little children see their mother tongues used at school, they feel proud of them and establish a solid relation with them from early ages. Hence, the negative attitudes about mother tongues will be changed (Bouziane, 2020, p.46).

Fourth, the article 6 is devoted to discuss the status of Amazigh language in higher education. It calls for two points: creating Amazigh departments specialized in Amazigh language and culture and using Amazigh language in institutions specialized in training human resources for public administrations. It should be noted that Amazigh language nowadays is taught in four universities in Morocco: Ibn Zohr in Agadir, Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah in Fes, Mohammed the First in Ouajda and Hassan II in Casablanca. This number represents 32% of Moroccan universities which are 13 in total. The fact that Amazigh language is not a language that is necessary in the job market affects the number of students enrolling in the Amazigh departments in higher education. In order to make Amazigh studies attract more students, there should be job opportunities that require Amazigh language certificates. Nowadays, Amazigh graduates have the education sector as the only option to have a job, but it is not enough. The number of Amazigh teachers recruited annually is not enough to attract more students to choose Amazigh departments in the university.

Fifth, the article 7 and 8 focus respectively on two main points. Article 7 insists on integrating Amazigh language in literacy programs and non-formal education. Yet, article 8 is devoted for preparation of the Amazigh curriculum. It stresses that two main points should be taken into consideration while preparing the curriculum: the different regional dialects and the different material and immaterial components of Amazigh culture.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

1. Context and participants

The sample consists of 100 Amazigh primary teachers belonging to different regions in Morocco. 56.3% of the teachers belong to urban areas, 22.3% work in semi-urban places, and 21.4% are from rural areas. 78% of teachers are male whereas 22% are female. About 44.7% of teachers are between 30 and 40 years old, 43.7% are younger than 30 and 11.7% are between 40 and 60. 68% of the teachers communicated that they have bachelor degrees in Amazigh language and 32% have other certificates. This confirms the direction of the Ministry of Education concerning the human resources used to teach Amazigh language. Before 2012, all teachers of Amazigh language were just primary school teachers who became Amazigh teachers due to the trainings provided by the coordination of IRCAM and Ministry of Education starting from 2003 till 2011. But starting from the 2012, by the creation of the Regional Centers of Professions of Education and Training, the ministry employs teachers who are specialised in Amazigh language. The Ministry of Education has set new eligible conditions for becoming an Amazigh teacher. The most important of them is having a bachelor degree in Amazigh language. This fact is completely supported by the answers of the teachers concerning responses about the question related to pre-training. 96.1% assured that they have benefited from pre-training before they become teachers of Amazigh language.

2. Instrument

The questionnaire used to gather data for this study is composed of a mix set of close ended questions and open ended questions. These questions target important factors that shape the status of teaching Amazigh language at the micro level- primary schools. These factors are related to the curriculum, teachers' working conditions and trainings, teaching materials, and the parents' attitudes and beliefs about teaching Amazigh language.

3. Data collection

Gathering data for this study took almost one month. Given the fact that it targets Amazigh teachers working in different regions of Morocco, the questionnaires were distributed electronically using google documents. The teachers were contacted first using facebook, whatsapp or e-mails. After they confirm their willingness to participate in the study, the questionnaires were sent to them to be filled out and sent back.

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4. Findings

The findings of the study are organised into four main sections. The first one presents the challenges and problems that fAmazigh in primary schools. The second section investigates the treatment of Amazigh in the Moroccan education system. The third one tackles the approaches, curriculum and time allotted to teaching Amazigh. Finally, the fourth part dewlls upon parents' attitudes and beliefs impact on teaching Amazigh.

A Problems and challenges that face teaching Amazigh in primary schools

Table 1.

Problems and challenges	Number of teachers
Lack of an indepedent classroom	34%
Timetable problems	30%
Shortage in Amazigh textbooks	33%
Absence of organic circulars	40%
Teacher training problems	53%
Insufficient number of Amazigh teachers	70%
Lack of a serious political will	44%
Absence of horizontal and vertical generalization of teaching Amazigh language	56%

The table (1) above shows the range of problems mentioned by teachers as real challenges that hinder their daily practices.

First, 34% of the teachers reported that they lack an independent classroom for teaching Amazigh language. They are enforced everyday to move from a class to another to do their jobs.

Second, 30% of the teachers mentioned that in the beginning of every school year, they find a lot of problems in preparing their time tables. They are obliged to coordinate with eight other teachers to integrate Amazigh sessions in their timetables.

Third, shortage in the Amazigh textbooks is another obstacle that affects the daily teaching practice of the Amazigh language. 33% of the teachers communicated that the number of textbooks available is not enough. This state of fact has adverse impact on the learning outcomes of students and hinders the teaching process.

Another most widely reported problem by the teachers is the absence of organic provisions that organise the teaching of Amazigh language. 40% of the teachers stressed that the ministry of education has not issued any circular since 2008. This renders their legal situation delicate as specialized Amazigh teachers.

Teacher training is another issue mostly reported by the teachers as being either absent or unsatisfactory. As indicated in the graph (1) below, 53% of the teachers assessed the quality of the pre-service trainings received before becoming teachers as being average.

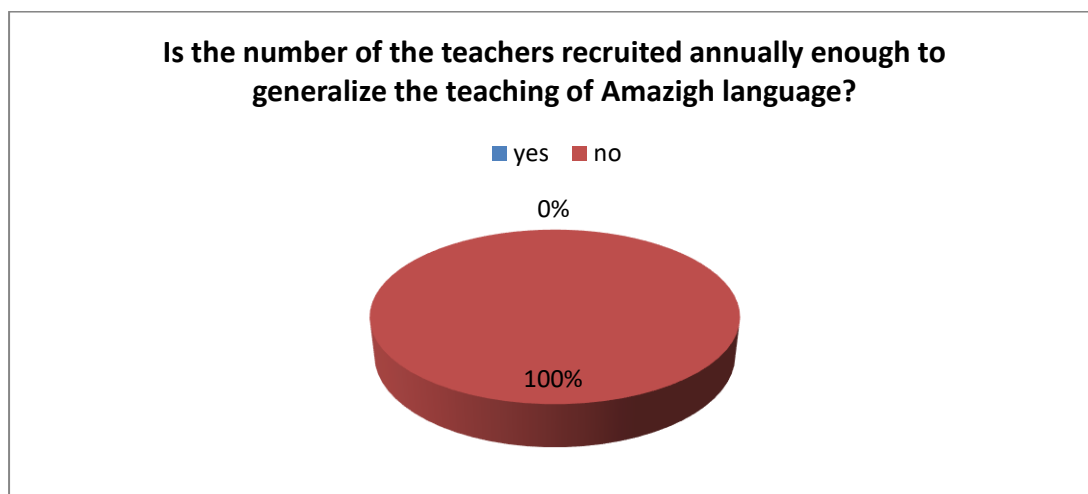


(Graph 1)

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In terms of in-service training, the majority of teachers proved that it is absent. Their answers show that both the teachers and the administrative staff in primary schools do not benefit from continuous training in Amazigh language.

The number of Amazigh teachers is another major obstacle that hinders the teaching of the Amazigh language. The graph (2) clearly demonstrates that the number of teachers recruited annually is not enough.



(Graph 2)

Among other important factors that influence the process of teaching Amazigh are the following. According to most of the teachers, teaching Amazigh language lacks a serious political will in the sense it is not equally treated as the other subjects. The decision makers have negative attitudes about the language starting from the central level, to the meso and to the micro levels. Many teachers reported that some headmasters in the primary schools oblige some Amazigh teachers to teach other subjects. Second, absence of vertical and horizontal generalization has adverse impact on the attitude of parents and students; they think that learning Amazigh is useless because it is not included in secondary and high school. So, studying it is just a waste of time.

The following are some excerpts taken from the questionnaire. They represent teachers' answers to the general question of this section: in your opinion, what are the challenges that hinder the process of teaching Amazigh?

Respondent 1: *time allotted to Amazigh sessions is not suitable, lack of an independent classroom for the Amazigh teacher, absence of communication and shortage of textbooks.*

Respondent 2: *lack of the state's political will to generalize the teaching of the Amazigh and negative attitudes of parents, some teachers and principals.*

Respondent 3: *lack or weak support from the state at different levels: motivating and providing in service training for teachers, provision of teaching materials, such as short stories, investigating the status of Amazigh in schools and how it is treated, providing enough Amazigh textbooks, create a training specific for Amazigh supervisors, using media to sensitize about the importance of learning Amazigh, and encouraging the Amazigh literary productions.*

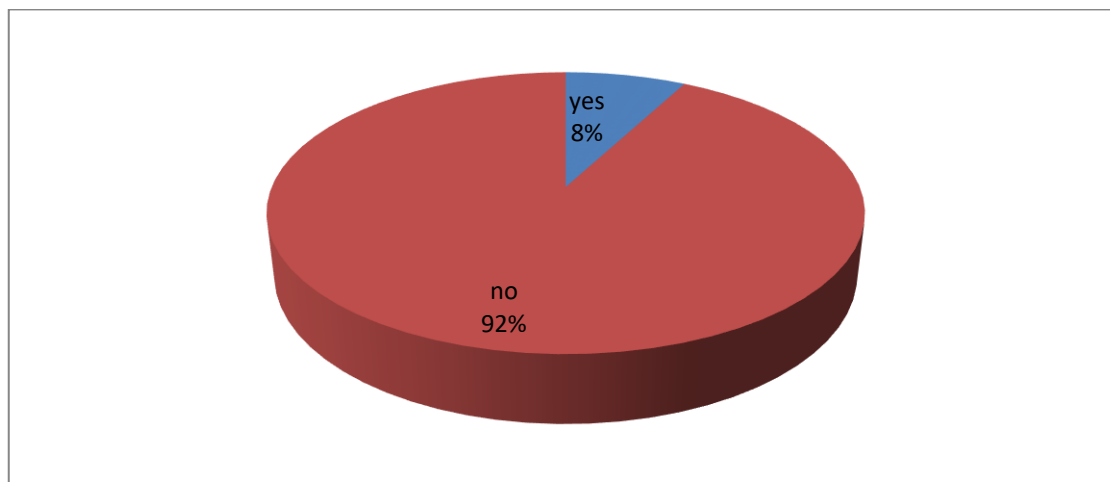
Respondent 4: *lack of inservice training, bad situation of the Amazigh teachers in schools, absence of continuity in teaching Amazigh within schools to guarantee the teaching of the language until the sixth grade, lack of an independent classroom for Amazigh language, insufficient number of hours devoted for teaching Amazigh, lack of enough textbooks, shortage of teaching materials, lack of objective evaluation of the status of teaching Amazigh in Morocco since its integration in the educational system up to now, exclusion of Amazigh teachers from contributing in the revision of the curriculum and of giving their suggestions in the programs meant to teach Amazigh, and generally speaking, lack of a clear vision and absence of facilities to reach the targeted goals.*

B. Treatment of Amazigh in the Moroccan education system

a. Is Amazigh language equally treated as the other languages in the Moroccan education system?

As represented in the (graph 3) below, 92% of the teachers assured that Amazigh language is not equally treated as the other languages.

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(Graph 3)

b. If your answer is no, what are the causes and manifestations of this discrimination?

The teachers' answers reveal that Amazigh language is exposed to discrimination at different levels. First, at the organization level, it does not have clear education provisions which organize the teaching of the language. The number of circulars issued by the ministry of education is not enough and outdated. According to the teachers, the language needs more organic texts to determine the rights and responsibilities of the specialized Amazigh teachers. Due to the lack of these texts, nowadays the priority is given to other subjects and languages. Once there is a shortage in the teachers of other subjects, the Amazigh teachers are enforced to replace them. In addition, the teachers mentioned that the time allotted to teaching Amazigh is not enough compared with other languages. Most of the teachers assured that 30 minutes do not allow them to cover the stages and activities that should be involved in tackling the components and skills included in the teaching of the language.

At the logistical level, Amazigh teachers reported that teaching Amazigh language is very challenging for various reasons. First, shortage of teaching materials is considered by most teachers as a real hindrance. Unlike the other subjects, Amazigh language is not included in the royal "one million schoolbag" initiative². The fact that Amazigh language is excluded from this initiative is a clear sign of discrimination against the language. The majority of students are left without textbooks. Even if they want to buy them from the private libraries, they are not available. Therefore, this has a negative impact on the teaching learning process given the primordial role of the textbook for both the teachers and students. Second, unlike other subjects, most teachers confirmed that Amazigh language is the only subject which does not have an independent classroom. The teachers are required to change the classrooms every 30 minutes. According to the teachers, not having a fixed classroom for Amazigh language reflects the low value given to the language in the Moroccan schools compared with the other subjects. Third, inequality in terms of human resources is another major sort of discrimination. Eventhough it has been almost two decades now since the integration of Amazigh language in Moroccan education system, but there is a big shortage in terms of teachers, trainers, and supervisors specialized in Amazigh language. Most of teachers reported that there is a sort of inequality in terms of quality and number of trainings provided for Amazigh teachers.

The following statements provide ample evidence about the different sorts of discrimination that face Amazigh language in the Moroccan education system:

Respondent 1: *Amazigh language is often viewed as a dialect not as a language. So, it is not appropriate to be taught.*

Respondent 2: *not specifying enough teaching hours for Amazigh as other languages such as Arabic and French and the number of Amazigh teachers are less than the number of teachers of other languages.*

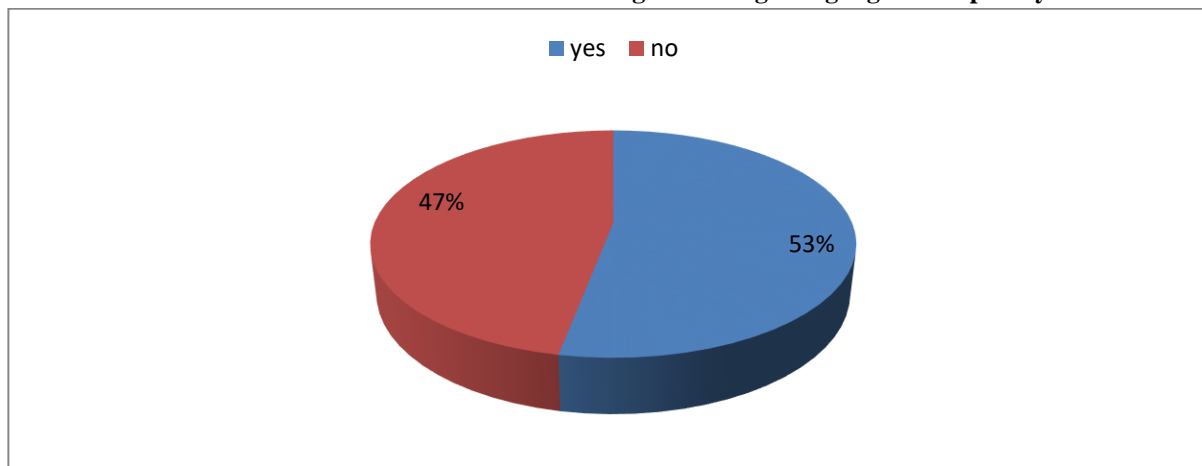
Respondent 3: *exclusion of Amazigh of the royal "one million schoolbag" initiative, discrimination at the level of time specified for Amazigh (30 minutes per session is not enough to teach the components of the language and to attain the intended objectives), considering Amazigh as an optional subject, and not providing an independent classroom for Amazigh teachers are all forms of discrimination.*

Respondent 4: *in the Moroccan constitution, there two official languages-Arabic and Amazigh. But in reality, they are not equal.*

² It is an initiative launched by the king Mohammed VI in 2008. Its objective is to provide primary school students with the basic teaching materials such as textbooks, copybooks, etc.

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c. Do you feel that there is sort of underestimation of the teaching of Amazigh language in the place you work?



(Graph 4)

The graph (4) above shows that number of teachers who feel that Amazigh language is underestimated in the place where they work is 53% whereas the number of others who do not is 47%. This result means that the image associated with the Amazigh affects its teaching in Moroccan schools. According to the responses of the teachers, there are a number of reasons behind the underestimation of teaching of Amazigh language.

d. If your answer is yes, what are the causes of this underestimation?

As an answer to the question above, teachers provided a variety of causes that result in the underestimation of teaching Amazigh language. The following excerpts are examples of teachers' answers:

Respondent 1: *the first cause is ideological and the underestimation of teaching Amazigh is a result of many years of marginalisation that Amazigh has seen for many years.*

Respondent 2: *society and state look down on Amazigh and there is as well lack of prospects and generalization in secondary education and its absence in graduation exams.*

Respondent 3: *lack of a real will from the part of the decision makers as they do not give much importance to teaching Amazigh. For them teaching Amazigh is not a priority, but it is dictated only by the political changes Morocco has known in the recent years.*

Respondent 4: *Amazigh is viewed as a language of mountaines. It does have any added value for the student. Moroccan Arabic is the language of communication. The domains in which Amazigh is used are limited.*

To start with, most of teachers communicated that teaching Amazigh language is underestimated because of lack of a political will. Decision makers consider teaching Amazigh just a result of the recent political changes in Morocco. The language is integrated in the education system just to calm down the Amazigh movements' demands, not a project that should be supported. This is obviously instantiated by the low progress that characterizes the status of the Amazigh language not only in educational sector but in all the sectors. It has been 10 years since its officialization, but it is absent in all the sectors. It is hardly used as a true official language.

Second, the fact that Amazigh language is not generalized to cover all the levels is another reason that weakens its status in the education sector. Many teachers indicated that the absence of the language in the middle school and high school make parents and students to look at it as an unimportant and a useless language. They think that: since students are not going to study it after the primary school, so it is optional. In addition, its absence in the final exams lead to its marginalization in the sense that parents and students do not care about it and focus more on the other subjects.

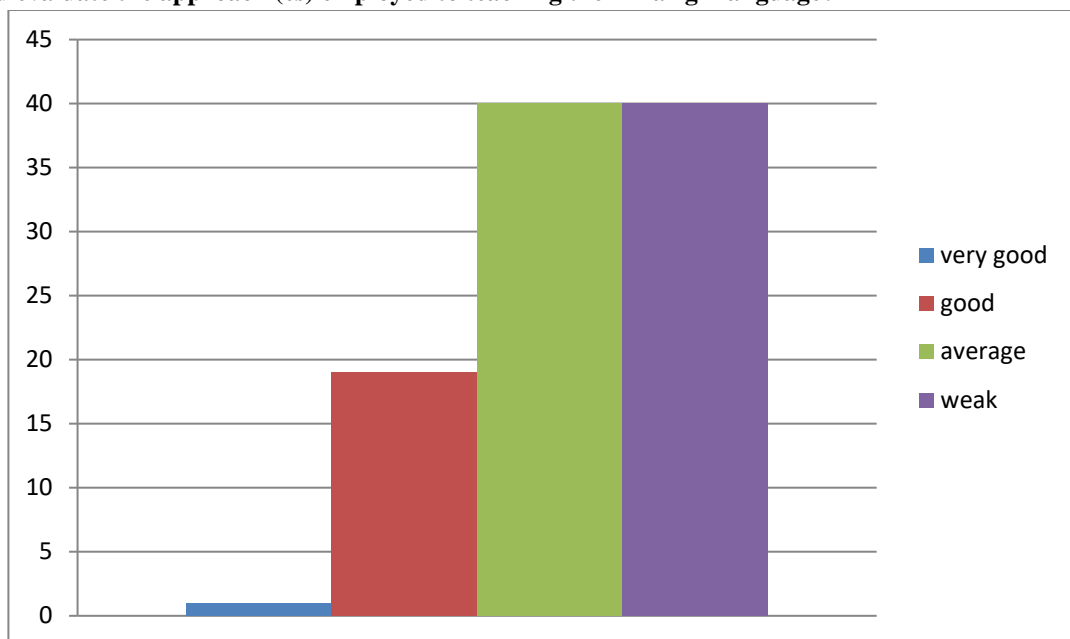
Third, Amazigh language is underestimated due to economic reasons. People look down at it because it lacks the economic incentives. The fact that economic sector is dominated by other languages such as French and English make people think of Amazigh language as useless. This is quite true because in Morocco job market requires foreign languages especially French.

Fourth, another major source of underestimation of the teaching of Amazigh language stems from the negative beliefs and attitudes established against the language. Many teachers mentioned that both Amazighophone and Arabophone people think that Amazigh language is useless because they think that the language has no role and it will not help their children in the future. Moreover, some teachers highlighted that ideological reasons lead to downgrade the value of the Amazigh language. The current situation is the result of many decades of marginalization and degradation that Amazigh language has been exposed to after the independence. The adoption of the state of one nation and one language ideology for more than 50 years still has impact on the role of the Amazigh language even after its officialisation.

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C. Approaches, curriculum, and time allotted to teaching Amazigh

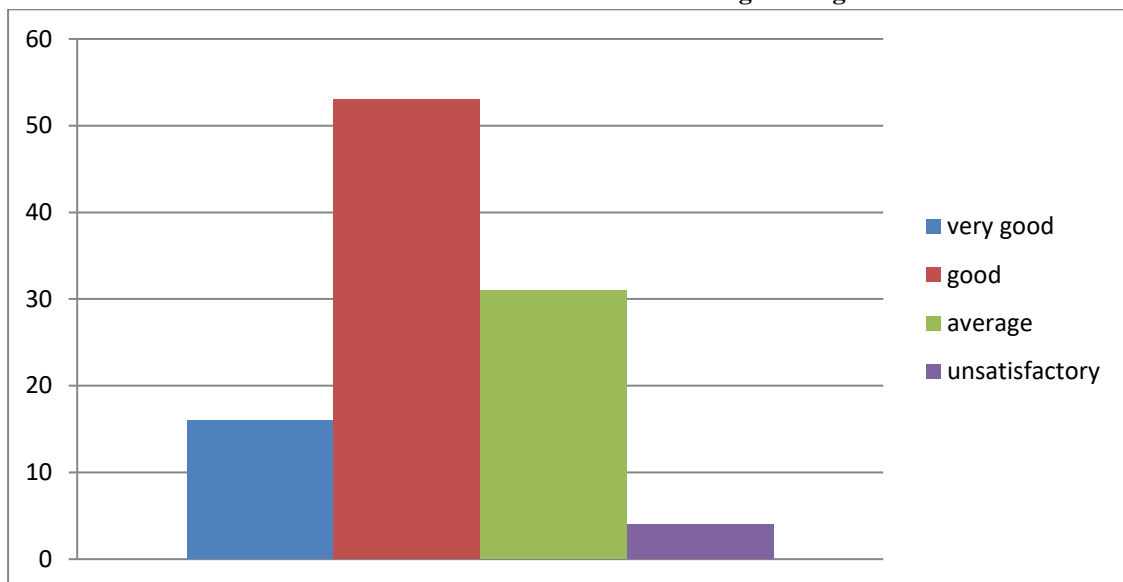
1. How do you evaluate the approach (es) employed to teaching the Amazigh language?



(Graph 5)

The above graph presents the results of the assessment of the adopted approaches to teaching Amazigh language. As it is shown the majority of teachers said that the quality of the approaches ranges from average to weak. The fact that 40% of the teachers mention that this approach is weak means that it does not meet their expectations. It is worthy noting that the ministry adopts the communicative approach to teaching Amazigh language. The main objective is to develop five competencies: communicative competence represented in listening, reading, writing and speaking skills, strategic competence, cultural competence, and technological competence (circular 116, 2008).

2. To what extent do students interact with the curriculum used to teaching Amazigh?

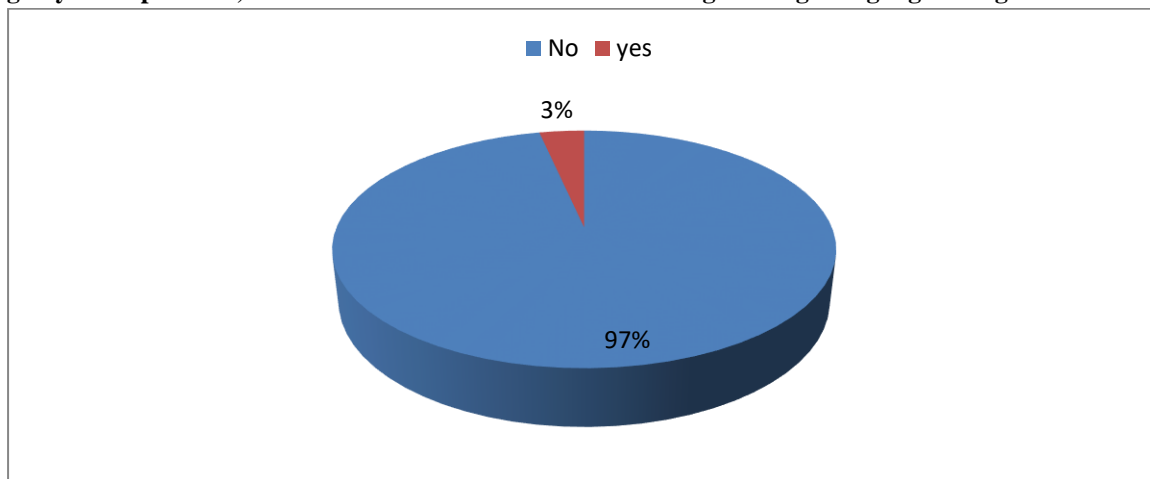


(Graph 6)

As regards the level of students' interaction with the curriculum used to teach Amazigh language, the above graph shows positive results. 53.5% of the teachers said that the level of interaction is good, 31.3% mentioned that it is average, 16.2% communicated that it is very good, and only 4% said that it is weak.

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1) According to your experience, is the time allotted to sessions of teaching Amazigh language enough?

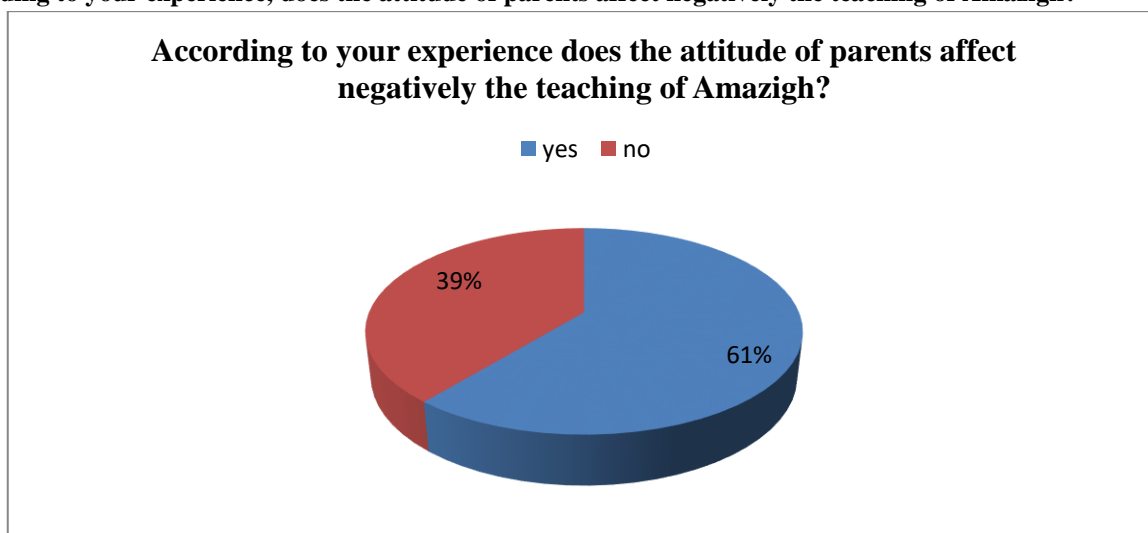


(Graph 7)

Results highlighted in the graph above concerning the time allotted to sessions of teaching Amazigh language show that 97% of teachers are not satisfied by the amount of time devoted for each session in teaching Amazigh components.

D. Parents' attitudes impact on teaching Amazigh

1. According to your experience, does the attitude of parents affect negatively the teaching of Amazigh?



(Graph 8)

Concerning the negative impact of parents' attitudes on teaching Amazigh, the above graph indicates that 61% of teachers agreed that parents' beliefs about the language affects adversely the teaching of the language whereas 39% said the opposite.

2. If your answer is yes, how parents' attitudes affect negatively the teaching of Amazigh?

The following statements provide clear illustration of how parents' attitudes and beliefs influence adversely the teaching of Amazigh language:

Respondent 1: some parents think that teaching Amazigh to their parents is just a waste of time and effort.

Respondent 2: lack of encouragement affects negatively the level of students. Parents look down on the language and ask their children not to do the homeworks.

Respondent 3: there are some parents who are against teaching Amazigh. They force their children to marginalize the language. This creates problems for the teacher as children do not like to learn the language.

Respondent 4: Some parents prevent their children from attending Amazigh classes. Children are the primary victims as this behaviour affects directly their studies and their final grades.

According to the teachers, parents' attitudes and beliefs about Amazigh language influence its teaching in a number of ways. First, the negative social representations push parents to demotivate their children to learn the language. They inject in their minds some negative ideas about the language as being optional, not important and can hinder their studies. They encourage them to focus on

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the other subjects. So, children do not do their Amazigh homeworks and avoid participation in all activities associated with the Amazigh language. Second, some teachers reported that some parents tried to take their children to other schools where Amazigh is not yet integrated. They believe that the language should not be taught at school. They say that their children do not need Amazigh language in the future and they need to study just Arabic and the other foreign languages. Third, some parents refuse to send their children to Amazigh classes and to buy them the Amazigh school materials.

DISCUSSION

The results displayed above show interesting facts about the manifestations of the gap between macro and micro levels of language planning and its effects on the status of Amazigh in primary schools. Teachers revealed that there are many problems that face the teaching of the language at the micro level. So, the gap between macro and micro levels of planning manifests itself in two levels: a) implementation of the macro policies and b) absence of micro planning in policy design.

a. Implementation of macro policies

The case under study reveals that attainment of the objectives set at the macro level regarding the teaching of Amazigh is hindered in different ways. This state of fact echoes a point raised by Liddicoat and Baldauf (2008) about one of the shortcomings of the macro approach, as it entails a direct causal relationship between decisions taken at the macro level and the results of language planning (p.8). The problems raised by the teachers implies the number of difficulties they face at primary schools to implement the macro policies.

Teachers' daily practices are affected in different ways because of the range of problems they face at the micro level. These problems can be grouped under three main headings: organizational problems, logistical problems, and pedagogical problems.

1. Organizational problems

To start with, teachers' responses show that the current status of Amazigh in primary schools requires new circulars that organise the teaching of the language. It is not logical and fair to find out that the last circular issued by the ministry of education dates back to 2008. It is almost fourteen years now, but the same procedures are in practice. The macro policies no longer provide for the practices at the micro level. For instance, 40% of the teachers reported that their legal situations are delicate because the circulars do not include their states as specialized Amazigh teachers. Although the policy of recruitment changed in 2012, after the creation of the Regional Centers of Professions of Education and Training (CRMEF in French), but the status of specialized Amazigh teachers remains vague. Teachers call for new circulars that define their tasks as specialized Amazigh teachers. They contend that the working hours per-week should not exceed 24 hours similar to teachers of other languages such as English and French.

This, in effect, renders the micro level as a field of improvisation. Absence or vagueness of organisational texts paves the way for agents at the micro level either to put into practice or interpret the macro policy in their own way. As a result, strange decisions are taken, which affect negatively the process of teaching Amazigh. For example, in 2018 many Amazigh teachers were enforced to teach French or Arabic instead of Amazigh in many primary schools in Morocco. These teachers were threatened either to accept teaching other languages or to get dismissed from their jobs (<https://www.alaraby.co.uk>).

This act was criticized by micro agents (Liddicoat and Baldauf 2008), such as associations, organisations, and Amazigh teachers. Some associations, such as Association of Amazigh Teachers, Association Amghar for Culture and Development, Tafoukt for Culture, and Tamayount Organisation considered enforcing Amazigh teachers to teach other languages as "a non-pedagogical act, and it is inappropriate for the Ministry of National Education to give priority for other languages over Amazigh". In addition, the Amazigh activist and teacher Lahcen Amkran noted that "enforcing Amazigh teachers by Ministry of Education to teach other subjects is an abuse of power and evidence of bankruptcy that ravages the body of the educational system" (<https://www.alaraby.co.uk>).

Enforcement of Amazigh teachers to teach other subjects is a clear instantiation of the gap between macro and micro levels of planning. This state of fact alludes to Liddicoat & Baldauf (2008, p.4) claim about the notion of power and how the macro approach is inadequate because it adopts a narrow sense of power. It views power as a form of dominance and control. Decisions taken at the macro level are enacted through coercion and enforcement and power of institutions. Macro decisions ultimate goal is to control not to bring change. Enforcing Amazigh teachers to teach other languages affects both the learning outcomes of students and the teachers themselves. As well, it worsens the situation of Amazigh in primary schools because there is already huge shortage in the number of Amazigh teachers.

2. Logistical problems

Generalization of Amazigh language to cover all the levels is one of the main objectives identified at the macro level to be given a high priority by decision makers (cf. Circular 116, 2008; Organic Law 26/16). Teachers' responses reveal that there are a number of logistical problems that face the generalisation policy at the micro level.

First, the majority of primary schools do not have an independent classroom specific to Amazigh language. Teachers of Amazigh are obliged to use classrooms of other subjects to teach Amazigh. They move in the school from one class to another. This, in effect,

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makes other teachers and students to underestimate the importance of the language as the Amazigh teacher is the only one who faces this problem among other teachers. In addition, according to the Amazigh teachers not having an independent classroom affects negatively the time allotted for the teaching sessions and does not allow teachers to prepare before hand for the sessions. Hence, the teaching learning process is being affected as the teachers do not have enough time to complete the lessons.

Second, another issue that has adverse impact on the generalisation policy is the number of teachers specialized in Amazigh. The generalisation of teaching Amazigh language at least in the primary school requires 20,000 teachers. According to the recent statistics the overall number of the Amazigh teachers is almost 5000³ teachers. This number covers only 20% of the students enrolled in primary schools in Morocco. This situation is the result of the low number of positions specified for the Amazigh language by the Ministry of Education in the annual recruitment exams. In the last five years, the number does not exceed 1000 teachers. It is true that there is a sort of improvement if we compare between the number of teachers recruited in 2016 (80 teachers) and 2021 (400 teachers). But, if the ministry keeps the same strategy, covering only the primary school will take many years. This state of fact represents a real hindrance in front of the generalisation of teaching Amazigh language because the goal is to make it reach all the levels starting from pre-school. Therefore, recruiting high numbers of teachers and providing them training is an essential step to make the generalization project moves forward and to set the basis for recruiting Amazigh supervisors and trainers.

Third, absence or shortage of teaching materials, especially textbooks, is another indicator that implementation of generalisation policy remains a lip service. The policy stops at the statement level. There is no implementation or monitoring strategies to see to what extent it is put into practice at the micro level. Bamgbose (2000) made this point clear in his account for the nature of language planning in West Africa, as he states that:

Language planning in West Africa is characterized by a number of features that are by no means peculiar to the region but may be true of most of Africa. Among such features are nonconformity with rational processes of decision making, preoccupation with policy, lack of continuity, bureaucratic monopoly of planning, elite domination of policy making, and restriction of the focus of language planning mainly to education” (p.107).

Failure of decision makers to provide enough textbooks and teaching materials for a small number of students implies that the policies implementation at the micro level is not a priority for the decision makers. This results in enlarging the gap between the policy and actual practice. Instead of adopting a participatory approach and see the real challenges that persist at the micro level, decision makers limit their focus only to policy making instead of ensuring continuity and making sure the policies are put into practice by providing the necessary means and facilities. The macro approach to power always proves itself in this context as there is a sort of “bureaucratic monopoly of policy and elite domination of policy making”. Decision makers’ issuance of policy is done not to improve or change the status of the language, but to keep their dominance and control.

3. Pedagogical problems

The gap at the pedagogical level between policy and practice is manifested in a number of ways. Teachers revealed that there are many issues that hinder their daily practices.

First, timetables design creates many problems for Amazigh teachers. They are not prepared based on the number of hours specified for Amazigh language per-week. But Amazigh sessions are integrated within the timetables of other teachers of other subjects. This operation is rejected by the majority of Amazigh teachers. It is considered as a clear sign that teaching Amazigh in primary schools is just optional and a complementary subject to other subjects such as Arabic and French which are principal.

Second, teachers’ attitudes about pre-service training as being average in quality and absence of in-service training go against the general measures and procedures of integrating Amazigh language in the Moroccan education system presented in the ministry circulars 108, 92,130, and 116. The teachers indicated that Amazigh language does not have specialized Amazigh trainers and supervisors. The ministry assigns trainers and supervisors of other subjects to take charge of Amazigh trainings; either in school visitations or workshops in the centers. This, according to the teachers, is not practical because Amazigh language should have its own specialized supervisors and trainers similar to other subjects. This is very true because it has been almost two decades since the integration of the Amazigh language in the education system. The ministry should recruit trainers and supervisors specialized in Amazigh language. According to the teachers, lack of specialized Amazigh trainers and supervisors affect the quality of trainings and does not help them improve their teaching practices.

Third, limiting the time devoted to each session in Amazigh classes to 30 minutes is considered by 97% of teachers as insufficient. It should be noted that the time specified for the Amazigh language in the curriculum is three hours per week. Each week consists of six sessions: oral communication, reading, writing, grammar, entertainment activities, and assessment and reinforcement. The fact that only 3% of teachers expressed their satisfaction with 30 minutes for each session implies that rethinking either the amount of time given to each session or the distribution of the sessions per week is prerequisite. Teaching Amazigh language components using the communicative approach requires at least one hour for each session to allow students engage more in the activities and

³ This number is provided by the IRCAM member Abdessalam Elkhalfi in a seminar about “the crisis of teaching Amazigh Language in Morocco”, organised by the association “Tadda Tamghrabyit” in 18 December 2021.

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express themselves. This is actually the case with the other languages. In English classes, for example, teachers devote at least one hour for targeting a skill (reading, listening or writing) or language component (grammar or vocabulary). The case of Amazigh, however, needs to be treated with more caution because, as mentioned above, Amazigh teachers do not have their own independent classrooms. So, the teachers find it difficult to prepare for the session and cover the targeted skill or language component in 30 minutes.

b. Absence of micro planning in policy design

Questionnaire results show that the gap between macro and micro levels of language planning manifest itself, as well, in the existence of some factors at the micro level which are ignored at the macro level. These factors, however, have a strong bearing on macro policy objectives. This point referred to by Liddicoat and Baldauf (2008,p.4) as “unplanned language planning”. It means the results of language planning may be due to “deliberate” or macro planning or due to some unplanned language planning activities taken place at the micro level. The decisions taken at the macro level do not put into consideration whether the plan is going to be accepted by society or not. The case is almost the same with the Amazigh language. The questionnaire reveals that representations, beliefs and attitudes of parents and officials have a direct influence on the status of Amazigh in Moroccan schools. Unequal treatment of Amazigh in the educational policy, as well, is another indicator that there are factors at the micro level which are not included in the macro education provisions.

1. Attitudes and beliefs towards Amazigh

Concerning the attitudes and beliefs, there is a wide agreement among the teachers that Amazigh language needs to be viewed positively and treated equally as the other languages. Many teachers believe that the Amazigh language policy requires a serious political will because the real situation of the Amazigh now not only in education sector but also in the other domains does not match the official discourse. The attitudes and beliefs about the language starting from the micro level to the meso and then macro should be changed because it has a negative impact on the language at school and in the whole society. Teachers assure that negative attitudes of decision makers hinder and block the process of teaching Amazigh because they think it is not a priority. Similarly, parents affect their children and prevent them from studying the language.

This affects negatively the image of the Amazigh language and reflects the low status of the language in the whole society. The fact that the language has an inferior status in the mind of people hinders its teaching in schools and its revitalization and spread in the whole society. Spolsky and Shohamy (2000 cited in Zohir, 2014, p.50) referred to this point stating that “in order for a policy to succeed, the beliefs and practices of people must change first”. So, in the case of Amazigh language we assume that to change the current situation of the language, there should be a new modal of language policy that takes into consideration other factors such as people’s beliefs and attitudes. Integrating the language in the school system is the first step. Its success depends on our ability to change real practices and attitudes of people about the language. So, improving the status of teaching the language depends on a large extent on changing the black image associated with Amazigh for years.

2. Unequal treatment of Amazigh language

Unequal treatment of Amazigh language within the Moroccan educational system is another manifestation of the gap between macro and micro levels of planning. Teachers’ answers display that unequal treatment of Amazigh is instantiated in two ways: a) discrimination toward Amazigh language and b) underestimation of Amazigh language in society. The factors that results in discrimination and underestimation are not included in the measures and strategies developed at the macro level.

a. Discrimination toward Amazigh language

As shown in the result section, the fact that Amazigh language is exposed to discrimination of different sorts especially at the level of logistics and organization implies that Amazigh integration in the education system and its generalization project is affected by the gap between the macro policies and their interpretation and implementation in local contexts. Liddicoat and Baldauf (2008, p.11) accounted for this point in terms of the interaction between the macro and micro levels of planning. They claim that macro level planning decisions implementation at local contexts depends on local conditions. They assume that “no macro-level policy is transmitted directly and unmodified to a local context”. Amazigh teachers revealed that due to the absence of organic texts, local agents either in primary schools, in Provincial Directorates of Education or in Regional Academies favor other subjects over Amazigh through issuance of some decisions that enforce Amazigh teachers to teach other subjects. Similarly, in terms of teaching materials unlike the other subjects Amazigh is excluded from the royal “one million schoolbag” initiative. This discriminative act deprives many students from having the Amazigh textbook. These two examples prove that there is wide gap between policy and practice. They show that attainment of the objectives set at the central level is not really an easy task due to the existence of local factors that must be taken into consideration.

b. Underestimation of Amazigh in society

Teachers’ answers reveal that the low value associated with the teaching of Amazigh language results from a number of factors. These factors include those related to the absence of a political will to upgrade the status of the language, the slow progress of the generalization policy, lack of economic incentives, and the negative attitudes and beliefs about usefulness of learning the

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language. The problem with these factors is that they contribute in giving a wrong image about the language and hinder its progress not only in the education sector but in all the other domains. Amazigh underestimation is in fact a clear example of the gap which exists between the macro and the micro levels of Amazigh language planning because the macro policies do not involve measures to remove this black image stuck with the language.

Micro level factors play a negative role as they contribute in shaping the direction of macro policies. The low value associated with Amazigh gives legitimacy to macro, meso, micro and local agents to give priority to other subjects in making, interpreting and implementing policies. Liddicoat and Lyeach (2014, p.239) mentioned that “the relationship between macro and micro may in some cases involve resistance at micro level to macro level policy”. For Amazigh language, the situation is very complex because its weight in society is very low. Implementation of macro policies is easily turned down at the micro level. Macro policies are faced with a strong resistance from the micro level. Underestimation of the language is a clear sign of this fact. This resistance implies as well that the state’s declared goals at the macro level regarding the status of the language at school are from real needs and challenges that should be targeted first before setting any other objectives.

Ignoring micro level factors such as the negative attitudes and beliefs of people, discrimination toward the language, its underestimation by society will surely affect the success of the macro policy. Lewis (1981) cited in Zohir (2014, p.39) clearly supports this point as he states that:

Any policy for language, especially in the system of education, has to take account of the attitude of those likely to be affected. In the long run, no policy will succeed which does not do one of three things: conform to the expressed attitudes of those involved; persuade those who express negative attitudes about the rightness of the policy; or seek to remove the causes of the disagreement. In any case, knowledge about attitudes is fundamental to the formulation of a policy as well as to success in its implementation.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The overall focus of this paper is to prove that the status of teaching Amazigh language in Moroccan schools is characterized by a gap between macro and micro levels of language policy. The challenges and problems described by the teachers reveal that the status of teaching the language at the micro level is complex. The problems associated with the horizontal and vertical generalisation, the training of teachers, the curriculum, the teaching materials, and the beliefs and the attitudes of people are all examples of the gap between the macro and the micro levels of language planning.

Amazigh language in education planning in Morocco is a clear example of a top-down model of language policy and planning. The policies are created at the central level by the government and the ministry of education and issued to the other levels for implementation. The micro level in the case of Amazigh language has only an executive role. The decisions are taken by the central agents. Amazigh teachers are obliged to conform with and to put in action the policies. This macro approach in effect hinders the teaching of the Amazigh language because it does not take into consideration the basic needs of the teachers and the real challenges that face the teaching of the Amazigh language at the micro level.

This state of fact implies that improving the status of Amazigh in Moroccan schools necessitates rethinking the top-down approach adopted by the Moroccan state to Amazigh language. Hence, the micro approach should have given importance because it allows teachers as central agents at the micro level to be active participants in policy making not just passive implementers of policies designed at the macro level. In addition, the micro approach will contribute in reshaping the community’s or the parent’s negative beliefs and attitudes about the language. The policies designed at the micro level surely will involve the community to discuss the importance of teaching Amazigh language to their children. Therefore, it will help to spread the language and make its acceptance in society easy.

Roles of micro agents in implementation of macro policies should be recognized. Parents, teachers, and local officials should be involved in the process of policy making. Improving the status of teaching Amazigh requires adopting a participatory approach instead of the top-down one. Parents once involved will surely provide their opinions about the teaching of Amazigh. So, strategies will be devised to convince them about the importance of learning the language. Similarly integration of teachers as the principal agents in process of policy making will benefit to a large extent the process of teaching Amazigh. Teachers as practitioners will provide their visions and voice their opinions and make stakeholders be aware of the range of problems that impinge on teaching Amazigh at the micro level. Equally important, local or micro officials ought to take part in the decision making process and be convinced that Amazigh enjoys the same rights as other subjects in school. This way discrimination against it will be reduced and interpretation and implementation of macro policies will go the right way.

To alleviate the effects of the gap between the macro and the micro levels of language planning, focus should be on the other micro agents, such as associations and organisations. The potential assistance they may provide especially to change the black image

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associated with Amazigh in society should be exploited. Therefore, these organisations should be recognized and supported by the state as real participants in the process of improving the status of Amazigh language at school and in the other domains.

Another major insight of great importance that can be drawn from this study is the need to rethink the top-down model of language policy adopted in Morocco for Amazigh language. An ecological approach (Ricento, 2006; Hornberger, 2006; Shohamy, 2006) instead will be very beneficial to Amazigh not only in the school domain, but across all the other sectors. Using this approach entails the necessity of rethinking and extending the definition of language policy to incorporate not just the official policy, but also covert and micro-level policies. Speakers' language practices and choices within communities do not directly result from a linear top-down process, but they are more affected by the complex interaction of agents, contexts, processes, contestations and of official policy directives (Berardi-Whiltshire, 2017, p.331). An ecological approach will be the key to transcend the factors that impinge on the progress of Amazigh in the educational sector, as it studies and analyses the true requirements of the language within schools and how it is affected by other domains especially the family and the whole society. An ecological approach will make policy makers be aware that the school domain does not stand in a vacuum, independent of society, but there are some major socio-economic, socio-political, and socio-linguistic factors that play a tremendous role and largely affect the implementation of macro policies.

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