REVIEW

The Worrying Situation of English Language Teaching in Some Secondary Schools in Zinder (Niger Republic): Strengths and Prospects

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ABSTRACT

In Niger, foreign languages such as English are introduced in the curriculum to give learners more opportunities and a better understanding of the outside world. Drawing on field observation, quantitative and qualitative methods, the study aims to identify the strength and challenges of English language teaching in secondary schools in the city of Zinder (Niger) before it proposes some suggestions. The results show that the majority of English teachers in Zinder do not have the necessary university training in English language education and 31% of them teach because there is no alternative opportunities. In addition, while 64,44% of the respondents acknowledge the importance of English in the world today and the necessity to improve its teaching practice, various partners fail to measure the unintended and unforeseen consequences of the policy which requires a lot of resources.

Keywords: English education, Niger, Zinder.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education has become the driving force in the establishment of sustainable, inclusive and resilient societies while facilitating personal development through physical, intellectual and moral fulfilment. In Niger, the legal framework for educational practices is provided by the law called Loi n° 98-12 d'Orientation du Système Educatif National (LOSEN, 1998), which establishes the general principles of the country's education system. The system faces significant challenges that can be attributed to a combination of technical, economic, and social factors (Niger, 2013, p. 4).

Sadly, the ongoing crises in the country affect students' learning opportunities, especially, the most vulnerable. The current situation is reflected in the low enrolment and educational attainment rate which is of 0.77% at secondary school level in 2012 (Niger, 2013). From this perspective, the educational performance of Niger appears markedly deficient, both in absolute terms and in comparison to international standards. However, the implementation of the proposed reforms resulted in a notable increase in the overall completion of secondary education. From 7% and 9% in 2000 and 2010, respectively, the rate increased to 22.4% in 2018 (Niger, 2018).

In a related development, besides, French which is not only the official language, but also the main language of instruction (LOSEN, 1998, Article 10) in Niger, there is a particular emphasis on the teaching of English which is regarded as one of the "other languages used as teaching subjects in schools and universities" (LOSEN, 1998, Article 10, p. 12). With the introduction of English into the education system, learning and adapting to this new language in secondary school has become more challenging. English is taught at all levels of the secondary school system and plays a key role in students' academic success.

Nevertheless, the high expectations generated by the incorporation of English into secondary education in Niger have been undermined by a lack of impartial assessment and a deficiency in political resolution. This has resulted in a lack of motivation among teachers and students, as well as a loss of public trust (Wiens *et al.*, 2018). However, to ensure the consistency of educational policies and

practices, it is essential that all teachers possess a great command of the English language and the ability to express themselves effectively. This affects all teachers' social relationships and interactions throughout their careers.

To obtain a better picture of the situation of education at the secondary level in the country, the government has initiated an evaluation of secondary school teachers in 2021 and the results of this research have been published (Direction de la Formation Initiale et Continue, 2021). These results indicate that Zinder region accounts for 2.30% of teachers in Group A (those with serious deficiencies in all three domains: content (40.52%), language (50%), and pedagogy (38.79%)), and 27.87% of teachers in Group B2 (teachers with serious deficiencies in two of the three domains). In the specific case of English teachers, although the subject had the highest percentage of teachers in Group F (teachers with no major deficiencies), namely 32.69% nationally (Direction de la Formation Initiale et Continue, 2021, p. 114) and 18.97% in Zinder (ibid. p. 36), it experienced significant challenges with regard to content and the language of instruction, with respectively 36.71% and 32.36% in the region. These figures (in the specific context of the city of Zinder, which constitutes our field of study) reveal that there is a pressing need to strengthen the education system in accordance with national plans and priorities, particularly with regard to the use of English in secondary education.

In a related development, in sector 2 of the Secondary Education Department (in French, Direction Départementale de l'Enseignement Secondaire 2 de Zinder, DDES 2), the field of this study, for example, there are 62 English teachers from a variety of training fields, including the school of education (secondary school teacher's certificates and degrees) and other branches such as Engineering, Forestry and Wildlife, Business Management, General Administration and Social Sciences. Teachers have attained qualifications at various levels, from BTS (advanced vocational certificate) to Bachelor of Art (Direction Régionale de l'Enseignements Secondaire, 2021). Against this backdrop, the 2021 Pedagogical Advisers Report indicates that 52.18% of the teachers are experiencing difficulties in adapting to the desired practice of teaching English, despite receiving support from their supervisors. Furthermore, 56.45% were in urgent need of training in the language of instruction.

Surprisingly, apart from Wiens *et al.* (2018), there has been no significant research on English language teaching in Niger. The current descriptive study aims to identify the strength and challenges of English language teaching in secondary schools in the city of Zinder before proposing some suggestions. In view of these issues pertaining to the teaching of English in schools within the scope of DDES 2, and with a particular focus on teachers, this research seeks to answer the following questions:

Main question: What are the reasons for the English teachers' difficulties in teaching practice?
Secondary questions:

- What factors influence the performance of participants?
- What are the weaknesses of English language teaching in secondary schools at DDES 2 in Zinder?
- What solutions can be implemented to address this situation to benefit future generations?

1.1. Aim and Objectives of the Research

This descriptive study aims to gain insight into the strengths and weaknesses of English language teaching in DDES 2 Zinder, which could help improve the observed shortcomings. In doing so, the research aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To identify the strengths of English language teaching in secondary schools in DDES 2 in Zinder;
- To identify the weakness of English language teaching in secondary schools;
- To propose perspectives on the teaching of English at secondary school level.

1.2. Research Hypothesis

The quality of education essentially depends on the quality of the teacher's initial training, which encompasses both subject matter expertise and pedagogical proficiency. The teaching of English faces challenges stemming from a lack of motivation among students and teachers, as well as a decline in public trust.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Choosing a research methodology or instrument is a part of a wider research strategy. The aim of this interventionist research was to identify novel issues pertaining to the teaching of English at the secondary school level within the context of the city of Zinder, with a particular focus on schools

covered by DDES 2. The methodology employed is not intended to impose definitive rules, but rather to help us reflect on the issue to adapt as much as possible our methods, sampling modalities, and the nature of the data to be constructed. As a result, once we have reviewed the available literature on the issue, it is necessary to move beyond the abstract to gain a deeper understanding of the realities of the environment and to consider the potential ways in which we can intervene. The aim is to gather the necessary information that can be used to assess both the favorable and unfavorable trends associated with English teaching at the secondary school level. To identify the issues inherent to the English language teaching process, particularly the dysfunctions, it is essential to focus on the analysis of the professional context. This will enable the identification of potential solutions, formulation of a plausible response, provision of a relevant explanation, or identification of benefits that are not immediately perceptible. Thus, the research was conducted through field observation together with qualitative and quantitative analysis of teachers' performance and quality of work. This maneuver begins with building a representative sample.

2.1.   Constructing a Representative Sample of the Population

Data collection will be carried out in accordance with an established plan to extract relevant information that can be used to identify the dynamics of English language teaching at the secondary school level, with a view to improving teaching and learning performance. The systematic collection of information from our participants was carried out using the chosen instruments (questionnaire and interview guide). It is useful to identify formal sampling criteria that require good knowledge of the statistical sampling theory and computer tools. However, DDES 2 was chosen as the working environment to determine the informants' experiences and their objective place in educational events. Therefore, to conduct this study, it is essential to take an operational sample from the population, describe and analyze this sample, and generalize it to the entire population of teachers. This study, which appears exhaustive, operates on two distinct groups of informants: teachers and administrators.

To be objective, the size of our accessible population for the group of teachers was two-thirds of the 62 English teachers working within DDES 2 (41 teachers). Regarding the selection criteria, the selected participants needed to be motivated and able to share their experiences and describe the characteristics of the main classroom management methods that could be compared with each other and with control groups. Probabilistic sampling techniques were used to achieve the desired results. This involved a truly random draw, in which every teacher in DDES 2 had an equal chance of being selected. At this level, we wrote each person's name on paper slips, placed them in a box, and then drew the names one at a time until we had the desired number of elements to make up the sample.

The second research group (administrators) aimed to understand and report on the systems of values, norms, representations, and symbols specific to the use of English in secondary schools. It is interested in officials of educational institutions who are experts in this field. Small samples of qualitative data were selected using purposive sampling. In particular, inspectors and educational advisors were selected because they have greater command of language, expression, and communication. They were more likely to provide valid and complete data because of their knowledge and experience. On the other hand, a representative of the Regional Education Department (DREN in French), a representative of DDES 2, the Regional Coordinator for Secondary Education, the Regional Education Inspectorate (IPR) for English, and two Pedagogical Advisors were targeted for qualitative data collection. The aim was to determine the points of view of these key stakeholders through their own experiences and to report their perceptions of the various dimensions of the introduction of English as a second language at the secondary school level, thus facilitating the proper exercise of the teaching profession.

2.2.   Field Survey Strategies

The use of triangulation was of particular importance to us, given our proximity to public and private schools where English is taught, namely junior secondary schools, known as *CEGs* and senior secondary schools called *lycées*. Our proximity to these centers meant that we could not perceive our observations as biased. In addition to our existing relational strengths, it was crucial to develop other personal networks so that we could compare the points of view.

The questionnaire survey gathered limited information based on reasoned samples that met the statistical representativeness criteria in an artificial questioning environment where the responses were recorded by our interviewers. Furthermore, to guarantee the objectivity of the data collected on English language teaching in secondary schools, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants, namely, English teachers. These interviews were guided by a semi-structured approach (face-to-face interviews) utilizing tools to facilitate discussion (questionnaires). The resulting data enabled the implementation of descriptive analyses, tables and graphs, and statistical research analyses, which were conducted in relation to the variables and realities in our field of study.

Regarding data collection, we considered the availability of informants to ensure that they were able to answer the questions asked. In addition, the criterion of comprehensibility requires us to be particularly careful when formulating questions. Furthermore, during the data collection phase, the open-ended responses were recorded as accurately and completely as possible. This accounts for valid and verifiable coding at a later stage. Finally, to minimize sources of error, great care was taken in the presentation and layout of the questionnaire.

To complement the statistical data from the teacher interviews, we chose institutional data (data from administrations of educational institutions) in relation to qualitative factors or variables. Overall, using this type of interview involves showing how the chosen method is better than others in capturing the systems of values, norms, representations, and symbols specific to the introduction of English in secondary schools. The second target group for this study, administrators (pedagogical advisors, school inspectors, and various directors of education), are valuable assets for saving energy. Thus, at this level, the interview guide becomes a privileged instrument because of its great flexibility, allowing this target group to have their say with the greatest respect for the confidence they have shown by submitting to an ordeal, justifying themselves to us, who are often anonymous. Practically speaking, we have to treat all the information received with utmost seriousness and get in tune with the interviewee. This behavioral question is a fundamental step in gaining access to the actor's universe of meaning, allowing us to address our own biases and preconceptions in the face of our significantly dense informants.

3. Research Findings and Data Analysis

Following the identification of the methodology and data collection, the results of the survey were presented and analyzed along the major axis. This analysis was based on the data collected from individuals during the research phase. The results are displayed in the figures that show data from December 2023 to June 2024 field survey. These results indicate that the reactions from the interview phases were diverse and may have been influenced by diverse factors, including life experience, the level of success in an apprenticeship, or an inherited fear. The data were analyzed based on the following: perceptions of the introduction of English in secondary education, training and experience, factors determining the choice of teaching English, pedagogical relationship/in-service teacher training, teacher-student relationship in the classroom, the importance of introducing English at the secondary school level, and the limitations of English language teaching.

3.1. Perceptions of the Introduction of English in Secondary Education

Professional perceptions are specific representations that emerge from a particular social context, namely that of the teachers' profession and their position within it. The perceptions of the specialist teachers interviewed during the consultations were consistent with the aforementioned findings. The interviewees indicated that learners manifest adverse behavior when learning the language, for instance, "students show more interest in obtaining good grades than in the subject itself." Respondents reiterated positive sentiments when questioned about the teaching of English. They made statements such as "a good initiative," "a good subject to teach" and "a language that is easy to teach." However, the teachers placed considerable emphasis on their mastery of the language and the teaching content, along with good classroom management as a crucial condition for the efficacy of teaching English at the secondary school level. As an illustration, when teachers converse with their students solely in the target language, that is, English, the students perceive it as a "game" in which teachers keep "repeating words that they [the students] don't understand."

The specialist teachers consulted (education staff, pedagogues) have a unanimously positive perception of the introduction of English, which, as they mentioned, aimed at "providing students with the basics." In most of the environments we visited for consultation, the education specialists expressed concern that some of their teaching colleagues spoke to their students in the local language, which was not conducive to learning.

3.2. Training and Work Experience

The following figure displays the schools where the respondents were trained along with their work experience in English language teaching.

Fig. 1 shows a cross-reference of the basic education variable with the years of experience variable. This reveals that the majority of respondents possess the following qualifications: Secondary School Teachers' Certificates and degrees known as DAP and CAP/CEG, *Licence*[1] and *Maitrise*[2] from Faculties of Arts, Engineer's Degree in Forestry and Wildlife, BTS (Advanced Vocational Certificate (BTS),

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[1] 3 years of higher education in the francophone system.
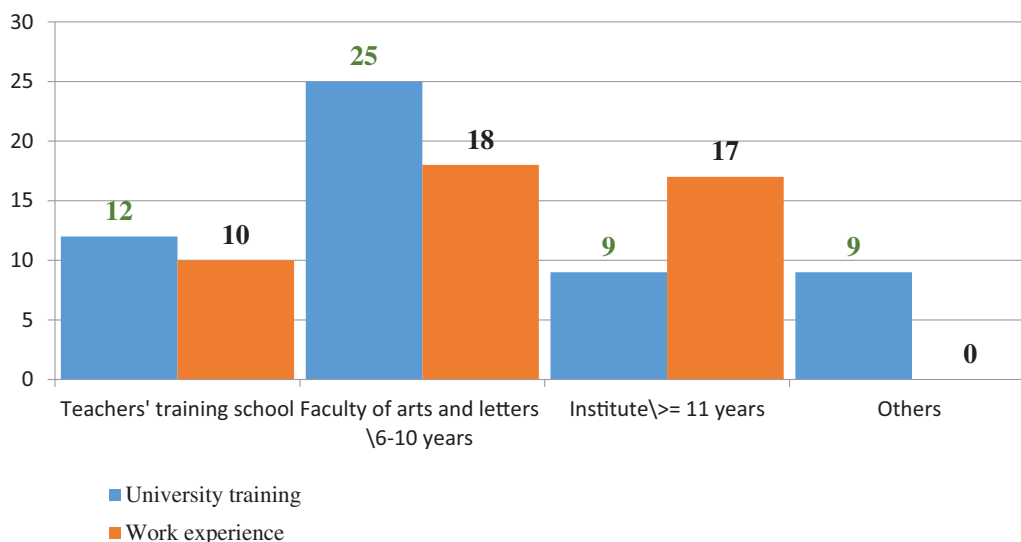[2] 4 years of higher education.

Fig. 1. Distribution of respondents by university training and work experience.

Maitrise in Business Administration, and other degrees from the National School of Administration (ENA) and School of Education Sciences (FSE). Some of the respondents had no qualifications other than at Secondary School Completion Certificate or Baccalaureate. Furthermore, the majority of the English teachers represented in this figure have accumulated more than six years of teaching experience, which exceeds the typical tenure required to meet the demands of social life. The way in which professional groups are constituted and their composition in training directly influence student learning outcomes.

Conversely, the analysis indicated that the degree serves as an indicator of the quality of the training received. Training also facilitates the acquisition of technical knowledge and enhances operational proficiency. According to our respondents, although the national context influences the use of English in the educational system, teachers' skills also come into play. In terms of qualifications, the survey findings demonstrated that the majority of English teachers were not qualified to teach the language.

3.3. Factors Determining the Choice of Teaching English

Fig. 2 indicates that the main reason for almost all respondents to teach English at secondary school level are reasons that cut across all dimensions. An analysis of teacher commitment rates may suggest a high rate among those who are vocationally inclined, representing approximately 60% of the total. Conversely, those who are driven by a lack of alternative opportunities constitute approximately 31%, while a mere 9% are influenced by the actions of a third party.

When questioned about the rationale behind their choice to teach English, teachers and other informants consistently provided compelling justification. Therefore, in the project conducted by both DDES, when the content of the response type was discussed, the data confirmed that there was no unanimous opinion among the stakeholders. While some expressed approval, several raised concerns, despite the numerous success stories that were noted. This study was conducted when 'a new category of teachers emerged. These teachers lack training, are poorly paid, have no career plan or pension, and are constrained by the demands of a complex profession that they have hardly entered by vocation, much less by qualification.' (translation is mine) (Aboubacar, 2018, p. 34)
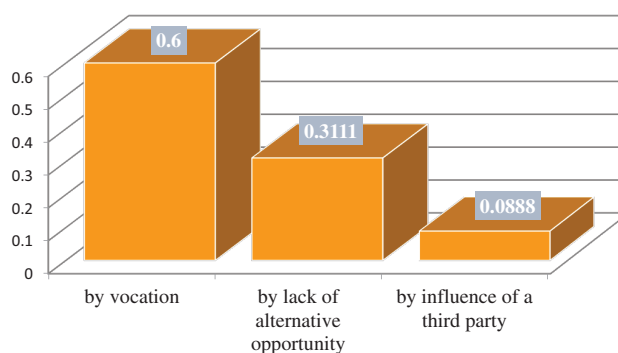

Fig. 2. Factors determining the choice of teaching English.

Moreover, while some respondents expressed more favorable views, despite the lack of training for teachers who were "ill prepared" for the task, others expressed concern about the "lack of mastery" of English and felt that it "sends a mixed message to the beneficiaries." One of the respondents reacted to this by assuming that the program would fail if the teaching staff were not up to the task. In addition to their differences in profiles and salaries, some teachers have been trained in institutes that provide no pedagogical training.

When it comes to preferences that depend on people's beliefs, desires, and opportunities, there is a doubt concerning the validity of those who choose teaching English as this reveals itself in contradiction with the responses received. For instance, among the education technicians and those who adhere to pedagogy in the town of Zinder, the primary challenge in recruiting teachers remains the lack of qualified language teachers. In the case of teachers, some consider English teaching as a viable profession while others eschew it, citing the adverse conditions of the profession and the detrimental consequences thereof. This point of view is echoed by a respondent claiming "due to the catastrophic conditions of the profession, the consequence of which are enormous, I think I've made a bad choice."

In a related development, the discussion highlighted several factors that could explain the sources of incentives. Different statements were made to describe this idea: "how people view English," "thirst of knowledge and will." In light of the analysis and argumentation carried out, professional choices explain the behavior and practices centered on the individual or community. However, some teachers link their choices to a pleasant learning atmosphere associated with English teaching. Overall, daily demands, society, curriculum, educational policies, colleagues and opportunities are believed to be the driving forces behind the choice of this profession.

3.4. *Pedagogical Relationship/In-Service Teacher Training*

Fig. 3 reveals that the majority of respondents (37 out of 45, or 82.22%) focused on educational partnerships, indicating a significant commitment to the professional development of teachers in different schools. However, 32 respondents indicated that they had received training or retraining from education trainers.

The analysis of the research findings focused on the supervisory relationship, which is a crucial aspect of teaching English. This enables teachers to master pedagogical skills such as "gap identification," fostering fairness and equity in their work. This bureaucratic logic of "the reason of State based on a mode of school reproduction" (Translation is mine) (Jourdain & Naulin, 2011, p. 7) makes it favorable for students to gain access to diplomas in order to legitimize their position in the social structure. In this context, UPS/UPL-SH meetings, which are opportunities for annual meetings between supervisors (Pedagogical Advisers and Inspectors), are particularly important. These periods of remediation constantly enable experienced and new teachers to 'equip themselves, facilitate their daily tasks, and increase academic performance' (translation is mine) (Inspection Pédagogique Régionale, 2022, p. 1).

Considering the functionality of pedagogical units in the DDES, these stakes are significant. This extends beyond teachers' language skills, although a solid theoretical and practical understanding of the language to be taught remains essential. Language can be taught in many different ways, depending on both the vision or its interpretation and the chosen path to learning. One approach involves the implementation of a sophisticated grammatical system with precise syntax rules, whereas the other focuses on facilitating communication between teachers and learners. A comprehensive analysis of the interview results with target groups identified three key competencies in English teaching: reading comprehension, language proficiency (including grammar, spelling, and translation), and writing.

However, as we review the work of Gazaille (2013) who established the pedagogical conditions, we understand with him that these conditions take into 'consideration relational aspects, the particularities
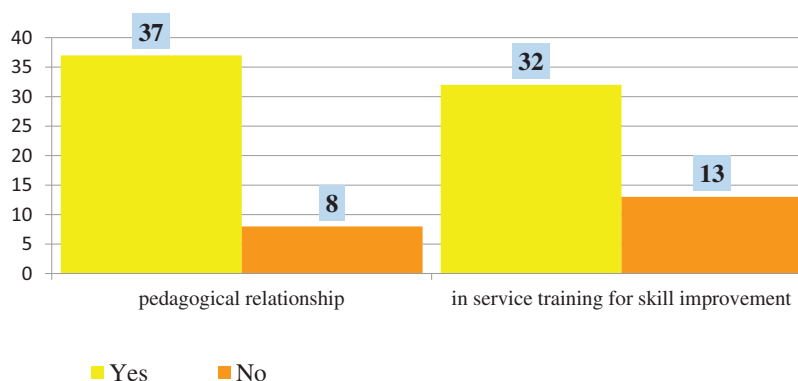

Fig. 3. Pedagogical relationship/in-service teacher training.

of the teaching environment, classroom dynamics and behaviors, as well as the learner's real needs' (p. 97) (translation is mine). The findings of this study demonstrate that teachers develop their expertise through the supervision and execution of programs over an extended period, during which they engage in specific activities and observe practices that perplex, astound, and occasionally disconcert them. Despite the supervisory actions, some pedagogical advisors advocate for a review of teacher training, citing concerns about the effectiveness of the training method. Others advocate for the expansion of Teacher Training Schools (ENS) to at least two additional regions in Niger, emphasizing the need for support for English teacher training in a French-speaking environment.

The analysis indicates that teaching by competency requires a review of pedagogical organizations, classroom learning materials and teaching practices. Given the numerous responsibilities of pedagogical advisor, their observational and reflective capacities, guided by teachers, should facilitate the authentic "pedagogy of discovery". Despite the efforts made to guide teachers, research shows that there are still cases of difficulties, in line with the results of the evaluation of secondary school teachers, which found a proportion of 38.79% in the city (Direction de la Formation Initiale et Continue, 2021). The pedagogical dimension inherent to "UP meetings, lesson studies, pedagogical animations, class visits, training workshops, and the national evaluation," (translation is mine) is also crucial. It facilitates the exchange of experiences among supervisors and teachers, as well as the identification and remediation of issues in everyday teaching practices. The reaction of a pedagogical advisor appears paramount and he states that

"The pedagogical frame of reference does not consist of a closed, dead-end system, but rather of pedagogical alignment, which is a principle of coherence for the construction of a course requiring mastery of the content to be taught, the teaching techniques, the tools needed to apply each technique, the relationships between assessment tools and the level of the objective to be assessed." (translation is mine).

The advice of a pedagogical advisor becomes significant in the specific orientation of "active acquisition strategies", and it continuously provides the teacher with theoretical landmarks and basic references in a conducive teacher-advisor relationship.

3.5. Teacher-Students Relationship in the Classroom

Fig. 4 illustrates teacher-student relationship in the context of teaching English at the secondary school level. The view on the relationship between teachers and students seems to be the same, as the majority of respondents (25 or 55.55%) reported being very satisfied with their relationships, while 20 respondents (44.45%) indicated that they experienced challenges in their relationships with students. However, 18 teachers out of 35 or 51%, reported being very satisfied with the teacher-student relationship during lessons, compared to 27 teachers out of 35, or 77%, who expressed disappointment with students' behavior.

These results reveal that there is a greater need to improve teacher-student relationships in the study area. This might favor a conducive learning/teaching environment (social values and norms, students' motivations to learn, learning atmosphere, etc.). This relationship provides a high-quality teaching activity. As Chatel (2005, p. 19) observes, "teaching must constantly reconcile two agendas:

- relationship with students
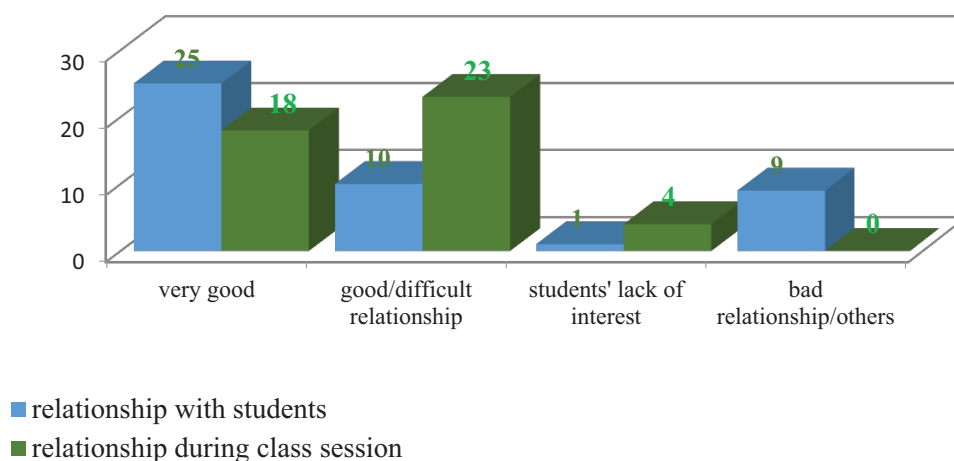- relationship during class session

Fig. 4. Teacher-student relationship in the classroom.

managing content and managing students' immediate relationship with content" (translation is mine). This points to the students' relationship with the professional who manages the teaching content and the relationship itself. If the context is marked by the desire to constitute a real elite, it emerges from this analysis that the main virtue is based on teacher-student objective relationships.

While the study reports that there is a distressing relational framework within the studied schools, these shortcomings, which the school acknowledges and regrets, are not the sole responsibility of individuals, their 'nature' or 'innate gifts', but rather depend on what Felouzis *et al*. (2016, p. 12) describe as "inherited social actors linked to family socialization and learning from an early age" (translation is mine).

However, even within an interactionist teaching approach, "focusing on the actor" (Boissonnet, 2021, p. 28), the respondents (teachers) put their classes into activity, introduce the language, guide learning, mediate between the language, its audience and the teaching activities through the common use of "grammatical explanatory tools." Based on their opinions derived from research on learning, the vast majority of the respondents perceived a positive effect on students' English skills. They express a very positive assessment of the effects of teaching English on students' academic success: "a subject that is particularly well-liked by students, especially those in the first year of junior secondary school" (translation is mine). The introduction of English into the secondary school system aims to familiarize students with sound linguistic skills, build their confidence, and improve their chances of learning the language later in education. This is instantiated by an observation of a teacher who stated, 'We are trying to give the students the means to become aware, at a very modest level, of how the English language works' (translation is mine). Thus, this study suggests that teachers are fully aware of the role that their relationship with the learner plays in the achievement of their teaching-learning activities.

3.6. The Importance of Introducing English at Secondary School Level

Fig. 5 indicates that the majority of respondents (64.44 %) considered the learning of English language as "very important in the world", while 20% viewed it as important in job hunting and 15.55 % saw English as something important in teaching programs. The importance of English has become more evident and predominant when we consider the growing political will to make English teaching accessible to all secondary school students. The vast majority of respondents seemed to favor the principle of the widespread implementation of this discipline. The results obtained in this study allowed us to identify the main factors characterizing its importance. For example, teachers from privileged backgrounds inherit a certain familiarity with the culture of language teaching through formative socialization. The cultural privilege that these teachers enjoy in relation to the school is reflected in the proximity between the culture they have acquired in their training environment and the culture of the school.

For this reason, most teachers are aware of the importance of language in everyday life and recognize the importance of English language integration processes, which are privileged means for the population to participate in the active life of the country. According to the reactions of those interviewed, English is perceived as 'the program that prepares students well for their professional lives', 'a business language and indispensable for science' that 'enriches the curriculum' (translation is mine). The main reasons why almost all respondents do not question the relevance of English relate mainly to its use in professional and everyday life in the context of globalization and innovation. The words of this educational adviser are important in this respect when he says that 'as a language, it better prepares students for future studies or to be more successful in the labor market' (translation is mine).

Accordingly, if language appears to be one of the markers of cultural identity, it is important to note the very terms used by the respondents who confirm that "the teaching of English as a modern language, in its educational dimension, contributes to the understanding of other cultures" (translation is mine). Most stakeholders do not question the significance of English language teaching at the secondary school level. For example, pedagogical advisors view it positively as in line with the skills expected in the 1st and 2nd cycles of secondary education. They express various views about it, such as
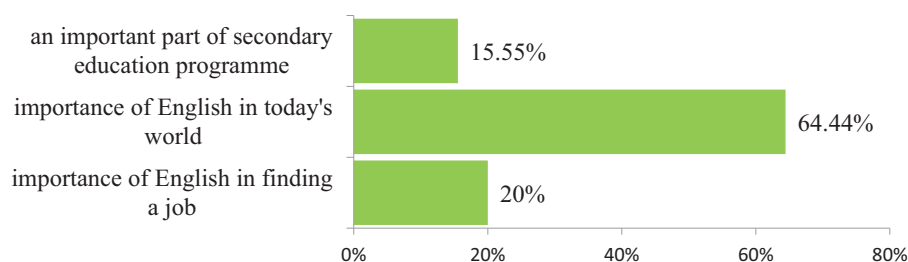

Fig. 5. The importance of introducing English at secondary school level.

'the integration of English into our daily life (business, media)' while others claims that it is 'an integral part of overall development' and 'a tool for cognitive development' (translation is mine).

Furthermore, the arguments that consider English language instruction as a means 'of communicating values and symbols intrinsic to English' highlight the cultural dimension of the language itself. According to a DDES resource person, 'Learning English facilitates access to alternative value systems and worldviews, fostering intercultural understanding' (translation is mine). This is one of the main benefits in terms of 'boosting self-confidence, a sense of commitment and initiative', 'overcoming stereotypes to promote living together' and 'integrating cultural specificities'. Finally, learning English has a number of additional advantages, such as 'improved concentration', 'adaptation to change', 'adaptive capacity to integrate the environment,' 'the ability to analyze daily life and to be able to react to various situations such as during travels' (translation is mine).

For most of the respondents in the study, the teacher's role seemed to be paramount in the successful implementation of English language teaching. Respondents who were informed, proactive and convinced of the importance of English for their children's academic and professional success were more likely to be catalysts for the implementation of the program, making it a mobilizing project and an innovation for the benefit of the population of Zinder.

3.7. The Limitations of English Language Teaching

The course of the research prompts a reflection on the consequences of the inclusion of English in secondary education as constructed by the respondents. Reactions to this question are diverse and vary depending on the respondent's position. To answer the research questions concerning the difficulties encountered in the process of developing, integrating, and learning English, or to understand the cultural misunderstandings between teachers and students, different perspectives were identified. These points of view mention the absence of clearly defined objectives on the part of educational authorities, the lack of coherence in the educational system, the issue of language training, the lack of scholarships and study trips, and the lack of testimonies of satisfaction with outstanding teachers. With regard to deficiencies in the learning of English, the respondents expressed negative views on the skills of teachers when they considered that "teachers do not know how to handle teaching tools" and that "because teachers are deficient, they do not know the different ways of improving the performance of the target group."

Accordingly, the responses provided insight into the underlying causes of this dissatisfaction. These are: "lack of investment in English teaching", "inadequate investment by the government, resulting in a shortage of books and other teaching materials in libraries", and "the absence of political regulation in personnel management and the posting of teachers." A limited number of dynamic statements can be identified in this phase, deploring the attitude of teachers who show a lack of interest or fear: "the sources stem from a lack of motivation on the part of teachers in carrying out their duties."

In a similar vein, some education administrators' statements referring to teachers as "unmotivated," "no initiative," "not qualified," "no in-service training" and "no profile" have been subject to criticism. However, these facts are reflected in the 2021 Report by the Ministry of Secondary Education (p. 37), which shows that, in English, difficulties related to content are found throughout the Zinder region, with a frequency of 40.52%, and those related to the language of instruction represent 50%. Additionally, the exchanges emphasized the hidden configurations of teachers in relating the facts as they are on the ground, due to some reasons of "extreme distrust of political tendencies." These tendencies are influential in providing the teaching profession with an imbalance that hinders its functionality.

Another observed hindrance for English teaching in Zinder resides in financial constraints, which push some people to join the profession for survival due to the lack of alternative opportunities; this reduces their motivation to teach effectively. Regarding this issue, many aspects has been cited: "temporary teaching contract, lack of permanent appointment," the "politicization of the education sector where a teacher's assignment is decided at the level of a personalized institution," "the impunity of those who manipulate the assignment system," "the lack of will on the part of individuals to solve the problem." The survey conducted as part of this research revealed several instances of failure in the system, including "the lack of commitment on the part of decision makers," where hierarchical relations are significantly complex due to what Dion (1987, p. 115) described as a "bureaucratic phenomenon."

Furthermore, the prevailing habitus of teachers, who predominantly teach English "as they have learned it," constitutes a notable resistance to change. Consequently, it can be observed that language teaching progressively assumes the role of entrepreneurial logic, which will ultimately lead to the conceptualization of job search in terms of negotiable goods.

Moreover, the findings of this research have highlighted significant disparities among teachers concerning their professional aspirations, with factors such as "low salary," "work condition," "the nature of the contract" and the "lack of vocation." In fact, for pedagogical advisors, these are

the usual problems where English teachers are trained in other disciplines and professions. As a consequence, these teachers display "a lack of proficiency in teaching methods" which is worsened by "inadequate supervision and training workshops" along with "the lack of library resources." From another perspective, the majority of teachers did not receive initial pedagogical training and did not enter the teaching profession through a vocational path. This situation concurs with Daouda and Barreteau (1997, p. 6), who emphasized that "the failures of the school system can be explained, not only by economic difficulties, but also by the poor integration of the school into society and the inadequacy of teaching methods' (translation is mine).

By placing emphasis on the interaction between social context, rules of language use (including grammar), meaning, and functionality, the analysis suggests that some teachers may have been pursuing a non-practical aim in their communication. In the school context, the study enabled us to understand the purpose of teaching English, which appears to be interactive, functional, and socio-cultural, but is limited to certain contexts or situations in which teachers and students remain at an unsatisfactory level.

Thus, the analysis indicates that the act of teaching English is synonymous with facilitating communication in English. This result is not surprising given that difficulties related to the teaching and learning of English at school are often reduced by students' daily activities. For instance, teachers' remarks concerning their students' achievements in relation to their prior English lessons reveal that the overwhelming majority of learners are successful because of their innate abilities and family support, particularly in the context of home-based educational support.

In addition to the aforementioned points, it must be noted that "due to their origin, students have no notion of knowledge, accessibility, and use." Respondents lamented that "there is a lack of discipline," "parents are poor and lack interest in school," "students are careless and they study in overcrowded classrooms." It should also be added that learners are often left to cater for themselves. These factors provide a more fundamental basis for reflections on the evolution of students' ordinary representations of both general education and English language teaching.

In contexts where education in general and English language education in particular have a lesser status, and socio-economic and/or historical constraints weigh heavily on the main actors involved, teaching English seems devoid of rationality. In the absence of an objective education system, its use will be confronted with situations whose complexity far exceeds the capacities of its understanding, affecting the conclusions of effective reasoning, and consequently, the content of the beliefs of the achievement. These questionable beliefs (e.g., lack of proficiency in teachers and students and inadequate educational policies) may also be subject to incomplete adherence. One resource person has expressed the view that this conception is highly open to criticism, but first of all it presupposes a form of "transparency in the management of educational institutions."

4. Conclusion

The parallel crises between the policy of integrating English as a secondary language and the conceptions of teachers in the implementation of this program tend towards non- "consensual" values. Nevertheless, the consensus on the objectives to be achieved resulting from this work means that the debate or discussion focuses more on the means to be implemented and the intervention strategies to be adopted in favor of the inclusion of the language. If this analysis is relevant, then we must conclude that its scope is limited; by focusing on teachers' and their partners' dubious and fragile beliefs, the analysis can only account for beliefs whose genesis is guided by rational procedures. The process of defining the typical perverse effects of the national education problem makes it possible to limit, to some extent, the scope of explanations from an invisible hand, while perhaps avoiding unforeseen consequences. To be more precise, the various partners in education have practically the same concern: improvement of the education system without measuring the unintended and unforeseen consequences of the policy, which requires many resources.

Taking into account the views of the education experts and teachers consulted, the research identified the main suggestions for improving the teaching of English as a second language in the city of Zinder. These are presented as follows:

- ✓ Build the capacity of those involved in the teaching of English through reliable teaching methods, ensure that they master the process, and respect the stages that characterize it.
- ✓ Ensure learning centers are provided with the adequate English documentation;
- ✓ Professionalize teachers and integrate them into the civil service;
- ✓ Make the English test compulsory during high school completion examinations (Baccalaureate) for *A4* (arts and literature) candidates rather than a choice between Arabic and English.

✓ Provide schools with qualified staff and a favorable working environment (textbooks, teachers' guides, and a language laboratory).
✓ Raising learners' awareness of the importance of English in international communication, science, and business.
✓ Improve the quality of teaching by providing grants for teachers to study abroad;
✓ Encourage a change in attitudes among the general public, technical service staff, and various institutions involved in teaching English.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

I hereby certify that I have NO affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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