

# Language-in-Education Policy and Practice in the Democratic Republic of Congo

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## ABSTRACT

This paper concentrates on the language-in-education policy and practice in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) particularly in Kalemie region. It intends to examine the practicality of language-in-education policy in schools and to examine the challenges pertaining to the implementation of the language of education policy. Data collection was done in four schools, two primary and two secondary schools in Kalemie region. The study employed a qualitative approach and the data were gathered through interviews, focus group discussions, observation and documentary review. Simple random sampling was used to get standard six pupils, form one students and teachers. The study employed the Proficiency Theory as a theory of bilingual education developed by Cummins. The study reveals that teachers from secondary schools use French language as a medium of instruction. It also indicates that language competence of the students is very weak. This is due to the transition from the national language, Kiswahili to French. The study notes that students are not comfortable with the medium of instruction, in this case French. It was discovered that, teachers face serious challenges on implementing the policy, such as students not being comfortable with the medium of instruction in the class, absence of teaching and learning materials, inadequate textbooks in schools, and lack of an organized library. However, the students indicated that, even if they have problems with French, they still prefer it to Kiswahili, since it is a language for their future job opportunities. The study recommends that there is a need for a political will to ensure the existence and growth of African languages and their position particularly in education.

**Keywords:** bilingual education, Democratic Republic of Congo, language policy, language-in-education, language practice, medium of instruction.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

This article focuses on language of education policy and practice in schools in the Democratic Republic of Congo (henceforth DRC). Language is an important tool that is useful in communication. Through it, we consider different circumstances that we encounter in our everyday interactions. In the education system, there is the language of education policy which decrees the language employed in spreading knowledge at different levels. The use of mother tongue as a channel through which knowledge is imparted cannot be underestimated. Learning to read and write in the language used at community level facilitates learners to acquire knowledge. It enables learners to participate in a lesson actively since the education is facilitated in a language that is familiar to them. Such learners encounter an important growth in confidence in their process of learning. This paper focuses on the practicality of language of education policy about the language of education used at the various levels in schools and the challenges for implementing the language policy in DRC.

## II. BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a general agreement among educators and scholars in Africa (Baker, 2006; Ellis, 2005; Kangas, 2000; Benson, 2000) that the first language of the pupils should be considered as the medium of instruction. After each of the colonized African country won independence, policies for the newly independent states were put in place. Alexander (1992) argues that the past four decades have demonstrated that the formulation of policy, particularly language-in-education policy, is frequently motivated by political expediency rather than financial or educational success.

The language of education policy is a key example of the educational struggle facing many countries in Africa presently. Research on language-in-education policy has stretched to include not just top-down, overt and de jure policies stated through official documents establishing the rationale and the mechanics

of language programmes or expressing mission statements or curricula, but also bottom-up policies that are not explicit or not established by authority but are derived or inferred from what people do and what people believe in (Spolsky, 2004).

Despite studies on the language condition in education all over Africa that highlights the effectiveness of these languages (students' mother tongues) as media of education, the use of African languages in education generally remains contentious (Benson, 2000). Additionally, Obanya (1998) claims that, many mother tongue education programmes, even those that were widely publicized as being very effective, have only reached the investigational stage, with other, even more strongly exposed programmes ending quickly following a change in government regime.

Cummins (2000) asserts that multilingual countries must decide which domestic or authorised language(s) to be employed in the public and private spheres of government and administration. The usage of these languages in the educational setting may be impacted by and encouraged by these policy choices which typically confer status to foreign or ex-colonial languages. In several of these nations, the amount and kind of sustenance that second language pupils require to be successful intellectually has proven to be a recurrent issue. Pupils need to learn the language of instruction simultaneously that they are expected to acquire academic content in the same language.

Additionally, Cummins (2000) contends that educational policy and practice in situations with a diversity of linguistic expressions may be built on imprecise presumptions concerning the characteristics of human education, particularly the acquisition of second languages. Furthermore, Skutnabb-Kangas *et al.* (2000) contend that studies are required that not only analyse language policy but also concentrate on their application in the African setting. This is essential because data reveals that, despite the plethora of outstanding policies developed throughout Africa, their implementation efficiency is still questionable.

Spolsky and Shohamy (1999) describe "Language practice as the deducible hidden principles that appear to trigger the language use of a given community, while they define language ideology as the group's generally accepted ideas about the language and its use" (p. 48). They show that a policy may exist, yet it may not restrict people's behaviour because of their ideology regarding a particular language. For instance, even if the policy may clearly indicate that French should be the language of instruction, people still speak English because they believe it to be a language of the wider communication.

As for language policy in Africa, Barber (2002) contends that before the arrival of the colonialists, the continent was home to a variety of languages, all of which were essentially equal in status; no language was better than the other. This changed after Africa was colonized because the Africans were forced to speak the colonizers' languages. This led to classification of countries as Francophone, Anglophone, and Lusophone. This condition has minimised the status of African languages to be regarded as lower in comparison to European languages. Larry (2003) points out that, English and French speaking nations were powerful. As a result, they gained the lion's share, making it the primary medium of instruction and communication for almost all African countries. In African countries, informal communication was used in mother tongues. For instance, among its 11 official languages, South Africa, a multilingual country, favours the employment of English and Afrikaans (Melchers, 2003). When we look closely at this situation, we can see that the mother tongue has no place in any formal situation. Western languages have dominated everywhere reducing the value of African languages by putting it behind English, French, or Portuguese.

Moreover, Kamwendo (2006) states that, since apartheid era in South Africa, language has been one of the dividing factors rather than unifying. Before independence, English was recognized as the prestigious language, a language to be spoken by people of higher status. Below there was Afrikaans, a language of the whites with Dutch origin who are the minorities. At the bottom there were African vernacular languages which were spoken by the indigenous black Africans. According to Webb (1996), language played various and important roles in South African politics. Webb submits, "The roles included defining racial groups, which supported apartheid; another role was to establish the political power of the white Afrikaans-speaking electorate" (p. 54). Therefore, the establishment of South African 11 official language policy was viewed as a way towards eliminating the problems which had initially been caused by language. It was a way to bring equality among all communities in South Africa.

Mputubwele (2003) explains that the presence of hundreds of languages in DRC has made the language-in-education policy a very critical issue. Each administration responded differently to this issue. Four national languages, namely Kikongo, Lingala, Kiswahili, and Tshiluba emerged as a result of the interest in local languages. In addition, Mputubwele (2003) clarifies that, upon the country's independence, the presidential edict designated French as the official language, a status that has persisted to the present day. The prevalence of French significantly impacted the development and utilization of mother tongue in schools. The imposition of the language of our colonial master's in education seems to be different to the implementation in schools. The domination of French language in education system in the country weakens the teaching and learning in schools. During colonial rule, the French language was forced on the Congolese education system by making it the language of education in schools and the

administrative language.

In fact, people were discouraged from speaking their vernacular languages; these languages were utilized, taught in lower schools, and left for informal communication among ethnic groups, whereas French was accorded a high standing (Mputubwele, 2003). Congolese people were resistant in the process of learning French, as the focus was put in their mother tongues. This situation impacted negatively on learning of French which was regarded as a superior and prestigious. However, due to the on-going obstacles, the French language has not advanced as expected. This has reflected in the national examination council of DRC report of 2012, where the medium of instruction was pointed out as a problem.

### III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopted the theory of bilingual education by Cummins (1980, 1991, & 2000). The work of Cummins (1980) has made a key influence to the theory concerning the development of bilingual education. Cummins (1980) came up with the proficiency theory that makes the difference between two opposing kinds of language proficiency, that is: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) which are the 'surface' skills of speaking and listening and which are usually acquired rapidly by many students; mostly by those from language backgrounds similar to French who spend a lot of their school time interrelating with native speakers. The other is Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) which is the foundation for a child's aptitude to cope with the academic demands placed upon him/her in several subjects.

Cummins (1991) considers that when learning one language, a child gets a set of skills and implicit metalinguistic knowledge that can be drawn upon when working in another language. The common underlying proficiency thus offers the base for the progress of both the first and the additional language. It follows that any development of common underlying proficiency that takes place in one language will have a useful effect on other languages. Additionally, Cummins notes that, it is very significant that students should be motivated to continue their native language development and one of the ways in which this can be done is by parents supporting their children at home by providing them with occasions to read widely in their mother tongues. He also suggests that parents should make some time every evening to converse with their children in their native languages what they did at school. They should give their children time to explicate in their native languages how they solved mathematical problems or conducted experiments in school. This theory was important for the study since it carries to perspective the vibrant role that mother tongue plays in the academic life of a child. Through its diverse skills are acquired and the child's ability to cope with numerous demands that are academic in nature is taken care of.

### IV. METHODOLOGY

#### A. Research Approach and Research Design

The study used qualitative approach to analyse data collected through interview and focus group discussions by narrating and giving the description to the records. Descriptive research design was used in order to collect data by describing the characteristics of a population.

#### B. Area of the Study

The study was conducted in Kalemie region, Tanganyika Province in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Kalemie, formerly Albertville, is a region on the western shore of Lake Tanganyika. The study was conducted in four schools, two primary and two secondary schools. The study area was chosen for various reasons, namely the researcher thought that the respondents in this area would give important data on the language of education policy and practice. The other reason is that this, the region is multilingual with multilingual pupils. This allowed the researchers to experience what the policy says about the language-in-education and its implementation in schools.

#### C. Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

Simple random sampling was used to select standard six students, form one students and teachers. Six students from each school were selected randomly and each one was given equal chance to participate fully in group discussions. Each student among the standard six and form one were given a unique number from one to 10 (in group of 10) then each number was placed in a bowl and mixed thoroughly. The researcher selected numbered tags at random from the bowl. All students who possessed the number selected by the researcher participated in the study. The same method was used to select teachers for the interview. At each school, the researchers picked two teachers due to the fact they all had equal opportunity to participate in the study under the objective required to obtain information about language-

in-education policy.

#### D. Data Collection Instruments

As it is typical for this type of evaluation research, interviews were conducted with teachers. Interview, as one of the procedures employed in the study, is beneficial as it helps the researcher to obtain more data from the respondents including information which was not clear or that necessitated more elaboration. In the focus group discussions, the researcher facilitated group discussions with secondary school and primary school students in which they were encouraged to speak freely and spontaneously regarding the implementation of language of education policy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The researchers' observation was used in order to observe the medium of instruction as per the national programme of secondary and primary education policy of 2005 reviewed in 2011. Observation focused on the language policy and its practice in and outside the classrooms. The researcher observed physically what was going on in the class during teaching and learning activities without asking any question. Moreover, the research observed the linguistic landscaping within the schools' parameters. As for the documentary review, the researcher reviewed the National Programme of Primary and Secondary Education of 2005, reviewed in 2011 on language of education policy as well as the constitution of the DRC.

### V. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### A. Language Used as medium of Instruction in Classes

Responding to the language used as the medium of instruction in the interview, teachers from secondary schools explained clearly that it is only French language that is used as medium of instruction in classes. However, they do not hesitate to use Kiswahili when they discover that students do not understand well what was explained. They observed that this situation is not frequently used in classes. A teacher from secondary school 1 stated: "I only use French language as the medium of instruction. However, I can switch to Kiswahili if I discover that the students do not get my concepts, and I do this especially in the afternoon hours."

On the other hand, primary school teachers had different views concerning the medium of instruction. Some teachers use French and Kiswahili as the medium of instruction and others use French as the sole medium of instruction. Most of the schools from the rural areas use Kiswahili as the medium of instruction they abide with the policy and the implementation of the national programme of primary and secondary education. Primary schools located in the urban areas use French as the medium of instruction. Such schools do not abide to the policy of the language-in-education in the national programme of primary and secondary education, since the policy stipulates that Kiswahili as a local language of the area should be considered as the language of education and French be used as a subject focusing on oral only.

The National Programme of Primary and Secondary Education stipulates, "Au degré élémentaire, 1er et 2ième années primaires la langue nationale ou du milieu est à la fois langue de l'enseignement et discipline enseignée. Le français est à ce niveau discipline enseignée, son apprentissage est limité à l'oral" (Republique Democratique Du Congo [RDC], 2005, p.17). [The instruction in one of the four main national languages depending on the region is provided in the first two classes of primary, elementary levels standard 1 and standard 2. French is taught as an introduction subject focusing on oral teaching] (DRC, 2005, p. 17)

Observing this mismatch between what the policy says and its practice on the language of education in primary schools, the researchers noted that, the rural primary schools were adhering to the medium of instruction as indicated in the national programme of primary and secondary education in the country. For the urban primary schools, they do not observe what the policy stipulates. In this case the researcher asked a teacher from a primary school 1urban, why they do not adhere to the policy, and he replied:

*We do not adhere to the policy because our classes are multilingual. Therefore, the only medium of instruction that fits in the class is only French. Since classes have pupils from different regions of DRC where Kiswahili is not used, pupils from Kinshasa, Kasai and Bandundu, bas-Congo are all here, they do not speak Kiswahili; additionally, we also have pupils who are from other countries for example we have pupils from Burundi, Central Africa Republic, Senegal as well as Ivory coast whose parents are working here in DRC; these pupils do not know Kiswahili so using Kiswahili is unfair and inappropriate for their learning. (Interview: 10/05/2022)*

Generally, the view on this matter indicates that secondary school teachers in secondary school 1 urban and secondary school 2 rural implement the language of education policy as directed in the National programme of Primary and Secondary Education of 2005. This is to mean that, French is given more

value in secondary schools compared to the other four national languages. In primary schools, the situation is not the same. The primary schools situated in the rural areas seem to implement the language of education policy as directed by the national programme of primary and secondary education. On the other hand, primary schools situated in the urban do not implement the medium of instruction as stipulated in the national programme of primary and secondary education.

Observations of the linguistic landscape were made in PS1, PS2 primary schools and SC1, SC2 secondary schools. The researchers focused on monitoring the linguistic landscape at the above-mentioned schools in order to determine whether the design of school signs corresponded to the language policy. In order to strengthen school language policy, schools should make an effort to increase the usage of French. The linguistic landscape centred on the terminology used to refer to classrooms, offices, labs, and other school structures such as kitchens and recreation centres. The emphasis was also placed on the language used on school signboards inside and outside of schools. It was observed that French was utilized on both secondary and primary school signs. On the signboards, neither Kiswahili nor French were utilized at all. In addition, signs in Kiswahili were observed in the offices of secondary school principals. The researcher classified this as a surprising instance.

In response to a cross-checking question about the signboards in their offices, the heads of SC1 and SC2 secondary schools stated that they preferred Kiswahili because their offices were meant for the general public, both those who spoke French and those who did not, because Kiswahili is the majority language spoken in Kalemie. They noted that in secondary schools, the school's motto, mission, and vision must be inscribed in French, and that even the school's signboards must be in French, as French is the principal language of communication in secondary schools. The main findings from linguistic landscape observations and responses for probing questions indicate that there are efforts made to reinforce French language in schools as the policy stipulates. The researcher noted that when designing signboards in the schools the efforts to make language policy improvement is considered first.

In acknowledgement of bilingual education and making African languages strong, Brock-Utne (2005) suggests the implementation of a three-language paradigm. In this concept, students would use a home language throughout the first grade while also receiving instruction in the regional language. In secondary and university education, the regional language would become the medium of instruction. Then, a global language would be learnt as a subject after the regional language is adopted as the language of education.

According to Wolff (2002), most governments have historically been unwilling to implement decisions, decrees, and constitutional provisions. Governments typically limit themselves to implementation-avoidance methods. He asserts that they accomplish this through the use of documents containing numerous vague paragraphs with vague modalities and time frames, the absence of overtly stated measures to ensure compliance, the absence of provisions for continuous assessment, and the lack of funding, publicity, and implementation agencies. Moreover, Adeyeni (2008) submits that, establishing home languages in backing of bilingualism has long been considered as a waste of funds with no, immediate economic benefits by many African governments. According to him, this provides African countries with ready-made justifications for not implementing language-in-education programmes. These justifications include lack of fund, labour, material resources, and functional models.

#### *B. Discouragement of Kiswahili in Secondary Schools*

In the interviews conducted by the researcher on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 2022, another important topic was the punishment to secondary school students who speak Kiswahili on school grounds. As evidenced by the linguistic landscape of the schools, "Speak French, No French, No Service" signs were widely dispersed across the secondary schools included in this study. No primary school signage promoting the use of French was observed. Students are expected to speak French at all times in secondary schools, with the exception of Kiswahili classes. Regarding the tendency to reprimand kids who spoke Kiswahili, teachers had a variety of opinions.

First, all teachers agreed that the goal of discipline is to help children improve their language skills rather than to harm them. According to the language-in-education policy, students who are allowed to speak Kiswahili will have trouble passing exams that are only in French. A teacher from SC1 said that punishment is important to aid in students' understanding what they learn in class. Second, they claimed that students are punished because they are expected to put a lot of time and effort into learning a foreign language, in this case French, despite the fact that they are well-versed in Kiswahili. In their homes and on the streets, where French is rarely spoken, they highlighted their fluency in Kiswahili. Furthermore, punishment was not viewed as inhibition in teaching and learning, since they revealed that it is normal in the DRC to punish students in order to get them to learn what the teacher desires. One of the teachers stated, "It is evident that French will continue to be a barrier to learning if pupils are allowed to do whatever they choose." They argued that the administration of the penalty must be cautious to prevent physical harm. However, respondents were of the opinion that corporal punishment is not necessary for students to learn French. Instead, they suggested that counselling sessions in which the necessity of

learning and speaking French is explained to pupils could work wonders. In addition, respondents indicated that the DRC has a statute overseeing school penalties. Therefore, they emphasized that punishment that hurts students is prohibited and proposed that schools had to comply with this rule. Article 61 of the constitution stipulates “the prohibition of torture and of cruel, inhuman or degrading punishments or treatment” (p.17) Positive punishments for the benefit of the kids, such as writing lengthy essays, contributing to the creation of the school newsletter, completing additional homework assignments, and maintaining a clean classroom, may be the best alternative.

However, some respondents (teachers) were of the view that students do not need to be punished to be able to speak French. Instead, they suggested counselling sessions by professionals who can explain the importance of learning and speaking French. Moreover, teachers revealed that DRC had enacted a law to control the way punishments are meted out to students in schools. Article 61 of the constitutions stipulates “the prohibition of torture and of cruel, inhuman or degrading punishments or treatment” (p.17).

In a focus group discussion the students expressed clearly their concern by saying they get punished when they speak Kiswahili. One of the students said, “I knelt two days consecutively from 8:00 in the morning till 12:00 noon in front of the academic master’s office for speaking Kiswahili.” The other one narrated that he was caned several times by the different teachers due to the use of Kiswahili. This situation is so usual in the selected schools. Students were afraid of being victims of these punishments. Therefore, they are forced to speak French though they are not competent in it. Moreover, the researchers observed a number of sticks on the corners of the academic master office and the staffroom. When the researcher asked the academic master why he was keeping sticks in the office, he replied with a smile, “These sticks are important to me. I use them to punish students who speak Kiswahili and others who are problematic here at school. They do not understand anything without a stick.”

This result matches with the study findings by Tibategeza in (2009) in Tanzanian’s secondary schools where punishment was meted to students who were speaking Kiswahili in class and around the school surroundings. In Africa as a continent in general, punishing students who speak African languages in schools seems to be a normal situation. This is done in order to reinforce ex-colonial languages which are the languages of instruction in most African schools. In general, the data collected from teachers in secondary schools indicate that kids are punished when they use another language other than French. This is a total contradiction regarding the promotion of the use of two languages in education.

As recently as 2016 the students of a Catholic school in Assam (India) were barred from having their lunch and made to stand for 90 minutes for breaking the institution’s rule of speaking only English. Elsewhere in India, teachers at a Catholic school put a board around the neck of students violating a standing order to “speak only in English in the school.” The board read “I never speak in Telugu” (Karmakar, 2016).

### *C. Challenges regarding the Medium of Instruction in Schools*

In the interview with teachers conducted from two primary and two secondary schools in rural and urban areas it was noted that there are some challenges in relation to the medium of instruction. A teacher at primary school 2 rural stated, “The medium of instruction is confusing as the severe problem is the capacity of pupils to cope with the language of instruction which is French. It is a burden to our pupils.” This situation was stressed by another teacher at secondary school 1 urban. The teacher said, “Our students have a serious problem with French language. This situation leads to difficulties in the teaching and learning process hence hard to implement language-in-education policy.” Another teacher at primary school 2 rural and secondary school 1 urban pointed a finger at teaching material. A teacher at secondary school 1 urban stated, “Another challenge we face is the absence of teaching and learning materials.” In this study, most of the teachers stated that the teaching and learning materials are not enough for the students. Textbooks are very few in schools, and no organized library for the students to go and read or borrow books. A student cannot borrow a book to read and do some exercises privately. Learning a foreign language necessitates enough textbooks in that given language, which is not the case in the selected schools.

In a group discussion with the students and pupils, not being able to master French properly came out clearly as one of the fundamental challenges to the students and pupils in schools. A student at secondary school 2 rural stressed, “Instructions given in French is a challenge for me. I feel good only when the teacher starts explaining in Kiswahili.” Other four students expressed the same concern. Students at secondary school 1 urban as well expressed their challenges with the use of French as the medium of instruction. A student at this school said, “I only enjoy the lessons when the teacher uses French and Kiswahili. It is very helpful to me because French is very difficult.” Other students expressed their frustrations as well in relation to the challenge of French language.

In the classroom observation, the researcher remarked that students/pupils have challenges on expressing themselves in French in class. Despite the teachers’ prohibition to speak Kiswahili, some students/pupils still speak it. Others decide to just keep silence due to the challenge connected with the

use of French. In some classes, the lessons are dull when the teacher decides to use French all the time. Students/pupils are not excited in the class as there is inactive participation of the students/pupils in class. Moreover, the researcher discovered that during French class it was only the teacher, who had one book reading it in front of the students. Students had no access to any book. This was discovered in all schools observed by the researcher lack of teaching and learning material was a serious problem.

Tuan and Mai (2015) observed that inhibition is the primary barrier to speaking French as a foreign language. They emphasized that, in contrast to reading, writing, and listening activities, speaking requires exposure to a variety of listeners and a cause to speak. The fear of speaking in a foreign language in the classroom is caused by a learner's timidity. They are anxious about making mistakes or are simply reticent about expressing themselves. They noted that pupils are filled with fear or disapproval of what their peers may say or embarrassment wherever they go as a result of something they may have said in the classroom (Tuan & Mai, 2015).

Rivers (1968) also considers that, students may have nothing or less to say, perhaps because the topic chosen by the teacher that day was uninteresting. Baker and Westrup (2003) concur that many students find it difficult to respond when asked to speak in a language that is not their native tongue because they may not know what to say, which terminology to employ, or how to use the language norms effectively.

Bowen (2005) and Abdalla (2015) concur that learners are cautious by nature because they are born exceedingly quiet. The majority of these students find it incredibly difficult to speak French in front of their classmates and teacher for fear of criticism. As a result, the majority of these students lack confidence and tend to be reluctant.

According to Tuan and Mai (2003), the usage of the mother tongue is also identified as a challenge for second-language French learners. According to them, when a big number of learners are from the same background or the majority of them share the same original language, they choose to use it since it is simpler for them to use and understand because it sounds natural. Harmer (1991) and Tuan and Mai (2015) offer insights as to why students employ their home language in the classroom. First, they declared that if students wish to participate in a discussion about an unknown issue, they will utilize their original language or express themselves first in their home tongue. Harmer (1991) underlined that using one's home language is natural, making it an easy language to learn. Finally, students will feel at ease using their native speech if their teachers do it frequently. As a result, the majority of students are not taught to use the target language during the learning process, which makes French usage challenging.

#### *D. Strategies to help Students with challenges in Relation to the Medium of Instruction*

Through the interviews with the teachers, strategies to help students who have difficulties in relation to the medium of instruction which is French were highlighted. Teachers stated it visibly that they face serious challenges on implementing the policy. As a result of students' discomfort with the medium of education, teachers also have a significant challenge. Teachers employ language alternation or code alternative as a way to assist students who have difficulties in class with the medium of teaching so that they may comprehend the lesson. This method incorporates varying degrees of alternative language usage. They use code-switching and code-mixing, respectively. Given that this code variation involves two independent forms of language modification, each is addressed individually.

##### *1) Code switching*

The medium of instruction in the classroom is French, while the learners' native tongue is Kiswahili in this situation, teachers code-switch to the learners' native languages. Code switching is a rational reaction by an educator to a particular type of teaching and learning circumstance. In an interview with an instructor at secondary school 2 rural, he stated it straight forward:

*I code switch in my lesson to make comprehension of the lesson easy. Without code switching, the lesson cannot be understood. This situation is also expected by our students in the class, he added. Students expect teachers to code switch during the lesson. If you don't do this, you will be teaching yourself in the class. This is to mean that the learners will not concentrate to the lesson till you change the language they are used to. This is a reality in our classes. (Interview: 10/05/2022)*

During the interviews with teachers, the researchers noted that, at the classroom level, it is marked that all instructors employ this method. In establishing the role of this method, a number of distinct patterns emerged. The results imply that code-switching facilitated a range of functions between a teacher and pupils in the classroom. Some teachers described the functions of code-switching in the classroom in order to support the use of this method. One of the teachers in urban secondary school explained code switching's functions. They include:

- 1) To offer learners with access to clarified concepts in order to make lessons more understandable.
- 2) They aid in classroom management.

3) It elicits student response as it encourages pupils/ students to participate in the lesson.

Ferguson (2002) submits that, when students lack competency in the official language, teachers adopt code-switching as a pragmatic coping strategy. Teachers who are fluent in their students' primary language usually utilize this coping strategy. Other researchers (Setati *et al.*, 2002) contend that, given that French is the target language in Congolese schools and in accordance with the new principles of the National Programme for Primary and Secondary Education of 2011, code alternation practices are not only unavoidable but also essential in schools where French is both the language of instruction and the language of instruction (Setati *et al.*, 2002)

## 2) Code-Mixing

Code-mixing is often viewed negatively compared to code-switching. Although code-switching typically shows a lack of linguistic skill in the target language, it is not necessarily indicative of a speaker's inadequacy. My objective is not to determine if code-mixing is practiced by bilingual teachers who are fluent or not, but rather to explain how code-mixing functions as a classroom coping mechanism. In this study, code-mixing refers to a linguistic switch that takes place within a single phrase, also known as an intra-sentence change. During the interviews, several teachers disclosed that their command of French, the instruction language, was adequate. In interviews, all the eight teachers expressed that they have no problem in relation with French language used as the instructional language but listening to their vocabulary and diction throughout the interview, the researcher observed, however, that a few of the them had difficulties with French.

Furthermore, Poplack (1980) suggests that non-fluent bilinguals prefer to code-switch between phrases, whereas fluent bilinguals like to code-switch within sentences (what we refer to in this study as code-mixing or intra-sentential alteration). According to Myers (1993), code switching typically occurs for two reasons: first, the speaker's lack in the target language, the second reason is multiple communicating purposes. It is believed that code-switching serves a purpose in the communication of bilinguals and multilingual.

Duran (1994) contends that code-switching is inseparably linked with bilingualism. Other academics, such as (Ferguson, 2002; Meyers, 1993; Poplack, 1980), assert that code-switching in a bilingual's discourse is also the outcome of psycholinguistic development. Among them, Myers and Brown assert that code-switching is a natural occurrence among bilinguals. Anderson (2006) explains that when a speaker wishes to emphasize a certain remark, he or she will change to the other language; "Llamépero no haba nadie." "I missed him terribly!" The transfer from Spanish (L1) to English (L2) highlights the speaker's fondness for a particular person. When the same sentence is repeated in two distinct languages, emphasis is also applied. According to a research by Taha (2008), Arab teachers of English tend to make comments in English and repeat them in Arabic to stress the point or ensure that their pupils comprehend what they are saying.

In a focus group discussion with students, they also informed the researcher that teachers do code switch in order to help them understand the lesson. The researcher asked the students if they are happy with the way they are taught. The students were in favour of this teaching strategy as one of them said, "French language is difficult, if they teach in French throughout the lesson we will not understand the content." This statement was supported by the rest of the students in the group.

During classroom observation in SC1 and SC2, the researcher discovered that teachers were trying to use French language in the lesson. However, the students were unable to follow the lesson correctly, the silence dominating when the teacher used French. The class became active when the teacher shifted the medium of instruction to Kiswahili. Moreover, the researcher noted that students were asking questions in Kiswahili though the teachers were discouraging the use of other languages apart from French.

The National Programme of Primary and Secondary Education discourages the usage of Kiswahili in secondary school. It states the only medium of instruction in secondary schools is French. The instruction in one of the four main national languages is provided in the first two grades of primary education, standard one and standard two. French is taught as an introductory subject focusing on oral teaching while French becomes the sole language of instruction and a subject to be taught from grade five to the university level. The implementation of bilingual education necessitates the equal utilisation of the two languages. Considering the usage of these codes' alteration in class, the bilingual schooling is far not practiced in schools.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This study focused on language of education policy and practice, focusing on four schools in Kalemie Region, in DRC. The study concludes that, instruction in mother tongue especially in primary school is a key in the achievement of the goals of education. Therefore, it should be enhanced and relevant resources put in place to implement the policy. There is enough evidence indicating the benefits as a result of the

use of home languages to impart knowledge to students. For instance, countries like China, Japan and Russia do not instruct learners in imported languages but have steadily developed in terms of technology.

In addition, there is an importance in introducing a course on Translation and Interpretation in the Teacher Training Colleges because linguistic barrier is an impediment to the understanding as well as transmission of knowledge. As such, translation, an important component in the comprehension process, should be given the attention it deserves if any benefits are to be attained in education. This course will be instrumental in ensuring that the language policy document in education among other vital ones is comprehended and the information contained therein effectively transmitted. The need for professional interpreters in the education system cannot be underestimated. This is because professional interpretation guards against incidences of misinterpretation that may lead to incorrect translations.

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