Refugees, immigrants, and language in Ivorian education

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Abstract

Through the Ministry of Education program *Programme des Écoles Integrées* (PEI) in Côte d'Ivoire, 26 rural public primary schools may use one of 10 local languages as the language of instruction in Grades 1-3 prior to switching to a French-only system. The purpose of a PEI school is to support basic academic skills development and French language acquisition for students who enter primary school with limited exposure to French. Students from PEI schools demonstrate stronger academic and French language outcomes compared to students from traditional French-only schools. However, neither the PEI program nor traditional schools account for multilingualism in the communities they serve nor do they provide language support to non-native students. In this exploratory study, I seek to understand how academic and learning outcomes for refugees and immigrants are supported in different school settings in Côte d'Ivoire. I observe three classrooms and interview three teachers, one stateless migrant parent, and two refugee parents about PEI and traditional schools. While teachers expressed mixed opinions about the benefits of PEI schools for non-native students, parents expressed positive opinions despite their limited knowledge of local languages and the lack of local language learning support. Observational and narrative analysis reveal that teacher strategies to support students who do not understand the language of instruction vary based upon teaching experience rather than training or available resources. Pedagogical techniques include ignoring students, call-response, and individual attention.

Keywords

Language teaching, refugee parent preferences, Côte d'Ivoire

Introduction

Côte d'Ivoire is home to 60+ local languages yet French, the nonlocal language imposed by the former colonial power, is the language of instruction (Brou-Diallo, 2011; Djité, 2000). Despite this, an estimated 43.91% of the population over the age of 15 lacks French literacy (UNESCO, 2017). The *Programme des Écoles Integrées* (PEI) is a Ministry of Education program that uses 10 local languages as the language of instruction while simultaneously teaching French as a Second Language in 26 rural public primary schools in Grades 1-3. The purpose of a PEI school is to support academic skills development and French language learning for students with limited exposure to French (Akissi Boutin & Kouadio N'Guessan,

2013; Brou-Diallo, 2011). Students from PEI schools demonstrate stronger academic and French language outcomes compared to students from traditional French-only schools (Akissi Boutin & Kouadio N'Guessan, 2013; Brou-Diallo, 2011). However, the PEI model does not account for multilingualism in the rural communities they serve nor does it provide specific language support to non-native students such as immigrants, migrants, refugees, and the stateless. Similarly, traditional French-only schools in both rural and urban settings do not provide language support for non-French speakers or account for multilingualism in the communities they serve; instead, the French language is used exclusively in these schools from the first day of school.

In this exploratory study of one traditional urban school, one traditional rural school, and one rural PEI school, I seek to understand how academic and learning outcomes for refugees and immigrants are supported in different school settings in Côte d'Ivoire. I do so through classroom observations and interviews with teachers and refugee and immigrant parents. While teachers expressed mixed opinions about the benefits of PEI schools for non-native students, parents expressed positive opinions despite their limited knowledge of local languages and the lack of local language learning support. Classroom observations revealed that teacher strategies to support students who do not understand the language of instruction vary based upon teaching experience rather than training or available resources.

Literature

Language of Instruction in sub-Saharan Africa

Research consistently shows that students who learn in their own language perform better academically and become more communicatively proficient in a second language that is taught as a subject, yet in many sub-Saharan African countries, former colonial languages remain the language of instruction (See Albaugh, 2014; Bamgbose, 2009; Prah, 2009). Current language of instruction models range from no local language use to local language use only at the primary school level (Albaugh, 2014). Parent preferences for language of instruction are not uniform across contexts or within countries (See Trudell & Piper, 2013). For example, all parents in a Ghanaian study preferred to send their children to English-only schools (Awedoba, 2001), whereas parents in a Nigerian study prefer bilingual schools (Amadi, 2012). A similar phenomenon occurred in pre-conflict Côte d'Ivoire, where parents feared local-language use in education was a tactic to ensure that only the elite can access high quality education (Djité, 2000).

Refugee Education

Literature on refugee education is limited but growing (Emert, 2013; Taylor & Sidhu, 2012). Refugee education research trends highlight gaps in teacher knowledge about refugee histories and needs (Barowsky & McIntyre, 2010; Dryden-Peterson, 2016; UNESCO, 2018). The needs that are most researched are language learning needs and psychological needs. There is a plethora of research about the trauma refugees experience (Betancourt et al., 2012; Hart, 2009), the need for teacher training to support trauma-affected students (Betancourt et al., 2012; Solorio, 2018; UNESCO, 2018), and language needs of refugee students (Betancourt et al., 2012; UNESCO, 2018). The 2019 UNESCO *Global Education Monitoring Report*, released in 2018, highlighted the needs of all migrant students, including refugees, immigrants, stateless persons, and internally displaced students, raising the concern that these students face strong barriers to education. These include language barriers which UNESCO found to be connected to migrant students exiting the education system. The report also detailed that teachers are ill-equipped to meet the multicultural, multilingual, and psychosocial needs of these students. The language and psychological needs of refugee students often overlap, as trauma is proven to negatively impact various aspects of student learning and thus can also hinder language learning (Betancourt et al., 2012; Hart, 2009; Solorio, 2018). The research demonstrates teachers' lack of understanding of the diverse educational histories the refugees bring and the lack of

refugee-specific education policies or trainings (Dryden-Peterson, 2016; Taylor & Sidhu, 2012), adding to the documented challenges teachers face in supporting refugee youth, as they are uncertain how to address language, cultural, and trauma needs.

*Vulnerable populations in Côte **d'Ivoire***. Ivorian schools house refugee students, internally displaced students, immigrant students, and stateless students at high levels **due to the country's long history of immigration,** two recent civil wars in 2002 and 2011, and wars in surrounding countries such as Liberia in 2003 (Bah, 2012; Chelpi-Den Hamer, 2011; Sany, 2010). In 2014, 24% of the Ivorian population self-identified as foreign despite the connection this identity has with civil war tensions (UNHCR, 2016). In March 2018, the UNHCR counted 1,573 registered refugees, 362 asylum seekers, and 692,800 stateless persons (UNHCR, 2018). In the early 1990s, refugee students could enroll in the Ivorian education system or in humanitarian-run refugee schools; this dual system was dissolved in 2001 by UNHCR request although some informal refugee schools remained (Chelpi-Den Hamer, 2011). Challenges integrating refugee students into the formal system were common, especially since the Ivorian education system struggles with limited resources, and refugee and stateless students face barriers to enrollment due to their lack of Ivorian identity cards (UNHCR, 2016).

Data and Methods

This exploratory study took place in **three contrasting sites in Côte d'Ivoire so I could** compare different language of instruction practices and environments potentially experienced by refugee and immigrant students in the diverse country. I selected a traditional French-only public primary school in urban Dyapo,[1] a traditional French-only public primary school in rural Konvi, and a PEI Brafé language public primary school in rural Konvi. My data consisted of classroom observations, interviews with teachers whose classrooms I observed, and interviews with refugee and immigrant parents of students in the observed classrooms. I conducted thematic and observational analysis on the data.

I received IRB exemption status from the Michigan State University board, obtained **research permission from the Côte d'Ivoire** Ministry of Education and the director of the PEI program, and was granted permission from the Regional Directors of National Education (DREN) for Dyapo and Konvi. I met with the school officials and teachers to explain the study, request permission, and recruit participants. One CP1 (first grade) teacher from each school offered to participate. With the aid of the CP1 teachers, I distributed study information to parents and met with the parent group for each school. Both processes enabled me to recruit parents from each of the participating classrooms for interviews.

I interviewed one teacher from each classroom that I observed and four non-Ivorian parents whose children were students in those classrooms. The parent identities were as follows: a stateless father born in Ghana living in rural Konvi; a refugee father from Niger in rural Konvi; an immigrant mother from Burkina Faso in urban Dyapo; and an immigrant mother from Guinée in urban Dyapo. I provided the participants with detailed information about the study and their rights following an IRB-approved script. During semi-structured interviews, I asked the parents about their language of instruction preferences and the teachers about the language teaching techniques they use. Interviews were recorded and transcribed.

I collected classroom observation data through fieldnotes and use of the *Stallings Snapshot Observation Tool*. Since this was an exploratory study, I was only in each classroom for one hour. Since the students and teachers were aware of my presence, I acknowledge that behavior modification occurred. The *Stallings Classroom Snapshot Tool* is designed to capture teacher behaviors when they are performing at their best in a small amount of time (World Bank Group, 2015). The *Stallings* tool required me to make 10 observations in a single class period, separated by equal intervals of time. In these observations, I marked what language was being used at that time by the teacher and by the majority of the students, what type of activity was occurring (i.e., academic, social, punishing), what subject was being taught, and what materials were used on a protocol sheet.

I collected and analyzed all data in French, but I translated the examples used in this paper into English. I used a thematic analysis approach on the interviews, where I coded the interviews inductively based upon the themes that emerged. I analyzed the fieldnotes from classroom observations through observational analysis using an inductive coding process to identify patterns in behavior. I analyzed the *Stallings Snapshot* observation data by calculating the percentage of times that teachers and students used various languages and the percentage of activities that occurred in different languages.

Findings

Non-**Ivorian Parents' Language** *Preferences*

Of the four parents I interviewed, two had children in the urban traditional classroom, one had children in the rural traditional classroom, and one had children in both the rural PEI classroom and the rural traditional classroom. The urban parents, Zuma (from Burkina Faso) and Fatimatou (from Guinée), had no prior knowledge of the PEI model of education. Both rural parents, Mawuli (from Ghana) and Dandou Ourfama (from Niger), were aware of the PEI model since the PEI and traditional schools share the same school yard. I gave all parents the same basic information about the PEI model since even the rural parents were not aware of all aspects of the program.

The parent interview analysis revealed that 3 out of 4 parents in my study support using local languages for instruction in public schools. This general support for local language schooling is surprising when compared to other research in sub-Saharan Africa (i.e., Trudell & Piper, 2014), where parents tend to be skeptical of using local languages at school for fear that their children would not successfully learn the official language necessary for success in society.

The non-Ivorian parents spoke about language use in schools relative to their own identities as non-Ivorian. Mawuli (rural, from Ghana) describes the difficulties he faces as a stateless person with no papers from Ghana or **Côte d'Ivoire, expressing fear that his children** will be barred from attending school due to their lack of identification papers. He also expressed desire for his children to have an official identity, something he felt would be possible through a traditional French education. He said,

> *All my children are in the French school. We do not speak Brafé. That's not our language. If the school teaches* **French, it's** *good. I think that the local language school is pointless for us. Maybe if it uses English, since ours is an English-speaking country. If our children learn French and our language, they can work in Ghana. The*

French way can educate the child. I want our children to learn, we are not here to learn a different language.

Mawuli views learning a local language **as incompatible with his children's academic** learning and their learning of French. His stateless status adds weight to his preferences for an education which will ensure his children **have access to formal spaces in Côte d'Ivoire by** learning in the official language. His stateless status in his native Ghana may also play a role when he says he might consider sending his children to an English school, as this would grant them access to Ghanaian life.

Contrary to Mawuli, who is in a precarious position as a stateless man, Dandou Ourfama who is a self-proclaimed refugee from Niger living in the same rural community expresses support for the local language school. Mawuli argued that his children learned the local language from their peers and do not need schooling to aid in their local integration, positioning school as a tool for adopting a national identity; Dandou Ourfama, who is also in a vulnerable position as a refugee, argues the opposite. Although Brafé is not his own language, he feels sending his children to the Brafé school will allow them to become part of the Konvi village community while also enabling them to complete high school. He said,

> *I think **it's very good when children** enroll in the Brafé school. It is important to speak and understand Brafé. We do not know the language. When you are here in Konvi, if you understand Brafé, your child is going to be okay. We send them to the Brafé school so that they learn Brafé. The Brafé school also provides an element to go to terminale [12th grade]. It becomes possible to understand.*

A refugee and a stateless person in rural Konvi, neither one of whom is a native Brafé speakers, each hold different perspectives on using local languages in school. For refugee Dandou Ourfama, local languages are tools for community integration and academic development, while for stateless Mawuli, local languages limit academic development and hinder national integration. For both, school is where relevant language learning occurs.

The two urban mothers, Zuma (from Burkina Faso) and Fatimatou (from Guinée), do not claim refugee or stateless identities, yet their foreign status still provides insight into the opinions of vulnerable immigrant populations in **Côte d'Ivoire. This is possible due to the** contentious nature of foreign identities in a country where the recent civil wars were partially rooted in divisions between Ivorians and non-Ivorians (Bah, 2012; Sany, 2010).

Zuma wavers between supporting the PEI model and the traditional French model. She views French as an academic language that signals educational status, yet she wants to **understand what happens in her child's school.** She says,

> *Schools using local languages, I think **they're good. When I say something in** my language, no one understands. But it is better to understand French in this country. At school we must use French. Our language is used more at home, so that I can understand. If my son is at home, he speaks our language. But at school he uses French, so he can understand a lot. The children must think in French at school. To speak French, you must be educated, and I am **not so I don't understand. You need** French or to have someone who can*

speak your language. We need to talk so we understand.

Zuma likes the idea of using a local language in school, except she fears that it will come at the cost of learning French—a skill she believes is needed to become educated and to communicate with others. Although she does support the PEI model, Zuma also agrees with Mawuli that French should be used in the classroom.

Fatimatou supported the PEI model **because "there are many people who do not speak French." Fatimatou claimed that she does** not speak French well while expressing concern that **"there is no one who can add local languages into schools." For Fatimatou,** language of instruction is an issue of general comprehension and allowing non-French speakers the opportunity to go to school rather than supporting French language acquisition.

The parent interviews provided insight into the language preferences of refugee, stateless, and immigrant parents. Although they did not address techniques to support language learning for their children, their preferences are important to understanding the value they place on sending their children to a local language or a French school. Three out of four parents support using a local language in school, because they see local languages as tools to aid in academic growth, French language acquisition, and community integration, and two parents expressed concern that local language use in schools could be detrimental to French language acquisition.

Teachers and Classrooms

The teacher interviews and corresponding classroom observations created a link between language preferences and pedagogical techniques. The two traditional

French teachers, Elodie (urban) and Mme Djere (rural) did not support the PEI model for similar reasons to the parental concerns, while the PEI teacher, Baako (rural), supported the model due to his belief in its academic potential.

The teachers discussed the strategies that they believe they use to support academic and language learning in their classrooms. The two traditional French teachers, Elodie (urban) and Mme Djere (rural) focused on strategies they use to help students learn French, while the PEI teacher Baako elaborated on teaching strategies he uses with all students regardless of their Brafé abilities.

Mme Djere's stated French teaching techniques included providing detailed explanations, repeating herself, requiring students to repeat after her, guiding their hands as they write, and requiring only French to be used in the classroom. Mme Djere also explained that she relies upon other students to aid their non-French speaking peers. She believes students learn French through immersion, in an exclusively French environment with peers who can guide non-French speakers to understanding. She says,

> *Using French is in their best interest.* ***When they use their language, it's*** *remedial. They learn French by means of seeing others do it. Then their French grows. When I put a sentence on the blackboard, to show a letter with its sound, I explain how it works but there* ***are some who don't automatically see*** *how it works. There are others who push them to it. When one goes to the blackboard and he does not say the sound, he looks around. He hears others. He repeats them. Even if he does not know what he said, he repeats it because of the others. Then someone*

explains to him what to say. It works. Another example is when we write. If he cannot write, I am obliged to take his hand and make it write. Once, twice, and then, we erase.

Mme Djere's belief that immersion and the aid of peers lead to French language acquisition is shared by her urban counterpart, Elodie. Elodie describes an almost osmosis-like notion of language learning, where students **come to understand French through "waves":**

When you start in French, there are some who understand and others who **don't. You take lessons in French, even if you're not following, and you are** *repeating. You must follow along in French. Because the students are cornered in the language, there are like these waves. That can allow us to teach everyone. At first it is difficult. But the children adapt, and it works. In class everyone is always made to listen to French for more than just a lesson. When you are doing a lesson, it is several sentences. We have another child sit with him, one who tells him things in French. Someone that tells him* **like this, like that, that's not the case. I** *use dialogues the most. The greetings, I start with the greetings. Hello, hello,* **goodbye, goodbye. It's little by little that** *they learn. Many are already in the process of learning French before they come to school. But as a teacher you must wait. They are led to understanding.*

Elodie focuses on her educational philosophy that learning French just happens while students learn other lessons, and she points to the specific techniques of using dialogues and peer support.

Baako, the only teacher with experience using a local language in the classroom, spoke about the lack of teacher training and resources. His focus on teaching challenges, while it cannot provide insight into the techniques that Baako believes he uses to support immigrant students in the classroom, sheds light on the challenges that impact what teachers do broadly.

What I can say is that teaching in a French school we at least received a lot **of training. Teaching in Brafé, it's good but it's not trained. I already know the language, but I didn't know how to** *write it, so I had to forge some. I am still motivated. In French at least I had* **materials. But in Brafé we don't have** *any documen***ts. It's a little lower** *quality in fact, relying on methods of sound. When I teach reading, I am not happy, and I must make do. The teaching is all in Brafé. Only in language class do we use French. Since I have been teaching a long time, I try to use the French pedagogical approach, but in Brafé. Today, we did* **the "reading four" lesson. They review** *the syllables of the sounds of letters. Have them write 30 words with the* **sound "é," and then write the syllable, "lé." And that's how the children find "attie," a Brafé word with similar** *sounds. Once the students find the word, they want sentences. I must improvise.*

Baako discusses the lack of resources and training to teach in a local language. By extension, he is also describing a lack of training for teaching French as a Second Language, which is part of the PEI model. Although Baako thinks using local languages can lead to better learning, he believes the lack of resources is causing the PEI model to be of lower quality

than the traditional French model. He fears that the potential of the PEI model to support language acquisition and academic learning is not being met, although research shows that PEI schools out-perform traditional schools in all subjects including French language (Brou-Diallo, 2011).

For refugee and immigrant students, there is another implication to the lack of teacher training described by Baako. If the government is unable to provide training for teachers to teach French as a Second Language for rural Ivorian students, it seems unlikely that the government is providing training targeted to meeting refugee and immigrant student needs in all schools.

Stallings Snapshot Observation Tool data. Per the *Snapshot* data, teachers mainly used the designated language of instruction while student language use varied. Baako (rural PEI teacher) used Brafé 70% of the time; during the 30% of instances noted in French, he used short French words interspersed in Brafé sentences or he was responding to outside visitors. Traditional teachers Mme Djere (rural) and Elodie (urban) used French 100% of the time.

Students in the rural PEI classroom, where the language of instruction is the language of the community, used Brafé 100% of the time even though at least one (the child of Dandou Ourfama, refugee from Niger) is not a native speaker. Students in the rural Konvi traditional classroom used French 80% of the time and Brafé 20% of the time, typically for socializing. In the urban Dyapo traditional classroom, students used French 50% of the time and local languages the remaining time; like their rural peers, local languages were used to socialize.

Insights from the observational analysis. Mme Djere (rural traditional teacher) provided an accurate assessment of the French teaching techniques she uses, while Baako (rural PEI teacher) and Elodie (urban traditional teacher) used techniques they did not describe. All teachers used call-and-response and peer aid to help struggling students.

Along with the common strategies, there were differences in the ways that teachers interacted with students who were showing signs of confusion or a lack of comprehension. Where Baako (rural PEI teacher) was teaching in the local language, Brafé, both Mme Djere (rural traditional teacher) and Elodie (urban traditional teacher) were teaching in the official yet non-local French language. This means that **the majority of Baako's students were native** speakers and not Brafé language learners, compared to all the **students in Mme Djere's** class who are non-native French speakers and French language learners. Similarly, the majority **of Elodie's class are non**-native French speakers, although some students are not French language learners since they only speak French at home. This is an important distinction, one that makes **it easier to observe Mme Djere's and Elodie's** language teaching techniques due to sheer volume of language learners in the classroom. However, it was not observationally clear in any of the classrooms which students were of refugee or other immigrant origin. What these observations can tell us is how teachers might respond to nonlocal students with any migratory history, which has implications for the special and vulnerable populations of interest in this study.

I observed more visual cues of non-comprehension in both French traditional classrooms than in the PEI classroom. Students in the rural traditional classroom were observed opening and closing their mouth quickly to

mimic speaking or otherwise not responding during call-and-response sessions, avoiding eye contact, and trying to get the attention of Mme Djere for help. The following vignette illustrates **Mme Djere's typical reaction to these student** behaviors:

> *Mme Djere writes some 2-letter combinations on the blackboard and says the sounds of each. She points to them for the students to say. A quarter of the class raise their hands. Mme* ***Djere focuses on the sound "lè": She*** *points to the letter pair without pronouncing it and asks the class to say a word using the sound made by that combination of letters. To encourage them, she asks the students in French,* ***"What do we call this?" while pointing*** *to her lips. The students say something in Brafé, and Mme Djere says in* ***French, "We call these lips," while*** ***writing "lèvre" ("lip") on the*** *blackboard. The students speak amongst themselves in Brafé while Mme Djere is writing. Mme Djere turns* ***around and says, "We speak French."*** *She continues using sounds to identify* ***French words. She points to "mè" and*** ***says, "Mè like in what word?" The*** *students are quiet, they look down at their tables or out the windows. She keeps asking. A student in the back says* ***"mom" ("maman"), and Mme Djere*** ***responds, "I want her other name, to go*** ***with the sound 'mè.'" Students shift in*** *their seats. Girls in the front row chat in Brafé. Mme Djere keeps asking, changing sounds occasionally and* ***chastising throughout. "What word*** ***goes with the sound 'lè'? Be quiet. What*** ***word? Pay attention. With 'lè.'"*** *No student responds to any of these*

questions, and Mme Djere answers ***herself each time. "Pay attention. Lèvre*** ***(lip) goes with 'lè.' Who can make a*** ***sentence with lip?"*** *Some students seem bored, others avoid eye contact and shift. Mme Djere keeps asking questions and answering herself. She again asks* ***who can make a sentence with "lèvre"*** *(lip). The girls in the front draw on the table, a group in the middle chats in Brafé, and Mme Djere repeats her question for 6 minutes. She then* ***provides her own example: "The lips of*** ***the virgin are red." Mme Djere asks*** ***who can write a sentence with "mère"*** *(mother). A girl in the back holds up a board where she wrote a squiggly line. Mme Djere asks again. She writes a sentence on the blackboard. The students chat in Brafé. Mme Djere* ***writes "a mother" on the blackboard.*** ***"Who can read this?" she asks. A*** *student in the middle of the room shouts* ***"mom," and a boy in the back says, "A*** ***mother." Mme Djere tells the students to*** ***write "a mother" on their boards. The*** *students write and quietly chat. Mme Djere helps a boy in the front by guiding his hand as he writes. A girl next to him draws a squiggle. All the students hold up their boards for Mme Djere to check. She walks around to* ***check the answers, saying "yes" or "do it*** ***again." She skips the girl who wrote a*** *squiggle, and the girl tries to get Mme* ***Djere's attention with eye contact,*** *following her, and raising her hand. Mme Djere does not speak to the girl. Mme Djere brings a boy to the front to write the response on the blackboard. She asks the class to raise their boards. All but 10 students copied the words from the board, most had the accent in*

the wrong direction. Mme Djere does not address the students who wrote nothing or those who wrote only a few letters. She focuses on the accent, describing the difference between è and é. She tells the students to erase their **boards and rewrite "une mère." She** *walks around the classroom to check the answers, but only corrects accents. Students who did not write anything are not addressed. Mme Djere looks at the big blackboard where a boy had* **written "une mére," and she asks** *another boy to correct it. She continues to correct accents and does not address the students who did not participate.*

Mme Djere often felt the need to respond to her own questions due to lack of student participation. While this cannot be solely attributed to language barriers, it was a typical strategy in this classroom. Combined **with Mme Djere's choice to ignore students who** were not participating in the writing task while focusing solely on the students who needed guidance on correct accent direction, it seems that Mme Djere was more inclined to support students who were demonstrably comprehending the lesson instead of providing extra support to students who were struggling. Again, while this cannot be exclusively attributed to language comprehension, the implication is that Mme Djere teaches as if all students understand French and the material instead of aiding students who do not understand.

Mme Djere did not only ignore signs of confusion or lack of comprehension; she also relied upon peer support. In the vignette, she asked for a student to come to the blackboard to **correct another students' work. The other technique in this vignette is Mme Djere's** decision to guide a student herself, helping a

student make the correct motions when writing. Both techniques were ones she described in her interview.

Asking other students to help their peers and call-and-response are techniques shared by Baako (rural PEI) and Elodie (urban traditional). Unlike Mme Djere, Baako and Elodie would use call-and-response to gauge student comprehension. Where Mme Djere would quickly move through call-and-response, ignoring lack of participation, Baako and Elodie would direct call-and-response to portions of the classroom that were not participating to encourage participation. This strategy suggests that Baako and Elodie were aware of their **students' non**-comprehension cues, and they responded by providing localized attention to classroom sections where low participation might indicate lack of comprehension. Baako provided the most energetic response, as seen in this vignette:

One boy is passing books out to the class. The students socialize in Brafé while Baako looks through the book. Baako says something in Brafé, and it looks like he is reading from the book. The students turn their pages. Baako walks around the classroom, checking that each student is on the correct page. While he is doing this, some students are socializing in Brafé and some are helping others to find the page. Baako points to the page in his book and speaks in Brafé. He appears to be reading aloud in Brafé, but the book is in French, so he must be translating on the spot. The students are silent. Baako asks a question in Brafé, students say **"no" in French. Baako speaks in B***rafé while the students silently watch him. He says something in Brafé which must be a question based on the intonation,*

the whole class says something together in Brafé to reply. Baako continues to ask questions in Brafé, gesturing and pointing to his head. The students say **"no" in French, and Baako asks a** *question with more energy. The students say something in Brafé. Baako asks longer Brafé questions. The student Brafé replies get longer. Some students are looking down, and Baako* **says, "Ben ye wa," while** *pointing to his eyes then himself. I think this means* **"Eyes up here" (I later confirmed this). He says, "Eyes up here" again, and all** *students look at him. Baako continues to speak in Brafé, some students laugh. Baako seems to be acting something out while speaking—he is walking around in a funny way, slumping and jumping. The students close their books together and simultaneously turn them over. Baako asks a question in Brafé, and all but three students raise their hands. A few students shout something out in Brafé. Baako asks something else in Brafé, and some students reply in Brafé. This type of question-answer is continued with increasing participation for three minutes. Baako is very energetic, getting more energy as he asks more questions, and the student replies have the same energy, gaining energy in the same way. Baako asks questions to different parts of the room, so that different subgroups all have a chance to answer. Students are responding.*

In this vignette, Baako seems to inject the class with energy, increasing his energy level as a response to lack of participation in an effort to increase participation. While this seems to work, he also shifts his attention to smaller

sections of the classroom to check that everyone is participating. Although as a non-Brafé speaker I cannot tell if the students are correctly responding to his questions, I could see that he was attentive to all his students and eager to make sure that participation was high. He was responsive to lack of eye contact. Though his response was to tell students to look at him, which does not support language learning, it does indicate that he is attentive to visual cues and has potential to attend to comprehension based upon those cues.

Baako's choice to focus on different sections of the classroom to gauge and encourage participation was a technique that Elodie also used in her urban traditional classroom, although she was less energetic. Elodie used a more individualized technique, selecting individual students rather than classroom segments to ensure that all students reached comprehension. She also spent more time on one subject; unlike Baako and Mme Djere, who moved through writing, reading, math, and civics lessons in one hour, Elodie spent 50 minutes on reading and writing before transitioning to math through a lesson on spelling numbers. The following vignette underscores the attention that Elodie pays to her students individually:

*Elodie gets an eggplant out of a bag on her desk and tells the class to observe it without spe***aking. She asks, "What is it?" and they quietly stare at it. She then** *calls on one student who correctly* **identifies it as "aubergine." She repeats "AUbergine" three times, emphasizing the "au" sound with volume. She asks, "What do we hear" in French and th**e **class says "au" then they clap. Elodie** *walks through the rows of students, talking about the sea and asking what* **has the sound "au" that goes in the sea.**

One girl says "bateau" (boat). Elodie says "yes" and the students clap. Elodie continues to walk among the students working on call-and-response for the *"au" sound. The students are engaged,* responding with sounds and words then clapping. Elodie asks a question about different words and hands are raised and responses given: she says a word and asks if th*e sound "au" is in* that word, and students raise their hand for Elodie to call on them to respond. When a student answers correctly, Elodie and the class clap. When a student answers incorrectly, Elodie asks if they are sure. If the student answers incorrectly the second time, Elodie asks the class to answer together. Elodie walks to the *blackboard and writes "aubergine" and "bateau." She asks, "Did we learn about 'au?'" and the students reply, "Yes madame." Elodie points to each section* of the classroom, and each section says *"au" as a group when pointed to. She* tells them all the ways to spell the *sound: "au," "eau," and "o." She writes* each version on the blackboard while the class watches silently. Elodie calls on one girl from the middle to read while pointing to the sounds; the girl comes to the front, points to a sound and says it, repeating for all three versions. Elodie calls on a girl from the back left to do this, and a girl from the front right, a boy from the back left. Each student does it then returns to *their seat. All students' hands are* raised. So far, all who are called on get the sound correct. For every correct answer, the students clap. Elodie is mixing up the sections from where she chooses who will read the sound. One

boy looks like he is guessing: He is saying the sound without pointing to it on the blackboard. Elodie tells the boy to stay and brings another boy up. Elodie tells the boy who was guessing to watch while the new boy reads and points. She brings up two more boys and a girl (individually) to read and point while the first boy continues to observe. Elodie tells the boy who was observing to try again, and he points to sounds while saying them correctly. The class claps. This exercise continues. The class starts to shuffle but remains silent and the activity continues for 16 minutes. All students were given a chance to come to the front, and all stayed until they got it correct.

Not only does Elodie make sure that all students are individually attended to, she does so with seemingly endless patience. She showed no sense of urgency, making sure that each student participated individually, and each student reached the correct answer before moving from one sound to the next. Instead of correcting students, she preferred to allow students to observe others then try again. Like with my observations of Mme Djere and Baako, **Elodie's classroom behavior does not explicitly** explain how she ensures that refugee and immigrant students learn French. However, it is possible to extrapolate that she prioritizes French language acquisition for all her students, regardless of their national identities, by **checking on each students' comprehension** throughout the lesson.

Conclusion and Discussion

My exploratory study is far from generalizable, as I only cover the opinions of four refugee, stateless, and immigrant parents **and three teachers in Côte d'Ivoire, and I only**

draw upon one-hour observations from three classrooms. However, my study can provide nominal insight and make the case for continued research about the impact of language in education on refugee and immigrant students in **Côte d'Ivoire.**

In this study, I found that among refugee and immigrant parents, there was varied support for using local languages in the classroom. While the parent data enabled me to understand language teaching preferences of refugee and immigrant parents, the data from the teachers was ripe with pedagogical insights. The differences in pedagogical techniques I observed are not explicitly language teaching strategies; however, since the classes I observed are comprised of native and non-native speakers, there are implications for language learning. Immersion was the norm: All three teachers taught lessons entirely in French or Brafé with the expectation that students would understand. Strategies such as using peer support, call-and-response, and individualized support, were executed with varying degrees of student engagement and participation. Teacher responses to lack of comprehension signaled by visual cues were equally varied.

While the PEI model of school specifically attends to language acquisition, traditional schools do not; however, the lack of specialized support provided to students in either type of school indicates that neither the PEI model nor the traditional model is designed to provide pedagogical support to refugees and immigrants. As Baako (rural PEI teacher) made clear, teachers lack training and resources to teach in local languages. The associated lack of French as a Second Language training may extend to traditional teachers. The implications for refugee and immigrant students who are language learners can only be assumed, yet the lack of resources and training about language

teaching and the whole-class approach to teaching underscores the lack of specialized support provided to these students.

Notes

1 Locations, local languages, and participant names are pseudonyms to protect their identities.

Acknowledgements

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