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Educational Policy in Mozambique: Local Practices and Challenges

Abstracts

EN

This article has the general objective of describing the local reality of teaching and education in schools based in Nampula province. It also problematises some challenges related to the implementation of Bilingual Education through document analysis and lesson observations. We observed six Portuguese language lessons in three primary schools: (1) Namaita Primary School, (2) Pheyoni Primary school and (3) Mutholo Primary School. In each school we attended two lessons, one lesson in the first grade, and one in the second grade. Namaita, Pheyoni and Mutholo primary schools are located in the Rapale district, in the province of Nampula. The study concludes that although Bilingual Education was proclaimed by the national education system in 1992 in Mozambique and is based on the country's Constitution, its implementation is still challenged by issues like the standardisation of Mozambican languages, the production of teaching material and teacher training.

DE

Das allgemeine Ziel dieses Artikels ist es, die lokale Realität des Unterrichts und der Bildung in Schulen in der Provinz Nampula zu beschreiben. Er problematisiert auch einige der Herausforderungen im Zusammenhang mit der Umsetzung der zweisprachigen Bildung durch Dokumentenanalyse und Unterrichtsbeobachtung. Sechs portugiesischsprachige Klassen wurden in drei Grundschulen beobachtet: (1) Namaita Primary School, (2) Pheyoni Primary School und (3) Mutholo Primary School. An jeder Schule besuchten wir zwei Klassen, eine Klasse in der ersten und eine in der zweiten Jahrgangsstufe. Die Grundschulen Namaita, Pheyoni und Mutholo befinden sich im Distrikt Rapale der Provinz Nampula. Die Studie kommt zu dem Schluss, dass der zweisprachige Unterricht zwar 1992 vom mosambikanischen Bildungssystem proklamiert wurde und in der Verfassung des

Landes verankert ist, seine Umsetzung aber immer noch durch Probleme beeinträchtigt wird, wie z. B. in Bezug auf die Standardisierung der mosambikanischen Sprachen, die Herstellung von Lehrmaterial und die Lehrer:innenausbildung.

PT

Este artigo tem como objetivo geral descrever a realidade local de ensino e educação nas escolas sediadas na província de Nampula. Também problematiza alguns desafios relacionados à implementação da Educação Bilíngue por meio da análise documental e observação de aulas. Foram observadas seis aulas de língua portuguesa em três escolas primárias: (1) Escola Primária de Namaita, (2) Escola Primária de Pheyoni e (3) Escola Primária de Mutholo. Em cada escola assistimos duas aulas, uma aula na primeira série e uma na segunda série. As escolas primárias Namaita, Pheyoni e Mutholo estão localizadas no distrito de Rapale, na província de Nampula. O estudo conclui que, embora a Educação Bilíngue tenha sido proclamada pelo sistema nacional de educação Moçambicano em 1992 e esteja baseada na Constituição do país, sua implementação ainda é desafiada por questões como a padronização das línguas moçambicanas, a produção de material didático e a formação de professores.

JA

本稿では、ナンブーラ州の学校での授業と教育の現場の実態を描写する。また、文書の分析と授業観察を通じて、バイリンガル教育の実施に関連したいくつかの課題を批判的に論じる。著者らは、ナンブーラ州ラパーレ郡にある(1)ナンブーラ初等学校、(2)フェヨニ初等教育学校、(3)ムトロ初等教育学校の三校で、ポルトガル語でおこなわれた第1学年・第2学年の授業をそれぞれ1時間、あわせて6時間観察した。本稿では、モザンビークで1992年に国民教育制度の枠組みで提唱され、国の憲法にもとづいたバイリンガル教育が、実施の点でいまだ課題を抱えていると結論づける。これらの課題は、モザンビークで用いられている言語の標準化、教材作成、教師教育といった論点によって確認できる。

Curricula reforms and main challenges in the teaching and learning process in Mozambique

Mozambique achieved independence in 1975 and subsequently, in 1983, the educational policies of the colonial period changed, culminating in the creation and introduction of the National Education System (SNE), based on the value of local languages and appreciation of Mozambican cultures as a funda-

mental dimension of the revolutionary struggle (Mazula 1995). The National Education System guided several curricula reforms and teaching programmes with a view of replacing the contents of Portuguese culture with those of Mozambican (multiethnic) cultures in order to foster Mozambican national identity building.

Despite this educational policy, Mozambique followed the Marxist socialist system that, according to Gómez (1999), influenced the process and development of the aforementioned policies of the National Education System. The central objective of this Marxist system was the training of the 'New Man', free from obscurantism, superstition and bourgeois mentality. This ideology, associated with a vision of national unity that was put forth at the time, which advocated the existence of a single Mozambican Nation, where expressions of ethnicity were discouraged (Newitt 1997), led to the prescribed teaching contents that had little or nothing to do with communities at the regional or local level (Gómez 1999). This aspect was found to be one of the main weaknesses of the first policy of the National Education System (Mondlane, apud Mazula 1995).

The implementation of the second reform of the National Education System in 1992 replaced the first one: Schools ceased to belong solely to the state; the mono political party content was removed from the teaching programs, the objective of training the 'socialist man' was withdrawn; the development of programmes using local languages was allowed; primary school entrance age was reduced from 7 to 6 years old and the teaching organisation now has two cycles, from grade 8 to 10 (first cycle) and from grade 11 to 12 (second cycle). Consequently, changes occurred regarding principles, objectives, structure, and administration of the National Education System.

Since the introduction of the first National Education System policy in 1983 (see Lei 4/83), Portuguese has been the only official language and the language of instruction throughout the education system, although the vast majority of children do not speak it when they enter school. The implementation of the second National Education System in 1992 (see Lei 6/92) allowed the development of programmes using local languages¹. Since then, the government proclaimed that: "The National Education System shall, within the framework of the principles expressed in this policy, enhance and develop the national languages, promoting their progressive implementation in the education of citizens" (Lei 6/92, art. 4: 8).

The concept of the implementation of national languages was reinforced again by the third reform of the National Education System in 2018 (see Lei

1 Local languages (the majority being Bantu Languages) are also referred to as 'national languages' in Mozambican documents. Portuguese on the other hand is usually referred to as the 'official language'.

18/18). It refers to the bilingual education methodology, whereby one of the languages of instruction can be a national language, including sign languages.

Bilingual Education and Mozambican Languages

To explore the bilingual education in practice, we conducted a case study with an inductive approach based on classroom observation, using an observation form to track the teachers' and students' mastery of the local language, level of interaction, and domain of textbook content. The study was conducted in three primary schools: (1) Namaita Primary School, (2) Pheyoni Primary School and (3) Mutholo Primary School. In total, the team observed six Portuguese language lessons, consisting of two lessons at Namaita Primary School, two lessons at Pheyoni Primary School and two lessons at Mutholo Primary School. In each school we observed one lesson in the first grade and another one in the second grade.

The bilingual teaching method was implemented in some public schools in the pilot phase, as was the case in Namaita Primary School, located in the Rapale District, in the Nampula Province. In 2018, more than two thousand schools in rural areas in 21 districts, including thirteen from Nampula Province and eight from Zambézia, introduced the bilingual method following a program of the Ministry of Education and Human Development (MINEDH). It is called "Vamos Ler" ("Let's read") and is funded by the American Agency for Development (USAID), with the purpose of improving the quality of education. It is thought that the process of teaching and learning in the mother tongues is an opportunity for children in rural areas who, when they reach school age, can only communicate in the local languages. MINEDH and "Vamos Ler" understand that education in the mother tongue enables children to learn more easily at school when they feel connected to their sociolinguistic realities of life outside school.

In addition to Namaita Primary School, the district of Rapale also introduced Pheyoni Primary School as one of the schools in the Rapale district, Nampula province, where bilingual education was introduced. For these classes, teachers are selected who are speakers of one of the variants of *Emakhuwa* (the major national language in terms of number of speakers, spoken in northern region of Mozambique). These teachers are trained for about five days per quarter to guide the teaching and learning process. In the framework of the program, books for teachers and students were provided in a standard variety of the eight language varieties of *Emakhuwa* that was adapted to enable the implementation of the bilingual education in northern Mozambique.

In addition to the large number of students per class (60 to 80 students), teachers are faced with the task of the dispersion of the language varieties, which is

compounded when they speak a different variety of Emakhuwa that is not the domain of the students. Furthermore, the Emakhuwa variety of the pupils can also differ from the standardised one in the textbooks. Therefore, the teacher must search for the variant of the students' domain to present the contents. In our study, we identified the following challenges for bilingual education:

- The pronunciation of the alphabet in Emakhuwa is different to the pronunciation of the alphabet in Portuguese, the official language in Mozambique. This may influence the process of transition from Language one (L1-Emakhuwa) to Language two (L2-Portuguese). For example, the letter "C" in L2 is pronounced as "dje" in L1; while the "S" as "C" in L1; and the "H" as "he" in L1.
- Socialisation into the standardised Emakhuwa is difficult in the northern region, because the mother tongues are not uniform, as is the case with Emakhuwa.
- Emakhuwa has many variants, which in some cases creates ethnolinguistic conflicts for native speakers of Emakhuwa. Consequently, particular attention and effort is required in the standardisation of Mozambican national languages, e.g., in selecting of one variant of Emakhuwa as the standard.
- More practice exercise is needed for both teachers and students in the transition from L1 to L2.
- Since Mozambique is a multilingual country, there is no local language that can serve as a model for all primary schools or teachers. The existence of several national languages with their variants and the fact that they lack standardisation has instigated education policy makers to impose Portuguese language as the language of instruction.
- Some teachers in the entrance classes are not speakers of the local language, which makes it difficult to adapt both the standardised and local language in the bilingual teaching process.
- There is still a shortage of teaching material, especially for bilingual teaching.

Conclusion

After independence, Mozambique has been developing educational policies to suit the needs of its citizens, but the process of implementing them has been ineffective due to the various factors mentioned above. This situation leads to changes in both policies and curricula and implementation strategies, often before a systematic evaluation of their impact on beneficiaries.

Bilingualism is one of the modalities that has been idealised in educational policies, but its implementation requires the selection and standardisation of

Mozambican languages to serve as a means of formal communication, as well as a language of instruction at school.

In schools where this approach is being implemented, difficulties have emerged ranging from the shortage of proficiency in the local languages of the actors and that of operationalisation into the process of teaching. This requires further efforts such as the standardisation of the language, and the training of teachers for this approach.

Based on this, the study puts forward some questions for future reflection:

- What perceptions do teachers and the wider community have about Bilingual Education, and how do these perceptions impact the teaching and learning process?
- What are the impacts of Bilingual Teaching on the development of literacy and numeracy skills of students, taking into account that they constitute the main objective of the educational reform of 2018?

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