



## Reflections on the Problems Encountered in the Teaching and Learning of English Language in Mozambique's Public Education

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### Abstract

Though English as a subject has been successfully implemented in Mozambique's public education, particularly in the 2nd Grade primary education (EP2)—grade 6 and 7 and secondary schools (grade 8-12), there are still serious problems, especially in the teaching and learning of the subject. The implementation of English in Mozambique's public education was done out of the realisation that English is increasingly becoming the global language with speakers in almost all parts of the world. Yet the fact that Mozambique was a Portuguese colony for almost five hundred years (1505-1975) means a lot on how Portuguese as a language has impacted and continue to affect the Mozambican people. The continued use of Portuguese as the official language after independence in 1975, for example, meant that the country will remain isolated from the English world for as long as Portuguese is the dominant language. It is out of this background that the teaching and learning of English in Mozambique has been a mammoth task since its implementation in school curriculum in 1992. This paper examines the difficulties encountered by both Mozambican teachers and students in the teaching-learning process of English in public schools. To identify the problems, a research was carried out in Gaza province. Questionnaire comprising closed and open items was used as a data collection tool. Data was analyzed quantitatively using frequency tables and analyzed qualitatively using evaluative descriptions. The study revealed that lack of qualified teachers and relevant materials (like English textbooks) were among the major problems that make the teaching and learning of English remain a big problem in Mozambique's public education. From the foregoing, the paper offers a number of recommendations that can effectively help the Ministry of Education and Culture, teachers and students in the teaching-learning process of the English language.

**Keywords:** English, Mozambique, Gaza, public education, teachers, students, Africa

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### INTRODUCTION

Approximately there are 6900 languages currently spoken around the world, but the majority of which have only a small number of speakers. About 4 billion of the earth's 7 billion people of the earth's total population speak one of the 10 most spoken languages in the world named in their order: Marandian, English, Spanish, Hindu/Urdu, Russian, Arabic, Bengali, Portuguese, Malay-Indonesian and French (Abbas 2010). At global level and in Africa in particular, English is fast becoming the most spoken and an official language for many countries. While it is still the second most spoken language,

the world-over after Mandarin (Chinese), the fact that English is a universal language, major source of communication in different cultures/civilizations and the most studied of all languages in the world makes it even more popular than Mandarin. This is echoed by Weber (1997), who notes that in terms of the number of countries where each of the ten languages mentioned above is spoken, English is the most spoken language followed by French. More so, in Africa particularly South African region, all countries except Mozambique use English as their official language in schools and job markets. Mozambique is the only country in the region that uses Portuguese as its official language in public schools and job markets. This has made Mozambique to suffer isolation in terms of trading, tourism, exchange of educational resources and in participation in regional and global politics, only to mention a few examples of cases of isolation.

It is out of this realization that after its independence from Portugal and the civil war that ended in 1992, Mozambique took a bold step to introduce English as one of the subjects taught in public schools. Yet, this has never been an easy task given Mozambique’s crippling poverty levels, lack of adequate training for English teachers had its unfortunate long period (almost five hundred years) of domination by the Portuguese people (Rambe and Mawere). As a result of these compound problems, Mozambique has been confined among the laggards of the world in effectively using Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Mozambique ranked 106th, post important improvements in their overall networked readiness since 2010 (up 10 positions) out of the 138 countries surveyed (World Economic Forum, 2011).

### Networked Readiness Index

Edition (No. of economies)	Score	Rank
2010–2011 (138)	3.3	106
2009–2010 (133)	3.0	116
2008–2009 (134)	2.9	124
2007–2008 (127)	2.8	121
2006–2007 (122)	2.6	115

Source: The Global Information Technology Report 2010-2011, p.249

While the problem of English in public education is widely known by Mozambicans, little research has been done, particularly on the problems encountered in the teaching and learning of the subject (English) in the curriculum. Yet lack of research on such an important subject will always have negative impact to society’s socio-economic and political development that cannot be underestimated or ignored. This is because although indigenous/local languages are as important as any other language in the world, it is important to acknowledge that English is increasingly becoming the most widely spoken language in business, education, job markets and many other arenas the world over. As such, it is now a necessity for non-English speaking people to acquire knowledge of English if they are to be able to “operate well and sensibly” in the global world.

That said, this paper examines the problems encountered by Mozambique’s public education in the implementation of English in the curriculum. In particular, the paper focuses on the problems that both teachers and students of English are facing in the teaching and learning of the subject. It is acknowledged that this important project should have covered the entire country (Mozambique) in order to capture the status of English as a subject in all public schools in the country. However, due to limited resources this was impossible. As such, the paper adopts Gaza province as a case study. Gaza being a province dramatically affected by problems that have to do with the teaching and learning of English in public schools, it represents other Mozambican provinces with the same problem.

### Background to Mozambique’s public education and the teaching-learning of English

In sub-Saharan Africa, Mozambican is one of the countries with both sad histories and a plethora of systems too complex to characterize with precision. The complexity of Mozambique’s systems is predicated on the country’s long tumultuous history under the Portuguese dominance, sixteen years of civil war after independence from Portugal in 1975, crippling poverty levels, rising levels of unemployment, lack of adequate training and limited deployment of public personnel to underserved communities, and adoption of Portuguese as an official language after independence. The complexities of Mozambique’s systems are not only visible in the country’s economic and political systems, but in social landscapes such as education. In view of the latter (education), Mario (2002) has aptly developed taxonomy of the literacy development trajectory that seems to be a prototype of the landmark political developments as they impacted the Mozambican

education sector. The taxonomy comprises the period of national reconstruction, marked by the growth of adult education nationally (1975 to mid 1980s), the reduction in adult literacy and the disbanding of national adult training institutions due to civil war (1977–1995), and the period of rediscovery of an adult education system that emphasizes sustainable development and gender equity in a post conflict state (1995 to the present).

In Mario's (2002) characterization, the literacy landscape of Mozambican educational system has generally been split into distinguishable phases although there is little consensus on what each of these historic epochs constitutes. Mario and Nandja (2006), for example, identify three main phases that summarized the Mozambican education provision and system:

1. *The reconstruction* phase (1975 to mid 1980s) – this immediate post-independence phase was characterized by the national reconstruction project and the building of a coherent adult education infrastructure (adult education and training schemes) to support adult literacy and education campaigns nationwide.
2. *The Destabilization* phase (mid 1980s–1995) – was characterized by internal instability accentuated by civil war insurgences that destabilized the existing adult literacy and educational activities in the country. This phase was marked by human emigration to neighboring war-free zones, destruction of academic infrastructure, the scaling down of literacy efforts and adult literacy programs in the rural areas and the disbanding of National Adult Education Department.
3. *Resuscitation phase* (1995 to date) has emphasized the re-emergence of the adult literacy initiatives and education in the context of social and economic development with a focus on the use of education as a vehicle for poverty eradication, national unity, and providing the population with moral values and social empowerment.

It should be emphasized that although English was introduced in the early 1990s, particularly in Mozambique's public secondary schools (grade 8), this phase falls in *resuscitation phase*, and not in Mario and Nandja's (2006) phase 2. This is because the introduction of English in Mozambique's public education was mainly done with the objective to eradicate poverty and to do away with the country's isolation in the region and the global world. English was believed to be a vehicle of change that would improve the country's relations with the global world, open avenues for Mozambicans to the global job market, tourism, educational and political participation. As a result of this the Mozambican government, initiated series of national interventions (such as those explained by Mario and Nandja above) especially after independence, aimed to improve education system in the country.

However, while there were a series of national interventions aimed at supporting the education systems, especially in terms of teachers' training and the alleviation of their economic status to expedite pedagogical delivery, it should be noted that the education sector has remained poorly remunerated in almost all aspects. For example, the newly introduced subjects like English remains with a critical shortage of resources such as textbooks, classrooms and qualified teachers. This is mainly because sometimes these resources need to be hired from outside the country. On the other hand, teacher wages are generally not typically fully responsive to local labor market conditions or to individual characteristics, so many teachers receive substantial rents (Chaudhury et al., 2006) in the form of illegal private tutoring to supplement their incomes. According to Rambe & Mawere (2011), such transactions can be two-way; where a teacher corrupts a student by demanding bribe or parents offering bribes to educators to secure students' progression to another grade or even pass an exam, thus compromising and diluting professional integrity and educational quality. Rent seeking behavior, which indeed erodes commitment to professional instruction can be partly explained by abject poverty in the country. Mozambique has high levels of poverty (54.1% in 2008) and child (0-59 months) malnutrition (46.2% in 2004) and currently faces escalating staple food prices (US Government Report, 2009). This is further compounded by differential levels of educator training across the country. Rural and outlying areas often have less access to educator development and support services than their urban counterparts, and fewer opportunities to attend in-service courses, which lead to lower quality education provision (Mulkeen, 2005).

The brief background to the Mozambican educational landscape articulated above sets the stage for my informed analysis and critique of the nation's schooling in general and the teaching-learning of English in particular.

## **RESEARCH QUESTION AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES**

The present study seeks to address the question: Could results from a critical examination of the problems faced by Mozambique's public education impact a positive change on the country's educational policies and socio-economic situation?

Having taught in Mozambique's public education and researched extensively on Mozambique's educational issues for the past six years, I realized that most researchers on Mozambican education (Mario 2002; Mario & Nandja 2006; Mulkeen 2005; Chaudhury et al., 2006) have paid insignificant attention to the problems that both the English teacher and student face in their teaching and learning of English in this context referred to as subject. Yet it is through constant reflection on daily experiences of both teachers and students of this troubled and newly introduced subject that problems are identified and solutions sought. The Mozambican history of education therefore makes a sorry reading with its failure to document, by default or otherwise, the problems being faced by both teachers and students of English since the implementation of the latter in the country's education curriculum in the 1990s (at least in secondary schools). As well as in the 2nd Grade primary education (EP2) grade 6 and 7-in the 2000s.

As part of my research design, I relied on observations (lessons observations of some English teachers in public schools), questionnaires and in-depth interviews (formal and informal). I carried out my study in ten schools (6 secondary schools and 4 primary schools) in Gaza province in Mozambique between February and November 2010, and I sampled education stakeholders, that is, students, parents and teachers in the study area. The study involved a selected sample of 100 people (70 students, 20 English teachers and 10 parents/guardians). I located my study within Gaza province, in particular, using students, teachers and parents affected in that region as representative of other public schools in Mozambique having similar educational challenges.

As previously pointed out, unstructured interviews were among the data collection techniques used in this study. Generally speaking, interviews entail presenting questions to the informant orally and recording the responses either in written notes in pocket books or on an audio-recording for later transcription and analysis. Wray and Bloomer (2006), articulate that any subjects can be used provided they are able to understand the questions and provide responses. In framing questions for the in-depth interviews, I was guided by the works of Erik Hofstee. According to Hofstee (2006, p. 135), "background type questions are important when carrying out in-depth interviews and it is also important to keep the interviewee to the topic being discussed, but it can also pay not to be too rigid". One of the advantages of in-depth interviews is that the interviewee may even give you more than what you will have bargained for. However, as Hofstee (2006, p. 136) observed, "if not carefully administered, interviews can produce misleading responses, thereby affecting results". To avoid this problem, the researcher asked the participants simple questions, most of which required one word answers. The aim of interviews was to complement and substantiate data collected from questioners and lesson observations. It must be emphasized that a wealth and elaborate explanation of respondents' views and opinions on problems affecting teachers and students in their teaching and learning of English at school can best be acquired through a combination of all the methods mentioned above (lesson observations, interviews and questioners).

In interviewing the voluntary participants: both individual and group interviews were used. The use of individual and group interview as well as lesson observations and questioners was suitable for the gathering of comprehensible information on the problems faced by teachers and students in the teaching and learning of English in public schools.

The people participated in the study were from different societal classes, ranging from students, educators and parents/guardians. The participants were drawn from different societal classes with the hope of obtaining a balanced research result that could be representative of all the parties that directly affected and involved in the teaching and learning of English in Mozambique's publication. Participants ranged from the ages of 11 to 65 years. This age group was considered appropriate for the study given that most of the people involved in the teaching and learning of English in Mozambican schools are between the aforesaid ranges. Equal number of women and men were sampled to ensure gender balance, in terms of representation. More so, it is generally believed that the problems faced in the teaching and learning of English in public education equally affect both male and female.

In using questionnaires, the researcher administered same to the participants in the different areas they were found. A "questionnaire is an instrument with open or closed questions or statements to which a respondent must react" (White, 2005, p. 126). In this study, the questionnaires consisted of limited open-ended (free response) questions and closed-ended (fixed alternative) questions. This was in agreement with the CACC Module (n.d) which states that "practically a good questionnaire should contain both open-ended and closed-ended questions so that the responses from the two forms can be checked and compared" (p.103). The open questionnaire was used as it enables the respondent to reply as s/he likes and does not confine the latter to a single alternative (Behr, 1988). This is to say the advantages of open-ended or free response questions are that they give a respondent an opportunity to answer sufficiently, giving all the details to clarify the answers. Put differently, open-ended questions are more suitable for complex questions or issues that cannot be elaborated in closed-ended questions. This was in agreement with White's (2005, p.131) view that "open-ended questions probe deeper than the closed question and evoke fuller and deeper responses". They evoke a fuller and richer response as they go beyond statistical data into hidden motivations that lie behind attitudes, interests, preferences and decisions. Furthermore, White observed that, open-ended questions may lead to collection of worthless and irrelevant

information. With this in mind, the researcher avoided being gullible of everything by selecting only the data he thought were relevant to this research.

Besides, the closed form of questionnaire was used because it facilitates answering and makes it easier for the researcher to code and classify responses especially in this case where a large number of questionnaires were dealt with. This is echoed by White (2005, p. 130) who articulates that “closed form of questionnaire is suitable for large number of questions and they do not allow any chances for irrelevant answers”. However, closed-ended questions should be posed with caution as they may have the effect of forcing the respondent to think along certain lines which he might not have done had he been left to make up his own responses. It is view of this understanding that both questionnaires were used in this study. Behr (1988) suggests, in practice, a good questionnaire should contain open and closed forms of questions so that responses from the two forms can be checked and compared; this guided the research method used in this study. Participants in this study were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and were asked not to identify themselves by names.

In addition, the researcher observed some of the English teachers’ lessons in their respective schools. This was done with the hope to obtain first hand information on methodologies used by English teachers, materials/resources available to teachers and students and the general interaction between teachers and students during English lessons. Data collected from lesson observations, questionnaires and in-depth interviews were tabulated to show frequencies before being subjected to evaluative analysis. Tables 1 and 2 contain details of the people who participated in the study and the data that was gathered during the study:

Table 1: Details of the people who participated in the Study

Occupation/Status	Age range	Gender	
		Male	Female
Teachers	20-60	10	10
Parents/guardians	32-65	5	5
Students	11-20	35	35

Table 2: Responses to closed questionnaire items on problems faced in the teaching and learning of English in Mozambique’s public schools

ITEMS	RESPONSES		
	Strongly agree	Strongly disagree	Uncertain
1. Reading, writing, speaking and listening are skills that teachers should teach their students.	100	0	0
2. Most of the students have problems in grammar, reading and speaking.	90	5	0
3. English songs, films, stories, group work and home work help students in the learning of English.	90	5	0
4. Scarcity of primary educational material contributes greatly to poor performance of students studying English.	98	1	1
5. Some English teachers in Mozambican schools are under-qualified to teach the subject.	85	10	5
6. Very few English teachers make use of the local community (ie friends) in improving performance of their students.	90	8	2
7. Some teachers are forced by their superiors to teach English instead of subjects they studied at college/university.	60	10	40
8. English workshops are often (annually) held to improve teachers’ skills.	0	75	25
9. Most of the teachers use either local language or Portuguese to teach English.	91	7	2
10. Most of the students like to learn English.	65	15	20

11. Text books being used in schools are unsuitable and should continue being used.	40	50	10
12. Students have the opportunity to use English outside school.	9	90	1
13. Some teachers do not plan for their lessons and rarely use teaching aids such as charts, black board and physical objects.	65	15	20
14. Teachers always revise home work and exercises given in class with their students.	50	47	3
15. Most of the students think that English is less important to other subjects studied at school.	60	20	20

## DISCUSSION

Findings presented in this research are based on the data that were collected from participants in Gaza province over a period of ten months. The research results in Table 2 above show different perceptions on problems being faced in the teaching and learning of English in Mozambique's public education. The main problem faced by both students and teachers of English in Gaza province is scarcity of primary educational material. According to majority of the participants (98 %), the main reasons for the scarcity of secondary material are poverty and economic hardships as well as shortage of local experts to write textbooks in the area of English. Due to poverty and economic hardships, schools and parents cannot raise the required money for textbooks to use at school and home respectively. In fact, where educational budgets for teacher training are limited, there will be limited primary educational resources (books, periodicals and journals are outdated) and weak supervision of teaching personnel. In such educational contexts, weak literacy practices persist and students' capacity to dissect texts for hidden meanings will be severely compromised (see Rambe and Mawere 2011). Mulkeen (2005) reports that, in Mozambique teacher deployment is done at the provincial level but provinces often have insufficient funds to recruit all of the newly qualified teachers and this leads to high teacher-student ratios. This also leads to under-staffing in some isolated areas. Worse still, the prolonged Portuguese domination resulted in very few Mozambicans specializing in English. Consequently, there are very few Mozambican teachers capable of teaching and of producing English textbooks that can be used in schools. Such a problem could have been lessened by way of conducting annual workshops for English teachers. Unfortunately, this study revealed that rarely are such workshops conducted in Gaza, a signal that delivery problems will persist in as long as no action is taken.

The other serious problem cited by majority of the respondents (85%), was that of under-qualified teachers who are employed/hired by the Ministry of Education and Culture to teach the English in public schools. This negatively impacts on the learners' psychological access to learning resources. This in turn compromises the quality of education and in particular of students produced from such a system. Rambe and Mawere (2011, p. 46) argue "structural dysfunctions such as corrupt practices (demanding bribes from students to pass exams/tests, appointments influenced by rent seeking behavior, teacher absenteeism, poor instruction) in the education sector frustrate the delivery of quality learning outcomes". I therefore argue that for impoverished Mozambican students, most of whom are coming from deprived backgrounds; their capacity to grasp the fundamental assumptions underpinning dominant discourses in the learning of English is constrained by the quality of the instructors they encounter in the classroom. In most cases, this often results in bribes from students (especially those from middle class families) who after realizing the impossibility to master the subject with the caliber of teachers they have in their schools would simply preoccupy themselves with passing on to the next grade/level. On the other hand, under-qualified teachers tend to privilege middle class learners because in an educational system where educators are under-qualified, educators are motivated to "pass" their students by the pursuit of rents and underhand deals rather than motivating students and supporting access to quality education. Students from humble background, even those who are intellectually gifted, are deprived both of "epistemological access" (Morrow, 1994) to resources and opportunities to embrace diversity and fully exploit their capacities in their learning endeavors.

From the results obtained during this study, it was also revealed by majority of the participants (91 %) that most of the teachers use either local language (Changani) or Portuguese as a language of instruction in conducting/delivering their English lessons. Speaking local languages or Portuguese is not wrong per se as to argue otherwise could be interpreted to mean discrediting these languages. However, it can be argued that teaching English using a local language or Portuguese deprives the student of the opportunity to be exposed to the language s/he is learning. As a matter of consequence, students hardly learn the speaking and listening skills of English. To confirm this, the present study together with my vast personal teaching experience in Gaza revealed that majority (90 %) of the students struggle with grammar, reading and speaking. Because of these deficiencies, majority of the students get up to grade twelve before acquiring the

necessary skills required to master the subject. This further limits the students' competency in the job market and in their choice of the place to pursue tertiary education after high school. In fact, due to language problems, those who want to go straight to tertiary education or into the job market are restricted to the local institutions and/or markets and to those in the few Portuguese speaking countries such as Brazil, Portugal, Congo and Cabo verde.

Other problems that were cited as contributing to poor performance of students studying English include teachers' reluctance to revise home work and exercises with their students (50 %), Misconception by some students (60 %) that English is not equally important as other subjects in the curriculum. Poor lesson planning by some English teachers (65 %) is also one of the reasons given by respondents'. Old and sometimes outdated textbooks with grammatical errors (40 %), and student's lack of exposure to English speaking environment outside class are all factors that militates against the effective implementation of English teaching and learning. In the case of the latter, 90% of the respondents agreed that the Mozambican students lack the opportunity to practice what they learn at school since their home uses either Portuguese or the local language most of the time.

### **How the teaching and learning of English in Mozambique can be improved? Some recommendations**

This study sought an in-depth understanding of education stakeholders' (students, guardians/parents and English teachers) perceptions on the problems encountered by both teachers and students in their teaching and learning of the subject. From data obtained, the study concluded that both teachers and students in public education are experiencing serious problems in their teaching/learning of English. Mozambican education system still seems to be in a dilemma as to what exactly should be done to improve the situation. As previously noted, one should note, however, that some steps like introducing English in the 2nd Grade primary education (EP2), that is, grade 6 and 7 have been taken by the Ministry of Education and Culture. I however argue that this step can hardly yield significant results according to the evidence in the data obtained in this study. In fact, even with the introduction of English at EP2 level, it was revealed that majority of the students (of those participated in this study) who started learning English in that level (EP2) get up to their Advanced level (Grade 12) still struggling to master the subject. In view of this observation, I recommend that the Ministry of Education seriously consider introducing the subject in earlier grades, particularly at grade one level. Such a measure is most likely to have a positive impact on the part of the students as they will be exposed to the subject at an earlier stage and for a longer period. This is the situation with Portuguese language in Mozambique's public education and most of the students do not have problems in learning the subject (Portuguese). This is confirmed by Instituto Nacional do Estatística (2007) which reported that the official and most widely spoken language of Mozambique is Portuguese, spoken by more than 50% of the population, majority of who are students.

Also, from data obtained it was apparent that in Mozambique's public education system, most of the English teachers are either under-qualified (85 %) or forced by their superiors (60 %) to teach the subject even if it is outside their area of specialization. This is mainly because of lack of qualified teachers in the country (see Rambe & Mawere, 2011) to teach English in public schools. That said, it appears more convincing in the context of Mozambique to recommend that the country invest in teacher training and hire qualified teachers from neighboring countries such as Tanzania, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Malawi to boost English teaching and learning. As part of teacher training, the Ministry of Education and Culture can conduct annual workshops for English teachers in their respective provinces to ensure that teachers are constantly equipped with the necessary English teaching skills. From a critical and reflective perspective as well as drawing from my professional experience in Mozambique, it is a truism that poorly qualified teachers always compromise the quality of education and in particular that of the products (students) in the country. As Khin and Fatt (2010, p. 2) articulate, in the reflective-practitioner approach, a researcher draws on "personal experiences, a personal story of his [sic] development as a heuristically critical reflective practitioner [and] search [es] into his past so that he can account for his values and actions in the present." Thus, my recommendation draws primarily on the findings of this research and my professional development journey, stock of practical knowledge of the educational terrain, personal reflections and experiences as a researcher and educator in Mozambican public and private schools and universities for many years.

In addition to the two recommendations given, I propose close collaboration between education stakeholders (students, guardian/parents and teachers) to ensure commitment, hardworking and the development of self-discipline in children. This is to say that even if English is to be introduced at a lower level (grade one) and qualified teachers are provided, quality education that embraces ethical practices and high levels of comprehension of students in a fragile post-conflict landscape such as that of Mozambique can only be achieved if all stakeholders work together as a team. This will help to foster high level of comprehension of the English as a subject and critical literacy as a necessary tool for learners. Critical literacy is crucial in education as it "helps teachers and students expand their reasoning capacities, seek out

multiple perspectives, and become active thinkers” (McLaughlin & DeVogd, 2004, p. 52) who seek practical solutions to the problems at hand. Rambe and Mawere (2011, p. 45) argue that “in contexts like Mozambique with high teacher-student ratios, limited deployment of teachers in resources constrained communities and limited training of educators, the use of critical literacy practices to overcome poor quality educational delivery cannot be over emphasized”.

## CONCLUSION

The arguments and recommendations put forward in this paper have been primarily drawn from data obtained during research and my professional development journey, personal reflections and experiences as a researcher and educator in Mozambique. Statistics have shown that majority (85 %) of the respondents agree that English teaching in Mozambican schools is poor as some teachers are under-qualified to teach the subject. An even larger percentage (90 %) reported that most of the teachers use either local language or Portuguese to teach English which in turn limits the learner’s participation and exposure to the subject. It therefore appears that the call for qualified teachers in Mozambican schools to replace and further train those currently holding these positions is a worth considering recommendation.

More importantly as part of my concluding remarks, this study acknowledged that the teaching and learning of English in Mozambique still desires that more should be done. However, there are divergent opinions and no consensus as to what exactly should be done. The momentum for these divergent perceptions has to a larger extent, been predicated on Mozambique’s unfortunate tumultuous history of colonialism and civil war, mounting international debts, crippling poverty levels and lack of adequate training of teachers. Another impetus for the divergent perceptions is predicated on the disagreement on whether English language teaching should be prioritized at the expense of local or “indigenous” languages or accorded the same status as other school subjects. A significant percentage (60%) of the respondents for example reported that most students think that English is less important to other subjects studied at school. Yet the fact that not all respondents participated in the present study subscribed to the same view on what exactly should be done on the question of English teaching and learning in Mozambican schools illustrates the complexity of the issue at hand. Overall, the teaching and learning of English in Mozambican schools remain an issue deserving further serious research in all corners of the country in order to identify the best possible course of action to take.

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