



CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN ZAMBÉZIA PROVINCE, MOZAMBIQUE

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Abstract:

This paper presents a contextual approach on the analysis of the quality of English language teachers training model 10 + 1 at the teacher training college in Zambezia province. The paper focuses on the quality in a didactic-pedagogical perspective and the teacher training process at the teacher training college for primary schools. The approach is targeted at the analysis of the quality in teacher education. For the effectiveness of this paper, it was identified and described the main factors that influence the quality, and the paper suggests strategies for the improvement of the English language teacher training at the teacher training colleges in Quelimane, Nicoadala and Morrumbala. To match the theme and the analysis expectations, the qualitative methodology was chosen for this study by using interviews, documental analysis and review of the literature as a means of data collection. The interviewer draws analysis of the information taking into account the responses from the respondents and the real situation observed in the field where the research took place. Henceforth, through the analysis from the interviewees and information from the documents it is concluded that the quality of English language teacher training course at the Teacher Training Colleges is unsatisfactory due to several problems of the reality of the English language teacher training process itself.

Keywords: English, language, teacher, training, quality

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Abstrato:

Este artigo apresenta uma abordagem contextual sobre a análise da qualidade de formação de professores de inglês do modelo 10 + 1, na província da Zambézia. O artigo enfoca a qualidade de formação de professores de inglês numa perspectiva didáctico-pedagógica. Para a eficácia deste artigo, foram identificados e descritos os principais factores que influenciam a qualidade, e o artigo sugere estratégias para a melhoria da formação de professores de inglês nos institutos de formação de professores em Quelimane, Nicoadala e Morrumbala. Para corresponder ao tema e às expectativas de análise, a metodologia qualitativa foi escolhida para este estudo por meio de entrevistas, análise documental e revisão da literatura como meio de produção de dados. O pesquisador faz uma análise da informação tomando em conta as respostas dos entrevistados e a situação real observada no campo em que a pesquisa ocorreu. Através da análise dos entrevistados e informações dos documentos conclui-se que a qualidade do curso de formação de professores de inglês nos institutos de formação de professores é insatisfatória devido a vários problemas da própria realidade do processo de formação.

Palavras-chave: Inglês, língua, professor, formação, qualidade

1. Introduction

This section discusses the factors which affect the quality of the English language teacher training syllabuses and the programme as a whole. The factors are discussed under the following sub-themes: motivation of the teacher trainee to get into the programme; competences of the English language teachers in the 10+1 model; the gaps in the training programme; lack of teaching and learning materials in the library and English Department; delivery of the English language lessons focused on nature of activities employed which include: unclear strategies on treatment of written and spoken language errors and mistakes, the activities which were more and less practised for communicative and teaching competences, and the skills which were more and less practised.

1.1 Quality of English language teacher training programme: Influencing factors and strategies for improving quality

The assessment of the quality of the programme by most of the interviewees was that it was not good. There were some respondents; however who said the quality was good. Table 1 summarises the assessment of the quality of the programme by the interviewees. The numbers in the column correspond to the number of the interviewees, who were either teacher trainers, or graduate English language teachers.

Table 1: Appreciation of the quality of the programme by the interviewees

No.	Interviewees	Quality appraisal	TTs/FGDs/ ⁱⁱ GELTs
01	TT2,FGD2-TTC A ⁱⁱⁱ , TT2- TTC B	The quality is good	2/1/0
02	TT1, TT3, TT4, FGD1-TTC A TT1,TT2-TTC C, GELTs1-8, FGD1-TTC B	The quality is not good	5/2/8
03	TT1-TTC B, FGD1-TTC C	Not clear answers	1/1/0

Source: Researcher's field data, 2017.

The interviewed teacher trainers and graduate teachers, who completed the English language teacher training programme for primary schools between the years 2010 and 2012, reported that the quality of the training programme is not good. There were several reasons for lack of quality. Two teacher trainers singled out the quality of the trainees as what undermines the programme due to the lower levels of English language proficiency as it was argued by TT2 from TTC A:

"The programme is not good, I would say that when the students are being admitted in this institution, they should select well, who really has capacity to be in this course because I myself I faced problems in first semester. When I'm [was] trying to explain matters related to English, some of them don't hear anything of English, they don't know some words in English so we try to group them in two-two or five-five in order to improve or maybe help them get information from one another, so that is the problem that I'm facing.", [TT2 - TTC A - 21/08/2017]

While the trainees' background was questioned by teacher trainers due to lack of English language practice outside the colleges, some teacher trainees referred to lack of seriousness by some teacher trainers as the problem. In Zambézia, Teacher Training Colleges and Universities were prepared to train either English language teachers for secondary schools or for primary schools. Teacher trainers were recruited to join teacher training colleges for primary schools based on their teaching experience and not because they were trained to teach in TTCs. In some cases, some teacher trainers did not even have the requirements to be teacher trainers. At TTC C, for example, both teacher trainers did not have Bachelors level degree.

This situation corroborates Redmond's view (2011) as he explains,

"...there are always factors contributing for students' failure such as: the curriculum assimilation, the presence of qualified teachers and the school managers, infrastructures, the family socioeconomic level.... and some internal factors such as:discouragement, affectivity as well as cognitive aspects." (p.57)

ⁱⁱ TTs- Teacher Trainers; FGDs-Focus Group Discussions; GELT-Graduate English Language Teachers.

ⁱⁱⁱ TTC A-Teacher Training College A; TTC B-Teacher Training College B; and TTC C-Teacher Training College C.

Unfortunately, there is no institution in Mozambique which trains or prepares teacher trainers to train English language teachers for primary schools. Obviously, this was not only the case for English language but for all the subjects or courses in TTCs. Some teachers trained to teach at secondary school level were assigned to train primary school English language teachers in the training colleges, a thing which they were not prepared for. From the lessons observed, the researcher noted that some teacher trainers were not prepared and did not feel confident as English language teacher trainers.

1.2 Teacher trainees' motivation for enrolling in the programme

On motivation, the researcher wanted to find out what motivated the teacher trainees to attend the English language teacher training programme and how they felt in the training programme. The researcher also found out from the research participants how they assessed the trainees' motivation basing on their training experience. One teacher trainee remarked:

"The motivation for me first is to improve our English and the second is to get English to communicate for [with people from] foreign countries and to be the English teacher". [FGD2 - trainee3 - TTC A - 23/08/2017]

A graduate said:

"The main motivation for me to get into the English language training programme was to improve my English and to be a teacher of English once I like it". [GELT4 - TTC B - 03/10/2017]

From the responses of the participants, both teacher trainees and graduate English language teachers presented the reasons why they were interested in becoming English language teachers. First and foremost, it is because they love the language and would like to improve their language skills since they were aware of the importance of the English language in Mozambique and around the world. Second, both teacher trainers and teacher trainees were interested in teaching English.

Interviews with teacher trainers revealed that some of the teacher trainees, mainly those with lower performance, got into the teacher training programme simply to gain employment after their training. The view presented by teacher trainers corroborates with a finding from a study conducted in Mozambique by Mataruca (2014) who concludes that *"we have teachers who are sometimes afraid of going to the class to teach because they know they do not have the necessary command in that particular lesson of the day"*. (p.213). Therefore, once in the primary schools, some teachers trained to teach English prefer to teach other subjects in Portuguese due to lack of teaching and communicative competence in English language.

1.3 Inadequate learning materials in the library and English Department

From the findings, it was evident that one of the factors which undermine the quality of the English language teacher training programme is lack of teaching and learning materials, lack of computers and room where to explore information related to the teacher training courses, especially in TTC B and TTC C. Table 2 summarises the findings from the assessment of the existing teaching and learning materials.

Table 2: Assessment of the available material for teacher trainees

No.	Interviewees	Interviewees' responses	No. of TTs/FGDs and GELTs
01	TT1, TT2, TT3-TTCA	There are materials for teacher trainees to make use	3/0/0
02	TT4, FGD-TTCA GELTs2,4-8	The library does not have materials	1/1/6
03	TT1, TT2-TTCB TT1, TT2, FGD1-TTCC FGD1-TTCB	The existing materials are simply grade 6 and 7 course books	4/2/0

Source: Researcher's analysed field data, 2017.

In TTC B and TTC C, both in the library and in the English Department, there were no dictionaries, grammar books, and storytelling books. The existing books in both colleges were grades 6 and 7 pupils' course books; these were the books that the teacher trainees were supposed to use in the primary schools soon after their training programme. Figure 1 shows some of the books in the library.





Figure 5: Sample of primary school books in Portuguese language in TTC C Library
(Source: Photos taken by the researcher, 2017.)

In TTC A, there were *Mapep* books with long stories which were not appropriate texts to the teacher trainees, bearing in mind their poor linguistic background. The teacher trainees needed to be exposed to the basics and intermediates of English language, so that they could learn much about the content delivered in class. With lack of CD players, adequate teaching and learning materials for listening, teacher trainees could not minimise their pronunciation problems. With lack of teaching and learning materials, teacher trainers and teacher trainees need to be very flexible in designing materials suitably for the training process. Saleh (2013) maintains that:

“In foreign language contexts, it is better to develop a model of communicative competence that takes into account the specific contextual, social and linguistic factors..... therefore, local experts need to be involved in the process of designing the language learning materials for their own contexts.” (p.109)

Thus, teacher trainers and teacher trainees need to adapt and develop authentic teaching and learning materials for the improvement of the training process. Luckily in TTC A, the English Department had some grammar books, three English Portuguese dictionaries, which unfortunately during the period the researcher visited the school were not used during lessons. In the Department, there were also two tape and CD players which were not working. Nevertheless, it is important to note that through their own efforts, TT3 from TTC A, TT1 from TTC B, TT1 from TTC C and TT2 from TTC C brought their own materials into the classroom and made the lessons very interesting by designing activities which would make the lessons enjoyable.

Contrary to the findings of this researcher, the teacher trainers' emotive response in TTC A was that there were many materials: *“We have so many material such as books, dictionaries and discs for listening activities”*, [TT3 – TTC A - 24/08/2017], while in reality the researcher observed a different scenario, because there were few books in the library and English Department. However, the other teacher trainers affirmed that the

institutions lacked teaching and learning materials, as evidenced by teacher trainer in TTC A.

"We don't have materials, it's just only exercise book for grade six and seven. ...Sometime(s) we avoid to give [giving] topics, distributing topics to prepare and to come to present because of not having resources and this also contribute[s] a lot in terms of..." [TT2 - TTC B - 21/08/2017]

"humm, yes, yes here we have got problems of resources, for example here at our department we have got problems of book, computers because those things we need. Even this radio is not working. So trainer F..... Sometimes brings her computer even the speakers she brings". [TT4 - TTC A -]

The college administrators and the Ministry of Education need to equip the colleges with materials and adequate resources that will make the teacher trainers and trainees feel comfortable. The necessary materials include: basic English-Portuguese dictionaries, elementary and basic English-English dictionaries, basic grammar books, course books and charts for designing pictures or designing flashcards. Kern (2000) maintains that:

"Teachers in training also need academic course book that brings to their attention the rich interplay between language use, context, and culture. Linguistics courses on the phonology, morphology and syntax of the language may be of some use in helping teachers to understand the complexities of the language system." (p.316)

Moreover, research showed that extending the training period without teaching and learning materials will not help much. Three year teacher training programmes have been implemented for primary schools in Ghana, Nigeria, Namibia, and Uganda. However, lack of teaching and learning materials was presented as an issue in order to improve the quality of teacher training. A study conducted in Nigeria by Adekola (2007, p. 19) noted that:

"Conditions for teaching and learning in colleges of education are inadequate, and in many ways reflect the school system itself. Physical infrastructure is in a poor condition and inadequate for the numbers of students. Textbooks and libraries are limited and course material is often photocopied by lecturers to be sold to students in lieu of textbooks and course materials." (p.19)

Having adequate and enough resources in the library and English Language Department would encourage the trainees to do more readings on their own instead of relying on the lessons in the classroom; and the handouts provided by some of the teacher trainers. The need to equip the library and English Language Departments with

resources such as books of English, grammar, short stories, novels, CD players is urgent. Similar findings regarding lack of teaching and learning resources was found in other studies under English language teaching and learning in Mozambique by Mozambican language scholars such as Mataruca (2014), Nhapulo (2013), Mawere (2012), Henriksen (2010) and Chimbutane (2009).

Therefore, candidates for the colleges are the ones coming from secondary schools with critical shortage of teaching and learning materials. Thus, teacher trainees did not have much content knowledge which could have been explored from the teaching and learning sources in secondary schools. Internet Wi-Fi could be a solution for the teacher trainees to download and make use of interesting *PDF* text books and related materials with a guidance of the teacher trainers. However, TTC B and TTC C did not have access to internet works, and at TTC A, the internet room was small and rarely open such that teacher trainees did not even use the room during the research period.

It would be encouraging if teacher trainers took advantage of using their own cell phones to access internet and download relevant teaching and learning material and share with their teacher trainees. One is inclined to believe that if, developmental training programmes for English language teacher trainers at TTCs in Zambézia were implemented they would encourage the teacher trainers be innovate, creative and flexible in exploring solutions to some of the challenges encountered along the training process, such as of material designing and development.

Sanyal (2013) contends that:

"...although teachers are the most important component determining educational quality, the quality of teacher education as a whole is determined by additional factors based on institutional characteristics. Teachers alone cannot assure good quality teacher education without an effective teacher education institution, which constitutes the teacher education system." (p.33)

The researcher argues that if teacher trainees do not have English-English dictionary or bilingual dictionaries; Portuguese-English and English-Portuguese, they cannot advance with the range of vocabulary knowledge needed for a language teacher in the following dimensions: grammatical, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences. Such being the case, trainees needed to have not only Portuguese - English or English - Portuguese Dictionaries, but also elementary, basic and intermediate English - English dictionaries which would help them move from the translation of the words to interpretation of the meanings of the English words. Teacher trainees needed to read short stories and make interpretations as part of their learning process so that once in their classroom as teachers, they should be able to interpret effectively reading comprehension texts.

Moreover, both the Provincial Directorate and The Ministry of Education in cooperation with INDE and some National Publishers such as, *Editora Escolar* should

support the English language teacher training colleges with adequate and necessary learning, teaching and training books, dictionaries and other relevant materials.

1.4 Lack of Continued Professional Development for TTCs Teacher Trainers

Teacher trainers from the three colleges lamented that they never had any meeting whereby they could discuss issues regarding their challenges and problems. The following statement from TT1 in TTC A is evidence for lack of short developmental training where matters related to English language teaching should be shared.

“The challenges that....the government should provide training courses, workshops related to the issues of teaching methodologies. For example, I’m here attending a seminar, but it isn’t about English teaching methodologies, it is about other issue. We are supposed to have those UP [Pedagogic University] teacher trainers to share with or train us”, [TT2 – TTC A - 18]

It is crucial to mention that in TTC B, there were two English language teacher trainers only who were teaching different subjects, likewise in TTC C. Logically, if one is teaching writing or reading courses, ideally, should meet at least once or twice during in a year with other colleagues teaching the same courses in the other two teacher training colleges. A discussion cannot be fruitful if one shares the challenges or gaps in given courses with one who has not embarked on the same issues. Thus, it becomes a limitation for the teacher trainers’ discussion. That was not the case at TTC A where there were four teacher trainers who met in a trimester at least, and reflected on their trainees’ progress. As it was argued by the teacher trainer 2 from TTC C during the data generation, the following constitute part of the major challenges in his view:

“The typical challenges are: the syllabuses for Teaching Practice, ourselves as trainers we don’t have the chance to exchange information experiences, ideas of the same subjects we teach with other trainers in other colleges.. Lack of resources, books, dictionaries, our library is very poor, coping: I have been giving PDF books, personal grammar and some books are used in the classroom”. [TT2 - TTC C - 18/07/2017]

From the document analysis based on the last Mozambican Strategic Plan, it becomes clear that the Mozambican Government is aware of some of the challenges that the teacher training colleges and the teacher trainees face in the colleges, as it is underlined by the Mozambican Strategic Plan 2012-2016:

“Improving the quality of education is a complex matter. The outcome of the educational process does not depend solely on the resources made available, but rather on a set of internal factors, including physical, psychological and socio-cultural factors, in which education plays... It also includes external factors such as families’ socioeconomic

conditions, home/ school distance, commitment of parents and guardians, among others.”
(p.35)

Therefore, the English language teacher trainers and teacher trainees in the teacher training colleges seem to be forgotten by the Educational administrators at intermediate and top levels. The researcher's focus is on the Provincial Directorate and the Ministry of Education who should support them with the training process. Adekola (2007, p.21) postulates that *“the lack of professional development as a teacher educator, specializing in fields of knowledge appropriate to primary school education, is common across other countries in Africa as international studies have shown”*. The need to implement workshops or developmental training programme is a must for the colleges. The trainers suggested that they should meet at least once a year to discuss issues regarding the training programme. Therefore, former teacher trainers, lecturers in universities from the English language teacher training programmes can be invited by the college managers to help, innovate and refresh the teacher trainers' knowledge on different matters of English language course, teaching methodologies and related issues.

1.5 Teacher Trainers Commitment at the TTCs

The teacher trainers' dedication and commitment was a point worth noting during the research, lack of dedication and commitment of the teacher trainers was an issue raised by some graduate English language teachers and a teacher trainer. Indeed, this challenge was also observed by the researcher in TTC A and TTC B where some teacher trainers would not show up for classes. This behaviour showed lack of professionalism, and indirectly inculcated negative attitudes into the teacher trainees. Similarly, in the same TTC A, the TT1 admitted lack of good relationship among the teacher trainers, which demonstrated bad environment and lack of professionalism among the teacher trainers. This was not the case at TTC B and TTC C. The statements below are clear pieces of evidence from one of the teacher trainers and one of the focus group discussions concerning the extent to which the teacher trainers' attitude affected the quality of the training. One of the teacher trainers told the researcher:

“Sometimes the trainers behave badly by the way they think that they are the owners of the course and some are selfish and absent”. [TT1 - TTCA - 18/08/2017]

The following quotes from another teacher trainer and a teacher trainee English language reinforce the need for teacher trainers' commitment towards the teaching and learning process during the training process.

“Teacher trainers should plan their lessons with activities that enable communicative competences”. [TT2 - TTC1 - 21/08/2017]

“The trainers should improve the teaching strategies for our improvements. Even if they increase the length of the course to two years, without changing the strategies it will not change anything and we will continue being poor in English language”. [FGD2 - trainee3 - TTCA - 23/08/2017]

The researcher believes that the teacher trainers’ behaviour may implicitly or explicitly influence the teacher trainees in their future career. It would lead to carelessness, lack of commitment to work, no lesson planning, and lesson improvisation. These are aspects that the teacher trainers should avoid as they undermine their professionalism and affected the training process in relation to the communicative competence and teaching performance of the teacher trainees.

2. Conclusion

So, teacher trainees should always be exposed to positive attitudes of their teacher trainers, share positive praxis, learn to design and develop teaching and learning materials, learn to reflect and critique the aspects which do help a professional English language teacher such as: proper dressing, adequate knowledge of register and encouraging the teacher trainees to understand subjects matters and pedagogical content knowledge. During the lesson observations, it was encouraging to see TT2 at TTC A moving around the class while the trainees were doing exercises in groups. This was not done by other teacher trainers. For example, in the second lesson of TT4 at TTC A, just like in the other three lessons, the teacher trainer used to set the task, give instructions and sit at her desk showing a kind of laziness and lack of interest in the lesson.

As observed by teacher trainees in TTC A and TTC B the teacher trainers did not work only in the training colleges, they also worked at least in one or two private institutions. The fact that they were most of the time careless and busy with other personal issues hindered their good concentration as they were always rushing and not very focused. Therefore, the private institutions are more rigorous than the public ones. The fact that the public institutions are not strict, teacher trainers end up being inflexible in their teaching basing the training their past experiences, not renewing the training methodologies, not adapting teaching and learning materials, relying thus on dictation of the notes as it was the case observed to the trainers in the three colleges.

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