Multilingual Pedagogies in African Post-Colonial Contexts: Opportunities and Implementational Challenges

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There are now diverse strands of research in multilingual classrooms that are calling into question the power of language pedagogies based on exclusive use of the target language (e.g. Cummins, 2008; García, 2012; Levine, 2011; Turnbull and Dailey-O'Cain, 2009; Creese and Blackledge, 2010; Saxena and Martin-Jones, 2013; Weber, 2014). This research is providing ample evidence to support the case for use of multilingual resources in classroom interaction as a legitimate communicative and pedagogical strategy.

Although this trend in research and pedagogy is not entirely new in post-colonial African contexts, there is still a mismatch between official discourse, policy and implementation. In the ebb and flow of practice in local schools, educators tend to avoid or even proscribe the use of multilingual resources in classroom interaction, both in monolingual and bilingual education programmes.

In my talk I will discuss some of the educational and socio-political reasons why a multilingual ethos is still not filtering through to classroom contexts in post-colonial Africa and suggest a few ways to mitigate educators' resistance to multilingual pedagogies. I will argue that, despite the convincing evidence in favour of multilingual pedagogies in the current literature, these still need to be tested in and adjusted to different contexts, including in African post-colonial contexts. In addition to that, I will also argue that buy-in and effective application of multilingual pedagogies can, at least in part, be achieved if there is ample dialogue and research cooperation between researchers and educators, including teachers. Such cooperation would involve co-design and co-implementation of language-in-education policies.

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Biography

Feliciano Chimbutane is Associate Professor of Educational Sociolinguistics at Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, Mozambique. His research has been primarily sociolinguistic and ethnographic in nature, focusing on bi/multilingual education policy and practice in African countries. He has devoted special attention to classroom practice and to the relationship between classroom discourse, day-to-day talk and the wider socio-political order. His publications include: *Rethinking Bilingual Education in Postcolonial Contexts* (2011, Multilingual Matters), *Ensino Bilingue em Moçambique: Reflectindo Criticamente sobre Políticas e Práticas* (co-edited with Christopher Stroud, 2012, Editora Escolar) and *Bilingual Education and Language Policy in the Global South* (co-edited with Jo Arthur Shoba, 2013, Routledge).