

Language and Citizenship Education in Postcolonial Mozambique*

Feliciano Chimbutane

Universidade Eduardo Mondlane

- Colonial and postcolonial language ideologies and citizenship education orientations have been inextricably bound up with political efforts towards the management of linguistic, cultural and political diversity
- There has been a shift from homogenizing legal provisions and political discourses on language, education and citizenship education to those celebrating diversity and difference
- Mozambique has moved from socialist to syncretic approaches to citizenship education, which comprise a synthesis of features of the republican, liberal, multicultural and global citizenship
- There is still a mismatch between legislation and political discourses on language, education and citizenship education, on the one hand, and actual practices of citizenship in Mozambique, on the other

Purpose: Despite the formal political decolonization of much of the world, the colonial legacy continues to prevail around the globe, in particular in the Global South. This article explores the interface of language, education and citizenship in Mozambique, with special reference to the role of education and language ideologies in forging the ideal citizen in the postcolonial context.

Method: Drawing on previous studies on education and citizenship in colonial and postcolonial contexts, I use the decolonial lenses of Linguistic Citizenship and other related frameworks to show how citizenship education in Mozambique has been inextricably bound up with political efforts towards the management of linguistic, cultural and political diversity. I argue that in spite of the progress made, there is still a mismatch between legislation and political discourses on language, education and citizenship education and actual practices of citizenship in Mozambique, which continue to be linguistically and politically constrained.

Findings: This article may contribute to uncover language related social injustices, often associated with the persisting colonial matrix of power, and also to promote decolonial, more pluralist and inclusive forms of citizenship education in Mozambique and elsewhere.

Keywords:

African languages, citizenship education, decoloniality, linguistic citizenship, Portuguese

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Corresponding Author:

Feliciano Chimbutane

Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, Faculdade de Letras e Ciências Sociais,
Av. Julius Nyerere nr. 3453, Campus Principal, Maputo, Mozambique

Email: feliciano.chimbutane@uem.ac.mz



1 Introduction

The relationship between the politics of language and citizenship education in Mozambique is best understood and explained against the background of a historical and socio-political approach. This is because language ideologies, citizenship education and practices of citizenship have been shaped by socio-political events such as colonialism, the construction of a socialist State, and the current process of democratic transformation of the country. This broad context substantiates the view that citizenship is by its very nature contingent, historical and political (Yeatman, 2001). In all phases of the history of Mozambique, language emerged as a key element in the orientation of citizenship education and the exercise of citizenship. Language ideologies, education policies and orientations to citizenship education adopted all through those years came to be ideological platforms for sustaining colonial and post-colonial regimes – they have always been intimately linked to the kind of citizen and the kind of society envisaged. The linkage between language, education and citizenship foregrounds the role of educational institutions in assigning value to linguistic and non-linguistic resources as well as in regulating access to them (see Martin-Jones, 2007; Stroud, 2003).

This article focuses on the interface of language, education and citizenship in Mozambique. It pays special attention to the role of language ideologies and citizenship education in forging the ideal citizen in the socio-political contexts mentioned above.

I draw on a previous study on education and citizenship in colonial and postcolonial Mozambique within the framework of Linguistic Citizenship (Chimbutane, 2018). However, this time, I expand my analytical framework and focus more on citizenship education in the postcolonial period. Accordingly, I use the decolonial lenses offered by Linguistic Citizenship and related frameworks to explore the connections between language, education and citizenship education. I take this framework as a suitable tool to understand and critique the ongoing coloniality of language, education and citizenship in post-colonial contexts. The data and cases analysed here come chiefly from my ongoing ethnographically-oriented research on language planning, policy and practice in Mozambique, in particular in the areas of education, health and governance (e.g. Chimbutane, 2011, 2017, 2018). Results from other studies on citizenship and citizenship education in Mozambique and elsewhere are also considered in this discussion.

The argument is that, as in the colonial era, language ideology and citizenship education in post-colonial Mozambique have been inextricably bound up with political efforts towards the management of linguistic, cultural and political diversity. In both periods, diversity is perceived as problematic and in need of managing in order to build a ‘harmonious’ society, that is, management here does not mean, for example, the development of policies and practices promoting rights of different interest groups, but of those aiming at levelling linguistic, cultural and political differences. Compared with the early periods of independence, it can be argued that there has now been a shift from homogenizing legal provisions and political discourses on language, education and citizenship education to those celebrating diversity and difference. However, there is still a mismatch between this relative openness in legislation and political discourse and actual practices of citizenship, which continue to be constrained from a linguistic and a political point of view. I argue that this is less due to a contradiction or lack of follow up between the politics of citizenship and implementation but something more inherent in a colonial notion of citizenship – a notion reproducing the coloniality-modernity matrix.

This article may contribute to uncover language related social injustices, often associated with the persisting colonial matrix of power, and also to promote decolonial, more pluralist and inclusive forms of citizenship education in Mozambique and elsewhere.



2 Conceptualizing citizenship and citizenship education

This section reviews some of the key principles underpinning understandings of citizenship and citizenship education, two of the core concepts used in this article.

2.1 Citizenship

Historically, there have been two main approaches to citizenship: the civic republican and the liberal approaches (see, e.g., Cemlyn & Ryder, 2016; McCowan, 2009). The civic republican approach focuses on the duties of citizens towards the State, in particular the duty of active participation in decision-making in politics and civil society. The rationale has been that active participation in governance is an essential condition “... both for effective functioning of democratic societies and for the well-being of the individual” (McCowan, 2009, p. 7). In contrast, the liberal approach focuses on the rights that the State guarantees to the individual, in particular civil, political and social rights.

The traditional republican and liberal views of citizenship are being challenged nowadays, mainly owing to socio-economic and geopolitical transformations that have been taking place mainly since the 1970s. These transformations include increased national and international mobility, the establishment of supra-national coalitions as well as the globalization of liberal economics. Among other things, these transformations have called into question the boundaries as well as the power of nation-states and have exacerbated socio-economic and other forms of inequalities at local and global levels. Consequently, these new local and world orders have led to the revision of traditional definitions of citizenship and their adaptation to new circumstances and to the proposition of new ones. The notions of multicultural citizenship, global citizenship, post-national citizenship and radical democratic citizenship are among these new conceptions of citizenship in this post-modern era (see Cemlyn & Ryder, 2016; McCowan, 2009). Given their relevance to the study of citizenship education in Mozambique, multicultural citizenship and global citizenship deserve a brief presentation here.

Proposed in Kymlicka (1995), multicultural citizenship can be understood as a response to the limitation of the traditional liberal view of citizenship to account for differences among sociocultural groups in a polity. Accordingly, multicultural citizenship comprises a set of principles for acknowledging the differentiation and recognition of group rights. One of the core principles of multicultural citizenship is that all groups in a polity, including minority groups, should be able to cultivate and retain their cultures and not forced to melt into the culture of the dominant national group(s). The multicultural citizenship concept emerged in the context of a shift in political discourse from claims of social equality to claims of group difference or politics of recognition (Fraser, 1997; Young, 1993), in what is often termed “political togetherness in difference” (Young, 1993). One of the drivers of this discourse on recognition is the perception that “some kinds of injustice are *cultural* in origin, rather than simply material” (Riddell, 2016, p. 550, emphasis in the original). However, one can still question whose terms are used to define culture and ‘subaltern’ forms of culture, as these definitions are often based on colonial parameters of diversity and difference.

The notion of global citizenship emerges in the context of the weakening of the power of nation-states in the face of superpower regional coalitions and global capitalist forces and the consequent change in economic and geopolitical relations. Departing from the premise that there are universal human relations and obligations beyond any particular local or national connections, global citizenship advocates “...empathy and solidarity with all peoples, along with rights and responsibilities that are valid across national boundaries” (McCowan, 2009, p. 13). That is, as in the liberal and republican views, the notion of citizenship is based on rights and duties, although in this case the center of power is not a nation-state but an amorphous ‘global’ entity. Within this framework, while “humans are required to look beyond their immediate and proximal relationships (families, local and national communities)” (Peterson, 2016, p. 250), it is also acknowledged that global citizenship is intertwined with local, regional and national forms of citizenship, all of which are mutually reinforcing (Peterson, 2016, p. 261). This relationship between the local and the global is epitomized by slogans such as ‘think globally, act locally’ and labels such as ‘glocality’. However, it should be noted that this relationship between the local and the global is often asymmetric and top-down, as is the case with the liberal and republican state-centered constructs of citizenship.



In spite of their substantial differences, the approaches outlined here share some core features, including the legal (legal rights and/or duties), top-down (state-centered or globally-centered) and universalistic construct of citizenship. In contrast, decolonial notions of citizenship, including the notion of citizenship within the Linguistic Citizenship framework, tend to account for and foreground informal, grassroots and context-bound “acts of citizenship” (Isin, 2008). Acts of citizenship are defined “as those acts that transform forms (orientations, strategies, technologies) and modes (citizens, strangers, outsiders, aliens) of being political by bringing into being new actors as activist citizens (claimants of rights and responsibilities) through creating new sites and scales of struggle” (Isin, 2008, p. 39). The notions of Linguistic Citizenship and acts of citizenship are similar in that they both account for the fact that citizenship activity can take place outside of formal institutions and can involve individuals and social groups that are not recognized as ‘citizens’ in the eyes of the State.

2.2 Citizenship education

Overall, citizenship education can be defined as provision of tools that enable individuals to develop skills, values and attitudes that can serve their orientation in the social environment. However, citizenship education is best appreciated when viewed from different perspectives, mainly depending on philosophical or ideological visions underpinning the construct of citizenship. I illustrate these claims mainly based on the four approaches to citizenship discussed above: republican, liberal, multicultural and global approaches. From the republican perspective, for example, citizenship education means teaching about the responsibilities of citizens towards the State, including military and civic obligations to the nation. From the liberal perspective, citizenship education focuses on provision of tools that can enable individuals to exercise social, political and civil rights, including the right to fair justice, the right to vote and the rights to health and education. From the multicultural perspective, citizenship education focuses on teaching about principles and practices that can allow individuals to recognize cultural differences and act to mitigate or eradicate culturally based social injustices. From the global perspective, citizenship education entails provision of tools enabling individuals to promote and act for the achievement of globally and locally relevant mores and values, such as peace, human rights, democracy and sustainable development.

Despite this rather compartmentalized definition and praxis of citizenship education, in many contexts, multiple or syncretic perspectives to citizenship education are adopted. Such perspectives comprise a combination of features of different approaches to citizenship. For example, citizenship education in Mozambique can be viewed as comprising a synthesis of different perspectives, including elements of the republican, liberal, multicultural and global approaches to citizenship. This is true at least in terms of legislation and political discourses, as in practice some “progressive” competences that would allow, for example, the formation of critical and participative citizens tend to be suppressed.

3 Decoloniality

As noted above, in spite of the formal political decolonization of much of the world, the colonial legacy continues to shape, among other things, the world views, the production and validation of knowledge, the relations of power and the distribution of wealth and resources around the globe. In general, postcolonial countries themselves, in particular those from the Global South, have not managed to delink from the colonial matrix of power. This linkage is epitomised, for example, by the prevalence of colonial language ideologies and policies, which tend to privilege former colonial languages to the detriment of native languages and associated cultures, and the adoption of Western-centred school curricula and pedagogies, while marginalizing local forms of knowledge and epistemologies. This situation has triggered the development of approaches that seek to address and reverse the continued relevance of colonialism around the world or in specific geopolitical spaces. Decoloniality is among such approaches.

Decoloniality, which emerged in the Global South, can be broadly defined as an epistemic, ethical, political and pedagogical project that aims at delinking from Western narratives – colonialism, imperialism, modernity and globalization – while at the same time promoting alternative modes of thinking and



living (see Mignolo, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013). Here, I will merely give a short overview of the key points of decolonial thinking that I use to further a critical discussion of citizenship and citizenship education.

As Mignolo (2013) suggests, the historical, political and epistemic foundations of decoloniality were established in the Bandung Conference of 1955, when 29 Asian and African countries met “to find a common ground and vision for the future that was neither capitalism nor communism” (p. 130). Among other things, this view implied a call for not aligning neither with the West nor with the Soviet Union. However, theorization on decoloniality has been strongly associated with Latin American scholars, who were mainly driven by the observation that neither communism nor capitalism were adequate philosophies and visions to address social and economic inequalities in Latin America, in particular, and in the globe more generally. In Mignolo’s (2013) terms, decolonial thinking “is concerned with global equality and economic justice, but it also asserts that Western democracy and socialism are not the only two models to orient our thinking and our doing.” (p. 131)

Border thinking, delinking and epistemic disobedience are three intertwined concepts that underpin the core politics of decolonial thinking. Mignolo (2013) asserts the relevance of these concepts when he states that “there is no other way of knowing, doing and being decolonially than simultaneously engaging in border thinking, delinking and epistemic disobedience” (p. 141).

Border thinking, regarded as “the epistemic singularity of any decolonial project” (Mignolo, 2013, p. 131), entails the thinking of the people commonly represented as the Other in Western thinking (the *anthropoid*), i.e. those who do not aspire to become or do not want to submit to those Western groups (the *humanitas*) in the powerful position to define, judge and evaluate the marginalized Other, the subaltern (Mignolo, 2013, pp. 131-132, 137). One of the implications of border thinking or border epistemology for decolonial pedagogy is that decolonial education should involve “...opening up the possibilities of teaching and learning subaltern knowledges positioned on the margins or borders of modernity.” (Mignolo, 2007, p. 455)

Delinking decolonially means not to align with or not to accept available options such as communism, capitalism, imperialism, modernism, postmodernism, etc. and adhere to other epistemic and philosophical options. It is within this frame of thinking that Mignolo (2013) states, for example, that “decolonial arguments promote the communal as another option next to capitalism and communism.” (p. 131) Decolonial theorists acknowledge that the marginalized, the subaltern cannot do without Western epistemes and paradigms such as modernity and globalization. However, they argue that by de-linking from those epistemes and paradigms one no longer takes them as “the point of reference and of epistemic legitimacy” (Mignolo, 2013, p. 131). Delinking is thought to be operationalized through border thinking and epistemic disobedience.

Epistemic disobedience or epistemic delinking means to critically confront hegemonic Euro-American epistemologies and paradigms of thought and advance or foreground alternative epistemologies and paradigms based on local ways of doing, thinking and being (Mignolo, 2007, 2011, 2013). This orientation confronts global designs and promotes the recognition and legitimation of pluralist forms of thought, knowledge and life, including those forms that have been historically marginalized or silenced under the rhetoric of civilization and modernity.

Decolonial scholars have been criticized, among other things, for over-emphasizing the linkage between modern epistemologies and power asymmetries. In this regard, Morreira (2017) notes that “decolonial thinking can be seen as over-determining the role played by modern epistemologies, such that the reader begins to wonder how it was possible for critiques of coloniality to have emerged at all” (p. 292) In spite of this criticism I still find the tenets of the decolonial thinking important to address citizenship education in postcolonial Mozambique, in particular considering the ongoing coloniality of language, education and citizenship. Not only does it allow us to trace the coloniality of citizenship discourses across historical time to the present, it also offers a way of understanding Linguistic Citizenship (Stroud, 2001; Chimbutane, 2018)



4 Language, education and citizenship education in postcolonial Mozambique

4.1 Education for monolithic citizenship: The case of the formation of *Homem Novo*

After about 500 years of Portuguese colonial occupation and 10 years of armed struggle, Mozambique became independent on June 25th, 1975. At that time, the government of *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (Mozambican Liberation Front, hereafter Frelimo) established a one-party socialist State. Frelimo proclaimed the formation of the *homem novo*, literally “new man” (Machel, 1975), as the appropriate path towards the achievement of this aim. This proclamation was further reiterated during the 3rd Congress of Frelimo in 1977 and later legislated through the Law on the National Education System – Law 3/83 (RPM, 1983).

Following a Marxist-Leninist ideological orientation, *homem novo*, the idealized new citizen, was defined as a citizen free of colonial and bourgeois mentality and also free of “backward” traditional values such as obscurantism and superstition. In addition, this man was expected to take up the values of socialism. This “new man” should also be able to appropriate scientific and technological knowledge and use it in the service of the socialist revolution (Machel, 1975, 1977; MEC, 1977; RPM, 1983). This definition underscored a call for a discrediting of the capitalist worldview and abandonment of all traditional beliefs and practices thought to be in conflict with ‘scientific’ wisdom. These included beliefs in witchcraft, in traditional medicine, in the power of ancestral forces and in God. In fact, with the exception of the call not to believe in God, these culturally based ‘undesirable’ attributes remind us of those that the model of citizen envisaged by the colonial civilizing mission attempted to expurgate – in both cases, the abandonment of traditional values and practices was a key feature of a ‘good’, modern citizen. This top-down colonial modernity is a common feature of traditional and more recent constructs of citizenship, including the construct of global citizenship.

Consistent with the monolithic and authoritarian political and educational ideology, Portuguese, the former colonial language, was declared as *the* official language and the only language of education in Mozambique. In other words, Portuguese was defined as the language that should mediate the socialist nation-state project, including the forging of the “new man”. In contrast, no official status was granted to African languages. This decision shows how the very same language policy that prevailed during the colonial rule was maintained at independence.

The decision to maintain Portuguese as the official language was allegedly to ensure national unity, a political-ideological project that included the bid to eradicate tribal, ethnic and regional differences. This ideological perspective was epitomised by the declaration of Portuguese as the language of national unity (*língua da unidade nacional*). Within this ideological framework, multilingualism had been conceptualized as the main cause of tribalism and regionalism, both of which should be fought vigorously. This explains why the use of African languages in formal domains and functions was not tolerated until recently, including in schools, as these were perceived as divisive and obstacles to the acquisition of the Portuguese language.

In line with these monolingual and socialist ideological frameworks, the school was symbolically conceived as the centre for dissemination of the Portuguese language and the place where the *homem novo* would be forged. This became the central orientation of citizenship education immediately after independence. This mandate is spelled out in the 1983 Law on the National Education System where it is stated that “...in its content, structure and method, the education system must lead to the forging of the new man” (RPM, 1983, p. 13). It is enshrined in this Law that the Education System is based on the educational experiences accumulated during the times of the liberation struggle, on the universal principles of Marxism-Leninism and on the shared world heritage of humanity (RPM, 1983, p. 13). As Castiano, Ngoenha, & Berthoud (2005) point out, Frelimo adopted a socialist construct of democratic education. Within this view of education, schools are conceived as spaces for everyone and through which the people should seize political power from the bourgeoisie. Hence, Frelimo defined the school as the *base para o povo tomar o poder* (the platform for the people to take power).

In addition to the development of solid scientific, technical and cultural skills, the education system was expected to impart patriotic and moral values on the “new man”, through moral and patriotic education. Accordingly, one of the key education policy guidelines was that “... when planning and preparing lessons, each teacher should be able to explore content that serves patriotic education” (MEC,

1986, p. 58). The Portuguese language subject in primary and secondary education was one of the platforms adopted to materialize this socialist orientation of citizenship education. The Portuguese language syllabus and materials were developed around political and social themes, such as the national liberation struggle, national heroes, women's emancipation, proletarian solidarity, life in community, demonization of the enemies of the socialist revolution and State, etc. These were also the preferred topics for essays in primary and secondary schools. To put it simply, Portuguese language classes became an arena for the promotion of socialist values and patriotic awareness among Mozambican students, rather than language lessons *per se*.

As can be perceived, the homogenizing language ideology discussed in this section was consistent with a wider political project of a nation-state founded on egalitarian socialist principles. Under this ideology, "equality meant sameness and the annihilation of difference" (McEwan, 2005, p. 183). Frelimo assumed that in order to build a harmonious socialist society, all citizens should be treated the same way and differences of all sorts should be overridden. Hence, there should only be one country, one party, one ideological orientation and one unifying language and cultural project. As stated so far, there was a vested interest in marking a historical discontinuity between the colonial and 'tribal' past and the 'national-revolutionary' present, as happened in other contemporaneous socialist-oriented African countries, such as Angola and Tanzania (see Blommaert, 2014' in relation to Tanzania¹).

4.2 Pluralist, global citizenship education or a case of syncretic citizenship education?

From the late 1980s and the early 1990s, the beginning of the so-called second Republic, internal and external socio-political forces led to radical changes in the State's discourse and politics about language, education, citizenship education and the national project. The revisions of the Constitution (RM, 1990) and the National Education System (RM, 1992) were some of the immediate measures taken to redirect the State's ideological discourse and national project. Among other things, the socialist philosophy was abandoned, and a more liberal and pluralist society was envisaged.

The introduction of the rule of law, a democratic multiparty system with universal suffrage and a market-based economy can be regarded as the remarkable innovations of the 1990 Constitution. This was a radical shift from the state-centered socialist orientation to a more liberal orientation in economic and socio-political activity. Relevant to this study is what the 1990 Constitution says in relation to orientations in education (RM, 1990: 32, paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Article 113):

"The Republic of Mozambique shall promote an educational strategy which has as its aims national unity, wiping out illiteracy, mastering science and technology, and providing citizens with moral and civic values. (Paragraph 1) (...)

The State shall not plan education and culture based on any aesthetic, political, ideological or religious orientation." (Paragraph 2)

The educational aims stated in the first paragraph of the above statement are typical of a 'modernist' (enlightenment) view of education for which traditional notions of citizenship were designed. In addition to that, the second paragraph signals an ideological shift in education in Mozambique. In fact, following the changes in the Constitution, there was a need to readjust the politics of the National Education System, making it consistent with the new pluralist ethos. Accordingly, the new Law on the National Education System is stripped of the Marxist-Leninist ideology and of the formation of the *homem novo* project. Instead, a more liberal and universalistic ideological perspective is adopted, which included the liberalization of education provision (up to then a State monopoly¹), allowing for diverse actors, with different philosophical and ideological orientations, to provide education services alongside the State. In this new era, one of the main goals set for the education sector is "to train citizens with solid scientific, technical, cultural and physical foundations and high levels of moral, civic and patriotic values" (RM, 1992, p. 8, Article 3 (d)). As can be understood, compared with the previous Law on Education, in this new one there are vested efforts to emphasize competences, values and attitudes that are not (overtly) bound to the ideology of any particular political party.



The socio-political transformations attested in the 1990s, include changes in the State's ideology on languages and culture as part and parcel of the project of a more plural society, a society where the principle of "political togetherness in difference" (Young, 1993, p. 124) should prevail. In fact, while in the 1990s Constitution Portuguese kept its status as the sole official language, for the very first time it is enshrined that the State promotes the development and increased use of African languages² in public life, including in education (RM, 1990, Article 5; also RM, 2004, Article 9). The use of African languages in education was further backed by Article 4 of decree 6/92 on the National Education System stating that "... the National Education System must value and develop the national languages², promoting their gradual introduction in the education of the citizens" (RM, 1992, p. 104). This shift in language ideology entails that the languages that until then had been construed as divisive and inappropriate for mediating the socialist project, were upgraded and promoted as potential vehicular languages in formal domains, including in formal education.

In line with this multilingual and multicultural ethos, in the Country's 1997 Cultural Policy (RM, 1997) it is restated that the Government of Mozambique is committed to promoting cultural development and to creating the conditions for respect for cultural diversity, including religious and ethnolinguistic differences. This move resonates with the multicultural citizenship principle of acknowledging group rights' differentiation and recognition (Kymlicka, 1995). In relation to the African languages, the document reads as follows:

"National languages are important assets as they are the main repositories and vehicles of national traditions, the communication instruments for the overwhelming majority of Mozambicans and *key elements for the involvement of citizens in social, economic and political life.*" (RM, 1997, p. 122, my highlighting)

Among other things, this statement foregrounds the State's recognition of the role of African languages as key instruments for the enactment of linguistic citizenship for the majority of the population, i.e., for those who cannot speak Portuguese. This ideological openness to the use of historically marginalized languages for social participation and voice can be taken as a step towards decolonial citizenship, as conceptualized in decolonial frameworks such as Linguistic Citizenship (Stroud, 2001, 2009, 2015).

In spite of the fact that neither of the above legal provisions is binding, they can be regarded as an indication of the decline of homogenizing and assimilationist language policy discourses in Mozambique. Among other things, the new discourses and legal provisions on language opened spaces for the promotion and upgrading of African languages and associated cultural practices as well as for the enactment of linguistic citizenship. For example, this openness has lent legitimacy to both intellectuals and ordinary citizens to debate language issues and to shape new forms of multilingual and multicultural provision in education. To put it differently, issues which were taboos in the first fifteen years of Independence came to be discussed openly in public spaces.

Following a pilot programme (1993-1997), the introduction of bilingual education in Mozambique in 2003 in which African languages are used as media of learning and teaching in the first three years of primary education is a remarkable consequence of the current openness of "ideological and implementational spaces" (Hornberger, 2005) in the country. In addition to the introduction of bilingual education, the 2003 curriculum reform also institutionalised the use of African languages to scaffold learning in contexts whereby Portuguese is taught as a subject or used as a medium of instruction (INDE/MINED, 2003). Put simply, African languages began to be allowed in the official context of school alongside the Portuguese language. These languages ceased to be conceptualized as divisive and obstacles to the acquisition of Portuguese, defined as the unifying language or the language of national identity.

Efforts to 'localize' formal education include the institutionalization of what is called *currículo local* (local curriculum), which consists of teaching local knowledge (local history, geography, agriculture, fishery, crafts, etc.) for 20% of instructional time (INDE/MINED, 2003). This portion of the curriculum is expected to be developed locally with community participation, a move which is part of a process of



decentralizing curriculum development and monitoring. Among other things, local curriculum is expected to help expand pupils' knowledge and skills by linking home/community and school-based contexts for learning.

Results of an ethnographically-informed study of bilingual education schools (Chimbutane 2011) indicated that given the official openness to African languages and associated cultural practices, topics such as religious observance, traditional kingdoms and folk medicine, which had been marginalized within the official curriculum of public schools in Mozambique until recently, are nowadays openly evoked and discussed in classes. These are the kinds of cultural practices and social structures that in the period immediately after independence and under the formation of *homem novo* project had been associated with exploitation, obscurantism and idealism (as opposed to materialism), or perceived as residues of colonialism that should be combated (Chimbutane, 2011). This shows how, in the spirit of decolonial pedagogies, the education system is opening up spaces for teaching and learning of subaltern languages and knowledges (Mignolo, 2007, 2013).

Stroud (2007, p. 42) uses the label “retraditionalization in the modernization of Mozambique” to refer to this State’s embrace of local languages and associated cultures. It should be noted, however, that this process of retraditionalization, on the one hand, has meant the return or invigoration of ‘traditional/colonial’ categories of diversity, which include the oppositions tribal-ethnic-nationalist, and, on the other hand, can be taken, at least in part, as a political-ideological strategy for Frelimo’s readjustment to a new sociopolitical dispensation. In fact, it can be argued that anticipating the post-war multiparty competition³, Frelimo had to embrace the ideals of multilingualism, multiculturalism and ‘localization’ of education, administration and governance to (re)conquer the hearts and minds of an important segment of the population that had been lost as a result of unpopular revolutionary measures, including those envisaging the eradication of tribes and traditional forms of authority (Chimbutane, 2011, 2018).

The pluralist discourses and legislative provisions discussed here have a bearing on the approach to citizenship education. Despite challenges in implementation, the current aim of citizenship education in Mozambique is to form citizens equipped with local, national and global values. Indeed, a review of post-1992 Education Strategic Plans, education curricula and programs, syllabi and textbooks leads to the identification of key themes such as the consolidation of national unity, defense of national sovereignty, preservation of peace, strengthening of democracy, freedom and gender equity and promotion of respect for human rights and for the environment. These themes are consistent with part of the core educational objectives spelled out in Article 11 of the Constitution (RM, 1990, 2004), and also with part of global education goals (cf. UNESCO, 2016). In fact, one of the targets of the Sustainable Development Goal 4, the goal to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”, is that:

“By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.” (UNESCO, 2016, p. 72)

Notwithstanding the progress made so far and as will be substantiated in the next section, there seems to be a mismatch between discourse/legislation, citizenship education and enactment of citizenship in Mozambique. I argue that this is because there is no real delinking but a pursuit of coloniality-modernity which manifests itself through re-traditionalization in the pursuit of modernity, a continued emphasis on the nation-state project and on a nation-state concept of citizenship, and a retention of traditional categories of colonially constructed diversities. In the next section, I show that even the seeming advances in the use of multiple languages in contexts of political decision-making in community contexts pale into insignificance when national and institutionalized politics are at play.



4.3 Legislation and discourse on language, education and citizenship education versus exercise of citizenship in mozambique: A case of mismatch

As discussed in the previous section, from the 1990s legislation and political discourse on language, education and citizenship education have pointed to some form of openness to pluralism in Mozambique. This pluralism could be translated, among other things, into the practice of multilingualism, multiculturalism and democratic participation and voice. However, as is argued in this section, although there is some progress made toward actual multilingual, multicultural and democratic practices, these practices are still being constrained owing among other factors to anti-pluralist attitudes and practices and also to political intolerance. These attitudes and practices are part of a restrictive notion of citizenship, in which only certain types of plurality and agency are accepted.

4.3.1 Citizens' agency and voice

Language and education have a bearing on the level and quality of citizens' participation in socio-political life. As a matter of fact, it is through language that citizens can, for example, understand the democratic participation game and influence decision-making. It follows that only those citizens with competence in languages or language varieties regarded as legitimate in formal, macro-level decision-making arenas will be effectively heard, whereas those who can only use low-status languages or varieties are often marginalized or silenced. In this exercise, education is of paramount importance in participation, since it is mainly through educational institutions that citizens acquire the language(s) or language variety(ies), knowledge and skills legitimated in these decision-making arenas (Martin-Jones, 2007; Stroud, 2003). Within this framework one can conclude that the ability to participate effectively in socio-politically relevant decision-making processes may be conditioned by the education received and language(s) or language variety(ies) used by the citizens.

Indeed, the exclusive use of Portuguese at meso- and macro-level decision-making spheres in Mozambique means that the majority of the citizens who are users of African languages and cannot express themselves in Portuguese are technically excluded from these decision-making arenas. This contradicts the discourse and legislation on multilingualism and democratic participation. It is only indirectly that they can influence decision-making at these higher level settings. In contrast, speakers of African languages are powerful agents at micro-level arenas (community or local level), where the Portuguese language does not have the role and the power it has at meso- and macro-level decision-making arenas. This possibility to participate in community or local level decision-making arenas substantiates the Linguistic Citizenship view that citizenship participation can manifest itself at different scales and through different languages. However, it should be recognised that the impact of citizens' agency and voice on the society may vary depending on the layer of participation. I will illustrate the points made here based on a brief analysis of citizens' participation through civil society organizations (CSOs), community consultation forums and parliamentary institutions.

Following the 1990 Constitution, in 1991 the government passed the Law on Freedom of Association, creating the legal and institutional framework for the exercise of citizenship participation in social life. From there on there was a blossoming of CSOs working in key areas such as education, health, environment, civil and human rights in Mozambique. These institutions have been crucial in basic services delivery, policy-making as well as in advocacy and asserting of citizens' rights and obligations. These CSOs either complement government development efforts or put pressure on the government to respect citizens' rights and entitlements. Some of these institutions, in particular those specialized in civic and political rights, are so mobilizing that they often clash with governmental institutions, in particular when they work outside parameters seen by the government as 'politically correct'. In recent years, these organizations have mobilized the society to press the government, including through demonstrations, to take effective measures to stop kidnappings, alleviate the cost of living, combat corruption in public institutions and hold the responsible officials to account. Although these civil society organizations involve citizens of different socio-economic backgrounds, the masterminds and powerful interlocutors with the government are those who can read and write in Portuguese, which is often linked to some sort of formal education. The sole speakers of African languages, who often only understand the motives of claims, manifestations and street demonstrations via 'interpreters', are often



the soldiers, those who dare to be at the front line and confront anti-riot police in particular in urban areas.

Nevertheless, there are some forums in which speakers of African languages can influence decision-making more directly. One such forum is community consultation, a communication platform frequently used by the government and civil society institutions to involve local communities in decision-making regarding matters of their interest. These consultation processes are usually conducted in African languages allowing communities to express their ideas and feelings fully in a language they can speak best. This mechanism of citizens' participation has been used, for example, in processes of development and implementation of important policy and legislative packages, such as the Land Law, Family Law and the Environment Law. As a result of enabling policy and legislative spaces like these and consequent advocacy actions from CSOs, there is greater awareness of community rights and more effective participation in the management of common wealth and resources such as land, forests and environment. Although studies have expressed doubts as to the efficacy, functionality and relevance of formal spaces for dialogue like these (Topsøe-Jensen, Pisco, Salimo, Lameiras, 2015), community consultation institutions have been important platforms for democratic participation involving languages and communities historically positioned on the margins or borders of 'modernity' (Mignolo, 2007, 2013).

The promotion of community participation and consultation processes is consistent with the government's definition of the district as the center of national development. The aim of this district-based development strategy is the decentralization of government functions down to the local level. This strategy is opening spaces for the official use of African languages for local governance and citizens' participation in decision-making at this level. The interaction between the government and local communities is mainly through African languages. In contexts like these, it is not the one who cannot speak Portuguese who feels constrained in communication exchanges, but the one who cannot speak the dominant local language(s). In line with this development policy, for the first time in independent Mozambique, the government institutionalized the position of interpreter (African languages–Portuguese–African languages) in the public sector. These interpreters have been mediating the dialogue between individuals/grassroots groups and meso- and macro-level government representatives. This concession in language policy can be taken as the government's recognition of the role of African languages for community participation in local socio-economic development and governance. In this sense, it can be said that African languages are starting to officially 'compete' with Portuguese as *de facto* languages of governance and citizens' participation at least at the local level.

In spite of the promising pro-democratic language practices attested at micro-level arenas such as the ones described above, the use of African languages in meso- and macro-level decision-making arenas is still very constrained, which, in turn, constrain democratic participation and voice. The example of the National Parliament is a clear case of the mismatch between the multilingual ethos in language policy making and language practices in Mozambique.⁴ In the internal regulation of this forum of the peoples' representatives, it is clearly stated that Portuguese is the official working language, but it is conceded that members can use African languages to express themselves, *as long as they can ensure interpretation to Portuguese*:

"A member of parliament can ask for permission to express himself/herself in a national language, providing simultaneous translation. 2. Every time a member of parliament decides to express himself/herself in other languages – national or foreign languages – s/he has to automatically create the conditions for simultaneous translation." (RM, 2014, p. 5, Article 13 of the Rules of procedure of the National Parliament, my highlighting)

In other words, in contrast to what happens at the district level, at this level the State does not provide interpretation services in African languages. The fact that the provision of interpretation services is made the responsibility of the respective members explains to a large extent why this policy, which presents itself as being pro-multilingualism, is not effectively implemented. The members of this institution have never opted for using African languages, not even those who can only barely express



themselves in Portuguese, but fluently in African languages. This means that the voices of these members and, consequently, the voices of the people they represent are in some way silenced in these important decision-making arenas. Therefore, in spite of the relative progress made – from total exclusion to some tolerance – the use of African languages in the National Parliament is yet to move from discourse/legislation to effective implementation.

4.3.2 Authoritarianism and silencing of critical voices

As discussed in section 4.2, from the 1990s citizenship education aims include promotion of peace and tolerance, strengthening of democracy, freedom and equity and promotion of respect for human rights. However, actual social practices seem to indicate that the authoritarian and monolithic ideology that prevailed during the colonial and socialist eras are still constraining the fulfillment of these aims. In this way they jeopardize the full exercise of liberal democracy and global citizenship, as implicit in official discourses and legislation. I will use the cases of freedom of speech in schools and in the media to substantiate this point of view.

Despite some transformation, Mozambican schools have been described as authoritarian in essence, a pattern that has prevailed since the colonial rule (Buendía-Gómez, 1999; Humbane, 2015). Teachers are viewed as the guardians of knowledge and students as passive receivers of that knowledge. The latter are not allowed to question the former's authority. This is consistent with the authoritarian political ideologies followed in colonial and postcolonial periods. Although this authoritarian pattern tends to be destabilized in educational contexts (Chimbutane, 2011), in particular in urban and in private schools, it is still the dominant pattern in Mozambique. Given this pattern, it follows that these schools cannot be taken as valid models of critical thinking and democratic participation.

In tune with this analysis, in a study on the relationship between school, society and citizenship in Mozambique, Humbane (2015) found that there is tight social control on teachers by school managers and there is absence of democratic dynamics within the schools, in general, and within the teachers' community of practice in particular. According to Humbane (2015), the teachers in his study considered that the political climate in Mozambique, in general, and in their schools, in particular, was not conducive to free expression of critical views on socio-political matters and to promoting students' critical thinking. The fear is that by doing so they could be perceived as political agitators or troublemakers. As a consequence, these teachers do not promote critical thinking in their classrooms, which would allow students to reflect and position themselves in relation to social, political and economic issues.

In fact, despite the *de jure* pluralist context, as in the socialist era, teachers and school managers are still expected to be aligned with Frelimo's political ideology. This alignment has been referred to as *confiança política*, that is, political trust. This climate may explain, at least in part, why expressing critical views on socio-political matters or promoting critical thinking on the students in the classroom is avoided or taken as taboo. There is the fear of being associated with opponents of the government or of rubbing salt into unhealed wounds of the recent civil war. This situation substantiates Borongo-Muweke's (2016) observation that there is suppression of citizenship maturity in postcolonial South.

The unwillingness to express critical views in public forums is, at least in part, a consequence of the perceived unsafe socio-political climate that has surrounded the exercise of the rights to freedom of speech and freedom of the press. Mozambican society has been witnessing the abduction, assault and killing of citizens, including politicians, journalists, commentators and scholars, apparently for expressing their critical views on economic and socio-political issues of public interest. In spite of investigations by relevant authorities and pressures from the civil society and international agencies, the perpetrators of these crimes are seldom known and prosecuted.

The climate described here shows how there is a mismatch between the discourse and legislation on freedom of speech and freedom of the press and the actual exercise of these rights. This means that the Mozambican society is yet to mobilize itself to conquer these freedoms, which are fundamental conditions for participation and active citizenry. As Castel-Branco (2010) has pointed out in his analysis of the socio-political context of Mozambique, at the same time that citizenship requires a pluralist climate, it is also forged and hardened in the fight for that pluralist space.

5 Decolonial and linguistic citizenship: A critical framing of citizenship and language in postcolonial Mozambique

The above critique of citizenship and citizenship education across time in Mozambique can be better conceptualized through the lenses of an alternative notion of decolonial citizenship education, as proposed in Barongo-Muweke (2016), and the idea of Linguistic Citizenship (Stroud, 2001, 2009, 2015, 2018; Stroud & Heugh, 2004; Williams & Stroud, 2015).

Departing from the observation that there is lack of autonomy and suppression of citizenship maturity in the postcolonial South, Barongo-Muweke (2016) suggests that the aim of a decolonizing framework of citizenship education should be to “construct micro-subjective social science competencies that enable postcolonial learners to recognize and challenge difference and social inequality in their various forms irrespective of context, social positioning of subjects or macro power constellations” (p.156). This approach is understood as a way to promote a civic consciousness that allows economic, social and political autonomy and self-determination to individuals and polities in postcolonial contexts.

Barongo-Muweke’s (2016) notion of decolonial citizenship education is compatible with the idea of Linguistic Citizenship. As argued before, Linguistic Citizenship is also a decolonial approach to citizenship as it also seeks to uncover language related social injustices, often associated with the colonial matrix of power, and to “...promote a *diversity of voice* and contribute to a *mutuality and reciprocity* of engagement across difference.” (Stroud, 2015, p. 20, italics in original) As can be understood, both decolonial citizenship education and Linguistic Citizenship depart from a critique of social injustices associated with the pervasive colonial matrix of power, and, speaking for the marginalized individuals, social groups and polities, they raise socio-political consciousness and promote participation and voice across contexts. This is why I take these two notions as appropriate to foreground and frame the decolonial critique of citizenship developed throughout this article.

As stressed in decolonial approaches to citizenship such as the ones outlined above, the analysis offered in this article confirms the prevalence of the coloniality of citizenship and of citizenship education across time in Mozambique. Based on this view, it can be argued that the failure of contemporary citizenship in Mozambique is not so much as a failure of implementation, lack of political will or arbitrary authoritarianism, but as a consequence of, and inherent in, colonial notions of citizenship and language ideology. Consistent with the colonial matrix, the notion of citizenship and the language ideologies adopted are nation-state based, privileging the national and neglecting the local and the individual, and are also based on Euro-American ideals of progress and modernity, hence the marginalization of local languages, knowledges and cultural practices, since these are regarded as backward. In this sense, even the attested movement towards the “retraditionalization in the modernization of Mozambique” (Stroud, 2007) can be understood as a (forced) acknowledgement of categories of ‘tribal-ethno-nationalist’ diversity set in place by coloniality. Instead of a transformative move, this can be interpreted as a palliative political strategy of readjustment to a new socio-political dispensation, one in which political power is, at least legally, reached through the ballot box.

It is this need to respond to new local and global forces that explains the move from monolithic and socialist to pluralist and liberal legal provisions and discourses on languages, citizenship and citizenship education, albeit within the same colonial logics. As discussed, from an overtly expressed socialist orientation to citizenship and citizenship education, Mozambique has institutionally adopted a kind of syncretic citizenship education approach, in which, drawing from complementary features from different orientations, including the republican, liberal, multicultural and global citizenship, the aim is to equip individuals with ‘politically correct’ competences, values and attitudes that are expected to serve their socio-political orientation in local, national and global environments. As discussed, all these forms of citizenship are based on the same colonial matrix of power. They all rely on formal institutions, top-down management and pre-determined categories of diversity inherited from coloniality (see also Stroud, 2018). Even the global citizenship, which pretends to be humanistic and inclusive, relies on nation-state, global coalitions and top-down management of the local impact of globalization as well as on the colonial view of development. That is, all these approaches to citizenship do not foreground or foster grassroots audibility, which makes them different from decolonial approaches such as Linguistic



Citizenship, which recognise the primacy and agency of the ‘grassroots’ to organize politically through language on their own conditions and forms of sociality (Stroud, 2018).

Despite the aforementioned colonial *status quo*, it should be acknowledged that the current legislative and discursive openness to multilingualism, multiculturalism and democracy is enabling some form of grassroots participation and voice. The use of African languages in local governance and in formal education, the exploration of local knowledge in education and the promotion of traditional values and practices are some of the acts of citizenship enabled by the new pluralist legislation and discourses. The use of African languages in these new contexts is enabling their speakers to reconfigure them “through the creation of new meanings, the repurposing of genres and the transformation of repertoires” (Stroud, 2015, p. 25). These transformations can be regarded as embryonic moves towards linguistic citizenship. That is, although these acts are not yet full-blown linguistic citizenship, in which language is perceived as a political construct “tied to material and symbolic wealth” (Stroud, 2001, p. 351), they can be regarded as steps towards that goal. Within this decolonial view of language, political recognition of low status languages should go hand in hand with dispensations that enable economic and socio-political visibility to the concerned linguistic communities. This is not yet the case in Mozambique as African languages are still not equated with meaningful socio-economic mobility and, in contrast with advances in the use of multiple languages in contexts of political decision making at the grassroots level, at national and institutionalized level Portuguese is still the legitimated language of citizenship. Moreover, the anti-pluralist attitudes and political intolerance that still constrain democratic participation and voice in Mozambique are also instantiations of a restricted notion of citizenship. This analysis suggests that, from a linguistic and socio-political point of view, only certain types of plurality, the ‘politically correct ones’, are accepted and nurtured. This ideology explains why there is a social control in schools, which constrain free expression of critical views on socio-political matters and also inhibits teachers from helping students to develop their critical thinking. These attitudes and practices substantiate Barongo-Muweke’s (2016) premise that there is lack of autonomy and suppression of citizenship maturity in the postcolonial South, and in Africa in particular, and also contradict the Linguistic Citizenship’s “desirability of constructing agency and maintaining voice across media, modalities and contexts” (Stroud, 2009, p. 208). Within this framework, linguistic citizenship is in action when speakers exercise agency and participation through the use of languages or other multimodal means in, but often, outside of institutional frameworks of the State for transformative purposes. This is a way of delinking from colonial language ideologies and associated matrix of socio-political participation. As discussed, this is the defining feature of ‘acts of citizenship’, as theorized by Isin (2008).

While the notions of citizenship and citizenship education adopted in Mozambique are still based and reproduce the colonial matrix of power relations, I can argue that the syncretic approach adopted allows for some breathes of decoloniality. The institutional call for the nurturing of a patriotic spirit and self-esteem in Mozambique can be linked, at least at first glance, with the decolonial approach to citizenship (e.g. Barongo-Muweke, 2016; Mignolo, 2013) in particular because, in addition to a call for love of the country and its people, the aim of this movement, at least in terms of discourse, is to build a project of emancipation and self-determination. The underlying ideological driver has been that Mozambicans have the capacity and resources to be in charge of their country’s fate. Frelimo’s efforts to constitute a ‘national patriotic bourgeoisie’ is consistent with this emancipation and self-determination, although through a form of endogenous capitalist trajectory. As Macamo argues, Frelimo perceives the economic empowerment of their members as a patriotic move whose aim is to free the country from capitalism and from Renamo reactionaries (Macamo, 2014, p. 56). Put differently, the socialists of the past are now dressed up as endogenous capitalists but at the same time claiming to protect the country from ‘external capitalists’ and internal anti-patriotic reactionaries. This leads me to suggest that while Frelimo leaders capitulated to capitalism they also try to challenge part of its structures through decolonial discourses.

6 Conclusion

The analysis offered in this article shows how the politics of language and the orientation of citizenship education in postcolonial Mozambique have been historically linked with political efforts towards the levelling of linguistic, cultural and political diversity. As in colonial Mozambique, in the postcolonial era language ideologies and citizenship education continue to be based on the perceived role of Portuguese as a key instrument for realizing the blueprint of the State – the formation of a socialist nation-state in the first Republic, and the formation of a notionally liberal, pluralistic polity in the second Republic. To put it simply, Portuguese continues to be the language of effective citizenship in this country. In spite of the progress made, African languages, cultures and sole speakers of these languages continue to be positioned on the margins of ‘modernity’, as defined in colonial terms. This is an example of the prevalence of the colonial matrix of power relations after decades of formal political decolonization.

The climate analysed here calls for decolonial approaches to citizenship education, ones that can contribute to reduce local and global inequalities and re-centre the marginalized languages, cultures and citizens while building on and celebrating the brighter side of Humanity’s achievements. The notions of decolonial citizenship education and Linguistic Citizenship as presented and discussed in this article are tools worth being considered as they can help to account for the persistence of coloniality in postcolonial contexts and also shed light on how to delink from colonial circuits of transmission. On this point, Barongo-Muweke’s (2016, p. 25) argument that “meaningful decolonisation is not possible without mainstreaming decolonising citizenship education in the various subject specific scientific disciplines” can be instructive here.

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Endnotes

1 At Independence, Frelimo nationalized, among others, the health, education, justice and housing sectors. From there up to the 1990s services in these sectors were solely provided by the State.

2 African languages spoken in Mozambique have been alternatively referred to as Mozambican languages or national languages, even though none of them is spoken nationwide.

3 After 16 years of civil war, involving Frelimo and Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (Mozambican National Resistance, hereafter Renamo), a peace agreement was reached in October 1992, making way for the first democratic elections held in 1994.

4 The same applies to language policies and practices at the level of municipalities.