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Dosier: Real Issues in Real English Classrooms - Problemáticas reales en aulas reales de enseñanza del Inglés

Action Research on In-Service Teachers Training Programme to Reduce Portuguese L1 Use by English Teachers in Huambo, Angola

Investigación-Acción sobre un Programa de Formación en Servicio para Reducir el uso del Portugués L1 por parte de los Profesores de Inglés en Huambo, Angola

Mateus Cañoma Njele

*Instituto Superior de Ciências de Educação do Huambo,
Huambo, Angola.*

<https://orcid.org/0009-0001-0078-3709>
mateusnjele@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This action research project explored how an in-service teachers training programme could help English language teachers in Huambo, Angola, reduce their reliance on Portuguese (L1) by promoting Teaching English in English (TEIE). TEIE encourages teachers to use English as the main language of instruction in EFL classrooms, based on the belief that more exposure to English leads to better language acquisition. Recognizing the need for more immersive English learning environments in Angolan schools, the study aimed to create conditions where students could interact more naturally in English. A qualitative approach was used, involving classroom observations before and after the training, along with the design and delivery of a tailor-made training course. This course focused on practical strategies to boost teachers' confidence in using English, integrate communicative activities, and manage the common challenges of minimizing L1 use. The project had four main goals: to understand the local challenges EFL teachers face, to design a relevant training program, to implement it effectively, and to assess its impact. Findings showed that although Angola's Ministry of Education supports Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), its real-world application is still limited. When TEIE is applied, it significantly improves classroom dynamics and students are more engaged, communication becomes more authentic, and learners develop stronger functional English skills. Ultimately, the study found TEIE to be both practical and beneficial in the Huambo EFL context. It highlights the need for ongoing, context-sensitive teacher training and calls for greater investment in professional development. By supporting teachers in shifting to English-medium instruction, schools can create more effective and engaging learning environments that foster real language growth.

Keywords: Teaching English in English, Language Immersion, Target Language Use, Action Research, Professional Development

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RESUMEN

Este proyecto de investigación-acción exploró cómo un programa de formación en servicio para docentes podría ayudar a los profesores de inglés en Huambo, Angola, a reducir su dependencia del portugués (L1) mediante la promoción de la Enseñanza del Inglés en Inglés (EII). EII fomenta el uso del inglés como lengua principal de instrucción en aulas de Inglés como Lengua Extranjera (ILE), basándose en la creencia de que una mayor exposición al idioma conlleva una mejor adquisición del mismo. Reconociendo la necesidad de entornos de aprendizaje más inmersivos en inglés en las escuelas angoleñas, el estudio tuvo como objetivo crear condiciones en las que los estudiantes pudieran interactuar de manera más natural en inglés. Se utilizó un enfoque cualitativo que incluyó observaciones de aula antes y después de la formación, así como el diseño e implementación de un curso de formación adaptado. Este curso se centró en estrategias prácticas para aumentar la confianza de los docentes en el uso del inglés, integrar actividades comunicativas y manejar los desafíos comunes relacionados con la reducción del uso de la lengua materna. El proyecto tuvo cuatro objetivos principales: comprender los desafíos locales que enfrentan los profesores de inglés, diseñar un programa de formación pertinente, implementarlo de manera eficaz y evaluar su impacto. Los hallazgos mostraron que, aunque el Ministerio de Educación de Angola respalda el Enfoque Comunicativo en la Enseñanza de Lenguas, su aplicación en la práctica sigue siendo limitada. Cuando se aplica la metodología EII, mejora significativamente la dinámica en el aula: los estudiantes se muestran más comprometidos, la comunicación se vuelve más auténtica y desarrollan habilidades funcionales más sólidas en inglés. En definitiva, el estudio concluyó que la implementación de EII es tanto práctica como beneficiosa en el contexto EFL de Huambo. Se destaca la necesidad de una formación docente continua y contextualizada, así como de una mayor inversión en el desarrollo profesional. Al apoyar a los docentes en la transición hacia una enseñanza en inglés como medio de instrucción, las escuelas pueden crear entornos de aprendizaje más eficaces y atractivos que fomenten un crecimiento real del idioma.

Palabras clave: enseñanza del Inglés en Inglés, inmersión lingüística, uso de la lengua meta, investigación-acción, desarrollo profesional

Introduction

With the global spread of English, English Language Teaching (ELT) has experienced significant growth, prompting ongoing debates over effective methods. While many traditional approaches have been abandoned for poor results, scholars such as Kumaravadivelu (2003, 2006) argue for a post-method era. Nevertheless, the primary goal of ELT remains enabling learners to communicate effectively in English. In Huambo, Angola, a large proportion of English teachers lack formal ELT training and rely heavily on translation into Portuguese (L1), hindering students' oral proficiency. This research problem raised the following question: To what extent does an in-service training program for teachers help reduce the use of Portuguese L1 among English teachers in Huambo, Angola? This action research project sought to address L1 overuse by designing, implementing, and evaluating an in-service teacher training program to promote Teaching English in English (TEIE). Despite plans to include an English proficiency component, time constraints prevented its integration. The study aimed to identify strategies to reduce L1 use through four objectives: diagnosing teaching challenges, designing a context-relevant training course, implementing it, and assessing its impact on teacher practice and classroom interaction.

Teachers' professional development

Teachers' professional development (TPD) is essential for improving instructional quality and student outcomes, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Effective TPD involves sustained, collaborative, and practice-oriented learning rather than occasional workshops (Desimone & Garet, 2015; Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017). In Huambo, challenges such as limited access to training, scarcity of qualified teacher trainers, and reliance on traditional methods hinder teacher growth. Research highlights that TPD is most effective when it is content-focused, consistent with curriculum goals, and fosters active learning and peer collaboration (Guskey, 2002; Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008). For EFL

teachers, training that emphasizes communicative approaches, classroom management, and contextually relevant materials is particularly beneficial (Richards & Farrell, 2005).

Investing in continuous professional development, including local workshops, mentoring programs, and technology-supported training, can enhance teacher competencies and foster better student learning outcomes in Huambo schools (OECD, 2019; Harris & Hofer, 2019). Similarly, Averina and Kuswandono (2023) found that structured TPD programs in Indonesia enhanced in-service EFL teachers' self-efficacy, attitudes, beliefs, reflective competence, instructional skills, and knowledge, though challenges persisted, including heavy workloads, time constraints, misalignment with teachers' needs, limited program access, and short duration.

Brief history of English language teaching in Angola

Angola was colonized by the Portuguese for about 400 years. The colonialists brought with them the Portuguese language, which was then introduced into the educational system. During the colonial era, Angola was considered one of the provinces of Portugal, and the teaching of foreign languages was forbidden. Poutou (2019) reports that in 1921, Norton de Matos, through Decree 77, declared that:

Art. 1º - 4º Não é permitido o ensino de qualquer língua estrangeira.

Art. 1º - 4º: "Teaching any foreign language is not allowed". [Translated by the author]

Matos's statement shows that by 1921, English as a foreign language was forbidden in the Angolan educational system. About the implementation of foreign languages in the Angolan education system, Poutou (ibid.) wrote the following:

Contrary to and paradoxically with the thinking of Norton de Matos, regarding the integration of foreign languages into the educational system of Angola, we can read in **PORTARÍA** Number 51, the favourable opinion of the Inspectorate Council of Public Instruction and with the affirmative vote of the Government Council and the Governor-General.

This shows clearly that, one year later (1922), foreign languages were integrated into the educational system in the early years of the creation of high schools in Angola, even though they were prohibited by Decree 77 of 1921. However, this integration was not significant.

Following independence, Angola retained Portuguese as its official language, yet the departure of Portuguese professionals left the education sector critically understaffed, including in English (Cacumba, 2014). By the early 1980s, the growing need for English, driven partly by foreign companies such as Chevron, revealed the country's limited training institutions and shortage of qualified teachers. In response, ISCED-Lubango created Angola's first English Sector in 1983 to train secondary school teachers, support university programs, and prepare teacher educators (Cacumba, ibid.). The prolonged Civil War (1975–2002) further devastated the education system. Widespread destruction of school infrastructure, massive population displacement, and the loss of trained teachers severely undermined access and quality (Human Rights Watch, 2003; UNICEF, 1995; World Bank, 2005). Concentration of resources in urban centers deepened regional inequalities, while trauma among learners and teachers hindered educational recovery (UNDP, 2002; Betancourt et al., 2008). During the conflict, teacher-training schools like ISCED Lubango and ISCED Huambo were closed. The

English/Linguistics course at ISCED Huambo, which started in 1984, was not offered again until 2012.

As a result, the post-war period saw an acute shortage of qualified English teachers, prompting the recruitment of individuals with very limited proficiency or no formal ELT preparation (Malaka, 2022). Although seven higher education institutions now offer ELT specialisations nationwide, the sector continues to face substantial quality challenges; in Huambo, for example, an estimated 95% of English teachers lack formal training (Malaka, *ibid.*)

Teaching English in English

This section outlines the theoretical foundations, benefits, challenges, and strategies of Teaching English in English (TEIE), which entails using English as the primary instructional language in EFL classrooms. Rooted in the belief that consistent target-language exposure fosters acquisition, TEIE encourages maximizing English use for explanations, instructions, and activities. Pollard (2008) argues that at intermediate levels and above, teaching can be entirely in English, with minimal reliance on students' L1. At lower levels, visual aids, mime, and simplified input can support comprehension while maintaining English as the dominant medium.

Definition of TEIE

TEIE denotes the practice where English is used as the main medium of instruction during English language lessons, minimizing or eliminating the use of the students' native language (L1). There are many definitions of TEIE. Based on Elkhayma (2022), TEIE can be defined as “an approach grounded on the use of English as a means of instruction for teaching and learning purposes in non-English native contexts” (p. 159). TEIE is rooted in immersion strategies in second language acquisition, where learners are flooded with the language they are learning, thereby improving their proficiency through practical use in authentic contexts. According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), TEIE “gives emphasis on the exclusive or predominant use of English in the classroom, allowing students to experience language learning in an immersive environment” (p. 117).

Theoretical ground underpinning TEIE

Supporters of TEIE argue that immersing learners in an English-only environment enhances language acquisition and proficiency, a practice increasingly adopted in EFL contexts worldwide. One key driver is English's role as a lingua franca (ELF), serving as a common language among speakers of different native tongues. Its dominance stems from global business needs, the rise of academic publishing in English, and its association with concepts such as globalization, networking, the global market, and the Internet (Mauranen, 2009, as cited in Kao & Shin-Mei, 2017).

The theoretical foundation of TEIE rests on the principle of language immersion, which holds that authentic exposure to the target language accelerates linguistic development, echoing Krashen's and other SLA scholars' views. It draws on several key theories: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which promotes meaningful interaction in English to foster acquisition and competence (Richards & Rodgers, 2014); Input Hypothesis, which stresses the value of comprehensible input slightly above learners' current level (Krashen, 1985); Sociocultural Theory, highlighting the role of social interaction in cognitive and language

growth (Vygotsky, 1978; Lantolf, 2000); and the Direct Method, which advocates exclusive use of the target language for more effective internalization (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

Benefits of TEIE

Despite its challenges, TEIE offers significant benefits for both students and teachers in EFL contexts. Constant exposure to English improves students' skills, builds confidence, and advances teachers' own language proficiency. Many countries have adopted policies promoting English as a medium of instruction for its educational advantages (Elkhayma, 2022). Benefits include enhanced language exposure through comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985); improved listening and comprehension (Richards & Rodgers, 2014); greater fluency and academic performance (Elkhayma, 2022; Lightbown & Spada, 2013); better pronunciation through extensive practice (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996); increased engagement via interactive methods (Harmer, 1983); natural learning akin to first language acquisition (Krashen & Terrel, 1985); cross-cultural awareness and academic quality (Kassteen, 2013, as cited in Chapple, 2015); and heightened communicative competence aligned with CLT principles (Littlewood, 1981; Brown, 2007).

For teachers, TEIE can boost their way to having access to better job-finding prospects locally and internationally, carrying out teaching mobility inside the country and abroad, knowing Western culture, and participating in multicultural and multilingual communities (Galloway et al., 2017). Besides, it allows them to develop English proficiency, take part in international seminars, and publish studies in academic journals.

Challenges

Teaching English through English (TEIE) demands high language proficiency, posing challenges related to cultural differences, resistance to change, teacher development, content complexity, and instructional strategies. Low English proficiency among teachers and students in non-native contexts often leads to demotivation, communication difficulties, and frequent code-switching to the dominant local language (Murata, 2018; Galloway et al., 2017). Effective implementation requires coordinated efforts across educators and policymakers. Moreover, teaching English using English as a medium of instruction in EFL contexts needs qualified teachers with a good repertoire of subject matter and target language knowledge. Under this perspective, Freeman (2016) considers teaching as what teachers do, say, and think with learners concerning content, in particular organizations and other environments, over time. It also includes knowledge of the subject matter and target language.

Subject matter knowledge

Subject matter knowledge is essential for effective language teaching, yet in some contexts, teachers skip topics they do not fully master. It encompasses understanding the discipline's facts, concepts, theories, and principles, including (a) curricular knowledge—awareness of the curriculum and effective sequencing of content; (b) pedagogical content knowledge (PCK)—the ability to combine subject expertise with teaching strategies to make content clear and engaging; and (c) knowledge of student understanding—insight into common learner misconceptions to anticipate challenges and address them effectively (Shulman, 1986; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005).

Target language knowledge

English language teachers need mastery of English to teach it. Sasoma stated during a talk at the 9th ELT conference at ISCED-Huambo, Angola, in 2023, that some English language teachers know only a limited amount of English and use that to teach others. Target language knowledge refers to a teacher's mastery of the language used for instruction, covering vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and cultural nuances. It relates to second language proficiency, L2 knowledge, communicative competence, and target language proficiency, as discussed by Bachman and Palmer (1996), Ellis (1994), Canale and Swain (1980), Hymes (1972), and Saville-Troike (2006). Elder (1994, as cited in Richards, 2017) identifies four key abilities for effective language teaching: using the target language as both the medium and goal of instruction, adapting input for comprehensibility, producing well-formed input, and directing learners' attention to language form.

Strategies to TEIE

It is always important that language teachers think about what their students need to know when learning a language. Several effective strategies for TEIE can be used. The remainder of this subsection suggests a plethora of useful strategies for language teachers based on our own teaching experience and different authors.

1. The first and probably the simplest strategy is the use of **visual aids**. This incorporates images, videos, and real-life objects (realia) to support understanding and reinforce vocabulary and grammar learning. Visual aids can help convey meaning and context, making it easier for students to comprehend English language concepts.
2. **Use clear and simple language**: Students' level is paramount to determine the language use. Use clear and simple language when delivering instructions and explanations in English. Avoid complex sentence structures and unfamiliar vocabulary that may confuse students, especially those at lower proficiency levels.
3. The British Council's page on contextualization (TeachingEnglish) suggests another strategy: providing contextualized language input. Here, teachers present English language input by connecting it to students' interests, experiences, and daily lives through meaningful and relevant contexts. These activities can enhance comprehension and retention of vocabulary and grammar structures.

Students must understand the meaning of the target language in context and its form, including spelling, pronunciation, and grammatical properties, and apply it in practice, a concept Riddell (2014) terms Meaning, Form, and Pronunciation (MFP). We adopt the sequence Meaning and Form (MF), as pronunciation is an inherent component of form. As Richards and Schmidt (2002) note, form encompasses the means by which language is expressed in speech or writing, represented through standard orthography or phonetic/phonemic symbols, making its separation from pronunciation unnecessary.

4. Integrating **listening, speaking, reading, and writing** is crucial for holistic language development, authentic communication, and efficient learning (Brown, 2000). These interdependent skills are categorized as receptive (listening, reading) and productive (speaking, writing) (Harmer, 2015; Scrivener, 2012) and are viewed as reciprocal pairs that interact in real communication, highlighting their complementary roles in language teaching (Nation, 2009; Grabe & Zhang, 2013; Burns & Siegel, 2018).

5. **Use basic classroom language:** Atkinson (1993) identifies four main purposes for using basic English in the classroom: directing student actions, eliciting information, providing information or permission, and engaging in general interaction.
6. **Use of comprehensible input:** Ensure that the language used is understandable to students by adjusting the complexity of speech. As mentioned earlier, at this stage, using visual aids, gestures, and contextual clues can be of paramount importance (Krashen, 1982).
7. **Do not tell students what they can tell you:** This strategy helps language teachers reduce their Teacher Talking Time (TTT). Lewis and Hill (1992) complain that most language teachers talk too much. Again, it is important to remember that the primary objective of a language class is to improve the students' language and to present *them* with opportunities for productive practice. Thus, teachers should not go to the class to show off their English.
8. **Scaffold instruction** means giving students support structures to help them learn a new language. This can include using simpler language initially, then gradually increasing the level of complexity, and providing sentence starters or language frames, thus helping students achieve tasks beyond their independent capabilities (Gibbons, 2015; Vygotsky, 1978).
9. **Use interactive activities:** The use of interactive activities entails engaging students in role-plays, simulations, group discussions, and problem-solving activities that require them to use English in communicative and meaningful ways (Brown, 2007; Littlewood, 1981).
10. **Use authentic materials:** Authentic materials, defined as resources not originally created for teaching, such as magazines, newspapers, advertisements, news reports, and songs, offer realistic language use beyond that of textbooks (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). Incorporating such materials, including videos and real-life objects, enhances relevance, engagement, and contextual understanding of how English functions in real-world settings (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).
11. **Task-Based Learning:** A task, in teaching, is 'an activity designed to achieve a particular learning goal' (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 539). Riddell (2014) notes that tasks mirror everyday activities, making their classroom use both natural and effective for language development. Willis (1996) advocates designing tasks that require learners to use English for meaningful purposes, such as planning a trip, solving a problem, or creating a project, thereby fostering active language use.
12. **Frequent feedback:** Provide regular, constructive feedback to help students understand their mistakes and learn from them. Use positive reinforcement to encourage participation and effort (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).
13. **Language immersion:** According to Cummins (2000), language teachers should create an immersive environment where English is used consistently for all classroom interactions, including instructions, classroom management, and casual conversations.
14. **Cultural integration:** Integrate cultural aspects of English-speaking countries into lessons to make learning more engaging and to provide context for language use (Brown, 2000).

15. Differentiated instruction: Tailor lessons to meet the diverse needs of students by varying the types of activities, materials, and levels of difficulty (Tomlinson, 2001).

16. Encouraging self-expression: Harmer (2007) believes that by encouraging students to express their own ideas, opinions, and experiences in English can help them increase their confidence and motivation to use the language.

The above strategies can help English teachers in the Huambo context to reduce the use of Portuguese L1 during their lessons.

Methodology

The study used an Action Research approach for its focus on continuous reflection and practical application (McNiff, 2013). A qualitative design was chosen to explore underlying reasons and motivations (De Vaus, 2006). Out of 140 English teachers in Huambo, 85 were chosen at random. Data was gathered using pre- and post-observation charts, supported by Cohen et al.'s (2007) view that such tools capture 'live' data from naturally occurring social situations.

The in-service course

The in-service teachers' training course sought to transform participants' teaching practice by equipping them with strategies to reduce Portuguese L1 use and increase English as the medium of instruction. Delivered over two weeks at Colégio Comandante Bula School, it combined practical workshops, peer observations, and feedback sessions, supported by audio-visual and digital resources. The program was part of the Continuing Professional Development for in-service English teachers in Huambo's public and private schools. It was held in conjunction with pedagogical meetings led by the Provincial English Language Coordinator.

The course length was insufficient to address fluency in depth, as most local in-service programs prioritize methodology over language development. Time constraints prevented the planned inclusion of a language component in this program. The original design envisioned three core areas: (1) English language teaching methodology, (2) teaching practice, and (3) English language. At this stage, it is paramount to document here that this study did not bring significant changes in the fluency and pronunciation state of affairs of the participants.

Regarding the admission requirements, we had no specific criterion for the selection of the participants. We worked with all in-service teachers who volunteered to take part. This decision was made since teachers who are self-motivated and enthusiastic about improving their language teaching methodologies were also considered key participants, as they seek professional growth and are often early adopters of new teaching strategies (Borg, 2015).

Results of the study

This section has been included to display the results of the present study. It begins with the results of the pre-observation. During the pre- and post-observation phases of the training program, a total of 85 teachers from a range of public and private schools in Huambo were systematically observed. This comprehensive observational process enabled the researcher to document teaching practices before and after the intervention, allowing for a more reliable assessment of the impact of the training. By including educators from diverse institutional

contexts, the observations provided a broader and more representative picture of classroom realities, thereby strengthening the validity of the findings.

Results of the pre-observation

The results of the pre-observation showed that the majority of the teachers (75), amounting to 90%, used Portuguese L1 during their English language lessons. Ten teachers used English in a very low percentage. These pre-observation data resulted in the decision of the design and administration of a two-week in-service teacher training course and the post-observation phase.

Results of the post-observation

After completing the in-service course, we had to observe the participants' lessons to check their progress. The results indicate that the paradigm changed. Sixty teachers used English during instruction. This number corresponds to 70.5% of the total participants. Below, we present the summary of the comparison of the results between the pre- and post-implementation of the in-service teachers' training course.

Table 1. Synthesis of the comparative results of pre- and post-training

Observation Criteria	Before the training					After the training				
	S u b j e c t s	Results				S u b j e c t s	Results			
		P o o r	Q u i t e g o o d	G o o d	E x c e l l e n t		P o o r	Q u i t e g o o d	G o o d	E x c e l l e n t
Teacher uses English for giving instructions	85	75	10	0	0	85	0	60	25	0
Teacher explains concepts in English	85	75	10	0	0	85	0	50	35	0
Teacher encourages students to ask questions in English	85	70	10	5	0	85	0	70	15	0
Use of visual aids and gestures	85	85	0	0	0	85	0	65	20	
Simplifying language	85	85	0	0	0	85	0	75	10	0
Repetition and reinforcement	85	85	0	0	0	85	0	75	10	0
Encouraging student interaction in English	85	75	5	5	0	85	0	80	5	0
Establishing an English-only classroom environment	85	85	0	0	0	85	0	70	15	0
Students comprehension	85	70	10	5	0	85	0	70	15	0
Students confidence in using English	85	75	10	0	0	85	0	75	10	0
Students use of English	85	75	10	0	0	85	0	75	10	0
Managing behaviour in English	85	85	0	0	0	85	0	60	25	0
Maintaining student attention	85	50	30	5	0	85	0	70	15	0
Fluency in English	85	60	20	5	0	85	60	20	5	0
Pronunciation and intonation	85	60	20	5	0	85	60	20	5	0
Availability of resources	85	60	25	5	0	85	0	75	10	0
Integration of multimedia resources	85	85	0	0	0	85	85	0	0	0
Achievement of lesson objectives	85	20	60	5	0	85	0	60	25	0
Students feedback	85	60	25	0	0	85	0	70	15	0

Discussion

Pre- and post-observations measured English use before and after the Huambo in-service training, assessing strategies to reduce reliance on Portuguese. Results indicated greater English use, with some teachers recognizing the value of giving instructions in English. However, some reverted to L1 when unobserved, revealing resistance to change. A key challenge was participants' limited fluency; teaching English in English requires proficiency, as teachers must model the target language. Before training, most used Portuguese for grammar explanations, reflecting Brown's (2015) observations. Post-training, English use increased, suggesting improved confidence and supporting Smith's (2018) and Richards' (2020) claim that meaningful target language exposure enhances communicative competence.

Persistent L1 use often stemmed from low confidence in explaining complex concepts in English, aligning with Richards' (2020) view. Nevertheless, Richards and Rodgers (2014) argue that explaining in English promotes meaningful engagement, while Swain (1995) and Lightbown and Spada emphasize its cognitive benefits, fluency gains, and confidence building. Consistent English use for concept clarification fosters target language thinking and proficiency. Post-observation results showed marked improvement in teachers' promotion of student questioning in English, rising from poor to good performance. This reflected greater awareness of its role in developing communication skills. Training covered strategies such as fostering a supportive environment (Harmer, 2007), modelling varied question types (Scrivener, 2011), using sentence starters (Gower et al., 1995), encouraging pair/group work (Nunan, 2004), allowing wait time (Ur, 2012), reinforcing efforts (Brown, 2001), and emphasizing the pedagogical value of questioning (Nunan, 2004).

The post-observation phase also assessed the use of visual aids and gestures. Before training, few teachers employed these tools; post-training, modest improvement was noted but remained below expectations. This may be attributed, in part, to a lack of motivation or financial investment on the part of some teachers. Effective language teaching requires not only pedagogical knowledge but also a commitment to resource preparation. Unfortunately, schools in Huambo often lack adequate teaching materials and support. As a result, teachers are responsible for creating and providing their own teaching materials to keep students interested and make lessons more effective.

During the training, the benefits of visual aids were emphasized: they enhance comprehension, engagement, and retention by providing context and concrete references for unfamiliar vocabulary (Harmer, 2007). Visuals support diverse learning styles, particularly visual learners, and paired with verbal explanations, aid auditory learners (Gower et al., 1995; Ur, 2012; Scrivener, 2011; Thornbury, 2006; Nunan, 2004; Brown, 2001). Despite their importance in promoting interaction and reducing teacher talk (Thornbury, 2006; Brown, 2001; Gower et al., 1995), their use remained limited, suggesting that educators require cost-effective alternatives like gestures and mime. Language simplification also improved post-training, though not to an optimal level. Simplifying vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure without altering meaning is crucial for effective learning and aligns with Long and Porter's (1985) view that simplified input facilitates acquisition.

Repetition and reinforcement showed progress, with teachers increasing repeated exposure to vocabulary and grammar, which is key for moving knowledge into long-term memory (Nation, 2001). Encouraging student interaction through real-life communicative tasks such as role-plays and group discussions further supported language use, consistent with Richards and Rodgers (2001) and Harmer's (2007) emphasis on authentic contexts and peer learning. A central concern was reducing Portuguese L1 use. While improvements were

observed, teachers often reverted to L1 when students struggled, citing lesson flow concerns. Such an outcome underscores the need for ongoing professional development to build confidence in English-only instruction. The study supports immersion, which is in line with Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis, Harmer's (2007) focus on real-world use, and Littlewood's (1981) idea of learner autonomy. It also warns that relying on L1 limits exposure to comprehensible input and spontaneous communication.

Effective use of visual aids, gestures, and language simplification enhances comprehension and promotes target language application, as observed post-training. Maintaining student attention through varied techniques and multimedia was noted, though sustained integration beyond observations remains a challenge. Digital tools, as Chapelle and Jamieson (2008) argue, can enhance engagement by offering personalized feedback. Despite challenges such as teacher confidence and limited resources, expectations were generally met with positive student feedback.

Conclusions

The current study concluded that English language teaching in Huambo, Angola, faces unique challenges and opportunities influenced by the country's linguistic landscape, where Portuguese is the official language and several Angolan languages are widely spoken. As English continues to gain importance globally, Angolan educators and policymakers are increasingly recognizing its value, not only as a means of communication but also as a gateway to broader educational and professional opportunities. However, limited resources, a shortage of qualified teachers, and the predominant use of Portuguese as the medium of instruction often delay effective English language learning in Huambo and the countryside. To address these challenges, the training course equipped English language teachers in Huambo with innovative teaching strategies, highlighted the importance of the investment in teacher training, and fostered a supportive environment for English learning.

The proposed strategies highlight the importance of delivering English instruction through meaningful, comprehensible, and context-rich exposure. Teachers create an environment that encourages understanding and long-term engagement by using visual aids, clear language, contextualized input, and integrated skills work. Approaches such as scaffolding, interactive tasks, authentic materials, and task-based learning promote active use of English, while measures like comprehensible input, reduced teacher talking time, and consistent classroom English help build immersion and communicative competence. Differentiation, cultural integration, frequent feedback, and opportunities for self-expression further ensure that instruction remains inclusive, motivating, and responsive to learners' needs, ultimately strengthening students' ability and confidence to use English effectively. To further reduce the use of Portuguese, more professional development courses are needed. The future courses should focus more attention on the fluency aspects, as they are paramount in teaching English in English. Time constraints in the current study did not allow us to tackle fluency and pronunciation in depth.

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