Fragments of Memory: Portuguese Culture and Language in Maputo. Homage to Mozambican Brothers

Fragmentos da memória: cultura e língua portuguesa em Maputo, homenagem aos irmãos moçambicanos

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ABSTRACT

This article reveals the importance of keeping alive and recognizing the memories of learning the Portuguese language by a group of Mozambicans who are residents of the city of Maputo and whose maternal language is not Portuguese, in the sense of reflecting on the relationship between language and the construction of citizenship. From data collection of oral records and from how we treated the data; we achieved results that show the ethnic-cultural diversity inside Mozambique's capital. Moreover, the set of interviews also indicated that familial relations and the relations established inside schools are strong for the insertion of these citizens into the Lusophone world, after Mozambique's independence from Portugal in 1975. Moreover, the article intends to assist in the implementation of Law 11.645/08 concerning the study of Afro-Brazilian culture and history in classrooms.

Index terms: Law 11.645/08, learning of the Portuguese language, Maputo, the rescue of memories.

RESUMO

Este artigo revela a importância de não deixar esquecida e desconhecida lembranças do aprendizado da Língua Portuguesa de um grupo de moçambicanos, habitantes da cidade de Maputo, que não teve esta língua como língua materna, no sentido da reflexão acerca da relação entre língua e construção da cidadania. Pelo viés da coleta de dado de registro oral e a partir do tratamento dado ao material, obtivemos resultados que nos mostraram a diversidade étnico-cultural na capital moçambicana. Além disto, o conjunto das entrevistas realizadas indicou também que as relações familiares e as relações estabelecidas na instituição escolar são marcantes para a inserção destes sujeitos no mundo lusófono, após a Independência do

país de Portugal. Ainda, o artigo pretende se constituir em subsídio para a implementação da Lei 11.645/08 acerca do estudo da temática História e Cultura Afro-Brasileira em salas de aula.

Palavras-chave: aprendizado da Língua Portuguesa, Lei 11.645/08, resgate das memórias, Maputo.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article révèle l'importance de ne pas laisser oublié et ne pas perdre connaissance des souvenirs de l'apprentissage de la Langue Portugaise d'un groupe de Mozambicains, habitants de la ville de Maputo, qui n'a pas eu cette langue comme langue maternelle, dans le sens de la réflexion concernant la relation entre langue et construction de la citoyenneté. A partir de données et de registre verbal du terrain et aussi à partir du traitement de ces données, nous avons obtenu des résultats qui montrent la diversité éthique culturelle dans la capitale mozambicain. En outre, l'ensemble des interviews réalisées, a démontré qu'après l'Indépendance du pays de Portugal, les relations familières et les relations établies dans l'institution scolaire sont marquantes pour l'insertion de ces sujets dans le monde lusophone. Encore, l'article vise à se constituer comme subvention pour la mise en oeuvre de la Loi 11.645/08 concernant l'étude de la thématique Histoire et de la Culture Afro-Brésiliénne et Africaine dans les classes.

Mots clés: l'apprentissage de la Langue Portugaise, Loi 11.645/08, Maputo, souvenirs de l'apprentissage.

1. Introduction

The main objective of this article is to give voice to the memories of a Mozambican group living in the city of Maputo and make the online journal Cultivating Literacy in Portuguese-Speaking Countries a support for submission of written records that materialize these subjects' practices and representations in the learning of Portuguese. This proposal aims to integrate a theoretical-practical *corpus* with the objective of composing curricular parameters of an ethnic-racial approach, favoring adequate study of this subject in basic education, and its intent to support law 11.645/08, which establishes as compulsory the study of indigenous history, African

studies and Afro-Brazilian culture and history in the classroom. Such legislation, as we know, has required continuous updating of teaching methods, as much for a specific informative repertoire as for superior training in the material. Thus this article, as well as numbers five and six of this journal, seek through written and electronic support to record life experiences for reconstitution, albeit partial, of the Mozambican people's social memory. We believe that knowing and reporting the memories that life in family, school and work, among other places, have produced in the histories of countless human beings – who from an early age are placed under the influence of these social institutions - is a challenge for any researcher interested in the genesis of the processes of identity formation, specifically the use of language in that formational process.

The material presented now is the result of a short mission in Maputo, which invites us to reflect on the position of the researcher in relation to her object of study when fieldwork is necessary. For Desaulniers (1997), it is the researcher's point of view that creates an object of study and not vice versa. This is a reflection that, for our proposal, before choosing a research methodology that supports oral record, becomes essential. According to the same author, we abandoned the exclusive use of quantitative research in order to bring ourselves closer to the complex historical and socio-cultural relations present in the environment of the accounts shared with us, since in these are rekindled human facts and experiences. In this direction, we seek to understand the dimensions and indicators that capture the social memory of learning the Portuguese language, performing fieldwork which resulted in an interdisciplinary research project. For this perspective, we were able to capture relevant dimensions that shape the complexity of reality, in this case, for some residents of the city of Maputo - writers and speakers of Portuguese, experiencing a rapid development of capitalism, with its sharp divisions in the social structure in relation to the distribution of wealth. Thus, when

considering the urbanization process in this African city, we see the construction of citizenship in order to form and self-form, weaving, by means of the written text, the social memory referring to the learning of Portuguese.

In short, we seek in this article to share with the reader the experiences that have been silenced, suppressed and/or known only inside subjects' homes that make up this study and to also reflect on the role of the institution of school and family relations on the formation of these memories.

2. A Look at the City of Maputo

2.1. Memory, Magic and Body: the Word is the City

> *[...] Where you reveal yourself and where adventure reveals itself,*
> *dive into the unlimited [...]*
> (Lourenco Marques, 1946[1])

Today, occupying an area of approximately 801,590 km^2 with about 17.5 million people, Mozambique is the most populous country of Portugal's former African colonies. Agriculture is the basis of the country's economy. According to Mouzinho and Nandja (2006), over 70% of the population lives in rural areas, working mainly in agriculture, forestry and fishing. Half the population is 6-24 years old and the majority is female. About 80% of public investments go to social services (education, health and the water supply) and infrastructure for agriculture, transportation and rural development.

The largest city in Mozambique, Maputo,[2] is also its capital. It is located in the south of the country, making the northern boundary with the District of Marracuene, the northwest and west with the municipality of

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1 This poem is included in "Negra Azul," signed by the heteronym Duarte Galvão. <http://www.lusitanistasail.net/secco01.htm>. 21 May 2008.
2 The city of Maputo should not be confused with the province of Maputo, which occupies the most meridional portion of Mozambique.

Matola and Boane and south with the district Matutuíne. The city used to be called *Lourenço Marques* but became *Maputo* after the country's independence from Portugal in 1975.

For its strategic position on the East Coast of Africa, Mozambique has over time been occupied by a huge mosaic of people from different backgrounds and cultures, such as Africans (black and mixed race), Arabs, Indians, Europeans, etc.

Of African peoples, we highlight the settlers of almost all of Africa south of the Sahara, the ethnic-linguistic groups descendent of the Bantu. Thus, in Maputo, we find Swahili, Macua-Lomué, Makonde, Ajaua (although they are typically northern inhabitants, as well as the Nhanjas and Angoni). In the south stand out the Tonga (divided in Changana, Chope, Tsua and Ronga), who are farmers and herders and who today have a strong presence in Maputo.

In the sky of the city, we see as many towers of cathedrals as minarets. As we walked among the people of this city, we took note of the presence of both Catholics and Muslims. In the same vein, not less important, there are evangelical temples built on several city streets and we even see Hindus who come mostly from the state of Gujarat, where the Goa, Daman and Diu enclaves are situated, which also make up Portugal's former state in India. Finally, we recall the ads we read in various Mozambican newspapers, in which the figure of wizards and African religions have a strong presence.

According to *data* from the Mozambican government, the diversified population of Maputo has approximately 1,000,000 inhabitants, distributed over an area of 300 km². The city is composed of grand boulevards whose names allude to the Soviet socialist leaders - Marx and Lenin, among others; African leaders - Lumumba, for example; and the Mozambican heroes of independence - Mondlane, Samora Machel and others.

Maputo has important monuments[3] such as fortresses, squares and statues that elucidate the Mozambican people's struggle for freedom from their colonizer. Among them are the Fortress of Maputo, the National Museum of Currency, the National Library (although under construction in March of this year), the Iron House, and statues of Eduardo Mondlane and Samora Machel, among others.

Given the multitude above, it is essential to our proposal to summarize some language, memory and identity aspects in order to contribute with some reflections about *data* collected by us through field-based research.

3. Language, Memory and Identity: Theoretical and Methodological Considerations

Memory is the most epic of all faculties.

(Walter Benjamin)

The complex relationships that developed to form Mozambican cultural identity have as a starting point a society formed by different ethnic groups, which implies, even partially, different traditions, customs and tongues. Alongside this characteristic, historically, this society had a cultural demand to adopt the Portuguese language as the official language according to the Constitution of the Republic, November 16, 2004,[4] since this option indicates the need for unifying the expression of the country, considering the multiple contexts present in the sense of *moçambicanidade*.[5]

Along with this point, it is necessary to once again take up Stephen Ullmann's definition based on Ferdinand Saussure that "language is the full

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[3] Do not miss the photo album of the city published in this volume.

[4] "Article 10: Official Language. In the Republic of Mozambique, the Portuguese language is the official language" (p. 3, available at <http://www.mozambique.mz/pdf/constituicao.pdf>. 24 May 2008).

[5] N.T.: *Moçambicanidade* is a Portuguese word that roughly translates to "Mozambique-ness" that represents what it means to live in Mozambique and be Mozambican.

sum of the linguistic systems that the individual members of the community have in memory" (1977, p. 45). In this respect, the tensions that are established between an official and a maternal language provides for rethinking the unifying identity, which assumes the official Portuguese language of Latin origin, and is therefore different from the origins of the languages of the different ethnic groups that make up Mozambican national identity.

Thus, in this context, we attempt to overcome this challenge, of choosing an ideal methodology for a field-based study, when facing the given reality. In the short time available, we needed to ascertain, albeit in introductory and exploratory ways, socio-cultural relations in Maputo in front of a population embedded in socio-cultural plurilingualism: native languages (previous to Portuguese colonization), foreign languages (from the western and eastern regions of the world) and also Portuguese. In other words: how do we save from oblivion relevant social experiences that could show us the way of thinking about the places occupied by different languages currently spoken in Maputo, for the subjects who make history in this country, so recently independent? That is, how can we rescue the memories of the insertion into the Lusophone world after the country's independence?

According to Pollak (1992), memory is inherited and refers not only to a person's physical life. This suffers fluctuations by being affected by the moment in which it is expressed. That is, the concerns of the moment, the actual condition in which the subject finds himself, structures unfurled memory and he who listens will have access to this unfurling. Furthermore, to the author, "memory is a constructed phenomenon" (1992, p. 210) and thus provides three essential elements guided by the axis of what rebuilds memory for oneself and for others: 1) Memory is immersed in one physical unity, or in other words, the feeling of physical boundaries in a person's body or barriers to belonging to a group in the case of a collective. 2)

Memory is inserted in a timeline, in the physical sense of the word but also in the moral and psychological sense. 3) Memory, when explained, calls for coherent sense, i.e., that different elements forming an individual are effectively unified.

For Pollak (1992), these three elements are crucial, for they provide a sense of unity to the person, so if there is a sharp break in one of them – which implies the breaking of the rest – we can observe a pathological phenomenon.

Thus, in the context of this research, we understand memory as a constituent of the sense of identity, both individual and collective, since it is an indispensable factor in the unity of human beings, in rebuilding himself and his group. By assimilating social identity into one's and others' self-image, there is an element of these definitions that necessarily escapes the individual and, by extension, the group: this element, of course, is the Other. Nobody can build a self-image exempt from change, negotiation, and transformation in respect to others. Identity construction is a phenomenon that occurs in reference to others, in reference to the criteria of acceptability, admissibility, and credibility and that is achieved through direct negotiation with others. It is legitimate to say that memory and identity can be negotiated and are not phenomenon that can be understood as the essence of a person or group (POLLAK, 1992, p. 211).

Memories evoke a significant part of childhood that established contact with the different instances of the social world. Via the rescue of memory, we seek the enigma that is the formation of human beings from childhood, inserted into a previously-defined society.

Faced with these options and theoretical considerations, we chose a qualitative research approach, and we had close contact with 42 investigated subjects, and only with three of them we proceeded to a questionnaire containing the same interview content. By recapturing these memories, we recovered memories related to Portuguese language learning. We seek

therefore to understand the relationship between this learning and memory formation in itself, given the complex relationships and cultural riches of this people, specifically in an attempt to rebuild and make an identity that is spoken, which shows itself through the act of telling. To this end, we consider that to speak and to use speech, each subject becomes the lord of his speech, with control over it, because it has an individual character. However, as researchers, while conducting our fieldwork, we were mindful of the fact that the communication established between researcher and subject occurred in the official – and institutionalized – language.

Thus, we consider the following: in speaking in Portuguese, the subjects of this study conducted an oral narration, that is, told us a story they remembered, a reminiscence full of psychological intonations, which were substantially compromised by not containing traditional elements. For Walter Benjamin, "reminiscence founds the chain of tradition, which transmits events from generation to generation" and in it, "all varieties of an epic nature" are included and in which what "is incarnated by the narrator" is given utmost importance because "reminiscence weaves the network that, ultimately, all the stories constitute among themselves" in which "one is articulated in the other" (BENJAMIN, 1993, p. 211). Thus, each narrator/subject in the study "lives a Scheherazade, who imagines a story in each passage of the story she is telling" (BENJAMIN, 1993, p. 211).

Given the complexity, we report the procedures adopted for methodology, based on the issues raised in the topic of this article.

4. Methodology Procedures

> *[...] Eu tambor*
> *Eu suruma*
> *Eu negro suaíli*
> *Eu Tchaca*

In this set of many cultures that we experienced while working in Mozambique in March 2008, with the support of CNPq, one of the aspects to be analyzed, which we believed to be essential, refers to, as seen above by Craveirinha's poem, oral records. Using a semi-structured interview style, we intended to allow the subjects to spontaneously build the narration of their history, having as an initial parameter their contact with the Lusophone world. That is, we chose a research method called "oral history" to authenticate our primary sources of research. From the mid-twentieth century, this methodology established its reliability, especially favored by the invention of new communication technologies such as the recorder. For these new features, this methodology had to rely on the documentary record, expanding in this way the various takes on the same event, counting on the subjects/agent with their individual oral narratives, perceived in socio-historical time and space. This approach allowed us to shine new light on the understanding of this society, for "oral evidence, in transforming the 'objects' of study into 'subjects,' contributes to a story that is not only richer, more vivid and more poignant, but also more true" (THOMPSON, 1992, p. 137).

Our look at the *data* collection was limited to residents of the city of Maputo, with whom we had daily contact. It seemed to us essential that the

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[6] We chose to leave this poem in its original Portuguese because were we to translate it into English, while it might still make sense, it would lose its melody. The overall message of the poem is one narrated in the first person (« I » or « eu ») by a Mozambican who is searching for his identity through the land and traditions of his ancestors.

subject-object of our research be found in common, everyday life environments in the capital, involving as little formality as possible. These parameters aimed to consider, within the initial proposal, their personal trajectories as well, and with these, rekindle the memory of their first contact with the official Portuguese language, in oral and written modalities. In addition, we sought to find grants to study the relationships established between the official language and the native language, since the country's Constitution (2004, p. 3) values the various languages that comprise the cultural landscape of Mozambique as cultural and educational heritage. This fact allowed us to add to the results the development of identity within this context.

Thus the *data* were collected at various locations that comprise the urban landscape of Maputo: shops, bars, supermarkets, restaurants, schools and libraries. At all stops we tried to encourage our respondents to engage in the art of narration. Of the statements obtained from the 45 subjects in this study, we observed the following preconditions:

1. Subjects were chosen at random in regards to their age, socio-economic status, gender and educational levels.

2. Subjects were residents of Maputo.

3. Subjects were of Mozambican nationality by birth.

Having met these conditions, *data* collection comprised the following steps:

a) Informal conversations about trivial matters such as life and the reasons why we, the researchers, were in Maputo.

b) Invitations for some of these people to report their form of contact with the country's official language, Portuguese.

c) A minimal script to conduct the taped collection of *data*, which distinguished the age of the subjects as well as their identity – in terms of their origin by ethnicity and mother tongue. Subjects were also asked to share the age at which they first had contact with or

learned the Portuguese language and how it happened: memories of learning.

d) The interviews were recorded, and some were written down to be rewritten later. Thirteen questionnaires were also distributed among graduate students in Adult Education at the University Eduardo Mondlane.

e) Full transcript of the interviews.

f) Review of results and processing.

g) We would like to underscore that we received permission from our interviewees for all components of the study.

5. The *Data* Treatment and Preliminary Results

> *Em meus lábios grossos fermenta*
> *a farinha do sarcasmo que coloniza minha Mãe África*
> *e meus ouvidos não levam ao coração seco*
> *misturado com o sal dos pensamentos*
> *a sintaxe anglo-latina de novas palavras.*
> *Amam-me com a única verdade dos seus evangelhos*
> *a mística das suas missangas e da sua pólvora*
> *a lógica das suas rajadas de metralhadora*
> *e enchem-me de sons que não sinto*
> *das canções das suas terras*
> *que não conheço.*
> (Craveirinha)[7]

Of the 15 written questionnaires distributed, only three were returned fully completed and they were therefore a compromised sample and only served to corroborate the results of the oral *data* collection. The oral records

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[7] We chose not to translate this poem for the reasons highlighted previously. This poem focuses on the bitter and strange experience that the African has with the language of his colonizer.

collected for the study were transcribed, following the directions of Tourtier-Bonazzi (2001), proposed in the text "Archives: methodological proposals" and, after appropriate treatment of the material collected, we proceeded to analyze and reflect on it, giving relevance to every silence, every laugh and every pause, because for Thompson, "The important lesson is to learn to be attentive to what is not being said and consider the meaning of the silences" and adds: "The simplest meanings are probably the most convincing" (THOMPSON, 1992, p. 204-5).

The results of the records collected from the 45 native respondents (distributed at random in line with the methodological principals of this study) indicate that the age range of respondents was between 16 and 50 years old, which included both sexes from various socioeconomic backgrounds, education levels and ethno-linguistic groups, as shown in the table below:

Ethno-Linguistic Group	Men			Women			Total
	Age 25 and younger	Age 26-45	Age 45+	Age 25 and younger	Age 26-45	Age 45+	
Changana	2	3	2	6			13
Chope		3	1	1	1		6
Tsua		2				1	3
Ronga		4	3	3	1	2	13
Maconde		1	1				2
Outros	3	1	1		2	1	8
Total	**5**	**14**	**8**	**10**	**4**	**4**	**45**

According to the table above, it is worth noting that respondents belong to different ethnic-linguistic groups, a situation that in qualitative terms - not quantitative, nor proportionally - reflects the reality of the population of Maputo.

The results indicate that among these subjects who are natives/residents of the Maputo urban area, the Portuguese language was not the mother tongue of any of them and they learned the written form of this official language primarily in school. In the oral modality, initial contact took place at home (around 70%). However, Portuguese reading and writing acquisition was in school (around 90%).

We also emphasize that of the 45 questionnaires and interviews conducted for purposes of this article, only 25% of people said that they had had significant experience with learning Portuguese. The other 75% said that "[A]t this time, they had nothing to say" or they "did not remember anything of interest" or "I need to think a little more about it."

Thus, from our research universe (45 respondents) for discussion purposes, we only have testimony from 11 of them, since the other 34 people said that they had nothing to say about learning the Portuguese language.

Thus, this sample consisted of 11 persons; we highlight that all have memories about learning the Portuguese language related to their own lives, the lives of their close relatives (mother, children, grandparents) and moments experienced in school.

For example, a 25-year-old student in eleventh grade, who identified himself as a member of the Bantu ethnic group, told us that he was excited when learning the alphabet and when he saw his own son speaking Portuguese.

Similarly, another of our interviewees – male, 26 years old, twelfth grade student, whose mother tongue was Changana – declared: *I learned to write in Portuguese in Maputo when I was seven or eight years old. I get excited when I think back to learning the alphabet. Ah... Also when I won the title of best poet at school in high school, that's unforgettable.*

In this direction, we highlight a passage from an interview with a 25-year-old woman, undergraduate student majoring in Tourism, whose mother

tongue was Changana: *I get emotional when I remember that I turned a literary text into theater when I was in tenth grade and one Portuguese teacher, who encouraged the reading of four books, which were required reading. From these, we had to do a summary, an index card with key points, a conversation, a play and a poem.* She adds that *I was very excited when I could read the Bible and when I taught my younger brothers to read through dictations and fun occasions.*

With respect to the memories of close relatives' learning of the Portuguese language, we highlight the testimony of a 32-year-old woman who studied until twelfth grade: *I get excited* [when I remember] *when I was reading perfectly and also when I heard my son starting to talk in that language.* What is more, we highlight the narrative of a 19-year-old woman and eleventh-grade student, whose family members' mother tongue is Bitonga and that they learned to speak Portuguese with a year at home and to write with five years at home, too: *I get emotional when I remember the moments when I taught my grandmother to speak and write in Portuguese ... It was beautiful, exciting.*

In addition, for this article, we transcribe a 38-year old university student's emotional testimony, whose mother tongue is Ronga, in regards to when he could speak in Portuguese in Matola, the capital city of Maputo province: *Up until I was ten, I knew very little of the Portuguese language and many people I knew laughed at me. This made me feel very bad and made me avoid talking.*

Another college-educated student, who is a native speaker of Sena/Shona [sic], learned to speak, read and write the Portuguese language when she was ten years old at school in Maputo. Despite this, she told us about an unforgettable moment - of great suffering - that she experienced when she took the college entrance exam: *It was very difficult to do the exam to get into college here in Maputo. I had learned the language as a*

child, but stopped practicing it because I went to live in Zimbabwe and there everyone speaks English.

With another connotation, we heard testimony from a young, 24-year-old waitress and a native speaker of Ronga. *Ah, I remember when I heard 'son of a bitch' at school. I went home and called my mother bitch. But she didn't know what it was and I didn't know either. Then my aunt came and explained* (laughs).

Finally, we add that our records enabled the socio-cultural contextualization and showed the confluence – in the narratives – of the living memory of the Mozambican people, which lead to the assertion that reframes the nation's identity, since "recalling life itself is fundamental to our sense of identity" (THOMPSON 1992, p. 208). And in this sense, "one of the most profound lessons of oral history is the singularity, as much as the representativeness of each life history" (THOMPSON, 1992, p. 174).

6. Final thoughts

> *Ser ilha, sem limites*
> *vertigem, vibração*
> *vôo da memória*
> *na subversão de si*
> *mesma, (...)*
> (Virgílio de Lemos[8])[9]

By using the methodology of data-collection research by way of oral records, we were allowed to see, though not in an in-depth manner, individual paths and share the meaningful experiences of some representatives of the Mozambican people in the process of learning the Portuguese language.

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[8] < http://www.lusitanistasail.net/secco01.htm>.
[9] Again, we chose not to translate this poem that in this case refers to the identity of a Mozambican.

We felt that the relationship with oral Portuguese in early childhood was critical, spoken as a second language within the ethnic groups whose native languages consisted of an immense diversity: Changana, Chope, Tsua, Ronga, Maconde, among others.

As mentioned above, none of the respondents' mother tongue was the Portuguese language. This language, in being the official language and carrying the weight of "unifying standard language," distances itself from the spontaneous communication of society, which has been corroborated by the fact that only one of the interviewees had learned written Portuguese at home and thus outside of an institutionalized setting. For everyone else, the Portuguese language, in written form, is learned at school and thus in a formal setting. We are able to infer, too, in the same direction, that the failure to express themselves in their mother tongue (all interviews were conducted in Portuguese), made it so 34 of the 45 interviewees claimed to not have anything important to tell us about learning the language of their former colonizer.

We were able to note, though, the effective role of the school in formal learning of written Portuguese, in so far as that institution produces, in the life stories of the residents of Maputo, memories that transcend time and accompany the subject.

In fact, in the capital of the country, we found that most of the respondents learned to speak Portuguese in their homes[10] and modern use of this language in the workplace proved to be an element that makes this official language an important tool for economic and social insertion.

In addition to these considerations, in view of the recent history of the country, we found that the younger subjects heard the oral modality of Portuguese at home, orally mastering the language by the age of seven, but as a second language and not as their mother tongue. Those over 40 - who

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[10] The same cannot be said for other regions of Mozambique, keeping in mind various literacy programs that, in the beginning, spend years only teaching spoken Portuguese.

lived, therefore, under the colonial regime, came to learn Portuguese later, around the ages of 10 to 12 and at school, i.e., in an institutionalized manner.

We also consider that the *data* collected about the experiences related to the learning of the Portuguese language, recorded by the publication of this article in which were presented and discussed life stories (images, memories, anecdotes, events), were useful for guaranteeing access to these stories to others interested in African studies, stories that could soon disappear.

Thus, given the complex relationships established in the human knot that the memories brought forth, we were able to somehow contribute to spreading the historical and socio-cultural wealth of the Mozambican people, specifically, the native inhabitants of the country who were also residents of Maputo, the capital.

Thus, we intend to contribute to the affirmation of Brazilian and Mozambican citizenship, since these are associated with the preservation of the social memory of the former Portuguese colonies, since elements provide input to the citizen and the social worker on the set of knowledge that has accumulated as a result of actions and strategies produced historically. These issues, outlined above, make us take up Desaulniers once again, for whom "The claim of citizenship is associated with preservation of social memory" (1997, p. 3). And yet:

> [...] The enterprise that is concerned with the organization and dissemination of information containing social memory, in socializing/democratizing history, complies with one of the fundamentals of scientific production and at the same time, with one of the fundamentals of citizenship. (DESAULNIERS, 1997, p. 3)

> However, despite the efforts outlined here, some questions still remain unanswered because, as Walter Benjamin observed,

> [...] It has been not properly realized until now that the naive relationship between the listener and the narrator is dominated

by the interest to preserve what has been narrated. For the impartial listener the important thing is to ensure the possibility of reproduction. (BENJAMIN, 1993, p. 210)

Here are some questions that remain unanswered: Why did so many of the respondents have no stories to tell about learning Portuguese? Is it possible that they really did not have any or was it that the language used in communication between interviewer and interviewee was inadequate? In the same vein, we question if the research methodology used was adequate for our purposes, and also if the time allocated for the study was sufficient because the researcher and the research subjects had little time to establish trust that would have allowed for more detailed and more candid interviews. And again: At what point, as researchers, do we establish enough distance to conduct interviews in an impartial manner?

Finally, we share with our readers the following questions: Are family relations fundamental to Maputo society, as they are in typical traditional African societies? If this is true, to what extent will the official language ever be able to penetrate this universe? How? And, finally: Just as what happened with almost all of the colonized nations, will the official language eventually become the mother tongue?

Given the above, we set a goal of continuing this work of building knowledge and we invite other members of the academic community to share this path with us. In fact, we intend to tread a "new route of discovery" in search of knowledge that we have been denied for so many years, beyond the colonial period in Brazil, aimed at contributing to Law 11.645/08's effective implementation, through the organization and dissemination of *data* and results learned about African cultures, because we believe that if we share them, we will enrich the social memory of Brazilians, Angolans and Mozambicans, among other peoples.

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