

Introduction to the Diadorim Special Issue “Africanity: Language, Literature, and Culture in Africa and Latin America” Vol. 27, No. 2

This special issue of Diadorim, titled “Africanity: Language, Literature, and Culture in Africa and Latin America,” emerged from an event organized by UFRJ in October 2024, during which Professors Luana Lamberti (*Iowa State University*) and Lanie Millar (*University of Oregon*) offered courses and lectures related to their research on the languages and literatures of the African diaspora in Latin America. Although they work in distinct areas, the natural intersection of their research interests motivated the call for papers and the organization of this special issue of Diadorim.

In the field of linguistics, the articles gathered here address issues arising from contact between Portuguese and African languages, language policies, and theoretical discussions from a decolonial perspective. Although they focus on different linguistic phenomena and themes, the articles converge by examining processes of lexical formation and linguistic outcomes rooted in the same historical context: colonization and the trafficking of enslaved people between Africa and Brazil. While studies on language contact are well established in Brazil, we believe that the research presented in this issue is situated within a contemporary theoretical framework that critically examines this context, highlighting the violence of Portuguese colonialism and its linguistic consequences. This approach, aligned with decolonial thought, is essential for understanding the impacts of slavery both in Brazil and on the African continent.

Furthermore, the articles demonstrate a consistent concern with the socio-historical contextualization of the phenomena and terms analyzed. This perspective is crucial for the study of colonization, slavery, and language contact, as emphasized by various sociolinguistic scholars

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(Thomason & Kaufman, 1988; Winford, 2013). A comprehensive understanding of the speech communities in which these languages and varieties developed requires a theoretical framework that integrates social, historical, demographic, and political dimensions into models of linguistic genesis (Mintz, 1971).

As noted, the studies included in this issue converge toward understanding the African influence on the formation and variation of Portuguese in different historical and geographical contexts. The first article, “Sociolinguistics of memory: Africanities in the formation of Brazilian Portuguese”, authored by Davidson Martins Viana Alves, investigates the influence of African languages, especially Fongbe and the Kwa group, on the formation of Brazilian Portuguese. The work revisits Eurocentric paradigms and highlights processes of creolization, decreolization, and linguistic resistance. The research, based on documentary and ethno-historical analysis, reveals the persistence of African elements and advocates for language policies that value diversity as part of the Amefrican experience.

Still within the Brazilian linguistic context, the following work, “African influences in southern Brazilian Portuguese: the field of Religion and Beliefs in the ALIB data”, by Helen Cristina da Silva, focuses on the religious lexicon of Southern Brazilian Portuguese. The study reveals the persistence of African elements and social prejudices, while historical-sociolinguistic analyses underscore the centrality of the African diaspora in the constitution of Afro-Brazilian vernaculars.

Moving on, the article “The re-signification of ‘pretuguês’ as a form of speaking Portuguese: linguistic and historical contextualizations”, by Eduardo Ferreira dos Santos and Ana Paulla Braga Mattos, discusses the concept of pretuguês. Initially pejorative, the term has been re-signified as an identity symbol and today appears in discursive practices that promote linguistic autonomy and combat racism.

Turning to the African context, the work “Angolan linguistic panorama: from colonization to post-independence”, by Nádia Carina da Silva Melo Jose, argues that the expansion of Portuguese in Angola occurred to the detriment of local languages, requiring revitalization policies to preserve multilingualism and recognize linguistic diversity as part of Angola’s national identity.

In the article that follows, “Clitic placement in Angolan Portuguese: The influence of Bantu languages and Internal variation”, author Bruno Eduardo dos Santos Cerqueira analyzes pronominalization in Angolan Portuguese. Comparing clitic usage with patterns found in Brazilian and European Portuguese, the study reveals tendencies such as the alignment of Angolan oral speech with the Brazilian pattern (proclisis) and the maintenance of enclisis in formal writing. These findings point to a system in transformation and reinforce the need for inclusive language policies.

Finally, the study “School dropout and truancy in Bafatá (Guinea-Bissau): economic, cultural, and linguistic influences”, by Sabrina Rodrigues Garcia Balsalobre and Alfa dos Santos Silom, shows how economic, social, and linguistic factors, including the imposition of Portuguese as the sole language of instruction, affect

student retention in Guinea-Bissau, indicating the urgency of decolonial pedagogical practices.

Taken together, these studies point to the need for inclusive language policies and for valuing Afro-descendant cultural and linguistic practices as foundational elements in the construction of plural identities in African and Brazilian contexts. We wish readers an engaging and thought-provoking experience with these works, which contribute greatly to contemporary Brazilian and African linguistics.

In the field of literary studies, the articles in this dossier propose critical displacements that challenge central categories of Western thought, such as time, history, narrative, and the canon. In dialogue with African and Afro-diasporic epistemologies, the contributions affirm literature as a space for the production of knowledge, memory, and the rewriting of the world, articulating philosophy, history, and culture.

The collection opens with the proposal of a literary theory grounded in Nagô philosophy, which positions Exu as a theoretical operator of the crossroads and of indeterminacy. From this framework, the articles explore African and Afro-diasporic temporalities that break with Eurocentric linearity, bringing together literary texts, ritual practices, and cultural experiences of the Brazilian diaspora, thus revealing alternative ways of conceiving time and space.

The dossier also gathers analyses of narrative and poetry produced in African Portuguese-speaking contexts, featuring readings of works by Paulina Chiziane, Ruy Duarte de Carvalho, and José Eduardo Agualusa. These studies highlight how the novel and poetry challenge hegemonic historical narratives, rethink the relationship between History and Literature, and affirm new forms of agency, particularly regarding women's experiences and epistemologies of the sensible. Complementing these reflections is a panoramic article on Mozambican poetry, which underscores its thematic and formal plurality.

Overall, the articles reaffirm the centrality of African and Afro-diasporic productions in the construction of contemporary critical paradigms, contributing to the strengthening of a field of studies committed to decoloniality, epistemological plurality, and the valorization of historically silenced forms of knowledge.

Within the broader landscape of this issue of *Diadorim*, the contributions highlight the central role of African and Afro-diasporic perspectives in understanding linguistic, literary, and cultural dynamics in African and Latin American contexts. By articulating language and literature studies from decolonial perspectives, the dossier reaffirms the importance of epistemological plurality, the valorization of cultural practices, and Afro-descendant aesthetic productions, thereby fostering critical dialogues on Africanness, language, literature, and culture.

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