

## THE QUESTION OF LINGUISTIC CHOICE IN DOMESTIC ENVIRONMENTS IN A MULTILINGUAL CONTEXT OF MOZAMBIQUE

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- **ABSTRACT:** The present study examined the patterns of linguistic choices in domestic environments in Montepuez, Mozambique, based on sociolinguistics approaches that deal with linguistic selection in multilingual contexts, namely the notions of diglossia and domain. The data collected through a survey. The study noted that the various languages are used in home environments, with a greater predominance of Portuguese and Emakhuwa, with no relation between the formality and the informality of the situation. Thus, in the home environment, the trend is the use of mother tongues, which include Portuguese. From a theoretical point of view, the study concluded that no approach is quite sufficiently strong to explain the phenomenon of linguistic choice in its entirety, calling for a more integrated approach. It was observed that the real context of communication is built as the interaction takes place, so it is considered a negotiation process, which occurs during and not before or after the communicative act. Studies on linguistic choices in other territorial spaces in the province of Cabo Delgado are proposed, including those subordinated to linguistic attitudes aiming to expand the information on the factors that influence linguistic uses both in Montepuez and in other regions of the province.
- **KEYWORDS:** Multilingualism. Montepuez. Linguistic choice. Home environment.

### Introduction

One of the major issues that have concerned Sociolinguistics is the issue of linguistic uses, taking into account that the linguistic communities are eminently heterogeneous; therefore, there is a range of possibilities within the community's repertoire. In this article, I intend to present the results of a study on linguistic uses in a multilingual context, in Montepuez, a city of Cabo Delgado province, taking the home environment as a reference.<sup>1</sup>

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In the city of Montepuez, Cabo Delgado province, there is a community, in which there are speakers of several languages, of which Portuguese, Emakhuwa, Shimakonde, Shingoni, Kiswahili and Kimwani stand out (MAE, 2005; INE, 2010). The interest in studying linguistic uses in home environments of Montepuez arises from the question “Who speaks what language to whom and when?” in contexts characterized by a broad and relatively stable multilingualism<sup>2</sup> (FISHMAN, 1965). For Joshua Fishman, the usual selection of a linguistic form is far from being a random or deliberate matter of momentary inclination, as it is governed by control factors. Inspired by the question posed by Fishman (1965), I tried to find out what language or languages Montepuez residents used in their home environment interactions. With this question, I will try to explain the linguistic options that the inhabitants of Montepuez used in domestic environments of interaction, taking into account the functions associated with the languages.

The present study had as objectives:

- (1) identify the most used language or languages in Montepuez’s home environments,
- (2) to evaluate the influence of the mother tongue on the language choices of the residents of Montepuez.

By privileging the presentation of data related to the variation in the linguistic behaviour of individuals according to their mother tongue, I intended to test the postulate by Landweer (2008), according to which the domestic environment constitutes an indicator domain of linguistic vitality, and maybe the last to be replaced by a second language.

Thus, the research assumes the conception of “linguistic choice”, which can be understood as a phenomenon that occurs when people have knowledge of two or more languages and; therefore, they have to make choices on when, where and with whom to use a certain language (FISHMAN, 1965; ADAMS; MATU; ONGARORA, 2012). The relevance of this research resides (1) in the exploration of evidence on the dynamics of the language market in Montepuez, which may contribute to a broader understanding of the level of implementation of Portuguese and Bantu languages in local communities, as well as (2) in the expansion of the study for another geographical space displaced from the capital of the country, known as the studies of Firmino (2002) and, in a way, treated by Ngunga & Bavo (2011) and Company (2016). As it is a little-explored topic in the context of Mozambique, given the primacy that it has been given to descriptive studies, I think it is opportune and pertinent to resume this line of research. As recommended by Firmino (2002), a better understanding of the functioning of linguistic diversity in Africa requires an examination of data referring to discursive and ideological practices, which needs to be studied and not conjectured. Indeed, Firmino (2002) presents reports from social actors on the languages used in the city of Maputo, Ngunga & Bavo

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<sup>2</sup> “This paper is primarily limited to a formal consideration of several descriptive and analytic variables which may contribute to an understanding of who speaks what language to whom and when in those settings that are characterized by widespread and relatively stable multilingualism characterized by widespread and relatively stable multilingualism” (FISHMAN, 1965, p. 67).

(2011) describe language practices in six districts of Mozambique, while Companhia (2016) examines the language of communication in interactions with parents, siblings, grandparents and friends in the city and province of Maputo.

## Literature review and theoretical framework

Assuming itself as a branch of Sociolinguistics, Sociology of Language started to focus on a whole range of topics related to the social organization of linguistic behaviour, including not only the use of the language itself but also the linguistic attitudes and behaviours concerning the language (FISHMAN, 1972). It is on these assumptions that studies on linguistic uses seek to determine the factors that, in a situation of linguistic coexistence in the community, explain the choice of one linguistic form over another, taking into account the linguistic repertoire and the social practices within the spheres of life and activity involved. Different authors approach the issue of linguistic choice<sup>3</sup> from the point of view of different perspectives. Some authors cited by Appel & Muysken (1987) deal with the issue of linguistic choice in communities taking into account the perspective of *intra-language variation* (BLOOM; GUMPERZ, 1972). However, other authors study the issue of linguistic choice from the perspective of *inter-linguistic variation*, which can be confirmed, for instance, in the studies by Greenfield (1972); Parasher (1980); Wheritt (1985), Borbély (2000); Adams, Matu & Ongarora (2012); Dumanige *et al.* (2013) or Dersingh (2014). Other authors also discuss the issue of linguistic choice from the perspective of linguistic policy and planning in multilingual countries (LOPES, 2013; FIRMINO, 2002; HEINE, 1990; VILELA, 2001). In the present work, the question of linguistic choice is addressed from the perspective of inter-linguistic variation. The option for this perspective is based on the fact that the study is interested in multilingualism situations, in which speakers have to choose one language instead of another/others, to communicate in a particular environment. Based on this assumption, the literature review focuses on studies guided mainly by the notions of diglossia and dominance.

## Example of studies guided by the notion of diglossia

Charles A. Ferguson proposed the notion of diglossia to show that the choice of a linguistic variety must be explained by considering allocations and social or symbolic functions associated with it. Thus, according to Ferguson (1959),

Diglossia is a relatively stable linguistic situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard

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<sup>3</sup> In English-language literature this concept is referred to by the designation language choice, such as Appel & Muysken (1987).

or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex), superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation (FERGUSON, 1959, p. 244).

Therefore, Charles Ferguson distinguishes between a High (H) and a Low (L) varieties, the first of which is prestigious (H), used in areas such as public and religious services, schooling and news outlets. Generally, a vehicle for a broad and highly valued cultured literature, it is not anyone's mother tongue, so their learning takes place through schooling. The second one, without prestige (L), is used in a family and leisure environment, in oral literature, acquired as a mother tongue in the family context, it is not standardized, so it cannot be used in formal education.

However, Fishman (1967a) expanded the notion of diglossia to cover situations in which there are two different languages in the speech community, which are kept separate in their functions and uses. According to the author, this is a situation in which each of the languages would have different roles and prestige perceived in the commonly shared space.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, Fishman (1972) admits that diglossia also occurs in societies that use dialects, separated or functionally differentiated registers.

According to Stepkowska (2012), despite the differences in approach between the concepts of diglossia here presented, the distribution in varieties High and Low constitutes the point of convergence between Charles Fergusson and Joshua Fishman, whereby several are the authors who have used the notion of diglossia to examine language choices in multilingual communities.

Here are some examples. Rubin (1968) presents a description of the situation of bilingualism in Paraguay, in which two languages are used for communication, namely Spanish (with the status of the official language, business language, and the medium of higher education, used on formal occasions and in interactions with foreigners and superiors, as well as in the church) and Guarani (indigenous language, used in informal speech in the family, with friends, with servants, as well as in most casual occasions outside cities and towns and primary education).

Petzell (2012) describes the linguistic situation in Tanzania in terms of *diglossia* between Swahili, local ethnic minority languages and English. According to Malin Petzell, the Swahili language is used throughout the country, even in isolated areas and has penetrated deeply into Tanzanian society, as it is the predominant language in all

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<sup>4</sup> Thus, two or more languages or language varieties can coexist in a given locality, each being supported by its corresponding sources. If one set of such supports prevails in some domains, while an alternative set becomes prevalent in other domains for a social group, so that the use of one of the two languages or varieties known by the members of that group is clearly favored and largely considered as proper for any domain, then a diglossic situation is said to exist (FERGUSON, 1972).

public environments. On the other hand, Petzell (2012) reports that minority languages are only spoken at home, being severely threatened by Swahili. In public settings, these languages are not heard at all, so their use is prohibited in education and discouraged in public and religious meetings. Besides this, minority languages are not used by any radio or television station, and there are no newspapers published in these languages.

In turn, analyzing diglossia in Switzerland, Stepkowska (2012) sought to show the extent to which Swiss German, exemplified by Ferguson (1959) as a Low form, became a prestigious Low variety. According to the author, for centuries the Swiss managed to maintain a balance between their dialectal varieties and the standard German, permanently avoiding their fusion. It was during the time of Nazi rule that Swiss Germans sought refuge in their language. As a result, Swiss-German entered many spheres of public life, where it never lost its position.

As is well known, Mozambique is a multilingual country because, in addition to Portuguese, the official language, there are in this country, according to the Geographic Atlas produced by the Ministry of Education «15 language units, namely Makua, Lomwe, Merende, Mwani, Yao, Makonde, Nyanja, Sena, Nyungwe, Shona, Changana, Tswa, Ronga, Chopi and Bitonga (FIRMINO, 1998). However, this linguistic map is somehow contradicted by Ngunga and Bavo (2011), who present a linguistic situation characterized by about 21 languages of the Bantu group, apart from sign language.

Based on the status and social functions associated with Portuguese and the Bantu languages, it is to be expected that, in the home environment, speakers will make more use of native languages to communicate with family members. Therefore, a hypothesis has been formulated, according to which in informal environments such as home, Montepuez residents predominantly use Bantu languages<sup>5</sup> in interactions with family members. In the formulation of this hypothesis, I started from the assumption that Portuguese is an official language (AR, 2004), associated with official and/or formal situations, in contrast to Bantu languages, whose use is predominantly restricted to informal family environments (FIRMINO, 2002; NGUNGA; BAVO, 2011).

## Examples of studies oriented by the notion of domain

Fishman (1965), in his article “Who speaks what language to whom and when”, uses the notion of domain to show that there are certain institutional contexts, in which the use of a specific variety of language is likely to be more appropriate than another. According to this author, domains are seen as constellations of factors that include *location*, which refers to the place where the interaction takes place; *topic*, which refers to the subject being talked about; and *participants*, which refers to people involved in the interaction. To paraphrase Joshua Fishman, we can say that the linguistic choice depends on the person to whom you talk to, the subject being addressed, and the place

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<sup>5</sup> The considered Bantu languages in this case are Emakhuwa, Shimakonde; Kiwshili, Shingoni and Kimuani.

where the conversation takes place, whereby the combination of these different factors configures different types of domains with respective appropriate linguistic uses.

One of the most cited studies by several authors is attributed to Greenfield (1972), carried out in the Puerto Rican community of New York. In this study, the author found that Spanish (the informants' mother tongue) was more preferred in the family domain, while English was more favourable to the one of work and education. In turn, Parasher (1980) conducted a study on linguistic choices, through a survey that involved 350 educated people in two cities in the southern part of India. The study found that the mother tongue was used more in the family domain, while English scored higher in the domains of education, government, and employment. On the other hand, English seemed strong in the domains of friendship and neighbourhood.

Authors such as Adams, Matu & Ongarora (2012) discuss linguistic uses in a domestic environment in the Kibera neighbourhood in Kenya, with Kinubi as the original language, but where other minority languages are also spoken, such as Lulya, Luo, Kikuyo, besides of Kiswahili, the national lingua franca. The study intended to show that the presence of multilingualism in Kibera did not affect the Kinubi language. In fact, of the four interviewees, three were in favour of using Kinubi at home with their family members, showing that the home environment is an indicator domain of linguistic vitality, and maybe the last to be replaced by a second language (LANDWEER, 2008).

However, Haberland (2005) considers that it is difficult to apply the concept of domain to those situations in which the alternation of code is part of the linguistic repertoire of the interlocutors. In these cases, sometimes languages have to be chosen for each utterance and sometimes even in the declarations, which for the author does not mean any random distribution of the language, because there are recognizable patterns, but they cannot be attributed to different domains unless alternating code patterns are considered an option in a situation of linguistic choice.

In summary, I consider that in some way all theories deal with the same subject, that is, the question of linguistic choice, differing from each other in the emphasis that is given to the elements involved. While some focus on the language itself, others emphasize the location, topic and participants. In other words, none of the various approaches is strong enough to explain the phenomenon of linguistic choice in its entirety. Each of the approaches highlights a certain aspect inherent to communicative interaction that, when combined, provides a holistic view, although it may also not be entirely satisfactory to explain the phenomenon under study.

As a result of these facts, the notion of domain appears as the most comprehensive in comparison to the remaining approaches to language choices in multilingual contexts. The scope of the notion of domain lies in the fact that it incorporates contextual elements such as location, topics and participants, which are reflected in approaches based on the notion of diglossia. Therefore, the present study adopts the notion of domain, as a key concept, as it brings together elements from the various approaches, which is why it is assumed, from a theoretical point of view, an eclectic character.

## Methodological aspects

For data collection, the study used a survey. Optionally, for the purpose, people were surveyed from different selected houses. To achieve the objectives defined in the survey, a sample was created using the non-probabilistic sampling method. It was a research in which the use of data quantification served only to support the description of the linguistic facts found; hence the statistical component was not rigorously addressed in the presentation of the results of the investigation. As a consequence of these methodological options, the percentage values refer only to the use of a language, not allowing comparisons.

In fact, I used an accidental sample (cf. FORTIN, CÔTÉ & VASSANDJÉE, 1999, p. 208), which has the advantage of being simple to organize and inexpensive, although it limits the generalization of results, since it has the risk of being less representative than probabilistic sampling, either from the point of view of social groups, or from the point of view of the distribution of respondents by neighborhoods.

According to Fortin, Côté & Vassandjée (1999), the subjects submitted to the survey are included in the study as they present themselves at the precise location until the sample reaches the desired size. To reach the informants, I contacted the heads of the neighbourhoods<sup>6</sup>, that is, the secretaries, who were asked to indicate the houses or families on which the investigation was going to focus. Therefore, the distribution of the number of houses covered by a neighbourhood is as follows: Bairro Cimento (7), Nacate (8), Napai (66), Mirige (85), Nihula (27), Matunda (8), Mahipa (11), Ncoripo (23), Matuto (30), Namueto (7), Nicuapa (6), Pitimpini (13), Melapane (8), Matico (1) and Nancaramo B (1), making a total of 301 residential units.

## Study of language choices in Montepuez / Mozambique

### Presentation of survey results

As mentioned, the survey was carried out in the city of Montepuez, that is in the south of Cabo Delgado Province, located 210 km from the provincial capital, Pemba, having as the target population its residents. In 301 households, 682 residents were surveyed, of which 54.5% are male, and 45.5% female, aged between 6 and 75 years old, spread over three age groups, namely from 6 to 14 years old, from 15 to 34 years old and from 35 to 75 years old, according to Table 1 presented below.

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<sup>6</sup> In the context of Mozambique, a neighbourhood is an administrative division of cities and towns, the size of which varies according to reality.

**Table 1** – Distribution of respondents by age group

Age range	Number of respondents	Percentage
6-14 years old	112	16,4
15-34 years old	359	52,6
35-75 years old	211	31,0
<b>Total</b>	<b>682</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Author's elaboration.

In the study of linguistic uses in Montepuz, respondents were asked to comment on all the languages considered in the study, one by one. I asked the interviewed subjects if they used Portuguese, Emakhuwa, Shimakonde, Shingoni, Kiswahili and Kimwani at home with their families<sup>7</sup>, which, as I stated earlier, was done based on separate questions like “Do you usually speak Portuguese in the following situations?” (at home, at school, at work, at the market/store, at popular rallies, at church, at the mosque, in evoking the spirits of ancestors and in the ceremonies of initiation rites).<sup>8</sup>

To understand the language choices of individuals, I started by aggregating data by general trends to gather information related to the language or languages more or less used by respondents in a home environment, regardless of other social factors that may influence the linguistic choices of the respondents in this context of social interaction. Table 2, which follows, illustrates the general trends in respondents' language choices in home settings.

**Table 2** – Linguistic uses in domestic environments (General data)

Languages	Use the language		Does not use the language		Not Applicable		Total	
	fr.	%	fr.	%	fr.	%	Nr	%
Portuguese	492	72,1	186	27,3	4	0,6	682	100
Emakhuwa	624	91,5	54	7,9	4	0,6	682	100
Shimakonde	83	12,2	592	86,8	7	1	682	100
Shingoni	31	4,5	537	78,7	14	2,1	682	100
Kiswahili	58	8,5	610	89,4	14	2,1	682	100
Kimwani	192	28,2	646	94,7	4	0,6	682	100

**Source:** Author's elaboration.

The general data show that, from the 682 respondents, 72.1% declared that they used Portuguese, while 91% recognized that they used Emakhuwa at home. According to respondents' statements, Shimakonde, with 12.2%, Shingoni, with 4.5%, Kimwani, with 8.5% and Kiswahili with 28.2%, tend to be the least used languages in home environments, according to informants' statements.

<sup>7</sup> The inclusion of these languages in the grid of questions concerning the linguistic choices of individuals in domestic environments was based on the linguistic map proposed in Mae (2005) and Ine (2010).

<sup>8</sup> The different options, which correspond to different domains of interaction, were inserted in a table, where the researcher marked the answers with X.



However, it appears that when the responses were arranged considering the individuals separated by their declared mother tongue<sup>9</sup>, there is a tendency for many to recognize that they use their L1 in the domestic environment.<sup>10</sup>

The results regarding the variation of the linguistic behaviour of the speakers in home environments are presented, taking into account the variable “mother tongue”, according to the statements of the individuals.<sup>11</sup>

Among the seven respondents, whose L1 is Portuguese, all declared that they used this language at home with family members; from the 569 respondents who spoke Emakhuwa as L1, 96.3% said they used it in a home environment; from the 45 Shimakonde speakers as L1, 86.7% acknowledged that they used it at home with family members; from the 22 respondents whose L1 is Shingoni, 72.7% stated that they used this language in the home environment; from the 5 Kiswahili speakers as L1, all said they used this language at home; finally, among the 19 Kimwani speakers as L1, only 47% stated that they used it in a home environment. However, a considerable segment of respondents recognized that they did not use their mother tongue in domestic settings, namely Kimwani (35.7%); Shingoni (27.3%); Shimakonde (11%), Emakhuwa (3.2%), with a higher proportion for those in the first group. Table 3, which follows, illustrates the variation in the linguistic behaviour of respondents in the domestic environment according to their mother tongue.

**Table 3** – Linguistic uses in domestic environments according to the mother tongue declared by the individuals

Mother tongue	Use MT		Does not use MT		Not Applicable		Total	
	fr.	%	fr.	%	fr.	%	Nr	%
Portuguese	7	100	0	0	0	0	7	100
Emakhuwa	548	96,3	18	3,2	3	1	569	100
Shimakonde	39	86,7	6	13,3	0	0	45	100
Shingoni	16	72,7	6	27,3	0	0	22	100
Kiswahili	5	100	0	0	0	0	5	100
Kimwani	9	47	5	35,7	5	26,3	19	100

**Source:** Author’s elaboration.

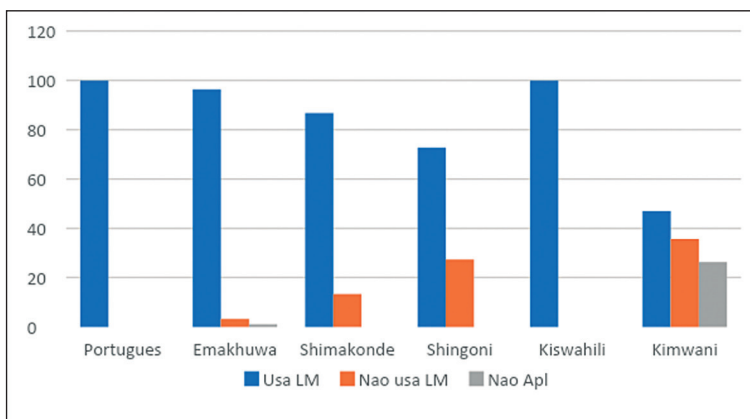
<sup>9</sup> The expression “mother tongue” or simply L1, has been used in opposition to L2, the EXPRESSION “MOTHER TONGUE” in the context of Mozambique, must be understood as the first language with which the child starts his socialization, therefore his native language (LINDONDE, 2002).

<sup>10</sup> See Note 7, which explains how the interviewees’ mother tongues were identified.

<sup>11</sup> Data on the respondents’ mother tongue were obtained from a sociolinguistic survey, which included, among other aspects, the profile of the individuals, namely the name, age, sex, the respondent’s mother tongue, the parents’ mother tongue, educational qualifications, the context of learning or acquiring Portuguese (school/home). Thus, the respondents’ mother tongue is shown in table 2 of this article. The results of these data are contained in the thesis defended to obtain the degree of Doctor in Linguistics.

To better visualize the tendency of the linguistic behaviour of the informants in home environments, see the Graph that follows, which summarizes the data entered in Table 3.

**Graphic 1** – Linguistic uses in domestic environments according to the mother tongue declared by the individuals



Source: Author's elaboration.

Despite this relative preference for mother tongues, the data show that respondents tend to use other non-mother tongues to communicate in domestic environments, mainly Emakhuwa, Portuguese and Kiswahili, as shown in Table 4, which follows:

**Table 4** – Use of non-mother tongues in domestic environments

L1	Portuguese		Emakhuwa		Shimakonde		Shingoni		Kiswahili		Kimwani	
	fr.	%	fr.	%	fr.	%	fr.	%	fr.	%	fr.	%
Portuguese	0	0	3	43	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Emakhuwa	98	17	0	0	7	1,2	4	0,7	4	0,7	4	0,7
Shimakonde	20	44	7	16	0	0	1	2,2	12	27	3	6,7
Shingoni	7	31,8	15	68,2	1	4,5	0	0	4	18,2	2	9,1
Kiswahili	3	60	2	40	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kimwani	5	35,7	3	21,4	5	35	0	0	2	14,3	0	0

Source: Author's elaboration.

As it can be seen in the table above, (1) some respondents whose L1 is Portuguese (43%), Shimakonde (16%), Shingoni (68.2%), Kiswahili (40%) and Kimwani (21.4%) stated that they used Emakhuwa; (2) many respondents, whose mother tongues are Emakhuwa (17%), Shimakonde (44%), Shingoni (31.8%), Kiswahili (60%) and

Kimwani (35.7%) said that they used Portuguese; finally, (3) some segments of Shimakonde speakers (27%), Shingoni (18.2%) and Kimwani (14.3%) as L1 said that they used Kiswahili in the home environment.

### **Brief analysis and interpretation of results**

After the presentation of the survey results, it follows its analysis. The domestic environment, in this study identified as home, is an informal domain, since it involves interactions between family members, dealing with everyday matters. Thus, according to the hypothesis previously mentioned, it is assumed that Bantu languages are exclusively used in an informal environment like a home, which identify the different families, as assumed in the literature dealing with the subject (FIRMINO, 2002; NGUNGA; BAVO 2011; ADAMS; MATU; ONGARORA, 2012).

Although general trends indicate greater use of Emakhuwa and Portuguese in verbal interactions in home environments, the data provided by L1 shows that many respondents tend to use their mother tongue (which includes Portuguese) to communicate in this informal domain. Portuguese is, therefore, the mother tongue of some respondents and can be used at home. It is important to underline that, although the number of its speakers as L1 is less expressive, only 7 (cf. Table 3), all said that they used Portuguese in home environments, which reveals a strong presence of the official language even in this informal domain. On the other hand, Portuguese is also used in domestic environments by speakers who have Bantu languages as their mother tongue. These results lead me to verify that, in this domain, Portuguese is also a language of informality, contradicting authors such as Firmino (2002) and Ngunga & Bavo (2011), who reserve this context only for the Bantu languages. Similar studies show ancestry of languages considered High in the interaction with children in the domestic environment as a result of language shift (MGBEMENA, 2014; ADAMS; MATU; ONGARORA, 2012).

Regarding the use of mother tongues of Bantu origin in home environments, there is an exception for the case of many respondents whose L1 is Kimwani, who declared that they used Emakhuwa and Portuguese, so I consider it a different case. In fact, this is a non-normal trend in the case of the family environment where respondents do not use their mother tongue, that is, in the case where the normal trend is not followed, the data shows that informants tend to use Emakhuwa or Portuguese. Based on the linguistic behaviour of the respondents who speak Kimwani as L1, it can be seen that there is an indication that, with the phenomenon of language shift (GAL, 1979; FASOLD, 1984), the tendency is towards acquisition or learning and use of the predominant language in the region (in this case Emakhuwa or Portuguese). In this way, it can be assumed that, in Montepuez, Emakhuwa and Portuguese are the languages that most people try to learn to communicate even in the home environment, in interactions between family members.

The measurement made in the previous paragraph is based, on the other hand, on the fact that some respondents whose L1 is Portuguese, Shimakonde, Shingoni, Kiswahili and Kimwani declare that they also used Emakhuwa, in addition to their mother tongues. It was also found that many respondents, speakers of Emakhuwa, Shimakonde, Shingoni, Kiswahili and Kimwani as mother tongues, declared that they also used Portuguese at home. In contrast, the results indicate that the vast majority of respondents whose L1 is Emakhuwa do not use other Bantu languages to communicate at home, favouring the choice of mother tongue or Portuguese, which can be analyzed based on theories on linguistic attitudes.

Based on the survey data, it can be seen that the pattern of language choices in Montepuez's home environments consists of the use of two to three languages, with emphasis on the mother tongue, which includes Portuguese. Thus, speakers of Emakhuwa as their mother tongue tend to use, fundamentally, two languages, while speakers of other languages tend to use, basically, three languages in domestic environments.

As mentioned, in the home environment, not only the Bantu languages are used but also Portuguese, which means that what is most expected is the use of the mother tongue, which can include Portuguese. This fact leads me to conclude that, in the Montepuez context, the mother tongue plays a relevant role in the linguistic behaviour of the informants in their interactions in the informal domains, particularly in the home environment. This finding is important because it forces us to reevaluate some theoretical assumptions used to explain the phenomenon of linguistic choice. For example, the notion of diglossia (FISHMAN, 1967b) presupposes a dichotomy between language H and language L, assuming that there would be languages for the high and low domains. In the context of Montepuez, the case of Portuguese, which is used in informal domains, contradicts this assumption.

Although in the Mozambican context, the Portuguese language is eminently an H language, given its status as an official language, taking into account the results of the present study, it can be assumed that it is also used in informal domains, and can therefore function as an L language. These results allow me to assess that, in Montepuez's multilingual context, the study of the use of High and Low languages is not necessarily and/or mutually exclusive. On the other hand, the results of the present study also require a reassessment of the concept of "mother tongue" that, according to common sense, and taking into account the context of Mozambique, refers only to Mozambican languages of Bantu origin, viewing Portuguese as an exogenous language, as if it had no native speakers in Mozambique and as if it were not used in the lower domains of social interaction in which speakers engage.

## **Conclusion**

In this article, I tried to show that in the multilingual context of Montepuez, the mother tongue, which includes Portuguese for many speakers, plays a fundamental role

in the interaction between family members in homely environments. The study indicated that while the use of Bantu languages is indeed noted in the domestic environment, it is no less true that the use of Portuguese is also verified both as L1 (in a small number of cases due to the reduced number of informants) and as L2 (in a much more productive way), in a domain that, from a theoretical point of view, is reserved for languages seen as low. In the context of Mozambique, the use of Portuguese in a home environment can be seen as less common, as it includes informants who declare it as L2. This conclusion reinforces, by itself, the idea that the real context of interaction determines the linguistic choice, and not necessarily the rigidity dictated by the theoretical assumptions of the linguistic choice.

Bearing in mind the conclusions I referred to, and based on the results of this study, the thesis that the present work sought to affirm is that, in the context of Montepuez, both Portuguese and Bantu languages, namely Emakhuwa, Shimakonde, Shingoni, Kiswahili and Kimwani as mother tongues play a role in the communication between family members in home settings. However, we assume in this study that in Montepuez the linguistic repertoire of many speakers is constituted fundamentally by three languages, Portuguese being used as L1, or as L2. Therefore, when the informant does not use mother tongue (Bantu language), tends to use Portuguese or the local indigenous lingua franca, namely Emakhuwa. This phenomenon can be better explained using studies focused on the variation of language choices according to the interlocutor, depending on whether they are children, parents, uncles or grandparents.

Thus, from a theoretical point of view, we can say that the contribution of the present research work lies in the fact that it shows the issue of linguistic selection in a multilingual context cannot be treated using a reductionist perspective, that is, based only on a single approach. However, as stated in the summary related to the examples of studies guided by the notions of diglossia and domin of this article, the different approaches to linguistic choice are not in contradiction. The fact is that none is strong enough and sufficient to explain the phenomenon. The communicative act is, in fact, a negotiation process, in which the linguistic options are the result of a negotiation, which occurs during, not before or after, the referred communicative act. Therefore, studies aimed at investigating the linguistic attitudes of speakers are recommended to complement research on language choices, which can be carried out not only in Montepuez / Cabo Delgado but also in other regions of Mozambique.

LINDONDE, L. A questão de escolha linguística em ambientes domésticos num contexto multilingue de Moçambique. *Alfa*, São Paulo, v.65, 2021.

- *RESUMO: O presente estudo examinou os padrões de escolhas linguísticas em ambientes domésticos de Montepuez, Moçambique, apoiando-se em abordagens sociolinguísticas que tratam da seleção linguística em contextos multilingues, nomeadamente as noções da diglossia e domínio. Os dados foram recolhidos através de um inquérito. O estudo observou que as*

várias línguas são usadas em ambientes caseiros, com maior predominância o Português e o Emakhuwa, sendo nula a relação entre a formalidade e a informalidade da situação. Assim, no ambiente caseiro a tendência é o uso das línguas maternas, que incluem o Português. Do ponto de vista teórico, o estudo concluiu que nenhuma abordagem é bastante e suficientemente forte para explicar o fenómeno da escolha linguística na totalidade, apelando para uma abordagem mais integrada, De facto, observou-se que o contexto real de comunicação é construído à medida que se faz a interação, pois se considera um processo negocial, que ocorre durante e não antes ou depois do ato comunicativo. Propõe-se estudos sobre escolhas linguísticas em outros espaços territoriais da província de Cabo Delgado, incluindo estudos subordinados a atitudes linguísticas com vista ao alargamento da informação relativa aos fatores que influenciam os usos linguísticos tanto em Montepuez quanto em outras regiões da província.

- **PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Multilinguismo. Montepuez. Escolha linguística. Ambiente caseiro.

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