

# Orality, its Linkages and Interfaces: An Approach from the African Cosmology

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**Abstract**—This research seeks to understand the study of orality from the African cosmology, as a way of construction of knowledge and paradigms break the post-colonial process of understanding the multiple languages in human communication. Highlights the need to know the representation elements and symbolic understanding of the trailer within the oral interrelationships. Points to the symbolism of the Bantu people and other peoples in their weaving, which uses signals as a spiritual representation and as a means of social communication, with this oral structure expression of differences in the community. Speaks of the extermination of the many languages of indigenous peoples in Brazil, showing that they were exterminated with the advance of the cities into the woods and, the maintenance of linguistic diversity is maintaining biocultural memory of mankind. As a result of the observations, the research seeks to answer questions related to orality and its structural organization within the religious rituals and the formation of knowledge, linking to what is considered by the Bantu community as sacred.

**Keywords**— Orality, African Cosmology, Bantu peoples, Sacred, Oral History.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Understanding orality beyond the systems that pose as opposed to writing: This is a challenge that goes down and opens new avenues for understanding the multiple languages, the symbolic world and human communication that is beyond words. Hambatê Ba (2010) addressing the oral tradition in Africa, leads us to the importance that is attributed to this and the sacredness of the word, since the narratives of griots do not admit corrections as they represent the course of life in society and its precepts and teachings.

Decipher the pictorial signs has always been a human need, and we can not say that all these many and varied ways to register have been less important than the alphabet. People known as pre-Columbian, Central America and the Mayans, Incas and Aztecs also developed his pictorial registration forms, which have not yet been fully deciphered.

For cosmology of African peoples (Badiru; 2017) between the physical world and the sacred world are subtle connections that objectivity can not explain. Not always the word is what it seems or explains what he writes. Ojo-Ade (2010) states the sacred accompanying the physical utterance of the word, giving it the power and axé (force or

energy that moves everything that lives and the universe). Beyond that importance which it contains the word spoken, it is necessary to know other elements that add to him, the word dressed gestures and representations that may favor their expression or even replace it. This understanding moves to try to scale the symbolic world linked to orality, expanding its limits and making almost disappear fine line between what is oral what is written.

Grasp the meaning or sense of orality requires a sharp eye on their interrelationships with various forms of representation, which we call written, body, or performing. What we understand how oral language links with subtle languages, pictorial, symbolic, iconic, body movements and recording symbols.

This work seeks to demonstrate the oral from the African cosmology and is, in times of post-colonial debate where the criticism of African literature are inserted into the subaltern experience which we seek to establish a line of thought between knowledge written and unwritten, so that the oral, form of transmission of knowledge between generations, gaining ground within the academic and critical approach to decolonization because it assumes recognizes the need to understand the "ecologies of knowledge", in the words of Boaventura de Sousa Santos.

This points in its South Epistemologies work (2010, p.7) that "there is no neutral epistemologies and who claim to be so are the least neutral." That is, the deconstruction of certain epistemological hegemonies, as holders of the monopoly of knowledge, overshadows other forms of understanding of the realities, leaving out those that do not fit into that way of knowing and deconstructs the knowledge dialogues. It is this political-ideological position and breaking paradigms as the knowledge imparted orally, which are guided our research.

## II. POSITIONS POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL AND THINKING ABOUT THE COMPANIES WITH NO WRITTEN LETTER

The misconception that oral languages would be less complex and therefore less important than those using alphabetic writing, leads to the construction of prejudices and distorted views of reality, as stated Ki-Zerbo (2010). The study of these language issues is a way to get to a less simplistic understanding.

Overall, we got used to judge other peoples and societies from the parameters used to ours, and over time it is formatted the idea that people who do not use writing (alphabetical) would be "backward" or "no civilized."

As highlights Calvet (2011), the absence of written tradition (alphabetical) in certain people does not mean no graphic tradition: "In many societies of oral tradition, there is a lively pictorialidade, the decorations pots and gourds, tissue, in tattoos and scarification in (...)" (Calvet, 2011, p. 11). As he points out, even without having to register function speech, these records take part in the maintenance of social memory; the various types of artwork found in oral societies have a wide range of representations, including on the cosmology of the people.

The author emphasizes the use of "messenger" drum in Africa, describing the touches of cyóndo, a wooden drum used by Luba (the western Zaire people) to post. This instrument, made with a wooden stem has a cavity with edges on uneven thickness, which emits high and low sounds: the duration (short vowels / long), and the tone of sounds that can be high, low or complex. This description of Calvert (ditto), message understanding is done by the drummer beats the female edge to edge lower and male tones to the high tones, and duration being perceived by prolonged vibration of sound.

To express a thus narrative, percussionist using the amplification technique, which is basically developing a text or a basic idea and can also use the feature of holófrases (stereotypical messages that can be constituted of a single

verse or several) . This implementation requires a mental exercise and material in order to make the instrument - cyóndo- communicate information that is complex, in a simplified manner. The example of cyóndo is another of the "talking drums", also well known in Yoruba culture, where the drums can transmit three tones of the vowels to compose entirely understandable messages by touch.

This fact indicates that the peoples of the African continent developed elaborate ways to increase communication, without it being necessary to alphabetic writing and using the performative elements.

The possibility of turning the word into other forms of language refers to a very wide world of knowledge, perhaps close to the understanding of philosophers and poets. Paulo Freire (2001) have introduced the term "palavramundo" and Manoel de Barros says poetically: ". I use the word to compose my silences" For Muniz Sodre (1983, p. 122) "The words are in the same plane of gestures", so they can say as much as a gesture, dance, body expression.

Zumthor (2007) speaks of voice abstraction in the contemporary world and the way it somehow apart from being reproduced by the technology can even be created by advanced technological devices. Advocates that the voice is not the word, is beyond, with its polysemy. I believe that the voice expands the word or the voices amplify the word and all your senses, making her stay in narrative forms that use the body and various other instruments, writing even.

The orality requires physical instrumental to materialize, and has different expressions. The expression embodies and translates into gestures, actions and performances, as noted by Zumthor (2007) to relate the concept of performance in the language to "the sensory and body engagement" (ZUMTHOR 2007, p.9).

Not only among the peoples of Africa, but in other parts of the world, the pictorial, performance and body language is widely used. The examples and considerations presented by Calvet (2010) are many, and these show that it is very little to establish a relationship of supposed inferiority of oral tradition comparing it to the written record: there are two different worlds, which now approach, intersect or move away in certain circumstances, as in multilingual situations.

We can not make the mistake of considering, as is common in other reviews, people who use the oral or the bias of denial, pointing out what supposedly they lack (Calvet, 2011). I understand that the role of orality is broad and decisive even for learning any language. In societies where the alphabetic writing, the other codes are as important as. There are ancient writings already missing

people on the African continent which until now could not decipher them.

There is, therefore, to give attention to limits and twists than is oral language and its pictorial forms / symbolic, the graphics that tell stories of the world and human experience, making it possible to understand that oral / written are not necessarily dichotomies, and or demarcate more or less legitimate grounds or "civilized".

Neves Santos (2019) found, in detail, an exemplification of the language of artwork with complex and not deciphered meanings by Western scholars: the art made weaving by Bantu people (also present in other people), where the signal "V" - also understood as the basis of all realities, symbol of the human being is composed of spiritual energy and physical energy in Bantu cosmology - is the basis for the tissue in an educational manner, teaches about the ways of living in society, the relationship between people and nature. The "V" sign is the focus in life, "her reproductive web and its value [...] Western scholars in African art and weaving industry were not able to explain these African icons. The lack of knowledge about Bantu worldview [...] not prepared them. "

The foundations of the Bantu people of belief arranged in the ancient art of tapestry, was not "read" by Westerners who, I have no knowledge of cosmology of this people, based on orality, they were unable to assign meaning to these symbols; not "read" the message of several "Vs" velvet fabrics, expressing different levels of structures - physical or not - and guiding lessons for that community.

### III. SEMIOTICS OF THE FIRST CLUES ON DATA PROCESSING

"From symptoms to the written" (Ginzburg 1989, p. 154); this is the way that Ginzburg (ditto) travels mapping the ways that humans have used through time to understand and decipher what is behind certain events and phenomena. Through evidence unfolds the real; the tracks offer information that may be accurate, both to detect diseases through symptoms or the details of subtlety in artistic objects constituting evidence to be read.

Ginzburg (1998) speaks of the paradigm evidentiary or semiotic that begins with the primitive man looking animal footprints in the mud, evidence that would become signs, which are elements that make up the divination, and are also considered today in the semiotic study. Seeing signs and evidence, pictorial signs, materials offal, marginal data "revealing" elements that reflect reality, and this, always prone to inferences and readings, understandings, "the

reality is opaque, there are privileged zones - signs, signs - that allow decipher it "(GINZBURG 1998, p. 177).

For millennia, man was a hunter. During numerous chases he learned to reconstruct the shapes and movements of the invisible prey by the footprints in the mud, broken branches, manure acorns, tufts of hair, matted feathers, stagnant odors. Learned to sniff out, record, interpret and classify infinitesimal tracks like whiskers. He learned to make complex mental operations with lightning speed, inside a dense forest or in a clearing full of pitfalls(GINZBURG 1998, p 151).

The evidentiary paradigm, the search for evidence, can be seen as the first deciphering human writing. And such complex operations that speaks Ginzburg can be the beginning of that made possible the precise construction of the Egyptian pyramids, and the preparation of the binary combination that allows communication through computer, hypertext, exchange instant messages in different places on the planet.

The XXI century is marked by virtual communication, but also the disappearance of much of the oral language, which has been lost over time because, in many cases, the arrival of coloniz

action which, among other annihilations also promotes linguistic annihilation. The case of Africa is emblematic in this sense, but it is the same observation about the Americas. According to studies of Toledo and Barrera-Bassols (2015), Nigeria is the country where it is still registered a greater number of native languages.

In Brazil, the extermination of tongues occurred simultaneously to the extermination of native peoples, indigenous, and currently, according to the IBGE (2010) there are 270 indigenous languages spoken in Brazil. Maintaining linguistic diversity, is, in turn, maintaining biocultural memory of mankind (TOLEDO AND BARRIER-BASSOLS, 2015). According to the authors:

If homo sapiens managed to stay colonizing and expanding its presence on earth it is because it was able to recognize and take advantage of the processed elements of the natural world, a universe that contains an essential feature: diversity. This ability is due to the maintenance of individual and collective memory (TOLEDO AND BARRIER-BASSOLS, 2015, p. 57).

From the perspective of the authors, cultural diversity is given in three dimensions: genetics, linguistics and cognitive. Linguistic cultural diversity has been so damaged as the other, so that causes a depletion to the point of view of humanity's memory.

What are the possible meanings when using a language whose structural organization is not known? We have analyzed the power of the word sacred in the religious rituals of African origin, which is one of the tripods of religion, Word, guiding force, is expressed by the energy emission is the ax. The ritual prayers elements such as corners and are carried out by oral, by which constitutes the link with the sacred.

In this case, the speakers of those remaining African languages do not need any structural knowledge about these, but only use them within the ritual as learned and as the cult was organized. The language transmitted from older and that too at some point arrives via an entity or an ancestral spirit fills with his power, space symbolic of belonging and spiritual for those who are part of the Holy Family.

The divinatory power of the mechanisms available to the yard of religious is closely linked to the power of the word, it reveals and makes. So is the Ifa divination game, derived from the Yoruba tradition that has great prestige in Africa and is practiced by priests prepared to handle these shells and beads within the precepts learned in tradition. Also called Eridinlogun (meaning the number sixteen in Yoruba) this game has great importance for religions of African origin, and their knowledge is fully grounded in orality.

About it, says prof. Dr. Ajibola Isau Badiru (2017): "Ifa has links with social, cultural applications, etc. Links that make the time becomes a moment charmed. " The most important decisions are made by consulting the Ifa. The teacher and priest also says about the word and its power: "The word expresses the ax. If someone is bitten by a snake and know the name of the poison says "out" and the poison out. "

The practice of oral tradition in African languages (Yoruba, muxicongo, Kikongo, etc.) in Candomblé / Umbanda is a way to illustrate the importance of the symbolism contained in the word. Most people who use these languages do not have an exact idea of its grammatical structure or even from your lexicon. However, because it is a ritual language in which they are performed liturgies, prayers and songs of the festive moments of the house is the "language of the Orisha" or holy language in which you have a lot of respect and in which there is no concern with what might be right or wrong.

About this empirical use, Pessoa de Castro (1983) comments that the holy language, "comprises an operating religious terminology, magical-semantic [...] rests on lexical systems character of different African languages were probably spoken in Brazil slavery period "(Castro PERSON, 1983, p. 4).

The use of words in Yoruba and Bantu languages takes place in order to realize the relationship with the divine ones and the home community with each other. Are expressions that indicate reverence, salute, benediction, interdiction, consent, among other functions. They are also found, as Pessoa de Castro (1983), references to the name of objects, substances, places, flora, fauna, cuisine and names of deities and their respective greetings.

The author demonstrates that the practice of oral tradition, with its load of meanings, operates the symbolic-religious functionality and gives it significance by being linked to the supernatural. Thus, the realization of the service is by a word "deified" containing elements of power, and does not need to be "translated", but lived. Summarizes the author: "The language does not report the reality, but subjectively creates" (CASTRO, 1983, p.5). This is the word creation in Candomblé: orality carries loyalty to the ancestors through prayer, singing, containing the ax; and while the people dance, takes communion with the deity, with the sacred.

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#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

The oral tradition has various ways to accomplish their communicative functions and expands into multiple possibilities. Ever since man has developed communicative processes, understood from indications, signs and other symbols, including the written forms. The writing does not necessarily represent the alphabetical conventional, Western writing, but is realized in fabrics, records like tattoos, drawings, paintings, and other mechanisms.

This broader understanding of the meanings of oral and written lies against what we have learned over time, a belief grounded in exclusionary vision that the people who do not need the writing - say in passing, Alphabetical - would be less "civilized" or less advanced than those others. It would be at least dangerous, consider inferior cultures that do not know, and even more inappropriate, do not attach importance to a set of symbolic elements, pictorial, body and performers that always accompanies the oral tradition.

It is not just speech, or writing as their representation; it is not possible to consider writing as a copy of the speech: between these processes there is a long chain of elements that greatly expands the discussion. The oral, oral languages are intangible heritage, participate in a cultural heritage of humanity that has been so dismissive about to go up losing. When you lose a language, you lose a big part of memory and identity of a people, the set of knowledge that belongs to it, that is, humanity is impoverished.

Liturgical ritualidades of religions of African origin exemplify the place of orality in the symbolism of these beliefs. It means a deep bond with the timeless, ancestry, in order to feed the "now" of the participants, but a connection with the before and after, that is expressed largely in languages that have survived through oral narratives.

Understanding the potential of language that has no written tradition and its importance as a cultural heritage of humanity is possibly a prerequisite to defend them in their materiality today as preservation factor of human diversity.

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