The Toponymy of Curuçá as a reflection of interethnic contacts in Eastern Amazon[1]

A toponímia de Curuçá como reflexo dos contatos interétnicos na Amazônia Oriental

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Abstract: This article discusses the contacts between peoples in the historical and linguistic constitution of Curuçá and how these events had a significant impact on the toponymy of Curuçá. We discuss the intrinsic relationship between language and people and how the dialogue between history, society and culture is established in a given space. The main objective is to analyze the influence of interethnic and linguistic contacts on the constitution of the toponymy of Curuçá, in order to understand how historical and social processes shaped the toponymic scenario, focusing on the presence of hybrid and compound terms. The theoretical framework used mainly uses the assumptions of toponymy from Dick (1990); the discussions on linguistic contacts from Lucchesi (2009) and Raso, Mello and Altenhofen (2011). The basis for the historiography of Curuçá and the process of formation of the territory comes from Canindé (2015). Regarding linguistic contact and interethnic relations, we used Cardoso de Oliveira (1962). The methodology used consists of bibliographical research, considering the historiography of Curuça, principles of toponymy and linguistic contact, as well as field research to obtain data on the toponymy of Curuça collected through interviews and oral narratives of the residents of Curuça. This article is an excerpt from a master's dissertation research on the toponymy of Curuça and the historical implications of linguistic contacts. The results point to a dynamic in which interethnic contacts in eastern Amazonia have repercussions

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on local toponymy expressed in the presence of compound and hybrid terms, involving Portuguese and indigenous elements of Tupi origin. This study contributes significantly to the understanding of the toponymy of Curuça and how it constitutes additional evidence of the interethnic contacts established in the region. Furthermore, the research reaches broader reflections on the identity, cultural heritage and sociolinguistic dynamics of Eastern Amazonia.

Keywords: toponymy; Curuçá; interethnic contacts; eastern Amazon; Tupi.

Resumo: Este artigo discorre a respeito dos contatos entre povos na constituição histórica e linguística de Curuçá e como estes eventos refletiram consideravelmente na toponímia curuçaense. Discutimos acerca da relação intrínseca entre língua e povo e como se estabelece o diálogo entre história, sociedade e cultura em um determinado espaço. O objetivo central consiste em analisar a influência dos contatos interétnicos e linguísticos na constituição da toponímia de Curuçá, de modo a compreender de que maneira os processos históricos e sociais moldaram o cenário toponímico, com foco na presença de termos híbridos e compostos. O referencial teórico utilizado recorre, principalmente, aos pressupostos da toponímia a partir de Dick (1990); as discussões sobre contatos linguísticos de Lucchesi (2009) e de Raso, Mello e Altenhofen (2011). De Canindé (2015) advém o embasamento da historiografia curuçaense e do processo de formação do território. No tocante ao contato linguístico e às relações interétnicas valemo-nos de Cardoso de Oliveira (1962). A metodologia empregada consiste em pesquisa bibliográfica, considerando a historiografia curuçaense, princípios da toponímia e do contato linguístico bem como em pesquisa de campo para a obtenção de dados sobre a toponímia curuçaense coletados por meio da técnica de entrevistas e de narrativas orais dos moradores de Curuçá. Este artigo é um recorte de uma pesquisa de dissertação de mestrado acerca da toponímia curuçaense e a implicação histórica dos contatos linguísticos. Os resultados apontam para uma dinâmica em que os contatos interétnicos na Amazônia oriental repercutem na toponímia local expresso na presença de termos compostos e híbridos, envolvendo o português e elementos indígenas de base tupí. Este estudo contribui, significativamente, para a compreensão da toponímia curuçaense e como esta se constitui como evidência adicional dos contatos interétnicos estabelecidos na região. Além disso, a pesquisa alcança reflexões mais amplas acerca da identidade, patrimônio cultural e dinâmica sociolinguística da Amazônia Oriental.

Palavras-chave: toponímia; Curuçá; contatos interétnicos; Amazônia oriental; tupi.

Introduction

To introduce a discussion about toponymy studies and their contributions as additional resources for the understanding of the history and culture of a people, it is relevant to consider the emerging relations in the social context, among them those of interethnic contacts involved in the formation process of a given group of people. One of the most evident results of these encounters lies in the linguistic marks that reflect the way humans refer to and apprehend the space where they live. Along with the need to be

cognizant of the environment in which they live and to talk about it, there also arises the need to name it. Thus, the naming act emerges as a human attitude towards the need to relate to the space where they live.

The practice of naming places, from simple everyday practice, has become of interest to scholars. With the advances in language sciences, the study of place names has become an object of research whose purpose is to understand the aspects involved in the act of naming. The act of naming was known to occur not only out of the necessity of defining signs and establishing meanings to ensure effective communication, but also to bestow identity and legality to the elements involved in the process.

When it comes to the denominatives of place, research has advanced over time in parallel with the changing process of humans in society. These denominatives have generated interest in various fields of study, be they anthropological, geographical, or historical, to mention a few of them. They are objects of study for acquiring knowledge of culture in general, as well as for gaining an understanding of a particular people. Thus, toponymic research - a branch of Onomastics that studies place names - emerges as a disciplinary body that focuses on aspects of language systems and structures in use, but it also provides evidence of the historical dynamics, of the interethnic relations experienced by a people in its trajectory.

Starting with the presentation of the object of study - that is, place names in Curuçá (state of Pará, Brazil) - this paper is intended to discuss the richness of the toponymic vocabulary of Curuçá as a sociocultural product of the history of contacts between peoples and ethnic groups involved in the emancipatory formation of this municipality. To this end, we aim to discuss briefly the emerging contacts in the process of constituting the place and their implications for the linguistic culture of Curuçá. Such discussion involves an analysis of the lexical items relative to the place names selected for this study.

The theoretical framework used draws mainly on the tenets of toponymy by Dick (1990), and the insights on linguistic contacts by Lucchesi (2009) and Raso, Mello, and Altenhofen (2011). Canindé (2015) provides the grounds for Curuçá's historiography and the formation process of the territory. We resort to Cardoso de Oliveira (1962) as regards language contact and interethnic relations.

The methodology employed to acquire data consisted of both bibliographic research and field research carried out during the development of the Master's thesis, which focused on the identification of the lexical items that make up the toponymic linguistic vocabulary of Curuçá and the relationship between these items and the history of contacts that emerged in the context of the formation of the place.

To obtain the data, we resorted to the interview technique, as well as to the collection of oral narratives from the residents of the localities that make up Curuçá's territory. The interviewees were selected according to social variables, such as age, provenance, familiarity, and length of stay in the locality. Therefore, employing exploratory research and visits to the municipality, we tried to survey the region, in order to learn about its origin and formation, its geography, economy, infrastructure, social organization, and, especially, to learn about Curuçá's way of life and cultural aspects to better inform the understanding of its toponymic configuration.

1 Toponyms and identity: historical, social and cultural perspectives

It is notable that the human species needed to name things, beings, and places, and that relationships could be better established from such references to enable effective dialogues. Even if translation depends on several factors for a more appropriate interpretation, the signs themselves are already real possibilities for the communicative act. In considering place names, i.e. toponyms, it is important to understand their origin,

their transformations over time, and the history of contacts involving the people who have lived in the named space.

To delve into the study of the toponymic sign, it is important to remember that all forms of representation of human life imply, significantly, their functioning and representativeness, establishing an important correlation between name and place. Thus, toponyms can represent and record various facts and aspects of the cultural and social life of a people in a particular place.

Considering the study of toponymy, it is relevant to outline the origin of Toponymy studies, its object of study, and its contribution to language studies in Brazil.

1.1 Toponymy: origin, object of study, importance, advances, and challenges in Brazil

Onomastics emerged as a scientific field in Europe around 1878, precisely in France, when Auguste Longnon introduced its study in academies and colleges. In 1922, Albert Dauzat resumed his studies with the support of European historians, geographers, and linguists. The study of toponymy gradually expanded to other continents, gaining ground in North America through George Stewart, in European Russia through Pospelov, then in Middle Asia and Asia Minor until it reached Brazil through the Brazilian Toponymy of Sampaio (1901) and also of Levy Cardoso, bringing indigenous lexicology to the fore (Dick, 1990: 1-4).

It is important to highlight the various Tupinological studies by Plínio Ayrosa in the 1930s, which emphasized the importance of Indigenous languages in Brazilian toponymy (Drumond, 1965), as well as the studies on Brazilian toponymy by Father Lemos Barbosa (1951). In the 1960s, Drumond made a significant contribution to toponymic studies with his thesis *Contribuição do Bororo à Toponímia Brasílica* (1965), in which he drew attention to the need for greater methodological rigor in toponymic

studies at the time and to the urgency of studying Indigenous-origin toponyms, arguing

at the time:

> It is therefore essential to study, as quickly as possible, the names of localities, specifically those of Indigenous origin, because, as Teodoro Sampaio once said, geographic names that are explainable and entirely natural in certain eras will become true enigmas for future generations, as daily changes or inevitable corruptions render them indecipherable (1965:20).

Drumond's argument suggests that toponyms of Indigenous origin should be

central to the concerns of anyone venturing into toponymic studies. The authors

mentioned are considered pioneers in toponymic studies in Brazil, following an

etymological perspective of Tupi Indigenous origin.

More recent toponymic studies have expanded the scope of interest beyond

Indigenous toponymy, primarily referencing Dick's toponymic research (1998) and her

taxonomic proposal. Following this same line of study are works by Isquerdo (1996),

Carvalhinhos (1998), Seabra (2007), Andrade (2010), and other authors. The current

landscape of onomastic studies in Brazil now includes new paradigms and methods

beyond the traditionally proposed approaches (Seide, 2013).

Onomastics is the science that studies proper names and is comprised of two

categories: Toponymy and Anthroponymy. Regarding Onomastics, which is conceived

as a study that is anything but constrained, Dick (2007) argues that:

> Onomastics, however, is much more than a mere auxiliary factor of individual or collective living and acting; it is an indication of the paths taken by oral interactions throughout the historical periods, of behaviors present in daily life, and of moral or industrious attitudes valued by a population (Dick, 2007:144).

The author stresses that Onomastics provides subsidies to the understanding of the

dynamics of languages and of a people's ways of being, and therefore is not a study that

ends with attributing a name to a given place or to a particular individual. Interfacing with

other areas of knowledge, the study of Onomastics focuses on the investigation of proper names, from where it departs to reach history, society, culture, etc.

The need to name things in the world is essentially human. At every moment, we attempt to give names and explanations for what happens around us — the objects and phenomena of nature — in order to describe, know, and understand them. This reflects a need to understand and explain reality, seeking, in a way, to make sense of things. Thus, each society or group develops a particular way of seeing and understanding the world, constructing a specific worldview unique to its people. This uniqueness can be perceived in the toponyms of Indigenous origin that have undergone significant historical, cultural, and physical influences regarding their motivation.

> Once, however, since words often lend themselves to various interpretations, it is advisable to confront the characteristic production of a place with its name; for Indigenous peoples almost always chose the names of localities according to their natural productions, often demonstrating an admirable gift of observation (Sampaio, 1987: 41).

Everywhere we find names that, in all realms of knowledge, classify animals, plants, materials, colors, celestial bodies, and beings. Everything that exists in the world has a nominative reference. Whether beings or things, all demand a reference — much more than just a meaning or significance, but a conventional sign that can be shared. Dick (1990) mentions the narrative of Genesis, precisely the moment of naming the species of the animal kingdom, highlighting the power of the naming act and its relevance in the linguistic realm.

> When in Genesis, the animals of the earth come to the presence of the first man so that he can name them, the intellectual possession of one species over the others was taking shape through the act of naming, through the symbolic manifestation of language, the "giving of names" and the "knowledge of the names given" (Dick, 1990: 5-6).

The biblical excerpt reveals that man appropriated the process of naming for the organization and control of the physical environment in which he lived, in order to facilitate his socialization and enhance his understanding of the reality surrounding him,

as well as to offer the possibility of speaking about that same reality in its presence or absence. It also reveals the worldview of Jewish culture and its way of relating to other beings. In this perspective, the human being is placed as the subject, while the surrounding reality is seen as the object, separate from it.

In Amerindian cultures, for example, man does not perceive himself as separate from the surrounding reality; rather, he forms a unity with it, and together they all possess humanity (Viveiros de Castro, 2002). Certainly, the act of naming places and people in Indigenous cultures carries the worldview of these cultures. What seems to unite these distinct worldviews is the need to name places and people, thus standing out as a particularly important practice, as it is included in the act of naming in general, which is one of the functions of human languages.

In this sense, people appropriated this naming process for the organization and control of the physical environment where they lived to facilitate their socialization and favor a deeper understanding of the reality that surrounded them, as well as to offer the possibility of talking about this same reality. Naming places and people is a very important practice since it is subsumed in the act of naming in general, which is one of the attributes of human languages.

In the endeavor to investigate the specific lexicon of proper place names, Toponymy has emerged as a field of study within scientific knowledge and can be considered today as one of the earliest sciences of the world. In addition to studying the toponymic sign itself, Toponymy also seeks to study the motivation surrounding the choice of a toponym. Therefore, its importance is also derived from the need to understand the motivations of the naming act, which ultimately serves as a way to understand the culture and history of a place and a people.

Linguistic research on toponyms has grown in recent times, continuously expanding into new branches and offering countless possibilities given the importance of understanding the signs, their attributions, their categories, to what they are applicable, and how they affect the cognition of reality.

Therefore, we stress the importance of the studies and the advancement of the sciences of language to the preservation of the memory of a particular people, as a link between past and present and its future benefits, aiming at the perpetuation of the cultural heritage, its history, its traditions, its meanings throughout generations.

Toponymy has contributed with further evidence to comprehend the dynamics of peoples. The most recurrent challenges to the study of toponymy in Brazil reside in the absence of specific materials, which can be considered didactical, despite the wealth of possibilities for finding data. Such data are more commonly present in immaterial sources, which have a more subjective character (as in individuals' relationships), in the memories of a given people, among other cultural riches (as legends, myths, traditions, and customs of humans in society).

2.2 Toponymy and its place within language studies

Language studies have long emphasized the need for a more comprehensive approach that includes the historical, social, and cultural aspects of a given people. Thus, studying language implies studying it in its heterogeneous and dynamic character, as an element that exerts crucial influence on the political, social, and cultural behaviors and attitudes that are formed at the core of individual and social relationships.

We refer to language as being heterogeneous because we also consider language users as heterogeneous beings. The mutability of languages goes hand in hand with the process of (trans)formation and evolution of humankind, which is always changing in accord with the context that surrounds it. Amid a society with so much diversity, it is to be expected that the language of its speakers will also manifest itself in different ways.

Even in face of linguistic heterogeneity, it is important to bear in mind that no speaker appropriates any language use in a disorderly way, without the proper sense for the act. Following this line of thought, countless analyses confirm the idea that every use of language has perfectly justifiable rules, because language does not happen randomly, but logically and, above all, in an organized fashion, regardless of the variations it manifests.

Based on this premise, it is possible to assume that linguistic behaviors and attitudes are motivated and fully justifiable, considering the events that emerge in this process. Toponymy, therefore, is interested in studying names in a broader sense than their identification, classification, and analysis at the structural level of language, but also to understand the human relationships intertwined in the naming process and their possible motivations.

Toponyms comprise part of the lexicon of a population and bear important traces of a people's history. Similarly, the linguistic aspects of a given social milieu also retain part of the intangible and historical heritage of society. By studying its linguistic materiality, it is possible to identify traces of the memory, values, customs, and life experience of groups of speakers from communities that are not always known by society. Such materiality is found, for example, in the name of the place where one lives and inhabits. Thus, place names and their modifications reveal the transformations undergone by the space and indicate the social history of that particular language society.

According to Dick (1990), the toponymic sign evinces historical marks and perpetuates characteristics of the physical environment of a region, which categorize the linguistic vocabulary of this milieu. When it comes to the physical environment, the great variety of species in different geographical areas tends to inspire the name-giver in the act of naming. For this reason, toponyms preserve in themselves geographical aspects,

and cultural facts in certain spaces and times, serving as memory retainers for a given group (Gusmão, 2012). Consonant with the lexicon, toponyms are thus elements that stand for the social life and the cultural and linguistic heritage of a people.

The naming act enables the individual to better assimilate reality and consequently reflect on it. This is where the study of the nature of toponyms is introduced. It is the act of naming that brings light to this scientific experience (Costa, 2011). In this sense, we assume that this designation process and the need to better reflect on it is what drove the emergence of Toponymy as a language science; it is now consolidated as such. As a language study, it is necessary to bear in mind that the study of toponyms must consider the heterogeneous and changeable character of a language, capable of aggregating aspects of the history and culture of a people and finding the motivation behind the naming act, a legitimate and distinctive act of a language.

1.3 Toponymy in dialogue with history, society, and culture

To elucidate the relationship between toponyms and history, society and culture it is necessary to reiterate the intrinsic nature of the relationship between language and society. Thus, when researching linguistic aspects of a people (regardless of language level), it is necessary to investigate social and cultural aspects, since the history, context, reality, and culture of these speakers condition the linguistic specificities of each speech society. Language and society are intrinsically linked since humankind - complex, heterogeneous, and changeable - acts in society by means of language, which consequently manifest itself in a variety of ways and accompanies the process of constant renewal that humans living in societies undergo through the ages.

What conditions a speaker's language is not the necessity to communicate in society, but the actual circumstances of the uses of that language. To carry out a successful study, it is thus important to consider the speaker's social environment, economy, culture,

political acts, and ways of living, which will define the speaker's linguistic strategies, behaviors, and attitudes.

To conduct a study of toponyms, it is relevant to keep in mind that all forms of representation of human life significantly implicate its functioning and representativeness, establishing an important relationship between name and place. In this way, toponyms can stand for and record various facts and aspects of the cultural and social life of a people.

Place names provide us with valuable information about various aspects of human life. They can pinpoint the historical origin of ancient peoples and their location, as well as recover historical facts from this or that people; they present precise descriptions of the physical and geographical nature of topographic reliefs and point out various modifications. Toponyms can also indicate the location of rock names, soil structures, and mined sites, and pinpoint a wide range of place names that refer to present or vanished fauna, for example. In summary, toponyms provide knowledge about the religious, agricultural, ethnological, physical, sociocultural, historical and linguistic features of a locality, in addition to a range of significant data.

Considering the wealth of possibilities of what can be learned through the study of toponyms, we deem it relevant to investigate what the toponyms identify, what they record, and what they represent.

It is also worth considering the dynamic nature of toponyms over the years. A case in point is that of the municipality of Curuçá, in which the toponym *Curuçá* changed throughout the municipal emancipation period up to its effective consolidation as it is currently known. In its foundation history, the first name was *Curuçá*, being subsequently renamed *Vila Nova Del Rey* when the Portuguese arrived in the region. It then resumed its name with the toponym *Curuçá* after the Jesuits were evicted from the region and has

retained this name to this day. The linguistic change of the name Curuçá is just one example of the dynamic processes that occur in various regions and that markedly demonstrates that toponyms are susceptible to change according to the cultural and social history of the people it represents. From that perspective, it is advantageous to conceive of the dynamic relationship of the toponym that varies or changes in keeping with the courses of history and culture of a given group or society.

Toponyms represent and translate identity to geographic space. A place is only given the name that was agreed upon at a given time in accordance with the motivation that determined the choice upon the naming act. That motivation stems from several factors, which can be historical facts and events, aspects of material and immaterial culture, beings and things, and datings, among countless other factors that might determine the choice of a place name. To reflect on the nature of toponyms in this respect, it is worth briefly discussing the iconicity of the toponymic linguistic sign.

In this regard, Dick (1990) considers that toponyms have the potential to distinguish various spaces, giving them peculiar characteristics and authentic specificities. The author argues for the dual motivational aspect of toponyms, ensuring the motivational character of the toponymic sign that differs from other signs that are merely arbitrary.

Concerning this double motivational aspect cited by Dick (1990), we recap two aspects: the intentionality and the semantic origin of a toponym itself. These two aspects can be observed in two distinct moments. The first aspect concerns the name-giver's intentionality when choosing a name, which, as mentioned, can be determined by a set of factors that govern the naming act, but which is exclusively up to the name-giver to decide what to consider most relevant to characterize that particular place. The second aspect consists in the semantic nature of the toponym itself generated by the choice of the name-

giver, that is, the meaning it reveals. For this second aspect, Dick (1990) proposes a taxonomy developed according to a grouping of categories based on the semantic content of each term, which is adopted in the present study.

This section's brief overview on certain aspects of the study of toponyms reveals how a toponymic sign embodies an array of elements that dialog with history, events that mark a society, geographic aspects, and the cultural expressions of the place. Additionally, toponymic signs bear evidence of the interethnic relations that have occurred in a given place, as well as the power relations that broke out into conflict at a given moment in history.

2 Interethnic contacts in eastern amazon: the case of Curuçá

Since colonization, Eastern Amazonia is an area that has served as a stage for encounters between peoples with very different worldviews, as well as a site for disputes between opposing interests in the power struggle. The municipality of Curuçá can be taken as a small portrait of that scenario.

Curuçá is located in Eastern Amazon , which is made up of the states of Pará, Maranhão, Amapá, Tocantins, and Mato Grosso. The eastern part of the Amazon is home to 20% of the biome Cerrado and part of the Pantanal of Mato Grosso. As for the geography of the area, Curuçá is located on the Atlantic coast of the South American continent, in the Northern region of Brazil. It is one of the 144 municipalities that make up the state of Pará, out of the 5,570 Brazilian municipalities. Curuçá is located about 136 km distant from the city of Belém, the capital of the state of Pará. The territory of the municipality is approximately 672.61 km², and its estimated population is 40,584 inhabitants, according to updated surveys by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE, 2020).

Interethnic contacts in the Amazon resulted in strong influences on the social, cultural, and linguistic constitution of the Amazonian people. Indigenous peoples,

Europeans, and Africans came into intense and long-lasting contact in the region, which resulted in mutual influences to the point of generating a markedly hybridized people.

The contacts between peoples with different worldviews and different interests in the Amazon region have been decisive for the linguistic scenario of the region. Colonizers and colonized peoples have mutually influenced each other. On the one hand, a significant number of indigenous languages spoken in the region have disappeared, and many of the surviving languages are currently threatened with extinction. The indigenous peoples' ways of life were also shaken and abruptly modified and, at the most extreme level, entire populations were decimated, putting an end to the languages spoken by these populations. On the other hand, the presence of elements of indigenous languages, especially those of Tupi base, is quite significant in the Portuguese language concerning the lexicon.

This brief observation aims to keep in mind that the contacts between peoples and individuals enable some kind of exchange, some influence of some over others, the results of which depend, to a great extent, on the type of power relationship that exists between these peoples. Considering the linguistic aspect in Brazil, Indian and African peoples - who were clearly in a situation of subjugation - faced significant losses in their languages.

In face of this scenario of encounters and contacts between Europeans, Indian and African peoples in Eastern Amazon, it is possible to infer, and even verify, that such interethnic contacts significantly influenced the uses and pieces of knowledge of the people of Curuçá.

Considering the history of formation and origin of the municipality of Curuçá as a starting point, it is initially important to emphasize that native historians state that the process of historical constitution of the area of Curuçá resulted from the occupation of the Amazon region and is strictly connected to the Jesuit settlements during the Portuguese colonization process.

Therefore, it is imperative to reflect on these contacts by observing a more general context because, in dealing with language, the individuals are considered to be in constant movement, variation, and transformation. For this reason, the contact of languages - or between languages - cannot be defined merely as an event of the past or a seasonal one. Since the formation of peoples and at every moment, in every corner of the world, linguistic units are continuously emerging, changing, and bordering on each other.

2.1 Interethnic contacts in eastern amazon

As already mentioned, Eastern Amazon has been and continues to be the stage for great cultural, economic, political, and social encounters and exchanges. The language formation process has followed this same process of influences that has constituted peoples and groups all over the world. These "distinct worlds" gave rise to relations, sometimes negotiable, sometimes conflictive, in which daily habits clashed and intertwined, enabling the creation of new sociabilities in Portuguese America in processes of cultural re-significations between indigenous and non-indigenous people.

In this scenario of Brazilian interethnic contacts the first centuries, day-to-day life proves to be full of challenges, since, given the need for survival in new territories, the settlers in Portuguese America needed to readapt their habits and customs through subsistence tactics and strategies. In discussing interethnic relations, Cardoso de Oliveira (1962) emphasizes the conflictive character of these contacts, especially in the amazon scenario. He goes so far as to define such an event as interethnic friction because the history of contacts sometimes has a conflictive and tense character. Two aspects are emphasized by the author as critical in defining interethnic friction, thus enabling this analysis to be contrasted with the approach in terms of acculturation. As the very term used by the author (friction) reveals, relations between ethnic groups cannot be thought

of exclusively as a consensual transmission of cultural elements, but rather as a primarily conflictive process that often involves conflicting interests and values.

It is reasonable to argue that Brazilian history is a history of interethnic contacts given its origins, reactions, motivations, and, mainly, its results. The events of contact that occurred in the formation process of the Brazilian people comprise a strong relationship with the historical and cultural moments that reveal certain periods of the country's political, economic, and social conjuncture.

From a historical and social perspective, in constituting a brief overview of the movements that took place in the formation process of the Amazon territory, we can latently perceive the changes and conflicts caused by the different moments in history and, especially, the tensions generated by the situations of contact, most of which were constituted as a close relationship of domination and imposition of power by European migrants over the indigenous peoples who already inhabited the region. There are studies developed in the linguistic and anthropological spheres that touch on more social and cultural aspects. These studies evidence the contact relations between peoples and ethnicities to understand the linguistic clues arising from these contact events.

Moreover, it is essential to consider language as a social and political instrument, sometimes used to establish power relations between subjects of different classes and/or creeds and for various purposes, such as domination strategies through the imposition of a language, as it has been extensively verified in Brazilian history.

It is possible to verify that the linguistic scenario in Brazil is marked by the migratory movement of European peoples and by the domination over Amerindian peoples through a communicative strategy aimed at withholding the power of the labor force. In this first moment, language is, therefore, the instrument adopted by the colonizers to establish power relations with the natives. From then on, a process of

catechization, domestication, but mainly enslavement of the Indias was established, a process that endured for over a century. To this end, it is important to elucidate that:

> Language contacts arise as a natural result of immigration or internal migration movements, which, as a general rule, imply a transposition from one sociocultural and political context to another and, consequently, a change in social and political status (Raso; Mello; Altenhofen, 2011: 290).

The presence of Indians in the contact situation is evidently marked and reconfigured after the arrival of the Europeans. Ribeiro (1995, p. 30) argues that the event that introduced the new protagonist - the European - in Amerindian lands inaugurated a major conflict at several levels. On the biotic plane, there occurred an epidemiological war stemming from the pests that the Europeans bore in their bodies and which were highly lethal to the natives. On the ecological plane, there was a dispute over their land, their forest, and their riches for the use of their own interests. On the socio-economic plane, there was a movement of enslavement of Indians and the massification of their labor force. From the ethnic-cultural standpoint, there was the transfiguration that occurred in language and customs.

This is how the first encounter that marks the situation of language contact in Brazil is set up, opening the way for emerging encounters after the introduction of the Europeans to Brazilic lands. The incorporation of indigenous values and customs allied to the European presence occurred because of the encounter of these distinct peoples, giving rise to the Brazilian individual. In this context, the African presence in the contact situation stands out, resulting in a new configuration at the ethnocultural and linguistic levels. Based on this assumption, it is worth noting that the situation of language contact between different groups in Brazilian society in the colonial period was marked by mutual influence. Both masters and servants experienced cultural and linguistic exchanges given the recurring interaction. Lucchesi (2009) argues that

> [...] in the large rural properties, one would find the domestic slaves, who, while certainly highly proficient in Portuguese, did not shy away from influencing the language of their masters - mainly through the action of the wet nurses who participated directly in the upbringing of their master's children -, imbuing their language with the marks of their imperfect acquisition (p. 47).

In this vein, it can be observed that the people of Curuçá have trodden several paths paved with struggle and conflict, both in terms of their district constitution and their linguistic culture. These conflicts were brought about by the various encounters that occurred throughout the historical process of Curuçá.

2.2 Curuçá: a territory for many peoples

Revisiting the indigenous cultural practices and their resignification in the interethnic processes involving European colonizers, we highlight the events of contact and relations between these distinct peoples and the results of these movements in the linguistic culture of Curuçá.

Through a survey of the literature about the history of the municipality, it was possible to find several published works (and others in progress) that describe the formation history of the municipality and highlight various aspects of a geographical, social, and cultural nature, including relevant aspects such as statistical data on the economic and demographic situation. Those works are especially revealing about the migration process in the region as a result of the Jesuit missions.

As previously mentioned, the historical formation of Curuçá occurred as a consequence of the occupation of the Amazon region and is related to the presence of the Jesuits during the Portuguese colonization. Canindé (2015) describes that the pre-colonial period in Curuçá's historiography comprises the occupation of São Luiz do Maranhão by the French and then the Portuguese and spans up to the installation order of the Jesuit mission in Curuçá. This period is marked by the hypothesis of a probable settlement of Europeans in the territory of Curuçá before the Jesuit enterprise. However, no supporting

records have been found to secure this assertion because, as Professor Canindé rightly states:

> The municipality of Curuçá still lacks archaeological information to compose and reconstitute the historical facts about the Pre-Colonial occupation of its territory, more specifically, the facts that preceded the establishment of the Jesuit company in Curuçá in 1653. The absence of documental and bibliographic sources that specifically refer to the pre-contact between colonizers and natives in the territory of Curuçá is an irrefutable fact. (Canindé, 2015: 43).

The occupation of the territory by European missionaries resulted from the Christianization of the native peoples. That was the main purpose of the Jesuit missions in the pre-colonial period. Some documents and studies published by Curuçá's historians lead to the hypothesis that the first inhabitants of the region, before the arrival of the European missionaries, were the indigenous peoples, the Andirá. Evidence of resistance by groups descending from this people can be found in a site about 4 km from the seat of the municipality, whose toponym bears the same name: Andirá Despite the empirical evidence, there are no official and documentary records that can prove this hypothesis.

> Although it is not possible to precise the beginning of settlement in the area that today is the territory of Curuçá with sharp documental precision, it is almost certain that before 1653 there was already a cluster of Indian villages in the region that today borders the territory of Curuçá, one of which was called by the native name Curuçá (Canindé, 2015: 108).

The Andirás have Tupi origin and designate the inhabitants of a village that was initially located on the banks of the Jauaperi River in the 19th century. These Indians migrated from Roraima to Manaus and to the State of Pará, where the municipality of Curuçá is located. According to Tibiriçá (1985), the word *andirá* is etymologically derived from another Tupi word meaning bat, from *andyrá*, the Tupi name for bat - it is the true Brazilic name for angelim - since a*ndirá* is also the name given to a tree native to tropical America and West Africa, whose fruit attracts some types of bats.

To understand the history of the foundation of the place, scholars assert that, as a result of the establishment of the Jesuits in the territory, a farm named Curuçá was founded as headquarters for the mission. Historians such as Cunha (1939) and Santos (2001) explain the toponym Curuçá from a rather generalist view according to which the word would be associated with the idea of a cross, the Christian cross. In an exclusive interview, Professor Canindé discusses the toponymic motivation for the word Curuçá:

> "Due to the context of the formation of the General Amazonian Language (GAL), the name Curuçá would be a corruption of two names: curuá, which would be a hole, in the sense of a deep river, a basin, which until today we call a "furo"[...] And, uçá, is our *ucides cordatus cordatus*, which is the crab uçá. Since the coast is rich in crab, that name seems more in the Brazilic language or the GAL, like crab hole, and, have nothing to do with the Christian relationship, that comes quite a long time later." (verbal information)[2].

It is worth noting that the toponym Curuçá has undergone some dynamic changes throughout the municipality's settlement history. Around the 1750s, Dom José I implemented an intervention led by the Marquis of Pombal and his brother, Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado. Driven by the thoughts influenced by the renaissance, humanism, and other intellectual movements that flourished during that period, the idea of reconstructing Lisbon still stemming from the effects of the 1755 tragedy reached Pará.

> [...] the representative of the Marquis of Pombal, Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado, his brother, sailed up the Amazon River in 1758 replacing the old Brazilic toponyms with "old Portuguese names" which evoked foreign cultures that were far from the cultural milieu experienced by the forest dwellers and mestizos, thus breaking the human/environment binomial that was so common in the Brazil of yesteryear (Dick, 1990: 93).

This event gave rise to the idea of changing the toponyms to names with Portuguese markings, such as from "Souza do Caeté" to "Bragança", and from "Maracanã" to "Cintra". In 1757, the Jesuits were expelled and Curuçá was renamed the

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[2] Interview granted by Canindé, Francisco. Interview I. [Mar. 2019]. Interviewer: Rízia Sâmela M. Ferreira. Curuçá- Pará, 2019. 1 .mp3 file (1h45min.).

toponym Vila Nova Del Rey. Only at the end of the 19th century, the toponym Curuçá was reestablished and has remained so until today. Dick (1990: 96) cites the case of Curuçá and other examples of toponymic displacement, not always spontaneous. She explains that landforms originally bearing Portuguese names received Brazilic ones in substitution: Vila Bela da Imperatriz, today Parintins; Luzea, currently Maués; Vila Nova d'El Rey, present-day Curuçá.

Therefore, it is possible to have a fleeting notion of the establishment of the Jesuits in the territory of Curuçá and to verify a remarkable similarity, considering that the Jesuit facilities were established in Grão-Pará only in 1653. The arrival of the European colonizers decisively affected the constitution of the territory of Curuçá, making it possible to understand, in the first instance, the cultural, political, economic, and social influences upon its people. It is certain that, after its foundation, the municipality went through several changes in its administrative formation, some of which are mentioned further on in this paper.

After several intricacies in the settlement history of Curuçá's territory - among them the occupation of São Luís do Maranhão that stands as a milestone in the occupation history of northern Brazil -, Curuçá begins to gain evidence following two events: the installation of the military fort in Belém, and the foundation of several other municipalities in the state in this period. About these events, Canindé (in an excerpt from Benedito Monteiro's work História do Pará, 2001) points out as follows:

> To defend the Amazon Region from the attacks of other European peoples, the Portuguese installed a series of fortifications at strategic points. The Macapá Fort originated the city of Macapá; the Presépio Fort originated the city of Belém; the Pauxis Fort originated the city of Óbidos, on the banks of the Amazon River (...). As for the nuclei of settlement and economic exploitation, the cities that are the seats of the state's municipalities provide objective insight into the results of the Portuguese exploration at the time of colonization. Out of the 143 municipalities in Pará, dozens were founded or installed due to the construction of military forts, missionary action, or even the

distribution of land by the colonial government (Monteiro, 2001 apud Canindé, 2015: 80).

In the century following the settlement period in Curuçá, the territory started to be subdivided into districts so that the people of the region could be arranged in different villages and communities. In this subdivision, it is possible to see that the contact events emerging in the process of the territory's constitution have led to important marks in the language and culture of the people of Curuçá.

In this vein, we are interested in showcasing some toponyms collected in our research to demonstrate that the toponymy Curuçá evinces those contacts by having characteristics that merge and border each other in terms of structure and form.

3 The toponymy of Curuçá as a reflection of interethnic contacts in Eastern Amazon

We can notice that interethnic contacts have influenced the toponymy of Curuçá. Hybrid toponyms and designations with marks of indigenous origin (among other characteristic items) are evidence of these interethnic contacts. According to the theoretical-methodological assumptions proposed by Dick (1990), toponyms can be classified as simple, compound, or hybrid based on their morphological structure. As for hybrid terms, the author defines that these are formed, in general, by a Portuguese language element + a formant of Tupi origin, or the inverse. In addition to these, there are also designatives classified as hybrid compounds that are formed by more than one element from more than one language.

The hybrid terms identified in the toponymic vocabulary of Curuçá are clear evidence of the events of interethnic contacts that occurred in the process of constitution of the municipality. For the sake of illustration, there are cases of formations with two lexies of Tupi origin combined with a Portuguese lexy, such as the toponyms "Acaputeua Grande" and "Acaputeuazinho". Further examples include Ananim, Mutucal,

Tucumateua, Boa vista do Iririteua, Nazaré do Mocajuba, and Santo Antônio do Tijoca, among many others that are not be covered here.

The following table presents a small demonstration of this hybridism:

Nº	TOPONYM	CLASSIFICATION MORPHOLOGICAL	LANGUAGES OF ORIGIN		
			HYBRIDISM IN CURUÇA TOPONYMS		
01	Acaputeuazinho	Simple hybrid	*Acapu* (Tupi)	*teua* (Tupi)	zinho (Portuguese)
02	Acaputeua Grande	Hybrid compound	*Acapu* (Tupi)	*teua* (Tupi)	Grande (Portuguese)
03	Ananim	Simple hybrid	*Anani* (Tupi)	im	(Portuguese)-
04	Boa Vista do Iririteua	Hybrid compound	Boa Vista (Portuguese)	*Iriri* (Tupi)	*teua* (Tupi)
05	Mutucal	Simple hybrid	*Mutuca* (Tupi)	*al* (Portuguese)	-
06	Nazaré do Mocajuba	Hybrid compound	Nazaré do (Portuguese)	*Mocajuba* (Tupi)	-
07	Santo Antônio do Tijoca	Hybrid compound	Santo Antônio do (Portuguese)	*Tijoca* (Tupi)	-
08	Tucumateua	Simple hybrid	Tucuma (Tupi)	*Teua (Tupi)*	-

As can be noted, hybrid toponyms are formed by lexies from languages of distinct origins, usually one from the Tupi language and another from the Portuguese language. In some toponyms, as in Acaputeuazinho, Acaputeua Grande and Boa Vista do Iririteua, more than one Tupi lexy can be found, while in the other names there is a formation (Portuguese lexy + Tupi), as in Nazaré do Mocajuba and Santo Antônio do Tijoca, or the reverse, as in Mutucal (Tupi + Portuguese). As for the formations of the designatives, we consulted vocabularies and dictionaries of Brazilian toponyms of Tupi origin, such as Tibiriçá (2009) and Silveira Bueno (2013).

In addition to those cases, following the taxonomic classification model suggested by Dick (1990), we find toponyms that name both physical-geographic and anthropocultural aspects of the municipality. The hagiotoponyms like Ilha Santa Rosa

and São João do Abade are examples of such cases. The existence of toponyms related to Roman hagiological saints is indicative of the strong representation of Curuçá's cultural and religious history, especially due to the Jesuit migration episode that shaped the origin and formation of the place, and also reveals the influence of Christianity in various areas of life and way of being in Curuçá until today.

The hagiotoponyms make direct reference to the Church-led movements during the founding of the municipality in the Jesuit period, as explained in the previous section of this study. The religious events that emerged during the founding of the municipality directly contributed to the sociolinguistic constitution of the region in such a way that it is possible to explain the recurrent presence of toponyms belonging to the class of hierotoponyms, such as the designation "Curuçá" itself.

3.1 The dynamics and toponymic motivation as a reflection of interethnic contacts in curuçá

As with other lexical items in the language, toponyms are also susceptible to change over time. Changing a toponym may concern modifications to the body of the word itself through the addition or loss of elements. Alternatively, a recurring change is the case of one toponymic item being replaced by another when naming a given place. Regarding the toponymy of Curuçá, a good example of the second situation is what happens with the toponym Curuçá itself, which pertains to the category of hierotoponyms, terms related to the sacred names of different beliefs, religious associations, and ephemeralities. As for its etymology, Curuçá - from the Tupi neologism *curussá*, cross; neologism introduced by the Jesuits means *cross*; among the Guarani, this Christian symbol is called curussu /curuzu (Tibiririçá, 1985, p.39).

Based on the analysis of the meaning of the toponym - curussá > curuçá = cross - we can identify the manner of articulation of the Indians in pronouncing the speech sounds of the word cross, thus becoming "curus". The origin of ussá > uçá is that it refers

to the caranguejo-uçá (uçá crab), which is abundant in the region. In summary, the vocabularies and dictionaries that contain the meaning of the toponym Curuçá always refer to the word cross and the way the Indians pronounced this name.

An important aspect in toponymic studies concerns the naming act, the explanation of the nature of its choice, what influenced and motivated this choice, and the context that led to it. As aforementioned, in dealing with toponymic motivation by describing the dual aspect of the motivation behind the choice of place names, Dick (1990) brings a straightforward concept about the toponym and its dual motivation.

> - first, in the intentionality that animates the name-giver, driven in his action by circumstances of subjective or objective order which lead him to choose, in a genuine selective process, a particular name for this or that geographical accident;
> - and, secondly, in the very semantic origin of the name, in the meaning it reveals, in a transparent or opaque way, and that can involve the most diverse origins (Dick, 1990: 18).

The reason that led to the choice of the toponym Curuçá stems from the social and linguistic factors that constitute it. Curuçá has undergone varied dynamics of change in its toponym throughout the historical process of the place's formation. The first name corresponds to the designation "Curuçá". It incorporates motivations that evidence the presence of the Europeans and the contact with the natives, the Indians, since the first inhabitants of the region were more specifically the "Andirá" Indians, according to native historians. After the arrival of the European in Brazilian lands, part of the indigenous toponymy was altered and replaced by names composed of words of Portuguese origin. In this context, Curuçá was renamed Vila Nova Del Rey for a long period, until the Jesuits were expelled from the region, and the toponym Curuçá was again adopted as the place's name, until the present day.

Curuçá is the first example of a toponym that resists the change imposed by the European presence, demonstrating the strength of its native language, as well as the resistance of the local inhabitants. Further on, it will be possible to identify other

examples of toponyms that resisted the dynamics that occurred during the process of formation and consolidation of the municipality and its territory. The diagram below illustrates the change dynamics of the toponym.

Curuçá > Vila Nova Del Rey > Curuçá

The process of incorporating a place name is subject to some movements and changes over time. For this reason, we have verified that some toponyms of Curuçá have suffered modification dynamics in their historical development because of the contact situations emerging from migratory movements that have occurred in Curuçá's historiography. These dynamics are evidence of the fact that the toponymy of the place reflects the interethnic contacts that occurred in the process of constitution of the people of Curuçá, as well as the power relations established at a given time.

Building on this linguistic background, we can illustrate the curious case of the dynamics of the toponym Murajá. According to accounts of the local inhabitants, Murajá was called Engenho (sugarcane mill) or Vila do Engenho (sugarcane mill village). It occurred because the first families in the region migrated from Pernambuco and settled on the banks of the river that runs through the town. It is common knowledge that the first sugar mill jobs came from Portuguese lands implemented in the state of Pernambuco to deal with sugar cane. In this way, it is possible to establish a relationship between the reports of the residents and Brazilian historiography about labor and the sugar economy, on the one hand, and the motivation for the choice of the first name that designated the place, on the other.

After the arrival of religious groups in the region, the construction of Christian temples began. From the beginning of the missionary work, the site was called "Santa Luzia". However, a governor issued a decree forbidding more than one location to have the same name. As there already existed, in the municipality of Vigia, a nearby town

named "Santa Luzia", the recurring toponym was substituted by Irajá. By consulting dictionaries, we have found the definition of Irajá, which is "place where there is honey". Nevertheless, a curious fact occurred in the assimilation of the toponym. The local residents claim that, for some unknown reason, the designation of the place changed from "Irajá" to "Murajá". Such a formation was not found in dictionaries or vocabularies of toponyms of Tupi origin. However, the lexy "Mura" + "Irajá" was identified, in which case a linguistic blend may have occurred to compose a single name. Mura means "village", and Irajá, "Place where there is honey". The dynamics of the toponym can be illustrated with the following diagram:

> Engenho > Santa Luzia > Irajá >
> Murajá

It is essential to remark that the interpretations given in this study regarding the meaning of the place names lead to the reflection that the study of language is paved by history, culture, politics, and society, but it also has its twists and turns, pointing to new directions, new insights, and new perspectives. Human beings apprehend a certain meaning for a certain name that is not always based on logic or does not always follow what is planned - what dictionaries and vocabularies determine -, as we can observe in the cases presented in the analyses.

To comprehend the dynamics that guide the ways of being of the people of Curuçá is also to understand the uses that they make of language and the way they see and represent the reality that surrounds them based on the naming practices. Such is the representation of the dynamics of a language that will never be foreseen and unveiled in its totality, only revealed, little by little, in each new use, in each new time.

Conclusion

According to widespread recognition, the Amazon is a space of great diversity regarding its physical/natural and cultural aspects. The pursuit to gain knowledge of the vastness and complexity of this region is still a great challenge. One of the keys to entering this universe is the knowledge of the languages that constitute, identify, and translate the region. Languages, especially verbal, are foundational elements that store important data about the entire Amazon. How can one approach this intricate web of diversity without paying attention to language, the mediating element par excellence? Paying attention to the names of the diverse elements that constitute the Amazon is therefore a first and urgent task for understanding that reality. In this sense, toponymic studies have much to contribute through their task of looking at a portion of the language that constitutes the region.

This brief study about Curuçá illustrates that paying attention to each name, to each account, brings to the surface important data about the history of the place, the dynamics of the society, the contacts between people, as well as about the power relations that took place at certain historical moments. The participatory contribution of the local residents and the importance given to their oral narratives grant access to valuable knowledge about their space and bring a distinctive feature to the proposed study, for it is in the experience of the people that the explanations for the naming process of a place are found, explanations that are often not in the official history and are completely opaque to the researcher.

Thus, this study sought to highlight the knowledge preserved in the memory of the people of Curuçá, of each toponym, revealed through the voice of the residents of each locality in Curuçá. Through the narratives of the residents, it was possible to get to know how the people of Curuçá perceive their environment, how they interpret their

history, and how they understand their ways of seeing the world, of living, and of naming their spaces.

The study of the toponymy of the region contributed to building knowledge of the history, memory, and linguistic and cultural identity of Curuçá. Therefore, we would like to underscore our contributions - through this paper - to the studies of toponymy in the region, which is still incipient in this respect.

Gradually, toponymy studies are progressing in Eastern Amazon and the expectation is that such studies will advance even further. May this work carried out in Curuçá be the awakening towards the studies of interethnic contacts and their reflexes in the toponymic set, that is, the words that name and give life and identity to our spaces.

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