

Contributions of the Linguistic Atlas of Brazil Project to the Methodology of Geolinguistic Research: the role of the inquirer

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Abstract:

The methodological procedures used in the Linguistic Atlas of Brazil Project (ALiB) depart from the procedures traditionally used in the collection of dialect data by expanding the types of questionnaires - phonetic-phonological, semantic-lexical and morphosyntactic - and by including questions relating to prosody, pragmatics and metalinguistic aspects, as well as themes for eliciting semi-directed speech, and a text for reading. Thus, the Project aims at providing a larger set of data, contemplating less studied aspects of the Brazilian linguistic reality, such as variation in prosody, pragmatics, register and linguistic attitude. In this sense, this project presents aspects related to the methodological procedures in the ALiB Project surveys. In the present article, the interviewer's role during the interviews, which are seen as unique experiences that far exceed the simple completion of the survey, will be highlighted, setting out the strategies used to achieve the desired data and to solve difficulties faced by interviewers in order to obtain certain responses.

Keywords:

Methodology. Interviews. Linguistic Atlas of Brazil Project.

Signum: Estudos da Linguagem, Londrina, v. 21, i. 1, p. 107-126, Apr. 2018

Received on: 06/28/2017

Accepted on: 12/21/2017

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INTRODUCTION

In the present article, surveys from the Linguistic Atlas of Brazil Project, henceforth ALiB Project, will be analyzed to reveal the strategies used to obtain the desired data. The discussion will provide future dialectologists suggestions for resolving impasses experienced by the interviewer when seeking to obtain certain answers during the application of the linguistic questionnaire.

The ALiB Project offers a broad interface with other branches of the sciences, which assures it a multi- and interdisciplinary character. Regarding the expected type of data collection, the data will reveal different forms of linguistic behavior correlated with the type of discourse. The linguistic posture that the speaker assumes, depending on the nature of his utterance, offers researchers in the fields of psychology and sociology substantial material of analysis for the study of human behavior. Questions that go unanswered and the constraints that are often clear in the informants' speech, as well as the refusals, metaphors, and circumlocutions used, are evidence of taboos, constructed in the course of history and motivated by differentiated impulses. These factors allow reflections in the field of cultural studies, in general.

Clearly, the above-mentioned associated aspects of the project hardly exhaust the interdisciplinary potential of the project. However, it is important to stress that the information that results from an atlas for linguistic studies lies specifically in its different fields - semantics, lexicology, syntax, morphology, phonetics / phonology, pragmatics, discourse.

The article will discuss the performance of the inquirer and her/his strategies for obtaining answers to the semantic-lexical questionnaire in the fields relating to the *human body, games and children's amusements, life cycles and clothing and accessories*.

THE LINGUISTIC ATLAS OF BRAZIL PROJECT: ORIGIN AND STATE OF THE ART

The interest in dialect studies in Brazil, evident among philologists and linguists of the first half of the twentieth century, caught the attention of the Brazilian Government,

leading it to express support for the elaboration of a Linguistic Atlas of Brazil, as expressed in the third paragraph of Decree No. 30.643 of 20 of March of 1952:

The Philology Commission will promote research throughout the vast field of Portuguese philology-phonology, morphological, syntactic, lexical, etymological, metrical, onomatological, bibliographic, historical, literary, text, source, authorial, influential, *its main purpose being the elaboration of the Linguistic Atlas of Brazil* (our translation; emphasis added).

Diverse reasons prevented this Brazilian linguists' wish to happen, despite the governmental determination. After some fifty years, the idea was resumed because of (i) the urgency of describing Brazilian Portuguese before data and facts central to clarifying aspects of the linguistic history of the country were lost (ii) and the role that linguistic geography continued to play, despite the implementation of sociolinguistic studies.

For the realization of these objectives, the ALiB Project was conceived, and its foundations were proposed in the colloquium *Paths and Perspectives for Geolinguistics in Brazil* (*Caminhos e Perspectivas para a Geolinguística no Brasil*). A representative number of Brazilian researchers participated and the colloquium benefitted additionally from the presence of Professor Michel Contini - PhD, of the Grenoble Center for Dialectology (*Centre de Dialectologie de Grenoble*), Director of the Linguistic Atlas of Romance Languages (*Atlas Linguistique Roman*) and member of the Executive Committee of the Atlas of European Languages (*Atlas Linguarum Europae*).

The ALiB Project is essentially an academic research activity because it seeks to document, describe and interpret the reality of Brazilian Portuguese. Precisely because of this character, it has an evident interface with different branches of organized knowledge, due to the fact that the history of a language is the history of the people who speak it.

This character of the ALiB Project has two obvious implications: on the one hand, it inspires and underpins its conception in the plurality of knowledge; on the other hand, it allows a wide spectrum of current sciences to benefit from the results it presents.

With regard to the first aspect, the design of the Project led to the use of different fields of knowledge in order to establish its bases. For example, during the data collection phase concerning the potential locations for the composition of the Network of Points, its definition required knowledge in the fields of History, Anthropology, Geography (physical, human, and political), and especially Demography. The project also relied on studies of culture, economics, social and political development and the religious aspects of each region. The selection of localities reflects not only the linguistic interest, but also the socio-historical profile of the areas to be mapped. While, on the one hand, locality selection is an important indicator for vision of the language, on the other hand, it encompasses a relevant bundle of sociohistorical cultural correlations.

Also in this regard, and in relation to the selection of informants to be documented, it was necessary to study the demographic development of Brazil and the constitution of

its society. Thus the sociological and anthropological aspects that characterize the composition of the Brazilian population were prime considerations, and additionally it was fundamental to have a knowledge of the social reality in which the interviewees are inserted. This led to the attempt to harmonize different social variables - such as age, sex, schooling - so that a linguistic sample representative of the country's reality can be obtained. The ALiB Project was thus born deeply correlated with other branches of scientific knowledge.

The ALiB Project comprises a group of 14 (fourteen) Brazilian institutions, articulated through an agreement signed between the Federal University of Bahia, the Federal University of Ceará, the University of Rio Grande do Norte Foundation, the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, the State University of Londrina, the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul, the Federal University of Paraíba, the Federal University of Maranhão, the State University of Ceará, the Federal Center of Technological Education of Paraíba, the Federal University of Pará, the Federal University of Ouro Preto, the Federal University of Piauí, the Federal University of Santa Catarina.

Currently, the coordination of the ALiB Project is the responsibility of a National Committee, composed of 13 members, structured as follows: Director-President - Suzana Alice Marcelino da Silva Cardoso (Federal University of Bahia), Executive Director - Jacyra Andrade Mota (Federal University of Bahia), Scientific Directors: Abdelhak Razky (Federal University of Pará); Aparecida Negri Isquerdo (Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul); Conceição Maria de Araújo (Federal University of Maranhão); Fabiane Cristina Altino (State University of Londrina); Felício Wessling Margotti (Federal University of Santa Catarina); Maria do Socorro Silva de Aragão (Federal University of Paraíba / Federal University of Ceará); Marilucia Barros de Oliveira (Federal University of Pará); Regiane Coelho Pereira Reis (Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul); Silvana Soares Costa Ribeiro (Federal University of Bahia); Valter Pereira Romano (Federal University of Lavras) and Vanderci de Andrade Aguilera (State University of Londrina).

As stated by Cardoso et al. (2013, p. 39), the decision on the type of informant that should provide the speech samples for the constitution of the ALiB Project corpus took into account the methodological decision to contemplate social dimensions - gender, generational and sociocultural, besides the geographic dimension. In this way, the ALiB Project departs from the traditional informant profile that Chambers and Trudgill identify as NORM (nonmobile, older, rural, male) - or HARAS (male, adult, rural; illiterate and sedentary), in the version suggested by Zágari (1998), adopting the contemporary methodology of Pluridimensional Geolinguistics, as presented below.

The number of informants at each survey point is four - except in state capitals, where eight informants were surveyed. They are equally distributed by both sexes in each locality, making a total of five hundred and fifty men and five hundred and fifty women. This facilitates an analysis of variation by gender.

In order to contemplate generational variation, the informants are from two age groups: one constituted by younger informants, 18 to 30 years old, and one constituted by older informants, 50-65 years old.

From the point of view of sociocultural variation, in the state capitals, informants from two levels of schooling are included: four with incomplete basic education - as in other localities - and four with a university level of education.

The 1,100 informants must be natives of the locality and children of people who are native to the same linguistic area. This is a standard in geolinguistic studies, - except in those where the opposition between static and dynamic geographic variation is considered, such as the *Geographic and Sociocultural Linguistic Atlas of Uruguay (Atlas Lingüístico Dialectal y Diastrático del Uruguay)*, as noted by Cardoso et al. (2013, p. 27), Another criterion for the informants selection is that they must not have moved away from the locality for very long and continuous periods, and these periods of absence cannot coincide with the first years of the individual's life (phase of language acquisition) nor with the years immediately preceding the one in which the survey is conducted .

Where other methodological aspects are concerned, it is important to consider information concerning the preparation of the questionnaire and its application in loco. The relationship between these two factors and the data will be dealt within this article.

The set of data that a linguistic atlas mirrors can reveal the coordinates followed in the settlement of the country, resolving doubts about entry routes or offering confirmation of waves of settlement that either became established in these locations or passed through them. It also can indicate the role of geographic features in the diffusion of linguistic habits - as can be seen, in the role of rivers - or in the isolation of phenomena that are detained behind mountains or embedded in valleys. Furthermore, it can provide specific information for specific studies, such as in medical field, showing names of diseases, diagnoses, and cures that are part of folk knowledge which emerge in questions in this semantic area, or in the field of geology, with characterization and denominations for types of terrain, or even in the designation of elements of the biosocial world, a vast field for psychoanalysts. The ALiB Project is also highly significant for the education field, for once the peculiarities of each area have been described and the local linguistic variety has been characterized, this will permit a better teaching-learning approach to the reality of each region, and a more effective vernacular teaching model.

The implementation of the ALiB Project in 1996 provided the opportunity to discuss the methodology of geolinguistic work and the elaboration of work tools that are appropriate to the needs of empirical data collection. The importance of these facts for the development of Geolinguistics in Brazil is paramount, and in this sense the ALiB Project can be seen as a milestone in a new phase in Brazilian Dialectology. Effectively, this would constitute a fourth phase, according to the three phases previously proposed by Cardoso and Ferreira (1994) (Cf. CARDOSO; MOTA, 2006, p. 19).

During this fourth phase, the enrichment of methodology and operational procedures has produced the area of geolinguistic research, thanks to advanced discussions of methodology at national and regional meetings and workshops, in lectures and mini-courses given by researchers who are part of the ALiB Project Team.

Prominent points of methodology achieved through this enrichment include:

- a) Owing to its extensive coverage of the different levels of language study, the ALiB Linguistic Questionnaire has served as the basis for the elaboration of specific questionnaires in various research projects, for postgraduate studies and for the development of regional linguistic atlases.
- b) The implementation of regional atlases, with the consequent growth of research groups in the Dialectology area, and an increase in the number of postgraduate studies on aspects of Brazilian Dialectology.

The immediately anticipated result of the ALiB Project is, of course, the production of the atlas itself, whose initial volumes, *Introduction* and *Linguistic Charts I*, were published in 2014 (see Cardoso et al., 2014a and 2014b), the content of which is described as follows.

Volume 1 – Introduction

Volume 1, with 212 pages, presents the trajectory of the ALiB Project and describes the methodological steps followed. The reproduction of the methodological instruments used and appendices complementing the information are included.

The methodological tools present:

- The linguistic questionnaires, presented in their initial version since in the course of the research some changes were implemented dictated by the field experience.
- The data annotation tabs of the locality and the informant.
- The response control framework, an instrument that allowed the research assistant, by marking the unanswered questions, to evaluate the performance of that survey according to the percentage of answers given. Thus, the inquirer can validate the survey, since the project had established a percentage limit above which the representative elements for that locality would not be found.

The Appendices include the Network of Survey Points, the list of ALiB researchers, the list of inquirers and auxiliaries and the list of Scientific Initiation scholarship students and Technical Support personnel supported by different official research funding programs¹.

Volume 2 – Linguistic Charts 1

Volume 2 (with 368 pages) presents a first set of linguistic charts that cover results related to state capitals, in the fields of phonetics, lexicon and morphosyntax, including in some cases, the geographic perspective, a focus on generational, gender and sociocultural parameters.

¹ The Scientific Initiation (literal translation of *Iniciação Científica*) scholarships are provided by State and National funding bodies and awarded to undergraduate students to provide them supervised research training prior to entering postgraduate programs.

As an introduction, there are 10 charts providing general data on the political and geographical aspects of the country, each detailing the geographical regions in which the survey network points are identified. Following these, the actual linguistic charts are presented:

- phonetic charts addressing six facts described and analyzed in a set of 46 charts;
- semantic-lexical charts, mainly onomasiological, but including two sema-siological charts, in a total of 106 charts that contemplate eight of the 14 semantic areas in the Semantic-Lexical Questionnaire and focus the data in a general perspective - general geographic charts - and with indication by region - regional geographic charts;
- morphosyntactic charts, seven thereof, with data on number and gender inflection, the distribution of treatment pronouns and the use of the verb *ter* 'to have' with an existential value.

In order to elucidate aspects considered relevant, most charts are accompanied by notes on comments by the informants and by the inquirer or the person responsible for compiling the chart.

THE APPLICATION OF GEOLINGUISTIC RESEARCH METHODOLOGY IN THE LINGUISTIC ATLAS OF BRAZIL PROJECT

The methodological procedures used in the Linguistic Atlas of Brazil Project (ALiB) depart from the procedures traditionally used in the collection of dialect data by expanding the types of questionnaires - phonetic-phonological, semantic-lexical and morphosyntactic - and by including questions relating to prosody, pragmatics and metalinguistic aspects, as well as themes for eliciting semi-directed speech, and a text for reading. Thus, the Project aims at providing a major set of data for analysis, contemplating less studied aspects of the Brazilian reality, such as prosodic, pragmatic, register and linguistic attitude variation.

The ALiB Project's linguistic questionnaire was prepared by the members of the National Committee, based on the linguistic questionnaires used in the state and regional atlases published or underway in Brazil and on the ALiR - Linguistic Atlas of Romance Languages (*Atlas Linguistique Roman*) and the Linguistic-Ethnographic Atlas of Portugal and Galicia (*Atlas Lingüístico-Etnográfico de Portugal e da Galiza*). Based on the committee's assessment and the experience of individual researchers, experimental versions of the questionnaire were developed. After applying the questionnaire for testing, refinement and adaptation to the Brazilian reality, the definitive questionnaire was produced and published in 2001. Subsequently, the ALiB questionnaire was applied consistently in the constitution of the corpus throughout the country.

The Linguistic Questionnaire of the ALiB Project comprises seven different parts, organized as follows:

- (1) QFF (*Questionário fonético-fonológico*) - Phonetic-phonological questionnaire (159 questions, and an additional 11 questions concerning prosody);
- (2) QSL (*Questionário semântico lexical*) - Semantic-lexical questionnaire (202 questions);
- (3) QMS (*Questionário morfossintático*) - Morphosyntactic questionnaire (49 questions);
- (4) QP (*Questões de pragmática*) - Pragmatics questions (04 questions);
- (5) TDS (*Temas para discurso semi-dirigido*) - Topics for semi-directed speech (04 subjects - personal reporting, comment, description and non-personal reporting);
- (6) PM (*Perguntas metalinguísticas*) - Metalinguistic questions (06 questions)
- (7) LE (*Texto para leitura*) - Reading text (“Parable of the seven strands of rattan” (*Parábola dos sete vimes*)).

In the Questionnaires, all questions are accompanied by an explanation of how they should be formulated, thus avoiding possible distortions in the obtained answer(s), as a result of the way in which the response was provided by the informant. The care required in the manner of application of the Questionnaire, and the maintenance of uniformity in obtaining the data, at a national level, is further reinforced in other ways. Thus, in addition to the initial formulation of a question, other complementary forms of obtaining responses are indicated, such as gestures, mimic, use of drawings or actual items (miniatures of objects or true examples of some objects). There are also suggestions concerning the possibility of reformulating questions (if necessary) and reformulating items in order to obtain a context item (example: *FAZENDA* ‘farm’ - QFF - 53) or a detailed description of the form in use in the locality (example: *AMARELINHA* ‘hopscotch’- QSL 167).

The questionnaire is applied at all the constituent sites of the ALiB Survey Points Network. The resulting interviews have an average duration of three hours and are fully recorded for later orthographic and phonetic transcription.

The following paragraphs present a brief commentary on the section of the ALiB Questionnaire that includes the Semantic-Lexical Questionnaire (QSL - *Questionário semântico lexical*), its specific characteristics, main objectives and form of application, given that the examples discussed in the current article were extracted from QSL responses.

The QSL comprises 202 questions aimed not at eliciting a specific word, but rather eliciting lexical variation. These questions are of an onomasiological nature and they are also useful for studies of sociocultural, generational and gender variation. This is because when informants are prompted to present “other denominations” for the semantic-lexical item in question, comments such as the following are often recorded: “the older ones spoke like this,” “I heard my grandmother say this,” “I didn’t say it like that, no,” “ignorant people talk like that,” or “I have heard it.” The intention is to document linguistic forms employed in the locality, the forms of common and general use. The QSL is organized into 14 semantic

areas² presented in Table 1:

Table 1: Semantic areas in the Semantic-Lexical Questionnaire (QSL)

SEMANTIC AREAS		N.º OF QUESTIONS
1	Landforms	06
2	Atmospheric phenomena	15
3	Heavenly bodies and time	17
4	Agropastoral activities	25
5	Fauna	25
6	The human body	32
7	Life cycles	15
8	Social interaction and social behaviour	11
9	Religion and beliefs	08
10	Games and amusements for children	13
11	Housing	08
12	Food and cooking	12
13	Clothing and accessories	06
14	Urban life	09
TOTAL		202

Source: The authors.

Data collection is one of the most important stages of geolinguistic research, because, through a well-articulated interview, researchers can investigate aspects that reveal the reality of Portuguese spoken in Brazil.

During the stage in which data is extracted and collected from the survey interviews, when researchers listen to many surveys several times, relevant facts stand out, such as the strategies used to achieve the desired data and the difficulties faced by the interviewer to obtain certain answers at the time of the application of the linguistic questionnaire.

Regarding the mechanisms used to obtain the desired data, one notable aspect in the ALiB Project surveys is the conduct of the inquirer, showing interest in the informant and making the inquiry resemble an informal conversation. To achieve this, there must be a balance between the rhythm of the speech of the informant and that of the interviewer, the appropriate distance of the microphone and the appropriate tone of voice of the inquirer.

² It should be noted that when referring to the Lexical Semantic Questionnaire of the ALiB Project, the term *semantic area* used is understood broadly as a semantic field or lexical field.

On this issue, Labov (1972, p. 113) stresses the caution that must be taken to avoid what he terms “the observer’s paradox”, being careful with the vocabulary used, the posture and attitude of the inquirer in relation to the informant, and finally, all the situations that make up the interview.

In the ALiB questionnaires, the problems related to the observer’s paradox were managed by introducing topics for the informant to freely talk about, for example, “a remarkable event in his life”. Such a topic made it possible to record more spontaneous speech moments, sometimes with considerable emotion.

As Mota (2006, p. 253) notes, certain requirements must be met in order to a linguistic inquiry take place in a satisfactory manner. First, there is a need for the interviewer to be completely familiar with the working tools, especially the questionnaires, and the interviewer must have the ability to establish a more informal conversation with the informant. To facilitate this, it is important that the informant have a cooperative attitude and time available. Finally, the interview must be conducted in an environment free of external noise that could compromise the quality of the recording, and the recording device used must be in excellent condition.

Additionally, bearing in mind that each interview represents a significant opportunity for dialogue between informant and interviewer, the inquirer must value human relations.

Concerning this aspect, Lindley Cintra (1983, p. 9-10) observes:

In the hard and painful time in which we live, when, in the face of such a pressing need for action, I even call into question the right to that quiet inquiry into words, which is in principle the life of the philologist, and I often think of my dialectological experience and encounter in it motives to proceed - and to encourage others to proceed. I remember landscapes and, framed in them, men and women. As diverse as the scenarios in which they stood, they told me stories, several stories as well. After two or three days, we sometimes felt like true friends, almost brothers. I had been unable to give them but a little attention, sympathy. They had given me a magnificent lesson, decisive for my way of feeling and thinking from that moment on. Behind the dialects I had come to study, lay a humble but dignified humanity, living intensely the simple feelings, struggling courageously for survival, with which dialectology had brought me into contact ... Through the words that he uses, through the conversations which these words suggest and provoke, the man we have in front of us will gradually unfold.

After nearly 4 decades, Cintra’s observations remain pertinent reaffirming that Dialectology is a science in which it is recommended that the researcher establish an empathetic relationship with the informant and have the sensitivity to be able to abstract aspects of their everyday reality. An example of this is evident in the following extract (Example 01) regarding question 95 of the Semantic-Lexical Questionnaire, of the human body field, which aims at determining the denominations for inflammation that occurs in the eyes and causes them to turn red and glued together when a person awakes:

Example 01

INT.³- Há uma inflamação seu M. que dá no olho e faz com que ele fique vermelho e amanheça grudado...

INF.⁴- Ah tem o... de primeiro tinha muito eu já teve isso, é *dor d'olho*.

INT.- Isso!

INF.- O *dor d'olho* e tem e aí tem... tem a *conjuntivite* também né como se chama agora? Eu também já teve esse *conjuntivite*... esse... esse *dor d'olho* é terrível, eu tive muito isso.

INT.- *Dor d'olho* né?

INF.- Ah dói demais e o olho fica ardendo e fica vermelho parece que vai sair até sangue.

INT.- É.

INF.- Eu curava muito, nesse tempo... no tempo de criança não tinha nem... remédio podia ser que tinha remédio mas não podia comprar que era muito pobre, né?

INT.- É.

INF.- Aí minha mãe usava de tirar folha de... fedegoso.

INT.- Ah!

INF.- Pra tirar o sumo, batia ele depois com... botava um pouco de água numa vasilha, batia bem mesmo, socava bem ele, depois torcia num pano pra tirar o suco da folha do... do fedegoso pra escaldar o olho.

INT.- Ah.

INF.- E com isso aí melhorava.

INT.- Olha só que interessante né?

INF.- E... ou então também botava limão, aquele limãozinho... limão é... limão caipira nosso, não sei se a senhora conhece.

INT.- Conheço.

INF.- Limão caipira daquele pequenininho assim, daquele bem verdinho, corta ele em cruz, aí fazia assim um tipo simpatia, né?

INT.- Ahã.

INF.- Aí um lado do gomo, que fica quatro gomo partido em cruz, fica quatro gomo né? Quatro pedaço, aí um pedaço joga pro lado do sol poente, do lado que o sol entra né?

INT.- Huhum.

INF.- E outros três, as outras três partes põe dentro d'uma água bem limpa, fervida, né? Ferve ela, se é com água assim bruta como era no caso nosso lá lá num

³ Interviewer.

⁴ Informant.

tinha filtro né? Era água de poço, de cacimba, essas coisa né? Aí, então, fervia aquela água deixava esfriar pra pôr o limão na água pra escaldar o olho, também é bom.

INT.- É, bom também.

INF.- É, mas o limão bem verdinho, né? Bem verde.

INT.- Certo.

(Cuiabá-MT, Male informant, Age group 2, Basic Education)

Example 01 also demonstrates how the sciences are not confined to rigid pathways and allow dialogue with other areas of knowledge. The discourse of this informant, when describing a home remedy for the treatment of conjunctivitis, exemplifies the interfaces of Dialectology with other branches of knowledge, as Cardoso (2006, p. 98) pointed out: “scientific knowledge is, in fact, a huge web, woven with various threads, in which one or another of these ‘threads’ stands out, that can be identified (...)”.

Examples 02 and 03, highlight question 158 of the Semantic-Lexical Questionnaire, in the field of games and children’s amusements, which aims to obtain the denominations for the toy made of paper-covered sticks that flies in the wind at the end of a long string.

In example 02, two lexemes, *papagaio* ‘parrot’ and *pipa* ‘kite’, are provided by the informant, and generational variation is evident: *papagaio* is the lexeme used by the elders and *pipa* is used by younger people.

Example 02

INT.- Como se chama o brinquedo feito de varetas cobertas de papel que se empina no vento por meio de uma linha?

INF.- É o *papagaio*. Nós falamos aqui *papagaio*, *pipa*.

INT.- Qual que é o nome mais comum?

INF.- Todos, todo, aqui, aqui em Unai eis (eles) fala muito *papagaio* e *pipa*.

INT.- E são iguais? Papagaio e pipa é a mesma coisa?

INF.- É o mesmo caso, mesma coisa. Mais o certo memo é *pipa*, fala mais *pipa*. O povo antigo mais que fala *papagaio*, né, o povo mais velho. Agora, os mais novos não, agora, dessa juventude que vai vindo eles já fala é *pipa*, né?

INT.- É, mas isso não quer dizer que papagaio esteja errado, né?

INF.- Não, eles fala... o povo antigo falava é *papagaio*.

(Unai-MG, Male Informant, Age group 2, Basic Education)

Also in example 02, the action of the inquirer is notable, demonstrating knowledge of the questionnaire and attention to the formulation of the questions in order to find out if there would be a difference between *papagaio* and *pipa* for the informant. The insistence of the inquirer also stands out in example 03 below:

Example 03

INT.- Como se chama o brinquedo feito de varetas cobertas de papel que se empina no vento por meio de uma linha?

INF.- *Pipa.*

INT.- Tem outro nome?

INF.- *Papagaio.*

INT.- Qual que é o mais comum?

INF.- *Pipa.*

INT.- E quem que fala papagaio?

INF.- É esses menino mais novo, meu filho mermo, por exemplo, eles fala.[...].

INT.- É igual? A pipa e o papagaio são iguais?

INF.- Não. *Papagai...* não, tem o *papagai*, a pipa e o ra... é *ratinha*, né. *Ratinha* geralmente é só de papel. A *pipa* é cum... É, cum vareta. E cum a *rabiola* ainda. A *ratinha* já num tem, só o papel e a linha.

(Unai-MG, Male Informant, Age group 2, Basic Education)

In example 03, the inquirer gives a lesson in patience and insistence through his questions that lead to the interview: *Tem outro nome?* ‘Is there another name?’, *Qual que é o mais comum?* ‘Which is the most common?’, *E quem que fala papagaio?* ‘And who says parrot?’ and *É igual? A pipa e o papagaio são iguais?* ‘Are they equal? Are kite and parrot the same?’. These sequences of questions were successful since the young informant from Unai was quite prompted to give the answers, demonstrating, in her testimony, that for the use of *pipa* x *papagaio*, there is variation by age group.

Also concerning the semantic field of games and children’s amusements, examples 04 and 05 related to question 167 of the Semantic-Lexical Questionnaire are notable. The question aims at eliciting denominations for a particular game which does not require any financial resources and is known in rural and urban areas. The purpose of the game is to hop through a diagram drawn on the ground, made up of numbered squares, after throwing of any object (pebbles, shards of tile, banana peels) into one of the squares. The person who first reaches the top (usually called *céu* ‘sky’) of the diagram is the winner.

There are many designs for the diagram, as well as many rules for playing the game. The questionnaire asks for the names used to describe the game activity and also a detailed description of the play: characteristics of the diagram, rules of execution, different names for the game when it is associated with different diagrams, for example.

Example 04

INT.- Como se chama a brincadeira em que as crianças riscam uma figura no chão, formada por quadrados numerados, jogam uma pedrinha (*mímica*) e vão pulando com uma perna só?

INF.- *Amarelinha.*

- INT.- Mas, a senhora conhece como amarelinha mesmo?
 INF.- A gente chamava era *macaco*.
 INT.- Pular...?
 INF.- *Pular macaco*.
 INT.- Então o desenho tem o jeito do...
 INF.- É... *pular macaco*, a gente chamava *pular macaco*, agora chama *amarelinha*.
 (Pedro Afonso-TO, Female Informant, Age Group 1, Basic Education)

Example 05 also shows an interesting case in which the inquirer manages to obtain information that shows that the game is practiced by girls, a fact that was verified in the speech of a male informant.

Example 05

- INT.- Como se chama a brincadeira em que as crianças riscam uma figura no chão, formada por quadrados numerados, jogam um pedrinha (*mímica*) e vão pulando com uma perna só?
 INF.- Ah, eu sei, aí é... como é que chama, aqui brinca muito disso, mas isso é só pra menina mulher, homem aqui não brinca com isso não... é... *amarelinha* parece, não é isso?
 INT.- É, é isso.
 INF.- É, minhas irmãs brincavam disso.
 INT.- É...é disso mesmo. Menino não?
 INF.- Não, homem aqui não.
 INT.- É, lá tanto faz.
 INF.- No meu tempo não. No meu tempo era custoso porque é o tempo que homem tinha que brincar brinquedo de homem, se não ele virava frozinha. (risos). E no meu tempo mesmo a gente brincava muito pouco, porque mais tinha que trabalhar mesmo pra ajudar o véio (velho).
 (Goiás-GO, Male Informant, Age group 2, Basic Education)

This example demonstrates that the interviewer has created an informal environment during the interview, participating and supplying contextual information, as the statements “É, é isso” ‘yes, that is it’, *É... é disso mesmo. Menino não?* ‘Yes ... that’s it. Not boys?’ and *É, lá tanto faz* ‘Yes, whatever’ and thus establishing a more spontaneous connection between interviewee and interviewer.

Examples 06 and 07, below, refer to question 121 of the Semantic-Lexical Questionnaire, which is part of the field of life cycles, aimed at eliciting the denominations for menstruation. In the examples, it can be seen that other denominations, in addition to *menstruação* ‘menstruation’, only arise after a question from the inquirer in order to overcome

the difficulties related to the linguistic taboo⁵: *Tem um mais comum? Pode falar* ‘Do you have a more common term? You can say it’.

Example 06

INT.- As mulheres perdem sangue todos os meses. Como é que chama isso?

INF.- É... *menstruação*, né?

INT.- Tem um mais comum? Pode falar.

INF.- Não, mas, o nome de antigamente é muito feio.

INT.- Fala!

INF.- *Regras*.

INT.- O que mais?

INF.- *Menstruada*...

(Belo Horizonte-MG, Male Informant, Age group 2, Basic Education)

Example 07

INT.- As mulheres perdem sangue todos os meses, como chama isso?

INF.- *Menstruação*.

INT.- Agora eu quero os nomes populares...

INF.- Ah, é...?

INT.- “Não vou pra piscina hoje porque eu tô...”

INF.- Tô de *bandeira vermelha*

INT.- Isso. O que mais?

INF.- Tô de *sinal vermelho*, tô de *regras*, as mais antigas chamam *regras*.

INT.- É.

INF.- *Tô de bode*.

INT.- Isso. Tua geração.

INF.- Ai que nome feio eu acho horrível.

INT.- (risos)

INF.- *Tô de bode*.

INT.- E da tua geração?

INF.- Da minha geração é... *tô menstruada*, *tô ... tô naqueles dias*, *tô de bandeira vermelha*, *tô de sinal vermelho*.

INT.- Certo.

INF.- Tem, tem, tem outros nomezinhos que hoje as meninas usam mais...

INT.- Ah, é?

INF.- Mas que eu não me lembro agora.

⁵ On linguistic taboos in data of the ALiB Project, and especially for the euphemistic forms (tá de boi, tá de chicho, tá de bode, dentre outras), consult Benke (2012).

- INT.- Se você lembrar, depois você me fala.
 INF.- Mas esses nomes assim. A maioria do povo mesmo assim popular, os mais antigos é: *tô de bode*.
 INT.- Tô de bode.
 INF.- Né?
 INT.- E ponto final.
 INF.- Eu acho horrível.
 INT.- É?
 INF.- Eu não gosto muito não.
 INT.- Você não usa?
 INF.- Não eu não, mas que eu ouço, ouço, né?
 (Boa Vista –RR, Female Informant, Age group 1, Higher Education)

In examples 06 and 07, after the successful strategies applied by the inquirer, the informants, cite older items; presenting the uses of *menstruação* ‘menstruation’, *tô menstruada* ‘I’ve got my period’, *tô naqueles dia* ‘I’m in those days’, *tô de bandeira vermelha* ‘I’ve got the red flag out’, *tô de sinal vermelho* ‘I’ve got the red light on’, as current uses, and *regras* ‘period’ and *tô de bode* ‘I’ve got the billy-goat’ as the older variants. Thus, informants remember and express their memories through the stimulus of the inquirer who is successful in eliciting the information with patience and by insistence in the search for answers. The testimonies point to the informants’ understanding that life has changed, and along with it also the lexical items to refer to the fact that women menstruate.

Furthermore, in relation to question 121 of the Semantic-Lexical Questionnaire, example 08 also illustrates a case in which the researcher established an empathetic relation with the informant, having the sensitivity of being able to, in a relaxed way, elicit data which, for many, still constitute linguistic taboos.

Example 08

- INT.- As mulheres perdem sangue todos os meses, né. Como é que se chama isso?
 INF.- Aqui pra nós é tudo *menstruação* né?
 INT.- Isso. Tem algum nome mais folclórico, mais popular... Que a gente falava quando era mais mocinha... Hoje eu tô do quê? O que que veio pra mim...?
 INF.- (risos) Aí não..., antigamente a gente, quando *tava menstruada* lá muito, nos anos de guaraná de rolha, né (risos)
 INT.- Guaraná de rolha é bom!
 INF.-A gente falava assim: “Ixe, eu *tô de chico*” (risos) que eu achava o máximo, né!
 INT.- É isso mesmo. No meu tempo também.
 INF.- Aí que horror né. Agora cê fala *menstruação* é mais assim delicado né! (risos).
 (São Paulo-SP, Female Informant, Age group 2, Basic Education)

Example 08 shows that the colloquial style of the language adopted by the interviewer creates an informal setting in the interview, establishing a relationship of trust between interviewee and interviewer. The example reveals the generational lexical variants of *tá de chico* and *regra* indicated in the informant's discourse as typical variants of older speakers. This data is obtained, also, due to the performance of the inquirer who finished by saying *É isso mesmo. No meu tempo também* 'That's right. In my time too' showing that between the interlocutors there is indeed something to share.

In the semantic field of clothing and accessories, the successful exercise of patience and insistence on the part of the inquirer is evident, especially in cases where a male informant is queried in relation to terms that refer more to the universe of women. Examples 09 and 10 show this in relation to question 191 which seeks the denominations for the product that women apply to color their cheeks.

Example 09

INT.- Como se chama o produto que as mulheres passam nas bochechas para ficarem mais rosadas?

INF.- *Pó de arroz, ruge*, aí são nomes qu'eu soube.

INT.- O pó de arroz é da mesma cor do ruge?

INF.- Não sei.

INT.- Já não é sua praia, né?

INF.- Pra mim é a mesma coisa.

(Salvador-BA, Male Informant, Age group 2, Higher Education)

Example 10

INT.- Como chama o produto que as mulheres passam nas bochechas para ficarem mais rosadas?

INF.- Rapaz, hoje, com tanto produto aí que elas têm, que a gente até...

INT.- Só aquilo assim que dá uma corzinha?

INF.- É tem aquela depilação que elas faz lá, lapiseira num sei o quê, sei lá, é *ruge*? Antigamente chamava de *ruge*, né isso?

INT.- Pra ficar rosado.

INF.- Rosado.

(Cabrobó-PE, Male Informant, Age group 2, Basic Education)

Examples 09 e 10 demonstrate the ability of the interviewer to establish a dialogue with the informant as close as possible to an informal conversation, Recognizing that it isn't possible to insist, the interviewer's speech in example 09 indicates *Já não é sua praia, né?* 'It is not your cup of tea, is it?' yet also in the actual insistence on searching for the data, as the researcher in example 10 shows: *Só aquilo assim que dá uma corzinha?* 'It's just that that gives the color?'

Also in the semantic field of clothing and accessories, successful elicitation is dependent on the skills of the interviewer to make the conversation more informal, very close to a dialogue. This is seen in Example 11, in connection with question 193 of the Semantic-Lexical Questionnaire, which aims to collect the terms for the object of metal or plastic that holds hair in place from one side of the head to the other.

Example 11

INT.- E o objeto de metal ou plástico que pega um lado a outro da cabeça?

INF.- *Tiara.*

INT.- Que serve pra prender o cabelo?

INF.- É *tiara*.

INT.- *Tiara.*

INF.- No meu tempo, era *travessa* que se usava e agora é *tiara*.

INT.- Hum hum, mudou muito a fala aqui?

INF.- Pra mim sim, tem as pessoas da minha idade que têm um vocabulário que era daquele tempo, né?

INT.- Hum hum.

INF.- E agora é diferente, e esse é um, *tiara* e *travessa*.

INT.- E por que será que mudou?

INF.- Olha, eu acho que a televisão...

INT.- A televisão?

INF.- Porque antes a gente escutava muito o rádio e o rádio era muito aqui da cidade e aí quando veio a televisão vieram assim, veio o vocabulário do Rio de Janeiro, de São Paulo, que começou, não todo né? Que tem muita coisa de lá que a gente não usa que é completamente diferente, né? Mas eu acho que muita coisa veio de lá e acho que foi a televisão, que mais, isso que padronizou, né?

INT.- Hum hum

INF.- Como o Brasil é tão grande isso se passa.

(Porto Alegre-RS, Female Informant, Age group 2, Higher Education)

In the above example, the informant situates the lexemes by recognizing the existence of a lexical selection according to the age group, demonstrating a comparison that involves past and present, expressed by the selection of the lexical items *travessa* and *tiara* for “tiara”. This opposition and this awareness occur through the conduct of the inquirer who supplies timely questions, such as *que serve pra prender o cabelo?* ‘Used for holding the hair?’, *mudou muito a fala aqui?* ‘Has the speech changed here a lot?’ and *E por que será que mudou?* ‘And I wonder why did it change?’, that stimulate the informant’s speech spontaneously.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Linguistic Atlas of Brazil Project has an important role in the advancement and dissemination of knowledge, and reflections about the Portuguese language, making a leap from theory to practice so that students of the language may find ways to enrich research and the teaching and learning of the mother tongue, in the face of linguistic variation. In this sense, the ALiB Project contributes to the understanding that language must always be an instrument of socialization of gains, histories, sources of knowledge and, above all, the humanization of every speaker in his daily existence and never a form of discrimination or stigmatization.

The interview process, which is the *corpus* of the ALiB Project, includes social, ideological and cultural interactions, among others, that provide a multiplicity of contact between different societies and ways of life. Without doubt, an in-depth knowledge of the linguistic questionnaire and its method of application ensures confidence in the conduct of the interview. The article has presented and discussed examples from specific fields of the semantic-lexical questionnaire – human body, children’s games and amusements, life cycles, and clothing and accessories, - demonstrating how the role and the performance of the interviewer during the interviews are crucial to elicitation, and are always unique in order to go beyond the mere completion of the linguistic inquiry.

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