

# *Does the Chicken Put or Lay Eggs? Responses and non-responses of informants of the Linguistic Atlas of the State of Alagoas - ALEAL*

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## **Abstract:**

This paper aims at describing and analyzing abstentions and invalid responses to some questions of the Phonetic-Phonological Questionnaire (QFF) that were registered by the informants of the Linguistic Atlas of the State of Alagoas - ALEAL. Relatively common in field studies, information with these characteristics are still poorly explored in scientific studies. This work is mainly based on the results referring to QFF 26 – BOTAR (to lay), in which we asked the informant “What will the chicken do when it clucks and goes to the nest?”. The verb *pôr* (to put), predominant among the speakers of the ALEAL, is understood as invalid responses, because it doesn’t meet the purposes of the linguistic phenomenon that would be analyzed, that is, the opening of the pretonic medial vowel. Only two abstentions were registered. When examining the reasons that lead the speakers to realize the mentioned occurrences, it is intended to contribute to a correct interpretation of the information obtained, in addition to rethinking the current methodologies, always with a view to the production of a cartography of excellence, that is, faithfully aligned to the different variables worked by the researcher, and, of course, to the collected registers.

## **Keywords:**

Linguistic Atlas of the State of Alagoas. Non-responses. Diatopic and diastratic variables.

*Signum: Estudos da Linguagem, Londrina, v. 21, i. 1, p. 89-106, Apr. 2018*

*Received on: 08/22/2017*

*Accepted on: 01/20/2018*

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the researchers' difficulties when working with linguistic atlases is the analysis of data related to certain questions from the Phonetic-Phonological Questionnaire (QFF), which repeatedly produces inadequate responses, lacunas and omissions. These frequent situations, usually present in national, regional or local atlases, raise questions about the genre: how to map this information? How to interpret the data collected?

Studies published by researchers who are members of the National Committee of Linguistic Atlas of Brazil - ALiB - pointed out the problem long time before the atlas was published in 2014. Aguilera and Yida (2008) addressed the topic specifically when they studied the absence of valid responses provided by ALiB informants, which were obtained in each of the twenty-five capitals examined.

Shortly before the publication of this article, other authors, based on the material collected for the ALiB in the Brazilian capitals, were also interested in the problem, although with different proposals. Aguilera (2007) herself researched the subject by reflecting on the beliefs and linguistic attitudes of the informants in responses to some metalinguistic questions. Cardoso (2007) focused on the existential meaning, in Brazilian Portuguese, of verbs “ter, haver e existir” (to have, there to be and to exist). Mota (2007) based on the stylistic value of stigmatized variants, and Isquierdo (2007), based on data on agropastoral questions that make up the ALiB Semantic-Lexical Questionnaire, worked with the urban vs. rural relationship.

In addition to these studies, some students guided by the researchers cited discussed the subject under different aspects, always considering the ALiB Project *corpora*: Jesus (2006, 2007), Yida (2006), Pastorelli (2007), and Romano (2007).

The Linguistic Atlas of the State of Alagoas - ALEAL - result of the doctoral thesis developed by Doiron<sup>1</sup>, in 2017, under the orientation of the professors Vanderci de Andrade Aguilera, from the State University of Londrina - UEL - and Elisabetta Carpitelli, from the Université Grenoble Alpes - UGA - also found the problem of invalid responses, or lack of responses to certain QFF questions. The author of ALEAL also verified that the

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<sup>1</sup> About Doiron's doctoral thesis, see in Doiron (2016).

fact occurs quite frequently, also in countryside localities, at least with regard to the State of Alagoas.

## **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ALEAL**

As already mentioned, the ALEAL is a doctoral thesis that aimed at documenting and describing the linguistic reality of speakers of the urban area of the State of Alagoas, considering the diatopic differences in their phonic, lexico-semantic and morphosyntactic aspects. The purpose of this was to verify if this unit of the Federation is within the Northeastern subfalar<sup>2</sup>, as proposed by Nascentes (1953) in his classic dialect division of Brazil.

About the network points (Annex 1), the ALEAL followed the guidelines of Nascentes (1958), with 21 localities surveyed. Except for the cities of Junqueiro, where it was not possible to find informants with the established profile, and from Canapi and Quebrangulo, that were not included on the author's list, the network remains faithful to the original. ALEAL interviewed two informants per locality, a man and a woman in the age group from 30 to 50 years old, with complete or incomplete schooling level. With the objective to verify the influence of the variable age group, seven informants, two men and two women aged between 30 and 50 years old, and 55 to 75 years old were interviewed in seven cities among the oldest ones of the State. The ALEAL therefore has a total of 56 informants:

**Point 1- Delmiro Gouveia** (two informants – 35/50 years old)

**Point 2- Canapi** (two informants – 35/50)

**Point 3- Santana do Ipanema** (four informants – 35/50; 55/75)

**Point 4- Piranhas** (two informants – 35/50)

**Point 5- Pão de Açúcar** (two informants – 35/50)

**Point 6- Traipu** (two informants – 35/50)

**Point 7- Penedo** (four informants – 35/50; 55/75)

**Point 8- Piaçabuçu** (two informants – 35/50)

**Point 9- Coruripe** (two informants – 35/50)

**Point 10- Arapiraca** (two informants – 35/50)

**Point 11- Palmeira dos Índios** (two informants – 35/50)

**Point 12- Quebrangulo** (two informants – 35/50)

**Point 13- Limoeiro de Anadia** (two informants – 35/50)

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<sup>2</sup> We work here with the portuguese term “subfalar”: this word can be understood as dialectal divisions existing within the different speeches found in Brazil. They are a particular form of a language which is peculiar to a specific region.

**Point 14- São Miguel dos Campos** (four informants – 35/50; 55/75)

**Point 15- Pilar** (two informants – 35/50)

**Point 16- Marechal Deodoro** (four informants – 35/50; 55/75)

**Point 17- Maceió** (four informants – 35/50 anos; 55/75)

**Point 18- União dos Palmares** (four informants – 35/50; 55/75)

**Point 19- São Luís do Quitunde** (four informants – 35/50)

**Point 20- Porto Calvo** (four informants – 35/50; 55/75)

**Point 21- Maragogi** (two informants – 35/50)

The ALEAL questionnaires, with a total of 328 questions, are practically the same as those proposed by the ALiB National Committee (2001), and are subdivided as follows: Phonetic-Phonological Questionnaire (90 questions); Semantic-Lexical Questionnaire (199); Morphosyntactic Questionnaire (33); and Metalinguistic Questions (6). Out of this total, 140 linguistic charts were produced, which contemplate all the linguistic phenomena proposed in the questionnaires, some of them, more than once.

#### **GENERAL CONFIGURATION OF RESPONSES AND NON-RESPONSES REGISTERED BY ALEAL INFORMANTS: THE MAPPING IMPASSE**

In the Phonetic-Phonological Questionnaire, many situations were observed in which the informants abstained, or did not present adequate responses to the propositions of questionnaires. The first case, and perhaps the most obvious example, refers to the question 06 from the QFF, which was expected to find the word ‘caminha’ ‘small bed’<sup>3</sup>. This question, in the ALiB, was formulated like this: “*um copo pequeno é um copinho, e aquele lugar onde a pessoa se deita para dormir, se for pequeno, como se chama?*”<sup>4</sup> (“a small glass is a little glass, what about that object a person lays down? How do you call it if it is small? Only eight (four men and four women) out of the 56 informants responded spontaneously to the question, all of them young informants. The most common responses, in order of frequency, were : *cama pequena, cama de solteiro, beliche* (small bed, single bed, bunk bed). More than half of the informants who registered *caminha*, could only pronounce that word after reading it. Although it is not in accordance with the instructions and recommendations of the ALiB National Committee, this procedure was the strategy used by the interviewer in view of the significant number of non-responses and inadequate responses. Although we verified that all the informants, when they registered the desired lexical item, nasalized the vowel / a / of the initial syllable,

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<sup>3</sup> We were searching the term “caminha”.

<sup>4</sup> We were finding the different accents for the word “caminha”, a small bed. We wanted to know if the accent was nasal or not, and for this we have presented an example of a word with diminutive: “a samll glass”.

we think that the obtained data did not fulfill the proposed questions because they were obtained from the intervention of the interviewer. For this reason, the records provided by 48 informants were considered invalid.

Another example of a linguistic chart that proved particularly difficult in obtaining responses was question 059 - QUESTÃO/QÜESTÃO (question). Only 6% of informants answered this question as expected: “*quando duas pessoas têm um desentendimento, uma briga, um problema, elas procuram o juiz para resolver a\_\_?*” (When two people have a disagreement, a fight, a problem, they seek the judge to solve the\_\_). Instead of the desired word, they answered *a situação* (situation), *a pendenga* (melee), *o problema* : (the problem), in this case they repeated the word from the question. When the question was asked again but in another way, according to what ALiB proposed: “*quando você não quer muito uma coisa, você diz: eu não faço\_\_*” (When you don't want something at all, you say\_\_), none of the informants answered the word *questão* (question).

The linguistic chart 86 of ALEAL concerning the question 010 from the QFF – ÍMÃ (magnet) presented a different situation from that previously reported. The lexical item *ímã* (magnet) was produced by 62% of of the informants, which is equivalent, in absolute numbers, to 18 responses provided by men, and 20 by women. But in Alagoas, as well as in other Northeastern States, the frequency of the regional variant is strong, as it has attested: 38% of the individuals interviewed expressed *azougue* (quicksilver), produced by 13 men and 10 women. This lexical occurrence was unique in points 2 (Canapi), 6 (Traipu) and 13 (Limoeiro de Anadia). The lexical item *ímã* (magnet) was obtained exclusively in points 4 (Piranhas), 8 (Piaçabuçu), 15 (Pilar), 18 (União dos Palmares), 20 (Porto Calvo) and 21 (Maragogi).

Due to the good productivity of the regional variant *azougue* (quicksilver), we opted to map the two occurrences in a single chart, because the dataset can be better observed when grouped. For a similar reason – the comparison with a regional variant – the data on Map 35, BARULHO (noise), was presented in a single map. Out of the total valid responses, 72.1% said that in order not to wake the sleeping child, one should not make any noise (*barulho*), but 27.8% pointed out the lexical unity *zoada* (hubbub/clangour). According to the author, the percentage referring to the regional variant would lose in expressiveness if it had been presented in a separate chart. Again, on Map 121 concerning the question 100 from the QSL – PESSOA LOURA (blond person), the regional variant *galega* (Galician), with 33 occurrences, overlapped the desired response: *loira/loura* (we wanted to know if this word was written with the vowel /i/ or /u/). The lexical variant *loira/loura* was recorded only nine times by the informants.

For the question 019 from the QFF – PENEIRA (strainer) - although not representative in the global data, the regional variant *arupemba* was collected on Map 08 . Three informants, two men and one woman, only remembered the lexical variant *arupemba*, while two men said *peneira* (strainer), but explained that they knew the other variant.

The option of collecting the data in a single chart perhaps would not be effective in the case of the question 080 from the QFF – ABERTURA DA CALÇA DO HOMEM (the opening of a man's pants) - which registered three lexical variants : *braguilha* (fly) with 36 responses, 21 men and 15 women ; *fecho eclair* (zip) with 19 mentions, of which 8 were said by men, and 11 by women; and *zíper* (zipper) with 13 occurrences (seven men and six women). Based on the question 080 three linguistic charts were generated: 32, 33 and 34, each with their phonetic variants.

With question 194 from QSL - TERRENO (plot of land) - which integrates the set of themes concerning urban life, two responses were obtained: *terreno* (plot of land), with 52 mentions (equivalent to 90%), and *chão* (floor) with six registers (10% out of the total). Three linguistic charts were produced, in this case the gross and exclusively lexical data are in Map 82. Map 83 brings the phonetic transcription of the variant *terreno* (plot of land), whose interest is on the opening of the pretonic medial vowel. Finally, on Map 84 are the phonetic transcriptions of the two variants found in the network of points of ALEAL.

In the question 60 from the QFF – PEGO (in the sense of *caught in the act*), we also had some difficulties. When asked the question: “*um ladrão sai correndo e o policial sai atrás e consegue pegar o ladrão. Você diz que o ladrão foi \_\_\_ pela polícia*” (A pickpocket runs out and a policeman goes off and takes him. You say that the pickpocket was \_\_\_ by the policeman), few were the informants who, at first, said *pego* (caught in act). Invariably they replied *preso*, *capturado*, *levado para a cadeia*, *algemado*, (arrested, captured, taken to jail, handcuffed) among the main ones. It was only after the inquirer asked about different words to complete the phrase that the informants registered *pego* (the vowel / e / open received 35 mentions, equivalent to a percentage of 81% out of the total).

The reformulation of the question with insertion of new elements was necessary in question 015 from the QFF – RUIM (bad). Many informants said, at first, that a food, when it is not good, is sour. However, other semas are presented, such as “a person who is not good is”, or, “the opposite of good” the informants registered the form analysed in the Phonetic-Phonological Questionnaire. In this question we wanted to examine if the variant was recorded as a monosyllable, therefore with the tonic accent on the vowel / u /, or dissyllable, with the accent on the vowel / i /.

On the question 016 from the QFF – ARROZ (rice) - it was necessary to reintroduce the question. For about 5% of the informants, “those small white grains that can accompany the beans and meat” is cassava flour, not rice, as expected by the questionnaire. A similar situation was found in QFF 08 – LUZ (light), with many mentions for “electricity”; in QFF 050 – EMPREGO (employment), in which we obtained “work, job, placement”. In QFF 056 – SOLDADO (soldier) (many informants mentioned policeman); in QFF 057 – CALÇÃO (shorts trousers) it was necessary to ask the question two or three times to obtain the satisfactory response. The question from the QFF 029 – ÁRVORE (tree) was the subject of three maps: on Map 13 we have the phonetic transcriptions of the segment *vore*; on Map 14 the phonetic phenomena for the particle *ár* are transcribe; on the third map

(Map 15), we registered the lexical occurrences. In addition to the lexical item tree with 44 records, 12 informants (19% out of the total) mentioned *pé de figo*, *pé de algaroba*, *pé de pau*, *pé de árvore*, *pé de arbuseiro*<sup>5</sup>, *juá*, *pé de planta*, *planta* (fig tree, *algaroba*<sup>6</sup> tree, wood tree, tree, shrub, *juá* tree, plant, plants).

## HOW CAN WE READ THIS DATA?

There are still few published works on the topic, so the exercise of interpretation of the presented data becomes somewhat laborious. Based on an accurate reading of the data it is possible to adjust or even rethink the current methodologies, always in the attempt to produce a cartography of excellence, that is, faithfully aligned to the different variables worked by the researcher, and, of course, to the collected records.

Aguilera and Yida (2008, p.20), authors of studies on this topic concluded that the level of informants' studies interferes in the responses. They found that about 65% of the questions applied to informers with low schooling presented some obstacle in eliciting the desired response. The authors cite some factors in the origin of the problem, all confirmed by ALEAL :

- i) the regional variant is more representative than the desired response: *azougue* (quicksilver) to magnet; *galega* (galician) for blond people; *zoadá* (hubbub/clangour) to noise;
- ii) when it is possible to register more than one response, the informant presents a paronym: *chão* (floor) instead of plot of land; *fecho ecler* (zip), *zíper* (zipper) in place of *braguilha* (fly); *cama pequena* (small bed) *beliche* (bunk bed), *cama de solteiro* (single bed) in lieu of *caminha*; *arupemba* to peneira (strainer); *energia* (electricity) to *luz* (light); *causa* (cause), *problema* (problem), *situação* (situation) *pendenga* (melee) instead of *questão* (question); *trabalho* (work), *serviço* (job) and *colocação* (placement) para *emprego*; *bermuda and shorts* to *calção* (short trousers);
- iii) the referent is uncommon in the region, and consequently it is not part of the informant's world knowledge, as on Map 49 - QSL 013 – GRANIZO (hail), which had six abstentions. In this case, in Point 1 (Delmiro Gouveia), the two informants, man and woman of the first age group, said they did not know hail, a phenomenon that does not occur in the semi-arid lands. The questions about watercourses, such as the name of "the place where the river meets the sea" (river mouth), and also natural occurrences related to rainfall, in points in the central-west and northern regions of Alagoas, areas that suffer prolonged droughts, it is worth to say that the responses, when provided, did not always agree with the referent.

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<sup>5</sup> The informant may have referred to a shrub.

<sup>6</sup> Algaroba and juá are the typical trees found in Brazil.

Considering the three factors proposed, and of course, with the exception of abstentions, we think that in the cited examples there were no non-responses.

Regarding the difficulties encountered by the informants in the registry of the phonetic variables to be mapped, as observed by Aguilera and Yida (2008), it is also confirmed in ALEAL that the educational factor can represent an obstacle in this sense. Out of the 56 ALEAL informants, 27 reported having completed elementary education, 24 did not complete elementary school, and five identified themselves as illiterate.

## WHAT WILL THE CHICKEN DO WHEN IT CLUCKS AND GOES TO THE NEST?

On Map 12 of ALEAL (Annex 2) we have the data of QFF 26 – BOTAR (to lay), in which informants were asked: “when the chicken clucks and goes to the nest, what will she do?”. We expected that the informant would say BOTAR (lay an egg), and in this case, the intention was to verify the accent of the previous pretonic mid vowel / o /, and the / r / in external syllable coda, in verbs. Contrary to what we expected, most informants did not register this variant: 77.8% of responses were obtained for the verb *pôr* (to put), 15.9% for the verb *botar* (to lay) and 6.3% *colocar* (to place). In absolute numbers, the responses are represented as follows:

- i) PÔR (to put): 25 men (19 out of them in the first age group, and six in the second age group); 24 women (19 in the first age group, and five in the second age group);

As for the diatopic distribution, the data are registered as the following: the verb *pôr* (to put) occurred in all localities, and it is exclusive in the points: 2 (Canapi), 5 (Pão de Açúcar), 6 (Traipu), 9 (Coruripe), 10 (Arapiraca), 12 (Quebrangulo), 13 (Limoeiro de Anadia), 15 (Pilar), 19 (São Luís do Quitunde) and 21 (Maragogi).

- ii) BOTAR (to lay): four men (three in the age group 30/50 years old, and one in the age group 55/75 years old); six women (three women 30/50, and three in the second age group).

As for the diatopic analysis, the records of the verb *botar* are represented in this way: it is not exclusive at any point, and only competes with the verb to put in point 1 (Delmiro Gouveia); it is a minority in points 3 (Santana do Ipanema), 4 (Piranhas), 7 (Penedo), 8 (Coruripe), 11 (Palmeira dos Índios, 16 (Marechal Deodoro), 17 (Maceió) and 18 (União dos Palmares).

- iii) COLOCAR (to place): a man 30/50 anos; three women (one in the first age group 30/50, and the other two in the 55/75 age group).

As for the diasexual and diatopic distribution, the only male informant who registered the verb *colocar* (to place) is from point 20 - Porto Calvo (the informant first said the verb to put); The three female informants are from points 3 (Santana do Ipanema), 14 - São Miguel dos Campos (in these two locations the verb *colocar* (to place) was the second response; the first response was the verb *pôr* (to put); and 17 - Maceió (in this locality it was the only response of the informant)



It is important to note that the verb *colocar* (to place), with the sense of egg laying, is not in the dictionaries. Considering that the informants registered this verb as a more prestigious form to say the verbs *pôr* (to put) and *botar* (to lay), we verified that, compared to the men, the women are more careful with their speech that seems to them more elaborated.

### WHAT IS THE PROBLEM OF THE VERB PÔR (TO LAY)?

The prevalence of the verb *pôr* (to put) instead of the desired variant *botar* (to lay) was registered on Map 12 (QFF 26). This prevalence was the object of a specific analysis on Map 99 of the Morphosyntactic Questionnaire (QMS). On the question 26 (Annex 3), whose intention was to find the variants *pus/ponhei* (the verb to put in the first singular person of the indicative), we asked the informant the following question: “A person searches an object but she can not find it, so that person asks you: where you put the object. How do you respond?” The results surprise:

- 56,7% said “*eu coloquei*” (I placed);
- 16,7%: “*eu botei*” (I laid);
- 11,7% “*eu pus*” (I put);
- 1,7% “*eu ponhei*” (I put<sup>7</sup>),
- 13,3% presented other ways of responding, such as: *sei não* (I don't know); *eu guardei* (I kept); *em cima da estante* (it is on the rack); *olha, eu deixei ali em cima, em tal lugar* (well, I left it there on the table); *eu joguei* (I threw off); *eu vi ela ali* (I saw it there).

In the total numbers, therefore, we have 86.7% of registers of several verbal forms, compared to only 13.4% of what we expected to collect: the variants *pus / ponhei*. Among the informants who opted for the omission, we found that the percentage of the verb *colocar* (to place) is almost four times greater than that of the verb *botar* (to lay). Again, as on the Map 12, we ask ourselves: is the verb *colocar* (to place) more prestigious?

In the New Electronic Dictionary Aurélio (2010), the verb *colocar* (to place) is defined in 12 entries: in the first one, the meaning is “*pôr em (algum lugar)*” (to put sth somewhere). As an example we have: “*mãos piedosas colocaram uma vela acesa ao lado dele*” (pious hands placed a lit candle beside him), and “*Alice coloca a bandeja sobre a mesinha do rádio*” (Alice places the tray on the small radio table). *Colocar* (to place) in this sense, is the act of landing something on a certain place.

The verb *botar* (to lay), the second option of the two verb forms omitted, in the same dictionary, appears in 26 entries: in the first one, it presents it with the sense of *deitar, atirar, lançar fora; expelir* (to lay down, to throw, to throw away; expel). We have as examples:

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<sup>7</sup> According to the norm, of the Portuguese language, the verb « *pôr* », in the first person singular of the preterite of the indicative is: “*eu pus*”.

*a fonte botava água continuamente; o doente botou muito sangue* (the water source put water continuously; the patient put a lot of blood). In the sixth entry, this dictionary brings the verb with the meaning of *pôr, colocar* (to put, to place), as in the example, place the book in the shelf. Afterwards, *colocar* (to place) is presented as an act of *pôr ovos* (laying eggs).

The verb to put, in the Electronic Dictionary Aurélio (2010), with dozens of entries, in its first definition, refers to the verb *colocar, depor* (to place something somewhere), and, in this sense, it presents two phrases: *pôr o copo sobre a mesa; Deus pôs o homem na Terra* (put the glass on the table; God put man on earth). In another entry, the author refers to the verb *pôr* (to put) as to lay: *deitar ovos num ninho* (laying eggs in a nest), citing the phrase (in the zinc structure of the oven where the polenta (a type of salty corn porridge) was cooked and the chickens laid eggs).

By comparing the results of both linguistic maps, two assumptions can be made:

i) the informant uses the verb *pôr* (to put) in indicative without difficulty; in QFF 26 the current variant prevails in Alagoas: *a galinha vai pôr o ovo* (the chicken will lay eggs).

ii) in the situation proposed in QMS 26, in which the verb put must be conjugated in the first singular person of the preterite of the indicative, the informant does not use it, replacing it by placing and laying, or he/she opts for the omission.

So we think that the informant, conscious of his uncertainty between the form *eu pus* (I put) and the form *eu ponhei* (popular form), choose not to register either. We may also claim that the form *eu pus* (I put) would remind the informant of the noun 'pus' (the thick yellowish liquid produced in infected tissue), and therefore he/she opts for abstention.

The doubt could perhaps be clarified if a second question concerning QFF 26 - BOTAR had been applied to the informant: "*you said that the chicken clucks when it goes to the nest lay the egg: when you see the egg in the nest you say the chicken ...*". What would the informant answer? Did the chicken *pôs* (put) eggs? Did the chicken *ponhou* (the verb to put, in this case, is not conjugated according to the norm) eggs? Did the chicken *botou* (laid) eggs? Did the chicken *colocou* (placed) eggs?

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Every researcher who performs fieldwork is faced with circumstances in which informants do not register the language item sought. These situations occur mainly in phonetic-phonological questions, and they are also common in semantic-lexical surveys. The data collected with these characteristics require greater care in the analysis and subsequent mapping. Invariably, the presented results will be object of discussions about the methodology and the understanding of the researcher about the information obtained.

Although it is one of the main concerns of the researchers, there are still few scientific studies about what is meant by non-responses or non-valid responses to questionnaires related to linguistic atlases. It is therefore difficult to establish a consensus

on the subject. In this article, we discussed the absence of responses and responses that are not adequate to the proposed referent in questions presented in the Linguistic Atlas of the State of Alagoas - ALEAL.

The data from some ALEAL linguistic maps showed that among the interviewed Alagoas' speakers, the index of invalid responses, or the absence of responses, was high. We would like to emphasize once again that the level of schooling from the informants is the complete and incomplete elementary education.

Based on this, it is possible to assume that it would be easier for informants with a higher educational level to understand the propositions that would lead to the expected responses. However, this possibility does not apply to ALEAL: its informants have more or less the same school profile.

Five out of the 56 ALEAL informants (9%), declared themselves to be illiterate (three men: two young and one elderly), and two women (two from the second age group). All these informants were found in the northern region of the State of Alagoas (points 2- Canapi, 3- Santana do Ipanema, 12- Quebrangulo, 18- União dos Palmares). We could compare the responses of the illiterate with those of complete and incomplete elementary education (Annex 4), but the global data, in the exposed maps in the present study, did not prove significant.

We all know that the context in which the responses are collected can tell a lot about the real possibility of obtaining the analyzed variant, that is, if the informant would be able to assimilate what is presented to him/her. Consequently, only the inquirer would be able to present the extralinguistic environment that determined the realization of an invalid variant in detriment of the expected item. Thus, only the inquirer would be able to present the extralinguistic environment that determined the realization of an invalid variant in detriment of the expected item. In ALEAL, the inquirer worked with the same questions as the ALiB, those previously tested by the National Committee: the communicative situation, therefore, did not differ from others already experienced by the researchers.

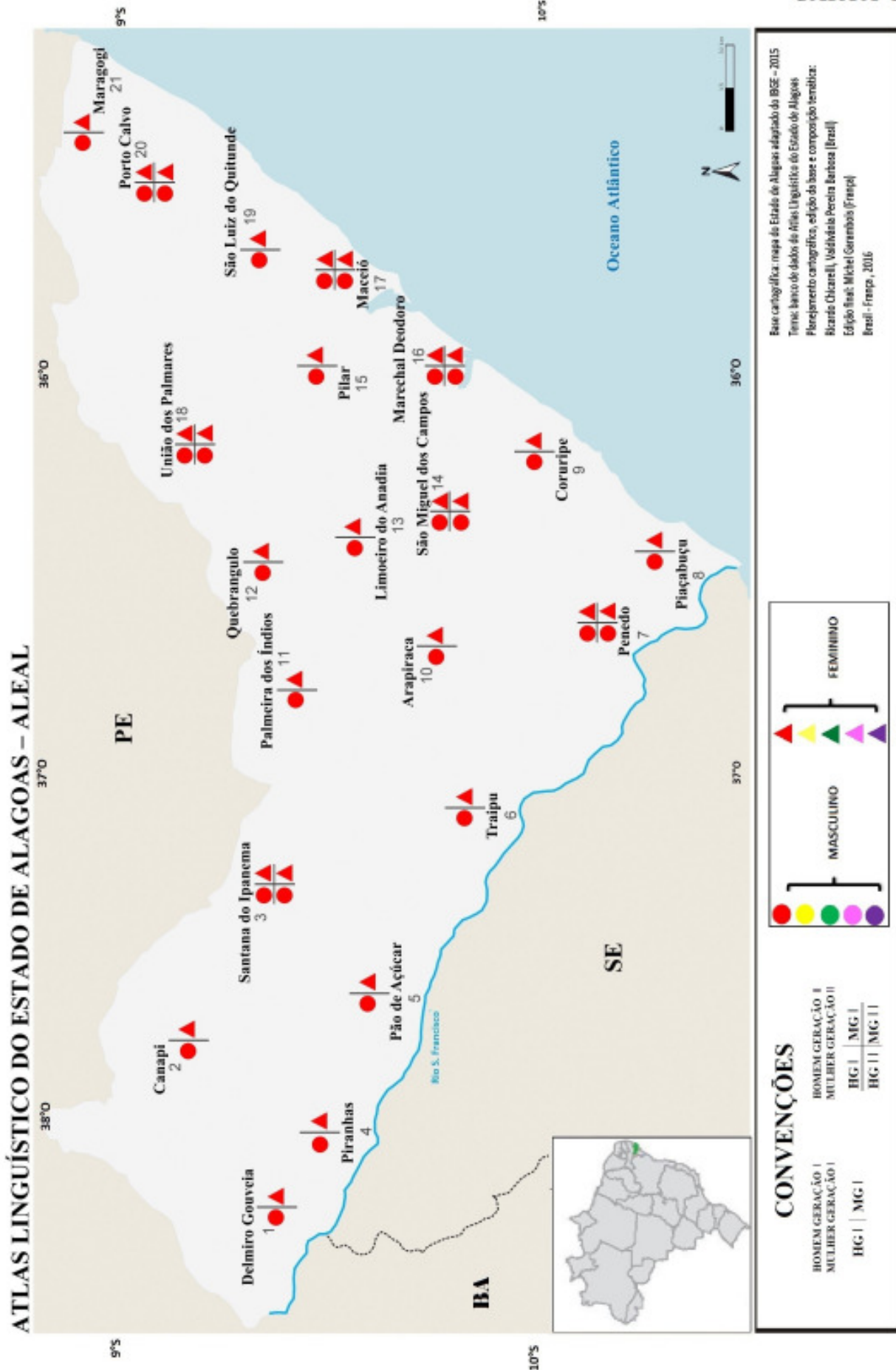
Regarding the conduction of the interviews, we consider it necessary to take up one of the considerations of Aguilera and Yida (2008), that the interviewer's posture may represent a greater or lesser facility to reformulate the question in order to obtain the appropriate response. In ALEAL, the interviewer, as mentioned before, found that the insistence on obtaining a certain response, even with the care to approach the subject very subtly, led to the inhibition of the speaker, and this interfered in the continuity of the interview. The ALEAL interviewer testified that informants, when unable to present the responses, were generally frustrated when the question was reformulated over and over again. A clear example of it concerns QFF 06, who intended to register the variants to *caminha* (small bed): only eight informants were able to perform it spontaneously. The parasyonyms that were obtained - *cama pequena*, *cama de solteiro* e *beliche* (small bed, single bed and bunk bed) - corroborate the considerations of Aguilera and Yida (2008), that the informants answered the question, but the variants did not meet the objective of the QFF.

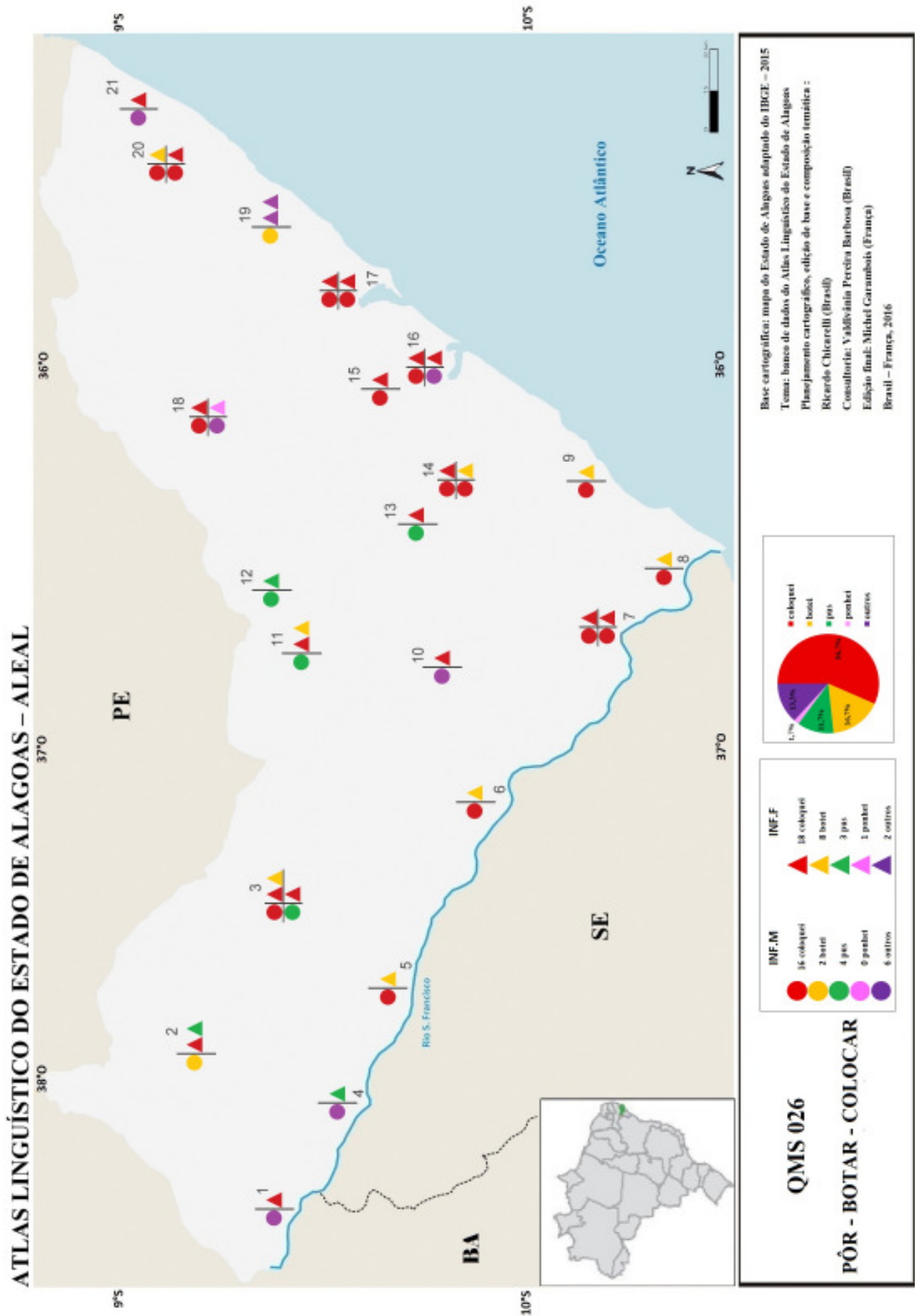
Regarding the central theme of this study, QFF 26 - BOTAR, which asked : *o que a galinha vai fazer quando canta e vai para o ninho ?* (what will the chicken do when it clucks and goes to the nest?), we concluded that the verb *pôr* (to put), predominant with the speakers of ALEAL, is considered an invalid response, because it does not serve the purposes of the linguistic phenomenon that would be analyzed. Only two informants showed none response.

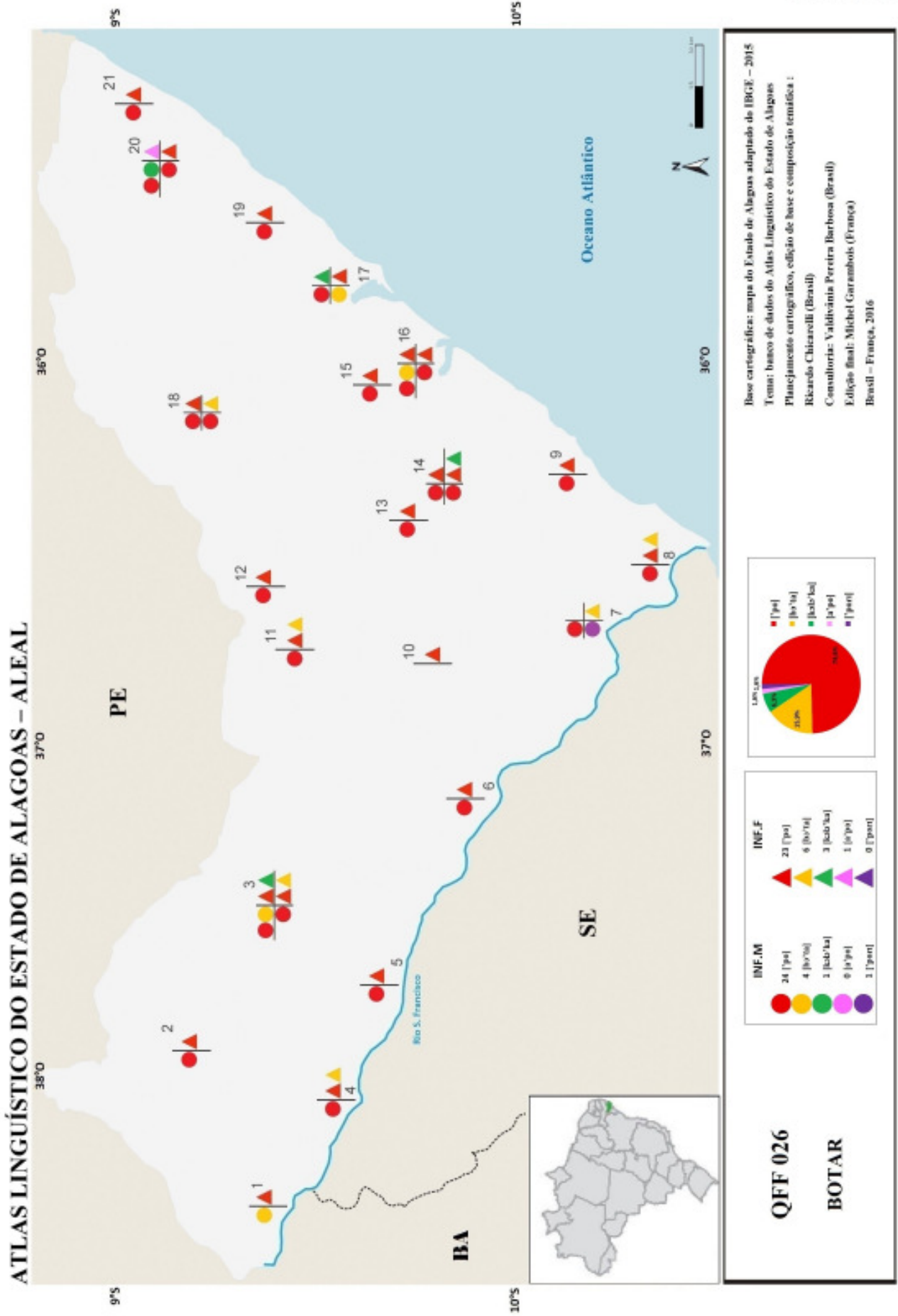
The same verb, analysed in ALEAL's Map 99 - *onde você pôs [um objeto qualquer]?* (where did you put [any object]?), was not registered by the majority of the speakers that produced invalid responses (because they did not fulfill the purpose of the question): to examine the use of the verb *pôr* (to put) in the first singular person of the preterite of the indicative mode.

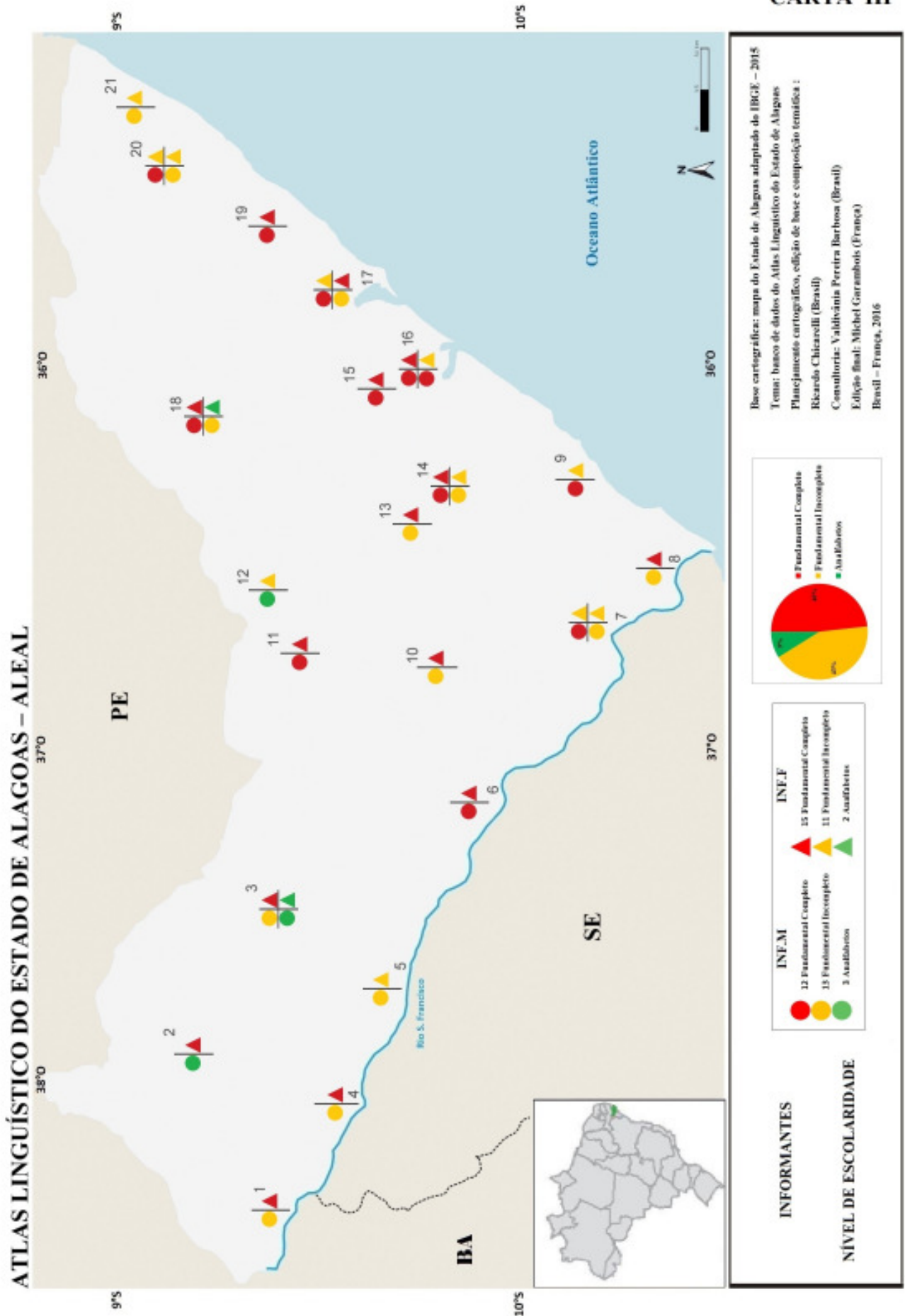
Finally, the hypothesis that the abstention and non-valid responses were linked to the limits of the informants' world knowledge was rejected: since the themes are part of their everyday experiences. Regarding the schooling factor, we conclude that, in the proposed questions, the ALEAL informants (who have a complete and incomplete elementary education) showed a tendency to present invalid responses and abstentions. However, unlike Aguilera and Yida (2008), in their studies, we can not affirm that the schooling factor is related to these phenomena, since ALEAL did not work with higher educational level informants, and this makes it impossible to compare them with focus on different scales of literacy..

## ANNEXES











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