The Interviewer's Strategies: analysis of question 102 of the QFF, in five capitals of the Northeast of Brazil

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Abstract:
Geolinguistic and dialectological studies comprise several stages such as definition of the object of study, objective, methodology, profile and selection of the informants, definition and preparation of the interviewers, financing, preparation of material for the interviews, establishment of the points of contact, selection of informants, the conduct of interviews, among others. Among the authors who discuss the stages of this work are Brandão (1991), Aragão (1998), Ferreira (1998), Aguilera (1998) and Caruso (2005). For this study, the conduction of the interview in field research is what matters. The objective of this paper is to analyze the strategies of the inquirer to obtain adequate answers from the informants. The corpus of this research considers the 40 interviews of the Linguistic Atlas of Brazil (ALiB), in five capitals of the Northeast of Brazil: Salvador (BA), Aracaju (SE), Maceió (AL), Recife (PE) and João Pessoa (PB). The data collection consisted of the analysis of question 102 of the QFF. From the corpus analyzed, the interviewers achieved the desired response in 29 interviews, totalizing 72.5%. The results point to different strategies of the inquirer to obtain the expected response.

Keywords:
Geolinguistic Studies. Dialectology. Inquirer's Strategies.

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Introduction

A linguistic atlas, as a product of geolinguistic and dialectological studies, presupposes a thorough, organized and systematized work so that data can be presented in the form of maps (linguistic maps) and can provide information in the context of diatopy about semantic, lexical, morphosyntactic and phonetic traits.

The work before the presentation of the maps and charts of a linguistic atlas is a task whose steps should be very well planned. These include the definition of the object of study, objectives, methodology (including network of points, data collection tools, informants' profile, interviewers' definition and preparation[1]), funding, material for conducting the interviews - albums of figures and realia, the establishment of points of contact, the selection of informants and conducting interviews. After these steps, it is necessary to transcribe the material collected and review the recorded interviews.

Among all the steps for the accomplishment of a linguistic atlas, in this article we are interested in the accomplishment of the interviews with the selected informants. Brandão (1991, p. 31-32) states that, in the accomplishment of an atlas, it is necessary to obtain in the interviews, with the selected informants, a homogeneous material that can be compared. The author points out that the most appropriate data collection instrument is the structured questionnaire, used as the guiding thread of the investigation.

> The formulation of questions depends first and foremost on the objectives of the project. The researcher must be clear if he/she is interested in the study of phonetic, lexical and/ or morphosyntactic aspects, and if he/she wants to print an ethnographic mark to the atlas. Thus, in the elaboration of the questionnaire, the stage here called "preliminary data collection" is once again of great importance, because the task, contrary to what may seem, is not simple (BRANDÃO, 1991, p. 32).

The literature on Geolinguistics and Dialectology - with details of the different stages - addresses in a precise way the elaboration of the questionnaires and the care that the researchers must have at the moment.

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[1] In this article we use the terms interviewer, inquirer, and documenter as synonyms.

there are no extremely restrictive norms for its organization. However, some general criteria must be observed, to which the recommendations of José Joaquim Montes in General and Spanish-American Dialectology can serve as guidelines (BRANDÃO, 1991, p. 33).

Among the recommendations synthesized by Brandão (1991), two of them stand out in the achievement of this article. These are indispensable elements for the good preparation of the instrument of data collection and the formation of a consolidated team of inquirers.

The dialectological researches in Brazil are centered on onomasiological questionnaires, that is, which depart from the concepts to reach the variants. The key points for the development of effective questionnaires are their geographic scope, the linguistic dimension to be registered, the lexical dimension and precision.

The first point deals with the geographic scope: in territories with a great idiomatic variety, it is possible to elaborate questionnaires that can cover concepts common to the territories and others, of specialties, which will refer to a regional and/or vocational language. Thus, we would have at least two different questionnaires, one general for all locations and one specific for certain regions. This division is very useful, on the one hand, for works that will detail the regional lexicon, and, on the other hand, for those that aim to map the speech(es) of a larger group of people, as is the case of ALiB - Linguistic Atlas of Brazil, which has general questionnaires, thus seeking the mapping of terms throughout the territory, centering its goal in mapping the realization/non-realization of common terms.

The second point concerns the linguistic dimension. The questionnaires usually articulate in three dimensions: the lexical one, which allows the knowledge of the variants for a given referent; the phonetic one, which make it possible to register the variations of pronunciation and prosody; and the grammatical one, which allows the collection of data for the verification of the speakers' morphosyntactic uses of a language. There are also dimensions that can measure the level of attitude about the language spoken, the recognition and the sense of belonging of the speaker about his/her mother tongue, the levels of language - formal, colloquial, among others. The task of preparing the questionnaires, their testing in pilot interviews and the reworking of questions that require a more accurate elaboration, precedes going to the field to collect data.

For the collection of data to be as natural as possible, it is essential for the interviewer to be prepared for the application of the questionnaires. As mentioned by Tarallo (1985), in order to have natural speech data although in an unnatural environment, the interviewer is confronted with the paradox of the observer: how to collect natural data in a situation as artificial as the interview? Thus, the preparation of the team that will go to the field in the collection of data deserves equal attention for the satisfactory accomplishment of interviews. For ALiB, according to Altino (2004), the crucial questions for the preparation of the inquirer/documenter were exhaustively discussed, and the use of pilot interviews that could prepare the team was of great value. Scientific rigor, familiarity with the research

instrument, study of the location, the willingness to listen to the informants' speeches are *sine qua non* conditions for the good progress of the interview.

For Brandão (1991, p. 35), in the fieldwork, the interviewer "should do his/her work with the maximum rigor, in order to ensure a trustworthy *corpus*". The team of inquirers should be in tune and their work should be as homogeneous as possible. Given this scenario, a very reduced number of inquirers are chosen to maintain the uniformity of the data collection. Aguilera (1998) reminds us that, for the Linguistic Atlas of France, Gilliéron opted for a single interviewer (Edmond Edmont) and, modernly, as in the case of the Linguistic Atlas of Paraná (1994), the author considered "indispensable to carry out fieldwork with a small number of inquirers so that the collection could be as homogeneous as possible" (AGUILERA, 1998, p. 113).

Although a single interviewer was ideal, with the national dimensions of ALiB this prerogative could not be considered. The defense of several researchers in the data collection phase became constant for contemporary dialectological studies. For the ALiB Project a similar conduct, possibilities for reformulating questions considered more difficult, and the way of conducting the work became the center of attention for the team, and many meetings were organized to resolve these and other problems. The methodological refinement adopted by the ALiB team allowed the interviews to be used as a parameter of refinement of interview techniques and its analysis were seen as a compass for new researchers. In this sense, the objective of this article is to analyze the interviewer's performance in the interviews for the elaboration of the Linguistic Atlas of Brazil- ALiB.

In order to analyze the interviewer's strategies[2], we consider question 102, from the Phonetic-Phonological Questionnaire - QFF of ALiB (CARDOSO et al., 2013, p. 79). *When two people have a disagreement, a fight, a problem, they look for a judge to solve the_____? [When you do not want a thing, you say: I don't _____?, where the answer is 'question', in Portuguese 'questão'* [kesˈtãw] / [kwesˈtãw] / [kwesˈtã] is expected for the initial formulation of the question. For the QFF it is important to highlight that: by the nature of the object of the questionnaire, it is necessary to lead the interviewee to respond to pre-established lexical items (hereinafter indicated by the expression 'expected response'), as is the case of the question above. In this way, all informants will be led to answer the lexical item *question* in their phonetic variations.

For this work, the resumption of the studied question at the end of the interviews was considered separately. We adopted this methodology because the resumption of the questions by itself, is already a strategy, defined and guided by the project and it is not a spontaneous and individual strategy of the interviewer.

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[2] This article is based on other authors who have already discussed the ALiB data collection methodology. The state of the art, mentioned in this article, served to a great extent for the improvement of the authors of this article and for the theoretical-methodological framework in the analysis of the answers recorded for question 102, object of study of this paper.

For the composition of the *corpus* of this study, we selected the interviews conducted in five capitals of the Brazilian Northeast region: João Pessoa (PB); Recife (PE), Maceió (AL), Aracaju (SE) and Salvador (BA). We investigated the responses of 40 informants, with equitable distribution among the localities, divided into: a) two age groups: 18 to 30 years old and 50 to 65 years old; b) male and female; and c) schooling: elementary education and university education.

Regarding the approach and methodology for data collection, Ferreira (1998, p. 20), quoting data collection procedures and results form Atlas Prévio dos Falares Baiano (*Preliminary Atlas of Bahia dialects*), model work for ALiB, points to situations which the inquirer must take as practice. Two of such situations concern the conduct adopted for ALiB: the form of production of statements and reformulations. In the first one, the standard formulation, which allows to homogenize the sample, is the initial suggestion of conduct. For question 102, by the nature of the answer, the questionnaire itself already suggests a second reformulation. If the expected response is not obtained, the inquirer will initiate further suggestions for obtaining the item. Care must be taken at this stage of data collection so as not to exhaust the informant with many attempts. These two recommendations suggest an informal conversation, without extrapolating the limits of the informant's tolerance. If necessary, the inquirer should, upon resumption at the end, make another attempt to collect the item. Recalling the words of Brandão (1991), one should take careful attention not to induce the respondent to the expected response, behave neutrally so that his speech does not serve as an example or imitation for the informant.

Having stated the guiding points above, this article analyzes the strategies for obtaining the item /keStãw/, object of question 102 of the QFF, detailed in the next section.

What the Data Tell Us

To verify the strategies of the interviewer in order to obtain the expected response to question 102, the quantitative organization of the answers is initially necessary. The expected response was obtained in the first formulations of the question in 29 interviews (72.5%) out of 40, and no answer was obtained in 11 interviews (27.5%).

It should be noted that 27.5% of respondents did not answer the question 102 of the QFF of ALiB with the desired variant, as expected. This fact leads us to questions such as: i) the informant does not recognize the term, so he/she did not respond to the interviewer; ii) the informants use other words to designate what is requested, since they presented other linguistic variants for instance, *cause*, *fight*, *action*, *problem*, *process*, *situation*; iii) it would be lack of skill of the interviewer in conducting the survey; or iv) the question was poorly elaborated (when formulating questionnaires).

Regarding the questions (i) and (ii) posed as possible motivations for the expected non-response, plausible and verified paths have been opened in other fields that refer to variation: the non-response is an answer as we find that certain lexical items (or from

another nature) are not performed in certain spaces (physical or social); that is why other terms in the language are used for referral.

As for items (iii) and (iv) of the notes, the expected non-response would come from the inability (of the inquirer and/or the questionnaire). The causes for that may be subject to methodological analysis by the project participants and the search to solve problems.

With regard to the data, in the panorama of the respondents who did not answer the analyzed question, the diassexual variable was not significant quantitatively. Out of 11 interviewees who did not answer, 6 are men and 5 are women. When we analyzed the variables, we counted the following panorama: 6 young and 5 elderly, and 7 with elementary education and 4 with university education. Diagenerationally the differences are also not representative, however, when we look at the data from diastratic perspective, the indicators begin to outline a framework that we can exploit. Probably the word *question* is not very common to the vocabulary of the informants with lower level of schooling. Another hypothesis launched refers to diatopic variable, that is, it may not be part of the active vocabulary in the studied region. This can be further strengthened by the fact that, in just nine interviews of this *corpus*, the desired word came out in the first answer, this being the most spontaneous, as it will be discussed later in this paper.

This impression is confirmed by a study of Aguilera and Yida (2008), who analyzed, in the *corpus* of 25 Brazilian capitals, the answers and the absence of answers in 159 questions of the QFF of the ALiB, regarding the schooling of the informants (elementary and university education). When analyzing the responses of the informants of elementary education, the authors claim that part of the QFF questions (such as *house*, *bee*, *Brazil*...) provide easy answers to informants and this facility can be related "with the fact of being words used very frequently and giving few possibilities of multiple choice" (AGUILERA; YIDA, 2008, p. 19). Still according to the authors, the other questions (most of them from the QFF), when applied to the informants with lower education, may present obstacles in obtaining the expected responses. This is the case of the question analyzed in this article, which may "be fulfilled by more frequent parasynonyms in the speech of the informants" (AGUILERA; YIDA, 2008, p. 20). It is possible to assert, therefore, that among the causes for not obtaining the expected response are the fact that the words are less used in the everyday life of the informants and that the questions enable multiple choices. According to the authors, the non-responses of informants with elementary education do not differ much of the profile of respondents with university education.

> The non-responses, among the informants with university education, have a similar profile to that of the informants with elementary education if we consider the nature of the questions, because, mostly, the informants (of both levels of schooling) repeat the lexical items (AGUILERA; YIDA, 2008, p. 23).

According to Aguilera and Yida (2008), the question 102 of the QFF, object of this study, is among the most counterproductive questions, distributed by region. In the Northeast region, the index reaches 22% among the informants with elementary education and 8% among those with university education.

Returning to the numbers of this research, out of the 11 unexpected answers (non-responses or parasynonyms) 36% of them were given by informants with university education and 64% with elementary education , figures that meet Aguilera and Yida's research data (2008).

The hypotheses iii and iv, which focus on the ability of the investigator in obtaining the answer, are predicated on the possibility of preparation of the data collection instrument or of the interviewer. On the question itself, the team of ALiB, after preparing the questionnaires, conducted experimental interviews and returned to the questionnaire elaboration in order to develop an instrument that could cover the entire national territory. All the efforts resulted in iconic work for Brazilian Geolinguistic and its questionnaires have been adopted, with or without adjustments, by many researchers throughout Brazil. Of course, as advocated by Nascentes (1958), the best questionnaire will be drafted and applied when the job is finished. All structures will have been tested and put to the test by the select group of interviewees who will drive us to the elaboration of a better instrument. At this point, our collection will be finished and we will make good use of our bad data, to remind us of Labov (1972).

Among the causes for the non-responses, we comment on the ability and the preparation of the interviewer. The ALiB, during its 20 years of existence, has sought to continuing education of all segments needed for the progress of the project. Within this perspective, the preparation of the interviewers has received special attention. The ability and resourcefulness to conduct the interviews, as well as to excel by the ability to solve (or bypass) problems during the interview are highlighted points; this can be seen in Altino (2004), which deals with the methodological procedures and makes the historiography of events until that moment to prepare the interviewers, on the II Workshop of ALiB (2000). Isquerdo (2004, p. 51), also dealing with the methodological procedures for definitive interviews, states that

> The success of the interviews presupposes the domain of each question in order to avoid the reading of the questions, as well as the construction of prior alternative reformulations to prevent improvisations when it is needed to repeat the question in order to ensure the achievement of the expected response (ISQUERDO, 2004, p. 51).

Aguilera and Yida (2008) reported the trajectory of the project in relation to the empowerment of their inquirers and underlined the dedication of leaders for the formation of a homogeneous and efficient team on the capture of data *in loco*.

On this aspect, the ALiB devoted special attention, reiterating to the scientific Directors, not only the need for preparation of the team of interviewers as well as the obligation of each candidate to be accepted by the National Committee by sending an interview test. This interview, after examined and accepted, returns to the candidate, who should observe the recommendations, so that he/she can integrate the team of field researchers (AGUILERA; YIDA, 2008, p. 28).

Furthermore, the National Committee of the ALiB limited the number of interviewers, which should not exceed 30. According to the recommendations, each investigator should carry at least 30 interviews, but effectively there have been a larger number of inquirers. This was necessary because of the territorial extension, the difficulty of maintaining the projects of undergraduate students; and, finally, the high turnover already known in the academic world. Recent data published in *Documents 7*, the official publication of ALiB, demonstrate the persistence of this definition, the attempt to conduct interviews with a small number of interviewers and comment on the results of the first 20 years of this project. As an example, the Paraná team "prepared twelve researchers, seven of whom underwent, more than 15 interviews each and three of them more than 50" (AGUILERA; ALTINO; ROMANO, 2017, p. 117).

THE STRATEGIES OF THE INQUIRER

Out of the total number of informants (40) selected for this article, the expected response was recorded in 29 interviews, and the inquirer got the answer [kesˈtãw] / [kwesˈtãw] / [kwesˈtã] in the first formulation of the question in 9 interviews, which represents 22.5% of the total number of interviewees. These data reinforce the need for the inquirer to review - at the time of interview - his/her strategies to achieve the desired answer. For the reformulation of the question 102 of QFFF, we can synthesize the initiatives for achieving the expected item in this way: eight informants gave the expected response in the second formulation of the question, the same number for obtaining answers to the interviews in which the investigator had to reformulate the question three times; four attempts of formulation to obtain the item in an interview; five attempts in two interviews; and seven attempts in one interview. It must be stressed at this point the instructions for the resumption of questions, so that the search by the expected response does not exceed the fine line between the search for the terms and the inconvenience that may be caused. Not to incur this error, the investigator is oriented to resume at the end of the interview the question that is left blank. This strategy will be discussed later in this article.

It is worth mentioning that along with 29 informants who gave the expected response, 70 attempts by the interviewers were carried out, in total. This represents an average of 2.41 attempts by informant. The minimum number of attempts was one and the maximum was seven. The average number of attempts by the informants who have not responded within

the expectation of response, in turn, is 3.54 attempts by informant. In all, there were 39 attempts to 11 informants, being the maximum of ten attempts in a single interview.

Without exception, the interviewers followed the guide of the QFF. In the first attempt, they all made the question as the wording suggested in the questionnaire: "When two people have a disagreement, a fight, a problem, they seek a judge to resolve the _____?" (CARDOSO et al., 2013, p. 79).

When the interviewer did not get the answer or the informant gave non-expected response, a common strategy was to repeat the question, redoing it in another way. The interview extract of the young informant with university education in João Pessoa (PB) corroborates the above. The informant had not answered the question, remaining in silence.

> INQ.[3]- You fought with someone or someone welshed on you, then you go to the judge and will solve what?
> INF.- The *problem*?

Another very common strategy in the *corpus* examined and adopted by the interviewers concerns the search by synonym or equivalent word when the informant showed, for example, *cause*, *process*, *fight* or *quarrel*. The interview of the same informant of João Pessoa is an example of the strategy used by the inquirer, in a third attempt.

> INQ.- "Yes, but is there a specific name for it?
> INF.- *Process*?

The search for a synonym or equivalent word, before a non-expected response, makes the interviewer to seek alternatives, redoing the question, more than once, as is the case of the interview in Maceió (AL), with the elderly man informant with university education, in which the inquirer seeks to reformulate the question in order to obtain the expected response: "Hum... Or another way of saying it (...) __ I will resolve this (...) It can be *cause*, but it can be in another way (Interview 7 of point 77). Another example is in the interview done with the elderly woman informant, with university education

> INQ.- Is there another name? There is a more or less technical word to ... to... I have a court ... .
> INF.- a *case*!
> INQ.- There is another name, do you know another name for it?
> INF.- an*lawsuit*.

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[3] In the transcripts: INQ refers to the inquirer, and INF to the informant.

When the inquirer did not get the answer, or faced with the informant repeatedly presenting non-expected responses, he/she usually changed the course of the interview, using the second part of the question 102 of the QFF as a strategy to obtain it: "When you do not really want one thing, you say: I do not ___?" (CARDOSO et al., 2013, p. 79). This can be checked in the interviews conducted in Recife - point 70, with a young male informant of elementary education and with a young female informant of university education, respectively.

INQ.- and there is a/sometimes there is a saying like this... when the person doesn't want one thing, sometimes I have one thing in my hands, you come and tell me: can I take it? I tell you: yes, you can, I don't... How do I say that? I don't...

INF.- I don't *mind.*

INQ.- and when you have an object. Then, you... Someone wants it. You know, take it. I don't...?

INF.- *mind.*

The strategy to reformulate the question was also used by the interviewer with the second part of the question 102 of the QFF. In some occasions, the investigator tries to approximate the situation to the informant to make it more personal and, thus, to obtain the desired response. This can be verified in the surveys of Maceió in the interviews of the young male informant with elementary education and of the elderly woman informant with university education, respectively.

INQ.- I'll say another thing. For example, when you don't want a thing too much, then you say so: I don't .... about that/this shirt.

INF.- (silence).

INQ.- You can take it.

INF.- I don't do anything else?

INQ.- Let's say.../ do you have a brother?

INF.- Yes.

INQ.- Then, let's say.. (...) he took your shirt. Then you come to him.

INF.- I don't use it anymore.

INQ.- but then, you still use it, but you don't (...). There, you say so.

INF.- I don't *care.*[4]

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[4] N.T. *Care* is a possible translation for *question*, depending on the context.

INQ.- Let's think so. You don't really want one thing and you say. No, I don't want that. I don't... how can you say it?

INF.- I don't... I don't want it in any way.

INQ.- The person's offering you one thing. No, no, you can stay with it, I don't?

INF.- I don't *mind*.[5]

The most attentive inquirer may not even come up with the question script according to the suggestions in question 102 of the QFF. From the profile of the informant, he can dismiss the second part of the question and formulate the question in a totally different way, as shown below, when the interviewer stands before the elderly female informant with university education in Aracaju (SE). On the first attempt, the response was not as expected.

INQ.- See, when is ... what is the name of those things that come ... When we make a public tender, do a test, something like that, here comes number 1, number 2 ...

INF.- *question*.

Using the term *query* as the equivalent of a *question* in a test, examination or public tender was also one of the strategies used by the interviewer in the various - unsuccessful - attempts in relation to the young female informant with elementary education in Maceió (AL).

INQ.- No, I want you to think about how you complete that sentence. No! You can have it because I don't ___ about it. I don't what?

INF.- I don't do such a kind of thing.

INQ.- Here is how. In a test you do a job, what do you have? what do you have to solve?

INF.- The *issue*.

INQ.- Each query, query or?

INF.- the owner?

INQ.- The test has so many queries.

INF.- Yes.

INQ.- or it has so many.

INF.- Answers.

INQ.- only queries, it has so many queries or so many (...) this test has so many.

INF.- what does it have so many, my God?

INQ.- I'll come back to it later.

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[5] N.T. *Mind* is another possible translation for *question*, depending on the context.

Even insisting and reworking strategies to get an expected response, the interviewer did not reach her goal. Aguilera and Yida (2008), when discussing abstention, raise the hypothesis that it is associated with the informant's personality

due to several factors, such as lack of education, lack of world knowledge and psychological problems such as shyness, fatigue, illness, lack of interest and even personal problems, such as lack of time, other commitments for that occasion, among others (AGUILERA; YIDA, 2008, p. 28).

The analysis of this last transcript also allows to affirm that the inquirer was perspicacious to rephrase the question, as the interview developed and the decision not to insist at that moment was correct. The intonation, according to the audio, reveals a good degree of informality. This feature is consonant with what Aragão (1998, p. 59) advocates when she presents and discusses the Linguistic Atlas of Paraíba. "The interviews were conducted as informally as possible, with a preliminary conversation in which the attempt was to make the informant to be relaxed and willing to answer the questions".

Even with an informal deal, the interviewee was embarressed for not meeting the expectations of the interviewer, because of the interviewer insistence by changing the focus of the question. This can be verified in her speech "what does it have so many, my God?", which shows that she is aware that she was not able to respond to the expectation of an answer. As it can be seen, informality is no guarantee that the inquirer will get the answer. Caruso (2005, p. 376) notes that

The researcher is, for the informant, a foreign element, an unknown, fitted with a recorder, paper and pencil, speaking a language different from his/her own. It is what has been called the "Paradox of the Observer". Of course, it is needed, at least, to try to nullify these 'weapons'.

About the actions of the researcher, Caruso (2005) recommends that he/she knows well the questionnaire to be applied and also the popular language spoken. He suggests that the inquirers listen to recordings already done to train the ear and learn new things. However, unforeseen situations can always occur. "That is why it is said that all the field research is a "blind flight", even if they are highly trained, it is possible to face never imagined situations". (CARUSO, 2005, p. 378).

When the interviewers do not get the expected response even after using the alternative question from the questionnaire, new strategies come into play for the success of the interview. These are the alternatives we will address in the next section.

THE RESUMPTION AS A STRATEGY OF ALIB

When the informant is not answering properly, that is, when the expected response is not obtained, in terms of the phonetic-phonological questionnaire, one of the

recommendations for the inquirer is not to overemphasize but return to this question at the end of the questionnaire. This strategy is valid for all the unanswered questions and for all questionnaires. Therefore, when the investigator no longer insists on searching for an answer and warns the informant that he/she will resume the question at the end of the interview, he/she is using a recommendation of the project, which is not a spontaneous strategy of the inquirer.

This strategy, used by dialectologists at various times, may have different motivations, as is the case of the APFB (1963). Ferreira (1998), about the Atlas of Bahia, recounts the experience of the resumes, but with the objective of questioning the informants if they knew a certain lexical item, presented by other informants in the same network of points, thus making a verification test.

> However, an unusual methodology was introduced in such works. After the full implementation of the questionnaire, when certain responses were not obtained and as the inquirers were already familiarized with regional expressions obtained in other areas, the informant was directly asked if he knew the expression in question (FERREIRA, 1998, p. 20).

The resumption to present to the informant lexical items heard in a given area is also recorded by Mota (1998), in the elaboration of the Linguistic Atlas of Sergipe: "after the full implementation of the questionnaire, the respondents presented previously heard forms in the area, requesting information on its meaning and use" (MOTA, 1998, p. 83).

The author also points out that the verification test is not an usual methodology in developing linguistic atlas and she writes that "the forms heard only in the direct question were only mapped when there was certainty about their identification by the informant, as evidenced in the notes" (MOTA, 1998, p. 83).

In 11 out of the 40 interviews from the *corpus* selected for this article, the inquirers did not have the expected response to question 102 of the QFF of ALiB. Seven informants from João Pessoa (PB), two from Maceió (AL), one from Aracaju (SE) and one from Salvador (BA) did not register in their speeches the expected response to the question analyzed in this article. In the resumptions, the expected response was achieved in only two interviews, that is, with 18.18% of the informants. One of the main reasons for the low productivity of the answers is the fact that the inquirer did not reformulate question 102 of the QFF during the resumption at the end of the questionnaire. In six out of the 11 interviews, (54.5%) the question was not asked.

In the five interviews in which the interviewer used the resumption and the reformulation strategy, he/she redid the first part of the question 102 of the QFF as it was in the questionnaire in order to make the informant remember the context of the question.

The young female informant with elementary education from Maceió, who did not gave the expected answer during the application of the questionnaire, answered adequately in the first resumption attempt.

INQ.- Some persons have a fight / the neighbor has a fight and will call the judge to resolve the _____?

INF.- the matter.[6]

In the interview with the elderly male informant with university education in Maceió, the inquirer did not get the answer in the first attempt, after having done the first part of question 102. However, he made another attempt, emphasizing the role of the judge and gets the response from the informant.

INQ.- You call the judge to resolve the _____?

INF.- the matter.

In the resumption of the interview in Aracaju, with the young male informant with elementary education, the inquirer also performed the two suggested formulations of question 102 of the QFF, but did not use the lexical item *judge*. In this case, he/she did not obtain the expected response, as transcribed below.

INQ.- Here, the person has a fight, a problem, he/she calls someone to solve the ___?

INF.- (Silence)

INQ.- When you have a fight, you must call the person to solve the ___?

INF.-fight.

INQ.- or then, you say/something that does not interest you. No, I don't ___ about it?

INF.- I don't want to, I don't.

It is worth mentioning that out of the seven informants in João Pessoa who did not answer question 102, during the application of the entire questionnaire there was no mention of the word suggested as a response to the question studied in this article. In other words, the term *question* was not used by the seven informants during all the questionnaires nor in the resumption, signaling to the non-use of the word in a situation of interlocution. The term *question* is probably not part of the linguistic repertoire of these informants, which leads us to question the use of this term in the region.

Aguilera and Yida (2008) present an important aspect for geolinguistic studies: what is the acceptable limit of abstention when interviewing? The authors state that there is no knowledge on the reaction of the geolinguists of the last century to the non-responses,

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[6] N.T. Here the expected word was obtained in Portuguese (*questão*), which can also mean *matter*, in this context.

which they said "they should be common, mainly because the questionnaires were very extensive, some of them reaching 5,000 questions" (AGUILERA; YIDA, 2008, p. 28). Regarding the current Brazilian atlases, the authors emphasize that the answers not obtained can have as root several possibilities: problems occurred at the time of recording the interviews as noises that could impair the hearing, carelessness of the interviewer for not doing the question, both in the interview or in the resumption of the questions, fatigue or shyness of the informant or because the informant doesn't know the referent. The latter is an important fact for Geolinguistics, since the lack of knowledge of a term can demarcate an area of non-use compared to others that use it by marking the isoglosses.

The importance of the inquirer in the making a linguistic atlas is evident. He/she is the key element in data collection from selected informants in the network of defined points and it is from these data, that is, from the forms presented by the informant, that analyzes will be processed in phonetic, phonological, semantic, lexical and morphosyntactic studies. It is noteworthy that the inquirer, even having trained, faces a tiring job and situations for which he may not be prepared. In the ALiB questionnaire there are 500 questions per informant, who is not always willing and available to answer all the questions. The sensitivity of perceiving when to suggest a break, when to go forward with the questionnaire, when to step back and leave a question for reformulation and the resumption at the end make all the difference in the success of a linguistic inquiry.

Final Considerations

The objective of this article was to evaluate the interviewer's strategies before the informant in question 102 of the QFF, one of the dimensions of the ALiB, in the *corpus* composed by the 40 interviews of five capitals of the Northeast of Brazil: Salvador, Aracaju, Maceió, Recife and João Pessoa.

As results, this study points out the main strategies of the interviewers in two different situations: when the answer is not the expected one; and when the informant does not answer the inquirer.

About the non-expected response, the interviewer's strategy of seeking synonyms or equivalent words to that presented initially by the respondent prevails. When the expected response is not obtained, the question is redone based on the second part/suggestion of question 102 of the QFF.

In the interviews of Northeast of Brazil studied here, there were no other referents used to obtain the answers. That is, the inquirers have come up with other situations in which the term *question* could appear. As an example, mathematics was not required by the interviewers as a conceptual field that could provide the expected response, as in "what do you solve in the math test?" Or, in another situation asking about "something that is extremely important and then we say it is a _____ of life or death", or other casual moments in which we can get the item under consideration. As the phonetic-phonological questionnaire

aims at the realization of the specific phenomenon, in the case the realization of the term 'question' [kesˈtãw] / [kwesˈtãw], that is, the possible realization of the diphthong, trying other strategies of obtaining the term could mean the success of the record.

The non-recording of the expected response even with the reformulations made by the inquirers may lead us to conclude that the informant does not use the term. In case of recurrence, the hypothesis of this term being in the passive vocabulary of the speakers can be suggested by the low productivity of the item in the interviews. This hypothesis could be confirmed or refuted with the analysis of the interviews of the countryside and, thus, verifiedthe scope of the term for the studied region.

In both situations, an important characteristic of the interviewers of the *corpus* analyzed is clear: the persistence in the search for the desired variant. The persistence of the interviewers is evident in the conduction of the interview that occurs naturally, without pressuring the informant.

Another important aspect is the concern with the vocabulary choice. What can be verified in the interviews conducted in some of the Northeastern capitals is what Caruso already advocated: "every researcher seeks to find the informal language of his/her informant, that kind of language that he would use with his friends, with his family, that is, day by day" (CARUSO, 2005, p. 375-376).

No matter how carefully the inquirer is prepared to conduct the interviews, some situations presented in the development of fieldwork cannot be predicted to the full. In many cases, getting the proper response will depend on the presence of mind of the researcher. His/her professional and life experience can be, in many situations, the touchstone for the success of the survey.

Today the ALiB , with 100% of its interviews done, celebrates the good training of its team of inquirers who carried out a detailed work that requires careful attention to details, dedication and study of the questionnaires.

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