

# Presence *vs* absence of traces of rurality in the lexicon of Tocantins

[ *Presença vs ausência de traços de ruralidade no léxico tocantinense* ]

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**ABSTRACT** • Up to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Brazil was preponderantly a rural country. This status has changed due to the new communication routes. Farmers have transferred themselves to the great urban centers in search of better opportunities. The process has frequently impacted social attitudes and, consequently, a different linguistic stance. In the city milieu, the speaker encounters a new dialectical situation which is often marked by linguistic uprooting processes. A discussion ensues on the maintenance or loss of lexical markings, characterized as rural, on data collected in 12 sites in Tocantins, Brazil, from 96 informants stratified by gender, age and type of mobility, from the Topodynamic and Topostatic Linguistic Atlas of the State of Tocantins. •

**KEYWORDS** • Rural lexicon; ALiTTETO; rural-urban communities. • **RESUMO** • Até o início do

século XX, o Brasil era essencialmente um país rural, dinâmica que tem se modificado com as novas vias de comunicações. Os agricultores têm se deslocado para os grandes centros em busca de melhores oportunidades. Esse processo marca uma nova configuração social e, consequentemente, linguística, visto que o falante, no ambiente citadino, se submete a uma nova situação dialetal, muitas vezes marcada por processos de desenraizamento linguístico. Discute-se a manutenção ou perda de marcas lexicais conceituadas como rurais a partir da análise dos dados coletados pelo Atlas Linguístico Topodinâmico e Topoestático do Estado do Tocantins (2018), em 12 localidades do Tocantins, junto a 96 informantes estratificados por sexo, idade e tipo de mobilidade. • **PALAVRAS-CHAVE** • Léxico rural; ALiTTETO; comunidades rurbanas.

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Historians and sociologists describe Brazil, until the beginning of the 20th century, as essentially rural, inheritance of the colonizing roots initiated by the Brazilian coast. More recently, phenomena such as the Industrial Revolution and Globalization resulted in the birth of large urban centers and populations, previously peasants, to seek these destinations searching for better financial and social opportunities (ISQUERDO, 2010).

In the case of Tocantins, specifically, two milestones mark the emergence of towns. The first of them, in the 18th century, refers to the very factor of the territory colonization: the search for precious metals, causing populations from the coast to move to the interior of Brazil and start the extractive cycle in the region (PALACIN; MORAES, 2008). The other milestone, however, is more recent, dating from the 20th century: the construction of Belém-Brasília<sup>3</sup> highway, causing a displacement of residents of the more traditional towns (previously mining camps) to inhabit the towns around the highway (AQUINO, 2004).

In linguistic terms, the factors of urbanization which lead a rural population to move to and live in urban areas, show a new dynamic, sometimes marked by the process of loss of dialectal marks, phonetic, lexical or morphosyntactic, conceptualized as rural. According to Isquerdo (2010, p. 137 – free translation):

The 20th century was marked by the rural exodus and the phenomenon of globalization contributed to accelerating overlaps between erudite, popular, traditional and modern forms, due to the ease of access to the mass media. In this context, the Portuguese language, distributed spatially throughout the Brazilian territory, followed its own drift and assumed neologizing characteristics in some locations and archaizing in others.

Currently, researchers have invested in analyzing the presence or absence of well-known terms in the peasant world (ROMANO, 2007; ISQUERDO, 2007; FREITAS e ISQUERDO, 2008; ISQUERDO, 2010), given the universe of designations and, depending on the researched region, the tendency towards the disappearance or

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3 Also known as Transbrasiliana or BR-153.

the maintenance of the forms coming from this universe. Commonly, these studies have pointed to a high rate of non-responses or generalizations, especially on the part of young people, which may indicate that the rural lexicon is on the way to be extinct. In this sense, we propose a discussion about the losses or maintenance of linguistic marks conceptualized as agropastoral, in the universe of the urban man of Tocantins. In this fragment, specifically, three questions were analyzed in the lexical field “fruits and agropastoral activities” collected by the Topodynamic and Topostatic Linguistic Atlas of the State of Tocantins (ALiTTETO)<sup>4</sup>.

## RURAL AND URBAN TOCANTINS

Specifically regarding the former North of Goiás, current Tocantins, Salles (1992) establishes a comparison between three phases that constituted the formation of the territory, which meet the formation of many other Brazilian spaces.

The economic history of Goiás traces a picture that seems to be common to all periods of conquest and settlement: the first phase, of great deeds and struggles of war against the Gentiles and the search for sources of wealth; the second, of exploration and formation of uncertain, often temporary, settlements; a third moment, agricultural work, the establishment of rural property and artisanal work, index of future manufacturing or industrial centers. (SALLES, 1992, p. 14 – free translation).

The first two phases are established with the formation of uncertain territories, which, for the most part, are linked to the exploitation of precious metals, mainly gold and, later, rock crystal. In the Goiás-Tocantins space, the villages were born in the poorest regions of the state, in the Tocantins River Valley and its affluents, such as the Paranã River, for example.

According to Barbosa, Teixeira Neto e Gomes (2004, p. 65), the mining activity boosted the birth of cities, since the gold-diggings were transformed into urban settlements. However, the understanding of “urban”, in the colonial period, deserves certain relativism, since it consisted of precarious spaces, with some buildings, administrative headquarters and few services.

Commonly, “the town-villages” had the following segregated configuration: a square in the center, a mother church and crooked streets that converged on the squares. Close to the church and the central square, wealthy families lived, while the poorest lived far from these regions, in clay and mud huts (BARBOSA; TEIXEIRA NETO; GOMES, 2004, p. 66).

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4 The Tocantins Topodynamic and Topostatic Linguistic Atlas (ALiTTETO) aimed at the systematic collection of linguistic data in 12 Tocantins localities. The informants were stratified by sex (men and women), by age - two age groups (18 to 30 years old and 50 to 65 years old), and by type of mobility (topostatics: informants born and established in the research towns, topodynamics: informants coming from migrations or internal displacements. A semi-structured questionnaire was applied to the interviewees, containing phonetic (QFF), lexical (QSL) and morphosyntactic (QMS) questions.

The supply to the towns was carried out by another group, less well equipped – the farmers and cattle raisers – responsible for supplying items such as: “meat, rice, beans, corn, manioc, flour and brown sugar” (BARBOSA; TEIXEIRA NETO; GOMES, 2004, p. 69). In fact, agropastoral activities were not the driving forces behind the emergence of cities, but those responsible for their maintenance. It is a transitional phase, in which the economy was no longer based on mining activities as in the colonial period.

In Goiás-Tocantins, another factor responsible for the appearance of at least 20% of the towns emerged precisely from large farms. These properties were characterized by the self-sustainability of first-rate goods. Normally, around the farms’ headquarters, villages appeared with churches and some shops, becoming stopping points for travelers (BARBOSA; TEIXEIRA NETO; GOMES, 2004, p. 66-70).

Barbosa, Teixeira Neto e Gomes (2004) point out that there were three regions between Goiás and Tocantins – The Tocantins River Valley, Southwest Goiás and Middle Valley of Araguaia – with emphasis on agropastoral activities. The Tocantins River Valley was the oldest and most needy region, showing prosperity in gold mines in the beginning; it is located in the micro-region of Dianópolis and encompasses the cities of Natividade, Arraias and Paranã, for example, considered “traditional towns” (AQUINO, 2004).

Gradually, some urbanization factors caused the region of the Tocantins River Valley to become, in a way, less populated, which gave rise to other towns. Aquino (2004) points out that the construction of the Belém-Brasília highway, in the 1950s, resulted in a significant growth of the towns on its banks, since the population that previously inhabited the thresholds of the Tocantins River, mostly residents of the rural area, migrated to the sides of the road. This factor is pointed out by the researcher as overriding in the emptying of “traditional” towns and an apparent swelling in the new municipalities along the highway.

As an example, using data from the IBGE census of 1991 and 2010, the significant population density of towns near BR-153 can be noted compared to older locations, as shown in Tables 1 and 2:

Towns	N. of inhabitants		Rural population		Urban population	
	1991	2010	1991	2010	1991	2010
Dianópolis	14,020	19,112	5,611	2,668	8,409	16,444
Arraias	12,899	10,645	7,373	3,274	5,526	7,371
Peixe	12,878	10,384	10,378	5,149	2,491	5,235
Paranã	10,887	10,338	8,947	5,618	1,940	4,720
Natividade	10,339	9,000	5,742	1,805	4,597	7,195
Total	61,023	59,479	38,060	18,514	22,936	40,965

**Table 1** – The five largest traditional towns in Tocantins – number of inhabitants – 1991 and 2010 Census (IBGE). Source: IBGE, 1991 Census (AQUINO, 2004, p. 337); 2010 Census

The Dianópolis microregion is home to the four localities considered traditional, with the exception of the town of Peixe, and described by BARBOSA; TEIXEIRA NETO; GOMES (2004) as belonging to the Tocantins River Valley. The 1991 census shows that most of the population lived in rural areas of the listed municipalities. Almost two decades later, there was a demographic change in the scenario: in 2010 only 31% still lived in the countryside, the rest migrated from the rural area to the urban area of the municipalities.

Also noteworthy is the fact that if the two census fragments are compared, the total population of traditional towns has decreased, possibly to move to towns around the BR-153 highway, a fact corroborated by the next table which shows the five largest towns in the extension of the Belém-Brasília highway.

Towns	N. of inhabitants		Rural population		Urban population	
	1991	2010	1991	2010	1991	2010
Araguaína	103,396	150,484	18,699	7,559	84,697	142,925
Gurupi	56,741	76,755	4,232	1,755	52,509	75,000
Paraíso	28,840	44,417	4,552	1,944	24,288	42,473
Colinas	21,022	30,838	1,957	1,231	19,065	29,607
Guaraí	20,829	23,200	6,249	2,072	14,580	21,128
Total	230,828	325,694	35,689	14,561	195,139	311,133

**Table 2** – The five largest towns around the Belém-Brasília highway

– number of inhabitants – 1991 and 2010 Census (IBGE). Source:

IBGE, 1991 Census, In: Aquino (2004, p. 337); 2010 Census

From the data provided by Aquino (2004), from the 1991 Census, it is noted that the number of inhabitants of towns near the highway, when compared to traditional Tocantins localities, practically quadruplicated. Almost 20 years later, in the 2010 census, that number continued to rise: Araguaína, for example, in the 90s, had 103,396 inhabitants, reaching more than 150 thousand in 2010. In the opposite position, among the five traditional towns (cited in Table 1), four of them show a decrease in their population: the town of Arraias had 12,899 inhabitants in the first census, two decades later, it computed 10,645.

This population displacement within the state itself, or intra-state migration, has been configured as characteristics of the inhabitants. They are, for the most part, linked to the more significant urbanization of some micro-regions to the detriment of others, to the so-called “progress”, mainly of populations from more traditional communities to large centers.

It should not be forgotten that in such processes the phenomenon of rural exodus is present, with accentuated emptying of the countryside. Families that do not fully emigrate to cities gradually “send” their children in search of studies or jobs, in short, in search of the dreamed comfort of the city. The departure of the children transforms the country people’s homes into true refuges of solitude. (AQUINO, 2004, p. 342 – free translation).

In addition to requesting refuges, these locations also become linguistic refuges, as the population ages and has little contact with the language that is renewed in urban centers. There is a kind of crystallization of the language, since the “no” contact with the lexicon renovations ends up leaving the rural language somewhat archaic.

## **THE DIALETAL VEINS AND THE RURAL VERSUS URBAN CONTINUUM**

The occupational factors of what Tocantins has become today are equal to the understanding of colonial principles throughout Brazil, especially on the formation of towns, whereupon “The entire structure of our colonial society had its base outside urban environments. [...] It was not strictly an agricultural civilization. [...], It was a civilization of rural roots [...] Towns are virtually, if not in fact, simple dependencies on them. (HOLANDA, 2004 [1936], p. 73 – free translation).

The author’s indication when establishing that, since the very beginning, the country followed an agrarian trend and whose cities were the direct results of this dynamic are in line with the definition of Brazilian cultural areas, with a rural-urban pattern, outlined by Diêgues Júnior (1980, p. 36) for Brazil at the beginning of colonization. For him, the main responsible for the diffusion of an agrarian society, mainly of aristocratic lineage, was the northeast coast. That society was conceptualized as the Agrarian Northeast in which connections with the Portuguese colonization process initiated by the coastal zones and, later, extended to the rural areas, in search of products for trade, such as gold, for example.

In addition to the Northeast, as a precursor of an agrarian/rural movement, there is an indication that in all other Brazilian regions the peasant element has always been the factor that boosted growth, to a greater or lesser extent, up to the beginning of the 20th century. For the author, for example, the regional configuration can be verified in different orders in all cultural regions.

In the pastoral Mediterranean, for example, the economy was initially focused on barns and on livestock farms later. In the range known as the Amazon, the domain of the forest and water elements gives the tonic to the regional way of life, with customs and traditions different from other localities, causing a terminology peculiar to the region, “enriched with terms adopted from other activities for life in the water and in the forest” (DIÊGUES JUNIOR, 1980, p. 38 – free translation).

The Midwest region, not necessarily born under the pastoral aegis but in the exploitation of precious metals, after the decay of the mines, dedicated itself to livestock activities, agriculture, among others linked to the peasant environment, a movement still substantial in current days.

Parallel to the fact that sociologists such as Holanda (1969) and Diêgues Jr (1980) consider Brazil to be eminently rural until the 20th century, IBGE Censuses have shown that in the last decades of the 20th and 21st centuries there was a significant decline in populations in rural areas that migrated to urban areas. It is estimated that in 35 years, peasants went from over 50% to just 19%. The criteria adopted by the Institute consider an urban area to be any seat of municipalities or districts,

regardless of the number of inhabitants or economic activity. From this perspective, Brazil would house 5,507 municipalities (BORTONI-RICARDO, 2006).

The aforementioned parameters, adopted by IBGE to designate a region as urban, have been criticized mainly by researchers such as Veiga (2002), who establishes that the most reliable criterion would be that of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). According to the agency, urban municipalities are those with a demography of more than 50,000 inhabitants. In this parameter, Brazil would have a total of 411 municipalities (VEIGA, 2000), a number much lower than that found at IBGE.

In the case of Tocantins, the Institute describes 139 official municipalities, but if the OECD criteria are applied, as suggested by Veiga (2002), only Palmas, Araguaína, Gurupi, Porto Nacional and Paraíso do Tocantins could be considered towns, resulting in a decline of approximately 96.4% in the number of municipalities.

Despite the criteria used by both the IBGE and the OECD, there is no denying that in recent decades there has been a swelling of large cities and an emptying of localities considered to be rural areas, translated by Penna (2006) in a process of loss of identity and uprooting of that migrant, normally poor, who seeks the great centers in search of better opportunities, configuring a situation of

a dialectal continuum, with the popular and cult poles highlighted, which has at one end the variants used mainly by non-educated people from rural areas and, at the other, the variants from those from areas, mainly urban, with high and good schooling. On the margins of this continuum, one can still locate, beyond one extreme, possible decreolizing sites in isolated former Afro-Brazilian communities. [...] and, in addition to the other, the formal pattern of individuals with high and good schooling, who still seek to apply the traditional prescriptive grammatical rules, at least in formal writing, indebted to European Portuguese. (SILVA, 2004, p. 165 – free translation).

Commonly, the speaker who was once compelled to leave his place of origin, for reasons ranging from “impossibility of access to land, poverty, lack of resources to face the problems of nature” (PENNA, 2006, p. 94 – free translation), is faced with a new reality, mainly dialectal, in which it needs to establish new social relationships and, in a way, try to adapt to this new scenario, a transition not always smooth.

In this sense, for Bortoni-Ricardo (2006, p. 85), the location of a given migrant/speaker, their social and linguistic integration, depends more on their network of relationships than necessarily on their social history. For the author, social networks, such as those found in large cities, exert a high degree of linguistic pressure on speakers and reinforce normative standards, sometimes distancing the speaker from his or her dialect matrix.

In this sort of environment, the speaker coming from rural areas and, currently projected in an urban environment, is submitted to adapt to the new linguistic standards, in a way, demanded by the environment. For Bortoni-Ricardo (2006, p. 92), this new speech community can be understood as *rurban*, that is, “urban community with preservation of its rural antecedents” or “rural populations with reasonable integration with urban culture” (free translation).



Diatologically, only in the last few decades, researchers with the theoretical support of social psychology and anthropology have dedicated themselves to verifying the continuum to describe linguistic factors, that is, structural variation and its dichotomies, rural/urban, for example. Initially, it was believed that pure speech, typical of a locality, was found in rural areas and, under this umbrella, the first descriptive linguistic works were born.

As an illustrative factor, for traditional Dialectology, linguistic surveys should be carried out with informants who meet the characteristics described by Chambers and Trudgill (1994, p. 47) as NORM: nonmobile, older, rural, males, understood by Zágari (1998, p. 36) as HARAS: male, adult, rural, illiterate and sedentary (low demographic mobility).

This type of informant was sought, since linguists, in essence, were linked to philological precepts and tried to collect more archaizing aspects of speech (Diachronic Dialectology), through individuals who had no influence from the urban area or any other means of communication. With this methodology, the first linguistic atlases were born.

However, due to migratory movements, the emergence of new means of communication, whether physical or digital, the contacts between speakers of different intervareital modalities, this reality and this informant described by Chambers and Trudgill (1994) no longer exist in essence. In this sense, currently, it is imperative to consider other social realities.

Altenhofen and Thun (2016) establish that in plural realities, such as that of many Brazilian states and, above all, Tocantins, it is up to the researcher to observe four factors: a) the condition of migration (migratory state), b) the space of migration, c) the directionality and course of migration and d) the temporality of migration.

The “migration condition” is directly linked to the speaker’s spatial mobility. It is in this context that migrants, in contact with different realities, reframe their language, sometimes resulting in the adoption of new linguistic forms outside the matrix of origin (ALTENHOFEN; THUN, 2016, p. 379-380). It is noteworthy that this factor is directly linked to its acceptance or not by the new linguistic community.

For the “migration space”, linguistic/social continuums are considered such as: rural *versus* urban, borders *versus* interior, proximity *versus* distance of communication ways for dialectal description. In this last point, the analysis of factors such as the Belém-Brasília Highway plays an important role in the migratory fronts to/in Tocantins. Localities that are on the edges of highways tend to develop faster than peripheral towns, as the social relationships established between residents can be more sparse and open (MILROY, 1980; BORTONI-RICARDO, 2011), that is, there is a tendency for the migrant to maintain ties with different nuclei: family, job, church, among others.

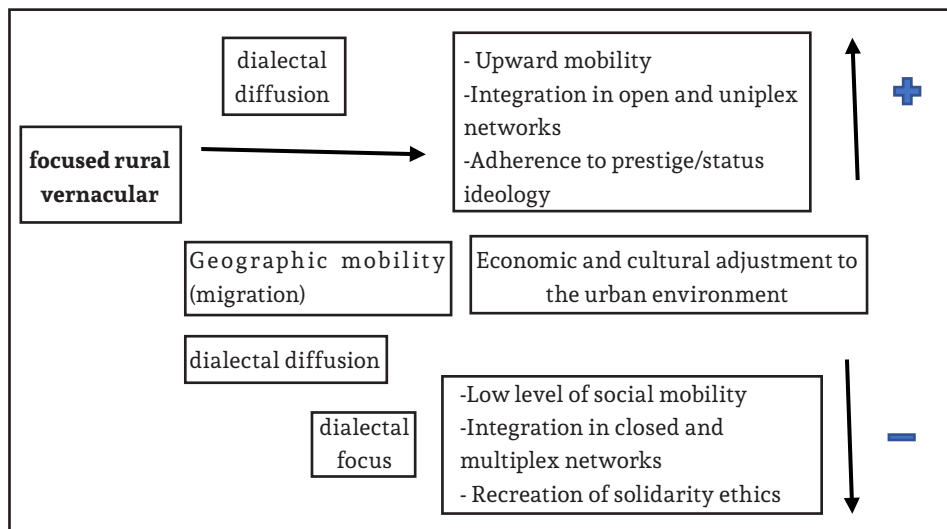
In “directionality and path of migration” the migratory path carried out by the speaker is verified, in order to contrast his variant with linguistic works carried out in his place of origin. From this path, it is possible to verify the processes of linguistic change in progress, the adoption of new variants and the disuse of linguistic forms.

Finally, the “temporality of migration” concerns, among other directions, the “time elapsed of a migration”, as well as the “arrival order” of this migrant in a chosen



territory (ALTENHOFEN; THUN, 2016, p. 391). The knowledge of these factors leads to the understanding of mechanisms of maintenance or adoption of a new linguistic variety by the migrant.

It is highlighted that older generations tend to maintain their variant of origin, rural, for example, while younger generations tend to adopt the local norm, depending on the “time” and the amount of “contacts” that these speakers have established (MARGOTTI, 2016, p. 368), that is, whether the network of contacts is denser or less dense, which can be translated into the following diagram:



**Figure 1** – Rural/urban migration – targeting and dialectal diffusion.

Source: adapted from Bortoni-Ricardo (2011, p. 124)

The scheme provided by Bortoni-Ricardo (2011) shows the speaker coming from rural areas after his spatial mobility in face of two situations. The first one is linked to the socioeconomic movement of this former peasant in an upward direction, that is, if this speaker finds better opportunities for life and work, and social integration in large centers. In this situation, the migrant tends to acquire more open networks and there are attempts to adapt to prestige standards, for example.

The opposite situation is verified when the speaker does not adjust economically or culturally to the urban environment and finds little social mobility on this scale. The movement of this migrant is more centripetal, because he seeks in his peers, relatives and friends from the same environment, his social relations. In this scenario, there is a lower tendency to adopt prestige standards and the migrant maintains his talk of origin.

In *rurban* communities, in the case of Tocantins, for example, it is observed that, in situations of linguistic interviews, there is a double process: sometimes the informant adapts himself dialectally to the new environment and presents the typical variants of the urban environment (dialect accommodation), sometimes he

presents the rural marks of his region of origin (MOLLICA et al, 2008), as can be seen in the next topic.

## TRACES OF THE RURAL LEXICON IN TOCANTINS

To verify the more or less rural linguistic patterns of the informants surveyed by ALiTTETO, three questions were selected from the semantic field “fruits and agropastoral activities” (*frutas e atividades agropastoris*), applied to 96 informants, linked to the urban universe, in 12 locations of Tocantins. The questions are: 28 – purple tip of the banana bunch (*ponta roxa do cacho da banana*); 38 – wicker, bamboo, or braided vine objects (*objetos de vime, de taquara, de cipó trançado*) used to carry potatoes, manioc on horse or donkey backs; 40 – leather objects with a lid (*objetos de couro com tampa*) to carry flour on the back of the horse or donkey.

It should be added that the non-response of the informant was considered, that is, the responsive absence at the time of the survey as a type of response, since this lack of knowledge of the referent requested in the question provides indications of the maintenance or loss of forms considered as rural.

For the variants obtained through question 28 - What is the name of the purple tip of the banana bunch, 87 responses were collected, distributed in 11 lexical units; 27 informants were not able to answer, mostly young people included in the first age group (18 to 30 years old). The results with the variants, number of occurrences and percentages are shown in Table 3.

Variant	N. of occurrence	%	Variant	N. of occurrence	%
Mangará	28	24.6	String ( <i>fio</i> )	2	1.8
Non-response	27	23.7	Bunch ( <i>cacho</i> )	1	0.9
Umbigo	19	16.7	Fig ( <i>figa</i> )	1	0.9
Coração	14	12.3	Eye ( <i>olho</i> )	1	0.9
Buzo	10	8.8	Tassel ( <i>pendão</i> )	1	0.9
<i>Flor de bananeira</i> (Lexia flower)	9	7.9	Cluster ( <i>penca</i> )	1	0.9
87					

**Table 3** – Designations for the purple tip of the banana bunch, and respective numbers of occurrences and percentages. Source: *corpus* data (2018)

Note that the most recurrent variant is *mangará*<sup>5</sup> quoted in the dictionary as *Tupinismo* by Houaiss (2009), dating from 1584. The diatopia of the term is extended to almost the entire state of Tocantins, with the exception of the Southeast side.

The second percentage obtained refers to the non-response rate for the question at issue, 23.7%. Responsive absences occur more intensely in cities on the banks of the Tocantins River and of the BR-153, with no distinction between older or more recent towns. It is noted that this lack of answers mainly affects informants in the first age group (18 and 30 years old).

*Umbigo*, third percentage of occurrences, appears in almost all of Tocantins, with the exception of the northeast side, predominantly pronounced by the oldest age group (50 and 65 years old). It is grouped in the opposite position to the *mangará* and very frequent in the towns Natividade and Paranã (Southeast), traditional towns, former mining camps.

On the other hand, the lexical item *coração*<sup>6</sup> has a distribution in the extreme north and in the extreme south of the state, taking place in all state limits. It is more frequent in the first age group, although it also occurs in the 2nd age group.

As to *buzo*<sup>7</sup>, fourth item, was recorded in the area known as the *baiano* way of speaking (NASCENTES, 1953; RIBEIRO, 2012), a region opposite to *mangará*, forming an isolexic in this space, that is, it indicates the formation of a dialectal region of almost exclusive use of a linguistic form to the detriment of otherwise.

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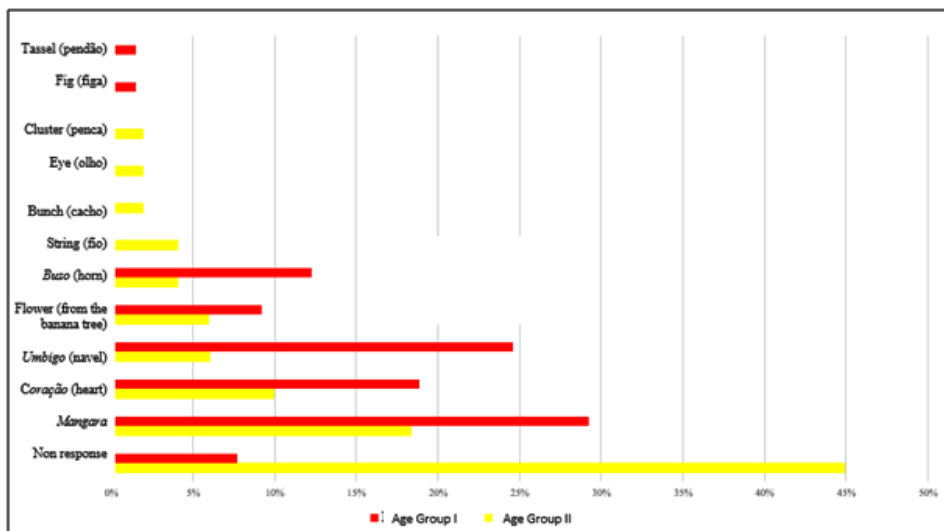
5 The term is provided by Houaiss (2009) as Tupinism and regionalism of the Brazilian Northeast, dating back to 1584. However, it was recorded as prominent in the data of Guedes (2012), in the state of Pará and. In the letter L07 of the Linguistic Atlas of Brazil (CARDOSO et al., 2014), *mangará* is dominant in both the capitals of the North and Northeast states: Fortaleza, Natal and João Pessoa; on a smaller scale, in São Luiz and Teresina. The word, therefore, would not be configured only as Northeastern regionalism. Still in Guedes's (2012), the hegemony of *mangará* loses its strength at the border point between Pará and Tocantins, where it competes with the form *umbigo*, the second variant in percentage in our data, but not lexicalized in Houaiss (2009) for the item at issue.

6 It is listed in Houaiss (2009) as regionalism of the Northeast and as a variant for *mangará*, dating from 1278. In ALiB, *coração* was expressed by informants from the three southern capitals, with a lower presence in the Midwest (Goiânia and Mato Grosso) and Northeast (Salvador and Aracaju) (CARDOSO et al., 2014, p. 173 [letter L07]) Thus, it is possibly an irradiated variant from the Center-West or Northeast to Tocantins.

7 In ALS I, *buzo* competes with *buzina* (horn); in Bahia, it is found as *buzo*, *buza* and *buzina* throughout the territory (ROSSI et al, 1963). Its record is not included in the data from Guedes (2012), in Pará, nor in the northern capitals analyzed by ALiB, but it was noticed in Maceió and Aracaju. (CARDOSO et al., 2014). Thus, it is possibly a Northeastern variant that entered Tocantins, and given the location of the variant, it was introduced via Bahia. The term is not registered by Aulete (1986) or by Houaiss (2009) as *banana inflorescence* (blossoming banana) but, among the meanings found and given the characteristics of the referent, we can believe that it is an allusion to the physical appearance of the item, which dates back to the *buzina* instrument (horn), in its old oval shape, one of the variants collected in Sergipe (ALS) and Bahia (APFB). ancient oval shape, one of the variants collected in Sergipe (ALS) and Bahia (APFB).

The *lexia* flower (from the banana tree)<sup>8</sup>, of nine occurrences, is disseminated throughout the research territory, with the exception of the border limits with Maranhão. Initially, it was believed that the concept was a generalization provided by informants, but the item was collected by the Linguistic Atlas of Brazil in different Brazilian regions (CARDOSO et al., 2014). Its occurrence occurs mainly among young women.

With few occurrences, *fio*, *cacho*, *figa*, *olho*, *pendão* and *penca*, which are generic, common designations, and quoted in dictionary with other meanings, provided by the informant not knowing the referent. These general designations were mostly collected from men in age group I, as can be seen in Graph 1.



**Graph 1** – Distribution of variants by age group (QSL 028). Source: *corpus* data (2018)

By the generational fragment (informants between 18 and 30 years and between 50 and 65 years old), the highest percentage occurred in informants in age group I is linked to non-responses, that is, the lack of knowledge about the requested referent, possibly because they do not belong to the linguistic universe of the youngest informant.

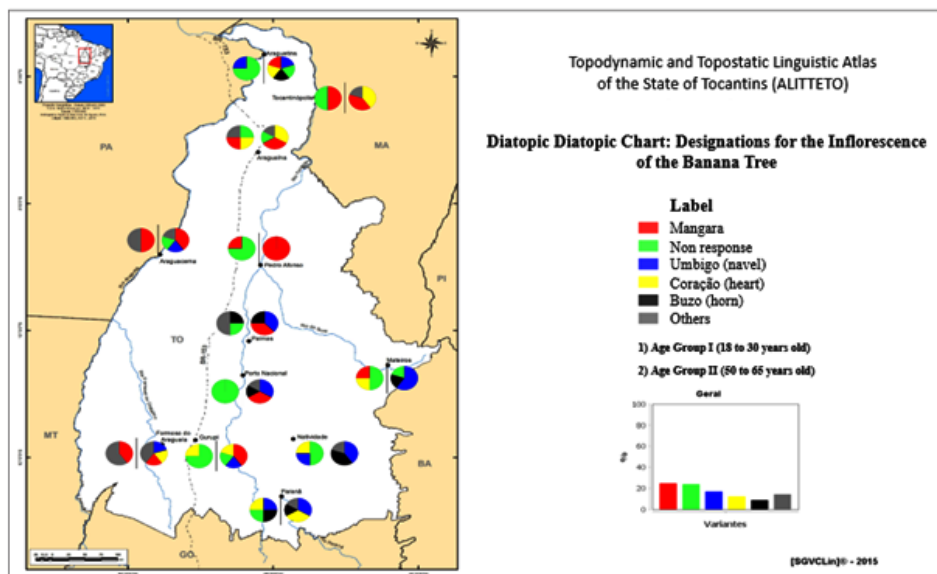
In this regard, Ziamandanis (1999, p. 656) indicates that at the time of the survey, silence on the part of the interviewee can be interpreted in two ways. The first case means that the informant does not know mentally the requested word or, if he does, he is unable to remember the name assigned, because it is part of a secondary mental collection. On the other hand, the author indicates that the absence of a response may indicate the interviewee's tiredness, due to the duration of the interview.

The first indication provided by the author is in line with the postulates about

8 In the Linguistic Atlas of Brazil (CARDOSO et al. 2014) from the cartogram Lo7, *flower* is more frequent in Rio Grande do Sul and São Paulo, with low rates in Vitória and Recife. In the western part of Brazil, it appears in Cuiabá, Porto Velho, Rio Branco and Macapá. The present situation verified, in comparison with our data, can evidence migratory influences coming from the South/Southeast, towards the North/Northeast.

the absence of words more restricted to the rural universe, a factor corroborated by the data showed in Graph I, with the comparisons between the variants produced by age groups I and II. While among young people, 44.9% claim not to know words that designate the banana inflorescence, the older ones show only 7.7% of abstentions. In addition, there is abundant citation of generic terms by the younger ones, while the older ones tend to focus their answers on a few items, such as *mangará*, *coração* and *umbigo*, for example.

Figure 1 shows the distribution in diatopic and diagenational terms of the variants obtained. Non-responses, marked in light green, occur predominantly in the first circles representing young informants. It is noted that in Porto Nacional, for example, none of the informants in this age group knew how to answer the question.



**Figure 2** – Diatopic-Diagenational Cartogram for banana inflorescence. Source: *corpus* data (2018)

The linguistic chart shows the responsive absences more clearly in the first age group and provides evidence that in some regions there is greater lack of knowledge of the referent, such as Gurupi, Porto Nacional, Pedro Afonso and Araguatins, which can also be caused by the inexistence of this type of cultivation.

The west side of BR-153 has little incidence of the referent ignorance. In Formoso do Araguaia, for example, all the informants know about the “inflorescence of the banana tree”; such evidence is based on the fact that in this region there are agrarian poles, causing the speakers of this locality to maintain contact with more rural environments and cultures.

In short, in a universe of 48 young informants interviewed, almost half are unaware of the item requested in the questioning; the older ones, on the other hand, showed only seven abstentions. Furthermore, in the collection of 11 lexical forms to

designate the “banana inflorescence”, at least six of them (*fio, cacho, figa, olho, pendão* and *penca*) are generic responses, provided mainly by young people.

In the universe of this questioning, in particular, there is a tendency not to adopt forms belonging to the rural environment, especially by the younger age group. which may indicate that these forms are on the way to disappear.

Still in the same analytical understanding, for question 38 – What are those wicker, bamboo, or braided vine objects called, used to carry potatoes, cassava, on the back of a horse or donkey, 12 different shapes were collected, provided in a universe of 124 answers. Table 4 shows the variants, the number of occurrences and the respective percentages.

Variant	N. of occurrence	%	Variant	N. of occurrence	%
Jacá	49	39.5	<i>Capanga/bolsa/ embornal</i> (hENCHMEN/bag)	3	2.4
<i>Balaio</i> (hamper)	22	17.7	<i>Alforje</i> (saddlebag)	2	1.6
<i>Cesto/cesta</i> (basket)	19	15.3	<i>Garajau</i> (tern)	2	1.6
Cofo	9	7.3	<i>Cocho</i> (through)	1	0.8
Caçua	6	4.8	Chocononto	1	0.8
Non-response	5	4.0	Arupemba	1	0.8
Pacará	4	3.2			
124					

**Table 4** – Designations for objects made of natural fiber, carried on the back of a horse or donkey, and respective numbers of occurrences and percentages. Source: author’s elaboration with *corpus* data (2018)

It is considered that the first two variants, *jacá* and *balaio*, describe the item in question from the dictionaryzation of both: “type of basket made from natural fibers” (HOUAISS), that is, the highest rates of citations, for part of the ALITTETO informants denotes the referent of the question. *Jacá*<sup>9</sup> is distributed across all survey points, more intensely in the Center-North fraction, while in the Center-South portion of Tocantins, radiating to the borders with Bahia, Piauí and Maranhão, in the locality of Mateiros, there is a greater concentration of *balaio*<sup>10</sup>.

On the other hand, the third most productive variant, *cesto/cesta*, understood by dictionaries as a general type of utensils (AULETE, 1986; HOUAISS, 2009), which serves to transport “things” denotes that it is a generic item, not necessarily used in the transport of groceries on the back of the animal. The areal distribution of

9 It comes from the Tupi *aiacá*, registered in 1698 (AULETE, 1986), indicating that its production is made with the natural fiber of the bamboo (HOUAISS, 2009). It should be noted that the letter “j” does not exist in Tupi and is commonly transcribed by “i”.

10 Its etymology is unknown, but it is dated to 1524.

the item was uniform in the 12 cities, being predominantly evident in the speech of young people. On a smaller scale are the items *cofo*<sup>11</sup> dispersed throughout the territory, both in more recent locations and in older cities; and *caçuá*<sup>12</sup> recorded by six informants and always collected at state border points. As for abstentions, in a total of six (4.8%), it appears that all responsive absences come from the state center towards the south of Tocantins.

The grouping *capanga/bolsa/embornal*, carried out from common semantic trait between the forms: all are listed as a type of bag used to carry groceries, regardless of the material used in the making. They occurred sparsely in the research space: two citations in the North and another in the capital Palmas.

In the Center-East portion, the items *pacará* (Porto Nacional and Mateiros), *garajau* (Palmas and Natividade) and *alforje* were registered with little representation. (Palmas e Paranã)<sup>13</sup>. The unique incidences – *arupemba*, *cocho*, *chocononto* – occur in the south-southeast of Tocantins. None of the items is lexicalized in the consulted dictionaries.

In terms of age group, as shown in Graph 2, unlike what happened in QSL 028, there is little lack of responses in both groups, despite the predominance of this fact in the younger ones.

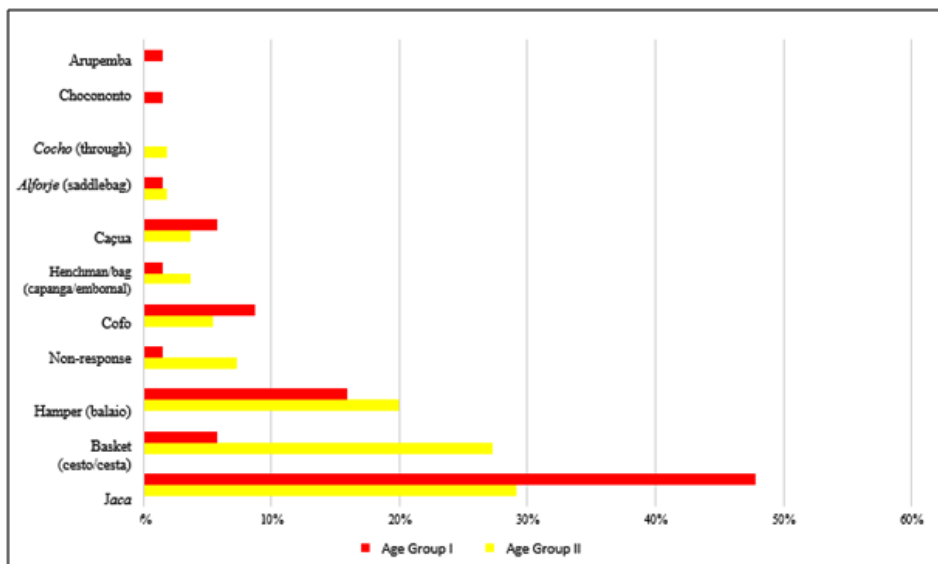
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11 Aulete (1986) presents it as an object used by fishermen and its etymology refers to *cofinho*, from Minho (Portugal) dating from the 14th century.

12 A variant of controversial origin, possibly African, from 1889 (HOUAISS, 2009), was recorded by six informants and was always collected at state border points, not only occurring on the border between Goiás and Tocantins. Consulting other state atlases, we found that, according to Guedes (2012), it is the most productive variant in Pará, competing with *panero*. In the data from the Linguistic Atlas of Amazonas (CRUZ, 2004, [Letter 94]), it was not very recurrent.

13 The first two are *tupinismo*, from 1763 and 1899, respectively, and are described as types of baskets made with natural fibers. *Alforje* (saddlebag), in turn, has its origins in the Arabic *al-khurj*, “bag that is carried alongside, in the saddle”, presenting the oldest dating of the three: 1162 (HOUAISS, 2009).

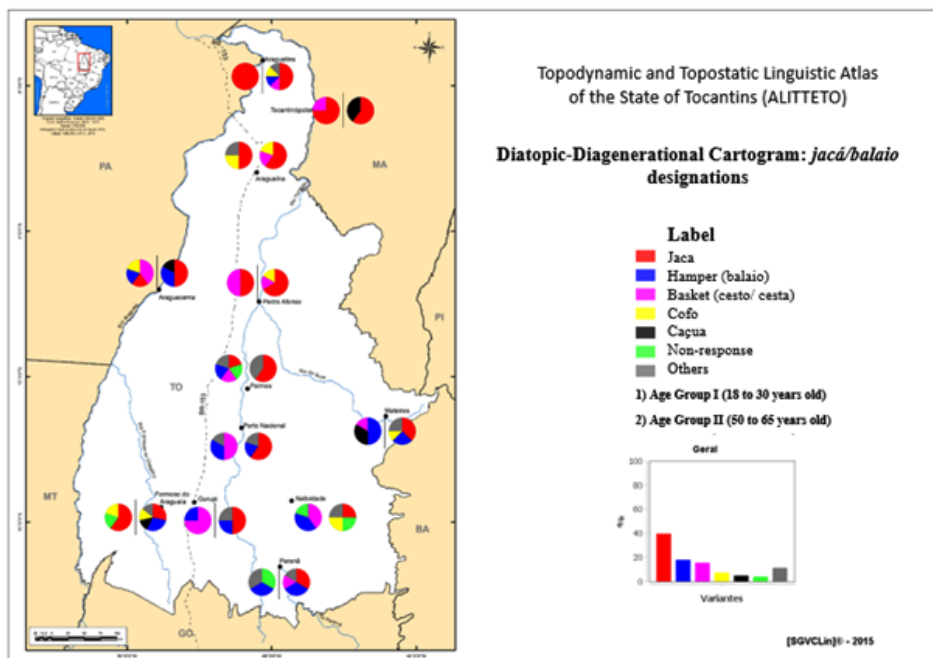




**Graph 2** – Distribution of variants by age group (QSL 038). Source: *corpus* data (2018)

In all variables, *jacá* predominates, with a higher rate in the speech of elderly informants. On the other hand, the second variant in the youth group refers to *cesto/cesta*, a designation, possibly generalist, while the older ones enunciated *balaio*. It is noteworthy that in both age groups, not only young people's, there were abundant citations of a generalist nature, normally obtained by only one informant each.

As for the non-response rate, despite the predominance of speakers in age group I, in all, in both groups, this factor was not relevant in this question, according to the cartogram that illustrates the most recurrent variants and the absence of response.



**Figure 3** – Diatopic-Diagenenerational Cartogram. Source: *corpus* data (2018)

The diatopy shown in the cartogram has a higher rate of non-responses from the Center-South of the state. It is observed that, in the northern half of Tocantins, all informants know the requested item and, in most cases, mentioned *jacá* or *cesto/cesta* (basket). As for the southern half, there is greater eclecticism in the responses, and it is not possible to trace isolexics.

When comparing the results of QSL 028 with QSL 038, with regard to non-responses, it appears that in the second group. informants, both young and old, seem to know the referents. Even the informants in the first age group. although they mentioned general terms such as *cesto/cesta* (basket), seem to belong to the requested agropastoral universe.

For the last question of this semantic field, which concerns question 40: What are the leather objects with a lid called to carry flour on the back of a horse or donkey? a total of 120 responses were collected, distributed among 15 forms; eleven informants were unable to respond. Table 5 shows the variants, the total number of occurrences and the respective percentages.

Variant	Occurrence	%	Variant	Occurrence	%
<i>Alforje</i> (saddlebag)	21	17.5	<i>Caixote</i> (box)	5	4.2
Buraca/bruaca	21	17.5	<i>Cesto/cesta</i> (basket)	3	2.5
Caçua	14	11.7	<i>Embornal</i> (scupper)	2	1.7
Jacá	11	9.2	Gibão	2	1.7
<i>Mala/maleta</i> (leather suitcase/bag)	11	9.2	Mocó	1	0.8
Non-response	11	9.2	Garajaú	1	0.8
<i>Baú</i> (chest)	9	7.5	Sucuntum	1	0.8
<i>Bolsa</i> (bag)	6	5.0	Surão	1	0.8
120					

**Table 5** – Designations for leather objects, used to carry flour, on horse or donkey back, and respective numbers of occurrences and percentages. Source: *corpus* data (2018)

The predominant item *Alforje*<sup>14</sup>, similar to *buraca/bruaca*, has a constant field distribution throughout Tocantins, with the exception of the cities of Araguacema and Natividade. In this case, given the significant amount of citations to designate the objects, as well as the endorsements provided by the informants, the present response is considered as valid for the referent under analysis, even considering that *alforje* (saddlebag) names other objects, such as evidenced in the QSL 038 analysis. That fact was also verified by Isquerdo (2010, s/d) in a study of data collected in Brazilian capitals. According to the author, the informant's lack of knowledge about the item makes him allude to other semes which bring together the designations in semantic terms (format, utility, material with which it is made), such as: *baú* (chest), *bolsa* (bag), *alforje* (saddlebag), *embornal* (scupper), *mala* (suitcase)/ *malote* (pouch) *mochila* (handbag).

*Buraca/bruaca*<sup>15</sup> occurs in the Southeast portion which housed a large contingent of Portuguese and slaves, as a result of the mines of gold and other metals; these variants radiate to the urban areas such: Palmas, Mateiros e Gurupi, Isquerdo (2010)

<sup>14</sup> According to Houaiss (2009), it is an Arabism (al-khurj), dating from 1162, but there is no mention in the dictionary whether this item is made of leather or not.

<sup>15</sup> Both items have etymology attributed to the Spanish *burjaca*, 'bag of beggar or pilgrim', from 1836. In Houaiss (2009), this entry refers to the *bruaca* and designation for rustic bag or suitcase. *Buraca*, was also predominantly recorded in the work of Augusto (2012), in Goiás, thus denoting that the origin of the variant comes from the aforementioned state, since the towns where this variant is registered are close to the Goiás-Tocantins state limits, especially Paranã.

adds that the term *bruaca* is linked to a rural universe, which may indicate that, in these localities, there are still lexical traces of colonization.

The third item was *caçuá* and its validation and insertion in the analysis was due to the amount of answers and explanations by the research subjects, because according to the dictionaries, this object is commonly made with natural fibers and not with leather, as requested in the question, as well as *alforje*. Its register does not occur precisely in the cities of the Southeast fraction, where *buraca* and *bruaca* predominate. *Caçuá* radiates from the Southwest part, where the newest localities are situated along the BR-153, rising in a northerly direction; in Araguatins, for example, this form showed a rate of 42%.

As highlighted, *caçuá*<sup>16</sup> is distributed throughout the North, the Central part and the Southwest; it competes with *buraca* and *bruaca* in Gurupi and Mateiros, which may be considered as transition zones of this variant, while, in the Central and Southeast parts, *buraca* and *bruaca* predominate. Another aspect that can be raised permeates the fact that the citation of *caçuá* indicates a certain lack of knowledge of the informants of these locations in relation to the referent: leather bag, that is, the more recent locations show less rural traits than those presented in the Southeast of Tocantins, for example.

The *jacá* form, also identified in question 38, occurs, as well as *caçuá*, in the cities around the Transbrasiliana highway (BR-153) and the Tocantins river. It appears with a higher percentage in the speech of women coming from migrations (topodynamics), which may indicate that it is a Northeastern variant present in the territory.

With a rate just over 10%, there are the generic terms *mala/maleta de couro* (sutcase/ leather bag), earned in the territory, with the exception of Natividade, Paranã, Gurupi and Araguaína. Broadly designates utensils for storing things, with the specification of being made of leather.

Eleven informants did not know how to answer the question (9.2%), a lower number compared to the index of ignorance of the referent in the Center-West region, for example, of approximately 20% (ISQUERDO, 2010), indicating that Tocantins shows signs of a Portuguese with traces of rurality in this questioning.

Variants such as *baú* (chest), *bolsa* (bag), *caixote* (box), *cesto* (basket) and *embornal* (scupper) were also found, on a low scale, possibly resulting from the informant's lack of knowledge regarding the object made of calfskin.

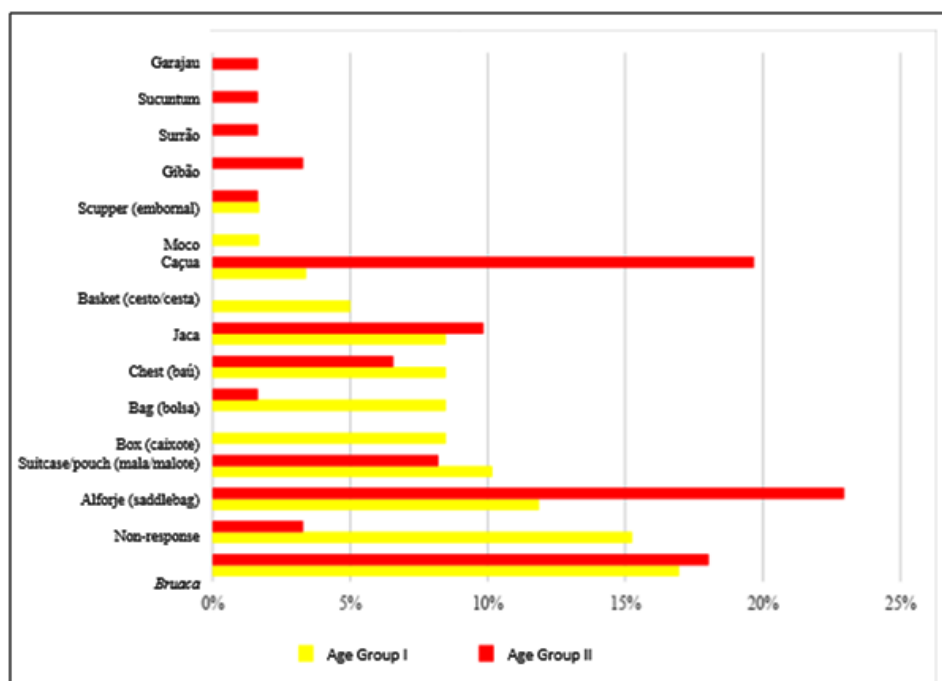
Each of the variants *gibão*, *mocó*, *garajau*, *surrão*<sup>17</sup> and *sucuntum* got Only one record. The only lexicalized terms that partially approximate the referent are *garajau* and *surrão*; the first indicating a type of basket, not necessarily of leather; the second, a type of leather bag used by shepherds (HOUAISS, 2009).

Isquerdo (2010, p. 8) highlights that the citation in more general forms or which designate another referent is linked to two clues: "the disuse of the sign due to the

16 Given the border with Goiás and the occurrence of this item in Augusto (2012) and Marins (2014), we can infer that *buraca* and *bruaca* are from the Midwest, while *caçuá*, is located in towns along and near the BR-153, which can be from the North/Northeast migrations, even though it occurs mostly in topostatic informants.

17 Variant also found in data from Freitas Marins (2014), in the Midwest locations: Barra do Garças (MT), Poxoréu (MS) and Corumbá (MS).

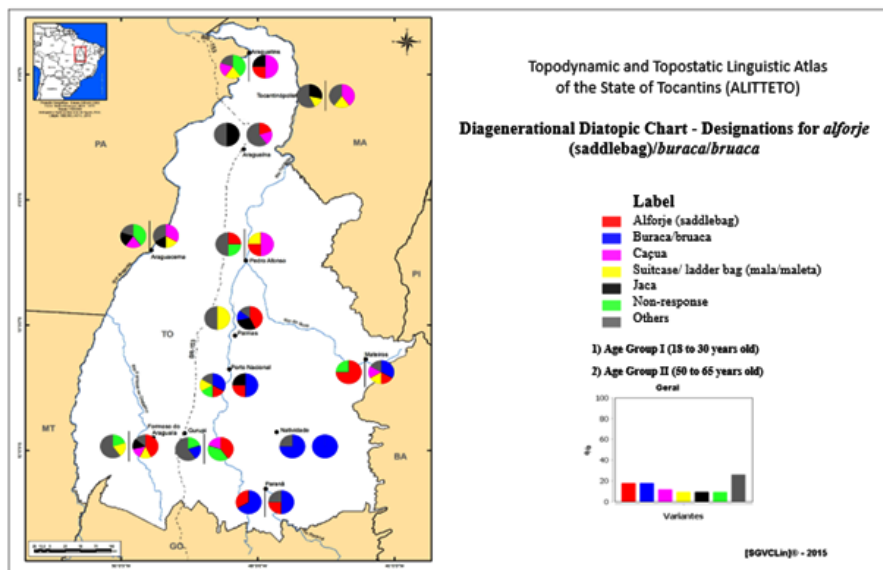
disappearance of the referent and the internal selection of the language which imposes the supremacy of one sign over the other, normally the most prestigious variant” (free translation). In these data, as in the author’s, the lack of knowledge of the referent is linked to the first indicative: the non-use of the object in younger and industrialized towns of Tocantins, which leads the informant to formulate names closer to their reality. When analyzing the lexical citations by age group, it is evident that in age group I, abstentions are predominant (15%), while in group II the rate does not reach 4%.



**Graph 3** – Distribution of variants by age group (QSL 040). Source: *corpus* data (2018)

Generic citations or citations referring to other elements are abundant in both groups. It is interesting that the citation of *buraca/bruaca*, understood by Isquerdo (2010) as an element linked to the rural universe, is similar in both age groups, not just the older ones. It is added that *caixote* (box), *cesto/cesta* (basket) and *moco* are for the exclusive use of the youngest, while *garajau*, *sucuntum*, *surrão* and *gibão* are specific to the older group.

The diatopic-diagenational distribution does not show apparent isoglosses that evidence non-responses. However, it is noted that the extreme North (Bico do Papagaio) and the Southeast present 100% of responses to the QSL 40, which may indicate that in these regions the elements of the rural universe are still known.



**Figure 4** – Diatopic-Diagenenerational Cartogram. Source: *corpus* data (2018)

The highest rates of non-response are in locations close to or on the banks of the BR-153, locations that constitute the most recent colonization axis in the state. On the other hand, in the Southeast part of the researched space, Natividade and Paranã, all informants claim to know the referent, especially with the citation of *buraca/bruaca*, understood by Isquerdo (2010) as a mark of rurality.

## FINAL REMARKS

In short, the semantic sub-area “fruits and agropastoral activities” showed a significant rate of non-responses, which can be attributed to the fact that the referents belong to the rural universe. However, the percentages of non-responses showed - when compared to other works - Isquerdo (2010), for example, denote that the abstentions of informants from Tocantins are still lower.

There is also an expressive number of lexias that we classify as general/generic, as they can designate more than one object, not necessarily what the question requests, mentioned mostly by young informants, possibly due to the lack of use of the object in the state.

Each question showed different levels of less or more rural traits. Question 28, for example, was the one with higher abstentions; while QSL 38 was the lowest non-responded. Finally, question 40 showed a relative rate of abstentions, but indicated the presence of various generic terms that do not necessarily designate the requested referent.

An explanation for that possible disparity is highlighted by the fact that, despite the three questions are inserted in a rural universe, the inhabitants of Tocantins demonstrate more knowledge of referents related, specifically, to dealing with cattle, perhaps because the region is markedly cattle-raising because of the vast expanses of area, hence a more pressing lexicon with livestock.

In this way, Tocantins, through the analyzed questions, as well as the non-response index, shows traces of rurality in the Center-West, as highlighted by Isquerdo (2010). On the other hand, the citation, especially by young people, of generic items makes us believe that more rural terms are disappearing, as pointed out by Romano (2007) and Isquerdo (2010).

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