

**BETWEEN SPEECH AND WRITING: LINGUISTIC-RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE WORDPLAYING GENRE IN THE NORTHEASTERN CANTORIA DE VIOLA IN BRAZIL**

**ENTRE A FALA E A ESCRITA: ANÁLISE LINGÜÍSTICO-RETÓRICA DO GÊNERO TEXTUAL/DISCURSIVO TROCADILHO NA CANTORIA DE VIOLA NORDESTINA**

**ENTRE EL HABLA Y LA ESCRITURA: UN ANÁLISIS LINGÜÍSTICO-RETÓRICO DEL GÉNERO TEXTUAL/DISCURSIVO DE LOS JUEGOS DE PALABRAS EN LA CANTORIA DE VIOLA DEL NORESTE DE BRASIL**



<https://doi.org/10.56238/sevened2026.008-121>

**Antonio Marinho do Nascimento<sup>1</sup>, Benedito Gomes Bezerra<sup>2</sup>**

**ABSTRACT**

The Brazilian northeastern cantoria de viola, orally improvised but often recorded in writing, has aroused the interest of many scholars, from different perspectives, from literary and cultural studies to musical and sociological approaches. Few studies, however, have been conducted from a strictly linguistic perspective. In this article, our aim was to conduct an exploratory study of the wordplaying genre in the cantoria de viola under the perspective of the Language for Specific Purposes, based on the theoretical and methodological contribution of Genre Analysis (Swales, 1990). Methodologically, the study consisted of applying move analysis to a *corpus* of twenty stanzas of sextilhas, a typical genre of the cantoria de viola, authored by Louro do Pajeú, focusing on the use of wordplaying by the poet. As a result, rhetorical moves were found that are both typical of the universe of the cantoria and specific to the poet's poetics. These moves are more general, relating to the aspects of introduction, development and conclusion of the text in any genre, as well as specific moves in the world of oral literature, which lead to its aesthetic prism and its playful context. Such results may contribute to shedding more light on the genre of cantoria and on Louro's creative work, including highlighting the non-formal literacies typical of the activities of viola singers.

**Keywords:** Move Analysis. Cantoria de Viola. Wordplaying. Rhetorical Strategies.

**RESUMO**

A cantoria de viola nordestina, improvisada oralmente, mas muitas vezes registrada por escrito, tem despertado o interesse de muitos estudiosos, em diferentes perspectivas, desde os estudos literários e culturais até as abordagens musicais e sociológicas. Poucos, entretanto, são os estudos realizados a partir de uma perspectiva propriamente linguística.

<sup>1</sup> Doctoral student in Language Sciences. Universidade Católica de Pernambuco (UNICAP).

E-mail: marinhosje@gmail.com Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-7046-9410>

Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/9374576160422518>

<sup>2</sup> Dr. in Linguistics. Universidade Católica de Pernambuco (UNICAP). Universidade de Pernambuco (UPE).

E-mail: beneditobezerra@gmail.com Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7382-0937>

Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/7286734462024652>

Neste artigo, nosso objetivo foi realizar um estudo exploratório do gênero trocadilho na cantoria de viola à luz da perspectiva de Língua para Fins Específicos, sob o aporte teórico-metodológico da Análise de Gêneros (Swales, 1990). Metodologicamente, o estudo consistiu na aplicação da análise de movimentos retóricos a um *corpus* de vinte estrofes de sextilhas, gênero típico da cantoria de viola, de autoria de Louro do Pajeú, com foco no uso do trocadilho pelo poeta. Como resultado, foram constatados movimentos retóricos próprios tanto do universo da cantoria como específicos da poética do cantador. Esses movimentos podem ser mais gerais, guardando relação com os aspectos de introdução, desenvolvimento e conclusão do texto em qualquer gênero, assim como movimentos específicos do mundo da literatura oral, que desembocam em seu prisma estético e em seu contexto lúdico. Tais resultados poderão contribuir para lançar mais luzes sobre o gênero da cantoria e sobre a obra criativa de Louro, inclusive ressaltando os letramentos não formais típicos das atividades dos cantadores de viola.

**Palavras-chave:** Análise de Movimentos. Cantoria de Viola. Trocadilhos. Estratégias Retóricas.

### RESUMEN

La cantoria de viola del noreste de Brasil, improvisada oralmente pero a menudo registrada por escrito, ha despertado el interés de muchos académicos desde diferentes perspectivas, que abarcan desde estudios literarios y culturales hasta enfoques musicales y sociológicos. Sin embargo, pocos estudios se han realizado desde una perspectiva estrictamente lingüística. En este artículo, nuestro objetivo fue realizar un estudio exploratorio del género del juego de palabras en la cantoria de viola desde la perspectiva del Lengua para Fines Específicos, utilizando el marco teórico y metodológico del Análisis de Género (Swales, 1990). Metodológicamente, el estudio consistió en aplicar el análisis de movidas a un *corpus* de veinte estrofas de seis versos (sextilhas), un género típico de la cantoria de viola, escritas por Louro do Pajeú, centrándose en el uso de juegos de palabras por parte del poeta. Como resultado, se observaron movidas retóricas características tanto del mundo de la cantoria de viola como de la poética del cantante. Estas movidas pueden ser más generales, relacionadas con la introducción, el desarrollo y la conclusión de un texto de cualquier género, así como movidas específicas dentro del mundo de la literatura oral, que culminan en su perspectiva estética y contexto lúdico. Estos resultados pueden contribuir a arrojar más luz sobre el género de la cantoria y la obra creativa de Louro, destacando las prácticas informales de alfabetismo típicas de las actividades de los cantadores de viola.

**Palabras clave:** Análisis de Movidas. Cantoria de Viola. Juegos de Palabras. Estrategias Retóricas.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The singing of the northeastern viola is an important cultural phenomenon, which has aroused the interest of many scholars, from different perspectives, including literary, cultural, musical, historical, folkloric and sociological studies, among others. Several themes are explored when dealing with viola singing: biographies, narratives and testimonies of singers/repentistas (Silva, 2006a; Silva, 2006b; Araújo, 2010; Lima, 2018), conceptions about women in singing (Oliveira, 2010), the role of music in singing (Tavares, 2011) and, more recently, the poetics of singing (Santos, 2020), viola singing mediated by social networks (Nóbrega, 2020), singing as a semiotic and cognitive system (Atã; Queiroz, 2021) and changes and continuities in viola singing (Diniz, 2022), just to mention a few examples.

Articles, dissertations, and theses on viola singing have also been developed from graduate programs in linguistics, as is the case of Nóbrega's thesis (2020). The term *genre* is quite frequent in works in general, usually from a literary perspective that tends to emphasize formal elements such as meter, rhyme, and regular characteristics of the stanzas, as in Atã and Queiroz (2021). We did not find studies on viola singing as a genre from the point of view of rhetorical-linguistic theories. In fact, the work of Santana and Aguiar (2008) is very close, as it is based on contributions from Rhetorical Studies of Gender, via Marcuschi (2002, 2008). However, it discusses the genre of "virtual fighting" on the internet, in which poetry, although it dialogues with the genre of viola singing, is not characterized by suddenness or improvisation.

In view of these considerations, our objective is to undertake an exploratory study of the genre of northeastern viola singing in the light of the perspective of Language for Specific Purposes, under the theoretical-methodological framework of Gender Analysis (Swales, 1990), in dialogue with the approach of Rhetorical Gender Studies (Miller, 2012). This dialogue is also justified by the possibility of describing Swales' (1990) analytical methodology as a "linguistic-rhetorical" approach (Devitt, 2015; Bezerra, 2022).

Particularly, we intend to focus, from the perspective of gender studies, on aspects of the work of the famous viola singer Lourival Batista, Louro do Pajeú, a unique master in his craft, recognized as such by the discursive community of Brazilian oral poetry. The approach, which seems to us unprecedented for the genre of singing, consists of outlining a model for the analysis of the rhetorical and discursive functioning of sextillas built on the basis of puns, a peculiar mark of Louro do Pajeú's poetry. We arrived at this model through the application of the methodology of analysis of movements and rhetorical steps based on Swales (1990), originally illustrated by his CARS (*Create a Research Space*) model.

The work will be organized into seven topics, including this introduction. In the second

topic, we describe and discuss viola singing and one of its best-known genres, the sextile. In the third, we present brief information about the singer Louro do Pajeú and the pun technique as a characteristic of his poetry. The fourth topic is dedicated to the presentation of the concept of gender, with emphasis on the Gender Analysis based on Swales (1990). In the fifth topic, we present the methodological procedures of this study, supported by the methodology of analysis of rhetorical movements. The sixth topic is the place where the results are presented and discussed. We conclude the work, in the seventh topic, with some considerations and reflections on the study.

## **2 ON THE SINGING OF THE NORTHEASTERN VIOLA AND THE GENRE OF THE SEXTILE**

Explicitly refuting folklorist approaches that treat it as something exotic and unused, Nóbrega (2020, p. 25) describes viola singing "as a present, living art, in constant dialogue with the world, a spokesperson for the people's yearnings and, in effect, a culture of resistance, and not as a residue of the past". In the definition of Tavares (2011, p. 31), viola singing consists of "poetry sung improvised in the interior of the Brazilian Northeast", in which typically two singers, accompanied by violas, but in a show "more poetic than musical", sing improvised verses, often on themes suggested by the audience. Although it began with simple poetic quatrains (stanzas of four verses), pé de parede singing, as viola singing is also called, today has "about 80 genres of improvisation" (Araújo, 2010, p. 30).

As for the poetic form of the sextile, a genre in which all the stanzas analyzed in this work participate, it is the introductory genre of singing. Any viola singing in the Northeast begins with a *baião* of *sextillas*. In the words of Tavares (2016, p. 33), "the sextile is the standard style of singing. The violists always start singing *sextillas*, and it is possible that, if no one requests another style, or no one delivers mottos, they will be singing sextile all night". The sextile, according to the author, is a stanza that is "malleable and solid: easy to manipulate, and capable of producing remarkable effects" (p. 33).

As for their formal aspects, the genres of singing have considerable structural stability. Named after the number of verses it contains, the sextile is composed of six verses of seven syllables, in which the second, fourth and sixth verses rhyme with each other, while the others do not have rhymes (with the exception that the first verse has to "take the cue" of the other singer, that is, the singer is forced to use the last rhyme left by the singing partner). In traditional notation, the rhyme scheme of the sextile can be described either as ABCBDB (indicating that only the verses "B" rhyme with each other) or XAXAXA, indicating the same

organization and emphasizing that the rhymes of the others, indicated by X, are "blank" (Tavares, 2016, p. 33).

Considered not only in its form, but also in its rhetorical component, in the social actions that the singers carry out through it, the sextile is the genre common to all the puns under analysis in this work. In this sense, the adoption of the sextile genre confers uniformity to our *corpus*, ensuring a common basis for the analysis of the textual and contextual elements of each stanza.

### 3 LOURO DO PAJEÚ, THE MASTER OF PUNS

The term *pun* today takes on different meanings, and can often be used to classify word games and sounds capable of generating pejorative, creative, funny meaning effects, depending on the situation. However, in this study, the term refers to the poetic, textual-discursive, aesthetic and stylistic resource used in a unique way by the poet singer of São José do Egito Lourival Batista, Louro do Pajeú.

The pun is not only one of the constructions present in the poet's work, it is the creative resource that distinguishes nature from his verve. According to Araújo (2010, p. 30), "old lovers of singing regret that puns are not made anymore, for example, such as those of the incomparable Lourival Batista Patriota, the Pernambuco native 'Louro do Pajeú'". In this respect, Louro was unique not only among his peers in viola singing, but also within a broader group of poets, so rare is the practice of this form of verse.

In the elaboration of the puns, improvised, let us remember, the poet goes beyond obeying the rules of rhyme and meter typical of the genres of viola singing. Louro's puns consist of playing with one's own language, with speech and writing, exploring pronunciation, spelling, polysemy and alliteration in letters, syllables, words, concepts and ideas. This characteristic was highlighted in Lourival Batista, according to the scholar of viola singing José Rabelo de Vasconcelos, "not only for the perfection of the puns but also for their quantity. In this aspect he is Louro of an impressive fecundity" (Vasconcelos, 1982, p. 3).

It is important to make it clear that we will not be here analyzing the cold text, the literal materiality of the planned text. It is necessary to remember that all the stanzas were built improvised, in the heat of the challenges suddenly, in the adrenaline of the singer who has in front of him an attentive and demanding audience, waiting for his desire to be satiated by the verses that are improvised according to the circumstances of the event. In all the stanzas to which we refer, the poet interacts directly with real characters who are present in the singing, a fact that reaffirms the concept of text as action and social interaction. Here, more than a physical artifact, we focus on the real encounter between the audience's expectation and the

rhetorical strategies that the poet uses to, in addition to achieving the purpose of the formal and aesthetic construction of the stanza, be able to involve his listener as the theme of the poem.

All this happens watered by true linguistic adventures among the infinite possibilities that language gives us when it is combined with the total freedom of the word transformed into poetry. Leite Filho (1982), in whose work the stanzas that we have selected for analysis are recorded, clarifies the value of the context in which the stanzas were elaborated and the unique content they bring. According to this author, it is a "poetics of light verse, a technique", in which the poet goes beyond the trivial, since, "because he better impresses the audience with the dexterity of his thought, in addition to improvising, he also does so by exchanging words, meaning, syllables, letters, etc." (Leite Filho, 1982, p. 6).

Improvising verses and improvising puns within those verses, that's what it's all about. Later on, the researcher returns to the theme, detailing and detailing the characteristics of singing suddenly:

To reach the merit of these verses, with the exception of the less informed; it is to be agreed how they were made: improvised, joining, at the same time, meter, rhyme, form, comparative sense in some, satirism and malice in others; this in the same intonation, without stopping to think or memorize beforehand, since in many of them the scarcity of time could not condition this hypothesis (Leite Filho, 1982, p. 9).

These details accentuate the understanding of the phenomenon of the use of puns as a singular mark of the creative genius of the poet and singer Lourival Batista Patriota. In the next topic, we will see the bases of the gender theory used in our analysis.

#### **4 GENRES FROM A LINGUISTIC-RHETORICAL PERSPECTIVE: JOHN SWALES' THEORY**

Well known, studied and influential within the field of research of genres in the area of linguistics, the theory and model of analysis constructed by John Swales (1990) were our basis, our reference element and the starting point for the investigation reported in this article. According to Swales (1990), the genre is associated with two other important concepts: discursive community and communicative purpose. First, the discursive community is defined as a socio-rhetorical network formed by participants who have common goals. Next, the genres practiced by the discursive community are endowed with communicative purposes, which consist of the functions or actions that each genre allows to be performed within a communicative situation. Genre is, after all, seen as a concept that encompasses a class of

communicative events, representative of the practices of discursive communities and mobilized by them to achieve their common goals.

From the methodological point of view, the classic contribution of Swales (1990) was the proposition of the CARS Model, an acronym for *Create a Research Space*. As can be seen from the terminology, the model refers to academic writing, and seeks to represent in the form of movements and steps the strategies used by researchers in the preparation of the introduction section of scientific articles. However, the model proved to be productive to the point of inspiring analyses of rhetorical movements of genres in different discursive domains, such as the literary domain and viola singing, to which we are now dedicated.

In the Brazilian context, as Bezerra (2022, p. 76) describes, "John Swales' thinking has grounded and influenced the work of Brazilian researchers at least since the 1990s, when the first gender studies appeared in the country." As the author points out, the methodology of analysis of rhetorical movements (*move analysis*) proposed by Swales has inspired numerous works on various genres.

In a nutshell, the CARS Model suggests the existence of three rhetorical movements in the construction of introductions to research articles, which would be: (1) Establish a research territory, (2) Establish a research niche, and (3) Occupy the niche. This ecological metaphor is proposed as representative of the linguistic-rhetorical strategies employed by researchers when writing their texts, in compliance with the conventions that confer stability to the genre.

In an illustrative way, Bezerra (2017) presents an application of the movement analysis model, based on the particularities of each discursive community and the rhetorical movements used to achieve the conventional communicative purposes of the genre. Bezerra's (2017) analysis is based on a *corpus* of 235 texts, called introductory genres of academic books, such as the introduction, introduction, and preface, which are analyzed together from the perspective of the phenomenon of the colony of genres (Bhatia, 2004). The texts are representative of three different disciplinary areas, namely, Linguistics, Theology and Biology.

Based on this analysis of the more than two hundred texts, Bezerra (2017) elaborates a descriptive model for each introductory genre, inferred from its data. It can be seen that the three models identify the composition of the genres presentation, introduction and preface as constituted by the same set of communicative purposes. However, the description of the genres varies, in subtle differences, when we look at the rhetorical movements carried out in each one. These differences are responsible for the uniqueness of each genre, justifying its mutually distinct existence, although closely related to the others.

Below we reproduce the descriptive models of each of the three genres, and then weave some reflections.

Table 1

*Rhetorical organization of introductory genres of academic books*

	GÊNERO APRESENTAÇÃO	GÊNERO INTRODUÇÃO	GÊNERO PREFÁCIO
PROPÓSITO COMUNICATIVO	JUSTIFICAR A OBRA	JUSTIFICAR A OBRA	JUSTIFICAR A OBRA
Movimentos retóricos	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Definir o tópico central</li> <li>2. Informar sobre o autor</li> <li>3. Estabelecer o campo de estudo</li> <li>4. Indicar os objetivos do livro</li> <li>5. Informar sobre a origem do livro</li> <li>6. Indicar lacuna a preencher</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Definir/discutir o tópico central</li> <li>2. Informar sobre o autor</li> <li>3. Estabelecer o campo de estudo</li> <li>4. Indicar os objetivos do livro</li> <li>5. Informar sobre a origem do livro</li> <li>6. Indicar lacuna a preencher</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Definir/discutir o tópico central</li> <li>2. Informar sobre o autor</li> <li>3. Estabelecer o campo de estudo</li> <li>4. Indicar os objetivos do livro</li> <li>5. Informar sobre a origem do livro</li> <li>6. Indicar lacuna a preencher</li> </ol>
PROPÓSITO COMUNICATIVO	RESUMIR O CONTEÚDO	RESUMIR O CONTEÚDO	RESUMIR O CONTEÚDO
Movimentos retóricos	7. Apresentar/discutir o conteúdo	7. Apresentar/discutir o conteúdo	7. Apresentar/discutir o conteúdo
PROPÓSITO COMUNICATIVO	CONCLUIR A APRESENTAÇÃO	CONCLUIR A INTRODUÇÃO	CONCLUIR O PREFÁCIO
Movimentos retóricos	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Fazer avaliação/recomendação final</li> <li>9. Expressar desejos/votos de sucesso</li> <li>10. Indicar potenciais leitores</li> <li>11. Convidar à leitura</li> <li>12. Felicitar o autor/edição/ outros</li> <li>13. Fazer agradecimentos</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Indicar potenciais leitores</li> <li>9. Fazer agradecimentos</li> <li>10. Felicitar o autor/edição/ outros</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Indicar potenciais leitores</li> <li>9. Fazer recomendação/ avaliação final</li> <li>10. Fazer agradecimentos</li> <li>11. Expressar desejo/ votos de sucesso</li> </ol>

Source: Prepared from Bezerra (2017, p. 68, 73, 77)

From the table, we can observe how the close relationship between discursive community, communicative purpose and genres easily decants from this list of possible rhetorical actions. Let us see that, in the case analyzed, the communicative purposes do not change either from one genre to another, nor from one disciplinary field to another. This stability of communicative purposes characterizes the respective genres as practices legitimized by the discursive communities in which they are inserted. The importance of communicative purposes is such that it functions as a constitutive principle of the genre, determining other equally constitutive aspects, such as the style and structural organization of texts. It is defended by specialists in genre analysis, such as Bhatia (1993), that the differentiation of communicative purposes works as an indication that genres also become mutually distinguishable.

In the table under discussion, we note that the verbs "justify", "summarize" and "conclude" remain as an expression of the communicative purposes of genres linked to the discursive community of academia. Although the rhetorical movements may vary among the genres of the colony, as well as in the respective disciplinary areas, the communicative purposes permeate with some common measure the genres that circulate in this milieu. This happens because they use a similar lexicon, with differences typical of each disciplinary context, and make use of the relationships, traditions, and values of the same academic discourse, or of the same discursive community in a broad sense.

It is interesting that they are introductory genres from the point of view of the whole work (book), but internally, as autonomous texts that they are, they need to unite basic

elements of introduction, development and conclusion, the basic structure for the formation of a, let's say, coherent text. The verbs that assume the internal structural role of symbolizing this set of intratextual movements are in the rhetorical movements and not in the communicative purposes, which designates being in more flexible parts of the genres, those that can change according to the disciplinary field. But at the same time that they can float, they need to draw the aforementioned classic structure of introducing, developing, and concluding. Define, establish, inform. They are verbs linked to the introductory part of the genres.

Presenting and discussing is the duo that is repeated throughout the frame as a single rhetorical movement of the communicative purpose of summarizing the content, in principle, the central part and core of the general purpose of the introductory genre, the core of the presentation and promotion discourse that is intended to be carried out. The centrality of this unique movement is interesting. While the introduction and conclusion sessions are populated by various rhetorical movements, the development brings only one movement as the main action. It is as if plurality diluted its importance and singularity intensified its function and responsibility, reserving for entry and closure fewer roles than that of the center, where the real meaning of the text that is constructed is kept.

In the rhetorical movements, however, we easily see differences. Although they are not exacerbated distances, since they are located in the same discursive community, each of the genres and each of the areas brings particularities. The former, due to the precise function they perform individually, although related to the other texts, within the book support; these, by the customs, traditions and values defined by their members as appropriate for each of the sciences and each of the collectivities that locally carry out their activities.

It is this dynamic in the realization of communicative purposes through rhetorical strategies that we seek to capture in our analysis of the stanzas of viola singing, as a sign of the practices of the discursive community of repentista poets and their audiences.

## **5 METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES**

For our study, we used the logic of the analysis of rhetorical movements, under the analogy of previously established models, such as the descriptive models of introductory genres exposed and discussed above. These, in turn, as mentioned, have already been built from empirical data and under the original inspiration of the CARS Model (Swales, 1990).

From the analogy with previous models of movement analysis, we sought to elaborate our own model, capable of responding to the unprecedented dimensions of this study, regarding the application of the methodology to verses of popular singing. With the caution

that the situation requires, we make use of such resources as if to try, from something put, consolidated and almost peacefully accepted, to undertake the elaboration of the initial draft of a model that suits our object of study.

As we have already made clear, the models or comparative starting points that we adopt originate in the studies of analysis of rhetorical movements initially outlined by Swales (1990) and Bhatia (2004), illustrated by their application in Bezerra's (2017) study on introductory academic genres. And what we pursue, from an analogical perspective and comparative investigation, is to analyze the rhetorical movements of a *corpus* of stanzas by the poet Louro do Pajeú in which the resource of puns was used.

20 stanzas were analyzed that internally and externally contain some elements of homogeneity. These elements of unification and homogeneity allow us to seek the regularity necessary for the deduction of a model of analysis of rhetorical movements appropriate to the object. These are stanzas that have already gone through a selection screen, which led them to be included in the work entitled *Louro do Pajeú: o rei dos pundilhos*, an independent publication of 1982, the result of research carried out by the poet, folklorist and researcher Aleixo Leite Filho.

All the texts are characterized as sextillas, the most characteristic genre of viola singing, and all were elaborated in some moment of direct and real-time interaction between Lourival and the audience. Almost always, a listener is the theme or even an important part of the stanza. It is worth noting that the fact that all stanzas have the same length sets a non-negotiable limit of six verses of seven poetic syllables for each set of rhetorical movements, which guarantees a structural element common to all texts and a consequent equality of realization for all utterances in which the common movements of construction and achievement of each communicative purpose will be sought.

## 6 THE RHETORICAL ORGANIZATION OF SEXTILLAS AND LOURIVAL BATISTA'S PUNS

As a result of the analysis of the stanzas that make up our *corpus*, we arrived at a descriptive picture of the communicative purposes and rhetorical movements manifested in the sextiles built on the basis of puns, improvised, by the poet Lourival Batista. At first glance at the picture, however, it is clear that we were faced with the need to propose some innovations or adaptations in the identification of peculiarities of purposes and movements.

### Table 2

*Rhetorical organization of the sextiles with puns by Lourival Batista*

PRIOR COMMUNICATIVE PURPOSE	START THE PUN
Introductory rhetorical movements (1 and 2)	Choose a word, a concept, an idea or even a scene that is happening as a reference for the textual construction
Accessory or structural rhetorical movements (3)	Establishing a lexical and semiotic zone Build one or more of the six mandatory lines by finding the rhyme and meter that fit the pun
CORE COMMUNICATIVE PURPOSE	MAKE THE PUN
Major rhetorical movements (4 to 12)	Turning one word into another Turn two words into one Turn one word into two
Accessory or structural rhetorical movements (13)	Remove and add syllables, letters and accents. Use of alliterations Using paradoxes between ideas and words Using phonetic approximations Polysemy using Use of paronyms and homonyms Build one or more of the six mandatory lines by finding the rhyme and meter that fit the pun
ULTIMATE COMMUNICATIVE PURPOSE	PRESENT THE PUN
Final rhetorical moves (14 to 19)	Present the new formed word or the new made words Display the redone expression Present the inverted idea
Accessory or structural rhetorical movements (20)	Present the concepts in a different relationship from the one they had before the pun Present a new way of looking at a certain person, place or thing Present the deconstruction of something initially said Build one or more of the six mandatory lines by finding the rhyme and meter that fit the pun

Source: Elaboration by the authors

In order to understand these adaptations, some observations seem necessary to us. Unlike the descriptive models of the analysis of introductory academic genres, in which the central communicative purpose was reduced to a single rhetorical movement, in our case it is precisely the central communicative purpose that is carried out by a wider range of rhetorical strategies. We can understand this difference if we take into account that, unlike the academic domain, art, poetry, is significantly open to the boldness and innovation of its enunciator, the poet of the sudden, who is a master of the word.

Equally diverse are the rhetorical possibilities for the realization of the final communicative purpose, in which the poet can choose one or exceptionally more than one among a series of rhetorical movements. This fact is also understood when one notes the plurality of possibilities of the movements of the central purpose, with their consequences for the final communicative purpose. If for each action we have a result or consequence, the diversity of the second communicative purpose is reflected in the movements of the third. It is important to remember that only very parsimoniously will more than one movement be used to achieve each purpose, since six verses of seven syllables configure little space for such possibilities. The aspect of stability in the length of the text is responsible for the imagetic synthesis of poetry, an element that aesthetically highlights its value as a form of language.

Finally, we call attention to the existence, in all communicative purposes, of what we call accessory or structural rhetorical movements. It is important not to forget that we are dealing with an environment of aesthetic creation, which requires observing syllabic, phrasal and lexical conditions. This fulfillment is guaranteed by the rhetorical movement that enables the poet to give due attention to the formal singularities of the genre in which he is participating, as well as keeping it connected with the liturgy of singing. This rhetorical movement, possible in the initial, central and final communicative purposes, is described as accessory because it does not directly contribute to the elaboration of the pun, and it is also structural, or even structuring, because it helps the poet to formally organize the verses according to the structure and stabilized conventions of the sextile genre. Also in this accessory or structural/structuring movement are the episodes of the poet's praise of his own verve and capacity, in addition to the requests for payment directed to the listener. This aspect also reverberates the promotional discourse identified by Bezerra (2017) in his work on academic genres.

Let us see, below, some examples in which, to facilitate the understanding of our analytical procedures, the colors used in Table 2 are resumed in the verses of each stanza.

In this way, the color of the line or verse signals the respective communicative purpose and rhetorical movement.

### Example 1: Stanza 4 (p. 12-13)

After the praise of the violists to a sergeant, promoting him to Lieutenant and Captain, without any result, the poet reacted:

This one will never be  
 Neither captain nor lieutenant  
 The gal he deserves  
 It's a different gallon  
 It's a dick with two cans  
 One behind the other in front

As the colors suggest, the first two verses serve as a preparation for the poet to find the rhyme and meter on which the pun will be based. It is movement 3, seen as accessory or structural/structuring of what follows. The third line expresses movement 1, in which the poet selects an idea or concept to erect the pun on it. The fourth line explores the homonymy of the term "galão", already within the scope of the central communicative purpose, performing the rhetorical movement 12. Concluding the stanza, the last two verses correspond to the final communicative purpose of presenting the pun, which is done through the rhetorical movement of re-presenting the concept of gallon in a different way than originally mentioned (movement 17).

A similar structure is verified in the next stanza, as indicated by our color code, which somehow points to a certain stability of the rhetorical strategies employed by the singer:

### Example 2: Stanza 9 (p. 15)

In the city of Teixeira, when he was singing with the famous singer Severino Pinto, a driver named Pedro Compasso entered the hall, making a racket and getting drunk.

Ô Pinto pays attention  
 How the world is changing  
 Look there Pedro Compasso  
 How it comes with the wrong step  
 The other bars scratch  
 But this one arrived scratched.

However, the poet has a variety of strategies for the construction of his project of saying. Example 3, for example, shows a different rhetorical organization. Let's see:

### Example 3: Stanza 19 (p. 24)

Lourival and Pinto sang in the presence of Gilberto Freyre, Câmara Cascudo, Germano da Hora and Aldemar Paiva, at Sítio da Trindade, in 1963, when Pinto asserted:

From Gilberto to us  
Big difference has

Laurel:

The difference it has  
From Freyre to Lourival:  
He, the greatest Sociologist  
From our homeland.  
I'm also a partner soon  
Entering without capital.

Once again, the poet begins the stanza with preparatory verses for the rhyme and the pun he will make in its development (lines in yellow). Then, he presents the initial rhetorical movement in which he categorizes Gilberto Freyre as "He, the greatest Sociologist". Accomplishing communicative purpose 2, the central purpose, he inserts another preparatory line, "From our homeland", and completes the rhetorical movement with the strategy of decomposing the term "sociologist" into "sociologo" (movement 6). Finally, the poet masterfully leads the stanza to the end with the verse "Entering without capital", representative of the rhetorical movement 18 (To present a new way of looking at a certain person, place or thing). In this case, it should be noted, the poet speaks of his own person. However, it also traces a relationship between "capital" and "homeland", in an allusion to the immediate context of the singing.

Table 3 presents the total occurrences of each rhetorical movement classified as the main one in the *corpus* of twenty texts analyzed, and may indicate the rhetorical and creative strategies preferred by the poet.

**Table 3**

*Total occurrences of the rhetorical movements*

Prior communicative purpose START THE PUN	Occurrences
M1 Choose word, concept, idea, or scene	18
M2 Choose lexical-semantic zone	03
Core communicative purpose MAKE THE PUN	

M4 Transform one word into another	02
M5 Turn two words into one	--
M6 Turn one word into two	06
M7 Remove and place syllables, letters, and accents	05
M8 Use of alliterations	02
M9 Using paradoxes between ideas and words	04
M10 Using Phonetic Approximations	01
M11 Use of polysemy	07
M12 Use of paronyms and homonyms	02
Final communicative purpose PRESENT THE PUN	
M14 Display the new word(s) made	06
M15 Display the redone expression	02
M16 Display the reversed idea	05
M17 Present the concepts in a different relationship from the one they had before the pun	04
M18 Present a new way of looking at a certain person, place or thing	03
M19 Present the deconstruction of something initially said	05

Source: Elaboration by the authors

As can be seen, we exclude from the picture the accessory or structural rhetorical movement, which is categorical in the *corpus*, except for a single stanza in which it does not occur. We will return to it later.

In the occurrences as a whole, we noticed a preference for the selection of a lexical item as the basis of the pun, a fact understandable by the very nature of the phenomenon, which is a game, a joke or an experiment with the use of language. It is also important to highlight that the sum of the rhetorical movements exceeds the number of stanzas in the *corpus*, since each stanza includes the realization of three or more movements for the poet's work to be carried out. By way of example, the initial communicative purpose of the twenty stanzas is accomplished, in total, by twenty-one occurrences of the two possible movements, excluding from this account the accessory or structural movement.

In the realization of the central communicative purpose, the rhetorical movements are more diversified in their occurrences, with a slight predominance of movements 6 and 11, namely, "transform one word into two" and "use polysemy", respectively. In the general framework of the central communicative purpose, to "make the pun, the sum of the rhetorical movements is more expressive than in the initial purpose. We perceive, therefore, the mobilization, on the part of the poet, of two or more rhetorical movements for the construction of a single pun. This aspect seems remarkable to us, considering the small space it has in the stanza, as it highlights the dynamic character of rhetorical and aesthetic creation.

The final communicative purpose, in which the pun is presented in its creative fullness, becomes evident as the place of the new, avoiding the mere exercise of verbal juggling. It is not a simple play on words, but the construction of coherence in the artistic discourse. The pun, in this way, is configured as a sophisticated enhancement for what the singer intends to say or, in terms consistent with our theory of genres, for the realization of the social action represented by singing as a linguistic and cultural activity.

In short, in just one stanza, the poet establishes himself in the essential pun, in him and for him. The ultimate communicative purpose of the pun-based sextile represents the apex of the creative process, in which the pun constitutes the new born of the artistic experiment. Also in this final communicative purpose, the rhetorical movements occur in greater quantity than the stanzas, combining to make it possible to carry out the action of presenting the finished pun.

Finally, it is worth making some observations about the rhetorical movement that we call accessory or structural, which can occur together with any of the three communicative purposes, be it initial, central or final. Table 4 presents a mapping of how many lines per stanza are used to perform this basic movement.

**Table 4**

*Occurrences of the accessory rhetorical movement*

Accessory or structural rhetorical movement	
Build one or more of the six mandatory lines in the stanza, finding the rhyme and meter that fit the pun	
Number of lines per stanza	Occurrences
No line	01
01 line	04
02 lines	07
03 lines	08

Source: Elaboration by the authors

It is immediately noteworthy that the singer dedicates considerable space in most of the stanzas to the structuring and preparation of the pun: in fifteen stanzas, two or three lines are dedicated to this purpose. A smaller number of stanzas, only four, uses only one line for accessory movement. And an apparently atypical case is represented by Stanza 3, in which the accessory rhetorical movement does not occur:

**Example 4: Stanza 3 (p. 12)**

From one of his calls to the listeners, this sudden suddenness originated:

I put the "d" and I put the "e"  
 I put the "c" and I put the "a"  
 Then an acute accent  
 Instead of Deca it's deca;  
 I take the "d" and I take the "e"  
 Be Deca, come here!

In this stanza, everything is game and pun, without the use of accessory verses. The rhetorical movements related to the initial, central and final communicative purposes follow one another, totally supported by the creative work of the pun.

As a general rule, however, because it is the movement responsible for the poet's obedience to the literary and aesthetic demands of this genre of poetry, our *corpus* indicates that it is exceptional that it is not present, because although it does not constitute the pun itself, it guarantees it the formal (structural) basis, while serving its realization, conditioned by the poet's rhyming options and lexical choices. Let us think that, when it occupies three lines of the stanza, this means half of the sextile, which demonstrates its importance for the realization of the communicative purposes of the genre. Thus, it is possible to affirm that this movement constitutes the foundation for the construction of the others.

We will then see how the preparation for the pun occurs in rhetorical movements of different lengths, starting with the one in which the poet dedicates only one verse to this purpose.

**Example 5: Stanza 13 (p. 18)**

At the time of the death of St. John XXIII, he was singing with his other brother, Otacilio, when he commented:

The month has come to an end  
 And the Pope no longer exists.

Lourival:

In all this, the saddest,  
 They both died at once;  
 The month is over with the Pope  
 And the Pope at the end of the month!  
 The month being thirty-one  
 And the Pope was twenty-three.

As can be seen, only the initial line, "in all this, the saddest", is dedicated to the accessory/structural movement. About this introduction, within the previous communicative purpose of starting the pun, the singer builds all his reasoning around a game between the end of the month and the end of the pope's life. In the following example, however, Lourival Batista dedicates not just one, but two lines of the stanza to the same purpose.

**Example 6: Stanza 18 (p. 22)**

At the house of the poet João Batista de Siqueira (Cancão), the celebration was animated by the presence of several singers, including: Manoel Chudú, Jó Patriota, Lourival Bandeira and Lourival Batista. The last two were exchanging friendly matches when Dr. José Gomes dos Passos arrived at the venue.

Bandeira finished the stanza:

The Prosecutor has arrived  
 To bring us the best

Batista added:

I myself have perked up now  
 Spotting the Prosecutor:  
 Because we know it ourselves,  
 Pro is in our favor,  
 With the dynamo of Law  
 He starts the engine.

In this example, the accessory rhetorical movement is distributed between the first and third lines of the stanza, maintaining its function of supporting the elaboration of the pun. Finally, in the next example, this function extends over three lines, half of the stanza.

**Example 7: Stanza 10 (p. 16)**

Severino Pinto was comparing himself to a painter, in relation to his verses, when he finished:

Regarding the landscape,  
 It is a fruitful idea

Then Louro replied:

Saturday, Sunday, Monday  
Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday  
On Friday not missing me

The canvas, the brush, the paint  
Paint painting what I paint  
I paint what Pinto paints

The dynamic and flexible way in which rhetorical movements are manifested, in order to enable the realization of the respective communicative purposes, in the case of our *corpus*, is consistent with what the literature predicts, as shown by some considerations made by Bezerra (2017). According to the author, the simultaneous occurrence of movements is not mandatory, given the only relative stability of any and all genders, but it is possible, as we have seen. Also according to the researcher, there are cases in which movements are presented "in very different and variable ways, denoting the use of diversified rhetorical strategies, which seek to meet different demands related to social practices implied by the production, use, and reception of gender" (Bezerra, 2017, p. 67). In the social practice of viola singing, and particularly in the construction of sextiles based on puns on Louro do Pajeú, we find that this is exactly what it is about.

Since the text is a dynamic process and the genre is a plastic and malleable communicative event, there is nothing that guarantees an absolute order of realization of rhetorical movements, despite the stability of the communicative purposes in our *corpus*. The dynamic character of the language in use, the particularities of the contexts and, in our case, the creative freedom of poetry, generate movements that accompany subjectivity and singularity and do not only reproduce conventions. Rather, they stamp the novelty of the moment lived between the artist and his audience, responsible for the multiplicity and plurality of rhetorical movements mobilized for interaction.

## 7 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this study, our objective was to carry out an exploratory study of the pun genre in viola singing in the light of the gender theory based on Swales (1990), applying the method of analysis of rhetorical movements to a *corpus* of sextillas, a very typical and popular genre in viola singing. In addition, we directed the focus of the analysis to the work of the poet Lourival Batista Patriota, Louro do Pajeú, selecting the sextiles by the criterion that they were built based on puns and, of course, made improvised.

Thus, what we did in this work, in a way, as far as we know, unprecedented, was to apply to a genre of the poetic discursive domain a theory of genres and a methodology usually used for the study of genres of academic writing. We understand that this analytical exercise proved to be fruitful and productive, with the potential to shed new light on the study of the poetic text and particularly of viola singing.

The look at Louro's sextiles, and particularly at the way in which the poet constructs the puns in them, from the perspective of the communicative purposes and rhetorical movements of the genre, reinforces the particularities of the artistic creative process, emerging from the concrete situations in which the stanzas were made. These situations, on the other hand, are tributaries of the complexity and dynamism of the contexts in which the social practices of the discursive community that loves viola singing are developed, which will ultimately contribute to shaping the communicative purposes carried out by the genre.

As for the analysis of rhetorical movements in the stanzas of sextillas based on puns, we found that the dynamism and versatility of the poetic work are maintained and stand out even in the face of the considerable formal stability of the genre, translated into the requirement of meter, rhyme and number of verses. With the support of a structural/structuring rhetorical movement, the initial, central and final movements of the sextile are constituted, in Louro do Pajeú's work, in an innovative way and always capable of surprising the audience present at the singing. According to the records made of the oral event of the singing, a later and potentially larger audience, formed by listeners of eventual audio recordings or by readers of anthologies such as that of Leite Filho (1982), will continue to be surprised by the poet's creative strategies, strategies that are also of a constitutively rhetorical nature.

Because we recognize the inexhaustibility of poetic talent and the inexhaustible capacity for reinvention of artistic language, we do not intend, with this study, to offer a ready-made and finished model of analysis. We believe, however, that the analysis presented here constitutes a starting point and a sign that new perspectives on the genres of singing are possible. These new perspectives may be extended, in future studies, including to test the effectiveness of the model, to the rest of Lourival Batista's work and, of course, to the work of other memorable names in northeastern oral poetry.

## REFERENCES

- Araújo, J. M. B. de. (2010). *Voz, viola e desafio: Experiências de repentistas e amantes da cantoria nordestina* [Dissertação de mestrado, Universidade de São Paulo]. Repositório USP. <https://repositorio.usp.br/item/002131842>
- Askhave, I., & Swales, J. M. (2009). Identificação de gênero e propósito comunicativo: Um

- problema e uma possível solução. In B. G. Bezerra, B. Biasi-Rodrigues, & M. M. Cavalcante (Eds.), *Gêneros e sequências textuais* (pp. 221–247). Edupe.
- Atã, P., & Queiroz, J. (2021). O externalismo semiótico ativo de C. S. Peirce e a cantoria de viola como signo em ação. *Trans/Form/Ação*, 44(3), 177–204.
- Bawarshi, A. S., & Reiff, M. J. (2013). *Gênero: História, teoria, pesquisa, ensino*. Parábola Editorial.
- Bezerra, B. G. (2017). *Gêneros no contexto brasileiro: Questões (meta)teóricas e conceituais*. Parábola Editorial.
- Bezerra, B. G. (2022). *O gênero como ele é (e como não é)*. Parábola Editorial.
- Bhatia, V. K. (1993). *Analysing genre: Language use in professional settings*. Longman.
- Bhatia, V. K. (2004). *Worlds of written discourse: A genre-based view*. Continuum.
- Devitt, A. J. (2015). Genre performances: Genre analysis and rhetorical-linguistic genre studies. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 19, 44–51.
- Diniz, J. J. O. (2022). *Entre repentes e sertões: Presença, mudanças e continuidades da cantoria de viola no Seridó potiguar* [Dissertação de mestrado, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte]. Repositório UFRN. <https://repositorio.ufrn.br/handle/123456789/52160>
- Leite Filho, A. (1982). *Louro do Pajeú: O rei dos trocadilhos*. Ed. do Autor.
- Lima, M. V. S. (2018). Nas trilhas da poesia e cantoria de viola nordestina: Memórias do poeta e cantador Alberto Porfírio. *História e Culturas*, 6(12), 134–153.
- Miller, C. R. (2012). *Gênero, agência e tecnologia*. Parábola Editorial.
- Nóbrega, M. V. (2020). *A cantoria de viola na contemporaneidade: Seus poetas em performance e memórias; estratégias para formação poética de apologistas e repentistas* [Tese de doutorado, Universidade Federal da Paraíba]. Repositório UFPB. <https://repositorio.ufpb.br/jspui/handle/123456789/18545>
- Oliveira, L. N. (2010). *Figuras do feminino na cantoria nordestina* [Dissertação de mestrado, Universidade Estadual da Paraíba]. TED-e UEPB. <http://tede.bc.uepb.edu.br/jspui/handle/tede/2615>
- Santana, D. P., & Aguiar, M. A. M. (2008). *Peleja virtual: Um novo gênero do discurso?* [Comunicação apresentada no Colóquio de Análise do Discurso]. Universidade Federal de Pernambuco.
- Santos, M. E. A. (2020). *Circularidade das vozes: A poética da cantoria de viola no Ceará* [Tese de doutorado, Universidade Federal da Paraíba]. Repositório UFPB. <https://repositorio.ufpb.br/jspui/handle/123456789/18358>
- Silva, M. I. (2006a). “O rei dos cantadores de viola nordestina”: Sua história e sua glória. *Boitatá*, 1(2), 62–77.
- Silva, M. I. (2006b). *Cantoria de viola nordestina: Narrativas sobre a vida e a performance dos repentistas* [Dissertação de mestrado, Universidade Federal da Bahia]. Repositório UFBA. <https://repositorio.ufba.br/handle/ri/29727>
- Swales, J. M. (1990). *Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings*. Cambridge University Press.

- Swales, J. M. (2004). *Research genres: Exploration and applications*. Cambridge University Press.
- Tavares, B. (2011). Função da música na cantoria de viola. *Synergies Brésil*, 9, 31–37.
- Tavares, B. (2016). *Arte e ciência da cantoria de viola: Cantoria: Regras e estilos (Vol. 1)*. Bagaço.
- Vasconcelos, J. R. (1982). Prefácio. In A. Leite Filho, *Louro do Pajeú: O rei dos trocadilhos* (pp. 3–4). Ed. do Autor.