

POETIC EXPERIENCE BETWEEN THE REGUEIFA OF GALICIA AND THE SUDDEN
NORTHEAST

*UMA EXPERIÊNCIA POÉTICA ENTRE A REGUEIFA DA GALIZA E O REPENTE
NORDESTINO*

*UNA EXPERIENCIA POÉTICA ENTRE LA REGUEIFA DE GALICIA Y EL NORESTE
REPENTINO*



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ABSTRACT: Regueifa goes back to ancient times, sharing stories and emotions in a spontaneous and creative way. The sudden is a fusion of Iberian, indigenous and African cultural influences, highlighted by improvisation and competition between singers. These traditions share similarities – such as the exploration of everyday themes and the preservation of cultural richness –, strengthen the identity of communities and serve as platforms for the expression of values and social and political issues. This article aims to analyze the interaction of these poetic traditions, highlighting their cultural influences and importance. The methodology adopted involves comparative analysis of poetic and cultural elements, based on observations and direct experiences in the school and community context. Cultural and linguistic exchange projects, such as BRALIZA, exemplify the ability of these traditions to promote understanding and respect between cultures. Thus, by celebrating regueifa and the sudden, we celebrate the cultural richness and vitality of the communities that nourish them.

KEYWORDS: Regueifa from Galicia. Sudden Northeastern. Poetic tradition. Cultural exchange. Orality.

RESUMO: *A regueifa remonta a tempos ancestrais, sendo uma prática que compartilha histórias e emoções de maneira espontânea e criativa. O repente, por sua vez, resulta de uma fusão de influências culturais ibéricas, indígenas e africanas, caracterizando-se pela improvisação e pela competição entre os cantadores. Essas tradições compartilham semelhanças, como a exploração de temas cotidianos e a preservação da riqueza cultural. Ambas fortalecem a identidade das comunidades e servem como plataformas para a expressão de valores e para o debate de questões sociais e políticas. Este artigo tem como objetivo analisar a interação entre essas tradições poéticas, destacando suas influências e relevâncias culturais. A metodologia adotada baseia-se em uma análise comparativa dos elementos poéticos e culturais, fundamentada em observações e experiências diretas no contexto escolar e comunitário. Projetos de intercâmbio cultural e linguístico, como o BRALIZA, exemplificam a capacidade dessas tradições de promover a compreensão e o respeito entre diferentes culturas. Assim, ao celebrar a regueifa e o repente, celebra-se não apenas a riqueza cultural que elas representam, mas também a vitalidade das comunidades que as mantêm vivas.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Regueifa da Galiza. Repente nordestino. Tradição poética. Intercâmbio cultural. Oralidade.*

RESUMEN: *Regueifa se remonta a la antigüedad, compartiendo historias y emociones de forma espontánea y creativa. Repente es una fusión de influencias culturales ibéricas, indígenas y africanas, resaltadas por la improvisación y la competencia entre cantantes. Estas tradiciones comparten similitudes –como la exploración de temas cotidianos y la preservación de la riqueza cultural–, fortalecen la identidad de las comunidades y sirven como plataformas para la expresión de valores y cuestiones sociales y políticas. Este artículo tiene como objetivo analizar la interacción de estas tradiciones poéticas, destacando sus influencias culturales e importancia. La metodología adoptada implica un análisis comparativo de elementos poéticos y culturales, a partir de observaciones y experiencias directas en el contexto escolar y comunitario. Los proyectos de intercambio cultural y lingüístico, como BRALIZA, ejemplifican la capacidad de estas tradiciones para promover el entendimiento y el respeto entre culturas. Así, al celebrar regueifa y repente, celebramos la riqueza cultural y la vitalidad de las comunidades que los nutren.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Regueifa de Galicia. Repente repentino. Tradición poética. Intercambio cultural. Oralidad.*

Introduction

The reflections presented in this work are based on experiences related to oral poetry, connecting two public schools: Rochaël de Medeiros School, located in the Boa Vista neighborhood of Recife, and Marco de Ballón School, situated in Vila Cruces, Galicia, Spain. The contact between these two institutions enabled, among other valuable contributions, a linguistic exchange between 8th-grade students, approximately 13 years old and from low-income families. In this context, the article reports some of the experiences from the first contact between students and teachers while reflecting on the importance of teaching a foreign language in the final years of elementary school.

The interaction between *regueifa*³, originating from Galicia, and *repente*⁴ from Northeast Brazil, highlighted how these improvisational traditions, despite emerging in distinct contexts, share similarities and mutually influence each other, enriching the cultural identity of the communities to which they belong. The analysis demonstrated the capacity of these forms of expression to capture human experience and strengthen community bonds through oral

³ In Portugal, *regueifa* is the name of a type of pilgrimage bread. *Regueifa* is shaped like a ring and is made with good quality flour, reminiscent of what in Portugal is called "Spanish bread".

⁴ Repentance or cantoria is a poetic-musical art common in the Northeast of Brazil and is characterized by the improvisation of stanzas, that is, by their composition at the time of the performance.

poetry. The research reveals the significant role these practices play in preserving local languages and traditions in an increasingly globalized world.

Poetry transcends imagination and borders, connecting distinct cultures through the words and emotions it carries. In this sense, the *regueifa* from Galicia, Spain, and the *repente* from Northeast Brazil emerge as literary forms that, despite their geographically distant origins, share a common poetic essence.

The *regueifa*, rooted in the rich cultural tradition of northwestern Spain, dates back to ancestral times when Galician communities gathered for festivities and communal meetings. Emerging as a powerful vehicle for spontaneous sharing of stories and emotions, *regueifa* has become a living reflection of Galician experience over time. Its metrics, rhymes, and themes combine to highlight the oral tradition of the Galicians, keeping it alive in an increasingly digital technology-influenced context (Sanches, 2019).

On the other hand, the *repente* from Northeast Brazil, which originated in the fairs and markets of the Northeast in the 18th and 19th centuries, is a testament to the fusion of Iberian, indigenous, and African cultural influences. Its most striking characteristic is improvisation, where performers duel, creating instantaneous verses in response to challenges posed by their opponents. This practice not only demonstrates linguistic virtuosity but also reveals mental agility and artistic sensitivity, becoming a unique and engaging art form (Cunha, 2022).

The BRALIZA project was born in the public school Rochaél de Medeiros. As we explore the traditions of *regueifa* and *repente*, it is essential to understand the technical mastery of the poets and their deep connection to the realities and feelings of the communities they represent. The investigation proposed here will allow us to appreciate the cultural and artistic richness of these forms of expression, while also providing a broader view of the shared human essence conveyed through poetry.

The objective of this article was to analyze and contextualize a poetic experience lived between the *regueifa* from Galicia and the *repente* from Northeast Brazil. To achieve this, it is important to understand the fundamental similarities and differences between these forms of artistic expression, as well as to explore the influence and interaction of these traditions in the author's personal poetic experience, in order to comprehend poetry as a means of cultural and emotional connection.

Furthermore, a better understanding of this experience requires an analysis of the distinctive characteristics of the *regueifa* from Galicia, exploring its origin, poetic structure, and its role in preserving the oral tradition in the region. Similarly, it is essential to investigate

the roots and development of the *repente* from Northeast Brazil to understand how the cultural diversity of the Brazilian Northeast influences this form of artistic expression. In the name of such an investigation, we cannot overlook the contextualization of each author's personal experience in encountering *regueifa* and *repente*, highlighting the elements that most impacted and enriched their poetic understanding of poetry and the richness of their respective cultural traditions.

Justification

The choice to analyze the poetic experience between the *regueifa* from Galicia and the *repente* from Northeast Brazil arises from the need to explore and understand the nuances and interactions between two such rich and distinct poetic traditions. This research is justified by the cultural and artistic relevance of these forms of expression, which transcend geographical boundaries and provide a window into understanding human diversity.

Additionally, the personal experience of engaging with *regueifa* and *repente* represents a gratifying encounter with these traditions, allowing for an immersion in the poetic nuances that permeate these artistic practices. Therefore, the justification for this research lies in the appreciation and understanding of cultural traditions through a deeply lived personal lens, aiming to enrich the discussion on the role of poetry as a means of connection between cultures and emotions.

Methodology

In the methodological process adopted for this research, the selection of the bibliography initially involved a detailed search in the Scielo and Google Scholar databases. To ensure a rigorous and comprehensive analysis, specific keywords were used, such as "*regueifa galega*," "*repente nordestino*," and "Improvised Poetry." This initial search resulted in the identification of approximately 150 documents, including articles, theses, and conference papers. After applying inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure the relevance and academic credibility of the sources, about 40 texts were selected for deeper analysis.

The inclusion and exclusion criteria applied to the articles were extended to all forms of scientific literature, including books, theses, dissertations, and conference materials. These criteria included the requirement for works to be published in reputable journals or by

recognized publishers and to be peer-reviewed, in addition to their direct relevance to the research topic. Non-academic sources or those with questionable credibility were discarded to maintain the integrity and quality of the theoretical foundation.

For a broader understanding and a comparative analysis, the technique of triangulation of sources was employed. This involved the inclusion of complementary literature found beyond the initially mentioned databases, which helped enrich the discussion and provide multiple perspectives on the topic under study. The systematization of the data followed a thematic approach, in which the materials were organized according to the identified areas of interest, thus allowing for a detailed analysis of the cultural and poetic intersections between the *regueifa* from Galicia and the *repente* from Northeast Brazil. The methodological approach employed ensured that the research was conducted with scientific rigor, providing a solid foundation for the discussion of the proposed themes.

History and Significance of *Regueifa* in Galician Culture

The *regueifa*, as a form of artistic expression, has deep roots in the rich cultural tradition of Galicia, a region located in the northwest of Spain, dating back to ancestral times when Galician communities gathered during festivities and communal events. It was in this context that *regueifa* began to flourish, emerging as a powerful vehicle for sharing stories, values, and emotions in a spontaneous and creative manner (Sanches, 2019).

The origins of *regueifa* can be traced back to the ancestral practices of improvised singing, when poets and musicians would gather in squares and festivities to share their compositions spontaneously. Over the centuries, the practice evolved, absorbing influences from popular literature, folklore traditions, and even broader artistic movements (Gomes, 2013).

This evolution culminated in a unique art form, whose meter, rhyme, and themes intertwine in a poetic dance that resonates in the hearts of the Galicians. Thus, the lyrics of *regueifa* often reflect daily life, challenges, and aspirations of the community, transforming into a living mirror of Galician experience over time (Paços, 2019).

The preservation of Galicia's rich oral tradition is an essential action, as in an increasingly technology-dominated and digital media world, the practice of *regueifa* serves as a beacon illuminating the path back to cultural roots and the authenticity of human expression.

The orality of *regueifa* is a direct link to past generations, transmitting not only words but also the rhythm and cadence of a tradition that endures through the centuries (Sanchez, 2019).

Moreover, *regueifa* plays a significant role in the construction and representation of Galician cultural identity, as the lyrics, often rooted in local themes and emblematic figures of the region, serve as a reflective mirror for the Galician community. By exploring the challenges, joys, and struggles of everyday life, *regueifa* becomes a vehicle for self-knowledge and cultural affirmation for Galicians, consolidating their unique identity and connection to the land and history (Rodríguez, 2017).

Therefore, *regueifa* is more than a simple form of artistic expression in Galicia; it is a living heritage, a link to the past, and an affirmation of Galician cultural identity. Through it, the voices of poets and the resonance of their words echo in the winds of the present, as well as in the ancestral traditions that shaped Galicia and continue to enrich its culture.

Nordeste's *Repente*: Roots and Development

The roots of *repente* date back to the 18th and 19th centuries, a period when fairs and markets were centers of social effervescence in the Northeast. It was in this vibrant environment that the *cantadores* stood out, engaging in verbal duels that challenged their artistic skills. The influence of different cultural currents, such as the Iberian traditions of medieval troubadours and elements of Indigenous and African cultures, merged in this cultural melting pot, shaping *repente* into a unique form of popular art (Sautchuk, 2017).

One of the most distinctive characteristics of *repente* is its improvisational nature, as the *cantadores* face each other in duels where they must create verses instantaneously, responding to the challenges posed by their opponent. This skill of improvisation corresponds to a demonstration of linguistic virtuosity and a manifestation of mental agility and artistic sensitivity, elements that are essential to an art form that requires, in addition to technique, an intimate connection with the culture and oral traditions of the Northeast (Instituto Histórico e Geográfico de Mato Grosso do Sul, 2022).

Another central element of *repente* is the competition among *cantadores*, in which the duels represent a demonstration of individual skill, combined with an expression of friendly rivalry and a quest for public acclaim. In this sense, the *cantadores* compete for the attention and recognition of the audience, creating an atmosphere of anticipation and enthusiasm that engages everyone (Santos, 2012).

Repente is more than an artistic tradition; it is a vivid reflection of the soul and culture of Northeast Brazil. Because of this aspect, its origins and evolution over the centuries make this poetic production precious within the landscape of artistic expression in the country, such that the improvisation and competition among *cantadores* lend this tradition a liveliness and authenticity that continue to captivate and inspire audiences, keeping the rich cultural heritage of Northeast Brazil alive (Lucas, 2011).

Thus, *repente*, with its deep roots and distinctive characteristics, is a living expression of the cultural and artistic wealth of Northeast Brazil. In this understanding, by comprehending its origins and evolution, we are invited to celebrate the mastery of the *cantadores*, as well as the vitality of a tradition that endures and flourishes in the improvised words and verses that echo through the hinterlands and cities of this singular region.

Similarities and Differences Between *Regueifa* and *Repente*

The *regueifa* from Galicia and the *repente* from Northeast Brazil are two literary expressions that share a remarkable cultural and artistic richness. When comparing these two traditions, it becomes evident that, despite their superficial differences, both share an intrinsic poetic essence and a capacity to enrich the cultural heritage of their respective territories (Essinger, 2011).

In terms of structure, both *regueifa* and *repente* follow a specific poetic form. Regarding *regueifa*, it typically presents itself in stanzas of four verses, with defined rhyme and meter, aiming to provide a rhythmic cadence that aids in memorization and oral interpretation. It is worth noting that the meter may vary depending on the context and the poet's style. In contrast, *repente*, in its most traditional form, is characterized by the alternation of stanzas between *cantadores*, each responding to the other with improvised verses. Although this format is more flexible, it also has its own metrical and rhythmic rules, contributing to the fluidity and harmony of the performance (Linhares, 2011).

Another point of convergence is the themes addressed by both traditions: both *regueifa* and *repente* often explore everyday, social, and cultural themes. In this perspective, the poets of these traditions have a unique ability to capture the nuances of ordinary life and transform them into poetic verses that resonate with the audience. This ability to translate human experience into words is one of the strengths that keep these traditions so relevant and engaging (Santos, 2016).

We know that the poetic forms of a particular culture contribute to the richness of traditions. With regard to *regueifa* and *repente*, we observe not only the technical mastery of the poets but also a profound connection with the realities and emotions of the communities they represent. These traditions are powerful vehicles for the preservation and transmission of culture, enriching the lives of those who practice and appreciate them (Sautchuk, 2017).

In light of this, the *regueifa* from Galicia and the *repente* from Northeast Brazil, although originating from different contexts, share an intrinsic poetic essence that transcends geographical boundaries. Their unique structures, themes, and improvisational techniques contribute to the richness and vitality of the cultural heritage of their respective territories, uniting communities through the art of words.

Cultural and Social Impact of *Regueifa* and *Repente*

The *regueifa* from Galicia and the *repente* from the Northeast of Brazil are not merely forms of artistic expression; they are fundamental pillars in the construction of cultural identity and social cohesion within the communities that practice them. When examining the impact of these traditions, it becomes evident that they go beyond entertainment, influencing how people perceive themselves, relate to one another, and interpret the world around them.

The practice of *regueifa* and *repente* has a profound impact on the communities that embrace them, as individuals participating in these forms of expression connect with a rich cultural tradition that is passed down from generation to generation. This fosters a sense of continuity and belonging, strengthening the bonds among community members and reinforcing their collective identity. The events and gatherings where *regueifa* and *repente* are celebrated become occasions for social interaction, where people come together to share verses, stories, experiences, and common values (Sautchuk, 2017).

Moreover, these forms of expression serve as a referential identity in the transmission of values and in the representation of social and political issues (Muscovici, 1996). Thus, the verses created during *regueifa* and *repente* often reflect the realities and challenges faced by the community. Topics such as rural life, the struggle for social justice, local traditions, and political concerns are frequently addressed. In this way, *regueifa* and *repente* become a platform for dialogue and reflection on fundamental issues within societies (Santos, 2012).

These traditions also have the power to preserve and revitalize local languages and dialects. By using everyday language in their compositions, practitioners of *regueifa* and

repente contribute to the maintenance and enrichment of the linguistic heritage of the region. This is especially relevant in contexts where language is a central element of cultural identity (Carneiro, 2016).

Thus, *regueifa* and *repente* have a deep and multifaceted cultural and social impact, as they strengthen the identity of the communities that practice them, serving as a link between the past and the present. Additionally, they provide a space for the expression of values and social and political issues, promoting dialogue and sociopolitical awareness. By doing so, these art forms enhance the cultural life of communities and contribute to the preservation and evolution of local traditions.

Cultural and Linguistic Exchange Project

There are several cultural and linguistic exchange projects that promote cultural exchange between different poetic traditions, similar to BRALIZA Brazil/Galicia. One example is the Brazilian Linguistic Diversity Platform Project, which aims to create an online platform that brings together different databases of the various languages present in Brazil. In this sense, the project acknowledges Brazil's linguistic and cultural diversity and seeks to preserve it (Carneiro, 2016).

Another example is the UFPR, PUCPR, Takahashi Educational Institutes, and Kake Cultural and Linguistic Exchange Program, which promotes the integration of university students from UFPR and PUCPR into aspects of Japanese life and culture. Additionally, there is the Science Without Borders Program, launched by the Federal Government in 2011, which aims to provide up to 75,000 exchange scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students by 2027 (PUC; UFPR, 2020).

The results and impacts of these projects on the artistic and cultural development of participants are significant, as they provide a unique opportunity for participants to immerse themselves in a different culture, learn a new language, and expand their cultural horizons. Furthermore, these programs also promote mutual understanding, harmony, and universal brotherhood among peoples (Nóbrega, 2014).

However, despite the aforementioned benefits, challenges remain to be overcome, such as the lack of awareness among a large portion of the Brazilian population regarding the diversity of the country's linguistic and cultural heritage. This situation is exacerbated by the absence of cataloging, adequate documentation, and a multilingual repository. These issues

represent a significant obstacle to the preservation and appreciation of these intangible riches, which could serve as a reference for any inquirer.

Case Study and Contextualization of the Theme with Professional Practice

The professional practice described in the BRALIZA Brazil/Galicia project demonstrates an innovative and enriching approach to the teaching and learning of oral and improvised poetry. By promoting meetings between students from Galicia and students from the Cônego Rochaél de Medeiros⁵ State School in the city of Recife, in the state of Pernambuco, the project creates an environment for cultural and linguistic exchange, enabling the sharing of knowledge and experiences among students from different countries.

This experience arises from the desire and objective of establishing relationships between two public schools: the Rochaél de Medeiros State School (Brazil) and the Marco de Ballón School in Vila Cruzes (Spain). The schools involved are working with *regueifa* and the Nordeste's *repente* within the perspective of oral poetry, as designed by teachers Shirley Izabela and Robson Teles, aiming to highlight popular poetry by connecting the tradition of *cordel* with history and contemporary issues in both Brazil and Galicia. Furthermore, the project seeks to modernize the *cordel* book, expanding its presence in both printed and digital dimensions, utilizing social media as a means of dissemination and appreciation of this poetic form. The exploration of the *cordel* book culture, *regueifa*, and popular songbooks provides students with an authentic immersion in the literary and artistic traditions of both territories. This experience goes beyond purely educational aspects, directly impacting the linguistic and communicative skills of the students. The practice of oral poetry not only stimulates creativity but also promotes the development of verbal expression and communication skills, essential for the holistic formation of students.

In this exchange, oral culture was essential, as it facilitated the sharing of knowledge among researchers, who, by being in contact with new cultures, could discuss and demonstrate their differences. The appreciation of cultural diversity and interculturalism are fundamental pillars of this project. In celebrating the different cultural expressions of young people from both countries, BRALIZA promotes acceptance and respect for the plurality of traditions and

⁵ The Rochaél de Medeiros School is part of the Pernambuco state education network, with a staff of thirty-six teachers and eight hundred students in elementary school II. The school has support from the coordination in the development and monitoring of students with autism spectrum disorder and students with visual and hearing impairments and is a reference in the perspective of inclusive education in the state of Pernambuco.

customs. This approach contributes to the formation of global citizens capable of understanding and valuing the diverse cultures present in an increasingly interconnected world.

The culmination of the project will include a call for the International Cordel Book Prize, representing a unique opportunity for the participating students, encouraging them to enhance their writing and poetic composition skills, while emphasizing popular literature created in verses and originating from both written and oral traditions. The term "*cordel*" originates from the way "booklets" were marketed in Galicia, Portugal, and Brazil, where publications were hung on strings for display. This literary tradition originated in the Iberian Peninsula and stood out as a popular form of literature in the 15th and 16th centuries, being disseminated in the colonies under the rule of the kingdoms of Portugal and Castile.

In Galicia, the stanzas were often composed of four, six, or ten verses, and these narratives were recited or sung by vendors, often blind, who performed in marketplace squares, sometimes using instruments like the hurdy-gurdy, violin, or hand viola. Cordel books began to gradually disappear in the last decades of the 20th century (Rodríguez, 2017).

The two schools aim to link the tradition of *repente* to their realities with students engaged in this experience; and concerning the award, it recognizes and values the student's creative expression, providing them with a space for academic visibility. The integration of social media as a means of dissemination amplifies the reach and impact of these productions, connecting students not only within the school context but also with a broader audience.

Therefore, the professional practice of the BRALIZA Brazil/Galicia project represents an inspiring example of how education can be enriched by integrating cultural and linguistic traditions in a collaborative and intercultural learning environment. By valuing the artistic expression of students in the creation and development of *regueifas* and *repentes*, and promoting interaction between different communities, the project contributes to the formation of conscious, creative, and culturally sensitive citizens.

Final considerations

In light of the enriching cultures and traditions of *regueifa* and *repente*, the transformative power of these forms of artistic expression becomes evident. Originating from distant lands, *regueifa* in Galicia and *repente* in Northeastern Brazil, these practices resonate not only in the improvised verses and rhythmic rhymes but also in the communities that cultivate them. *Regueifa*, with its ancestral roots and the ability to reflect the Galician

experience over time, is a direct link to past generations, transmitting not only words but also the rhythm and cadence of a tradition that has endured through the centuries.

Repente, in turn, is a living manifestation of the cultural and artistic richness of Northeastern Brazil. Its origins intertwine with Iberian, Indigenous, and African influences, creating a truly unique art form. Thus, the improvisation and competition between *cantadores* imbue this tradition with a vibrancy and authenticity that continue to captivate and inspire audiences. In comparing *regueifa* and *repente*, we observe not only similarities in structure and themes but also profound differences in their improvisational techniques. Both, however, stand as living witnesses to the poetic mastery and cultural wealth of their respective communities.

Moreover, these traditions have a profound social and cultural impact, strengthening the identity of the communities that practice them and serving as platforms for the expression of values and social and political issues. They preserve and revitalize local languages and dialects, contributing to the maintenance of the region's linguistic heritage.

Cultural and linguistic exchange projects, such as BRALIZA Brazil/Galicia, exemplify the ability of these traditions to foster mutual understanding and respect between different cultures. By celebrating *regueifa* and *repente*, we celebrate not only poetic mastery but also the cultural richness and vitality of the communities that nurture them.

Thus, may these traditions continue to resonate through the centuries, inspiring future generations to connect with their cultural roots and express themselves authentically and creatively. May *regueifa* and *repente* remain beacons that illuminate the path of knowledge of our origins, celebrating the cultural diversity that enriches our world.

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