

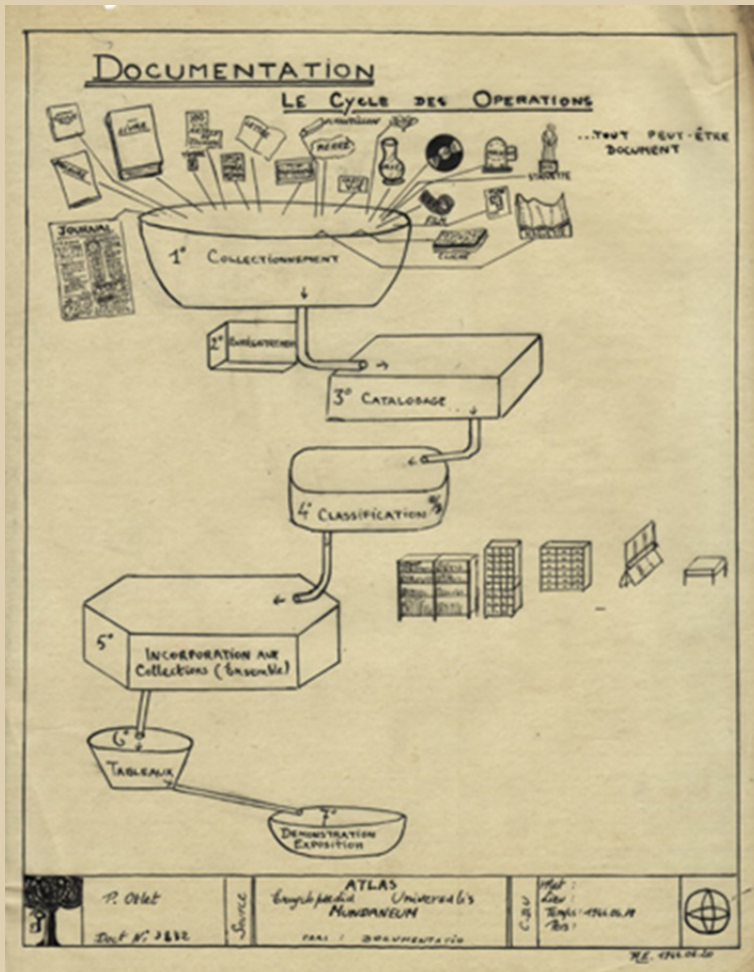
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Contributi

Possibilities for using cultural warrant to complement literary work:

An analysis of the thesaurus of Brazilian Folklore and Popular Culture

Larissa Moraes Martins, Carlos Eduardo da Silva Carvalho,
Ana Cristina de Albuquerque*, Mario Barité**

Abstract: This study analyzes the Brazilian Folklore and Popular Culture Thesaurus from the perspective of literary warrant, proposing possibilities for enrichment through cultural warrant. Using a theoretical framework focused on the organization of knowledge, it examines the structure of the thesaurus, its terminological categories and the bibliographic corpus on which it is based. Although the instrument shows methodological coherence and a consistent empirical basis, there are limitations in terms of the transparency of editorial processes and the lack of participatory strategies with the cultural communities involved. It is therefore proposed to adopt cultural assurance as a complementary approach, in order to broaden the semantic depth and representativeness of the vocabulary. Such integration can strengthen the relevance and accessibility of the thesaurus, especially with regard to the interface, inclusion mechanisms and usability for different audiences. The study highlights the potential of articulating literary and cultural collateral in the organization of knowledge in culturally complex domains.

Keywords: Literary Warrant, Cultural Warrant, Thesaurus, Knowledge Organization Systems, Popular Culture.

1. Introduction

This paper is the result of reflections based on Barité et al. (2010) and aims to analyze the Thesaurus of Brazilian Folklore and Popular Culture (Centro Nacional de Folclore e Cultura Popular 2006a), its structure and presentation from the perspective of cultural warrant.

According to Barité (2015), a thesaurus is a knowledge organization system (KOS) made up of terms that have both functional and semantic relationships with each other. The authors also state that the thesaurus is organized «under

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strong terminological control, so as to constitute an ideal tool for storing and retrieving information in specialized areas» (Barité 2015, 156).

The thesaurus of Brazilian folklore and popular culture began to be conceived in the 1980s by the National Centre for Folklore and Popular Culture (CNFCP) together with the Edison Carneiro Folklore Museum and the Amadeu Amaral Library, both sectors of the institution. However, due to various issues, it only became a reality in 2004, with UNESCO sponsorship. It is worth highlighting the importance of a thesaurus linked to the theme, since folklore and popular culture are fundamental bases of Brazilian cultural heritage.

Throughout the introduction or presentation of the system, the objectives of the thesaurus are not presented, however, they are mentioned in the CNFCP activity report when presenting the second version of the thesaurus as part of the «project Preserving Traditions: Multimedia Thesaurus of Brazilian Popular Culture, which aims to encourage research, documentation and dissemination of sound, visual and textual collections on the country's popular culture. The project is sponsored by Caixa Econômica Federal, through the Caixa Program for the Adoption of Cultural Entities» (Centro Nacional de Folclore e Cultura Popular 2006b, 50).

The thesaurus has two forms of structure, always presenting the term with an explanatory note as to the relationships. In one, the terms are presented in alphabetical order regardless of classification and in the other, it has a systematic structure in which the terms are organized hierarchically based on their relationships in 15 classes: Food; Artifact; Association; Productive activity; Rural activity; Craft construction; Popular expression; Individual; Popular language; Popular literature; Place; Raw material; Medicine; Belief system; and Time. The last seven classes were included in the second version of the thesaurus.

For each of the classes there is also an explanatory note, as well as their specific terms and/or associated terms. The first class, food, according to its note refers to a product derived from «plants and/or animals and/or minerals, whether fresh or processed. These substances, when ingested by an individual, should nourish and satisfy hunger» (Centro Nacional de Folclore e Cultura Popular 2006a). The second class, called artifact, notes that it is an «individual form of material culture» (Centro Nacional de Folclore e Cultura Popular 2006a). The third class presented by the thesaurus, called association, refers to the union of individuals due to a specific objective, whereby «they remain cohesive thanks to procedures, routines and sanctions that they accept and approve of in a conscious and rational manner» (Centro Nacional de Folclore e Cultura Popular 2006a).

As for productive activity, the fourth class in the thesaurus, it deals with the production of goods to meet society's needs, through economic, social or cultural activities. Despite being related to it, the craft construction class has

its own specificities, since it deals with the construction of goods using either a craft technique or materials available in the environment (Centro Nacional de Folclore e Cultura Popular 2006a).

Another class that has some specificities is rural activity, which deals with the

«process that demarcates, in the social rhythm, a special moment of a sacred and/or profane nature, in which the temporary replacement of certain symbolic and/or behavioral paradigms by other paradigms whose function is to reinforce the social structure and cultural standards. It is characterized by a specific space-time configuration, by the use of objects, systems of languages and behaviors, and by emblematic signs, marked by tradition, whose meaning is common to the group» (Centro Nacional de Folclore e Cultura Popular 2006a).

In relation to popular Expression, this refers to a locution or phrase specific to certain social or cultural groups.

As for the class of individual, this refers not only to the human species, but to specimens of species, «organic or inorganic, which constitute a distinct unit» (Centro Nacional de Folclore e Cultura Popular 2006a). The raw material class is about the «main substance that is used in the manufacture of something» (Centro Nacional de Folclore e Cultura Popular 2006a).

As for the class of medicine, it refers to a single substance or set of substances intended to treat both physical and spiritual ailments. In relation to the belief system, this is described as a set of practices, representations and values that encompass the «cosmological, philosophical, historical, sociological and psychological dimensions in their approach to the essential questions of human life» (Centro Nacional de Folclore e Cultura Popular 2006a). This set is organized in such a way as to divide the world into the sacred and the profane.

Two other classes that are very close are popular language and popular literature. The former is described as a process by which humans express their mental states, used by different groups within a linguistic community, «has a dynamic and non-normative character, which differentiates it from formal language» (Centro Nacional de Folclore e Cultura Popular 2006a) and popular literature, which encompasses more than one literary genre, such as tales, short stories, novels, and others, is defined as a «collection of narratives in prose and/or verse, of a traditional or non-traditional nature, transmitted orally» (Centro Nacional de Folclore e Cultura Popular 2006a).

As for the class of place, this is presented as the «physical and/or symbolic space, to which identity, relational and historical characteristics are attributed; for carrying out or practicing various activities» (Centro Nacional de Folclore e Cultura Popular 2006a). And finally, the class of time which «comprises milestones and cycles of social life, expressed by belief systems and social practices (religiosity, work, leisure, etc.)» (Centro Nacional de Folclore e Cultura Popular 2006a).

It was not possible to see the total number of terms, or the number by class, which could be interesting for different studies or for users of the system. Then, we discuss the warrants, with special attention to the literary warrant, identified as being used in this instrument.

2. On the use of the Literary Warrant

The Thesaurus in question does not explain in its presentation and introduction texts (either in the first or second version) which warrant was used in the composition of the instrument. Lourenço (2022), when presenting the UFRGS Thesaurus of Brazilian Folklore (an instrument based, among other sources, on the thesaurus explored in this paper), explains that the principle of literary warrant was used specifically, basing the work on the search for terms in articles, books, dictionaries and documents, in a deductive approach (creating categories before searching for the terms). It is understood that the Thesaurus of Folklore and Brazilian Popular Culture follows a similar path, since it establishes 283 bibliographic sources in its most recent version (Centro Nacional de Folclore e Cultura Popular 2006a). It is important to pay attention to the definitions and characteristics of a literary warrant in order to correctly approach the Thesaurus of Brazilian Folklore and Popular Culture as an example of an instrument based on a literary warrant.

Beghtol (1995) explains that literary assurance is concerned with describing the content of certain documents. Barité (2018) recalls that warrants are authorities that the subject involved in the activity of organizing knowledge will invoke to justify and verify decisions, whether they are explicit about making a warrant. Even if sometimes the organizers of an instrument or system do not make clear the choices made and the authorities that guide their work, the presence of some kind of warrant is what differentiates a Knowledge Organization System from an arbitrary proposal (Barité 2018, 530). Along with Beghtol's (1995) argument above, Barité (2018) recalls that Hulme's proposal in 1911 involved an empirical approach to the study of literature, proposing a distinction in classification standards from other forms of work. Hulme disagreed with the use of the authority of philosophers and thinkers or scientific consensus as simple justifications for the establishment of a classification system with its subjective elements, proposing the transfer of authority in the establishment of a system to knowledge itself in its recorded and socialized materiality (Barité 2018).

The basic foundation of literary assurance must therefore be the literature linked to the domain in question, both for validation and for the extraction of terminology, moving from the state-of-the-art to a structured conceptual reconfiguration (Barité et al. 2010). In this sense, the principle of literary warrant goes against «an aprioristic organization of knowledge or one based

on formal aspects of classification theory» (Barité et al. 2010, 125), with the documentation on which it is based being the source of validation itself, since the object of classification has its substance in this material (Barité et al. 2010). This perspective reinforces the empirical dimension of the activity of organizing knowledge based on literary warrants in relation to other warrants that can be anchored, for example, in ethical or philosophical principles.

The next topic reflects on the potential enrichment of the type of instrument analyzed here, based on the use of mechanisms linked to cultural warrants.

3. Analysis of the thesaurus and possibilities for enrichment based on the Cultural Warrant proposal

As explained above, in the presentation and introduction texts of the thesaurus analyzed there is no stated mention of a specific objective, and it can be inferred from the CNFCP's activity report that this thesaurus aims to contribute to the research, documentation and dissemination of collections on the country's popular culture.

The terms are organized alphabetically and hierarchically, based on a relationship with some fundamental categories. In the first version published in 2004, there were seven classes: Food, Artifact, Association, Productive activity, Ritual activity, Individual and Raw material. In the latest version available (Centro Nacional de Folclore e Cultura Popular 2006a), the categories Oral Literature, Medicine, Artisanal Construction, Belief System, Place and Time were included, as well as expanding the categories of Ritual Activity and Productive Activity with the inclusion of the subcategories Musical Activity, Narrative Activity, Religious Practice and Popular Pharmacopoeia.

It is interesting to note the inclusion of new categories and the expansion of some that have shown the need for expansion to include the organized terms. Barité et al. (2010) suggests that in addition to using literary assurance to formulate knowledge organization systems, it is possible to use it to validate or re-observe them, and it is common for those responsible for these systems, when needing to prepare new editions, to make decisions regarding terms that need to be excluded or incorporated. The process and result of this work are summarized in Figure 1.

Thesaurus of Cultural Heritage Objects in Brazilian Museums	
Structure	Attributes
<p>General plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 categories; <p>Ex.: Personal use objects;</p> <p>• 77 subcategories</p> <p>Ex.: Clothing.</p> <p>Systematic part: Development of the general plan; Hierarchical relations of genus/species of all preferred terms are evidenced at greater levels of depth.</p> <p>Alphabetical part: Structured alphabetical index, with the complete list of preferred and non-preferred terms, in which each term is accompanied by its logical and semantic relations with other terms.</p>	<p>Monolingual - Portuguese (BR); 4,558 terms; 3,412 preferred terms; 1,146 non-preferred terms.</p>
	<p>Methodology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collection of terms in thesauri, dictionaries, glossaries and encyclopedias, specialized or not, published in Brazil and abroad; • Inclusion of terms directly requested by Brazilian museums; • Inclusions throughout the construction of categories during consultations in literature and museums with specific collections such as the Delgado de Carvalho Museum and the Fundação do Teatro Municipal do Rio de Janeiro.

Figure 1. Characterization. Source: Adapted from Ferrez (2016).

From the perspective of literary assurance, the thesaurus organizing team's attention to reformulating categories and incorporating new ones is something positive. Therefore, to enable a better understanding of the discussion and presentation of the thesaurus in question, we provide below a representation of its categories and subcategories in Figure 2.

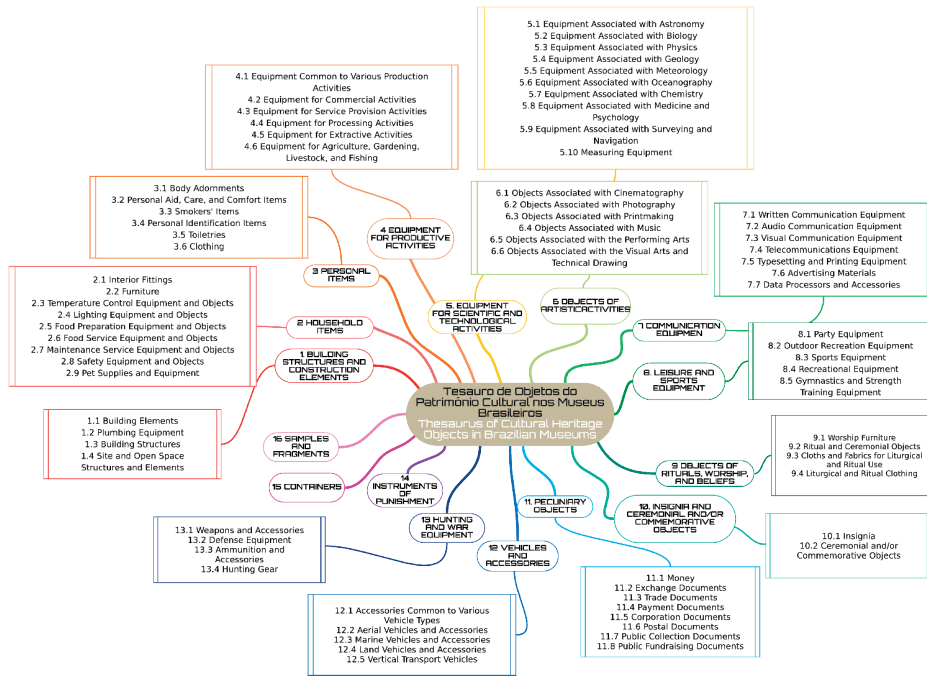


Figure 2. Categories and Subcategories. Source: Adapted from Ferrez (2016).

As explained by Beghtol (1995) and Barité (2010; 2018), Hulme understood that what is fundamental in the use of literary warrant is the constant reference to the empirical concreteness of the observed material, in this case, materials linked mainly to academic publications in folklore and popular culture studies. However, the lack of transparency in relation to the processes of alteration in the thesaurus, as well as the lack of explanation of the materials that solidified the changes, is a weak point in the material.

Likewise, the process of inserting or removing terms is not made explicit by the organizers of the device. While the first version had 2092 terms divided into seven categories, it is not known exactly how many new terms became part of the updated version, nor is it known how the subordination of certain terms changed with the inclusion of new categories and subcategories. In view of the 283 works and documents referred to in the thesaurus as sources consulted, it would be interesting to observe the determinants that suggested the changes. A brief comparison of the structure of the two versions is represented in Figure 3.

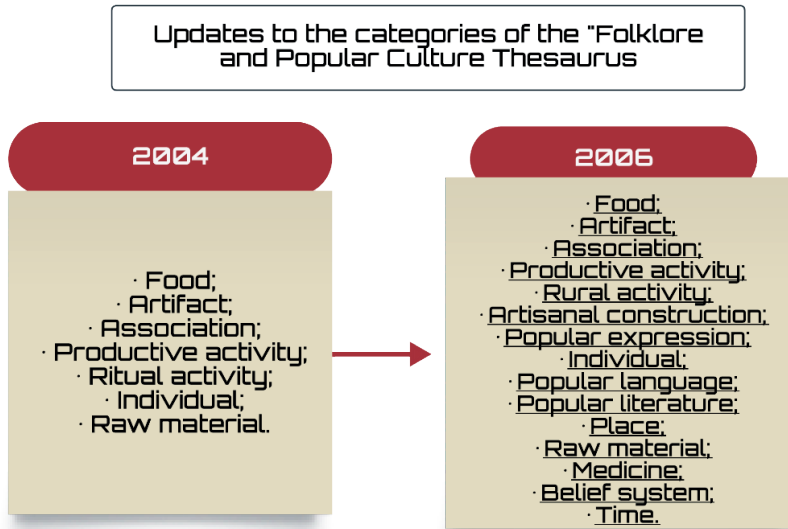


Figure 3. Comparison first and second version. Source: Adapted from Ferrez (2016).

The extent of the bibliography on which the thesaurus is based is remarkable, with almost three hundred academic materials and the presence of government documents, consisting of a considerable corpus of literary collateral, despite not declaring the use of this collateral at any time.

For educational purposes, we present below two terms as examples of how they appear in the thesaurus analyzed here, in order to better illustrate their relationships and description within the thesaurus. Along with these terms, we provide examples of how these same terms appear in the *Thesaurus des Objets Mobiliers* (Verdier and Magnien 2001) organized by H el ene Verdier.

The *Thesaurus des Objets Mobiliers* is based on the Palissy Base and the collection *Principes d'analyse scientifique*. Although it is not aimed at museums and their collections, it still has some similarities to the thesaurus analyzed here, so this relationship can allow for a better understanding of the organization in Ferrez (2016). It is important to emphasize that this is not a comparison, as this would be inappropriate.

In Table 1 we present the terms "accordion" and chandelier and how they appear in each of the thesauri, the differences and similarities in the relationships, organization of the terms and even in the order in which the information is presented.

Field	Thesaurus of Cultural Heritage Objects in Brazilian Museums	<i>Thesaurus des Objects Furniture</i>
1st	Term: Accordion	Term and notation: Accordéon 14.04.02.01.
2nd	NA: A wind instrument whose sound is produced by the actuation of bellows, which produce a current of air that passes through a set of reeds inside the instrument's body. Its structure is usually made of wood, with a box and a keyboard for the high notes, connected by a pleated bellows to another box with buttons that activate the low notes.	TG: free reed aerophone
3rd	UP: Accordion Accordion Concertina Bagpipes Harmonica Accordion	NE: Portable keyboard instrument consisting of a set of free metal reeds controlled by keys or buttons. The air is actuated by bellows.
4th	TG: Aerophone	NA: Created in Austria in 1829, based on the principles of the harmonica. The accordion can be diatonic or chromatic, and this information should be indicated in the PDEN field, if possible.
5th	SCA: 0604 Objects Associated with Music	Bibliographic reference
1st	Term: Chandelier	Term and notation: Chandelier 08.10.03.
2nd	NA: Light fixture made of metal, glass, wood, etc., not necessarily connected to the electrical system, attached to the ceiling and consisting, in principle, of a central column and many lights distributed in arms.	TG: lamp
3rd	TG: Lighting objects and equipment	VA: pendant (pendant light) synagogue chandelier church chandelier crown of lights chandelier pendants (crystals)
4th	TA: Ceiling light	NE: A light fixture suspended from the ceiling and composed of multiple light sources, which may be shaped like a ring (crown of lights) or a wheel, with arms (spokes). It can be powered by candles, oil, kerosene, gas, or electricity.
5th	SCA: 0204 Lighting Objects and Equipment	Bibliographic reference

Table 1. Organization of terms in thesauri. Source: Adapted from Verdier and Magnien (2001) and Ferrez (2016).

So, even when dealing with the same object using the same type of guarantee, differences are present even in the order in which the elements are presented. The terms were chosen randomly, but the organization follows the same pattern in both, including or removing elements according to the term's needs.

Interesting differences worth noting are the explanatory and application notes, which in the Brazilian thesaurus were constructed based on bibliographic references, but without specifying which. While the French thesaurus specifies in its introduction that both the explanatory and application notes come from the Palissy database and are accompanied by a bibliographic reference specific to that object. They are not grouped by categories at the end of the whole as in the Brazilian case. These are merely highlighted curiosities without establishing a judgment of better or worse between them.

Resuming our analysis after the example of the presentation of thesauri, Ferrez (2016) in addition to the thesaurus in pdf format, the recent version of the thesaurus is operated on a World Wide Web page, allowing access to the items via hyperlinks, making both the systematic and alphabetical presentation very fluid - the interface is clean and the direction to a term or category is immediate, depending on just one click. There are interesting mechanisms for linking images and bibliographic materials linked to the term that can be observed, to enable the user to access the thesaurus.

However, there were some limitations imposed by the technologies available at the time of the latest version.

Some examples of these limitations include a lack of features for international users, such as translation tools, as well as a lack of accessibility for people with disabilities (PWD). This includes missing tools like high-contrast viewing, the ability to enlarge and/or change the font, screen reader functionality, and other resources that could improve the thesaurus's accessibility and usability.

Another important point is related to the system's flexibility, its compatibility with different systems and browsers, since there is no thesaurus format for smartphones, only the desktop version, which can hinder access by certain audiences and comfortable use of the system (individuals with limited vision, the elderly, among others).

There is also a specific concern about the use of warrants in this context. Among the different perspectives on culture, it can be said that it is the totality of relationships established between a group, structured in hierarchical sets, in the distinctive characters manifested in the behavior of the individuals of this group in relation to others (Laplantine 2003). Also, according to Laplantine (2003), the experience of contact with other cultural forms, an expression of otherness, leads the observer of other cultural forms to see what their own references allow them to observe and understand. In terms close to our problems,

«culture may influence what data is represented and what is not in any given knowledge organization system» (Lee 2021, 6).

This question is relevant to any topic to be discussed, but in the context of Brazilian folklore, which is fed by a series of structures from different cultural matrices, such as the various indigenous, African and Iberian influences (Brandão 1982), it is a discussion that is constantly in evidence. The choice to use literary collateral is an interesting one, as it allows for the approximation of qualified productions that are crossed by academic reflection for the composition of the thesaurus, which is of great value. However, there are certain limitations that are inherent to the empirical proposal.

The empiricism can never be used in a pure form, because the way we select sources for our empirical studies and the way we see the world is always influenced by our subjectivity and cultural background. Therefore, our position today is to recognize the empirical, rational, historical and pragmatic/political elements that underpin our SOC. Because the historical and pragmatic/critical elements have been under-represented in the history of OC, the need is in particular for their integration. Hulme's vision is important (and in line with the growing trend towards bibliometric studies), but it should be recognized that there will always be a tension between different epistemological positions and that a pure empiricist position is an illusion (Barité 2018, 531).

It is also understood that it would be possible to approach the use of cultural collateral as complementary collateral in order to further enrich the thesaurus. Barité et al. (2010) reports on the proposal made by various authors to improve existing classification systems or controlled vocabularies by using other warrants (such as cultural) alongside literary ones.

By way of example, some of the works included in the sources used by the thesaurus are classic texts by renowned "interpreters of Brazil", such as Gilberto Freyre and Luís da Câmara Cascudo, basic authors for social and cultural theory in Brazil, with particular interpretations and their own image of our reality (Albuquerque Júnior 2015; Couto 2015; Novais and Arruda 1998). As Lee (2021) explains, cultural assurance is a conscious and deliberate movement with reference to culture carried out by classification and information professionals to build their systems. Considering the different practical possibilities of cultural assurance (Lee 2021), it might be possible to establish dialogues with communities associated with the terms in the thesaurus in order to deepen the work, with a view to enriching the relationships between terms, the presence of synonyms or possible hierarchical restructuring, for example. This is, however, a very complex job that would require even more literary depth (including the dimension of literary warrant) and the development of specific and functional methodologies for working groups to operate in conjunction with communities that share the terms present in folklore (which is also multicultural, involving different communities and perspectives that

do not necessarily coincide). One could think of mechanisms for bringing together communities that experience the elements of folklore and popular culture dealt with by the instrument, the creation of commissions including members of communities, or carrying out targeted anthropological work, for example.

Taking two concrete examples from the observed thesaurus, we can mention the terms “Tapiri” and “Tucupi”. The former is presented as «A place used as a temporary shelter or storage for raw materials; it consists of a small hut with a round wooden frame and a thatched roof. It does not require a wall»¹ (Centro Nacional de Folclore e Cultura Popular 2006c). Its generic term constitutes “Place”, and its associated term “Artisan work”. In this case, the use of cultural guarantee could provide an understanding with a broader meaning; note the understanding that “Tapiri” gains for the culture of Tupi-speaking peoples. Meaning in Tupi language: «“Tapiri” is an indigenous word in the Tupi language that is used by various traditional peoples in the North region of Brazil and means, among other things, a place where people gather to share ideas, food, rest, and experiences» (Associação Brasileira de Agroecologia 2023).

In this case, “Tapiri” leaps from a strict sense, associated solely with a place, to the cultural enrichment that connects Tapiri to a shared environment, where people live, converse, and share experiences. Similarly, we can mention the case of “Tucupi”, which is presented as «processed food, extracted from the juice of peeled cassava and squeezed into a tipiti»² (Centro Nacional de Folclore e Cultura Popular 2006d) a definition that could be enriched through cultural guarantee, adding elements of its preparation and the full range of possible dishes derived from its culinary base – whether in its definition or in the construction of associated terms and expansion of the thesaurus.

Both examples could be profoundly enriched if accompanied by mechanisms based on cultural guarantee, as in the aforementioned hypotheses of building a committee of community members who use the terms that appear in the thesaurus – where these participants would add meaning and associations to the thesaurus terms.

4. Conclusions

The Thesaurus of Brazilian Folklore and Popular Culture is a significant initiative in the field of knowledge organization, especially considering the complexity and diversity inherent in popular knowledge. The structured on the basis of literary warrant, the instrument is based on a robust bibliographic

¹ Original definition in Portuguese [N.d.A].

² Original definition in Portuguese [N.d.A].

corpus, made up mostly of academic works, technical documents and productions by recognized interpreters of Brazilian culture. This methodological choice, although not formally explained in the texts presenting the thesaurus, denotes adherence to an empirical perspective based on textual materiality. This foundation warrants, on the one hand, the legitimacy of the terminological selection and, on the other, shows the concern with fidelity to the documentation on the domain covered.

The organization of the thesaurus into systematic and alphabetical categories, as well as the expansion of classes between the first and second versions, point to the attention paid by the team responsible to the evolution of folklore studies and the need to accommodate new terms and cultural expressions. The inclusion of subcategories and the reformulation of some classes show that the instrument's management team has worked to update it in line with the proposed thematic scope. However, this evolution is not accompanied by transparent records of the criteria and decision-making processes used, which limits the traceability of changes and, consequently, the full reliability of the instrument for certain scientific and professional uses. The lack of data on the current number of terms and their distribution by category also compromises quantitative or comparative analyses between versions.

Furthermore, although the use of literary warrant is a positive differential in anchoring terminological selection in established documents, the opening of explicit relations with procedures linked to cultural warrants with the approximation of the social groups that produce and experience the cultural expressions represented by the thesaurus would be very enriching. In this sense, the proposal to complement this warrant with a cultural warrant is promising. As authors such as Lee (2021) and Barité et al. (2010) point out, the adoption of other warrants – especially those that consider the cultural and community dimension – can broaden representativeness, semantically enrich the vocabulary and strengthen its social function. Incorporating the voices of the communities that hold popular knowledge, through ethnographic listening, collaborative working groups or consultative committees, could contribute to the instrument's greater adherence to the cultural reality it seeks to represent.

Finally, the technological environment that supports the thesaurus could be improved to better meet the principles of accessibility and usability. The lack of mechanisms aimed at foreign users, people with disabilities or with different levels of digital literacy limits the system's reach and effectiveness. Improvements in this regard – such as the inclusion of translations, contrast tools and automated reading, as well as versions adapted for mobile devices – would be consistent with the thesaurus' purpose of promoting the documentation and dissemination of Brazilian popular culture in its multiple manifestations. Thus, while recognizing the merits of the proposal based on literary assurance, it reinforces the need for an expanded and integrated approach, which

also includes the foundations and practices of cultural assurance, favoring the creation of more inclusive, dynamic and representative systems for organizing knowledge.

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