Papo Reto: The Politics of Enregisterment amid the Crossfire in Rio de Janeiro

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ABSTRACT

This essay studies *papo reto* (straight talk) activist register as an enregistered social formation that indexes practices, relations, and personae belonging in Brazil's favelas (low-income neighborhoods). Drawing from fieldwork in the Complexo do Alemão favelas in Rio de Janeiro, I discuss three case studies that showcase prototypical pragmatic features of *papo reto* (suspension of face concerns; directness; and indexically valued tropism). In juxtaposing findings from the sociology of violence in Brazil with my informants' ethnopragmatics, I conclude that *papo reto* activist register is a crucial language game for surviving the "crossfire," that is, the violent dispute between the normative regimes of the state and the "world of crime" in favelas. Further, in its rewording of the "convoluted" language of bureaucracy and other upscale registers to a "direct" and more participatory speech level, *papo reto* activist register is a fundamental weapon for the political participation of Blacks and other minorities in one of the world's most unequal countries.

This essay draws on data from nearly a decade of fieldwork with predominantly Black activists, artists, and residents of a group of favelas in Rio de Janeiro and explores a register formation in these antiracist spaces that can be described as *papo reto* activist register. In Portuguese, the slang phrase *papo reto* translates into English roughly as "straight talk." In the activist circles I follow that operate at the periphery of Rio de Janeiro, as well as in other

participant frameworks beyond Rio de Janeiro where the *papo reto* activist register is disseminated—including rap and funk music concerts, social movement meetings, political training courses for leaders and residents, and the growing parliamentary activity of people emerging from favelas—*papo reto* is an enregistered trope that indexes a speaker animator who is an activist or favela resident (or aligns with this role) and who often metadiscursively signals an attitude of defiance toward the unequal structuring of Brazilian society, particularly the perceived effects of inequality embedded in privileges associated with "cordial racism" (Turra and Venturi 1995), a metapragmatic injunction embedded in racial domination in Brazil according to which speakers "downplay racial differences that might lead to conflict or disagreement" (Roth-Gordon 2017, 3), and the speech register, legitimated by elite institutions, known as *norma culta*, or standard Portuguese (Signorini 2002; Faraco 2008).[1]

The *papo reto* activist register is associated with different yet interrelated pragmatic effects: It indexes belonging in or sympathy for *favelas*, the name in Portuguese for low-income neighborhoods created by former enslaved Africans and their descendants. When used in situations of interpersonal conflict, it may contextually suspend expectations of face and, through directness, reconfigure interactions to more participatory grounds. Its referential practice (Hanks 1990) usually singles out objects of discourse related to racial or economic injustice, and the speaker is opposed to them. In its work of differentiation from upscale registers, it

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1. In usual sociolinguistic terms, a standard variety is a specific social dialect of a language (Agha 2007, 134–42). In stratified and unequal societies like Brazil, this social dialect acquires the status of a "baseline register, a standard in relation to which others are normatively evaluated as deviant or substandard" (Agha 2015, 306). When I refer to "standard Portuguese" and to "nonstandard varieties of Portuguese," I am not speaking of bounded registers that can be sufficiently catalogued in lexicogrammatical terms but of reflexive tropes with stereotypical and variable lexicogrammatical features that play a crucial role in societal differentiation and inequality. Roth-Gordon (2017) ethnographically documents that, in upper-middle-class spaces in Rio de Janeiro, often made up of White speakers, the ideal of *falar na norma culta* 'speaking Standard Portuguese' is a habituated, ideologically oriented process of disciplining the body and regimenting social ties not only to uplift whites' "level of education and their class standing but also their claims to racial whiteness" (28; see also Nascimento 2020). Through fractal recursivity (Irvine and Gal 2000), lower-middle-class and poor Brazilians, a majority of whom are Black or *pardos* (brown), may deploy this mapping of language difference onto racial/class belonging across societal scales, such as in protecting oneself from racial profiling by the police (Roth-Gordon 2009) or in participating in gatekeeping genres such as job interviews (Roth-Gordon 2017, 65–68). Further, Silverstein (1996), in his account of the "culture of monoglot standard" in the United States, describes that the standard in this society is construed in mainstream metadiscourses as the social dialect that best denotes the world "out there" and that speakers of the standard do the best work of denotation (hence their inherent superiority in the linguistic market). Favela activists rationalize *papo reto* activist register as *gíria* (slang). Even if some of the activists I engage with have a trajectory of schooling and proficiency in the standard, their contextual use of *papo reto*, as a register of slang (Agha 2015), necessarily breaks from images of speaker animators inhabiting the "standard" (which, in Brazilian mainstream discourses, embody Silverstein's twofold ideological characterization and Roth-Gordon's raciolinguistic account). As I discuss later, while not all of my informants diverge from the ideology of the standard as cognitively superior, speaking in *papo reto* activist register often enacts a valorization of personae and lifestyles proper to favelas and they are therefore seen as contextually speaking nonstandard Portuguese.

exhibits a "indexically valued tropism" (Agha 2015, 323–26), that is, at least some of its repertoire units may be perceived by users socialized in *papo reto* as a form of analogy or translation of tropes across phonolexical register repertoires. Further, in a participation framework signaled as *papo reto*, users recognize the co-occurrence of this style with other enregistered speech and semiotic styles for surviving racism and Brazil's dire economic inequality, hence *papo reto* is linked to stereotypical semiotic values for these users (Agha 2007: 186). These different pragmatic effects are grouped together as "the same thing, again" (Gal 2019, 452) and as indexing coherent types of personae and social relations (Agha 2007)—that is, as a *sociolinguistic register*—through enregisterment, that is, through a sociocultural process that includes (1) the socialization of register users into participation frameworks that relatively stabilize the register's denotational and indexical values and (2) the metapragmatic work of institutions and discourses that reflexively produce criteria, norms, and evaluations for its discursive organization and situate it in the stratified terrain of a society. Susan Gal (2019, 453) explains that enregisterment "is the assembling and conventionalization of register contrasts via a language ideological process that orients the expectations and perceptions of participants." This essay is thus invested in explaining the ideological work embedded in people's use and uptake of certain language forms and pragmatic moves as indexing a *papo reto* activist register. Further, it looks to some multiple modes through which those who identify with *papo reto* employ this dynamic semiotic resource in different arenas of political action.

The data I bring for describing this communicative practice come from fieldwork in Complexo do Alemão, a group of favelas in Rio de Janeiro, and from interactions with residents and human rights activists from other favelas, such as Complexo da Maré. Some 80,000 people live in Complexo do Alemão. Despite having the lowest Human Development Index in the city (0.711) and disproportionately fewer public services such as schools and health care facilities (IBGE 2010), Complexo do Alemão is a site of intense artistic activity, political organization, and production of solutions for everyday life.

To exemplify one of such forms of resisting violence and stigma through semiotic activity, I briefly detail a videoclip where the *papo reto* activist register produces important pragmatic effects. Shot in Morro do Adeus, one of twelve Alemão favelas, "AmarElo" is sung by Emicida, one of Brazil's leading rappers, along with Pablo Vittar, a drag queen singer, and Majur, a nonbinary trans Black singer.[2] Written by Emicida, the song's lyrics "speak of hope, positivity, and overcoming—or

2. See https://youtu.be/PTDgP3BDPIU.

bypassing—the hardships of life through faith in oneself" (Facina 2021, 12). Released just months after Bolsonaro's inauguration in 2019, the clip rapidly became a symbol of resistance as it thematizes the "common experience for many Brazilians of living under threat" (Facina 2021, 12). It counterposes despair and hopelessness—iconized, in the opening 2 minutes and 50 seconds, by a phone call from a depressed young man on the verge of suicide—to the work of hope and valorization of the peripheral condition. In "AmarElo," *papo reto* contextually emerges as response to previous experiences of suffering. Below is a fragment of the song that may be characterized as a token of *papo reto* and that ends by referencing the register itself:

Excerpt 1. Lyrics of Emicida's "AmarElo" (2019)

Sem melodrama, busco grana	No melodrama, I'm after money,
Isso é Hosana em curso	God's plan in sight
Capulanas, catanas	Capulanas, katanas,
Buscar nirvana é o recurso	Nirvana is the goal
É um mundo cão	It's a hell of a world for us,
Pra nóiz perder não é opção, certo?	losing is not an option, right?
De onde o vento faz a curva	When the wind takes a turn and you least expect,
Brota o papo reto	we'll find the truth[3]

These verses display some of the features of *papo reto* activist register. First, metadiscursively, Emicida—who acts, in Goffmann's (1981) terms, as speaker author, principal, and, alongside Majur and Pablo Vittar, animator—sings that "De onde o vento faz a curva, brota o papo reto." A literal translation of the verses would read: "*papo reto* flourishes where the wind bends/takes a turn." That is, the "direct" register of conflict resolution in favelas emerges in response to "curves" (i.e., hardship but also avoidance of sorting out problems). Second, at the lexical but also at the grammatical, prosodic, and deferential levels, *papo reto* activist register tends to exhibit an indexical valued tropism (Agha 2015) that works by producing (partial) analogues between semiotic items valued in favelas and those attributed to a purported "standard," such as politeness and circumlocution (often rationalized as "curves"). In this sense, Emicida's production team translation of "brota o papo reto" (*papo reto* emerges) as "we'll find the truth" points to this analogical tropism. To "speak the truth" or "to speak of reality," common phrases that I hear in fieldwork, generally amounts to producing analogues of lexical or other pragmatic units (such as politeness) from other registers into nonstandard varieties or locally valued speech forms of conduct. Thus, the Portuguese verses oppose *papo reto*'s pragmatic moves (such as being "direct" and informal) and

3. Translated by Ulisses Costa.

repertoires to the wind's "bend," alongside a rationalization that *papo reto* is straightforward, without "roundabouts" or "melodrama." Third, the pronoun *nós* 'we' is graphed as "nóiz," thus combining the epenthetic vowel /i/, indexical of nonstandard Portuguese, and a conspicuous graphic alternant /z/, as a further mark of peripheral identity. In short, Emicida's multimodal text relies on metapragmatic operations of *papo reto* activist register that often, but not always, co-occur: being direct; opposing "convoluted" forms of speech that deviate from the point of interest, especially through indexical analogues associated with peripheral speech; and indexing peripheral belonging, including through conspicuously using tropes of slang (Agha 2015; Roth-Gordon 2009) or other pragmatic forms associated with nonstandard varieties and speech conduct. In other words, Emicida's verses "speak to the point"—they oppose criminalization and despair while valorizing a queer, trans, Black, and *favelado* ethos.

I would like to emphasize up front that *papo reto* activist register has similarities with other enregistered formations of "straight talk," both inside and beyond Brazil, both past and present. Some of these other discursive formations of straight talk include *dugri* speech, a form of straight talk enregistered as an emblem of Israeli Sabra Jews' lifestyles (Katriel 1986); *vertu* speech, the discourse crafted by the French Revolution to authenticate "the new state and the groups that competed for its control" (Outram 1997, 142); and the new extreme-right-wing Brazilian discourse crafted by Bolsonaro and his allies, which is often rationalized as talking to the point, without concern for politeness (see Silva 2020). While I have identified that the metapragmatic label *papo reto* is sometimes used by Bolsonarist politicians and activists to name their (or their leader's) public appearances—such as Gabriel Monteiro, a pro-Bolsonaro policeman, who hosts a series of interviews on YouTube called "Papo Reto com Gabriel Monteiro," or Straight Talk with Gabriel Monteiro,[4]—I am not concerned with these other formations in this article. While Monteiro's parodies of, and interdiscursive engagements with, favela speech activism are the kinds of moves that readily occur within processes of enregisterment (see Gal 2018), my interest here lies in describing a sociologically specific and semiotically distinctive register of *papo reto* 'straight talk', whose demographically locatable circuits of discourse authentication, training and circulation specify both (*a*) the features (noted above) that make the register empirically identifiable (and performable by activists), and (*b*) the stereotypic indexical values that make performances of these features construable as acts of political resistance by those marginalized or oppressed in a country under democratic decline (see Agha 2007, 190–232; Borba 2019; Junge et al. 2021).

4. See, e.g., https://youtu.be/Yar_1RIMkBI.

Given this background, I study *papo reto* activist register as an important language game for grassroots movements of political resistance in Brazilian peripheries—locations populated by a majority Black population, who still endure the colonial legacy of the longest and largest European slave trade in the Americas (Marques 2019). I continue by first providing a general picture of my fieldwork in Complexo do Alemão and by spelling out the Brazilian scholarship on the dialectics of speaking and silencing in favelas, locations that, differently from (upper-) middle-class areas, are controlled by two normative regimes in dispute: the state and "the world of crime." Next, I move to three case studies to unpack some defining pragmatic features of *papo reto*: suspension of face concerns; directness; and indexically valued tropism. I conclude by emphasizing the coherence effect of *papo reto* both interdiscursively in the case studies and in the *longue durée* of the survival of former enslaved Africans and their descendants.

The Dynamics of Speaking and Silencing in Favelas

Together with Adriana Facina and Adriana Lopes, I initiated fieldwork in Rio de Janeiro's Complexo do Alemão favelas in 2012. Favelas are peripheral neighborhoods in Brazil built by their residents (Caldeira 2000; Valladares 2019). Approximately 1.4 million residents of Rio de Janeiro live in favelas (out of 6.4 million; IBGE 2010). Rio's favelas are diverse, but similar in their being home to a majority Black population, occupying low-paying or precarious work positions, and having less access to public services. It is also common that the armed management of everyday life is disputed by the police, the drug traffickers, and, in some favelas, *milícias*—groups of police officers who illegally control the circulation of commerce, drugs, and people. The trope that favela residents use (and that Brazil's sociology of violence conceptually refines) is that these spaces are disproportionately affected by the *fogo cruzado*, or crossfire, between the normative regimes of the state and the "world of crime."[5]

When I arrived in Complexo do Alemão in 2012, a new policing program known as Pacifying Police Units (UPPs) was being deployed. The UPPs were created in 2008, ahead of mega-events such as the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games. (Since 2018, however, this policing program has been underfunded and is about to end.) The public aim of "pacification" was to promote permanent policing in favelas and to remove weapons from the retail drug trade. New police officers were hired, with the alleged expectation that policing would be moved away from authoritarian practices and toward a model of "proximity

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5. Machado da Silva (1999); Menezes (2015); Biondi (2016); Menezes and Correa (2017); Feltran (2020).

policing." In practice, however, the new police officers were working in the same military institution as the former ones. Alongside an often conspicuously aggressive treatment of periphery residents, during "pacification" the police had to accommodate their relations to the retail drug traffic in favelas, which has not only been one of confrontation, but also of "agreements and political exchanges" (Machado da Silva and Menezes 2019, 531; Telles and Hirata 2007).

Our initial connection with the neighborhood was Raízes em Movimento, a grassroots NGO that fosters human rights. Between 2012 and 2016, we came to understand the dynamics of silence and speech that had taken shape in the favelas. Being mindful of this dynamic is important because the *papo reto* activist register that I describe occurs when it is "safe" to speak. For a resident, talking about violence—with outsiders or even with neighbors—may be potentially dangerous, as they are constantly watched by both the police and drug traffickers. Our informants are mostly human rights activists and artists who are somehow an exception to this rule. They are connected to broader networks that may offer them protection and legal aid. But even activists are not immune to scrutiny of (and violence from) the police and drug traffickers. Tatiana Lima (2021) reports that "the vulnerability of Rio de Janeiro human rights defenders, in their confrontation to urban and institutional violence, has reached a peak, especially after the assassination of councilwoman Marielle Franco." I elaborate on Marielle Franco's biography and this state of vulnerability on the next section.

This background of tension has been studied by Palloma Menezes and colleagues (Menezes 2015; Menezes and Correa 2017; Machado da Silva and Menezes 2019). Based on fieldwork in two "pacified" favelas—Santa Marta and Cidade de Deus—Menezes explains that the dynamics of speech and silence during "pacification" was largely shaped by "investigation strategies" (Dewey 1938, cited in Menezes 2015). Experiencing a new dynamic of policing where the police would be permanently present and coexisting with the drug trade, residents resorted to investigative strategies for surviving the "minefield"—an expression that refers to "an imperative of constant anticipation in daily life in 'pacified' favelas" (Machado da Silva and Menezes 2019, 542). These anticipations had the following features. First, they refer primarily to when and how to talk—for instance, when to avoid talking about the police or drug traffic. Second, anticipations involved producing rumors or "informal news" about a new scenario of policing, mapping changes in the territory, and seeking stability in a situation of uncertainty (Menezes 2014). Third, anticipations relied on using technologies of surveillance at hand—for instance, to film a potential illegal police action and use the images as evidence for pressing charges. Machado da Silva and Menezes (2019, 542) conclude that

these anticipations, "contrary to Goffman's brilliant analyses, were not subject to the risk of 'losing face' (Goffman 1967), but rather of losing one's own life." In other words, for Goffman, everyday face-to-face interactions involve managing the potential threat of harming the face of others and ourselves. And this is why we constantly seek to protect our (and our interlocutor's) face, for instance through polite discourse. In principle, for favela residents, an imminent threat in the "minefield" is losing not one's face but one's own life, since the police could in theory criminalize any resident's utterances as belonging to the drug trade—or the drug trade could frame any such resident as a snitch.

The three case studies that I discuss come from my interactions with subjects who have suffered or witnessed such embedding of one's utterances into adverse frameworks. Like Menezes's anticipatory strategies, *papo reto* activist register is also a communicative strategy for surviving "crossfire" and other inequities. Yet *papo reto*'s avoidance of violence differs from the pragmatics of anticipation. People often *dão um papo reto* 'give a straight talk'—that is, they are direct, suspend expectations of face, and/or translate affirmative tropes—when it is safe to confront the interlocutor. For example, in 2015, MC Smith, a funk singer born in Complexo do Alemão, told us that he had recently witnessed an aggressive police reprimand. A resident was barbecuing with neighbors on the sidewalk, with samba music playing loudly from his speakers. A police officer approached him, saying: "Hey, *federal* [i.e., the resident], if you don't turn that shit off, I'm going to shoot your speaker." MC Smith told the policeman: "Why can't he have fun listening to his music? What situation are we living in? In a new dictatorship? But a dictatorship only for the poor? An oppression only for the poor?"

MC Smith gave a *papo reto* to the policeman, that is, he used tropes associated with social justice—namely, the critique on the disproportionally aggressive police approach to *favelados*—alongside "blunt," nondeferential, and straightforward questions. These co-occurring features produce the impression of *papo reto* for those acquainted with this activist register (see Agha 2007, 185–89). Yet reports of such confrontations with the police are rare in my data. MC Smith is a famous singer and has resources for self-protection that other residents lack. However, MC Smith's talk itself was criminalized in 2010. Interpreting that some of his lyrics belonging to the subgenre *proibidão*—or forbidden funk, which spells out the dynamics of the "world of crime"—"incited crime," a judge ordered his arrest alongside other artists (Palombini 2013). They remained in prison for fourteen days, until the Supreme Court accepted a petition for habeas corpus claiming that their arrest had violated free speech (Palombini 2013, 222). This empirical case entails that, at the barbecue scene, MC Smith was in a more favored position

than the harassed resident in giving a *papo reto*. Next, I unpack the pragmatics of *papo reto* activist register.

Enregistering *Papo Reto*: Suspension of Face Concerns

The first case study on *papo reto* examines an interaction with a person who suffered from crossfire at its most extreme. Born in Complexo da Maré, Marielle Franco became a city councilwoman in 2017. However, in the second year of her term, Franco and her driver Anderson Gomes were brutally assassinated. Even though the assailants are in prison—Ronnie Lessa and Élcio Queiroz, former military officers connected to the Crime Office *milícia*—it is still unknown who solicited the murder, much less their motives.

Together with Jerry Lee, I have been invested in understanding the political significance of this crime in Brazil's current democratic collapse under Bolsonaro (Silva and Lee 2021). Speculations about the killers' motivations commonly arise in my interviews, and many informants point out that Franco disturbed influential power structures in Rio de Janeiro for her defense of Black women, LGBTQI+ rights, economic redistribution, and especially her agenda on public security, which included tackling *milícias*. In short, Marielle's *papo reto* political style was a source of discontent for the White male majority of the political establishment (Silva and Lee 2021; Khalil et al., forthcoming). Renata Souza, a member of Franco's cabinet and now a state deputy, made the explicit association between Franco's defiant linguistic style and her assassination. In her book *Cria da favela* (Born in the favela), Souza (2020, 11) writes that Franco was killed for "raising her voice" (*erguer a voz*): "It is evident that by 'raising her voice' [talking back]— a phrase by bell hooks that symbolizes our transition from objects to political subjects—Marielle Franco challenged the power of the male white elite with ties to the Brazilian *milícias*." Souza thus describes *milícias*' uptake of Franco's use of *papo reto* activist register as contributing to her femicide. As the enregisterment of style is not a bounded and isolable pattern of semiotic activity but rather an "emergent patterning . . . of co-ocurrent styles" (Agha 2007, 186), Souza also connects Franco's defiant speech to other Afrodiasporic stylistic models of language and personhood, such as hooks's (1989) notion of talking back as part of Black women's conversion from "objects to political subjects."

At a feminist seminar in 2017, Franco reported to the participants a conflictive debate in which she reframed the interaction to *papo reto*. She had been invited to discuss city economics along with other councilmember, Leandro Lyra, at PUC-Rio, an upper-class space. Franco told the audience that she had to "give a *papo reto*" to Lyra, a White male economist trained at Rio de Janeiro's elite

IMPA graduate school of mathematics, who had refused to recognize the economic effects of Brazil's regressive taxation on the poor. Franco's signaling that she would from that moment on use some features of *papo reto* activist register (such as suspension of face concerns, directness, and use of social-justice-discourse-analogues to Lyra's technicist economic talk) indicates that *papo reto*, like most registers, is a "contextual register of speech" (Agha 2015, 311). For a user, a fundamental metapragmatic knowledge about a register, in Agha's terms, is to know that usually that particular register is not used all the time; in the case of the register of slang, for instance, "to know a slang is to know that it is appropriate only to certain occasions. In this sense slang is a contextual register of speech, and, like every other register, effective competence in the register includes knowledge of when not to use it" (311). Franco's authoritative competence in *papo reto* activist register therefore included a competence in deploying *papo reto* when "necessary," in this case when her political adversary produced a metapragmatic attack (Jacquemet 1994) by using characterological tropes associated with "standard" political talk (such as parliamentary politeness, cordial racism, and avoidance of discourse topics potentially controversial for one's ideological position, such as "racial inequality" in Lyra's discourse). Here is Franco's description of the contextual use of *papo reto*:[6]

Excerpt 2. Marielle Franco's talk at the State University of Rio de Janeiro Feminist Seminar (2017)

eu vim com debate das mulheres, o debate das empregadas domésticas, de quem é o trabalhador e a trabalhadora, aí apresentei (.) e aí quando ele foi falar, ele entrou num debate irônico (.) aí eu falei: "é fácil, né, Leandro, citei ele (.) é fácil ser homem branco é:: e tá na PUC e dizer que todo mundo é taxado de manei::ra <u>igual</u> (.) e não <u>falar</u> de toda sonegação (.) e não falar das grandes empresas," enfim (.) fiz essa fala, na tranquilidade, no conteú::do (.) e aí ((Leandro em seguida falou)) "é:: porque já falaram até de homem branco," aí eu tive

I presented the women's debate, the domestic workers' debate, I explained who is the male and female worker (.) and then when he was speaking, he started an ironic debate (.) then I said: "it's easy, isn't it, Leandro? I quoted him (.) it's easy to be a white man and yeah:: to be at PUC and say that everyone is taxed <u>e::qually</u> (.) without <u>talking</u> about all the tax evasion (.) and without talking about the big companies" anyway (.) I made that speech, with tranquility, with con::tent (.) ((and then Leandro said)) "we::ll someone spoke even about white man," then I literally had to stand up

6. I have utilized Jefferson Transcription Conventions throughout:

(.)	A micropause
(( ))	Analyst comments
<u>Underlining</u>	A raise in volume or emphasis
-	A cut-off
::	Stretched sound

Excerpt 2. (*Continued*)

que levantar literalmente (.) levantei na mesa, assim (.) falei, "falaram não, Leandro, quem falou fui eu," é porque, ainda mais sendo vereador né? parece que você mantém assim- você tá xingando mas é assim: "excelência" ((ela fala sorrindo, para imitar o uso de honoríficos enquanto se xinga alguém na câmara)), não vai fazer ((esse papo convoluto)), galera, na boa, não vai, aí eu falei: "falaram não, eu tou na mesa, tou debatendo," mas aí (.) a casta do direito, "você está interrompendo," e eu falei: "estou interrompendo sim porque ele foi irônico e eu me permiti o direito de interromper," porque eu tou do lado dele, porque ele não faz referência à pessoa: "Marielle fez uma referência a mim enquanto homem branco, eu não sou, eu sou sei lá" (.) eu falei: "por quê? isso é xingamento?," não entendi, "ah, você tá incomodado com seu privilégio? tá assumindo teu problema da branquitude?"

(.) I stood up at the table, like this (.) I said, "someone spoke, no, Leandro, I'm the one who said it," it seems like ((in parliament)) you keep- you have to curse like this: "your excellency" ((she mocks the use of honorifics when councilmembers are cursing others)), he's not going to this ((convoluted talk)), folks, for good, he's not, then I said, "someone spoke, no, I'm at the table, I'm debating," but then (.) the law caste, "you're interrupting," then I replied: "I'm interrupting because he was ironic and I allowed myself the right to interrupt him," because I'm next to him, why can't he reference the person: "Marielle referenced me as a white man, which I'm not, I don't know what I am" (.) I said, "why? Is that a curse?," is that a slur? I don't understand it, oh, are you bothered by your privilege? are you assuming your problem of whiteness?"

Franco reports that, initially, she "made [the] speech with tranquility, with content." That is, her initial conversation was not in *papo reto*. Yet upon hearing Lyra's impersonal reference to her ("someone even spoke about white man"), Franco decides to rescale her talk to the *papo reto* activist register. She first signals the public about her suspension of parliamentary deference: "Then I literally had to stand up, I stood up at the table, like this. I said, 'Someone spoke, no, Leandro, I'm the one who said it.'" Uncomfortable with Lyra's ideological work of making herself invisible, Franco intentionally displays several layers of face suspension: she interrupts Lyra; she "literally [stands] up at the table"; and she deliberately avoids parliamentary politeness, namely, by refusing to use the honorific pronoun *Vossa excelência* (your excellency)—a politeness marker commonly used by councilmembers in their public address to fellow members. While explaining the audience that councilmembers use *Vossa excelência* even when cursing other members, she reassured them that she would have not allowed Lyra protect himself in the guise of parliamentary politeness: "He's not going to do [this convoluted talk], folks, for good, he's not."

In addition to suspending face concerns, Franco rescales Lyra's misrecognition of his own condition into the speech level of progressist identity politics. In her

rationalization of the metapragmatic conflict, Franco suggests that her appeal to *papo reto* meant denaturalizing Lyra's White, male, upper-class condition. She asks her adversarial colleague, "Why [are you bothered that I call you a white man]? Is that a slur? I don't understand it. Oh, are you bothered by your privilege? Are you assuming your problem of whiteness?" At this point, Marielle's rescaling of the interaction to *papo reto* means that she was confronting not just parliamentary politeness but also "cordial racism" (Turra and Venturi 1995). *Cordial racism* is a specific manifestation of racial domination in Brazil. To be racially cordial means to "downplay racial differences that might lead to conflict or disagreement" (Roth-Gordon 2017, 3). Under cordial racism, race relations are brought into private or humorous spheres (Sales 2007), while speaking publicly about racism or racial inequality is forbidden. Thus, Franco's comment that Lyra was appalled about her reference to his being a White man indicates that he perceived a violation of the requirement to remain racially "cordial." Through the *papo reto* activist register, she challenges this imperative to remain silent about racial domination; simultaneously, she brings to the surface Lyra's indexical attempt to speak with an unmarked voice, "from nowhere," which for her conceals "privilege" and further legitimizes inequality. Later in the debate she explains to her audience that "Leandro is a PhD student in mathematical economics at IMPA, but he reads economic data without reading the reality." Significantly, Franco adds that alongside his unproblematizing of whiteness, the refusal to *papo reto* undergirds the modus operandi of Lyra's caucus in the city council, which supports Jair Bolsonaro, known for his open defense of white supremacy. In Franco's words: "[it's] a modus operandi that is proper to whiteness, that doesn't relay the *papo reto*, that won't sort out the questions and the polemics."

This case study demonstrates some features of Franco's speech style, which in sociological terms is an authoritative token of *papo reto* in Rio de Janeiro's progressive peripheral and leftist political circles. I pointed out at the beginning of the section that Renata Souza, Franco's parliamentary aide and now a state deputy, made an explicit correlation between Franco's defiant speech style and the brutal attempt to stifle her voice through a murder perpetrated just over a year after her first term as councilwoman began. The assassination of Marielle Franco has taken on a central importance for contemporary Brazilian politics. The reasons for this centrality are manifold and intersect with the politics of enregisterment espoused by the councilwoman, who posthumously multiplied this defiant speech style through several "seeds"—a metaphor that her mourning movement uses to name the people and causes influenced by her (meta)discursive action. Currently, three of her parliamentary aides are Black women elected to state and municipal parliaments in

Rio de Janeiro—Renata Souza, Monica Francisco, and Danielle Monteiro—in addition to other Black and trans women who have been elected to other houses, including the federal chamber. Franco's image and political action have also been cannibalized by Bolsonaro, who uses the memory of the councilwoman to represent the perversion of Black activism, communism, feminism, and the LGBTQI+ movement. Like the specter of Hamlet, Franco has thus been a crucial metaleptic figure for contemporary Brazil—as one of my informants told me, she survives and narrates the present, even if posthumously and vicariously.

Unrolling the Lines of Talk: Emic Directness

In her preface to Claudia Giannotti's (2016) book about production of news by and for residents of peripheries, Renata Souza (2016, 14) offers a definition of *papo reto* that underlines the dimension of directness in *papo reto* activist register. Souza writes that the book "gives the '*papo reto*' about the communication of workers in favelas. A *papo reto*, without curves or reticence, is that which forms and informs without victimization, which goes straight to the point of interest: the fight for the right to life and voice." Souza's succinct definition does the language-ideological work of assembling tropes (curves, reticence, form[ation], inform [ation], rights, life, voice) that are organized in at least two pragmatic clusters (referential practice and directness of mode) and bound together through linguistic ideology to express a recognizable register. For her, *papo reto* as a referential practice is both performative and constative (Austin 1962), that is, it respectively "forms and informs." *Papo reto* thus invokes the "right to life and voice" of *favelados* by being direct, that is, by iconically avoiding curves and reticence.

It is worth pointing that (in)directness of mode does not inhere in language but rather comes to be viewed as such vis-à-vis language-ideological work. Wierzbicka (1985, 175) argues that "terms such as 'directness' or 'indirectness' are much too general, much too vague to be really safe in cross-cultural studies, unless the specific nature of a given cultural norm is spelled out." Silverstein (2010, 351) goes so far as suggesting that we abandon directness and indirectness as theoretical categories, as both doctrines "are descriptive and theoretical dead-ends for comprehending cross-culturally how people use the semiotic resources of language." My account of "directness" in *papo reto* activist discourse is not about looking for inherently grammatical features of directness but about spelling out a "cultural norm," as Wierzbicka (1985) suggests. In this sense, *reto* in Portuguese means "straight," "nonoblique," as in *linha reta* 'straight line'. Souza thus draws from the visual representation of a straight path and metapragmatically explains

that *papo reto* is direct as it does not stray from the point of interest. Further, for many of my informants, "o papo é reto" (talk is direct), as it referentially does not refrain from singling out economic, racial, and other societal inequities and does so through enregistered emblems of favela lifestyles, such as the valorization of blackness, laughter, and informality (see Goldstein 2013).

The second example in this case study comes from a ten-week training course in which I participated that may be seen as a chain of participation frameworks in which the *papo reto* activist register was taught to activists, artists, and residents. Promoted by the National Museum for Anthropology professor Adriana Facina and NGO Raízes em Movimento, the 2013 training course "Vamos desenrolar" took place in Complexo do Alemão and included classes on public policy, health, racism, policing, income generation, and other fundamental topics for favela activism. "Vamos desenrolar" may be roughly translated as "Let's unroll or disentangle the talk/the topics of interest." *Desenrolar* in Portuguese is a slang term for sorting ideas out. Literally, *desenrolar* means unwinding something (e.g., a cord) that has been rolled up. So *desenrolar* in the training course puns on unwinding the line of talk (*papo*) just so it can be straight (*reto*).

Raull Santiago was one of the Complexo do Alemão activists participating in the training course. A year later, alongside other local Black activists, he would create a collective named after the register: Coletivo Papo Reto. This collective today has some thirty members who promote strategies of action in favelas focusing on communication, health, and public security (see https://coletivopaporeto.org). Importantly, Coletivo Papo Reto has established direct lines of communication with residents through WhatsApp, which enables them to "monitor violence and enact strategies for assuring human rights in a location of intense inequality and armed conflicts" (Freitas 2021). Below, I transcribe a poem that Santiago wrote and performed at the closing of the training course. In his dramatic reading of the poem, he spells out the pragmatics of *papo reto* activist register.

Excerpt 3. Raull Santiago's poem written to be read at "Vamos Desenrolar" training course (2013)

Sociedade de consumo ou cidade partida?	Consumer society or split city?
É dentro dessas leituras que eu inicio a rima.	Within these readings I begin the rhyme
Maravilhosa? Cês acham que tá, essa cidade?	Wonderful? Do you think it is, this city?
Na moral, político é que faz publicidade.	Honestly, politicians are those who advertise
Só aumenta, inventa, aliena e fode.	They only boost, invent, alienate and fuck up
E manda UPP pra conter,	And they send the UPPs to contain,
Pra acalmar dá BOPE.	To calm down, they give BOPE.

Excerpt 3. (*Continued*)

Parece até George Orwell, *1984*, como um grande irmão,	It's like George Orwell's *1984*, like a big brother,
Cercando por todos os lados.	We're surrounded from all sides.
Mensageiro da chacina,	The messenger of slaughter,
[. . .]	[. . .]
Seu pensamento crítico rapidamente aliena	Your critical thinking becomes alienated
E dentro do desespero, cai na montagem da cena.	Desperate, you fall into the montage of the scene.
[. . .]	[. . .]
Sai disso, tentar a sorte é o marketing do azar,	Get out, playing the lottery is marketing of bad
não é assim que tua vida vai mudar.	luck, this is not how your life will change.
O papo é reto e fala de realidade,	The talk is straight and talks about reality, but
mas se quer ficção boa, lê *A Praga Escarlate*.	for good fiction, read *The Scarlet Plague*.
Deu ruim, se liga no que eu vou te falar.	If it's bad, listen to what I'll tell you.
Deu ruim, não tenho papa na língua pra travar.	It's bad, I'm outspoken and my tongue won't be stopped.
Não dá mais pra ser otário, alienado e bobo,	There is no use in being an idiot, alienated, and foolish,
Aplaudindo o discurso de quem ferra o povo.	Applauding the speech of those who hurt the people.
Nessa cidade sangrenta, violência dá ibope.	In this bloody city, violence is popular.
Dogmática e sofrida é a história do pobre.	Dogmatic and painful is the story of the poor.
Direitos humanos garantem o direito à vida, segurança, educação [. . .]	Human rights ensure the right to life, safety, education [. . .]

In poetic terms, Santiago's verses oppose a condition of repression and alienation to the liberating illocutionary force of *papo reto* and human rights. Denotationally, his verses tell that favela residents are being watched by Big Brother and the state's security apparatuses; further, they are confined by the police and alienated by the "system." As in Plato's allegory of the cave, residents may "fall into the montage of the scene." To see the actual scene—that is, the reality of social justice—the resident needs a *papo reto*.

Santiago's verse "The talk is straight and talks about reality" sounds like Renata Souza's description of *papo reto*. That is, it embodies a sense of speaking directly and denotationally singling out objects of discourse related to tropes of social justice. Like Marielle Franco, Santiago suspends expectations of politeness and, before an otherwise formal situation with an audience that included nonfavela residents and activists, partially unknown to him, says that politicians only "boost, invent, alienate and fuck up." These similarities are as much a fact of interdiscursivity as they point to the "coherence of indexical and other compatible signs one with another in the flow of discourse," a defining characteristic of enregisterment for

Silverstein (2016, 38). Santiago's interdiscursive activity also responds to the dialectics of speech and silence described above. That is, Santiago refuses to abide by the pragmatics of anticipation (Machado da Silva and Menezes 2019), whereby residents tend to opt for silence when the subject is armed violence, and decides instead to defiantly "raise his voice," like Franco. Along these lines, Santiago metapragmatically comments that *papo reto* is not only direct and defiant but is also unimpeded by fear: "If it's bad, listen to what I'll tell you / It's bad, I'm outspoken and my tongue won't be stopped." As enregisterment is about indexical signs in circulation, Santiago's outspokenness is clearly an interdiscursive response to the fear of speaking (about violence) that was brought up to me several times in the field. I repeatedly heard from other researchers in the field that many of their informants refused to talk about the police or the drug traffic to them—a clear anticipation of potential violent effects tied to the entextualization of their talk (see Menezes 2015, 16–27; Savell 2021).

Using *papo reto*, obviously, is tied to the risk of "losing one's life"—which appears to be at the core of Marielle Franco's assassination. But collectives like Coletivo Papo Reto, Vamos Desenrolar, and Raízes em Movimento attempt to create enunciative conditions for fearless speech and for the chained authentication of the *papo reto* activist register—as a whole, these institutions also provide a network for making sure that the *papo* (talk) of activists and residents is *reto*, straight to the point.

Fogos Virtual: Cross-Repertoire Tropism

The third case centers on a typical metapragmatic move in *papo reto* activist register: the production of partial lexicogrammatical analogues across registers (Agha 2015, 323–26). We have seen that MC Smith questioned a police officer in the *papo reto* activist register by changing human rights discourses into blunt, direct questions with wording that indexes enregistered forms from the favela. Marielle Franco, in confronting Leandro Lyra, refused to abide by the metapragmatic norm of "cordial racism" and instead invoked a confrontational stance and a lexical repertoire associated with racial justice. Smith and Franco both engaged with "lexicogrammatical tropism across register boundaries" (Agha 2015, 320) by specifically rewording units from repertoires of other registers and metapragmatic stances (such as being polite or remaining silent in the face of societal/racial injustices) into lexicogrammatical semiotic forms recognized as belonging in the *papo reto* activist register. Here, I draw from an interview with Mariluce Mariá and Kleber Souza, partners from Complexo do Alemão who have

become recognized in the neighborhood and beyond (see Maia 2017). Their activism includes a remarkable ability to mobilize residents through digital media. Like Coletivo Papo Reto, they use digital communication technologies to monitor police wrongdoing and to map violence. During an interview in 2015, they called their Facebook posts informing residents about gunshots *fogos virtual*, or virtual rockets. As a further mark of their *papo reto* stance, the name of their strategy was relayed to us in the nonstandard: *fogos virtual*. Unlike standard Portuguese, which marks number agreement through plural inflexion of all lexemes in the noun phrase (e.g., *fogo-s virtuai-s*), nonstandard Portuguese nonredundantly inflects only the first element with the plural morpheme /-s/ (*fogo-s*) while omitting it in subsequent lexemes /-Ø/ (*virtual-ø*). As they explained to us, virtual rockets are a strategy of communicating the state of security to residents. This trope is a pun on the rockets that used to be set off by drug traffickers to signal that the police were entering the favela. (In 2015, raids were less common, as the police were permanently patrolling in the territory. Yet now, under Bolsonaro, violent raids have become more frequent. On May 6, 2021, Rio's police force performed the deadliest raid in its history, killing twenty-seven people in Favela Jacarezinho [Phillips 2021]).

As virtual rockets are resources for protecting residents from crossfire, they bear family resemblance to *papo reto*. Virtual rockets are as cleverly concise as *papo reto*: their point of interest is warning residents about insecurity. In excerpt 4, Kleber Souza and Mariluce Mariá provide a metapragmatic explanation of their *papo reto* activist discourse:

Excerpt 4. Mariluce Mariá and Kleber Souza talking at the Museu Nacional de Antropologia about *fogos virtual* (2015)

Mariluce Mariá:	porque a gente virou fogos virtual, assim, "tá dando tiro aqui, melhor subir por outro luga::r," "olha, não sobe por aqui que tá dando tiro," "cuidado com não sei ao::nde" é:: sempre tinha que dar uma opção para pessoa voltar pra casa, nossa preocupação era mais essa (.) e aí começou, depois da Copa, então ((escalou))	we became virtual rockets, I mean, "there's shootings here, you'd better take another rou::te!," "look, don't come up here, there's shooting," "careful about that street!" yeah:: we had to always give options for the person to go back home, our main concern was this (.) then, after the World Cup ((it escalated))
	((7 minutes 5 seconds omitted))	
Kleber Souza:	então, o que a gente faz? a gente consegue alcançar as pessoas tanto dentro da favela como de fora da favela, por que que a gente consegue? porque a gente usou a linguagem que	so, what do we do? we can reach people both inside the favela and outside, why do we get to do it? because we used the language that people understand (.) we tried

Excerpt 4. (*Continued*)

as pessoas entendem (.) a gente busco::u uma linguagem que está ao alcance- não adianta eu falar lá que, ah:: "nós vamos fazer a desmilitarização da polícia," ninguém vai entender nada, entendeu? a gente sabe da importância desse tema, sabe da importância do conhecimento teórico, mas lá as pessoas não têm esse conhecimento, muitas pessoas são desprovidas e eu sei disso (.) têm dificuldade de fala, dificuldade de escrita, dificuldade de entender a linguagem até, às vezes, que vem em algumas páginas que a gente sabe que quer ajudar o Alemão lá e eu não critico (.) e por que a gente se sobressai sobre essas páginas tudo? porque a gente quer falar aquilo que é:: o Gregório, lá do bar, entenda, que nunca foi numa escola, ele tá no nosso Facebook o tempo todo, o cara comprou um celular pra ficar no nosso Facebook, é inacreditável um negócio desse, é você ser parado na rua e a pessoa falar assim, "olha, sabe aquele dia que você postou que tava tendo tiro lá na Praça do Cruzeiro? eu não peguei a Kombi, vim andando pelo beco, entendeu, mas eu não peguei a Kombi e a minha colega falou que passou o maior perrengue lá na (.) Praça do Cruzeiro, a Kombi parou, não teve como subir, foi um tiroteio imenso, tal, tal, tal" [. . .] e as pessoas vinham, sabe? fazendo os mais diversos tipos de pedidos inbox pra gente como se a gente fosse (.) uma voz que ela não tem, a gente tem pedido aqui desde (.) remédio pra dor de cabeça até uma casa (.) no Facebook

to use a language within people's reach- it's no use saying, "we are going to demilitarize the police," no one will understand it, you see? we know the importance of this theme, we know the importance of theoretical knowledge, but people there don't have this knowledge, many people are deprived, and I know this (.) they have difficulty in speaking, difficulty in writing, and even difficulty in understanding the language of some webpages that we know want to help the Alemão, and I don't criticize them (.) and how do we get to differentiate ourselves? because we go on saying in a way that li::ke Gregorio from the bar, who's never been to school, understands it, he's on our Facebook all the time, he purchased a smart phone to be on our Facebook, it's unbelievable, sometimes you're stopped on the street by someone who says, "hey, do you remember that day that you were posting about the shootings at Praça do Cruzeiro? I didn't take the van, I came walking through the alleys, you know, I didn't take the van and my friend said that it was very messy at the (.) Praça do Cruzeiro, the van stopped, there was no way go get on it, then there was the shooting and such" [. . .] so a lot of people came, you know? They were making requests to us as if we had (.) a voice that we actually don't have, some people ask us everything from (.) a headache pill to a house (.) on Facebook

Mariluce Mariá: | e já conseguimos casa também ((risos na sala)) a gente só não consegue pra gente porque a gente não pede pra gente, mas já conseguimos já, já sim | but we actually once got a house ((laughter in the room)) we didn't get one for ourselves because we don't ask for us, but we've got one, yes

Kleber Souza: | é, é uma história muito forte essa história, me emociona bastante | yes, it's a beautiful and moving story

Excerpt 4. (*Continued*)

Mariluce Mariá:	lembra aquele barraquinho de madeira que tem lá nas Palmeiras? Então, a pessoa foi e apadrinhou a meni::na (.) a Alessandra, e (.) queria dar a casa pra família dela morar [. . .]	do you remember that wooden shack in Palmeiras? Someone sponsored the gir::l, Alessandra, and (.) wanted to give her family a house [. . .]
Kleber Souza:	nós conseguimos, para você ter uma ideia, com esse Facebook (.) chegar até Stanford, nós conseguimos chegar é:: nos principais jornais do mundo, todos os correspondentes, todos os correspondentes dos jornais do mundo, a gente não fala inglês, não escreve inglês, os caras se comunicam com a gente pelo:: pelo Google Tradutor, a gente fala pra eles, correspondentes de todos os jornais do mundo mesmo, nós estamos até com um agora do Japão, que veio, teve ontem lá na favela, vai voltar, já teve várias vezes já na fa- vela com a gente, ele falou que não tem confiança de entrar em favela nenhuma do Rio de Janeiro, só entra com a gente lá do Complexo do Alemão, o Tafumi, é:: e agora a gente conseguiu muitas e muitas e muitas coisas, acho que, talvez, se a gente fosse presidente do Brasil a gente não conseguiria (.) pra você ter ideia (.) um diretor da Casas- Lojas Americanas entrou em contato com a gente uma vez, sem se identificar, e falou, "não conheço vocês, não sei quem vocês são, para mim, não me importa, mas o que eu vejo aí é verdade, eu quero doar para aí 500 cestas de natal"	just so you have an idea, with this Facebook (.) we were able to reach Stanford, we could reach hmm::: the main newspapers in the world, all correspondents, all corre- spondents from the newspapers in the world, we don't speak English, we don't write in English, the dudes talk to us through hmm::: Google Translator, we speak with them, correspondents from all the newspapers in the world, we have one now from Japan, who came, he was yesterday in the favela, and he's coming back, he's been many times with us in the favela, he said he's scared of going to any favela in Rio de Janeiro, but he enters the Complexo do Alemão with us, his name is Tafumi, hmm::: and we've got so many and many things that we think that if we were perhaps president of Brazil we wouldn't get them (.) just so you know, once a director from Casas- Lojas Americanas once got in touch with us, without identifying himself, and said: "I don't know you, but it doesn't matter, I see that you speak the truth, I want to donate these 500 family food baskets"

At least three aspects of their calibration of *papo reto* through indexically valued tropism are worth unpacking in this excerpt. First, Souza suggests that a key metapragmatic strategy in *fogos virtual* is the "use of a language within people's reach." Following this comment, Souza adds that other social media profiles have not achieved the reach of virtual rockets because Complexo do Alemão residents have, in his terms, "difficulty in writing . . . in reading [and] in understanding the language of some webpages that we know want to help the Alemão." Note that Souza invokes one of the terms identified by Silverstein (1996; see also n. 1) in his characterization of the ideology of monoglot standard—the assumption that

users of nonstandard varieties would not do the best denotational work of pairing word and referent, hence their cognitive inferiority—but at the same time he says that he "[doesn't] criticize [residents] for that." Pragmatically, to facilitate the dissemination of virtual rockets, Mariá and Souza therefore produce analogues across register repertoires. Thus, "it's no use saying, 'we are going to demilitarize the police,' no one will understand it, you see?" That is, virtual rockets partially work through calibrating messages through non-standard lexicogrammatical analogues, "within people's reach." I would like to add that their calibration of messages from one register to another goes beyond mere transfer of denotational content originally enunciated in the standard into its indexical "equivalent" in *papo reto*. This indexically valued tropism is "transformative" in the sense that it builds on indexicality's layer of entailment (Silverstein 2003), that is, performativity. Silverstein says that translating stands for "inherently transforming . . . cultural material in the source text that has indexically entailing potential realized in context" (95). Thus, Mariá and Souza calibrate their *papo reto* activist discourse in such a way that "Gregório at the bar" understands it—and changes his conduct (Souza says that "Gregório purchased a smart phone to be on [their] Facebook"). Other entailing/performative effects of *papo reto* activist register are exemplified: some people reported being protected from crossfire by reading their messages on Facebook; one person was given a house, and 500 families were helped with food baskets because of their mediation work; the couple made their translating practice reach international newspapers and even Stanford University, where Mariá talked about her social work (see Souza 2014).

Second, their translation activity on social media evidences the fundamental aspect of relaying (Gal 2018) in enregisterment. As Gal explains it, "a register acts as a 'relay,' triggering uptakes across arenas recognized by participants as institutionally distinct" (12). As registers exist in circulation, relaying is crucial to their growing or shrinking across semiotic encounters (Agha 2007, 81). In terms of Souza's and Mariá's ethnopragmatics, the efficacy of *papo reto* activist register is directly dependent on multiple uptakes, each indexing a particular arena of social action. For instance, in line with *papo reto*'s major association with protection from violence, residents' uptake of virtual rockets helps them navigate Complexo do Alemão with safety. Alongside the cultural understanding that *papo reto* is a language resource for fixing long-standing inequities, the uptake of institutional actors like Lojas Americanas, a large department store in Brazil, may entail aid to residents. Further, the uptake of international news correspondents and universities facilitates the relaying of *papo reto* activist register beyond Brazil. In this arena of circulation, *papo reto* activist register grows as an enregistered emblem of

protection from crossfire, redress for necessity, and recognition of ethical and affective dispositions of *favelados*.

Third, Excerpt 4 signals a diachrony. In the conversation turns, sequentially, Mariá says that they *became* virtual virtual rockets; Mariá and Souza both point to pragmatic effects that have *emerged* from their communicative practice in social media; Souza comments on the *growing* audience of their *papo reto*—both in the neighborhood and in global arenas. That is, they are not speaking of a static feature of their discourse—an already existing and fixed register—but of a process of becoming, more specifically the ongoing process of enregistering *papo reto* activist register as a particular association of semiotic values with signs (Agha 2007, 80). The becoming of their discourse into an authoritative arena of *papo reto* activist register becomes all the more evident in Souza's comment on voice: "So a lot of people were doing requests to us as if we had a voice that we actually don't have." *Voice* here seems to stand for authority and communicative reach. Souza seemingly doubts that their *papo reto* has such an authoritative pragmatic efficacy—which would allow them to meet people's demands with "everything, from a headache pill to a house"—but Mariá immediately repairs his comment by joyfully saying that, indeed, they "actually once got a house" (to which everyone in the room responds with laughter).

Conclusion

In this essay, I described *papo reto* activist register as an assemblage of metapragmatic operations and distinctive pragmatic effects grouped together as a "register"—that is, "a repertoire of performable signs linked to stereotypic pragmatic effects by a sociocultural process of enregisterment" (Agha 2007, 80). Through a semiotic chain that includes a pedagogy of *papo reto* in chained participation frameworks like the Vamos Desenrolar training course and mediatized spread on social media, *papo reto* activist register is recognized in social circles in Brazil as a type of talk from the peripheries that performs different yet interrelated operations: It may be deployed as a metapragmatic marker of liminality through which the speaker announces that the talk will be rescaled into a "direct" frame. Contextually, it entails suspension of face concerns and recourse to a speech level that displays alignment with favela lifestyles. Its favored referential practice is about singling out objects of discourse relating to racial, economic, and other societal inequities. As a register of slang (Agha 2015), it often exhibits cross-repertoire tropism through lexicogrammatical analogues recognized as nonstandard or as breaking from a metapragmatic habitus associated with the upper classes. Further, its utterances exhibit a co-occurrence style (Agha 2007,

186) with other enregistered speech forms and semiotic practices in Black activist circles in Rio de Janeiro and other cities in Brazil, and thus *papo reto* constitutes an enregistered style for activists, residents, and those acquainted with this register. As we saw in the case studies, a speaker does not necessarily need to perform all these pragmatic operations to produce *papo reto* activist discourse. For instance, during my interview with Mariluce Mariá and Kleber Souza, Souza suspended politeness concerns and used swear words throughout the conversation, but his suspension of face was not aimed at confronting the interlocutors—different from Marielle Franco's rescaling of talk to *papo reto* activist register as a denunciation of Leandro Lyra's disguise of sexism and racism as indirect, polite talk. Yet *papo reto* activist register may not involve suspension of face altogether: Renata Souza's metapragmatic comments about *papo reto* were rendered in polite standard Portuguese; Mariluce Mariá complained at the beginning of the interview about her partner's use of swear words. Further, speakers in the case studies varyingly evoked metapragmatic labels such as "directness" or *gíria* 'slang' for their conduct in talk; others did not evoke these labels and were quite "indirect," like Mariá. My point here is that these crisscrossing, recursive, and varying patterns indicate that my informants variously grapple with the language game of *papo reto* activist register, calibrating its intricate moves to navigate inequities and pursue important political effects.

Another conclusion is that these cases point to a cultural transmission: Emicida, Kleber Souza, and Mariluce Mariá, for instance, invoke practices of improvisation and solidarity in favelas that have been enregistered as emblems of the survival of Blacks. In 1888, Brazil's monarchy abolished slavery without any form of redress. No policy of labor or housing was designed for former enslaved Africans and their descendants. They therefore squatted on available land and created favelas and other practical forms of life for surviving state neglect. *Papo reto* activist register is one such form. In addition to coherently invoking this *longue durée* of transmission, my informants also display occasion-specific, interdiscursive engagements with each across case studies. For instance, in the section "Unrolling the Lines of Talk: Emic Directness," I detailed how Raull Santiago's verses respond to and repeat many of the concerns of others in my fieldwork. Agha (2007) summarizes that the "assignment of stereotypic indexical values" to registers depends on processes of "transmission [of such values] to other locales through semiotic chain processes; and, in the course of such transmission, [registers] may be stabilized by semiotic ideologies . . . or be revalorized or otherwise transformed" (81). In this sense, the interviews, the training course, the activists' Facebook pages, and the other locales of encounters that I narrate in this

essay are all connected participation frameworks through which *papo reto* grows as a register.

Finally, the crucial entanglements between *papo reto* activist register, surveillance practices, and crossfire point to the importance of local communicative practices for resisting "securitization" (Rampton and Charalambous 2020). Across the world, securitization has enormous variability, but Brazil has striking similarities with the Global North frameworks of securitization discussed by Charalambous and Rampton in that in both contexts "normal political rights and procedures are suspended" (Charalambous et al. 2021, 18), often with the justification of defeating an "enemy." Importantly, in all case studies, *papo reto* activist register is used alongside other resources of contestation: Marielle Franco and Renata Souza both entered institutional politics, and while Franco was killed, possibly for amplifying her *papo reto*, they both combined *papo reto* with bureaucratic mechanisms of channeling progressive demands into institutional politics; Mariluce Mariá, Kleber Souza, and Raull Santiago combined *papo reto* activist register with digital techniques of communication, surveillance, and denunciation, which help residents navigate a territory treated by the state as "exceptional" and therefore in need of the "penal state" rather than the "welfare state." I believe that *papo reto* activist register—in all its variability, portability, and complexity—is a powerful language game for talking back to exclusionary practices of securitization and enemy annihilation.

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