




THE LINGUISTIC VARIATION PRESENT IN NORTHEASTERN MIGRANTS IN MATO GROSSO: SEMANTIC-LEXICAL ASPECTS CHARACTERISTIC OF THE REGION

 <https://doi.org/10.56238/levv15n42-069>

Submitted on: 26/10/2024

Publication date: 26/11/2024

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ABSTRACT

The present work aims to expose a research carried out in the municipality of Sinop, located in the north of the state of Mato Grosso, which investigated the linguistic variation of migrant subjects from the Northeast region. The research was conducted with four participants, two males and two females. Two of these subjects were over 50 years old, while the other two were in the 18-30 age group. After the selection of the participants, interviews were conducted in the format of free narratives, with the objective of understanding the migratory and cultural process of the subjects. Then, a semantic-lexical questionnaire was applied consisting of 50 questions taken from the Linguistic Atlas of Brazil (ALiB). The work is based on the theoretical assumptions of Variationist Sociolinguistics, based on authors such as Bortoni-Ricardo (2014) and Labov (2008), among others. The research stood out for analyzing the migratory process and the sociocultural formation of the municipality of Sinop, revealing that the region has a great linguistic diversity, influenced by the presence of migrants from different locations, including the variety of Northeastern speech.

Keywords: Variationist Sociolinguistics. Migratory Process. Mato Grosso. Northeast Region.



INTRODUCTION

The migration process is motivated by the search for better living conditions, in which people can settle and find greater comfort. According to Cuba and Isquierdo (2009), when migrating, human beings transport their knowledge and their language, establishing interactions with people from different cultures. In this process, he shares his worldview and, simultaneously, absorbs characteristics of other cultural groups.

Thus, the migrant is always looking for a place that provides him with shelter and a more comfortable life, with the hope of better days. This phenomenon also occurred in the municipality of Sinop, which is the focus of this research. Therefore, the objective of this study is to investigate whether linguistic traits characteristic of the Northeast region still persist among migrants who live in the city, but who came from this region.

The present work aims to analyze some lexias found among northeastern migrants who currently reside in Sinop, in the state of Mato Grosso. For this, questions from the ALiB questionnaire, Philippsen's thesis (2013) and Michaelis' lexicographic work (2018) were used.

Variationist Sociolinguistics, an approach that recognizes linguistic diversity as a reflection of the different social, cultural, and historical experiences of speakers, proposes a different view of language in relation to previous theories, such as Saussure's, which saw language as a fixed system. For Variationist Sociolinguistics, language is dynamic and is subject to variations that depend on the context, region, social class, and even the time of residence of an individual in a given place. In this way, language is understood as a product of interactions between people and their social and geographical realities.

This article, in turn, examines linguistic variation based on a sociolinguistic analysis carried out in Sinop, a city that stands out as an important destination for migrants, especially from the Northeast. The study investigates how factors such as length of residence and geographic origin influence the use of different linguistic forms and the maintenance of lexias characteristic of the Northeast, even after years of adaptation to the new sociocultural context.

The research, based on the principles of Variationist Sociolinguistics, aimed to investigate lexical variations in the discourse of northeastern migrants, based on a semantic-lexical questionnaire applied to four subjects. The results demonstrate that, although the adaptation to the new place occurs gradually, the linguistic marks of the region of origin continue to predominate among the migrants, evidencing the complexity of the linguistic phenomenon and its relationship with the life trajectories of the speakers.



THEORETICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION: VARIATIONIST SOCIOLINGUISTICS

The language has variations. In this sense, Alkmim (2012) points out that there is no linguistic homogeneity, which means that any language is made up of a set of varieties. In addition, the life context and migration experiences of speakers directly influence the variations that occur in their language.

Similarly, Tarallo (2007) points out that, in all speech communities, varying linguistic forms are common. This demonstrates that the absence of uniformity is an inherent element of languages, which are, by definition, heterogeneous, as also observed by Alkmim (2012). According to Costa (1996), languages are, by nature, diversified and heterogeneous, thus reflecting the distinct historical, social, cultural and political experiences of human societies. In this way, linguistic variation becomes inevitable, manifesting itself in different times, geographical and social spaces, in addition to varying according to the speaker's communication situation

Another important point is the fundamental role of speakers in the constitution of the language and in communication. Calvet (2002) emphasizes that the existence of a language depends essentially on its speakers, and the history of a language is intrinsically linked to the history of those who speak it. Similarly, Silva (2015) highlights the social character of language, noting that a child's language development only occurs from his interactions with other people.

On the other hand, Saussure conceived language in a homogeneous way. He argued that, unlike language, language is an invariable system of signs, where the essential lies in the union of meaning with the acoustic image (Saussure, 1916). However, its conception was later challenged with the emergence of Sociolinguistics, which proposed a different approach.

Some scholars, such as Meillet, Bakhtin, and members of the Prague Linguistic Circle, were already developing theories of a clearly sociolinguistic nature (Bortoni-Ricardo, 2017). In this context, Labov offered a different perspective from Saussure, creating a model of linguistic analysis and interpretation known as Variationist Sociolinguistics or Theory of Variation (Alécio, 2020). Thus, according to this approach, each community has its own forms of variation.

Furthermore, Labov (2008) defines a speech community not by uniformity in the use of linguistic elements, but by adherence to a shared set of norms, which manifests itself through evaluative behaviors and consistent abstract patterns of variation.

Finally, Salomão (2011) points out that Sociolinguistics reveals regularities and patterns behind what may seem to be a communicative chaos in everyday life. In this way, it



demonstrates how variants establish themselves or disappear from the language, highlighting the importance of the underlying organization even in linguistic heterogeneity. Labov (1972), as explained by Heidmann (2018), proposed that variation refers to the different ways of expressing the same thing while maintaining the same referential meaning. This shows that the language varies according to the context and the situation.

METHODOLOGY

The work, in the first place, was based on the assumptions of Sociolinguistics, which highlight the social character of the language and thus explain the great variation that exists. Thus, to prove these theories, it was necessary to carry out a field research.

In this context, qualitative research was initially used in the exploratory stage, that is, in the pre-design phase, with the objective of exploring qualitative distinctions, as described by Bauer and Gaskell (2002). According to these authors, this approach allows, on the one hand, to develop more precise measurements or, on the other hand, to acquire a better understanding of the research field.

In addition, Gil (2008) observes that the interview is particularly suitable for exploratory studies, which seek to address realities little known by the researcher or to provide an initial view of the problem investigated. Therefore, in the present study, the interviews aimed to capture specific lexias and understand the participants, especially in relation to the migration process.

The interviews were conducted in two stages. In the first, the format of free narratives was adopted to better understand the subjects, their migration stories, age and other relevant aspects. Then, in the second stage, a semantic-lexical questionnaire was applied consisting of 50 questions. The table with the questions applied is presented below. Finally, it should be noted that this work represents only a section of the research, with emphasis on the linguistic variety of the Northeast region.

Chart 1: Semantic-lexical questionnaire applied.

- Semantic Quiz – Lexical
- 1) ... a small river, about two meters wide? (ALiB Questionnaire, 2001, p.21).
 - 2) ... a heavy and continuous rain? (ALiB Questionnaire, 2001, p. 22).
 - 3) ... A flash that appears in the sky on rainy days? (ALiB Questionnaire, 2001, p.21).
 - 4) ... a strong and fast light that comes out of the clouds, which can burn a tree, kill people and animals, on bad weather days? (ALiB Questionnaire, 2001, p.21).
 - 5) ... the loud noise that is heard immediately after a _____ (cf. Item 4)? (ALiB Questionnaire, 2001, p. 22).
 - 6) What is it that opens with the machete, the sickle to pass through a dense bush? (ALiB Questionnaire, 2001, p. 26).
 - 7) ... That white root inside, covered by a brown bark, that is cooked to eat? (ALiB Questionnaire, 2001, p. 25).
 - 8) ... The commercial establishment where barbecue is served as a specialty? (Philippson, 2013, p.603)
 - 9) ... the wooden frame, which is placed on the necks of animals (pig, calf/calf, sheep, cow), so as not to cross the fence? (ALiB Questionnaire, 2001, p. 25).
 - 10) ... a one-wheeled vehicle, pushed by a person, for small loads in short stretches? (ALiB Questionnaire, 2001, p. 25).
 - 11) Little child, we say it's a baby. And when she is 5 to 10 years old, male? (ALiB Questionnaire, 2001, p. 31).
 - 12) And if you are female, what is your name? (ALiB Questionnaire, 2001, p. 32).
 - 13) ... The person who gets paid to kill someone? (ALiB Questionnaire, 2001, p. 32).
 - 14) ... When you go to the bathroom, where does the person sit down to relieve themselves? (ALiB Questionnaire, 2001, p. 35).
 - 15) ... the alcoholic beverage made from sugar cane? (ALiB Questionnaire, 2001, p. 35).
 - 16) ... area that you need to have or buy to make a house in the city? (ALiB Questionnaire, 2001, p. 38).
 - 17) ... It is a small place, with a balcony, where men usually go beber _____ (cf. Item 15) and where can you also buy something else? (ALiB Questionnaire, 2001, p. 38).
 - 18) ... device that you can listen to music?
 - 19) To buy something do I need ...?
 - 20) At noon is the time when everyone...?
 - 21) When someone says they don't live in the city, do they ... ?
 - 22) ... Container that conditions liquids? (Philippson, 2013, p.629).
 - 23) Is it used to drive nails?
 - 24) ... the hot drink prepared with herb in a gourd, very bitter, without sugar, and taken by a special straw called a bomb? (Philippson, 2013, p.627).
 - 25) ... a cutting instrument, which includes a blade and a wooden handle, used for carving, cutting meat? (Philippson, 2013, p.629).
 - 26) We currently use it to talk to a distant person, it is usually used to make calls and send text messages.
 - 27) ... corn flour used to make cakes, breads and etc.? (Philippson, 2013, p.629).
 - 28) ... An instrument used for eating, which is usually used for soups?
 - 29) ... the short-calf footwear, a little higher than the shoe, usually made of leather, closed by laces or elastics, generally used by men for work in the fields? (Philippson, 2013, p.664)
 - 30) Does it have two wheels and what do we use to pedal?
 - 31) Used to weed the swidden, or to remove pastures?
 - 32) ... set of mixed things usually based on meat, fish, chicken and etc.? (Philippson, 2013, p.597).
 - 33) ... cooked vegetables, such as zucchini, pumpkin, etc., in a kind of sauce with little water, fats and spices such as garlic, salt, onion, etc.? (Philippson, 2013, p.598).
 - 34) ... Residue or dust from the total combustion of certain elements? (Michaelis, 2018, online version).
 - 35) ... Used to light a type of stove that does not use gas?
 - 36) ... A small apparatus, usually made of metal, used to light a cigarette, cigar or pipe, equipped with a wick moistened with gasoline or a compartment with gas, which ignites when it comes into contact with sparks produced by friction between a serrated cylinder or a spring and a special stone? (Michaelis, 2018, online version)
 - 37) ... Trace that a person or animal leaves in the place it passes; (Michaelis, 2018, online version)
 - 38) ... Narrow path, generally precarious and tortuous, among vegetation?
 - 39) ... Thick tuft formed by plants of the same species that grow very close together or that is

- made up of shoots and shafts of the same plant? (Michaelis, 2018, online version)
- 40) ... Brave, fearless individual?
- 41) ... Vehicle that has two wheels, engine and is used by many people because it is a more economical option to get around?
- 42) ... Dense vegetation, consisting of large trees, which covers a vast expanse of land? (Michaelis, 2028, online version)
- 43) ... Clearing the bush? (Michaelis, 2018, online version)
- 44) ... animal that crawls and generally walks in human habitations?
- 45) ... That very small insect, which looks like a little black dot and makes a line when you pass your hand and usually, during the day, attacks from the knee down and burns a lot? (Philippsen, 2013, p.429).
- 46) ... Used to carry clothes on a trip?
- 47) ... Great flame that rises or forms strongly? (Michaelis, 2018, online version)
- 48) ... kind of bag or pillow filled with similar substance (feather, pain, cotton, synthetic foam flakes, etc.? (Michaelis, 2018, online version)
- 49) ... Who is too drunk or sleepy? (Michaelis, 2018, online version)
- 50) ... a long-handled utensil, trimmed with a transverse piece at the end, which has a rubber frieze, suitable for pulling water spread on the floor? (Michaelis, 2018, online version)

Source: Prepared by the author, 2018.

In the following table, the profile of each subject will be presented, including the aspects considered relevant by sociolinguistic studies for the analysis and collection of data. These data were obtained in the first stage of the interviews.

Chart 2: Profile of the subjects.

DENOMINAÇÃO7	SEX	AGE	TIME THAT LIVES IN SINOP	REGION OF ORIGIN
Subject RNO1	Female	52 years	13 years	Timbaúba - Pernambuco
Subject RNO2	Male	60 years	34 years old	Bahia
Subject RNO3	Female	28 years old	5 years	Olho D'Água do Borges/ Rio Grande do Norte
Subject RNO4	Male	30 years	6 years	Santo Inês - Maranhão

Source: Prepared by the author, 2018.

As shown in Chart 2, the subjects are divided into two age groups: one over 50 years old and the other between 18 and 30 years old, with one participant of each sex in each age group. In addition, it is observed that all of them have more than 5 years of residence in the municipality. Next, a brief contextualization of the locus of the research is presented.

LOCUS OF THE RESEARCH: SINOP

The municipality of Sinop had its origin from a private colonization project led by the company Colonizadora Sinop S.A., which owned a large area in the northern region of Mato Grosso, known as Gleba Celeste (Tomé; Rohden, 2017, p. 314). The attraction of migrants

to the region was facilitated, mainly, through advertising campaigns carried out in the state of Paraná.

With the arrival of people from different regions, the growth of the city became inevitable. This accelerated development, in turn, offered those seeking a better life the chance for professional advancement and financial stability. In this way, Sinop began to offer several job opportunities, which, consequently, resulted in migrations not only within Mato Grosso, but also from other parts of Brazil (Alécio; Philippsen, 2019, p. 13).

As Falchetti (2011, p. 56) points out, the city of Sinop underwent rapid transformations in its landscapes. In fact, it was founded in the 1970s and, since then, has reflected the principles of economic development typical of the logic of that time (Falchetti, 2011, p. 57).

Figure 1: Image of the city of Sinop.



Source:⁹

Thus, the city became synonymous with development, and migrants began to see Sinop as an opportunity for growth. Located on the banks of the BR-163, the city offered numerous opportunities (Alécio; Philippsen, 2019). In the next topic, the data obtained through the semantic-lexical questionnaire are presented.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Given the number of questions in the questionnaire, only a few will be exposed for analysis, as an excerpt from the complete work, developed during the scientific initiation.

- 1) ... "A small river, about two meters wide?" (ALiB Questionnaire, 2001, p.21).

⁹ Available at: <http://mochileiro.tur.br/sinop.htm>. Accessed: Oct. of 2018.

Chart 3: Subjects' responses.

Locality	Northeast region			
	18 – 30 years old		Over 50 years old	
Age group	F	M	F	M
Lexias sex				
Stream		X	X	
Sanga				
Pond	X			
Stream				X

Source: Researcher's file.

The question taken from the ALIB questionnaire obtained four lexias: "riacho", mentioned by two subjects; "lagoon", mentioned by a subject; and "corgo", mentioned by another subject. It is noticed that there was the identification of more lexias, which are related to the northeastern variation, as well as from other regions.

2)... "A heavy and continuous rain?" (ALiB Questionnaire, 2001, p. 22).

Chart 4: Subjects' responses.

Locality	Northeast region			
	18 – 30 years old		Over 50 years old	
Age group	F	M	F	M
Lexias sex				
Storm				X
Chuvarada		X		
Rain	X			
Waterspout			X	

Source: Researcher's file.

In this question, four lexias were found: "storm", uttered by a male subject, over 50 years old; "chuvarada", said by a male subject in the age group of 18 to 30 years, who also referred to the same situation as "rain", but said by a woman; and, finally, "waterspout", mentioned by a female subject, over 50 years old.

3)... "That white root inside, covered with a brown bark, that is cooked to eat?" (ALiB Questionnaire, 2001, p. 25).

Chart 5: Subjects' responses.

Locality	Northeast region			
	18 – 30 years old		Over 50 years old	
Age group	F	M	F	M
Lexias sex				
cassava				X
manioc	X	X	X	

Source: Researcher's file.

In the question referring to the white root, which is more common for the production of flour and typical dishes of the region, three subjects used the term "manioc", while only one, over 50 years old, referred to the root as "cassava". From these answers, it can be inferred that the terminological choice reveals a lot about the subjects, since most of them opted for the predominant term in their region of origin.

In addition, the research contributed to a deeper understanding of the linguistic varieties present in Sinop-MT. It was observed that, although the interviewees have lived in the municipality for more than five years, most still maintain the linguistic varieties characteristic of their regions of origin. However, some have demonstrated a change in the use of language, adapting or still in the process of adapting to local speech, which indicates that the Sinopense variety is still in the process of formation (Alécio; Philippsen, 2019, p. 11).

The last analysis carried out in this work will be presented below. It is worth mentioning that similar research can be carried out in other locations.

4) ... "Narrow path, generally precarious and tortuous, among vegetation?"
(Michaelis, 2018, online version)

Chart 6: Subjects' answers.

Locality	Northeast region			
	18 – 30 years old		Over 50 years old	
Age group	F	M	F	M
Lexias sex				
Footpath	X			
Trio				X
Alley		X		
Hill			X	

Source: Researcher's file.

In this context, it is observed that the subjects used different lexias, with "trail" mentioned by a woman, "trio" by a man over 50 years old, "alley" by a man in the age group of 18 to 50 years and, finally, "ladeira" said by a woman over 50 years old.

Based on the answers obtained in the questions of the ALiB questionnaire, it is observed that the lexias used by the migrant subjects, from the Northeast region and living in Sinop, MT, reveal a rich linguistic diversity, still influenced by their regions of origin. In relation to the first question, which referred to a "small river, about two meters wide", the lexias "riacho", "sanga", "lagoa" and "córrego" were mentioned by the participants, evidencing the persistence of variations typical of the Northeast, but also the presence of terms more widely used in other regions of Brazil.



In the second question, about a "heavy and continuous rain", the lexias "storm", "rainfall", "rain" and "waterspout" stood out among the interviewees, showing an interesting intersection of regional variations. Although some words are more specific to the northeastern region, others, such as "rain", are more universal, demonstrating a possible adaptation to the local language.

In the case of the third question, which dealt with the edible root, there was a prevalence of the term "manioc", widely used in the Northeast region, but also the use of the term "cassava" by an older participant, which may reflect a generational transition in the use of terminology. This data suggests that, although the lexias of the region of origin prevail, changes can occur over time, especially in the younger generations.

Finally, the question about a "narrow path between vegetation" generated the identification of several lexias such as "trail", "trio", "alley" and "slope", varying according to the age group and gender of the participants. These differences reinforce the idea that lexical choices are closely related to the personal experience and sociocultural trajectory of the speakers.

The analysis of the data reveals that, despite the adaptation of the migrants to the new environment in Sinop, the linguistic marks of their regions of origin remain evident, especially in the more specific lexias. This permanence of linguistic variants, even after years of residence in a new location, points to the complexity of the phenomenon of migration and its implications for linguistic variation, suggesting that language is a dynamic reflection of individuals' social and cultural interactions. The research also indicates that the Sinopense variety is still in the process of formation, which opens space for future investigations that can deepen the understanding of linguistic adaptation and the coexistence of the different variants in the municipality.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The language varies according to the context and the community in which it is used, reflecting its social character as a means of communication. Thus, each region presents a specific speech, an ordered heterogeneity that makes it unique, but also variable.

The migratory process, common to the human constitution, involves the search for better living conditions. In this context, the present work presents an excerpt from a research that investigated, in depth, the migratory process and its implications in the maintenance of the linguistic diversity of the subjects.

To this end, four migrants were analyzed, with different age groups and time of residence in Sinop, all of whom came from the northeast region and had lived in the city for



at least five years. The emphasis of the study falls on the lexias found among migrants from this region.

From the interviews and questionnaires applied, it was observed that, for the most part, the migrants preserve the linguistic characteristics of the Northeast. However, those who have lived in Sinop for a longer time show a decrease in this variety. It is important to highlight that the research used partial data, and other studies derived from the same investigation are being developed.

This study, therefore, reveals a significant linguistic variation in Sinop, a result of the migratory process, especially of people from the northeast of Brazil. The analysis of the migrants' responses allowed us to identify several lexias typical of this region, such as "stream", "rainfall" and "waterspout", which persist even after adapting to the new sociocultural environment. In addition, the research also shows that language is deeply influenced by the social and historical context of each individual, and that migration, far from erasing linguistic characteristics, often ends up reinforcing them.

Based on the assumptions of Variationist Sociolinguistics, it was possible to observe that, even in a municipality with a strong presence of other regional groups, the Northeastern linguistic variation remains alive and is transmitted between generations. Thus, this work contributes to the understanding of the impact of migration on the linguistic behavior of the subjects, offering an in-depth view of the sociolinguistic constitution of Sinop and demonstrating how the language, although in constant adaptation, preserves traces of its origin.



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