

Cognitive and functional motivations in the productive schema[[X]_N-ar]_V in Brazilian Portuguese: the “sextar” construction and its analogous lexical instantiations

The lexicon of a language is innovated naturally, and this assertion is not new in Linguistics. When a word is incipient in the vocabulary of a language or is perceived by speakers as novelty, it is considered a neologism (ALVES, 1994). This work investigates the neologism “sextar” and lexical constructions emerging from analogies of it in Brazilian Portuguese, as “sabadar”, “domingar”, “segundar”, “feriadar”, “dezembrar” and “trintar”. Literally, these verbs mean ‘to Friday’, ‘to Saturday’, ‘to Sunday’, ‘to Monday’, ‘to Holliday’, ‘to December’, and ‘to thirty [years old]’; that is, these neologisms are verbs formed with names of time frames, originally expressed as nouns. The morpheme -ar, recurrent in these structures, is characteristic of verbal forms. In our analysis, we adopt a Construction Grammar perspective, mainly based on Croft (2022), and also supported by Booij (2010) and Gonçalves (2016). The objective of this research is to find functional and cognitive motivations for the need to innovate the lexicon by converting the name of a time frame into a verb. Based on the notion of information packaging of Croft (2022) — a functional category which is part of a construction’s function, together with the semantic content — our hypothesis is that this schema is motivated by the predication information packaging, contextualized by a discursive need to express actions performed in a specific time frame. We collected data from social networks (Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest), memes/quotations websites, and online dictionaries by freely browsing through the indicated sites and by inserting desired entries in search fields (Table 1). The collected data were classified in terms of the theoretical precepts presented, compared, and semantically related, by lexical network and field, to confirm the existence of analogies and the items’ instantiative/schematic nature. Two productive schemas applicable to “sextar” and its analogies emerged from the analysis: [[X]_N-ar]_V ~ ‘To celebrate time period X’; and [[X]_N-ar]_V ~ ‘Time period X has come’. We concluded that the emergence of this construction is based on a discursive need that involves three fronts: semantic, of keeping the same temporal concept described by the base; pragmatic, of packaging a semantic information to attribute to it a predication character, instead of reference; morphosyntactic, of applying verbal inflectional paradigms according to the construction’s function. Thus, the hypothesis was confirmed: information packaging acts as a key to motivate the productive schema [X-ar] applied to “sextar”, because the way the semantic information is used — packaged — entails changes that echo by all dimensions of the construction, in its functional and formal aspects. Additionally, both in the “sextar” construction and its analogous constructions, there is more than the meaning of transforming the name of “time period X” into an action: the speakers consider what action is performed, or what is expected to be done, in this “time period X”. There is a dependence on encyclopedic knowledge about this time frame, based on the cultural and social experience of the speakers, and only through these functional motivations, the concept is apprehended in cognition and actualized properly in language.

Keywords: Construction. Construction Grammar. Lexicon. Morphology. Neologism.

Table 1: List of lexical constructions analyzed

Reference Image	Construction X-ar	Text	Source/Link	Access
1	sextou	Sextou! [...]	SEXTOU... (2022)	1 dec. 2022
2	sextou, sextarei	sextou, mas desconfio q não sextarei	DOCE COMO LIMÃO (2022)	1 dec. 2022
3	Sextou, sextarás	“NÃO É PORQUE SEXTOU, QUE TU SEXTARÁS”	DICIONÁRIO POPULAR (2022)	30 nov. 2022
4	sextar, sabada (sic), domingar	queria entender esse povo q não trabalha e tem dinheiro pra Sextar Sabada Domingar [...]	IFUNNY (2018)	26 nov. 2022
5	sextou, sabadou, domingou, segundou	sextou sabadou domingou segundou	IFUNNY (2020)	25 nov. 2022
6	Trintei	DE REPENTE OU NÃO TÃO DE REPENTE: TRINTEI!	50 FRASES... (2022)	1 dec. 2022
7	Dezembrou	Dezembrou [...]	MIMOS DE NÓS (2020)	1 dec. 2022
8	feriadou	#FERIADOU [...]	BOTECO DO TALA (2021)	1 dec. 2022

References

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