

## **A corpus-based analysis of prepositions and goal-oriented motion verbs in Brazilian Portuguese**

Goal-oriented motion verbs have been studied in different languages, revealing different patterns of lexicalization and behaviour. In Brazilian Portuguese, a phenomenon extensively investigated is the variation of prepositions in the complement of goal-oriented motion verbs (Wiedemer, 2008; 2013; Vieira, 2009).

Based on an usage-feature analysis and using corpus-based and multivariate statistical methods (random forest and conditional tree), we describe and analyze the use of the prepositions *a* 'to', *para* 'for', *em* 'in' to introduce the complement of three goal-oriented motion verbs – *ir* 'to go', *vir* 'to come' and *chegar* 'to arrive' – in Brazilian Portuguese. In order to develop the investigation, it was used a sample composed by occurrences from four sources with different levels of monitoring: newspaper (Corpus Brasileiro), texts written by high school students (Corpus TecEM), blogs and oral narratives (C-OralBR). A total of 461 occurrences were analysed, aiming at identifying the conditioning cognitive (semantic, pragmatic), structural (syntactic) and social factors that act in such variation. Our theoretical background relies specially on the principles of Cognitive Grammar (Langacker 1987, 1991; Taylor 2002). An important concept is *profiling*, which is the conceptual highlighting of some aspect of a domain, i.e. the process whereby an aspect of some base is selected. For example, 'rim' profiles a substructure within the larger structure 'wheel', which is its base (Langacker, 2008). Comparing this research with other studies about this phenomenon developed with different samples of Brazilian Portuguese, we propose some significant contributions, such as: the inclusion of occurrences from corpora constituted by texts with different levels of monitoring and the inclusion of cognitive factors in the analysis.

The results of the study show that (i) the source is a crucial factor for the association between the use of *a* 'to' and the texts from the newspaper; and (ii) the profiling is a crucial factor for the association between the use of *em* 'in' and the constructions focused on the locative complement. The association observed in the first result could be understood as a more conservative use related to the higher level of monitoring in those texts. To understand the second result, we need to articulate two aspects: (i) the use of *em* 'in' to introduce the complement of goal-oriented motion verbs involves the superimposition of a CONTAINER schema onto a SOURCE-PATH-GOAL schema; and (ii) through the cooccurrence of the cognitive operation called profiling, the GOAL of the movement is selected/profiled, reinforcing the prominence of the CONTAINER schema and the use of *em* 'in'. Regarding the profiling, it is important to highlight that, despite its cognitive nature, this process was analysed according to well established linguistics markers.

One important outcome of these results is the understanding that the variation phenomenon investigated has a cognitive basis, in addition to the linguistic and extra-linguistic acting factors already pointed out by other studies. Finally, we argue that the cognitive, structural and social factors acting in such variation have a complementary relationship rather than a competitive one.

### **References**

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