

Appellations for “day laborer”: marks of rurality in the lexicon of speakers in the southeast region of Brazil

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Abstract: This study analyzes traits of rurality in the vocabulary of Brazilians from country areas of Minas Gerais, Espírito Santo, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, in the Southeast of Brazil. It is based on the results of research conducted by Fernandes (2021) and Santos (2019) who studied appellations provided by 304 informants from the ALiB Project (Brazilian Linguistic Atlas) from 76 locations in the four states mentioned above. The research corpus consists of the answers to question 61 of the Semantic-Lexical/ALiB questionnaire: “(What is the word to define) the man who is hired to work on someone else's field and gets paid per day of work?”, semantic area “agropastoral activities” (National Committee..., 2001, p. 26). Based on the theoretical-methodological assumptions of Geolinguistics and Rural Sociology, the purpose of the work is to discuss the presence of possible features of

rurality in the vocabulary of the selected speakers, for example, *boia-fria*¹, *camarada*², also the lexical forms of a generic nature such as *diarista*³ and *peão*⁴, which points to the presence of a *continuum* of rurality in the speech of Southeastern dwellers. The study also revealed traits of still conservative speech, such as the lexical item *trabalha jornal*⁵, cited by an elderly informant in the State of Espírito Santo to mean day laborer.

Keywords: Rural and Urban; Day laborer; Southeast region.

Resumo:

Este estudo analisa traços de ruralidade no vocabulário de brasileiros naturais de localidades do interior de Minas Gerais, do Espírito Santo, do Rio de Janeiro e de São Paulo, região Sudeste do Brasil. Para tanto, pauta-se em resultados dos estudos de Fernandes (2021) e de Santos (2019) que estudaram denominações fornecidas por 304 informantes do Projeto Atlas Linguístico do Brasil, naturais de 76 localidades da rede de pontos dos quatro estados da região Sudeste, como resposta para a pergunta 61 do Questionário Semântico-Lexical/ALiB: “O homem que é contratado para trabalhar na roça de outro, que recebe por dia de trabalho?”, área semântica *atividades agropastoris* (National Committee..., 2001, p. 26). Fundamentado em pressupostos teórico-metodológicos da Geolinguística e da Sociologia Rural, o trabalho tem como propósito discutir a presença de possíveis traços de rurais no acervo vocabular dos falantes selecionados como ocorre com *boia-fria*, *camarada*, e com formas lexicais de caráter genérico como *diarista* e *peão*, o que aponta para a presença de um *continuum* de ruralidade no falar dos habitantes da região Sudeste. O estudo também revelou traços de um falar ainda conservador, como o uso de *trabalha jornal* por uma falante idosa do Espírito Santo como denominação de “diarista”.

Palavras-chave: Rural e Urbano; Diarista; Região Sudeste.

Signum: Estudos da Linguagem, Londrina, v.26, n.3, p.46-61, december. 2023

Received on: 03/10/23

Accepted on: 14/02/24

¹ The literal translation into English is “cold food”. It is said of the laborer who does not come home to have lunch; instead, he takes a lunchbox at work, usually with no conditions to heat the food.

² This word can be translated as “fellow” or “comrade” (political member), but in this study the context is not that of Politics.

³ Day laborer, the person who gets daily wage/pay.

⁴ Person hired to deal with livestock (cowboy) or in jobs related to civil engineering. This study concerns the former.

⁵ The expression refers to *jornal* in the sense of daily; “a man who is hired to work on someone else’s farm and is paid for the day’s work”.

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Introduction

Contact and social interaction, initially between Portuguese colonizers and the indigenous population, followed by Africans and people from different European and Asian countries, contributed directly to the constitution and development of the Brazilian linguistic reality. The coexistence of these different peoples with their own cultures and ways of speaking with the native inhabitants of the land resulted in the presence of distinguishing features of the Portuguese language, especially at the lexical level. This linguistic miscellany influenced the vocabulary repertoire of the first groups of speakers at the time of Brazil's colonization. The process of socio-historical, geographic, economic and cultural formation favored the configuration of a dynamic and heterogeneous lexical collection of these groups, highlighting their culture and worldview.

It is clear, therefore, that the study of the lexicon allows the identification of marks of the historical trajectory of a people and the understanding that the lexical repertoire is shaped by the “socio-historical, political, geographical characteristics of the physical and cultural environment of a given locality, generating, thus, certain specificities that singularize a region” (Isquerdo; Carvalho, 2012, p. 251). In a sense, Brazil's socio-historical trajectory was fundamental for the conception of a characteristic vocabulary collection. The social organization, initially formed by the first groups of inhabitants in the colonial period, corresponds to one of the determining factors for the formation of the lexicon of the Brazilian variant of Portuguese as opposed to the language transplanted by the colonizers. The economy in the Colonial Period represents another factor that collaborated in expanding the lexical repertoire of the first inhabitants of Brazilian lands. According to Diégues Júnior (1960, p. 124), the economy in Colonial Brazil, initially based on the extraction and trade of brazilwood at the end of the 16th century, with the scarcity of the wood, found its main economical source in the cultivation of sugar cane, especially on the Brazilian coast, with plant owners and slaves (Indians and Africans) as representative human elements.

In the 17th century, livestock farming emerged as the economic activity that allowed social and geographic expansion towards the northeastern interior of Brazil, as Diégues Júnior (1960, p. 150) records: “livestock farming gives the region its appearance, whether by ruling its economic life, or by guiding its cultural features. Cattle raising creates the conditions that normalize and characterize regional life.” In the 18th century, rubber plant extraction became prominent in the Amazon, and the mining cycle allowed human occupation of the interior of Brazil, particularly the Southeast region. “Mining was, therefore, the factor that led to the occupation of the central area of the country; with it, particularly at the end of the 17th century and beginning of the 18th century, the influx of immigrants to the mining region grew [...]” (Diégues Júnior, 1960, p. 242). With the decline of gold, coffee became the main economic element in the 19th century, a period in which a new economic scenario began: an industrial activity that ended up becoming the country's main source of income and urbanization.

This article discusses the results of the studies by Fernandes (2021) and Santos (2019) who,

respectively, analyzed data documented in the locations of the ALiB Project in the interior of Minas Gerais (22), Espírito Santos (4), Rio de Janeiro (13), and in 37 cities of the interior of São Paulo State, both investigating the rural/urban theme in the lexicon of speakers from these states based on data from the ALiB Project.

As already noted, the appellations under examination were documented by ALiB Project researchers in the mentioned areas based on the survey question that refers to the theme of rurality in the lexicon of the inhabitants of the four states of the Southeast Region – Minas Gerais (88 informants), Espírito Santo (16), Rio de Janeiro (52) and São Paulo (148). The study analyzes data provided as answers to question 061 of the Semantic-Lexical Questionnaire – QSL/ALiB: (How do you call) “the man who is hired to work on someone else's field, and gets paid per day of work?”, semantic area agropastoral activities (National Committee..., 2001, p. 26).

The aim is, from a diatopic and lexico-semantic point of view, to identify and analyze the presence of possible traits of rurality in the vocabulary collection of the groups under examination, checking whether or not these marks are maintained in the speech of people from the four states, observing, from the diatopic dimension, the notion of a continuum in the areas investigated within the scope of the lexicon.

Data analysis was guided by theoretical-methodological foundations of Geolinguistics (Cardoso, 2010) and Rural Sociology (Sorokin; Zimmerman, Galpin ([1930], 1981), and the lexico-semantic approach with the analysis enriched with information provided by the corpus consulted as well as with data obtained by means of consultation of lexicographic works such as Silva (1813), Houaiss (2001) and Aulete (2014).

1. Contextualizing the notions of rural and urban

The basic scenario of Brazil's socioeconomic formation system was the rural universe. Economic activities such as sugarcane production, livestock farming and the coffee cycle, developed in Brazilian lands in the colonial period, were essentially peasant-based, a fact that collaborated in configuring a typically rural social organization in Brazil until the end of the 18th century: “It was with rural organization that Brazil began; before cities, there existed mills, farms, ranches” (Diégues Júnior, 1960, p. 87). It is noted, therefore, that the process of formation and organization of the country had this feature as a structural element and “the influence of rural life has been accentuated since the early days of our formation. Colonial life revolved around ruralism [...]” (Diégues Júnior, 1960, p. 87). By extension, this mark of rurality was reflected in the language, depicting a speech characteristic of the peasant setting.

This panorama began to change in the 19th century with the mining cycle, when the first urban manifestations emerged: “the true urban setting among us began with the 19th century” [...] “in Minas Gerais the conditions created by mining activity contributed to the formation of cities [...]” (Diégues Júnior, 1960, p. 88; 89).

Since then, we have seen the emergence of cities as another form of social organization, the urban one, that represented the economic and social development with the growth and expansion of commercial and industrial activities, which, by extension, resulted in the rise of new habits and customs, thus influencing the way of speaking of the Brazilian population, who eventually adapted to the city environment in a natural way. In this context, a dichotomous notion of the concepts of rural and urban is established. From the perspective of Rural Sociology, based on polarity, the rural set is seen as a backward, retrograde and traditional space, whereas the urban one refers to newness, development and progress.

In line with this dual approach, the examination of these concepts must consider the various traits printed in these spaces, their differences as a whole, with the economic dimension as the main characterizing factor. As Sorokin and Zimmerman ([1930], 1981, p. 200) point out, the defining criterion of the largest peasant population is occupational aspect, “through it the rural society

contrasts with other populations, particularly urban ones, involved in different work-related activities”.

However, because of the various transformations that have occurred both in the countryside and in cities, this polarized concept is no longer sustainable, given the integration of the spaces today, which configures a new understanding of the environment that corresponds to the notion of gradual spatial variation in these settings, that is, the notion of a continuum. Currently, in view of the social, economic and cultural context in which Brazil is inserted, considering this issue through a continuity approach is pertinent, since:

[...] the difference between rural and urban is increasingly less important. It can be said that the rural today can only be understood as a continuum of the urban from a spatial point of view; and from the point of view of the organization of economic activity, cities can no longer be identified only with industrial activity, neither can fields with agriculture and livestock (Silva, 2002, p. 1).

Thus, considering that the development and transformations that occur within a social group are revealed by means of language, especially the lexicon, it is possible to identify socio-historical and cultural aspects of this group through language. The way of life and the spaces in which a community is located imprint marks on the lexical collection that allow speakers from both environments to be differentiated. As a result, it is possible to dispense with the rural/urban notion in the linguistic domain from the perspective of the continuum, since, nowadays, it is observed that lexical forms typical of rural areas appear in the lexical norm of speakers from urban areas, in the same way as it is still possible to detect typically rural lexical forms in the city, especially in the speech of the elderly.

As already noted, in Brazil this process arises, among other factors, from the system of social and economic organization which, by extension, is reflected in the lexical collection, giving it a heterogeneous and diversified aspect that makes it possible to understand the notion of rural/urban in speakers' lexicon from the perspective of continuity, as it allows identifying the presence of both rurality and urbanization marks in the vocabulary conveyed by different social groups. As Bortoni-Ricardo (2005, p. 24) observes, “linguistic varieties in Brazil are not compartmentalized. They are characterized by a relative permeability and fluidity that can be represented by a horizontal continuum, in which varieties are distributed without defined borders”.

2. Data analysis and discussion

Historically, the Southeast Region was the scene of many events in the social, economic and cultural contexts of Brazil. The discovery of gold in Minas Gerais, the Bandeirantes movement and the coffee cycle in São Paulo, the installation of the Royal Family in Rio de Janeiro, among other factors, allowed the growth and development of this region, leading it to an important position in Brazil, especially in economic terms.

These events also contributed to the configuration of a lexical repertoire that highlights signs of speech characteristic of this region. Based on studies by Fernandes (2021), who investigated data documented by the ALiB Project in the States of Minas Gerais (MG), Espírito Santo (ES) and Rio de Janeiro (RJ); and by Santos (2019), who analyzed data from the State of São Paulo (SP), the aim of this section is to discuss the existence of possible traits of rurality in the lexicon of speakers from the states at issue .

In the research carried out by Fernandes (2021), the survey of appellations for “the man who is hired to work on someone else's farm, paid per day's work” computed a total of 23 lexical units in

the set of localities investigated, with a total of 145 occurrences, in addition to 23 cases of no answer (NA). Among the appellations found, the most frequent were *diarista*, *boia-fria*, *peão* and *camarada*, the last registered only in Minas Gerais. Santos (2019), in turn, found nine lexical units in a total of 170 occurrences and 16 cases of NA, with the items *diarista*, *boia-fria*, *peão* and *camarada* as the most frequent among the answers indicated by informants from São Paulo.

In this scenario, it is important to highlight the case of the lexical form *trabalha jornal*, recorded by Fernandes (2021), which, although documented only in the city of São Mateus (ES) with a single occurrence, was considered valid for analysis purposes, considering both its validation by the informant and its dictionarization in the lexicographic works consulted. The same occurred with the lexical item *trabalhador*, (laborer), documented by researchers from the ALiB Project in Minas Gerais, that, despite its low frequency, was validated with a view to highlighting the semantic feature “man who works occasionally” in dictionary definitions. Next, the most frequent appellations in the corpus under examination are analyzed for diatopic and lexico-semantic dimensions.

2.1 Diatopic approach

The spatial distribution of the most frequent appellations for “the hoe laborer in someone else's field” is shown, in Figure 1, according to the ALiB Project in each state in which they were documented, except for the State of São Paulo, whose distribution was carried out in accordance with the 15 geographic mesoregions of IBGE (1990) to which the ALiB Project survey belong. This option was adopted because of the large number of locations covered by the project in this Federation Unit (38 points) owing to the high population density.

Figure 1 - Diatopic distribution of the most frequent appellations in the interior of the states of the Southeast Region of Brazil for “the man who is hired to work on someone else’s farm, who is paid per day of work” (QSL/ALiB/61).

MINAS GERAIS				
Appellation Locality	<i>Diarista</i>	<i>Boia-fria</i>	<i>Peão</i>	<i>Camarada</i>
Januária	•	-	-	-
Janaúba	•	-	-	•
Pedra Azul	•	•	-	-
Unaí	•	-	-	-
Montes Claros	•	•	-	-
Pirapora	•	•	-	-
Teófilo Otoni	-	•	-	-
Diamantina	•	-	•	-
Uberlândia	•	•	•	-
Patos de Minas	-	•	•	-
Campina Verde	•	-	•	-
Ipatinga	•	-	-	•
Passos	•	-	•	-
Formiga	•	-	•	-

Ouro Preto	-	•	-	-
Viçosa	•	-	-	•
Lavras	•	-	•	-
São João Del Rei	•	-	•	-
Muriae	-	•	-	•
Poços de Caldas	•	•	-	-
Juiz de Fora	•	-	•	-
Itajubá	•	•	•	-
ESPÍRITO SANTO				
Appellation Locality	<i>Diarista</i>	<i>Boia-fria</i>	<i>Peão</i>	<i>Camarada</i>
Barra de São Francisco	-	-	-	-
São Mateus	•	•	•	-
Santa Teresa	•	-	-	-
Alegre	•	-	•	-
RIO DE JANEIRO				
Appellation Locality	<i>Diarista</i>	<i>Boia-fria</i>	<i>Peão</i>	<i>Camarada</i>
Itaperuna	•	-	-	-
São João da Barra	•	-	-	-
Campos dos Goytacazes	•	-	-	-
Três Rios	•	-	-	-
Nova Friburgo	•	-	•	-
Macaé	•	-	-	-
Valença	-	•	-	-
Petrópolis	•	-	•	-
Nova Iguaçu	-	-	•	-
Niterói	•	-	-	-
Arraial do Cabo	•	-	•	-
Barra Mansa	-	-	-	-
Parati	•	-	-	-
SÃO PAULO				
Appellation Mesorregion⁶	<i>Diarista</i>	<i>Boia-fria</i>	<i>Peão</i>	<i>Camarada</i>
São José do Rio Preto	•	•	•	•
Ribeirão Preto	•	•	•	-
Araçatuba	•	•	-	-
Bauru	•	•	•	•
Araraquara	•	•	•	-
Piracicaba	•	-	-	-

⁶ IBGE administrative mesoregions (2019). Criterium adopted by Santos (2019).

Campinas	.	.	.	-
Presidente Prudente	.	.	.	.
Marília	.	.	-	.
Assis	.	.	.	.
Itapetininga	.	.	.	.
Macro Metropolitana Paulista	.	.	.	-
Vale do Paraíba	.	.	.	-
Litoral Sul Paulista	.	.	-	-
Metropolitana de São Paulo	.	-	-	-

Source: The authors, based on Fernandes (2021, p. 140, 141) and Santos (2019, p. 127).

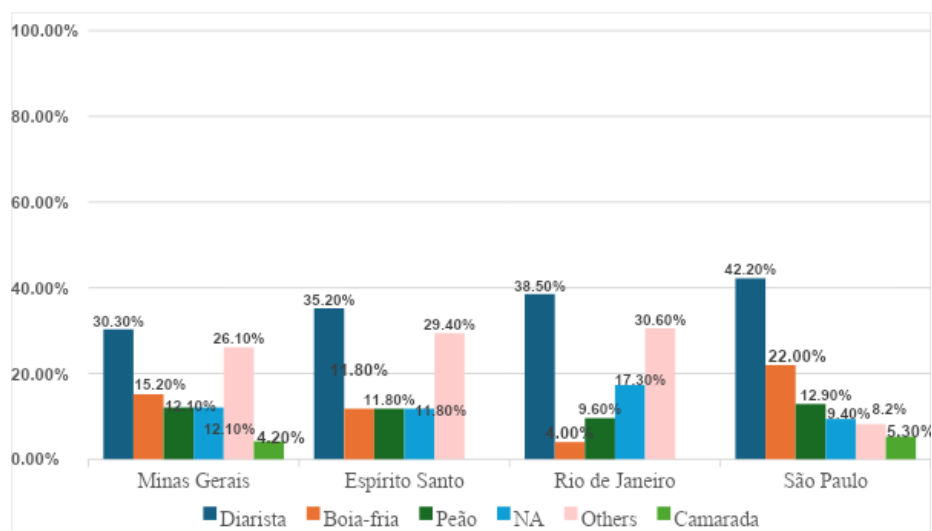
In examining the data, it is observed that *diarista* was the predominant form in all the locations surveyed, especially in the States of Espírito Santo and São Paulo, while *boia-fria* had greater records in Montes Claros and Pirapora (northern mesoregion of Minas Gerais), Teófilo Otoni (Vale do Mucuri/MG) mesoregion, Pedra Azul (Jequitinhonha/MG mesoregion), geographical areas very close to each other. The same was seen in Poços de Caldas and Itajubá (south and southwest mesoregions of Minas Gerais), regions that border Bragança Paulista/SP, a location where the index of occurrence of this lexical item was high, which indicates its dissemination to other territories in the Southeast Region. In Espírito Santo the lexical form *boia-fria* was documented in São Mateus and, in Rio de Janeiro State, only in Valença.

A similar phenomenon occurs with *peão*, in Minas Gerais, with occurrences concentrated in specific areas such as São João Del Rei and Lavras (Campos das Vertentes mesoregion/MG), Juiz de Fora (Zona da Mata mesoregion/MG), Formiga (west mesoregion of MG) and in Itajubá and Passos (south and southwest mesoregions of MG, respectively), all of which are border regions. The last two border the Triângulo Mineiro and Alto Paranaíba mesoregions, where *peão* was also documented in the municipalities of Uberlândia, Patos de Minas and Campina Verde.

In Espírito Santo, Rio de Janeiro and part of São Paulo State, *peão* is distributed regularly. However, the lexical form was not registered in the Mesoregions of Araçatuba, Piracicaba, Marília, Litoral Sul Paulista and Metropolitana de São Paulo. The lexical unit *camarada* had the lowest frequency rate in Minas Gerais and also in the State of São Paulo.

Next, Graph 1 shows the percentage of occurrence of the lexical units with the highest frequency rates in the States of Minas Gerais, Espírito Santo, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.

Graph 1: Frequency rate of the most common appellations for day laborer (QSL/ALiB/61) in the interior of the southeastern states of Brazil.



[Source: The authors, based on Fernandes (2021) and Santos (2019).

The data in Graph 1 demonstrate that *diarista* presented the largest number of records in all locations investigated, with close percentages, thus representing the generic form indicated by the informants. *Boia-fria*, in turn, came second in terms of frequency, with a median percentage of records, except in São Paulo where it occurred more frequently than in the other regions, while *peão*, equally registered in all regions investigated, reached approximate percentage rates, except in Rio de Janeiro State, where the percentage is lower.

On the other hand, the lexical unit *camarada* was documented only in Minas Gerais and São Paulo with occurrence rates of approximately 4.0% and 5.3%, respectively. The system of settlement and social organization, as well as the Bandeirantes movement are factors that may justify the maintenance of this appellation in these regions. As Barbosa (1985, p. 43) records in his *Dicionário da Terra e da Gente de Minas* (Dictionary of the Land and People of Minas), “*camarada*, a term still in use in some parts of Minas Gerais sertão (inland/backwoods), is one of the nicest and most significant words in the history of our social formation”.

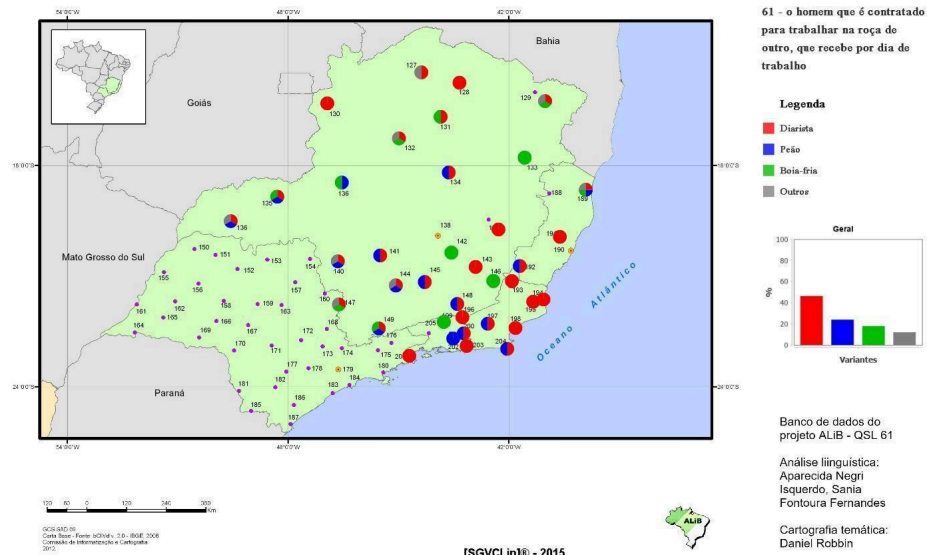
It can be seen, from data in Graph 1, that appellations *diarista*, *boia-fria* and *peão* were the most recurrent ones in the Southeast Region; and the less frequent form *camarada* was documented only in Minas Gerais and São Paulo.

It is important to point out that the forms *trabalha jornal*, a single occurrence in São Mateus/ES, and *trabalhador* (laborer), registered only in Minas Gerais, do not appear in Figure 1 because of their low frequency, but were computed in the item “others” in Graph 1.

However, as they are considered valid as answers to the question under analysis, the approach of these appellations in the diatopic discussion became relevant as a way of demonstrating their geographical distribution. The data gathered under acronym NA (no answer) were not included here owing to the extension of this work. Thus, regardless of the occurrence rate, the diatopy of appellations validated for the question, indicated by the speakers of the four states can be seen in Figures 2, 3 and 4 below.

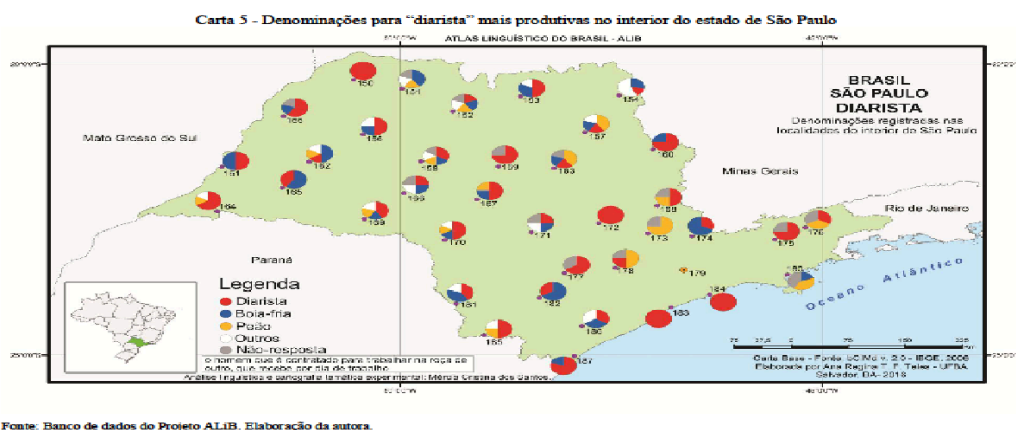
Figure 2 – Map of the most frequent appellations for day laborer in the interior of Minas Gerais, Espírito Santo and Rio de Janeiro.

Denominações mais frequentes para "diarista" comuns a Minas Gerais, Espírito Santo e Rio de Janeiro



Source: The authors.

Figure 3 - Map of the most frequent appellations for *day laborer* the interior of São Paulo State.



Source: Santos (2019, p. 129)⁷.

It can be seen from Figures 2 and 3 that the lexical form *diarista* was mentioned in all states of the Southeast Region and its scope denotes that it is used in a generic way in the vocabulary norm of speakers from Southeastern Brazil. The occurrence of lexical unit *peão*, in turn, was remarkably concentrated in the central and southern regions of Minas Gerais, in the central area of Rio de Janeiro but presented some scattered records in Espírito Santo. This appellation was also mentioned throughout São Paulo, “especially, at a higher rate in regions close to the border with Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais” (Santos, 2019, p. 131). *Boia-fria*, in turn, despite being registered in all states in the Southeast Region, had a higher rate of occurrence in São Paulo. In summary, the mapping of these lexical items revealed that *diarista* and *peão* are generic forms frequently used in the vocabulary of speakers from the Southeast Region of Brazil, while *boia-fria* has a greater concentration in the lexical norm of São Paulo residents.

⁷ In the original, Santos (2019): Letter 5 – Most productive names for “day laborer” in the interior of the state of São Paulo.

Figure 4 – Map of appellations for day laborer with the lowest frequency rates in the interior of Minas Gerais and Espírito⁸



Source: The authors.

In the case of the less frequent appellations in the corpus under examination, Figure 4 demonstrates the area-based distribution of the form *camarada* in Pedra Azul (north of MG), and Lavras (Campo das Vertentes region); and in Passos and Poços de Caldas, respectively located in the southwest and south of Minas Gerais, areas close to Franca, Barretos and Votuporanga in São Paulo, where, according to Santos (2019), the greatest concentration of *camarada* occurred.

The form *trabalhador* was most frequently found in Januária and Pirapora, north of MG, and in Campina Verde, in the Triângulo Mineiro. In a study carried out on the appellations for day laborer in the center west region of Brazil based on data from the ALiB Project, Isquerdo and Carvalho (2012) identified *trabalhador* in the municipality of São Domingos, northeast of Goiás, that borders Bahia, a Brazilian state in which the form presented high incidence of registration, as attested by the *Vocabulário Dialetal Baiano* (Bahian Dialectal Vocabulary) (Santana, 2017). These data point to the expansion of the lexical unit *trabalhador* beyond Minas Gerais and confirm the phenomenon of continuum in the vocabulary of speakers from these two Brazilian states.

Finally, the lexical form *trabalha jornal*, with a single occurrence, was mentioned by an elderly informant from São Mateus, the second oldest municipality in Espírito Santo, which indicates its conservative character in the lexical norm of that state.

2.2 – Lexico-semantic approach

The predominant lexical unit in the regions investigated, *diarista*, cannot be found in Silva’s work (1813) with the semantic feature “laborer who gets paid per day’s work”, but the dictionary presents the entry *diário* (daily) to convey the idea of “every day”. Houaiss (2001), in turn, registers the following meaning to *diarista*: “that or who does not have a fixed salary, earning only for the days worked [...] that or who receives a daily rate for their work. ETY *diária+ista*”; while, Aulete (2014) records, in the updated entry: “he who provides services and receives payment for each day worked”. And in the original entry, the lexicographer classifies *diarista* as a Brazilianism with the definition of “laborer, he who only earns on the days he works. Cf. *Diária*” (day pay).

Although the dictionary meanings do not contain the same “rural or urban worker”, they refer to the semantic feature “worker who is paid per day worked”, which, adding to the high rate of

⁸ The lexical items *camarada* e *trabalhador*, of low frequency, and *trabalha jornal*, of sole occurrence, were considered for analysis as they were validated by informants and found in the dictionaries consulted.

occurrence of *diarista* among speakers in the Southeast Region, justifies and validates its use to refer to the occasional worker who provides services and is paid for the day's work. The Brazilian economic process, especially the coffee cycle, was a strong stimulus for the expansion of this category of worker, which, in turn, remains and gains greater space with urbanization and industrial advances.

Houaiss (2001) classified the lexical unit *boia-fria*, the second in terms of frequency in the corpus under examination, as Brazilianism to convey the idea of “itinerant rural worker who works in temporary tasks without an employment contract. Ext. employee who eats the food he brings from home at work (such as rural *boias frias*)”, while Aulete (2014) defines the term as “rural worker who provides temporary services during planting or harvesting time”. And, by extension of meaning, also refers to the “worker who brings from home the meal that will be eaten, cold, at work, like the so called rural workers”.

When focusing on this category of worker, Mello (1976, p. 31) addresses the *boia-fria* as “the day laborer from rural areas” who, according to the author, collaborated in replacing the labor force of stable workers in the countryside and favored the interests of employers, large landowners. The author records the following explanation for the use of the form:

[...] the DESIGNATION “*boia-fria*”, given to the “quick-task performer/short-distance driver”, arises from the most frequent conditions in which its work is carried out. Hired to perform tasks in short periods of time, the “quick-task performer” cannot get stuck in the place where he works. As a rule, he travels to the local on a daily basis taking a small lunchbox with the food he will have for lunch. Because of the lack of facilities for proper heating, food is eaten cold (Mello, 1976, p. 109).

The same scholar explains that the main characteristic of this category of workers is not merely the fact that they are forced to eat cold food, but rather the reference of the contractual manner they are hired. “The “*boia-fria*” is employed to perform a certain task, in a short time span and without any employment relationship with the employer” (Mello, 1976, p. 110).

It is noted that the meanings presented carry the semantic feature “of occasional, without employment relationship”, which is consistent with the content of question 61/QSL/ALiB and can be observed in the comment of the elderly informant from Muriaé/MG/146:

INQ. – What is it called here that man who is hired to work on someone else's field and earns a daily salary, he is not an employee, no.
INF. - 4/146 – secretary, no.
INQ. – In my city they ride on a truck, a bus, on the outskirts calling
INF. - 4/146 – Employee, right?
INQ. – He is not an employee, he does not work by the month, he works by the day. If it rains, he is out of service
INF. - 4/146 – Caretaker
INQ. – But isn't the caretaker the one who lives in the farm?
INF. - 4/146 – Yes
INQ. – Because this one... leaves in the morning... even takes his food.
INF. - 4/146 – It's a *boia-fria*
INQ. – *Boia-fria*, can you see them here?
INF. - 4/146 – I think so, it's very big here
INQ. – Did you see this *boia-fria* on television or do you hear people talking about it?
INF. 4/146 – I see people talk
INQ. - Yes

INF. - 4/146 – But here there are many people who work, who take the food as sometimes they can't go home, who are also called boia-fria, sometimes they even take the alcohol with them so they can heat up the food.

It is noted, from the informant's answers, that the appellation boia-fria is related to the phenomenon of rural exodus, when workers in stable conditions escaped from this environment towards the cities and, to supply this workforce, employers began to hire, in cities, the “boias-frias” to work temporarily in the plantations and harvests of coffee plantations, for example, being paid for the day worked. In this particular case, the human element makes the opposite journey, from the city to the countryside, to carry out his work activity, a fact that confirms the notion of continuum that was also reflected in the way of naming the day laborer.

The lexical unit peão, in turn, documented throughout the Southeast Region, is defined in Silva (1813) as pião [peão? Cf.] with the following explanation from the lexicographer: “better spelling is peão, man standing in the troop. It. Commoner, not gentleman.” With this meaning, Houaiss (2001) records: “(C. XIII). Person who walks on foot; pedestrian. Common man; commoner”. However, this dictionarist, dating from 1642, records the following meaning: “B tamer of animals, “B assistant of cattle driver”, “employed in rural work. Road and highway worker, railways and other civil engineering works. B. civil construction worker’s helper”. The same lexicographer gives the lexical form peão the etymology “plat. peón, ‘rural worker’, from Spanish peón (1074), connected to Port. ‘peão, from medv Latin pedo.”

In Aulete’s dictionary (2014), peão has the mark “Lus. He who walks on foot; pedestrian”. From the meanings, it is noted that peão, a lexical unit transplanted by the Portuguese at the time of colonization on Brazilian soil, acquired new meanings throughout the process of semantic resignification. The same lexicographer also defines peão as “Rural worker. Civil construction and road works worker, inside or outside cities. Any manual or unskilled worker”, thus classifying this lexical unit with the diatopic mark of regionalism from Rio Grande do Sul State to mean “person in charge of domestic services in a ranch; CONCHAVADO”.

It is worth noting that Souza (1939), in the Dictionary of Land and People of Brazil (Dicionário da Terra e da Gente do Brasil), already recorded peão with the following meanings that refer to diatopic marks of this lexical unit: “in Portuguese, it is the individual who walks on foot”. “In Brazil, [...] especially in the South and in Goiás, it is precisely the opposite, that is, the cowboy or gaúcho, horse breaker, tamer”.

In all, it appears that the lexical form peão is used to name the worker who carries out not only rural activities (not only those related to dealing with cattle and horses), but also other farm services such as cleaning the local, feeding the animals (chicken, pig). And, with the urbanization process, the role of this worker extended to the urban environment, laboring in civil construction, in works of different nature and in general services. When leaving the countryside in search of better living conditions, the individual took with him his lexical collection, which remained in the city environment.

In turn, camarada, a form documented in Minas Gerais and São Paulo, is defined by Houaiss (2001) as “a worker who is temporarily employed on a rural property for domestic and agricultural tasks, also involving livestock, mineral exploration, etc.”. In the updated entry by Aulete (2014), the form also receives the meaning of “temporary worker on rural property” while, in the original entry, the dictionary author attributes to camarada the diatopic mark of Brazilianism in the meaning of “casual worker on farms”.

According to Santos (2019), the form camarada was documented in São Paulo, suggesting that this spatial distribution may signal the presence of lexical regionalism in these areas, what had already been indicated by Souza (1939) in the Dicionário da Terra e da Gente do Brasil (Dictionary of Land and People of Brazil) with the following meaning: “word registered by Beaufort-Rohan as a regionalism of S. Paulo, Minas, Paraná, Goiás and Mato Grosso, referring to salaried man to serve not only as animal riders, but also as rural and domestic workers”. It should be noted that the

definition recorded in a work published in the first half of the 20th century does not contain the same “payment per working day”, but refers to the worker who carries out various activities in rural areas, a situation that, for historical reasons, also applies to the urban man who carries out the activity in question, according to the ALiB Project corpus documented mainly in the first decade of the 21st century.

The meanings provided by Houaiss (2001) and Aulete (2014) contain semantic features such as “occasional work carried out on rural properties” that, therefore, characterizes the “man who is hired to work in the fields, receiving payment per day of work”, data that validate *camarada* as a name for day laborer.

Another lexical form documented with a unique occurrence only in Minas Gerais was *trabalhador* (laborer/worker), in Silva (1813) defined as “adj. keen on work, not idle.” It is also registered in Houaiss (2001) in the connotation of “the one who works” and “journeyman, journeyer, laborer”. And, also, there is the meaning “self-employed worker” which corresponds to the worker who “performs any remunerated activity on a non-permanent basis and without an employment relationship”. Likewise, Aulete (2014), in the updated entry *trabalhador* records “self-employed worker” to denote “one who carries out paid activity on a non-permanent basis without an employment relationship”. And, in the original entry, the meaning is “the man who works in the field, who does the rough work of farming”. It is observed that the dictionary meanings contain the semantic feature “man who works on an occasional, non-permanent basis”, and, as he is not a worker with an employment contract, the pay is only for the days worked, information that refers to the same “who receives per day of work” and that justifies using *trabalhador* to mean day laborer. Although it appears as a lexical form of a generic nature, it is possible to regard this unit as a regional norm in Minas Gerais because it was mentioned only by informants from that state.

Among the lexical items with a single occurrence, the lexical item *trabalha jornal*, mentioned in São Mateus/ES by an elderly informant, deserves to be highlighted. Silva (1813) registers *jornal* to mean “daily payment given to the journeyer/ day worker”. In the dictionary of Nascentes (1955), the form *jornal* is defined as “the salary that a worker earns per day”, a form coming from the Latin “diurnale, daily; Sp. jornal; It. giornale; Fr. journal. It probably comes from a region where the idea of day was expressed by a word derived from Latin *diurnu* (France, Italy)”. Contemporaneously, *jornal* is registered in Houaiss (2001) with the meaning of “(s. XIII [...] salary remuneration made per day of work”. ETY noun from Lat. *diurnalis*, and related to the day, *diário* (daily). The same dictionary also contains the entry “*jornaleiro*”, with the following explanation: “it is said of a worker who is paid *jornal*. ETY *jornal* + *eiro*; see *dia* (day)”. In the updated entry by Aulete (2014), the lexical unit *jornaleiro* is also defined as “payment for a day’s work; weekly pay, wage. “A sliver of land, my rich lord, a sliver of land! And then the tithe, the *jornais*” (Eça de Queirós, *O crime do Padre Amaro*)”. In the original entry of the same dictionary, the following meaning is seen: “payment for each day of work”.

Finally, even though these meanings do not include the semantic trait “man who is hired to work on the rural region”, they do contain the semantic features “payment, salary per day of work” and *diurno*, daily pay, senses present in the definition of “*diarista*, thus validating the use of *trabalha jornal* to name “a man who is hired to work on someone else’s farm and is paid for the day’s work”. The data under examination confirm that socio-historical factors, among them the waves of immigrants who settled in Espírito Santo at the time of colonization, particularly Italians, may have motivated the maintenance of the item *jornal* in the lexical norm of Espírito Santo speakers, considering also the content of the definition by Nascentes (1955) mentioned above.

The corpus consulted brings together other appellations provided by the interviewed speakers, namely: *empregado* (employee), *lavrador* (farm worker), *roceiro* (farm laborer), *agregado* (member of a collective group), *empreiteiro* (task performer), *biscate* (odd job man) *contratado* (hired man), *companheiro* (fellow), *colono* (settler), *meeiro* (sharecropper), *fazer extra* (extra-job doer), *caseiro* (caretaker), *fazendeiro* (farmer), *homem da roça* (rural laborer/farm man), and *prestador de serviços* (service provider) that denote categories of workers distinct from “day

laborers”, given that the definitions attributed to them by the dictionaries consulted do not include the same “man who is hired and paid per day of work”.

In summary, the data analysis pointed to the maintenance and preservation of lexical forms typical of rural areas that are still present in the vocabulary collection of city-dwelling speakers in the areas researched, for example, *camarada*, registered only in Minas Gerais and São Paulo, and *trabalha jornal* with a sole register in Espírito Santo. Likewise, the record of lexical items documented in the Southeast Region in the lexicon disseminated in other states, such as the study by Santana (2017) on Bahian speech, reinforces the thesis of the *continuum* identified in the geographic areas selected within the scope of this study.

Final considerations

As already mentioned, the purpose of this article was to demonstrate that socio-historical, economic and cultural factors that marked the history of Brazil, since the colonial period, have collaborated on a unique vocabulary in the Southeast Region, the area at issue.

In this scenario, it was highlighted that especially the economic and social system, based on rural activity, allowed man to experience the peasant environment and, by extension, develop a way of speaking specific to this setting. However, this scenario began to change from the 18th century onwards, motivated by the industrial and urban development occurred in Brazil, particularly in the Southeast Region. Considering that the lexicon is the level of the language that best reflects social, economic and cultural transformations of a community of speakers, it is justifiable that lexical forms originating from rural areas integrate the vocabulary of speakers from urban setting, a phenomenon that ratifies the notion of rural versus urban continuum observed in the analyzed corpus.

The use of generic lexical forms such as *diarista* and *peão*, for example, confirms the manifestation of this notion in the vocabulary items of Minas Gerais, Espírito Santo, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, since the data revealed signs of maintenance of forms that originally name references typical of rural areas but still remain in the city environment, like *camarada*, documented only in Minas Gerais and *trabalha jornal*, registered only in Espírito Santo. It was also possible to prove the open character of the lexicon, as in the case of the use of *trabalhador*, documented in Minas Gerais and also in Goiás according to the study by Isquerdo and Carvalho (2012), and in the State of Bahia, in Santana’s research (2017). Thus, the dispersion of this lexical item beyond the areas investigated within the scope of the present study indicates the dynamicity of the lexicon which, given its nature, does not remain static, on the contrary, it follows the footsteps of speakers and their movements along different geographic spaces.

In conclusion, the study sought to ratify the notions of rural and urban from the perspective of the continuum, in which lexical forms of common use coexist in both spaces, resulting in a relationship of interaction and continuity between the two universes. Finally, the analysis of the corpus examined here highlighted the importance of studies of this nature for the recording and description of the lexical norm, which justifies the authors' need and interest in continuing the study based on documented data from the ALiB Project *corpus* in other Brazilian regions.

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