

Artigo

Human migration and dialect spread: designations for *snow* and *fog* in Tocantins, Brazil

A migração humana e a disseminação dialetal: designações para *neve* e *neblina* no Tocantins, Brasil

Migración humana y difusión dialetal: denominaciones para *neve* y *neblina* en Tocantins, Brasil



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Abstract: Migration is a constant in Brazil and the main purpose of that process is the man's search for better opportunities, especially socioeconomic. In linguistic terms, the migratory process expresses dialectal marks and it has been the object of study of the most current theoretical-methodological schools under the title of diatopic-kinetic variable. The present study analyzes the designations obtained for the questioning QSL 019: *neblina*, *neve*, *nevoeiro* ('fog', 'snow', 'mist'), obtained for the *Linguistic Topodynamic and Topostatic Atlas of Tocantins* (Silva, 2018), along with 96 informants. As a result, the *neve* ('snow') variant indicates sedimented marks of the arrival of migrants from the Brazilian Northeast to Tocantins.

Keywords: Diatopic-kinetic variable; dialect spread; fog designations.

Resumo: A migração é uma constante no Brasil e esse processo tem como finalidade principal a busca do indivíduo por melhores oportunidades, sobretudo socioeconômicas. Em termos linguísticos, o processo migratório exprime marcas dialetais e tem sido objeto de estudo das correntes teórico-metodológicas mais atuais sob o título de variável diatópico-cinética. O presente estudo analisa as designações obtidas para o questionamento QSL 019: neblina, neve, nevoeiro, auferidas para o *Atlas Linguístico Topodinâmico e Topoestático do Tocantins* (Silva, 2018), junto a 96 informantes. Como resultado, a variante neve indica marcas sedimentadas da vinda de migrantes do Nordeste brasileiro para o Tocantins.

Palavras-chave: Variável diatópico-cinética; disseminação dialetal; designações para neblina.

Resumen: La migración es una constante en Brasil y este proceso tiene como principal objetivo la búsqueda de mejores oportunidades por parte del individuo. En términos lingüísticos, el proceso migratorio expresa marcas dialectales y ha sido objeto de estudio de las corrientes teórico-metodológicas más actuales bajo el título de variable diatópico-cinética. El presente estudio analiza las designaciones obtenidas con 96 entrevistados en el cuestionamiento QSL 019: *neblina, neve, nevoeiro* ('niebla', 'nieve', 'niebla'), utilizadas para el *Atlas Lingüístico Topodinámico y Topoestático* de Tocantins (Silva, 2018). Como resultado, la variante de *neve* indica marcas sedimentadas que corresponden a la llegada de migrantes del Nordeste brasileño a Tocantins.

Palabras clave: Variable diatópica-cinética; difusión dialectal; denominaciones para neblina.

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1. Initial thoughts

The significant amount of geolinguistic work developed in the Amazon region is a factor to be highlighted in the last decades, especially after the implementation of the Linguistic Atlas of Brazil Project (1996) and the formulation of a methodology based on the modern molds of Pluridimensional Dialectology, with the systematic collection of social variables. In addition to this pluridimensionality observed in the grouping of extralinguistic variables, currently, dialectologists have turned to another group not previously included in dialectological surveys, which are prominent in the North region of the country: the migrant and his “centrifugal or centripetal” process (Altenhofen; Thun, 2016, p. 376) in the new location, which is commonly known as the diatopic-kinetic variable.

Migrations in certain periods have always been part of human flows (Brito, 2000; Simielli, 2006), and in the legal Amazon, for example, they were intensified from the 1940s onwards, through government incentives for the settlement of the North and Midwest¹. In the specific case of Tocantins, the most recent Federative Unit, the population entrances and exits constituted the aegis of the territory, whose main groups come from the Brazilian Northeast and, more recently, from the Midwest.

In the context of the mixture of autochthonous and allochthonous human elements, and in the dialectal configuration that such contact results, the Tocantins Topostatic and Topodynamic Linguistic Atlas (ALITTETO standing for *Atlas Linguístico Topostático e Topodinâmico do Tocantins*) is centered (Silva, 2018), whose central proposal was to describe the dialectal reality of Tocantins, through cartographic means, from the counterpoint between informants born and established in the research cities (topostatic) with the speakers coming from displacements/migrations (topodynamics).

Thus, the present text aims to briefly discuss the importance of migratory movements for understanding the dialectal situation

¹ The “March to the West” was one of those incentives.

of the mentioned state and how this affects the process of lexical variants formation, specifically for the conceptualization of the type of smoke which is normally seen in the morning, whose variants are, among others, *neblina* ('fog') and *neve* ('snow'). First, considerations are made about Brazilian migratory issues, with a specific focus on the North and Midwest (initial region of current Tocantins) and how population dynamics are representative in the linguistic-dialectal context. Then, we move on to the example present in QSL 019, whose snow variant is the mark of the northeastern migration in Tocantins in the process of sedimentation.

2. Centripetal and centrifugal dialect movements in the context of migrations

Migratory flows are part of Brazilian history and culture in different time frames and are motivated by different goals on the part of those who travel, whether social, economic, cultural, political, environmental - all of them linked to a common denominator: opportunities not offered in the original space (Simielli, 2006).

There is, in Brazil, a kind of *migratory culture*, arising from the understanding that "the rigidity of social stratification in Brazil is so great that 'improvement in life' or 'climbing socially', for a large majority of the population, has always been associated with migration, or better still, it was only possible with migration" (Brito, 2000, p. 19). In other words, the act of migrating is linked to economic and social factors, when the absence of possibilities for survival drives the population to leave. It is the expectation of moving from absolute nothingness to an even minimal *possibility*. In this indicative, migrations go beyond purely geographical aspects and they are not mere individual decisions of a person who moves to another location, state, region; they are mainly social groups that migrate to a reality, taking with them their beliefs, their values, their culture and their language, as pointed out by Brito:

As migrations constitute a social process, they are not a random event, they have empirical regularity that can be observed in the form of migratory flows, in their different modalities. Many of these migratory flows, due to their importance for the spatial dynamics of the economy and society, assume structural regularity. They become migratory trajectories that society, the economy and the state draw, spatially, according to their needs and, therefore, can be redesigned as long as these needs change (Brito 2000, p. 05; free translation).

In this clearly multi-social chain, with regard to dialectal issues, the focus of this work discussion, two processes conceptualized as “centripetal and centrifugal movements” (Altenhofen; Thun, 2016, p. 376) are imbued in the migratory dynamics. The first one, refers to the speaker who is more fixed to the locality, converging with his space, transmitting a dialectal rootedness when using variants of his private space. In this group are listed the inhabitants born and established in that place. On the other hand, centrifugal actions are verified in migrants when they deviate from the local speech of this new habitat and use dialectal forms from their region of origin (Silva, 2018).

Centrifugal actions can be caused by different situations: a) non-acceptance of this migrant by the local population in the new speech community², whose values, beliefs, customs (and consequently the language component) differ from those of the migrant; b) the migrant’s positive beliefs related to the place of origin and the centrifugal action occurs as a manifestation of belonging³ and the nostalgic feeling related to his homeland.

² Speech community is interpreted in this study as the group which share the same norms, beliefs and attitudes towards the language (Labov, 2008; free translation).

³ The case of southern migrants (called *gauchos*) in the North and Midwest regions, when they maintain their variant of origin (lexical and phonetic), in addition to other cultural elements, such as the Center of *Gaúchos* Tradition (CTG - *Centro de Tradições Gaúchas*), for example.

However, still on the motivations that lead populations to migrate, Brito (2000) shows that new migratory photographs are established in each period, according to the economic needs designed in the Brazilian space. According to him, for example, between 1940 and 1960, the largest migrant representatives came from the Northeast⁴ and Minas Gerais and were destined for São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, exponents in urban-industrial development, Paraná and the Midwest - regions of expansion of agricultural frontiers, that is, large areas of occupation destined to activities related to agriculture or livestock.

Between 1960 and 1980, the predilection of Northeasterners and Minas Gerais people for industrial regions, such as São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, and for agricultural regions such as Paraná and Midwest in the first years of the crop, can still be noted, but, over the decades, another situation took shape: an increase in migrants to other expanding agricultural frontiers located in the Midwest and North of the country, as a result of government incentives. Minas Gerais considerably reduces its emigrant's contingent and the Midwest became responsible for migratory exchanges within the own region, also towards North:

The majority of immigrants from the North region, approximately one third, came from the Northeast, mainly from Maranhão. The remainder came from Paraná, 15.5%, especially to Rondônia, and from the Midwest region, 21.0%. The latter, mostly migrants from Mato Grosso do Sul and Mato Grosso to Rondônia and from Goiás to Pará. Migration within the North region contributed with 14.0%. In this case, it was mainly the migratory flows from Acre and Amazonas to Rondônia, and from Pará to Amazonas and Amapá (Brito, 2000, p. 16; free translation).

⁴ "Northeastern emigrants became the majority in the 50s, due to the great drought occurred in the second half of that decade and the improvement in the transport system, with the opening of the *Rio-Bahia* highway" (Brito, 2000, p. 08; free translation).

Between 1980 and 1991, in addition to migration, there was the so-called “return migration” (Brito, 2000, p. 21) of Northeasterners and Minas Gerais people to their regions of origin. In relation to the North, populations grew, especially those coming from the Northeast (mainly Maranhão) and the Midwest, in addition to intra-regional displacements from the North region itself. Finally, between 1991 and 1996 there was a decrease in the number of migrants. In the case of the North region specifically, this rate is linked to the failure of government programs (Brito, 2000).

It is in the last three proposed scenarios (1960 to 1996) that the main migratory surface for Tocantins is located, providing a dialect movement for the region. The state in question was part of the territory of Goiás until 1988 and two major landmarks which attracted different populations to the territory can also be highlighted. The first of these was the construction of the BR-153 highway started in 1950 and completed in 1974; the second was the emancipation of Tocantins in 1988. The main migrant groups were the Northeastern, mainly from Maranhão, followed by Goiás and Pará (Cunha; Baeninger, 2000).

Faced with this reality, it can be considered that Tocantins was structured from an ethnic-cultural amalgam formed by migratory fronts in contact with the locals. Thus, local forms, represented by static, centripetal speakers, act in dialectical terms, in contrast to variants introduced by migrants at different stages of the formation of Tocantins. According to Silva (2018), these are attributed forms such as *ata* (a local variant) and *pinha* (a variant brought by extralocal groups, meaning ‘pine cone’); *espinha* (meaning ‘pimple’) and *terçol* (meaning ‘stye’) and *cambito* and *libélula* (meaning ‘dragonfly’), for example.

Also, in line with the migratory stages indicated by Brito (2000), Tocantins, depending on specific lexical variants, can be divided into two dialectal macroareas, resulting from the migratory amalgamation in different phases: Area A – Old Tocantins and Area B – Contemporary Tocantins. In the first, “dialectal similarities with

the Brazilian Northeast and lexical tendency towards more rural variants predominate⁵, fact which is due to less contact with the main communication routes" (Silva, 2018, p. 202). Area B

"gathers the other cities surveyed, located in the Southwest, Midwest and North areas. They are of more recent colonization and contain assimilation with different regions [...], possibly due to the greater proximity to the BR-153 highway, which connects Tocantins to other states" (Silva, 2018, p. 203, free translation).

The stages of the migratory process and the types of migration, as well as the "migration condition" (Altenhofen; Thun, 2016, p. 376), influence the centripetal and centrifugal forms in the local reality; Campoy's (2001) considerations regarding these aspects are opportune when we talk about a broad science of linguistic variation:

Issues related to the spatial distribution of the population and forms of occupation - urban spaces: situation and location of population centers - are of enormous importance as an essential element of spatial planning and regional planning, in addition to purely demographic aspects. They are interested in clarifying questions such as: «how many people populate each territory, how they are distributed in their different geographical areas [...] and spatial mobility (emigrants less immigrants) and what characteristics (age, sex, activity, level of education, etc.) have such people» (Puyol, 1990 *apud* Campoy, 2001, p. 125; free translation). [...]

If we assume that the places where people live or go there is also language, studies on the spatial distribution of the population and their analyzes of concentration and

⁵ See examples and in-depth discussion in Silva and Borges, in the text "Presence vs absence of traces of rurality in the Tocantins lexicon" (Presença vs ausência de traços de ruralidade no léxico tocantinense) (2019). Available in: https://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0020-38742019000100083. Accessed on Jan. 15th, 2021.

dispersion can indicate where languages are spoken at the same time that they indicate where languages are located, spaces and, specifically, urban centers (Campoy, 2001, p. 125-126; free translation)⁶.

In short, social factors such as: the condition, space, directionality and course of migration are important indicators of how the mechanisms of exchange and dialectal diffusion are processed in a given reality (Altenhofen; Thun, 2016). Still, depending on these factors listed, linguistic beliefs and attitudes, both of migrants and non-migrants, are fundamental in the acceptability or rejection of dialect forms from different groups.

In the next topic, the presence of the term *neve* ('snow') is discussed in a diatopic way to designate a type of *fumaça* ('smoke') which occurs in the morning, normally in mountainous regions, also known as *neblina* ('fog'), in order to demonstrate the massive presence of lexical variants coming from the migratory contact, mainly with the Northeast region. For this purpose, data from Tocantins are listed and contrasted with Cuba and Isquierdo's work (2009) on the same lexical proposition.

3. Designations for fog (*neblina*)/snow (*neve*) in Tocantins

The analysis described here addresses the variants collected for the questioning *Often, especially in the early morning, you can barely see because of something like smoke, which covers everything. What do you call it?*, observed in the ALITTETO semantic-lexical subquestionnaire; 115 responses were collected, distributed among eight forms; only one informant did not know how to respond to what was asked.

⁶ From the original in Spanish: "Los temas concenientes al reparto espacial de la población y las formas de poblamiento -los espacios urbanos: situación y emplazamiento de los núcleos de población- tienen una enorme importancia como elemento esencial de la ordenación territorial y la planificación regional, además de los aspectos puramente demográficos. Se interesan por esclarecer cuestiones como pueden ser: «qué número de personas pueblan cada territorio, cómo se reparten en sus diferentes ámbitos geográficos [...] y de la movilidad espacial (emigrantes menos inmigrantes) y qué características (de edad, sexo, actividad, nivel de instrucción, etc.), tienen tales personas» (Puyol, 1990 *apud* Campoy, 2001, p. 125). [...]

Si asumimos que donde está o va la gente está también el lenguaje, los estudios sobre la distribución espacial de la población y sus análisis de concentración y dispersión de ésta pueden indicarnos dónde se hablan las lenguas a la vez que nos indican dónde se encuentran localizados los espacios y, concretamente, los núcleos urbanos" (Campoy, 2001, p. 125-126).

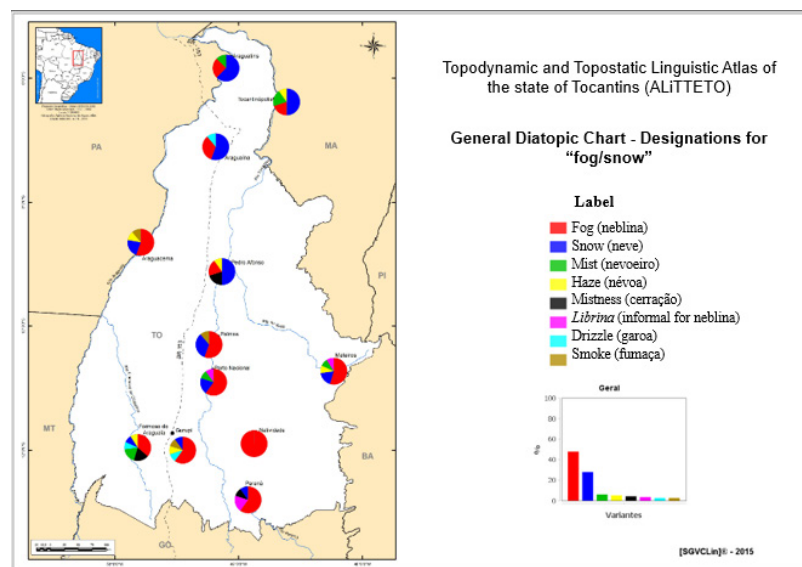
Table 1 – Designations for *neblina* ('fog')/ *neve* ('snow') in Tocantins

Variant	N. of occurrences	%	Variant	N. of occurrences	%
<i>Neblina</i> ('fog')	55	47.8%	<i>Cerração</i> ('mistness')	5	4.4%
<i>Neve</i> ('snow')	32	27.8%	<i>Librina</i> (variant for 'fog')	4	3.5%
<i>Nevoeiro</i> ('mist')	7	6.0%	<i>Garoa</i> ('drizzle')	3	2.6%
<i>Névoa</i> ('haze')	6	5.2%	<i>Fumaça</i> ('smoke')	3	2.6%
115					

Source: Author's elaboration with data from the corpus.

The predominant form in Tocantins is *neblina* ('fog'), defined by Houaiss (2009)⁷ as Spanishism and synonymous with low and closed haze or mist. Its diatopic distribution is visualized in the 12 localities of the corpus, having been in Natividade (southeastern part), for example, cited by all informants, as can be seen in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 – General diatopic chart (topostatic and topodynamic informants) for the forms from QSL Question 019 of ALiTTETO.



Source: Author's elaboration with data from the corpus.

⁷ It is not intended here to present a complete lexicographical analysis of the variants.

The cartographic layout shows a higher incidence of *neblina* ('fog') in the locations located in the southern half of the state, a fact that contrasts with some results described by Cuba and Isquierdo (2009)⁸ about the variants for the concept worked here in five linguistic atlases, as seen in order of occurrence:

Table 2 – Most productive variants in state and regional linguistic atlases

Atlas/ Chart	Variant/ 1st. place of occurrence	Variant/ 2nd. place of occurrence	Variant/ 3rd. Place of occurrence	Variant/ 4th. place of occurrence
APFB – mist (chart 13)	<i>Neve</i> ('snow')	<i>Librina</i> (deviation term from fog)	<i>Neblina</i> ('fog')	<i>Nivoada</i> (deviation term of 'mist')
ALPB – mistness (chart 24)	<i>Nevoeiro</i> ('mist')	<i>Neve</i> ('snow')	<i>Umidade</i> ('moisture')	<i>As neve</i> ('the snows')
ALPR – mistness (chart 33)	Mistness	<i>Neblina</i> ('fog')	<i>Fumaça</i> ('smoke')	<i>Garoa</i> ('drizzle')
ALMS – (chart 32.a)	<i>Neblina</i> ('fog')	<i>Cerração</i> ('mistness')	<i>Nevoeiro</i> ('mist')	<i>Neve/neve branca</i> ('snow/ 'whitesnow')
ALMESEMT – (chart 13)	<i>Neblina</i> ('fog')	<i>Neve</i> ('snow')	<i>Cerração</i> ('mistness')	<i>Umidade</i> ('moisture')

Source: Cuba and Isquierdo (2009, p. 157).

Neblina ('fog') is recurrent in four atlases, only in Paraíba there is no evidence of the variant among the four most cited forms in Table 2. It is obtained as the first variant in the Atlas of Mato Grosso do Sul and the Southeast Mesoregion of Mato Grosso, that is, with the exception of Paraíba, it is widespread in states in the Northeast, South and Midwest.

On the other hand, *neve* ('snow'), the second variant in terms of percentage in Tocantins, is defined as the type of precipitation

⁸ The authors analyzed the occurrence of *neve* ('snow') in two questions "the drops of water that wet the grass in the morning and at night" (dew) and the "species of smoke that covers everything in the morning" (fog), from the Linguistic Atlas of the Southeast Mesoregion. from Mato Grosso – ALMESEMT, in contrast to the Previous Atlas of the *Falares Baianos* – APFB (Rossi, 1963); Sketch of the Linguistic Atlas of Minas Gerais – EALMG (Ribeiro; Zágari, 1977); Linguistic Atlas of Paraíba – ALPB (Aragão; Menezes, 1984); from the Linguistic Atlas of Paraná – ALPR (Aguilera, 1994) and the Linguistic Atlas of Mato Grosso do Sul – ALMS (Oliveira, 2007) (Cuba; Isquierdo, 2009, free translation).

of ice crystals and, by extension, as “excessive cold” (Houaiss, 2009; free translation). In the realization observed in Chart 1, movement opposite to *neblina* (‘fog’) is indicated, in the Northern half of Tocantins, increasing the intensity of the citations in the locations closest to the states of Maranhão and Pará. In Araguatins, for example, a border region with Pará, the variant occurs in 62% of informants.

In the atlas listed by Cuba and Isquerdo (2009), *neve* (‘snow’) was not reported only in the data from Paraná (ALPR), possibly given the migratory and population characteristics of the State. In Bahia it occurs as the first variant in percentage numbers. Also, according to the authors:

In the previous Atlas of *Falares Baianos* (Rossi, 1963), the [*neve*] variant is used on the borders with the following states: Piauí, Tocantins, Goiás and Minas Gerais. In the Linguistic Atlas of Paraíba (Aragão; Menezes, 1984a), it appears on the borders with the states of Rio Grande do Norte, Ceará and Pernambuco, while in the Sketch of a Linguistic Atlas of Minas Gerais (Ribeiro; Zágari; Passini, 1977), *neve* is registered in the west of the state, on the borders with Goiás, Mato Grosso do Sul and São Paulo. The Linguistic Atlas of Mato Grosso do Sul (Oliveira, 2007), in turn, has the *neve* variant mapped in locations located in the center of the state of Mato Grosso do Sul (Cuba, Isquerdo, 2009, p. 157, free translation).

Having scored the locations where *neve* (‘snow’) was pronounced, combined with the diatopic distribution of the concept in Tocantins, some considerations can be made based on Cuba (2015). According to the author, in her Atlas on the Uncharacteristic Territory, whose informants have a topodynamic profile:

The presence of the [*neve*] variant denounces the linguistic influence left by the first wave of migrants, the Northeasterners, coming to the area investigated in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The [*cerração*] variety, on the other hand, expresses the southern norm, of recent migration (Cuba, 2015, p. 178, free translation, emphasis added by the author).

In Tocantins, the highest incidences of *neve* ('snow'), as already pointed out, are in places bordering the Tocantins River and the BR-153 highway, demonstrating the two main migratory moments of the northeastern fronts, first on the banks of the river and, later, moving to inhabit the highway thresholds (Silva, 2018). Also, if the group of informants is selected, it can be seen that the form *neve* ('snow') was given in ALITTETO by both groups: 18 occurrences for the natives and 14 for the migrants, demonstrating that the northeastern concept is in the process of dialectal sedimentation. in the territory in question. The other variants collected in Tocantins have lower incidences: *nevoeiro* ('mist'), (6.0%), *névoa* ('haze') (5.2%), *cerração* ('mistness') (4.4%), *librina* (informal for *neblina*, meaning 'fog') (3.5%) and *garoa* ('drizzle') (2,6%) and *fumaça* ('smoke') (2.6%). There are some considerations about them.

Névoa ('haze') and *nevoeiro* ('mist') derive in Portuguese from the same etymology, since the second one is formed by *névoa* + *-eiro* and are understood as a type of atmospheric steam less dense than mistness; synonyms of fog and mist (Houaiss, 2009). Both are distributed, with the exception of the cities of Natividade and Paranã, by the research territory. About the two cities in which the variants were not found, they are located in the southeast of Tocantins, on the border with Bahia. *Névoa* ('haze') occurs in the Linguistic Atlas of Paraíba.

Cerração ('mistness') understood as synonym of *nevoeiro* ('mist') (Houaiss, 2009), is centered on three locations: Paranã (Southeast),

Pedro Afonso (center) and Formoso do Araguaia (Southwest). The last two cities were pioneers in the state as they housed projects linked to agribusiness and the southern fronts were important in these two regions. In the state atlases elaborated by Cuba and Isquerdo (2009), it is observed that *neblina* ('fog') is provided as a first response in Paraná, Mato Grosso do Sul and Southeast Mesoregion of Mato Grosso, demonstrating that it is a variant with a more southern region, as the description of the informant from Paranã illustrates: "The word *cerração* is more used there in the South, here we say *neblina*" (12/7).

Librina, provided as an informal use for *neblina* ('fog') (Houaiss, 2009), in addition to being verified in the APFB (1963), is found in three locations in Tocantins (Porto Nacional, Mateiros and Paranã), all belonging to the center-southeast, closer to the state of Bahia. It is worth noting that this area demarcates what Silva (2018) establishes as Area A: old Tocantins, with old colonization and whose dialectal tendencies are ruralized and closer to the northeastern states.

Finally, *garoa* ('drizzle') and *fumaça* ('smoke') are forms found to the west of the Tocantins River, especially along the BR-153 route, in a region described by Silva (2018) as the most recent colonization and migration: Area B- Contemporary Tocantins.

As can be noticed, of the eight ways collected to designate Question 019, three are markedly derived from the population process: *neve* ('snow') and *librina* (informal for *neblina*, meaning 'fog') are linked to the Northeast, while *cerração* ('mistness') marks the southern fronts of the region. However, the crossing of the data, grouping the informants by migrant and autochthonous profile, denotes an apparent movement of dialectal amalgam, whose variants are being superimposed, regardless some local type of speaker.

4. Final Remarks

The new directions that Dialectology has taken in Brazil, especially in plurivarietal realities such as those found in the North Region, are strong indications that the diatopic-kinetic variable is necessary for a complete description of the varieties of Portuguese in regions of linguistic contact.

Thus, the present text aimed to discuss the importance of migratory movements for understanding the dialectal situation of the mentioned state and how this affects the process of lexical variants formation, specifically for the conceptualization of the *type of condensation caused by evaporated water*, whose variants: *neve* ('snow') and *librina* (informal for *neblina*, meaning 'fog') mark dialectal similarities with the Northeast, arising from the migratory fronts in the first cycles of Tocantins, while *cerração* ('mistness') is attributed to southern groups living in the region, coming with the implementation of agricultural frontiers.

Finally, it is worth highlighting that migrations are not movements caused by chance, whose decisions are individual; they have a certain regularity, since they are linked to the economic and social context of the Brazilian regions. And it is within that reality that Dialectology must operate.

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