

DIATOPIC VARIATION OF BRAZILIAN SOCCER PHRASEOLOGISMS *OPEN THE SCORE* AND *HOME TEAM*

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- **ABSTRACT:** The present paper aims at describing and mapping the diatopic variation found in the pairs of phraseologisms of Brazilian soccer — *abrir o placar* (open the score) e *time da casa* (home team). The theoretical framework adopted is limited to the French school of phraseological studies based on Mejri (1997, 2009, 2012), who points out basic properties of recognition of these structures: polylexicality, fixity, congruence, frequency, predictability and idiomaticity. Regarding the phenomenon of diatopic variation, we adopt the conception of Coseriu (1980), Chambers and Trudgill (1980), as well as Razky and Guedes (2015) regarding the issue of linguistic grouping, in addition to Corpas Pastor (1996) and Garcia-Page (2008) in the treatment of phraseological variation. The sample considered includes soccer written texts published in the period from 2008 to 2015 and extracted from the column *Caderno de Esportes* of five Brazilian electronic newspapers. The results show two variants for *time da casa* and six for *abrir o placar*. The analysis points to a diatopic configuration of the selected phraseologisms with a characteristic use of figurative language.
- **KEYWORDS:** phraseologism; soccer; variation; linguistic cartography.

Initial Considerations

The language use related to soccer games, disseminated by the media, as well as the variety of Brazilian phraseology, constitute modalities that arouse the interest of researchers in academia, and with equal emphasis, in other segments of society. In Brazil, most representative print media daily dedicate entire pages and even sections to the theme of soccer, especially in the days before and after the games of the most varied championships that take place in the country, providing writers and journalists with ample opportunity to create expressions related to the practice of this sport. Because it is a medium in constant movement, the language of soccer reflects part of the interaction

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existing in different contexts of society, which means that it is used by men, women, and children, presenting a continuous flow, which justifies constant investigations of this domain of language, so that it is possible to register and update this process.

In this context, to consider the relationship between *soccer* and the *Brazilian people* is to understand it, in some instances, as part of the identity of Brazilians, and as it could not be otherwise, this relationship is also manifested in the structure of the lexicon that represents it, an aspect that motivated the interest in the subject, since phraseological productivity coming from the field of soccer also reflects the constant movement of this activity and, consequently, constitutes a field whose dimension of lexical richness, both internationally and nationally, requires the development of studies that can follow the flow of phraseological variability of this domain that lends to the general lexicon expressions such as: *pisar na bola*, *bola cheia*, *bola da vez*, *bola pra frente*, *camisa dez*, among many others.

Although the subject has already been studied in other fields of knowledge, such as history, anthropology, sociology, sports, etc., research in the area of language, dealing more specifically with soccer phraseology, is still scarce in Brazil. Considering the reach of soccer around the planet and the dissemination of news related to this sport allows the language of this domain to be used in different geographic spaces, besides enabling investigations in the scope of Geosociolinguistics (Razky, 1998).

In view of the proposition of registering the distribution of the analyzed phraseological units, using a cartographic resource, it is possible to show the nature of the phraseologisms obtained according to the specificity of the geographic space in which they were produced. As for the cartographic resource, Razky and Guedes (2015) highlight the concept of lexical grouping in which they propose the categorization of linguistic variation, including variation of phraseological order, in scales that consider the supra, macro, micro and nano levels of groupings as an expansion of the concept of isogloss. In this sense, the lexical groupings favor the description of the linguistic variation in a horizontal line, as well as allowing the verification of the factors that influence such variation.

For the purpose of systematization, this article is divided into sections. The first section consists of these initial considerations. In the section *Phraseology: a few words*, there's a brief presentation of the discussions that involve the field of study of phraseology and its object of investigation, phraseologisms,¹ as well as a list of some of the criteria that allow its identification, delimitation, and categorization. Then, in the *Phraseological Variation* section, we turn our attention to the phenomenon of variation, more specifically the diatopic one, and the use of language charts as an instrument that makes it possible to record such units. *The Methodological Procedures* section describes the steps taken to collect and systematize the *corpus*. The results achieved and the record in linguistic charts are presented in the section *Outline of soccer phraseological*

¹ In view of the terminological diversity to name the phenomenon, we opted for the use of *phraseologism* or *phraseological unit* (Mejri, 2012).

variation. The text is complemented with the *Final Considerations* and the *References* that support this study.

Phraseology: a few words

The question of phraseology as a linguistic discipline is widely discussed. The problem begins with the technical term *phraseology*, which is at least ambiguous and makes it susceptible to controversy and polysemy (Oliveira Silva, 2011), because while it deals with the study of the phenomenon, that is, the recurrent syntagmatic associations, the phraseologisms (Mejri, 2012), it also refers to the scientific discipline that deals with the study of such units (Ortíz Alvarez, 2000). Thus, phraseology, spelled with a lowercase initial letter, is understood as the set of phraseologisms, fixed expressions of a language, and Phraseology, spelled with a capital initial letter, refers to the scientific discipline that investigates such units. From the range of phraseological investigations emanate controversies related to its area of activity, its object of study and its delimitation, in addition to the abundant terminological difference, associated with the line of thought of its authors about fixed units.

Phraseology, in the sense of linguistic research, is a relatively new discipline. Charles Bally, in 1909, already used the term *Phraséologie*. He was one of the first to pay attention to the existence of fixed expressions and stable combinations, in which the associations and groupings generated may be transient or become habitual and form indissoluble units, thus helping to delimit the object of study of Phraseology, a field defined by him as a sub-area of Lexicology, which is divided into “Popular Phraseology” that studies idioms, proverbs, slang and sayings, and “Technical-Scientific Phraseology”, which is concerned with the study of terminological expressions.

Criteria for identifying phraseologisms

Phraseologisms are the relatively fixed syntagmatic ties of a language, which present, according to Mejri (1997, 2012), in different degrees, polylexicity, fixity, congruency, frequency, predictability and idiomaticity. These properties help identifying them as a semantically cohesive set, such as: *pimba na gorduchinha*, *perna de pau*, *gol de letra*, with reference to a type of kick given in soccer, a player with little skill, and a goal scored in which the player’s leg crossing generates a letter “x”, in this order. In addition to their polylexical character and structural stability, phraseologisms also present conventionality of grouping marked by the intersection of fixity and congruency, in which memorization by the speaker is established from the notion of a cohesive block, elements that make them recognizable as informational units, and idiomaticity, which expresses the connotative character of the expression through the degree of transparency and opacity.

Although the fixity and stability are properties that characterize phraseologism, it is also possible to find variation in this type of unit, which reflects the different levels of fixity of these structures. As a phenomenon that may occur in all languages, there is also a record of variation in the sample under analysis as in the structures *abrir o placar*, which refers to the first goal scored in a match, and *time da casa*, a unit that indicates the club that plays a soccer match in its own venue or in a stadium of equal value (Salvador, 2017).

For a combination of words to be considered a phraseologism, there must be some properties that allow its identification. In this process, some features seem to be more recurrent than others, such as polylexicality, the internal semantic relationship that the components of the combination maintain among themselves, and the stability or fixity of its components. Some of the main characteristics of the criteria used in this study are briefly listed below, according to Mejri (2012).

(a) Polylexicality

Polylexicality is the most prominent feature of phraseologisms and concerns the number of elements that make up the expression and the meaning between them, assuming both a qualitative and quantitative pattern. In other words, if every phraseologism is formed by at least two lexical units, stored in the memory as if they were a single one, as *pisar na bola*, *matar no peito*, *bola cheia*, *ficar pra escanteio*, *bater na trave*, *pendurar as chuteiras*, *tirar o time de campo*, *vestir a camisa etc.*, it is because they represent a unit regardless of the number of elements that make them up.

Although the polylexical character of the phraseologism is its most evident feature, as it contrasts with monolexical items, and can be identified right on the surface of the combinatorics, the elements that make up the phraseological expression must be fixed in form; otherwise, they may be no more than a free combination. In this process, it is necessary to pay attention to the fact that if every phraseologism is formed by a union of lexical items, not every syntagmatic union can be classified as a phraseologism. There are sequences in the language that can reflect other processes, as is the case, for example, of compound words such as sunflower or pastime, whose formation obeys productive rules (composition). In phraseologisms such as *bater um bolão*, *mão furada*, *gol de bicicleta*, *tiro de meta*, the polylexical formation presents some kind of deviation from the literal meaning in at least one of the constituents and is understood.

(b) Fixity and congruence

Fixity, for Mejri (2012), is the phraseological phenomenon that describes the crystallization process by which semantic solidarities encounter a freezing of the rules of syntagmatic combinatorics. Among the phraseological characteristics, fixity is considered one of its most relevant features, alongside idiomaticity (Monteiro-Plantin, 2014). This property allows us to observe the degree of crystallization of the polylexical

unit and establish its typology in: collocation, semi-crystallized and crystallized. Classifying a sequence in *collocation*, as observed in *árbitro central*, means considering the initial freezing phase and the stability process of this unit, in which approximation, co-occurrence of more technical terms-constituents, and sequences with more restriction for the insertion of elements are verified; Besides, the *semi-fixed* or *semi-crystallized* character is observed in units that allow some kind of alteration in the syntagmatic combinatorics, be it of paradigmatic and/or syntagmatic order, such as, for example, the insertion of an element, as occurs in *dar uma caneta > dar uma (bela) caneta*. These changes, however, do not cause the loss of the meaning conveyed by the phraseologism. On the other hand, the totally *fixed* or *crystallized* aspect of the phraseologism, as in *bico na redonda*, is gauged, among other factors, by the restrictions to inflections and commutations that the combinatorics present.

Beside fixity, Mejri (2009, p. 79) presents and defines congruency as “[...] a process of adaptation of lexical units by which they naturally integrate into the combinatorial”. This criterion is taken, in this sense, as a word definition. For the author, congruence intervenes in the morphological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic levels. A sequence is incongruous if it contradicts the rules of combinatorics, such as: *Dentro das quatro linhas / *Dentro das (cinco, três,) linhas*, in reference to the rectangular shape of the space of a soccer field.

Hence the notion of (in)congruency is a relevant property, because it is different from the notion of grammaticality, which focuses only on good grammatical formation, it is not to be confused with acceptability, which points to certain normativity, and covers all aspects: syntax, semantics, and pragmatics (Mejri, 2012). In summary, what fits the rules is congruent, what does not fit is incongruent; it follows from this notion the predictability factor: it is predictable what can be predicted according to the possible inscribed in the application of the rules. Thus, the intersection of fixity and congruence makes it possible to choose the crystallized character of the phraseologism and to choose the typology of the cataloged units.

(c) Idiomaticity

The criterion of idiomaticity is closely linked to pragmatic aspects since this property is present in the various discursive situations. When none of its components contains a meaning that indicates the sense of a phraseologism, its semantic specification has reached the highest degree.

The manifestation of idiomaticity shows the discordance between the internal and external meanings of the phraseologism, in which there is an irregular relationship between the structures of the content and the plane of expression. These irregular elements are not represented by components or formal characteristics, but by the whole set. In the case of the expression *arrombar a porteira*, in the example: *O Leão <<arrombou a porteira>> do time paulista logo aos 5 minutos de jogo. Geovanni deu bola açucarada para Marcel, que apresentou o cartão de boas-vindas ao goleiro*

Gilvan. {SBNEOM2011}.² In this example, neither the verb *arrombar* nor the noun *porteira* are used in their denotative meanings, but the union of these two elements gives a third meaning, i.e., *arrombar a porteira* indicates the scoring of the first goal of a soccer match. Thus, phraseologisms are affected by a particular and restricted meaning, different from the literal meaning of each lexical item that integrates it.

(d) Frequency and predictability

The criteria of frequency and predictability are tied to each other to such an extent that the relationship between them can be said to be tautological, that is, they are closely linked, so that a phraseologism like *time da casa: And do you know who scored Vitória's fourth goal? Marquinhos himself. He kicked hard on a rehearsed play with Fernandinho, 16 minutes into the second half, opening the score for the << time da casa >>* {SBNEOM2011} can become frequent by its predictability and can also become predictable by its frequency.

In this attraction relationship, on the one hand, frequency acts as a systemic element of repetition, often automatic, of these prefabricated structures, registering the circulation of the combinatorics in the language system and facilitating their recognition. On the other hand, the criterion of predictability refers to the selection of certain structures in detriment of others, to meet precise discursive purposes, and indicates the possibility of an element occupying a certain place in the combinatorics, and may be noticed, even by its absence. Thus, in *time da casa*, for example, the probability of the omitted slot in *time da _____* being filled by *casa* is much higher than by *residência* or *lar*, because, even if these lexical items belong to the same semantic field, they are not able to fulfill the same senses conveyed by the analogous composition.

However, as with monolexical elements, phraseological structures, even if crystallized in form and meaning, are susceptible to the pressures of the system and, eventually, may also present different configurations to allude to the same referent, without the original meaning of the unit being undone. In *abrir o placar*, for example, the available options increase the predictability factor of occupation of another term in the combinatorics *abrir/o (a) placar/ marcador/ contagem*. The same would apply to the first constituent of the phrase in *inaugurar/ o marcador/placar*. However, in *arrombar a porteira*, there is high degree of idiomaticity present in the phraseologism, directly linked to the level of opacity, in which neither the constituent *arrombar* nor the constituent *porteira* assume its individual meaning, thus confirming the perspective of Mejri (2012), who explains that the greater the opacity, the greater the idiomaticity of the unit.

² *Corpus* coding: SB=Brazilian Championship Series, NE=Northeast Region, OM= O Massa Jornal, 2011= year of publication.

Thus, based on the above-mentioned criteria, it was possible to identify in the *corpus* collected by Salvador (2017) a variety of soccer phraseologisms, among which the pair *abrir o placar* and *time da casa* were selected to exemplify, besides the typology, the register of the diatopical phraseological variation of these two units in linguistic maps, since the data under analysis were extracted from newspapers located in each of the regions of Brazil.

Phraseological variation

The interest in registering cases of soccer phraseologisms in linguistic maps also motivated the need to deal with theoretical aspects related to the study of variation. To this end, we considered the notion of historical language presented by Coseriu (1980), which points to variable realizations within a given language. The variation referred to by the author concerns the diatopic, diastratic and diaphasic levels. Due to the delimitation of this paper, only the diatopic variation, the distribution within geographic space, is discussed here.

For the treatment and description of the diatopic variation of soccer phraseologisms found in the corpus of this study, we also based ourselves on the definition of Chambers and Trudgill (1980), when they explain that “All dialects are both regional and social, since all speakers have a social experience as well as a regional location” (Chambers; Trudgill, 1980, p. 54). In this sense, for the authors, in addition to the cultural and social background, it is also necessary to consider the geographical location and linguistic manifestations that allow us to identify regional traits of speakers, a factor that instigated, in view of the occurrences in the *corpus of the* research-base of Salvador (2017), to verify the distribution of the variants of the pair of phraseologisms listed.

In addition to the factors that make it possible to assess the linguistic variation of diatopic level, Razky and Guedes (2015) propose the regrouping of variants, especially those of lexical character, into scales that consider the phenomena seen in macro, micro, and nano distributable manifestation, and the registration of this variation in linguistic maps, which makes it possible to verify the movement of variation in progress.

From the point of view of phraseological studies, Corpas Pastor (1996) draws attention to the variationist character of phraseologisms:

Phraseological variation constitutes a linguistic universal (Dobrovol'skij, 1988: 159), from which the degree of regularity of a given phraseological system can be measured: the more variations, transformations, and modifications the phraseologisms of a language exhibit, the more regular is its phraseological system (Corpas Pastor, 1996, p. 28, our translation).³

³ *La variación fraseológica constituye un universal lingüístico (Dobrovol'skij, 1988, p. 159), a partir del cual se puede medir el grado de regularidad de un sistema fraseológico dado: cuantas más variaciones, transformaciones y*

In the excerpt, the author highlights the fact that phraseological regularity is also measured by the variability of the units that the language presents, because the more these sequences are put to the test, the more they can show how their meaning is crystallized within the system. In this sense, phraseological variation happens naturally, just as it happens with monolexical items, with the exception that, in polylexical units, the reorganized structure cannot present a meaning divergent from the original unit.

In these conditions, the crystallization of the phraseological units presents relative stability regarding the structural and semantic elements of the combinatorics, which allows pointing out cases of variation in these units. However, some conditions are to be considered in the case of phraseological variation, such as the fact that the analyzed units are present in the same language, have similar arrangement of their constituents, with a certain degree of stability and, especially, convey the same meaning.

To this extent, Garcia-Page (2008, p.34, our translation) distinguishes between

[...] the terms “variant” of a phraseologism considered original, where this complex lexical unit has only one formal change and is automatically employed, and “variation”, when the expression refers to an individual creation, but which will never be employed as a substitute for the canonical formulation.⁴

The perspective taken by Garcia-Page (2008) reveals the variation in the sense that it shows changes due to the location in which the phraseologisms were produced, for example, *inaugurar o placar* found in the newspaper *Amazônia*, Northern region, and *abrir a contagem*, found only in the newspapers *Meia Hora de Notícias*, in the Southeast region, and *O Massa!* of the Northeast region, where both phraseologisms refer to the ‘first goal scored in a match’ Salvador (2017). The phraseological pair in vogue presents lexical alternation that distinguishes the external constitution of the combinatorics, despite sharing the same meaning. The units are then to appear as variants, since they convey the same meaning, but are different in form.

The geolinguistic method was also used to map the variation in the phraseological units analyzed here, in the sense that this parameter allows for “[...] the study of linguistic variations in the use of language by individuals or social groups from different geographical origins” (Dubois *et al.* 1978, p. 307). The next section describes the steps taken to accomplish this task.

modificaciones presenten los fraseologismos de una lengua, más regular es su sistema fraseológico. (Corpas Pastor, 1996, p. 28).

⁴ [...] los términos “variante” de un fraseologismo considerado original, donde esta unidad léxica compleja tiene un solo cambio formal y se emplea automáticamente, y “variación”, cuando la expresión se refiere a una creación individual, pero que nunca será empleada como un sustituto de la formulación canónica (Garcia-Page, 2008, p. 34).

Methodological Procedures

In this section, referring to the methodology used, we highlight the steps for constituting the base sample of Salvador (2017), in which the author chose exploratory-descriptive research with a quali-quantitative method (Lakatos; Marconi, 2010) and the choice of the pairs addressed in the article.

To compose the base sample, the first step was the data selection and collection stage. Due to the adequacy of the work of Salvador (2017) to the axis of phraseological studies of the Linguistic Geography and Socioterminology Project — GeoLinTerm (Razky; Oliveira; Lima, 2020), and the Northern region of the Linguistic Atlas of Brazil — ALiB (Cardoso, 2010), we chose to verify phraseologisms present in popular newspapers from five Brazilian capitals.

The collection of texts was made through a systematic survey in *online* popular newspapers regularly published in five Brazilian capitals — Belém, Goiânia, Porto Alegre, Salvador, and Rio de Janeiro —, during a time span from 2008 to 2015. The content of the newspapers was related to the Series B, C and D of the Brazilian Championship. The collected data served both as a basis for the extraction of phraseological candidates, which followed the orientation of *Corpus* Linguistics, according to Berber Sardinha (2004) and Tagnin (2011). The analysis of phraseologisms, is based on the principles and phraseological criteria of Mejri (2012).

The selective process of information sources was fundamentally determined by the actual news and coverage of the newspapers in the media. The so-called *popular newspapers*, also known as tabloids, dedicate countless pages, sections, or supplements to sports news, thus generating the linguistic material focus of this research, an abundant source of data, a fact verified during the research. The *Sports section* is one of the several parts into which a newspaper is divided, bringing information about the most varied sports practiced in Brazil and in the world. However, for the purposes of the present work, the author collected only news referring to men's field soccer.

The choice of newspapers that contributed to the survey of the *corpus*, object of investigation, was not random, but due to the large local circulation of these newspapers, a fact that ensures them a prominent position in relation to their peers. Likewise, the fact that each of the periodicals presents two circulation versions, one printed and the other digital, was considered. The quantitative character of the consultation to each newspaper obeyed the following criteria: a) the content of information about soccer; b) the target audience; c) the specificity; and d) the geographical location, according to the methodological guidance of the GeoLinTerm project (Razky; Oliveira; Lima, 2020). From this stand, the publications related to men's field soccer are represented in the *corpus* by the material collected in the newspapers *Amazônia*, from Belém, Pará (Northern Region); *Daqui*, from Goiânia, Goiás (Midwest Region); *Diário Gaúcho*, from Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul (Southern Region); *O Massa!*, from Salvador, Bahia (Northeast Region); and *Meia Hora de Notícias*, from Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro (Southeast Region).

After the process of collection, cleaning and treatment of the texts collected from the electronic sites where the newspapers are anchored, the *corpus*, composed of 2674 texts, was subjected to automatic treatment through the tools available in the *WordSmith Tools software*, version 5.0 (Scott, 2008). After the automated *mining* of the phraseology candidates, we started the process of applying the criteria established by Mejri (2012) for the delimitation and categorization of the phraseologisms found.

The task of verifying phraseological properties involved in the first place the certification of the polylexical aspect of the units under analysis, as in the case of *abrir o placar*, in which we observe the grouping of three units (*abrir/o/placar*). This step is necessary to see how monolexical and autonomous items suffer the freezing process within the syntagma and take on a new configuration, now polylexical, which must be understood as a whole. This means that, despite the individual meanings of the lexical items in question, it will not be the meaning of *abrir* or *placar* that will be considered to express *the first goal scored in a soccer match*, but rather the union of these elements to confer a single meaning.

Then, the criteria of fixity and congruence (Mejri, 2012) were crossed to verify the degree of syntactic, semantic and pragmatic stability and the degree of acceptability of phraseologisms. The fixity factor constitutes for Mejri (2012) one of the most important properties in the identification of phraseologisms, because it is what allows to gauge the degree of freezing of these polylexical structures. *Abrir o placar* has the same value as *abrir a contagem*; however, in the second case the productivity is lower than in the first, and it can be justified by the lexical choice of *placar*, in relation to *contagem*. *Placar* is a monolexical element widely used by speakers in all levels that involve soccer. In the example above, the commutation of one item by the other, however, does not undo the sense of the phraseologism. Thus, fixity and congruency enable the speaker, at the same time, to recover both the value of the polylexical unit and to update the syntagma without losing the meaning of the phraseological unit.

Following the testing stage, the frequency and predictability of the pairs under analysis were verified. In the case of *time da casa*, the unit had a frequency of 608 occurrences, being more productive in the *corpus* than its similar expression *equipe da casa* with 119 occurrences. In these cases, frequency leads to predictability since the fixity of the grouping enables the form of the phraseologism to become recurrent. Thus, in *time da casa* there would be a restriction for commutation of the item *casa*, for example, with the item *residência*, since the latter would not fulfill the same value despite belonging to the same semantic field.

To conclude the testing phase, the connotative feature present in the polylexical units was also verified. In *abrir o placar*, for example, the verb to *open* is not employed in its first meaning, i.e., with the sense of opening or passage, but in a connotative character, with the value of starting the counting of goals scored in the match. Therefore, it is not a reference to the act of literally *opening* the scoreboard. The connotative character of the examples in question allowed us to choose the degree of idiomaticity of each unit.

It should be noted that Salvador (2017) aimed to collect and categorize soccer phraseologisms according to the criteria established by Mejri (2012). Although the general *corpus* is extensive, two examples were chosen to verify if there was diatopic variation of these syntagmatic combinations among other occurrences present in the *corpus* — to *abrir o placar* and *time da casa* — to analyze and record this variation in linguistic chart. The choice of these samples was conditioned by the variation they present, since they are samples from each of the regions of Brazil. After the certification of the phraseological variety, we proceeded to the step of registering it in the linguistic maps. In the next section, the outline of this variation is registered.

Results: outline of Phraseological Variation

Considering the perspective that a phraseological variant manifest itself through different syntagmatic structures that occur in the language to mean the same thing, units that, while maintaining similar semantic content, present some modification in their structure, we list in Table 1 the phraseological units analyzed in our sample, accompanied by the number count found in each newspaper.

Table 1 – Examples from the sample

Phraseological variants	Region/Journal					Total
	N/AJ ⁵	CO/DA	S/DG	SE/MH	NE/OM	
Time da casa	150	106	121	119	112	608
Equipe da casa	04	02	03	105	05	119
Total						727
Abrir o placar	481	108	105	110	212	1.016
Abrir o marcador	105	104	101	104	-	414
Abrir a contagem	-	-	-	101	101	202
Inaugurar o marcador	-	102	101	-	-	203
Inaugurar o placar	103	-	-	-	-	103
Arrombar a porteira	-	111	-	-	-	111
Total						2049

Source: authors' elaboration.

The phraseological units in Table 1 reflect the first condition of these sequences, the polylexicality (Mejri, 2012). The alternation between these phraseologisms shows that

⁵ N=North/AJ=Amazônia Jornal CO=Central West/DA=Daqui S= Southeast/DG=Diário Gaúcho SE= Southeast/MH=Meia Hora de Notícias NE=Northeast/OM=O Massa!

the equivalence relation existing between them has the same meaning value, since the commutation of terms does not imply the loss of congruence, acceptability, although there is a partial break of fixity.

The variation found in the *corpus* occurs through the alternation of one of the elements at the base of the combinatorics, as in the case of *abrir o placar/marcador*, a movement of paradigmatic nature, which, despite the distinction in the lexical pattern, does not change the meaning of the expression in which the commutation occurs, configuring the semi-fixed state of some phraseologisms and their circulation activity in the system, as well as by means of a new example, as in *arrombar a porteira*. Although we have found several occurrences, in addition to those cited in Table 1, we have chosen, in this article, to deal only with the pair *abrir o placar* and *time da casa*, because these examples allow us to present the variation measured in the five newspapers, serving, therefore, the diatopic purposes of this research.

In order to perform the description of the variants related to the phraseologism *home team*, we isolated, in Table 2, the two occurrences found in the sample that refer to the *club that plays the match in its stadium, in its city, in the country where its headquarters or stadium of equal value is located* (Salvador, 2017) due to the location by region of each of the newspapers:

Table 2 – Phraseologisms by region x newspaper

Phraseological variants	Frequency by Region/Newspaper					Total
	N/AJ	CO/DA	S/DG	SE/MH	NE/OM	
Home team	150	106	121	119	112	608
Home Team	04	02	03	105	05	119
Total						727

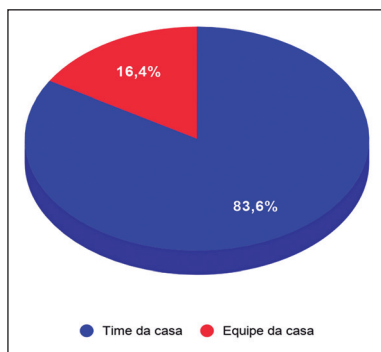
Source: authors' elaboration.

Table 2 shows that both the phraseologism *time da casa* and its variant *equipe da casa* occur in all newspapers, therefore in all regions. Facing the two possibilities, the sports columnists of *Amazônia Jornal* are those who most use the first one in their written productions, with 150⁶ records, followed by the columnists of *Diário Gaúcho* newspaper (121), from the South of the country, and *Meia Hora de Notícias* (119), located in the Southeast region. The journalists from *O Massa!* from the Northeast (112), and *Daqui*, from the Midwest (106), despite presenting a lower frequency, they use the same structure to refer to the *club playing the match in their stadium, in their city, or in the country where their headquarters are located*. Take the example: *Ipatinga built the result still in the first half. The << time da casa >> opened the score at 14 min with striker Amilton. Campinense tied two minutes later with Edmundo* {SBSEMH2009}.

⁶ The number of times it appeared in the *corpus*.

As for *equipe da casa*, the newspaper that presented most of this occurrence was Meia Hora de Notícias (105) and the other newspapers, registered low frequency, only five occurrences, of this same expression. In percentage terms, the general alternation between *time/equipe da casa* phraseologisms can also be seen in Chart 1.

Graph 1 – *time/equipe da casa* variation



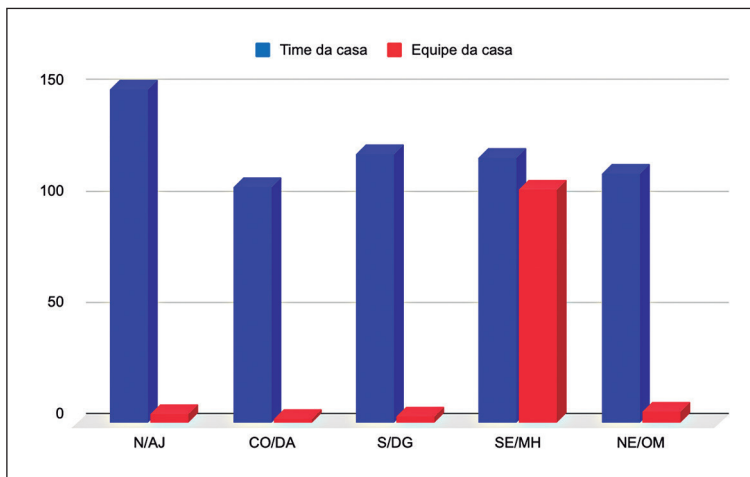
Source: authors' elaboration.

Chart 1 illustrates the alternation between the phraseologisms *equipe da casa* (83.6%) and *time da casa* (16.4%). The high productivity of *equipe da casa*, in this case, may indicate the greater recursiveness of the item *team* as an aggregator element of collectivity, since the lexical items *time* and *equipe* belong to the same grammatical category, both are nouns and convey the same meaning of the set. In this case, the lexical choice and the stylistic idiosyncrasies allow greater approximation between the writers and their readers/supporters.

Besides the geographic factor, another factor that may have favored the higher productivity of *time* and not *equipe da casa* may be linked to the issue of language updating, in which certain structures fall into disuse or are gradually replaced by others that are more frequently used by speakers.

Chart 2 illustrates the variation of the phraseological pair due to its distribution according to the newspapers to which they are linked.

Graph 2 – Variation according to newspaper



Source: authors' elaboration.

Graph 2 shows the variation of phraseologisms according to each newspaper and, consequently, the representation of this variation in each region of the country. The data from *Amazônia Jornal*, located in the northern region of the country, shows the highest number of occurrences for *time da casa*, as opposed to the newspaper *Daqui*, located in the central western region, which has the lowest rates of occurrences for this phraseologism. On the other hand, the phraseologism *equipe da casa* is more used by the editors of *Meia Hora de Notícias*, newspaper of the Southeast Region, and less cited in *newspaper Daqui*, of the Midwest Region. In *Meia Hora de Notícias*, there are variant forms in co-occurrence, as Garcia-Page (2008) points out, configuring stable variation, which reinforces the notion of social fixity of phraseologisms.

Reading the data presented in Chart 2 also shows a preference for the phraseology *home team* over its analogous *equipe da casa* when comparing the data for all newspapers. There are two hypotheses for this preference. The first would be linked to the geographical factor and to issues of reproduction of the most productive variants in the soccer context and the second, to changes that the language undergoes. The production condition of these pairs is more polarized in *Amazônia Jornal* 150/04⁷, in *Daqui* 106/02, in *Diário Gaúcho* 121/03 and in *O Massa!* 112/05 and less disparate in the *Jornal Meia Hora de Notícias* 119/109. The latter, for its editorial characteristics and proposal to disseminate information, is better known nationally, which may reinforce the hypothesis that there is an attempt to standardize this discourse in order to operate a closer relationship with readers from other regions.

⁷ The amount of occurrence of each variant.

The cartographic record of diatopic variation for the phraseologisms *time da casa* e *equipe da casa* is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1⁸ – Home Team/Home Team



Source: authors' elaboration.

Figure 1 shows that, from the geographical-territorial point of view, the authors of the five newspapers use the same structure when it comes to the *time da casa*, this sense seems to correspond to a macro-regional linguistic fact. Thus, the soccer phraseologisms under analysis may indicate that some variants characterize what Razky and Guedes (2015) call lexical macro-grouping, in this case phraseological macro-grouping, because the occurrence is present in all tabloids consulted, consequently in all regions of the country, which seems to show the globalized nature of the dissemination of news supported by the *Web* support, in which there is an attempt to standardize the discourse. The same phenomenon occurs with *equipe da casa*, which presents lower productivity in relation to the pair phraseological units.

While the phraseologism *time da casa* presents only one variant, that is, *equipe da casa*, the same does not happen with *abrir o placar*, for which six variants were found, as shown in Table 3.

⁸ ALiB's basic charter.

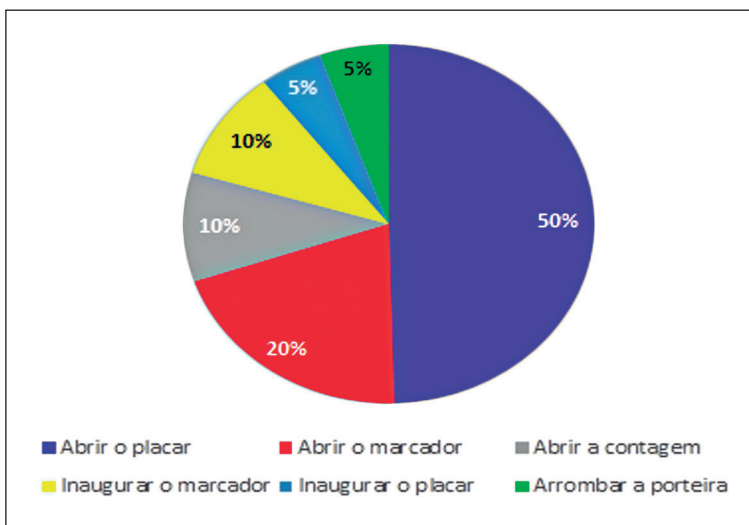
Table 3 – Variants to *open the scoring*

Phraseological variants	Region/Journal					Total
	N/AJ	CO/DA	S/DG	SE/MH	NE/OM	
Abrir o placar	481	108	105	110	212	1.016
Abrir o marcador	105	104	101	104	-	414
Abrir a contagem	-	-	-	101	101	202
Inaugurar o marcador	-	102	101	-	-	203
Inaugurar o placar	103	-	-	-	-	103
Breaking into the gate	-	111	-	-	-	111
Total						2049

Source: authors' elaboration.

The data arranged in Table 3 show that only the variant *abrir o placar* (1,016) occurs in all newspapers, being also the most productive among the options. *Open the score* (414) does not appear in the newspaper from the Northeast of Brazil only. The cases of *abrir a contagem* (202) and *inaugurar o marcador* (203) only appear in two newspapers, the first in newspapers from Southeast and Northeast regions and the second only in those from the Midwest and South regions. In turn, *inaugurar o placar* (103) and *arrombar a porteira* (111) are restricted to one region each, North and Midwest respectively. Graph 3 illustrates the variants found in the sample.

Graph 3 – Scoring the first goal of a match

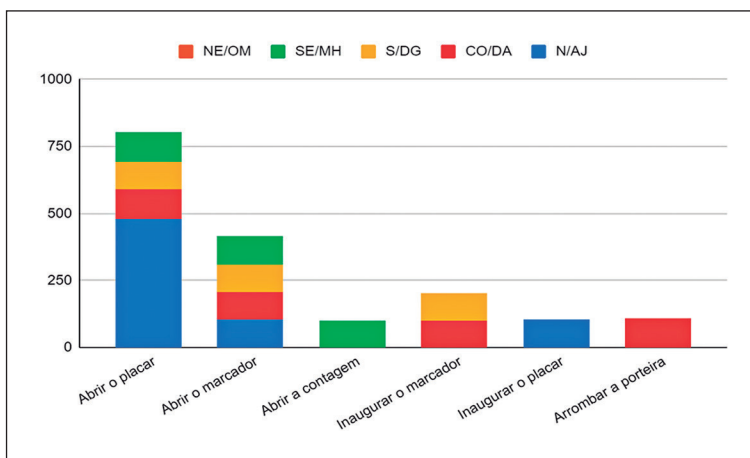


Source: authors' elaboration.

Chart 3 shows the number of variants (6) for the phraseologism whose definition indicates *scoring the first goal of a match* (Salvador, 2017). The most productive of them and that occurred in all newspapers was *abrir o placar*, with 49% of the occurrences. Next, *abrir o marcador*, with 20%. *Abrir a contagem* and *inaugurar o marcador* both presented 10% of production, followed by *inaugurar o placar*, with 5%. Among the alternations registered, however, *arrombar a porteira*, with 6% of the occurrences, caught our attention for appearing only in *Jornal Daqui*, from the Midwest, a region of the country known for its significant livestock production, where the lexical item *porteira* may signal this cultural relationship. *Arrombar a porteira* also carries the notion that the result of the game was marked by many goals, initiated by the relation of *arrombar*, a verb that carries the information of violence and abundance at the same time.

Chart 4 helps visualize the behavior of the variants in relation to the newspaper and the region in which each is located.

Graph 4 – Distribution of variation according to newspaper by region



Source: authors' elaboration.

The observation of Graph 4 shows the phraseological diversity for the most productive unit in the sample: *abrir o placar*. Due to the geographical distribution of each newspaper, the Midwest region presents the largest number of variants, four out of the six listed: *abrir o placar*, *abrir o marcador*, *inaugurar o marcador* and *arrombar a porteira*. In the newspapers based in the North, South and Southeast regions three of the six variants were registered: *abrir o placar*, *abrir o marcador* and *inaugurar o placar*. The newspaper from the Northeast region presents two of the variants: *abrir o placar* and *abrir a contagem*. This result allows us to observe both the variable behavior of the phraseological unit in the formal perspective pointed out by Garcia-Page (2008), as it occurs in *abrir o / placar / marcador e inaugurar o marcador / placar*, in which there is automatic replacement of lexical elements within the syntagmatic sequence,

and the manifestation of variant unit, when we observe *abrir o placar* and *arrombar a porteira*, units that do not retain the same form, but convey the same meaning.

The cartographic registration drawn for *time da casa* was also done for *abrir o placar* variants, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 – Open the scoreboard



Source: authors' elaboration.

Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of the variants of *abrir o placar* according to the geographical distribution of each newspaper. In this sense, *abrir o placar* occurred in all the newspapers and that *abrir o marcador*, the second in number of occurrences, appeared in the data of four newspapers, except for *O Massa!* from Salvador, Brazilian Northeast region. *Inaugurar o placar* appeared only in the data from *Amazônia* newspaper, North region. In turn, *abrir a contagem* appeared in the data of the newspapers *O Massa!* Northeast region and *Meia Hora*, Southeast region, not occurring in the other regions. In terms of quantity, *Daqui* newspaper, from the Midwest region, presented four of the six variants. The variant “*abrir o placar*” shows a polarization, since it is more recurrent in the *Amazônia* newspaper, located in the Northern region, and is less productive in the *Diário Gaúcho* newspaper, from the Southern region.

The phraseological distribution illustrated in Figure 2 also evidences the existence of three types of groupings due to the diatopic distribution, as reported by Razky and Guedes (2015), namely: two macro-groupings, in view of their realization at the territorial-national level, *abrir o placar* and *abrir o marcador*; two micro-groupings, present at the regional level, *abrir a contagem* in the Northeast and South regions, in

addition to *inaugurar o placar*, in the Midwest and South; and two nano-groupings, with a distribution at the state level, *arrombar a porteira*, found in the newspaper Daqui, from Goiânia-Goiás, and *abrir o placar*, in Amazônia Jornal, a tabloid based in Belém-Pará.

From the phraseological point of view, considering the fixity of the grouping makes it possible to determine the typology of the cataloged units. However, as they are subject to variation, it is relevant to observe the property related to predictability, that is, in the case of *abrir o placar*, the available options increase the predictability factor of occupation of another term in the combinatorics *abrir/o (a) placar/ marcador/ contagem*, and the same may occur with the first constituent of the syntagma in *inaugurar/o marcador/placar*. However, in *arrombar a porteira* there is a high degree of idiomaticity directly linked to the level of opacity, in which neither the constituent *arrombar* nor the constituent *porteira* assume their individual meaning, thus confirming the perspective of Mejri (2012), which explains that the greater the opacity, the greater the idiomaticity of the unit.

The criteria pointed out by Mejri (2012) allowed us to identify, besides the strictly polylexical aspect, the validity of the fixity and the conditions of acceptability, which enable the speaker to make use of these structures in specific situations. At the same time, the dynamics of language actualization allow the speaker to present in his linguistic production a variety of expressions. Such expressions, as Corpas Pastor (1996) assures, are marks of the user's creativity and speakers adapt them to the context and historical movement in which they are produced, but not to the point of having their meaning undone. This same variation (Coseriu, 1980) reflects the particularities of the speakers' spatial distribution. For this, they attribute connotative value, as verified in *arrombar a porteira*, which allows the approximation between the interlocutors both from the diatopic point of view and the union circumscribed by soccer. In this case, idiomaticity becomes an aggregating element, because, in the game of choices, some phraseological units are more opportune than others.

Thus, the phraseological language of soccer within this study and through the studied pairs of expressions, shows that the geographical distribution of its occurrences evidences the dynamic character of these expressions, which serve the purposes of writers in different regions of the country.

Final considerations

The present article focused on the description of the phraseologisms pairs *time da casa e abrir o placar* in order to illustrate, through cartography, the diatopic variation existing in the language used by writers of popular digital newspapers, in their daily editions. From the results and according to the phraseological domain of their readers, the sensationalist character of the newspapers under analysis makes the editors direct the news in such a way that the language is basically made up of expressions easily recognized by their readers.

Regarding the phraseological aspect, we saw that the frequency with which phraseologisms occur, an aspect measured by the number of times each unit was produced, reflects their degree of institutionalization, the scalarity of their fixity, idiomaticity, conventionality, and consequent acceptability, properties that distinguish them from free lexical units.

From a strictly diatopic point of view, we notice that some phraseologisms behave in a more specialized way, as is the case of *time/equipe da casa*, in which the writers seem to escape, to some degree, the variation due to territorial location. In the case of *abrir o placar*, there is evidence of diatopia, which is expressed by the six variants presented.

In summary, the phraseological variation measured in the pairs presented here reflects, even in written texts, in which there is more monitoring in relation to features of diversity of each region of the country, polylexical variants in Brazilian speech. The analysis of the phraseological variation present in these electronic newspapers shows the need for further geosociolinguistic research on phraseology since there are still few phraseological investigations of this nature. Moreover, research in the field of language brings contributions to users in various domains, especially when it facilitates the understanding of the meanings of terms and expressions that develop and circulate in each area of knowledge. Thus, soccer, as the other discursive domains, also needs linguistic-based studies so that one can follow the dynamics of this sport and the understanding of the meanings conveyed by the expressions linked to its practice.

SALVADOR, C. F. N.; RAZKY, A. Variação diatópica dos fraseologismos do futebol brasileiro abrir o placar e time da casa. *Alfa*, São Paulo, v.67, 2023.

- *RESUMO: Este artigo tem por objetivo descrever e cartografar a variação diatópica apurada nos pares de fraseologismos do futebol brasileiro abrir o placar e time da casa. Para tanto, o aporte teórico adotado está circunscrito à escola francesa de estudos fraseológicos a partir de Meiri (1997; 2009; 2012), o qual aponta propriedades básicas de reconhecimento dessas estruturas: polilexicalidade, fixidez, congruência, frequência, previsibilidade e idiomaticidade. No que concerne ao fenômeno da variação diatópica, adota-se a concepção de Coseriu (1980), Chambers e Trudgill (1980), assim como Razky e Guedes (2015) no que diz respeito à questão de agrupamento linguístico, além de Corpas Pastor (1996) e Garcia-Page (2008) no tratamento da variação fraseológica. A amostra considerada inclui textos escritos publicados no período de 2008 a 2015, sobre futebol, extraídos da coluna Caderno de Esportes de cinco jornais eletrônicos brasileiros. Os resultados mostram duas variantes para time da casa e seis para abrir o placar. A análise aponta para uma configuração diatópica dos fraseologismos selecionados com uso característico de linguagem figurada.*
- *PALAVRAS-CHAVE: fraseologismo; futebol; variação; cartografia linguística.*

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