

EMERGENCE OF MODAL MICRO-CONSTRUCTIONS [DAR]

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- **ABSTRACT:** Drawing from a constructionist perspective, more specifically on Traugott and Trousdale (2013), and on studies on typology and modality change, this research investigates the emergence and development of modal micro-constructions “dar” in Portuguese. The aim is to identify incremental stages of change and inheritance relationships among these micro-constructions. The study analyzes how alterations within this family of constructions may correspond with hypotheses of modality change. The research utilizes texts from the 14th to 20th centuries from the Portuguese Corpus (Davies; Ferreira, 2006), and contemporary spoken language data from C-Oral Brasil and the NURC Project. The examination does not confirm semantic changes from “ability” to “possibility”, a hypothesis proposed based on predictions of modal semantic change. Instead, it reveals that the “ability transferential” micro-construction, in the earliest instances of the corpus, licenses a possibility sense and subsequently sanctions other micro-constructions. Throughout this process, there is a gradual annulment of the thematic grid of the verb “dar”, conventionalization of the impersonal micro-construction, and emergence of deontic uses. Reduction in compositionality, increase in productivity and schematicity are identified, interpreted as grammatical constructionalization.
- **KEYWORDS:** Modality; Constructional; Change; Verb “dar”.

Introduction¹

The rise and conventionalization of forms conveying modality have always attracted the interest of scholars across various languages. These studies identify patterns of semantic configuration and linguistic change that are valid across different languages. A trend of change is that of semantic domains moving from more concrete (circumstantial, habilitative, deontic meanings) to more abstract related to the domain of knowledge (epistemic meaning). It is postulated the existence of a cognitive, metaphorical process underlying these changes (Sweetser, 1990), understood as prominent instances of grammaticalization (Traugott, 1989; Traugott; Dasher, 2002; Bybee *et al.*, 1994).

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It should be noted that the majority of studies on development in the modal domain are dedicated to languages other than Portuguese. In the Portuguese language, this intriguing and challenging topic has not been sufficiently studied, and that justifies research efforts aimed at providing a deeper understanding of the area.

In this paper, a well-known form of modal expression is studied, as noted by Salomão, namely the modal constructions with the verb “dar” in Portuguese. The following instances exemplify².

- (1) a) *Eu não **dou para** penteados.* (C-Oral Brasil)
[I’m not good at hairstyles / I **don’t have the skills** to do hairstyles.³]
- b) *Não **dou para** assistir a esses espetáculos.* (CP)
[I **can’t** watch those shows/ I’m not cut out for watching those shows]
- (2) a) (...) *porque a contração já vinha assim / de três em três passos já **nã dava pa** andar* (C-Oral Brasil)
[Because the contractions were coming like every three steps, and I just **couldn’t** keep going]
- b) *A kombi **dá para** fazer isso.* (NURC)
[The van **can** do that / You **can** do that with the van]
- c) *Eu tentei fazer uns sambas, mas não **deu**... Samba é diferente.* (CP)
[I tried to make some sambas, but **it didn’t work/ it’s not possible**... Samba is different.]
- d) *Shakespeare tem cenas de quatro, seis versos. Como é que você vai fazer um cenário só para isso? Não **dá**. Ele não dependia de cenografia.* (CP)
[Shakespeare has scenes with four, six lines. How are you going to create a set just for that? **It doesn’t work/ It’s not possible**. He didn’t rely on set design.]

In the examples in (1), dynamic modality (Palmer, 1986; Bybee *et al.*, 1994) or participant-oriented facultative modality (Hengeveld, 2004) is expressed, where the subject’s ability to perform a specific action is described; it means that the participant, a human, doesn’t have ability or is not in a position to engage in the event.

The utterances in (2) are interpreted as root possibility (Bybee *et al.*, 1994), or participant-external possibility (Auwera; Plungian, 1998), or event-oriented facultative modality (Hengeveld, 2004). In these cases, the (non)existence of physical or circumstantial conditions enabling the occurrence of the described event is conveyed. The statements in (2) are paraphrasable as ‘it’s (not) possible’ (to walk/do this with the van/do samba/create a set for this).

² The data presented in (1) and (2) are from contemporary texts, both spoken and written, analyzed in the research. As will be explained in the methodological section, they are extracted from the Corpus do Português (CP), the C-Oral Brasil project, and the NURC project.

³ It should be noted that the English texts in this and the other examples in the paper are approximate versions of the examples of “dar(para)” in Portuguese.

The modality expressed by the construction with verb “*dar*” has been the subject of previous studies. Some of these works investigate expressions with verb “*dar*” in different grammatical contexts, not limited to modal senses and without the aim of specifically studying the emergence and development of modal meanings (Coelho; Silva, 2014, 2019; Torrent, 2015). Others offer synchronic analyses of modal constructions with “*dar*” (Salomão, 2008; Souza, 2017; Görski, 2020) and propose hypotheses regarding the linguistic evolution of this construction family.

From the set of modal constructions with “*dar*”, Salomão (2008) examines the impersonal ones (such as 2a) in contemporary Portuguese. Based on constructionist assumptions, the author suggests that the impersonal modal construction with “*dar*” emerges as a generalization of the transferential habilitative structure, with the omission of the verb’s arguments: ‘(...) the remaining argument structure is the constructional argument structure, consisting of a Generic Cause that generically enables a Situation’⁴ (Salomão, 2008, p. 105). Souza (2017), on functionalist theoretical frameworks, examines texts from contemporary Portuguese, identifies various modal senses, and proposes, drawing on researches on the development of modality, that habilitative uses (as in 1) may precede possibilitative ones (as in 2). Görski (2020), in turn, examines the modal uses of ‘*dar para/de + V.inf*’ (as in 2a and 2b) in contemporary Portuguese and argues the emergence of “*dar*” as an auxiliary verb in contemporary Portuguese, like a process of grammaticalization.

The aim of this paper is to investigate areas yet unexplored in the study of modal expression with the verb “*dar*”, from a constructionist approach, according to which examples like (1) and (2) represent instances of the use of modal micro-constructions, categorization patterns that are routinized, conventionalized through use, and in network linked to macro-schemas. It is understood that linguistic change occurs through language use, via micro-changes, where one micro-construction can lead to a new construction. Drawing on this framework and research on the development of modal verbs, the following research questions are addressed: which micro-constructions with “*dar*” can lead to modal micro-constructions? Which micro-changes lead to the conventionalized modal uses in contemporary Portuguese? Can semantic development trajectories of modality explain the emergence of modal micro-constructions with “*dar*”?

From a diachronic perspective, the aim is to investigate the rise of modal constructions with “*dar*”, identify small-step micro-changes, and examine the applicability of traditional proposals for semantic change in modality to this case. The research uses texts from the Portuguese language produced between the 14th and 20th centuries, drawing on assumptions of constructional change as developed by Traugott and Trousdale (2013) and Bybee (2010).

This paper is organized in three sections, in addition to this introduction and the conclusion. The following section, subdivided into two subsections, presents the

⁴ In the original: “[...] a estrutura argumental remanescente é a estrutura argumental construcional, constituída de uma Causa Genérica que habilita genericamente uma Situação”.

theoretical framework that will support the analyses. The theoretical foundations for the study of modality and modal change, as well as constructionist approach are discussed. After presenting the theoretical support, a section is dedicated to the methodological procedures. The subsequent section proposes an analytical approach to modal micro-constructions with “dar”.

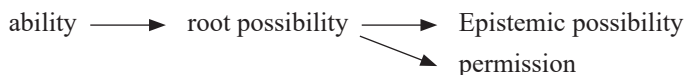
Theoretical framework

Linguistic change and modality

Despite the wide variety of classificatory proposals, three types of modality are typically considered in the literature: facultative, deontic and epistemic. Facultative, or dynamic modality, denotes the abilities and capabilities of a participant (Palmer, 1986; Hengeveld, 2004; Bybee *et al.*, 1994). Deontic modality involves what is permissible or obligatory, based on norms (legal, cultural, social) (Lyons, 1977; Palmer, 1986; Hengeveld, 2004; Bybee *et al.*, 1994). Epistemic modality is understood as what is known or believed about the world (Lyons, 1977; Palmer, 1986; Hengeveld, 2004; Bybee *et al.*, 1994). These three broader domains are associated with senses such as possibility, probability, necessity, obligation, permission, and ability. The relationship between these three broader modal dimensions is frequently examined from a historical perspective.

Bybee *et al.* (1994) is a frequently cited study of modality change. The authors investigate historical paths of semantic changes applicable to different languages, aiming to determine why particular grammatical meanings emerge in the domain of modality. They present paths of change identified through the analysis of synchronic polysemy: recurring polysemies across different languages are reinterpreted as recurrent paths of grammatical and semantic change. Specifically involving the notions of ability, possibility, and permission, which are of interest to this study, the authors present the following:

Figure 1 – A path to epistemic possibility



Source: Bybee *et al.* (1994, p. 199)

The path indicates that the notion of root possibility (external conditions to a participant that enable the occurrence of an event (Bybee *et al.*, 1994, p. 178)) can develop from the ability meaning (internal conditions of a participant (Bybee *et al.*, 1994, p. 177)), and may also sanction other modal values, towards the expression of either epistemic possibility (the speaker’s evaluation that the proposition is possibly true (Bybee *et al.*, 1994, p. 179)) or permission.

Studies on modality with the verb “dar” recognize that the notions of ability, possibility, and permission are expressed (Salomão, 2008; Souza, 2017; Gorski, 2020), as (3)-(5) illustrate.

(3) “to have the ability to”

*A mim nunca pilharam para declamar, não **dou para** essas exhibições.* (CP, 20th century)

[I was never pushed to recite, I’m not **cut out** for these performances.]

(4) “to be possible”

*Estado - Em sua primeira semana à frente da PM, o crime diminuiu? Carlos Alberto de Camargo - **Deu para** a gente ter uma idéia de como poderemos enfrentar a criminalidade e como distribuir nossos homens nas ruas.* (CP, 20th century)

[Estado - In your first week at the head of the Military Police, did crime decrease? Carlos Alberto de Camargo - **It was possible** for us to get an idea of how to face crime and deploy our officers on the streets.]

(5) “to be allowed”

*O médico explica que o Covid-19 é um vírus respiratório e sua principal forma de transmissão é através de gotículas. “Durante a respiração você elimina essas gotículas, a mão infectada vai no rosto, na bola, pega na outra pessoa que está suando. A transmissibilidade é enorme, nem usando máscara no jogo não **dá**”, diz.*⁵

[The doctor explains that Covid-19 is a respiratory virus, and its main mode of transmission is through droplets. ‘When you breathe, you release these droplets. If an infected hand touches your face, a ball, and then touches another person who is sweating, the transmission risk is enormous, even wearing a mask during the game is **not allowed**,’ he says.]

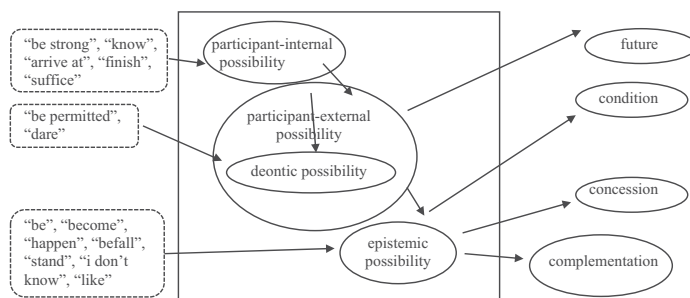
Based on Bybee *et al.* (1994), it is considered whether the path ‘ability > root possibility > permission’ would apply to this case. The authors argue that changes, by hypothesis, are explained as a generalization of meanings. For example, the modal *can* in English went through the following stages: a) there are mental ability conditions in the agent; b) there are ability conditions for an agent; c) there are enabling conditions, conditions that favor the accomplishment of an action (*op. cit.*, p. 192)

Starting from Bybee *et al.* (1994), who also identify lexemes that give rise to modal values, Auwera and Plungian (1998) propose a semantic map that delineates pre-modal and post-modal domains. This representation aims to be a broad generalization for the

⁵ The example (5), found on the internet (<https://www.campograndenews.com.br/cidades/capital/jogar-futebol-ou-volei-e-a-melhor-forma-de-transmitir-o-virus-alerta-medico>), clearly illustrates the deontic value, which justifies its presentation.

modal domain, applicable to different languages. The modal distinctions proposed by Auwera and Plungian are based on the expression of possibility and necessity across four domains (internal modality to the participant; external modality to the participant; deontic; epistemic). The following figure represents the semantic field of possibility as presented by the scholars:

Figure 2 – Possibility and beyond



Source: Auwera e Plungian (1988, p. 94)

The modal domain, displayed in the central rectangle, illustrates the relationships between meanings, in accordance with Bybee *et al.*'s (1994) work. The modal senses identified for the modal constructions with “dar” would be, in terms of Auwera and Plungian, participant-internal possibility (example 3), participant-external possibility (example 4), and deontic possibility (example 5).

In Figure 2, the pre-modal and post-modal values, indicated respectively by the empty rectangles on the left and the ovals outside the rectangle on the right, are also predominantly based on Bybee *et al.* (1994). The diachronic dimension of the figure is emphasized by the arrows, which indicate the trends of development. Furthermore, the arrangement of the arrows shows that a modal item does not necessarily follow the entire trajectory (from participant-internal possibility to epistemic possibility, for example). In this way, a meaning epistemic may emerge without the permission (deontic) and/or ability (participant-internal possibility) meanings being conventionalized. However, if there is polysemy, and this involves an epistemic, for instance, hypothetically, this will come after the other meanings.

These proposals delineate the modal field and outline developmental paths of change from a more concrete, descriptive dimension (ability, participant-internal possibility) to a more abstract, evaluative one (epistemic possibility). This represents a gradual increase in subjectivity (meanings tend to be increasingly based in the speaker's states of belief and opinion) (Traugott; Dasher, 2002; Traugott, 2010).

The developments involving an increase in abstraction within the modal domain were also proposed by Sweetser (1990). From a cognitive perspective, she explains that root modal meanings (deontic and ability) extend to the epistemic domain because

language describing the external world is applied to the internal mental world, which is metaphorically structured in parallel with the external world. The author adopts Talmy’s (1988) idea and argues that the metaphor of forces and barriers underlies our modal interpretations. Thus, for example, the meaning of the English modal *may* would represent an absent barrier in the socio-physical world (for non-epistemic meanings) or in the mental world of premises (for epistemic meaning), while the modal *can* would indicate a condition (in the socio-physical or mental world) that favors an activity. The extension can also reach the conversational level, that of speech acts, as in *He may be a university professor, but he sure is dumb* (Sweetser, 1990, p. 70), where there is an admission (absence of a barrier in the conversational world) in the first segment (*he may be a university professor*), as part of a conversational strategy.

There are proposals for the modal field based on scope expansions, concerning the orientation of modality. As Narrog (2012) argues, grammatical verb categories typically progresses from categories with narrower scope i.e., relatively lower categories in the grammatical hierarchy to categories with the same or broader scope, with this change being more significant than the shift between modal domains (for example, from non-epistemic to epistemic meanings): “the hypothesis was advanced that meaning change will always proceed from ‘inside” to “outside” the sentence, from narrow scope to wide scope, and from event-oriented meaning to speech act-oriented meaning.” (Narrog, 2012, p. 110).

Along similar lines of research, concerning scope changes, one can observe Hengeveld’s (2004, 2017) modal classification, which is related to Discourse-Functional Grammar (Hengeveld; Mackenzie, 2008), a model of grammatical description based on the organization into levels and layers. Hengeveld’s (2004) classification is based on the combination of two parameters: the target of evaluation (the part of the utterance that is modalized) and the domain of evaluation (the perspective in which the modal evaluation occurs). The cross-classification of modality types is presented in table 1.

Frame 1 – Modal distinctions according to Hengeveld

<i>Target</i>	<i>Domain</i>	
<i>Participant-oriented</i>	<i>Facultative</i>	<i>Deontic</i>
<i>Event-oriented</i>	<i>Facultative</i>	<i>Deontic</i>
<i>Episode-oriented</i>		<i>Objective epistemic</i>
<i>Proposition-oriented</i>		<i>Subjective epistemic</i>

Source: Adapted from Hattnher and Hengeveld (2016)

The proposed modality orientations represent distinct configurations that enable the assessment of varying degrees of grammaticality in modal elements (Hattnher; Hengeveld, 2016). The hypothesis for development in the modality is as follows: participant-oriented > event-oriented > episode-oriented > proposition-oriented.

Examples (3) to (5), previously presented, would represent expressions *facultative participant-oriented modality*, *facultative event-oriented modality*, and *deontic event-oriented modality*.

Facultative participant-oriented modality (FPO) forms part of the descriptive structure of the sentence; it affects the relational aspect, as expressed by the predicate, and it refers to the relationship between (ability of) a participant in an event and the potential realization of that event. The FPO is related to intrinsic (“be able to”) or acquired ability (“know how to”), it describes a participant’s ability to engage in event type designated by the predicate. Examples of the verb “dar”, meaning FPO, convey a subject’s capacity, aptitude, or tendency to perform an activity, as illustrated in (3) (“*não dou para essas exibições*” [I’m not **cut out** for these performances]).

Facultative event-oriented modality (FEO) affects the description of the event codified by the sentence, that is, the descriptive part of a sentence, and refers to the objective evaluation of the event’s current status. “It describes the existence of possibilities, general obligations, and like, without the speaker taking responsibility for these judgments” (Hengeveld, 2004, p. 1194). In the facultative domain, the modality is characterized “in terms of the physical or circumstantial enabling conditions on their occurrence” (Hengeveld, 2004, p. 1195), as example (4) (*Deu para a gente ter uma idéia de como poderemos enfrentar a criminalidade e como distribuir nossos homens nas ruas* [**It was possible** for us to get an idea of how to face crime and deploy our officers on the street].). In contrast to FPO modality (example 3), FEO modality (example 4) does not refer to a participant’s abilities; rather, the possibility of an event occurring is linked to the circumstances in which the event takes place.

In the *event-oriented deontic modality* (EOD), states of affairs are characterized in terms of what is obligatory or permitted from the perspective of some moral or legal conventions, or conduct rules. In this case, permission or obligation does not apply to a specific participant but is generalized. In example (5), a conduct norm for the COVID-19 pandemic period is expressed by a medical authority, stating that playing soccer is not allowed, even while wearing a mask.

It should be noted that, like Bybee *et al.* (1994), Hengeveld (2017) argues the precedence of habilitative uses (facultative participant-oriented modality); however, in contrast to the former, he does not consider the precedence or posteriority between the event-oriented meanings (facultative and deontic).

Drawing from these different studies, we analyze the modal meanings of **ability**, **possibility**, and **permission** expressed by the construction with “dar”. As discussed in this section, these modal meanings correspond to those described by Bybee *et al.* (1994), Auwera and Plungian (1998), and Hengeveld (2004) using different terms.

Studies on the development of auxiliary verbs also provide analytical support for this work. These studies suggest that verbs can undergo grammaticalization, undergoing changes in which they lose the properties of full verbs and acquire the properties of auxiliary verbs, expressing grammatical functions such as modality (Heine, 1993;

Olbertz, 1998; Coelho, Silva, 2014; Hattnher, Hengeveld, 2016; Görski, 2020; Traugott, Dasher, among others). These changes follow tendencies indicated by scholars, in which verbs, in general: cease to refer to concrete situations and begin to refer to activities, events, and from there, express grammatical functions of tense, aspect, and modality; begin to associate with non-finite verb forms, forming semantic and syntactic units with them; undergo decategorization.

Constructional changes

This paper adopts a usage-based approach, grounded in principles of constructional change (Traugott; Trousdale, 2013). In this theoretical orientation of grammar, a human language can be understood as “a network of nodes and links between nodes” (Traugott; Trousdale, 2013, p. 3). Constructions are understood as symbolic pairings of form and meaning/function, conventionalized and routinized by use, and linked to general cognitive processes such as rich memory storage, categorization, and chunking (Bybee, 2010).

The representation of construction by Traugott and Trousdale (2013) is based on Croft (2001): [FORM] ↔ [MEANING]. The form and meaning dimensions are linked by a symbolic correspondence. The structural domain includes syntactic, morphological, and phonological aspects; the meaning domain involves discourse, pragmatic, and semantic factors. Constructions form a network and are associated with each other within it.

From a diachronic perspective, it is hypothesized that constructions, which represent speakers’ linguistic knowledge, become more abstract and schematic. This can be studied through three factors considered relevant for constructional description: compositionality, schematicity, and productivity. These properties are gradients and change over time.

Compositionality refers to the degree of transparency between form and meaning, both at the syntactic and semantic levels. Semantically, a construction is more compositional when the meaning of its component elements can still be recognized from the meaning of the whole. Bybee (2016), drawing on Langacker (1987) and Croft and Cruse (2004), distinguishes between semantic compositionality and the analyzability of a construction. The first property refers to the degree of predictability of the whole’s meaning is based on its component parts, while the second refers to the recognition of each part’s contribution to the conceptual composition. Syntactically, compositionality relates to the morphosyntactic integration of the subparts, with the construction being more compositional if its elements still retain grammatical properties of the source category. It is expected that, historically and gradually, constructions lose compositionality.

Schematicity, a second relevant parameter for constructional studies, pertains to categorization properties that form the language’s schemas, understood as routinized patterns of experience, unconsciously perceived by language users. This property

involves different levels of generality or specificity of the parts of constructions and hierarchical relations. According to Bybee (2010, p. 9), “the crucial idea behind the construction is that it is a direct form–meaning pairing that has sequential structure and may include positions that are fixed as well as positions that are open”. Traugott and Trousdale (2013) identify the following dimensions, hierarchically organized: schemas (more generic patterns within the constructional network), subschemas, and micro-constructions (more specific sets with similar behavior), and constructs (what speakers produce and listeners process).

Interrelated with schematicity is productivity, the third relevant parameter for constructional analysis. According to Traugott and Trousdale (2013, p. 17), productivity concerns “i) [...] the extent to which they sanction other less schematic constructions, and ii) the extent to which they are constrained”. Productivity is linked to frequency of use, which can be examined in terms of *type* (a particular pattern) or *token* (constructs), as noted by Bybee (2003). From a diachronic perspective, there is an increase in productivity and schematicity of constructions (Traugott; Trousdale, 2013). The increase in productivity can also be measured by the collocational range of the construction, which can be expanded, thus increasing the frequency of types. In this regard, Traugott and Trousdale’s proposal finds support in “collocational analysis” (e.g., Hilpert, 2012), where categorical types filling positions in the construction are examined.

Traugott (2016) discusses the integration of modality’s semantic maps (such as those of Bybee *et al.* (1994) and Auwera & Plungian (1998)) into a constructional approach. As an initial issue for reconciling these semantic maps with a constructional approach is the fact that the latter considers both semantic-pragmatic and formal factors, whereas the former focuses on semantic aspects. Traugott’s (2016) proposal is to reconceptualize maps of semantic connectivity in modality as models of the relationships between micro-constructions, which are, in the end, linked to a macro-constructional level. Schemas and sub-schemas reflect conceptual spaces, understood as representations of functions and their relationships.

Linguistic change, as proposed by Traugott and Trousdale (2013), may involve only one dimension of the construction – form or meaning (such as the morphophonological change in English from ‘will’ to ‘ll’, which pertains solely to the formal dimension), characterizing what they term “constructional changes”. Changes may also involve both formal and semantic-pragmatic dimensions, leading to the creation of a new pairing of form and meaning, a new node in the constructional network (such as the development of quantifiers like ‘a lot/bit/shred of a N’ in English, whose changes involve morphosyntactic, semantic, and pragmatic dimensions), constituting, in this case, the process of “constructionalization”.

Traugott and Trousdale (2013) recognize two mechanisms linked to the small-step micro-changes: neoanalysis of morphosyntactic forms and semantic-pragmatic meanings, which explains the emergence of new properties for an emerging form; and analogization, the recruitment of an item into an already existing schema in the language.

Methodology

In order to gather representative data from contemporary Brazilian Portuguese, the research utilized two sets of spoken material: the C-Oral Brasil corpus (<http://www.c-oral-brasil.org/>) and the minimal corpus from the Norma Urbana Culta Project (NURC). Additionally, data from the Corpus do Português (CP), available at corpusdoportugues.org, which includes both written and spoken texts, were also used. From the CP, in addition to the data from the 20th century, texts from different centuries were also considered.

Other modal patterns were found, in addition to those already illustrated. (6)-(8) are examples.

(6) [DAR *de* +V2]

Profundo devia ser esse meditar que não dava de perceber os passos abafados de Miguel. ...e não se me dá de crer que a câmara é capaz de aprovar aquela resposta e... (CP, 19th century)

[The meditation must have been so deep that one couldn't hear Miguel's muffled steps. ...and I cannot believe that the chamber is capable of approving that response and...]

(7) [SER ^{participio}dar +V2]

Poucas vezes me foi dado compreender melhor o que significam aquelas palavras: ganhar o pão de cada dia. (CP, 20th century)

[Few times have I been able to understand better what those words mean: to earn one's daily bread.]

(8) [DAR (*que*) +V2]

E dá repousar-me teu seio... Dá que eu goze o talismã.... Dá que ali repouse a fronte. (CP, 19th century)

[And let me rest upon your bosom... Let me enjoy the talisman... Let my brow rest there]

However, it was observed that these cases are very infrequent, and the most common pattern with the verb “dar” for expressing modality are the micro-constructions with the preposition *para* followed by a noun or non-finite verb, or those where “dar” occurs without content introduced by *para*, and without a non-finite verb (e.g., 2c, ‘eu tentei fazer uns sambas, mas não deu,’ which can be paraphrased as ‘não deu para fazer uns sambas’). Therefore, the investigation focused on modal micro-constructions with *para* and those in which “dar” scope over textual elements, or prior discourse [*dar(para)*].

Modal micro-constructions with “dar”

In contemporary Portuguese, modal micro-constructions with meanings of ability, possibility, and permission are identified, as illustrated by instances (3)-(5), repeated below. Micro-constructions with the value of ability, like (3), are formed by a human participant in the function of the subject of the verb “dar”, and in the texts examined, nearly all instances are followed by a noun referring to an activity. In most of the micro-constructions with the values of possibility or permission, as exemplified by (4) and (5), “dar” assumes an impersonal form, in a complex construction (*dar para* + V2_{inf}), as (4), or it may be constituted by “dar” with scope over a communicated content, as (5).

- (3) *A mim nunca pilharam para declamar, não dou para essas exibições.*
[I was never pushed to recite, I’m not cut out for these performances.]
- (4) *Deu para a gente ter uma ideia de como poderemos enfrentar a criminalidade (...).*
[It was possible for us to get an idea of how to face crime and deploy our officers on the streets.]
- (5) *A transmissibilidade é enorme, nem usando máscara no jogo não dá.*
[The transmissibility is enormous; even wearing a mask during the game is not allowed.]

To examine the order of emergence of modal values (ability, possibility, permission), the instances of modal micro-constructions with “dar” were grouped according to their meanings. Table 1 presents this initial examination.

Table 1 – Instances of modal micro-constructions with “dar”

	15th	16th	17th	18th	19th	20th	total
Ability	1	0	1	0	19	14	35
Possibility	1	2	2	1	29	647	682
Permission	-	-	-	-	-	7	7
TOTAL	2	2	3	1	48	668	724

Source: Own elaboration

The oldest data dates back to the 15th century. The data from the 15th to the 19th centuries are only from the CP corpus. The 668 instances from the 20th century are distributed across the three corpora of this study as follows: 80% (537 instances) are from the CP corpus; 16% (105 instances) are from C-Oral-Brasil; and 4% (26 instances) are from the NURC Project.

As shown in the table, the earliest instances that allow for an interpretation as capability- whether intrinsic or acquired - are from the 15th and 17th centuries (examples 9 and 10).

(9) 15th century:

O comde, vemdo como tais dous cavaleiros heram mais dados pera serviço de Deus que pera se combaterẽ sobre pequeno caso, trabalhou muito, per sy & per outrẽ, de hos avir, o que nũa per nenhũ modo pôde acabar.

[The count, seeing how those two knights **had more inclination and ability** for the service of God than for fighting over a trivial matter, worked hard, for himself and for others, to achieve this, but he was never able to accomplish it in any way.]

(10) 17th century:

E paraque se saiba a razão porque este recado veyo mais por molher que por homem, se ha de saber que foy sempre custume antiquissimo dos Reys destes reynos desdo principio delles, tratarem as cousas de muyta importancia, & em que se requiere paz & concordia, por molheres;(...) & dão para isto por razão, que ao genero feminino, pela brandura da sua natureza, dera Deos mais afabilidade, & autoridade [...].

[And to understand the reason why this message came more through a woman than a man, it is necessary to know that it has always been an ancient custom in this kingdom, since the beginning, for matters of great importance, in which peace and concord are required, to be handled by women [...] and rightly, kings **have this tendency**, because God, in His wisdom, gave the female gender more kindness and authority due to the gentleness of their nature [...]]

In both instances, the subjects are human (the knights; the kings), and a property of these participants (their ability) is expressed in relation to the realization of an event. In (9), the verb “dar” is in a nominal form, in a micro-construction very similar to that found in contemporary Portuguese with the preposition *a* (“ser dado a”), conveying the meaning of “having a tendency to”.

Example (10), in turn, presents a form closer to those found in contemporary Portuguese, with the meaning of capacity or ability. A possible paraphrase could be “to have a tendency to, to be accustomed to,” which is also similar to the micro-construction “ser dado a” in contemporary Portuguese. It is understood that these contexts of use may have generated conventionalized implicatures in the sense of “having the ability to perform an activity,” a meaning that appears consistently in the texts of the 19th and 20th centuries, particularly with a noun, in instances of the micro-construction [N-_{human} “dar para” N]:

(11) 19th century:

O rapaz era esperto; até demais; porém não dava para clérigo, como dizia então o povo, dos que não mostravam aptidão literária.

[The young man was clever; perhaps too clever; but he was not **cut out** to be a cleric, as people used to say back then, referring to those who did not show literary aptitude.]

(12) 20th century:

Voltou a sorrir lentamente e pensou: Eita, trabalho da-nado de complicado! O Deuca é inteligente. Quem diria que o Deuca dava para êsse negócio de banco?

[He smiled slowly again and thought: “Wow, this is really complicated work! Deuca is smart. Who would have thought Deuca was **cut out** for this banking business?]

In the entire corpus of the research, only three instances of the habilitative micro-construction with the verb [“dar para” + V2] were found: two from the 19th century (13), and one from the 20th century (14).

(13) 19th century:

As velhas, umas dão para rezar, outras para ralar desde a manhã até à noite, outras para lavar cachorrinhos ou para criar pintos; esta deu para criar mulatinhas princesas. É um divertimento um pouco mais dispendioso na verdade.

[The old women, some **are inclined to** pray, others to scold from morning to night, some to wash little puppies or raise chicks; this one **is inclined to** raise little mulatto princesses. It’s a slightly more expensive pastime, though.]

(14) 20th century:

É de cortar o coração. Um pobre morrer à míngua é qual-quer coisa que berra contra a natureza. Não dou para assistir a esses espetáculos. Tenho o coração mole.

[It’s heart-wrenching. A poor person dying of hunger is something that screams against nature. I’m not **cut out** for watching these spectacles. I have a soft heart.]

The analysis of the data reveals that the most conventionalized pattern of the habilitative micro-construction features a noun in position 2 (as in 11, “clérigo” (cleric) and 12, “esse negócio de banco” (this banking business)), rather than a verb (as in 13, “rezar” (to pray), “criar” (to raise), and 14, “assistir” (to watch)).

Based on the data identified, it was not possible to observe micro-steps of change or routinization paths for habilitative micro-constructions. Furthermore, no evidence

was found in the examined texts that suggested any proximity between habilitative and possibility micro-constructions. In other words, no contexts were observed that demonstrated pragmatic approximations, inferences, or polysemy, which would be expected to confirm that the possibility micro-constructions have been ‘sanctioned’ by ability micro-constructions. Additionally, as shown in Table 1, the oldest instances of habilitative and possibility micro-constructions were located in the same period, the 15th century, which does not confirm the precedence of either in the examined texts. Therefore, the shift from ability to possibility, investigated based on the predictions of change in the modal domain (Bybee *et al.*, 1994; Auwera; Plungian, 1998; Hengeveld, 2017), was not supported by the research.

The information in Table 1 also shows that instances of the deontic micro-construction were found only in the 20th-century data, and that the seven permissive examples come from the spoken data of C-Oral Brasil. The data analysis points to a linguistic feature of the impersonal construction, where micro-constructions with a meaning of possibility seem to have sanctioned those with a meaning of permission. The next subsection is dedicated to presenting a proposal for examining this development.

From the habilitative transferential to the impersonal permissive micro-construction

In this subsection, a set of examples with meanings of possibility and permission are analyzed. As shown in Table 1, a total of 689 constructs were identified from this set across all synchronies, with 682 conveying the meaning of possibility and 7 conveying the meaning of permission. The oldest data allowing for a modal reading are presented in a “transferential micro-construction of resources for a purpose” or “habilitative transferential”, as exemplified in (15), from the 15th century:

(15) 15th century:

E antre todallas cousas saibha conhecer o contrapeso da lança deanteira que lhe deve dar pera a fazer hyr feita, e em correndo a leve assy apertada que, quando a lançar, a ponta vaa toda dereita aly hu tener teençom.

[And, among all things, know how to identify the counterbalance of the front spear, **which should help guide it properly**, and, while running, hold it firmly so that, when throwing it, the tip stays perfectly straight and with attention.]

Example (15) is found in a text that provides instructions on the art of horsemanship (*Livro da Enseñança de Bem Cavalgar Toda Sela*) and can be paraphrased as “it is necessary for the rider to understand the counterbalance of the front spear, and this should enable the spear to move in the desired Direction”. In (15), there is a relative clause, subordinated to the utterance “contrapeso da lança dianteira”, with the verb “dar” modalized by “dever”. Here, there is a “transferential habilitative micro-construction

for a purpose”, with the morphosyntactic subject represented by a relative pronoun (“que”) referring to an inanimate participant (“contrapeso da lança dianteira”). This resource enables another participant, human (the beneficiary of the transfer of “dar”, morphosyntactically marked by the dative clitic *lhe*, referring to the rider), to perform a specific event (to make the spear go in the desired direction).

The constructs that allow an interpretation of possibility are “transferential habilitative construction for a purpose” can be found in texts from the 15th-century to the 18th-century, as illustrated in (16) and (17):

(16) 16th century

Pedia o marido ao padre lhe fosse rezar um Evangelho, mas era em tempo que lho não davam para isso as ocupações do serviço de Deus.

[The husband asked the priest to pray an Evangelium for him, but it was a time when his duties in **the service of God did not allow him to do so.**]

(17) 18th century:

*Não contão os Evangelistas mais da vida de Christo dos doze annos até os trinta de sua idade; & este silencio falla muyto, **no muyto que nos dá para considerar quam escondida esteve a Omnipotencia Divina.***

[The Evangelists do not recount more of Christ’s life from the age of twelve to thirty, **and this silence greatly enables us to consider how hidden divine omnipotence was.**]

In examples (16) and (17), it is possible to understand that a certain property of the social or physical world (the duties of God’s service; the much that the silence speaks of) constitutes a circumstantial condition (dis)enabling a specific human participant (represented by the clitic *lho* in 16 and *nos* in 17) in performing or undergoing an action (praying an evangelium, in 16; considering how hidden divine omnipotence was, in 17).

In the 17th-century texts, an instance in a passive structure was identified (example 18), which can suggest that the ‘transferential habilitative micro-construction’ had already licensed the omission of a specific habilitated participant, potentially indicating the decrease of compositionality.

(18) 17th century:

*Vendo Iorge Dalbuquerque tamanho espanto na gente, foy cercado de gradissima tristeza, & dor, por ver que ja nam tinha nenhum modo de mantimento, nem que beber, auendo j a muytos dias que nao bebiemos agua, nem vinho, & que **o vinagre que se daua pera molhar o padar, estaua ja na borra, & que ja nao auia quem podesse dar a boba, nem teremse nas pernas com fraqueza.***

[Seeing such astonishment in the people, Jorge Dalbuquerque was overwhelmed with great sadness and pain, realizing that there was no longer any means of

sustenance or anything to drink, after many days without water or wine, and the vinegar, **which could moisten the palate**, was already in the sediment, and there was no one who could afford to be idle or weak in the legs.]

However, a more definitive first small-step micro change is recognized in the texts in the texts of 19th-century. the non-occurrence of the dative clitic, and the human participant as the beneficiary of the transferred resource. As Traugott and Trosdale (2013, p. 21) argue, “change begins with a new representation in the mind of a language user” and “the mechanism that brings about this new representation is what is widely known as reanalysis [...] the modification of an element of a construction.”

In the 19th-century texts, it was found that 60% of the constructs don’t have the dative pronoun (as in (19)), while 40% retain it (as in (20)). Without the dative pronoun, the conditions that enable or block a situation no longer fall on an agent; there is a generic (de)habilitation of the situation.

- (19) *Mas, pouco depois de casado, Lourenço começou a desgostá-la: era um nunca terminar de festas; a casa vivia num rebuliço constante; **os intervalos das pândegas não davam sequer para** a trazer arrumada e limpa.* (CP, 19th century)

[But shortly after getting married, Lourenço began to displease her: it was a never-ending series of parties; the house was in a constant uproar; the breaks between the revelries **weren’t even enough** to keep it tidy and clean.]

- (20) *Guiomar refletiu ainda muito e muito, e não refletiu só, devaneou também, soltando o pano todo a essa veleira escuna da imaginação, em que todos navegamos alguma vez na vida, quando nos cansa a terra firme e dura, e chama-nos o mar vasto e sem praias. **A imaginação dela porém não era doentia, nem romântica, nem piegas, nem lhe dava para** ir colher flores em regiões selváticas ou adormecer à beira de lagos azuis. Nada disso era nem fazia; e por mais longe que velejassem levaria entranhadas na alma as lembranças da terra.* (CP, 19th century)

[Guiomar reflected deeply, and not only reflected, but also daydreamed, letting her imagination sail freely, like the little schooner that all of us sometimes navigate on in life, when the solid, hard land tires us, and the vast, shoreless sea calls to us. However, her imagination was neither sickly, nor romantic, nor sentimental, nor **did it lead her** to go gather flowers in wild regions or sleep by blue lakes. She did none of that, and no matter how far she sailed, she would always carry the memories of the land deeply rooted in her soul.]

In the 20th-century texts, among the instances with possibility meaning, the omission of the dative pronoun appears more definitive: only 9 examples (less than 1% of the 20th-century data set) include the dative pronoun, *lhe*, as in (21).

- (21) *É certo que o corredor, segundo ele, andava adoentado, mas a sua condição física **dar-lhe-ia** para ir mais longe.* (CP, 20th century)
 [It is true that the runner, according to him, was feeling unwell, but his physical condition would **allow him** to go further.]

Besides the near disappearance of the dative clitic in the 20th-century texts, it is also observed that the vast majority of examples are in an impersonal structure. As will be demonstrated in Table 2, few 20th-century instances have a filled syntactic subject, and among these cases, two situations can be identified: a) the subject is filled by a noun representing a resource (temporal, socio-physical) that enables a generic situation (examples 22); b) constituents of an argumental nature of the infinitive verb (subject or complement) fill the syntactic subject function of verb “dar” (examples 23), in a process of topicalization by raising.

- (22) a) *meu tempo não dá não dá pra eu estudar ((rindo)) [...] - meu tempo nunca deu [...]* (CP, 20th century)
 [My time doesn’t allow, I don’t have time to study ((laughing)) [...] my time never allowed [...]]
 b) *Era usuário mas **minha condição** não dava pra ser usuário continuamente. Eu era usuário quando sobrava uma ponta, quando tinha dinheiro, uma arma para trocar.* (CP, 20th century)
 [I was a user, but **my situation** didn’t allow me to be a user continuously. I was a user when there was a leftover, when I had money, or a weapon to trade.]
- (23) a) *você já dá pra deixar o pessoal caminhar sozinho e o padre não quer deixar o pessoal caminhar sozinho entendeu?* (CP, 20th century)
 [It is already possible for you to let the people walk by themselves / You already let the people walk on their own, but the priest doesn’t want to let them walk on their own, you know?]
 b) *Mas **a máquina** ainda dá para recuperar? Está tudo enferrujado..! - “Ah.. mesmo assim* (CP, 20th century)
 [But is it still possible to recover the machine?/But is the machine still recoverable? It’s all rusty..! - “Ah.. even so.”] (

Examples such as (23), although fewer than those in (22), can be analyzed as instances of the impersonal micro-construction. These would be cases of raising (Noonan, 2007, p. 69): “movement of an argument from a lower to a higher sentence”. In examples, an argument (subject (23a) or object (23b)) of the V2(infinitive) is displaced to occupy the morphosyntactic subject position of “dar”, by pragmatic reasons. There is a divergence between the morphosyntactic and semantic status of the nominal constituent that fills the subject function of “dar.”

The constructs with meanings of possibility and permission⁶ in the 20th-century texts reveal a prevalence of impersonal forms (micro-constructions [*dar_{impersonal} para V2 inf*] and [*dar_{impessoal}*]), as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 – Modal micro-constructions in the 20th century

	[<i>dar (para V2_{inf})</i>] _{MODAL}			TOTAL
	[N <i>dar para V2_{inf}</i>]	[<i>dar_{impersonal} para V2_{inf}</i>]	[<i>dar_{impersonal}</i>]	
CP	87 (17%)	368 (70%)	69 (13%)	524 (100%)
C-Oral, NURC	12 (9%)	69 (53%)	49 (38%)	130 (100%)
TOTAL	99 (15%)	437 (67%)	118 (18%)	654 (100%)

Source: Own elaboration

The token frequency of the micro-constructions with an impersonal subject represents 85% of the data examined in total (67% of [*dar_{impersonal} para V2_{inf}*] and 18% of [*dar_{impersonal}*]) and indicates the conventionalization of the impersonal pattern. The loss of the grammatical subject is yet another small-step change, since the verb “dar” loses its arguments, what contributes to the genericity of the habilitation, to the reduction of compositionality, and to the increase in schematicity. The examples in (24), repeated for clarity, illustrate:

- (24) a) *Deu para a gente ter uma idéia de como poderemos enfrentar a criminalidade*
[It was possible for us to get an idea of how to face crime and deploy our officers on the streets.]
 b) *REG: [9] *porque a contração já vinha assim / de três em três passos já nũ dava*
[Because the contractions were coming like every three steps, and I just couldn’t keep going]

The exam suggests that a neoanalysis has occurred, leading to the rise of a new impersonal micro-construction. The constituent that previously functioned as an enabler or blocker of a specific event is no longer instantiated, and the meaning conveys a general habilitation, a circumstantial possibility. Among the impersonal micro-constructions with “dar”, there is one that functions as a more syntactically mobile element, with omission of non-finite component, introduced by ‘para’, with scope over textual, discursive portions, as exemplified in (25):

⁶ As shown in Table 1, 647 instances of possibility and 7 of permission were identified in the 20th century, totaling 654 instances. These are distributed across the three micro-constructions presented in Table 2.

(25)

a) *Você quer festejar à noite? Hoje? Que pena, não vai **dar**.* (CP, 20th century)
[Do you want to celebrate tonight? Today? What a shame, **it won't work**.]

b) *Até já tentei, mas não consegui, me distraio no melhor da festa, leio, leio, vou virando as páginas e de repente nem sei do que se trata, meu pensamento voa longe... não vou ler este livro, não **dá**, Gê!* (CP, século XX)

[I've even tried, but I couldn't. I get distracted in the middle of the party, I read, I read, I keep turning the pages, and suddenly I don't even know what it's about, my mind drifts away... I'm not going to read this book, I can't, Gê!]

c) *tem uma colher aí do lado / dá pra fazer alguma coisa?/ **dá*** (C-ORAL, bfmacv18)

[Is there a spoon over there? Can we do something with it? Yes.]

In these examples, “dar” scopes over a content shared in the discourse (“festejar à noite” [to celebrate tonight]; “ler o livro” [to read the book]; “fazer alguma coisa” [to do something]). Olbertz (1998) indicates that expressing grammatical functions without the presence of a combination with a verbal lexical component, when a conceptual situation to be modified was specified immediately before, is a typical property of semi-auxiliaries. Heine (1993) also considers this property as revealing one of the stages in the grammatical development of verbs. This is yet another micro-step of constructional change (alongside the loss of the dative pronoun and the loss of the subject).

As shown in Table 2, the impersonal micro-construction, [*dar*_{impersonal}], accounts for 18% of the total sample from the 20th century. When examining the data distributed across samples consisting just of spoken language (NURC and C-Oral) and those predominantly composed of written texts (CP), [*dar*_{impersonal}] micro-construction is found to be more frequent in spoken texts. In the samples consisting exclusively of spoken language (NURC and C-Oral), it accounts for 38% of the cases (49/130), whereas in the data predominantly composed of written language (CP), it represents only 13% of the cases (69/524). It is well known that writing is more resistant to innovations that arise from spontaneous speech, and the higher percentage found in the spoken-only data can be seen as further evidence that the structure is recent in the Portuguese language.

Once the meaning of ‘general qualification or circumstantial possibility’ becomes conventionalized, the micro-construction is then used in contexts where the enabling of an event is related to a set of norms (legal, social, medical), thereby conveying a deontic sense. In other words, the (un)favorable conditions for the event’s occurrence may be tied to conventions or rules of conduct, as in (26):

(26) *BRU: [85] *o filhote tá começando a ficar com fome / tal / e aí eles fazem a coisa //*\$

*BRU: [86] *que nã pode contar / nã **dá** //*\$

*PRI: [87] *<tá hhh> //*\$

*JAN: [88] *<que coisa> //*\$

*BRU: [89] <tem que assistir> // \$
 *PRI: [90] <não / é> do filme // \$
 *JAN: [91] <mas que coisa> // \$
 *PRI: [92] *nũ quero saber* // \$
 *BRU: [93] *nũ dá pra contar o final do filme* // \$
 *JAN: [94] *eu vou olhar na internet* // \$
 *PRI: [95] *ah / <por que que cê nũ assiste> / hein* // \$
 *BRU: [96] <tá bom> // \$
 *BRU: [97] *posso contar / <então>* // \$
 *JAN: [98] <pode> // \$
 *PRI: [99] *ah* // \$
 *PRI: [100] *nũ sei / ué* // \$
 (C-ORAL, bfmav22)

[BRU: *The baby's starting to get hungry, you know, and then they do the thing...*

BRU: *That you **can't** spoil, you **can't** say...*

PRI: *Yeah, hhh*

JAN: *What thing?*

BRU: *You have to watch it.*

PRI: *No, it's from the movie.*

JAN: *But what thing?*

PRI: *I don't want to know.*

BRU: *You **can't** spoil the end of the movie.*

JAN: *I'll look it up online.*

PRI: *Ah, why don't you just watch it, huh?*

BRU: *Fine.*

BRU: *Can I tell you then?*

JAN: *Go ahead.*

PRI: *Ah.*

PRI: *I don't know, huh?*]

As noted by Hengeveld (2004), event-oriented deontic modality characterizes states of affairs in terms of what is obligatory or permitted within a system of moral or legal conventions, rules of conduct. The deontic source in (26) is based on social interaction rules, which the entire plot of films or books should not be revealed (*que nũ pode contar / nũ dá* [*That you can't spoil, you can't say...*]; *nũ dá pra contar o final do filme* [*You **can't** spoil the end of the movie.*]).

It was observed that impersonal micro-constructions with a meaning of possibility (such as 24, 25) are much more frequent than the permissive ones (such as 26). It can be argued, therefore, that these are micro-constructions linked by inheritance relations, where the permissive constructions are subsequent to the possibilitative ones. This shift

supports the predictions of change in the modal domain (Bybee *et al.*, 1994; Auwera; Plungian, 1998), where circumstantial possibility can give rise to permission. It would further confirm the change in terms of scope expansion (Narrog, 2012), where the modal shows greater flexibility and covers larger spans.

Conclusion

This research investigated the emergence of modal micro-constructions with “dar” in written texts from the 14th to the 20th centuries, and in spoken texts from the 20th century. The framework was based on proposals for constructional change, hypotheses on the semantic development of modality, and the emergence of auxiliary verbs.

The shift from ability to possibility, analyzed based on a synchronic arrangement of the data and hypotheses on modality development (Bybee *et al.*, 1994; Auwera; Plungian, 1998; Hengeveld, 2017), was not confirmed for the modal micro-constructions with “dar”. In contrast, the shift from possibility to permission (Bybee *et al.*, 1994; Auwera; Plungian, 1998) was supported by the examined texts.

Impersonal micro-constructions conveying meanings of possibility and permission were found exclusively in the 20th century, suggesting their recent emergence. The earliest instances, which allow for modal meaning, date back to the 15th century and feature a “transferential micro-construction enabling a purpose”. In these, it is observed that a specific element of the socio-physical world is metaphorically transferred to a human participant, empowering them to perform an activity. In the 19th- and 20th-century texts, the morphosyntactic structure of ‘dar’, as a verb of transfer, is gradually being lost. The beneficiary of the transfer and the subject (‘resource’ enabling a purpose) become scarcely frequent in the more contemporary data, indicating the process of change. The structure found in the more contemporary instances indicates generic enabling for a situation. With the loss of the arguments of the verb “dar”, there is a ‘dilution’ of the transferential value of the construction and an increase in the generalization of its modal enabling, suggesting a decrease in compositionality, increase in schematicity and productivity.

The analyses reveal the emergence of a new node in the constructional network, with changes in both the formal and semantic dimensions of the constructions, as well as constructional changes in only one dimension of the construction. It is observed in contemporary Portuguese that impersonal modal micro-constructions function as a unit of memory organization, routinized and conventionalized in the Portuguese language, a chunking (Bybee, 2010).

- **RESUMO:** *Com base em uma perspectiva construcionista, mais especificamente em Traugott e Trousdale (2021 [2013]), e em estudos sobre tipologia e mudança modal, investigam-se a emergência e o desenvolvimento de microconstruções modais com “dar”, no português, buscando-se identificar micropassos de mudança e relações de herança. Analisa-se como as alterações para essa família de construções podem se alinhar às hipóteses de mudança da modalidade. A pesquisa serve-se de textos dos séculos XIV a XX do Corpus do Português (Davies; Ferreira, 2006), e de dados de língua falada contemporânea provenientes do C-Oral Brasil e do Projeto NURC. O exame não comprova alterações semânticas de valores habilitativos para possibilitativos, hipótese levantada com base em previsões de mudança semântica no campo modal. Revela-se, por outro lado, que a microconstrução transferencial habilitativa (para um propósito), localizada nas instâncias mais remotas do corpus, licencia valor possibilitativo e, posteriormente, sanciona outras microconstruções. Nesse processo, nota-se gradual anulação da grade temática do verbo “dar”, convencionalização do padrão impessoal e surgimento de valor deôntico.*
- **PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *Modalidade; Mudança construcional; Verbo dar.*

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