

From society to neology and lexicography

Relationships between morphology and dictionaries

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Objectives of this study

This paper aims at verifying if the most important online Brazilian Portuguese dictionaries include some of the neologisms identified in texts published from the 1990s until the 2000s, formed with the elements **ciber-**, **e-**, **bio-**, **eco-** and **narco-**, which we refer to as fractomorphemes / fracto-morphèmes.

Three online Brazilian dictionaries were analyzed - **Aulete**, **Houaiss** and **Michaelis**.

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Our analysis takes into account these morphemes, observed since the 1990s, that have been reflecting new tendencies of contemporary global (and, in particular, Brazilian) society:

ciber-, **e-** (Information Technology, Computing);

bio-, **eco-** (healthy, sustainable life and society);

narco- (some of society problems).

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These morphemes have been termed differently.

Sometimes they are considered prefixes, because they occupy the first position in the word, but they have also received specific denominations. In English, they are referred to as **splinters**, a term thus defined by Bauer (2004, p. 95-96):

“A splinter is a fraction of a word, arising in a blend, then used as an affix to create more words, as **-nomics** in *Reaganomics*, *Clintonomics*, *Thatchernomics* and so on .”

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According to Tournier (1985, p. 86), this term was first employed by Adams (1973, p. 188-98), in order to distinguish among affixes, compound elements and amalgamated elements. This author mentions, as an example, the word *microscope*, in which **-scope** is a splinter. Tournier termed them **fractomorphèmes**.

In this text, we have chosen to term these elements **fractomorfemas**, following the French tradition as well as some Portuguese and Brazilian authors, such as Lino (1990) and Bizzocchi (2021).

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Ciber-, **e-**, **bio-**, **eco-** and **narco-** represent different aspects of the society of this period and of the following decades:

- From the technological point of view, there is a development of already used technologies such as the Internet as well as the intensification of the use of mobile phones, which have become smaller.
- The possibilities of virtual communication are considerably expanded, which is expressed by the fractomorphemes **ciber-** (from Eng. **Cybernetics** (Houaiss) and **e-** (< Eng. reduction of **electronic** (Houaiss)).

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Objectives of this study

- Regarding the environment, the 1990s were marked by the importance assumed by the Earth Summit, a conference organized by the UN in 1992, in Rio de Janeiro, also known as Eco 92, which was attended by members of several countries. The Eco 92 contributed to bringing together the concepts of society, economy and sustainability.
- This concern for the care of the environment was reflected in new usages of the elements **bio-** (< Greek *bíos*, 'life' (Houaiss)) and **eco-** (< Greek *oikos*, 'house, household, family' (Houaiss)).

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- The 1990s also saw a change in the relationship between drug trafficking and the policies of different nations regarding the circulation and use of drugs, which can explain the usage of **narco-**.

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Methodology

Our corpus of neologisms is based on the results of Project TermNeo (**Observatório de neologismos do português brasileiro contemporâneo** - Observatory of contemporary Brazilian Portuguese neologisms).

This is a project with the scope of collecting and investigating neologisms present in contemporary Brazilian press (newspapers and magazines) since January 1993.

This project was proposed, similarly to other neology observatories in the Romance languages, following the model of the **Laboratoire d'Analyse Lexicologique du Centre d'Etudes de Linguistique Appliquée** (University of Franche-Comté, Besançon, France), conceived by the lexicologist and lexicographer Bernard Quemada, in the early 1960s.

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Methodology

Similarly to other neology observatories in the Romance languages, Project TermNeo has considered the absence of a word in a set of contemporary lexicographic works and, more recently, online materials, as the most important criterion for a lexical unit to be classified as a neologism.

More recently, the development of Information Technology and Corpus Linguistics has allowed us to improve this methodology using automated techniques.

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Methodology

Through the systematic observation of neologisms from 1993 onwards, we were able to identify the development of a recent pattern of word-formation in Brazilian Portuguese:

words formed with elements such as **ciber-**, **e-**, **bio-**, **eco-** and **narco-**, which share some traits with traditional prefixes, but nowadays are best described as fractomorphemes, as already mentioned in the introduction.

In this presentation, we will only study **ciber-**, **eco-** and **narco-**.

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Methodology

In order to verify if contemporary Brazilian Portuguese dictionaries describe this new pattern, we chose three online dictionaries (described in the following section).

The following questions guided our research:

- Do the dictionaries include separate entries for these fractomorphemes? If so, do they mention their neological meanings?
- Do the dictionaries include neologisms formed with these fractomorphemes ? If so, how do they describe their structure?

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Description of the dictionaries

The three lexicographical works analyzed here, **Houaiss**, **Aulete** and **Michaelis**, are among the most important Brazilian Portuguese general dictionaries.

- (i) they are among the largest dictionaries for Brazilian Portuguese which present more than 150,000 entries;
- (ii) all three have online versions;
- (iii) their latest versions include some neologisms.

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Analysis of the data: **ciber-**

This morpheme has its own entry only in Houaiss (classified as a compounding element), which mentions many examples (some of them with their own entries): **ciberataque**, **cibercafé**, **cibercolapso**, **ciberespacial** (adjective), **ciberespaço** (noun), **ciberpirata**, **ciberpirataria**, **ciberterrorismo**, among others.

In Michaelis, the following words are included as entries: **cibercriminoso**, **cibercultura**, **ciberdependência**, **ciberdependente**, **ciberespacial**, **cibermundo**, among others.

Aulete includes, as entries, **ciberespacial**, **ciberespaço**, **ciberladrao**, **cibermaníaco**, **ciberpornografia**, **ciberpropaganda**, among others.

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Analysis of the data: **eco-**

The morpheme **eco-** has a meaning close to that of **bio-**, referring to eco-friendly facts.

In neologisms formed with this morpheme, sometimes a playful aspect is also observed in words that suggest an exaggeration on environmental concerns: **ecobrigão** from **brigão** ‘a person who fights for anything’, **ecochoato** from **choato** a ‘boring person’, **ecoxiita** from **xiita** ‘extremist, fundamentalist’...

It is included as an entry in Houaiss and Aulete. Houaiss describes its meaning as ‘house’, ‘habitat’, ‘family’; Aulete does the same, but also includes the neological meaning ‘ecological’, mentioning neologisms such as **ecoturismo** ‘ecotourism’ and **ecoturista** ‘ecotourist’.

All three dictionaries include entries for **ecoturismo** and **ecoturista**.

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Analysis of the data: **narco-**

It is included as an entry in Houaiss and Aulete, but not in Michaelis.

Both dictionaries describe its meaning as ‘numbness’, but Aulete includes the neological meaning ‘related to narco-trafficking’.

All three dictionaries include an entry for **narcotráfico** ‘narco-trafficking’;

Houaiss and Aulete include also entries for **narcoterrorismo** and **narcoterrorista**;

Aulete also includes the neologism **narcotúnel** ‘narco-tunnel, tunnel used for drug trafficking’.

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Analysis of the data

Now we are able to answer the questions we posed (1):

- Do the dictionaries include separate entries for these fractomorphemes? If so, do they mention their neological meanings?
- Houaiss and Aulete includes separate entries for all of them.

Michaelis do not include separate entries for these fractomorphemes.

- Aulete is the only one that mentions the neological meaning of **eco-**:

'(p.ext.) ecológico': *ecobarreira, ecodesenvolvimento, ...*

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Analysis of the data

Now we are able to answer the questions we posed (2):

- Do the dictionaries include neologisms formed with these fractomorphemes ?
If so, how do they describe their structure?

All lexicographical works include at least one neologism for each fractomorpheme.

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Final remarks



As already pointed out in Alves and Maroneze (2021), even though the dictionaries' main goal is to describe individual lexical items, it does not prevent them from describing grammatical facts.

We conclude that the dictionaries here analyzed, while almost updated in terms of including neologisms, are still incomplete concerning the description of morphological elements.

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