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Authors

Pereira Abranches, Giovana

Pederneira, Isabella Lipes

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Structural Principles in the Interpretation of Blends in Brazilian Portuguese

This study investigates how morphosyntactic and semantic criteria influence the acceptance and interpretation of blends in Brazilian Portuguese, understood as lexical formations created by merging two base words. Previous research shows that blend formation is shaped by prosodic structure, phonological overlap, base recognizability, and process productivity (Marangoni, 2021; Gries, 2004; Beliaeva, 2019, Elisa, 2019; Nóbrega & Minussi, 2015). Focusing on morphosyntactic and semantic constraints, this study examines whether blends reflect internal structural patterns of Brazilian Portuguese, particularly the tendency for the first constituent to function as the head and the second as a modifier. Adopting the Distributed Morphology (Halle and Marantz, 1997) framework, the hypothesis is that speakers rely on internalized syntactic and semantic structures even in creative word formation. Three experiments were conducted: (i) forced choice between two blends, (ii) forced choice between paraphrases, and (iii) image selection. Results from the tasks support the hypothesis, indicating that blend formation is not random but guided by internalized grammatical principles.

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