

1. Introduction

In Portuguese (as in many other languages that distinguish absolute and relative tenses), backshift (*sequence of tenses / consecutio temporum / concordance des temps / transposition / retrogradation*²) is not mandatory in Indirect Speech (henceforth IS). In a matrix past tense verb context (as for, *disse que...*, Pretérito Perfeito Simples, PPS, “*said that...*”), the embedded verb can both backshift into the past or maintain the corresponding “original” speech form.

We are dealing with the following pairs of alternative embedded tenses (in this order: “backshift” or “non-backshift”): Pretérito Imperfeito (IMP) or Presente (PR) // Pretérito Mais-que-Perfeito (MQP) or Pretérito Perfeito Simples (PPS) // Condicional (COND) or Futuro (FUT), as shown in the examples:

- (1) [Original speech] *Eu vivo em Baião.* (PR)
 (“I live in Baião.”)
 - a. [IS, backshif] *Disse que vivia em Baião.* (IMP)
 (“He said he was living in Baião.”)
 - b. [IS, non-backshif] *Disse que vive em Baião.* (PR)
 (“He said he lives in Baião.”)

- (2) *Eu vivi em Baião.* (PPS)
 (“I lived in Baião.”)
 - a. *Disse que tinha vivido em Baião.* (MQP)
 (“He said he had lived in Baião.”)
 - b. *Disse que viveu em Baião.* (PPS)
 (“He said he lived in Baião.”)

- (3) *Eu viverei em Baião.* (FUT)
 (“I will live in Baião.”)
 - a. *Disse que viveria em Baião.* (CONDI)
 (“He said he would live in Baião.”)
 - b. *Disse que viverá em Baião.* (FUT)
 (“He said he will live in Baião.”)

The choice between these two strategies (backshift or non-backshift) is generally said to depend on some *temporal conditions*. Backshift being the default rule, non-backshift is the marked option and therefore it *must be well-motivated, and it is subject to certain restrictions* (Declerck & Tanaka, 1996).

¹ I am indebted to Cristina Nery, Cristina Loureiro and David McCormick for their suggestions in the English version.

² See Rosier & Wilmet (2003).

This opposition (backshift / non-backshift) is closely connected, as we said, with another important grammatical opposition, the one that distinguishes relative and absolute tenses. Thus, speech reporting mechanisms have to be related first of all to the languages' own grammatical structures.

Section 2 will address the relation between speech reporting modes and languages tense subsystems, namely the relation between DS and IS and *absolute* and *relative tenses* opposition.

2. Speech reporting modes and tense systems. DS and IS: *absolute* and *relative tenses*.

The different modes of speech reporting¹ are partially dependent on each language's grammatical structures (Coulmas, 1986). One of the main language subsystems, among others, that may condition the ways of reporting speech is the verbal morphological system, mainly tense (sub)systems. Different languages provide different tense mechanisms that can be used to signal different modes of reporting other's speech, namely to mark the commonly accepted basic opposition between DS and IS. That is the case for languages that have formal *absolute* and *relative tenses* distinction. But other distinctive mechanisms are available in other languages to signal modes of speech reporting – for instance, differences of mood in German and Ancient Greek (Haberland, 1986). Some other languages, on the other hand, due to their structure, simply reproduce in IS the tenses in DS - it is well known the specific case of Russian (see Costello, 1961²; Brecht, 1974³; Comrie, 1986; Barentsen, 1996) and that is the case also for South Slavic (Gvozdanović, 1996) and Japanese (Ogihara, 1996).

Here we are dealing with languages that distinguish *absolute* and *relative tenses*. That is the case for Portuguese.

2.1. *Absolute* and *relative tenses* in Portuguese

The nuclear verbal category in Portuguese is tense. Different morphological endings (and also syntactic structures) convey information about the location of the event in one of three main positions - *anterior*, *simultaneous* or *posterior* – in relation to some *orientation point* (Oliveira & Lopes, 1995). This orientation point (OP) is, by default, the speech act (t_0). Considering the moment of the speech act, we can thus locate an event either in *its* past (“anteriority”), *its* present (“simultaneity”) or *its* future (“posteriority”). However, this OP can also be another point in the text (another

¹ *Cita* (Reyes, 1993 e 1994), *discurso reproducido* (Bosque & Demonte, 1999), *reported speech* (Janssen & Wurff, 1996), *discours rapporté* (Grevisse, 1988).

² «Since Russian has no morphological means of expressing the pluperfect or the future-in-the-past [...] the past and future tenses of direct speech are necessarily reproduced without change in indirect.» (Costello, 1961: 489)

³ «[...] the general rule for tense usage for Russian in so-called ‘reported speech’ is the following: the verb in the embedded tense is put into the same tense that would occur in the corresponding Direct Speech report.» (Brecht, 1974: 495)

speech act or another event, t_1), usually in the past and as such directly related to the t_0 . So, we can also signal that an event is *anterior*, *simultaneous* or *posterior* to this other OP.

These two possibilities can be expressed by two tense subsystems, with two parallel groups of tenses – the so called *absolute tenses* and *relative tenses* -, and the corresponding two parallel sets of temporal relations: “past in present”, “present in present” and “future in present”, on one hand, and “past in past”, “present in past” and “future in past”, on the other hand. *Absolute tenses* anchor directly in the speech act; *relative tenses* anchor directly in a *temporal domain* (Davidse & Vandelanotte, 2011) established in the text, which is, as such, directly anchored to the speech act. The following table presents the two parallel sets of temporal relations and tenses:

to	t_0	t_1
“simultaneity”	PR (Presente)	IMP (Pret Imp)
“anteriority”	PRET (Pret Perf)	MQP (Pret MQPerf)
“posteriority”	FUT (Futuro)	CONDI (Condicional)

Table 1. *Absolute and relative tenses: two parallel sets of temporal relations*

The second OP (t_1) can be either in the same sentence as the event or in another place in the context, explicit or implied. It can also be, as said before, either “situation-type” or “discourse-type”.

*Quando **cheguei** [t1], já eles **tinham jantado**.*

[“jantar” = anterior to t1]

*Ela **disse** [t1] que **chegaria** mais tarde.*

[“chegar” = posterior to t1]

*O João **falou-me** [t1] com maus modos. De certeza que já lhe **tinham contado** o sucedido. [“contar” = anterior to t1]*

Indirect Speech is one of the combined clauses that are eligible to employ the relative tenses subsystem and, thus, DS/IS differences have been partially ascribed to absolute/relative tenses opposition, through *transposition* phenomenon.

2.2. *Absolute vs relative tenses: DS vs IS*

There are two main ways of reporting speech: *directly* (*oratio recta*, direct speech/discourse/quotation) and *indirectly* (*oratio obliqua*, indirect speech/discourse/quotation). Direct Speech and Indirect Speech are therefore commonly accepted as the nuclear modes of reporting. Besides this traditional division, we have to deal with other derived and intermediate modes of speech reporting, expressed terminologically simply by means of the addition of adjectives or certain combining forms, such as *free*, *quasi-*, *semi-*, *pseudo-*. The most important one is *free indirect discourse*, but there are others: *pseudo-direct speech*, *pseudo-indirect speech*, *quasi-direct speech*, *quasi-indirect speech*, *semi-indirect discourse*, *free direct speech*, etc.¹

¹ See Maldonado (1991), Reyes (1994).

The connection between these two main nuclear ways of reporting (direct and indirect speech) is the phenomenon of *transposition/backshift*: indirect speech is the result of the transposition of direct speech, through which, as it is said, a *de dicto* reading (DS) is replaced by a *de re* reading (IS). This is the invariable way grammatical discourse explains IS: the expression «transposição do discurso direto para o indireto» (“transposition from direct to indirect discourse”), apparently based on the confusion between *direct speech* and the *original speech* itself, occurs frequently as a title or part of a text introducing this way of reporting.¹

As a result, in this backshifting process, among other mainly deictic changes, *absolute tenses are replaced by the corresponding relative ones*: PR becomes IMP, PPS becomes MQP and FUT becomes CONDI. According to Bechara (1999: 482): «O discurso direto [...] passa a discurso indireto, em que se transpõe o presente [...] para o pretérito imperfeito [...]». One of the four Le Bon Usage’s *Modifications entraînées par la transformation du discours direct en discours indirect* says that «Si le verbe introducteur est au passé, le présent de l’indicatif devient un imparfait, le passé composé devient...» (Grevisse, 1988: 681).

Backshifting is in fact a generic operative rule in IS in many languages in the context of a past tense matrix verb. It is so in Portuguese, as in Spanish (Reys, 1993² e Maldonado, 1991), in French (Landeweerd & Vet, 1996), in English (Declerck, 1990), in Dutch (Boogaart, 1996) and other languages. However, this is not the only available rule in this mode of reporting, as its counter-rule is also an option to be considered. Section 3 will discuss backshift and non-backshift in IS.

3. Indirect Speech: Backshift or non-backshift

3.1. Backshift: the “default rule”

The traditional expression of the backshifting rule seems to follow the common rule of *consecutio temporum* (Sequence of Tenses, SoT) for combined clauses and, thus, to define it as a *purely formal phenomenon*. With slightly different approaches, the switching from absolute to relative tenses in IS is seen as the natural consequence of the reporting verb tense form. According to Comrie (1986: 284-285), «if the tense of the verb of reporting is past, then the tense of the original utterance is backshifted into the past». In Landeweerd & Vet (1996: 147) we read that «The common rule of ‘consecutio temporum’ states that the tense form in the subordinate clause should be adapted to the tense of the matrix sentence [...]».

However, due to the specific nature of IS, this traditional view seems to be restrictive. Tense transposition in IS has to be more than a merely mechanical operation and therefore has to be distinguished from other tense shift processes. First of all and mainly, because of the specificity of the second OP here involved. IS’s t_I is discourse-type and therefore we have to consider two communicative situations. More than (changes in) *temporal orientation*, in fact, we are dealing with (changes in)

¹ See Cunha & Cintra (2013: 797).

² «Si el tiempo de Sit B [quoted speaker] es anterior al de Sit A, deben usarse los tiempos llamados “relativos”, cuyo significado temporal no es transparente, sino establecido a partir del verbo principal» (Reyes, 1993: 39)

perspective. And here is a quite intriguing and apparently paradoxical aspect: in IS the original temporal perspective/orientation is filtered through another speaker's (the reporting speaker) perspective but without losing its original anchorage. On the one hand, the actual speaker may have to deal with a lack of control on the embedded contents, namely on the tense's temporal orientation towards his own point-of-speech. On the other hand, however, according to Coulmas (1986), there is some space left for the *processing of content* and reporting speaker plays a role in it. Coulmas (1986: 3) refers to talking about a "de dicto and de re ambiguity": «in indirect speech the speaker is free to blend information about an utterance with information about the world not conveyed by that utterance». More than a merely formal operation, backshift has to be seen therefore as a mostly dynamic process and its status on IS's identity needs to be reviewed.

Additionally, we have to consider other tense patterns involved, namely the fact that the embedded tense can be available to anchor another point in the text. Veters (1996: 60) draws attention to this: «le choix de la stratégie temporelle se fait au niveau textuel et non pas à l'intérieur de la phrase complexe.» This may also put the SoT rule into perspective.

In this regard, non-backshift can be seen as a convincing evidence of the need for different approaches and transposition seems to gain a broader sense. After all, once in IS, backshift is not the only rule. In several contexts backshift and non-backshift seem to be equally valid possibilities and then absolute and relative tenses opposition becomes once again part of the equation. More than opposite tense patterns, we believe that backshift and non-backshift have to be viewed as complementary mechanisms in the processing of content shared by the two speakers involved. Thus, a revision of the conditions for non-backshifting is needed.

3.2. Backshift or non-backshift: "continuing applicability" context

A well-known main condition for non-backshifting is Comrie's rule of the applicability of the quoted original tense orientation ("anteriority", "posteriority" or "simultaneity") to the speaking point-of-time of the External Speaker (the "quoting speaker"): «[...] if the content of the indirect speech has continuing applicability, the backshifting is optional.» (Comrie, 1986: 284). This rule has to be supported by two other complementary rules: firstly, the temporal orientation of the embedded tense can never be used irrespective of the Internal Speech Point (the quoted speaker); secondly, the embedded tense never signals an exclusive orientation towards the Internal Speech Point – that is, the choice for backshift never prevents the "applicability reading".

The consequences of these three rules combined can be seen from different angles and therefore other different rules and conditions can be established.

First of all, from the point of view of the temporal relations towards the two speech points as far as it concerns the tense expression's responsibility, we can say that there are only two general readings: whether (i) the temporal orientation ("anterior", "simultaneous" or "posterior") of the embedded tense is *mandatorily true* for the Internal Speech Point (*IntSpeechPt*) and *simply possible* for the External

Speech Point (*ExtSpeechPt*); whether (ii) it is *mandatorily true for both* Speech Points. There is a “one-to-one correspondence” between the two tense mechanisms (backshift/non-backshift) and these two possible readings:

- 1) If the embedded tense backshifts, its temporal orientation is *mandatorily true* for the Internal Speech Point and *possibly true* for the External Speech Point;
- 2) If the embedded tense doesn't backshift, its temporal orientation is *mandatorily true* both for the Internal Speech Point and for the External Speech Point;

As we can observe, backshift and non-backshift differ in the status of the embedded tense's expressed relation towards the External Speech Point: either *possible* or *mandatory*.

This can be summarised as in the following figure, where arrows indicate the Speech Points that are followed by the tense's temporal orientation in each tense pattern context (solid line being mandatory and dotted line non-mandatory):

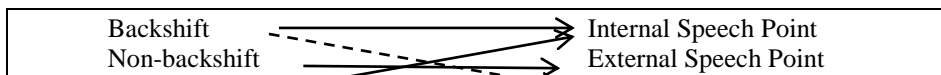


Figure 1. *Speech Points that are followed by the tense's temporal orientation*

The Internal Situation's (*IntSitPt*) temporal orientation towards the *ExtSpeechPt* happens to be the only non-mandatory relation (3) in the IS's *three-point and three-relations figure*:

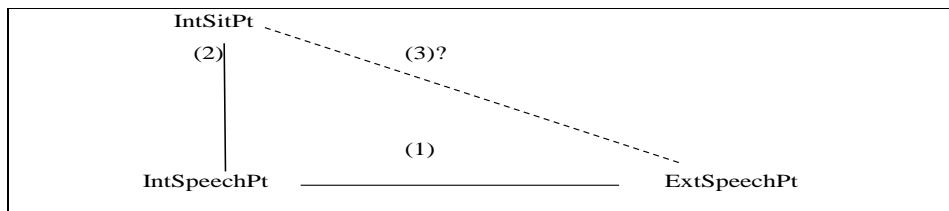


Figure 2. *IS's three-points and three-relations*

When tense backshifts, other contextual clues, namely adverbs, or even the truth status of the proposition itself (Kiparsky & Kiparsky, 1971, apud Davidse & Vandelanotte 2011: 248)¹ may make clear the actual embedded situation's temporal orientation towards the *ExtSpeechPt*. Otherwise it will remain ambiguous.² Depending on contextual information, non-backshift, in turn, would be, therefore, either impossible, “redundant” or even a really relevant temporal choice.

Secondly, in consequence, backshift and non-backshift have to be related to the following possibilities which place final temporal readings in context:

¹ *John grasped that the earth is (was) flat.* (Kiparsky and Kiparsky, 1971: 162, apud Davidse & Vandelanotte, 2011: 248).

² Veters (1996: 56) talks about *opaque* reading.

- (i) the temporal orientation of the embedded tense is **true only for** the InternalSpeechPoint; (**Backshift**)
Ele disse que chegaria ontem.
- (ii) the temporal orientation of the embedded tense is **true both for** the IntSpeechPt and the ExtSpeechPt (**Backshift** or **non-backshift**)
Ele disse que falaria com ele amanhã.
Ele disse que falará com ele (amanhã).
- (iii) the temporal orientation of the embedded tense is **true for** the InternalSpeechPoint **and ambiguous** towards the ExternalSpeechPoint. (**Backshift**)
Ele disse que falaria com ele.

As we can see, backshift is the more comprehensive form, as it is always possible (Declerck & Tanaka, 1996).

Thirdly, in the case of possibilities (i) and (ii) above, we can talk about *convergent* and *non-convergent* embedded tenses' temporal orientations towards the two Speech Points: in *convergent reading* (we will call it “applicability reading”), the two temporal orientations go in the same direction; in *non-convergent reading*, they go in different directions (opposite or simply divergent). The possible combinations of temporal orientations for each one of the mentioned pairs of tenses are the following:

- (1) Eu vivo (PR) em Baião. (“simultaneity”)

Backshift: *Disse que vivia em Baião.*

- Non-convergent (divergent) Reading
[“**simultaneity** to IntSpeechP + **anteriority** to ExtSpeechPt”]

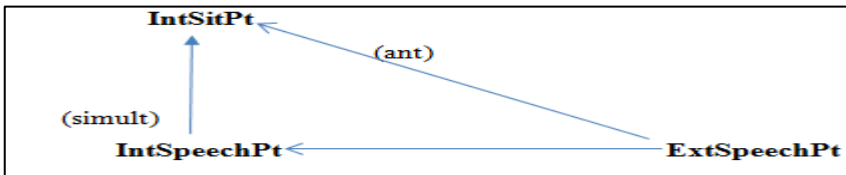


Figure 3. IS IMP Non-Convergent Reading

- Applicability Reading [“**simultaneity** to IntSpeechPt + **simultaneity** to ExtSpeechPt”]

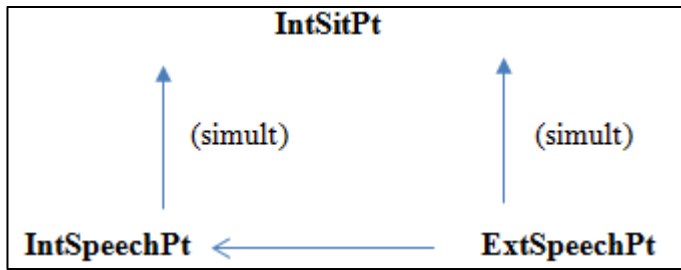


Figure 4. IS IMP Applicability Reading

Non-Backshift: *Disse que vive em Baião.*

- Applicability Reading [“**simultaneity** to IntSpeechPt + **simultaneity** to

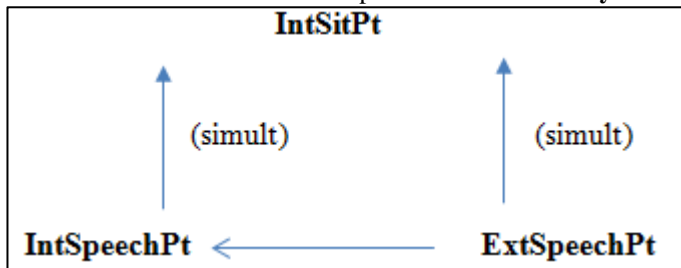


Figure 5. IS PR Applicability Reading

(2) Eu vivi (PPS) em Baião. (“anteriority”)

Backshift: *Disse que tinha vivido em Baião.*

- Applicability Reading [“**anteriority** to IntSpeechPt + **anteriority** to ExtSpeechPt”]

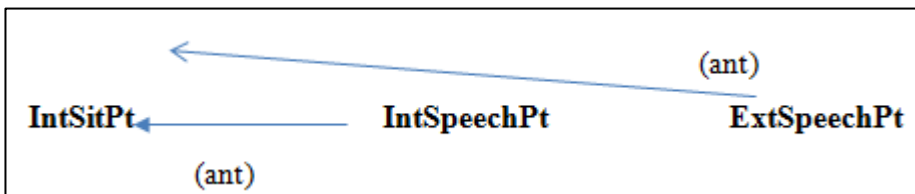


Figure 6. IS MQP Applicability Reading

Non-Backshift: *Disse que viveu em Baião.*

- Applicability Reading [“**anteriority** to IntSpeechPt + **anteriority** to ExtSpeechPt”]

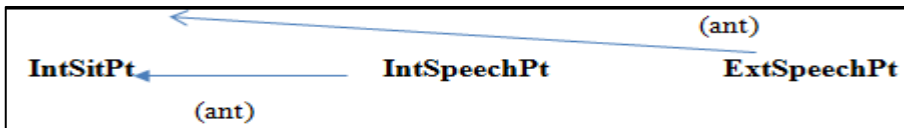


Figure 7. IS PPS Applicability Reading

(3) Eu viverei (FUT) em Baião. (“posteriority”)

Backshift: Disse que viveria em Baião.

- Non-convergent (opposite) Reading [“**posteriority** to IntSpeechPt + “**anteriority** to ExtSpeechPt”]~

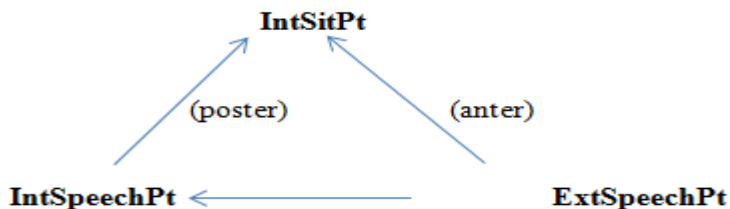


Figure 8. IS CONDI Non-Convergent Reading

- Applicability Reading [“**posteriority** to IntSpeechPt + **posteriority** to ExtSpeechPt”]

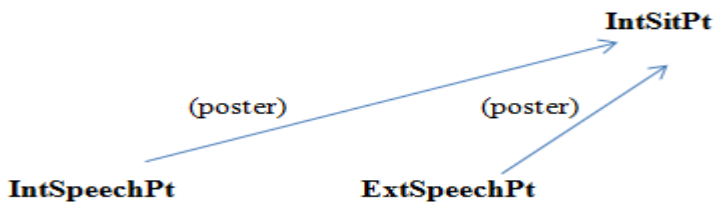


Figure 9. IS CONDI Applicability Reading

Non-Backshift: Disse que viverá em Baião.

- Applicability Reading [“**posteriority** to IntSpeechPt + **posteriority** to ExtSpeechPt”]

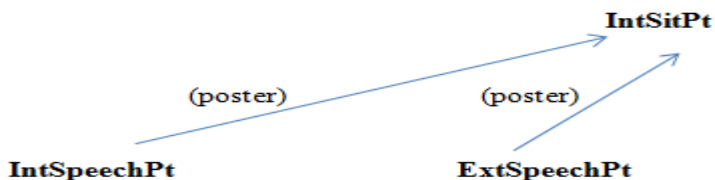


Figure 10. IS FUT Applicability Reading

In an “applicability reading” context, as backshift and non-backshift are both possible, the question is *what exactly brings the speaker to choose one or the other*. According to Comrie’s rule, we have been ascribing to IS’s tense variation mainly a temporal function, non-backshift explicitly marking the convergent reading. But we have to go back to the concept of “applicability reading” itself and its means of expression, in order to clarify what is really left for tense variation. In fact, we have to consider at least two possibilities: the “applicability reading” can be (i) either part of the embedded text (in which case, it can be inherent to the propositional content or expressed by other elements in the context), (ii) or not. In the latter, the “applicability reading” can be seen as tense pattern dependent and, thus, non-backshift as a motivated option. In the former case, however, the tense pattern apparently is not, at least temporally (*stricto sensu*), motivated.

Moreover, convergent/divergent figures show that there is one specific case where the “applicability reading” is inherent to the temporal orientation pattern: in the “anterior” pattern (in the context of an also “anterior” matrix verb) - as for *Disse que tinha vivido/viveu em Baião* - the embedded situation’s temporal orientation happens to be, for logical reasons and according to the rules, always true for both Speech Points. That is, the embedded temporal orientation would never be used irrespective of neither of the two Speech Points.¹

In our study we intend to focus specifically on this case: tense pattern variation in “past in past” context (MQP or PPS). And as we have seen that cannot be ascribed strictly speaking to a temporally motivated choice. It may become vulnerable to other factors.

3.3. Backshift or non-backshift: reviewing tense strategies in IS

The phenomenon of non-backshift in IS is one of the topics that has been further investigated in recent literature. Two main kinds of contributions, among others, can be identified and relevant for our purpose. On one hand, for languages that employ tense-shift rule as a default rule, empirical data shows that non-backshifting can be a more frequent phenomenon than it seemed to be. Consequently, it is claimed that it can’t be viewed as a peripheral phenomenon anymore [in contrast, according to some traditional approaches, non-backshift has been commonly seen as a simple possibility constrained by certain conditions, an allowed simplification, as an exception, sometimes even an error - *Le Bon Usage* (Grevisse, 1988: 681) refers to talking about «exemples non conformes», «mélange des temps»]. On the other hand, for languages that do not employ tense-shift in IS, at least systematically, cross-linguistic observation puts it into perspective. But basically both kinds of contributions bring to discussion the exact nature of the whole backshifting phenomenon. In fact, more than

¹ See also Costa & Branco (2012: 88): talking about “anteriority” contexts, they say that «in backshift contexts involving two past tense forms, the embedded tense never signals a time that temporally follows the time associated with the embedding tense: [...] *Debra said last night that she brought a bottle of wine this morning.»

a problem in itself, non-backshift has to be treated as part of the “problem” of backshifting process.

Being part of the problem, non-backshift has to be seen also as part of the solution. In fact, new approaches and data show that non-backshift plays a much more important role in the whole process.

Firstly because non-backshift is formally closer to the backshift pattern than it seems. In fact, unlike other combined clauses, in IS the matrix verb seems to be “strong enough to hold” the original embedded tense’s temporal orientation, regardless of tense pattern.

Secondly, because in certain conditions non-backshift may be as frequent as backshift pattern. According to Davidse & Vandelanotte (2011: 246), «relative tense is not as dominant as might have been expected». In Vandelanotte’s study about the distribution of tense patterns in IS, the numbers tend to be in fact quite close (Davidse & Vandelanotte, 2011).

One possible explanation could relate this pattern alternation to differences in register, non-backshift being in certain conditions preferred in oral communication.

Thirdly, in spite of what it seems, non-backshift is not a step back to direct quotation, but rather another step towards other levels of reporting speaker’s participation and commitment. An important facet of the phenomenon, and a possible argument, is the fact that non-backshift seems to be only possible with verbs of saying (Landeweerd & Vet 1996: 149).

In this respect, important data comes also from languages with other tense patterns in IS. According to Cate (1996), in German the Indicative/*Konjunktiv* opposition is said to be somehow related to reporting speaker’s degrees of distance towards reported contents and Indicative seems to be sometimes used to express approval of the contents. The relation between reporting and reported speakers, namely their identity, is said to be therefore a crucial factor and different situations have to be considered. First of all, the reporting speaker may quote either his own words and perspectives or somebody else’s. A different effect on tense pattern choice is thus expected. According to Cate (1996: 200), in German the use of *Indicative verb forms* are frequent *when reported speaker and reporter are identical*. Moreover, when reporting and reported speakers are different, which is the typical case, important differences should be also drawn between the context of a 3rd and a 2nd person reported speaker.

In our study we are investigating the distribution of MQP (backshift) and PPS (non-backshift) in the context of a matrix past tense verb of saying (*disse que*). As that cannot be ascribed strictly speaking to a temporally motivated choice, we believe that it may become vulnerable to other factors. We will try to discuss the following hypothesis: *the tense pattern alternation can be generically related to reporting speaker’s degrees of commitment to the reported contents and thus differences about who is reporting and who is reported should be considered*.

Our study is based on empirical data from parliamentary debates, where “discourse about discourse”, debating over (interlocutor’s or self’s) words, meanings and arguments is an important part of the reasoning processes and strategies.

4. Data analysis: some examples

We intend to observe the distribution of MQP (backshifting) and PPS (non-backshifting) in embedded clauses depending on *disse que* (*said that*), in the context of parliamentary debate. The examples are extracted from the CRPC corpus and considers only, in this phase, event verbs. As we said before, we believe that these two different tense patterns (backshift / non-backshift) can be related to the reporting speaker's intentions to build and combine points of view and knowledge about reported propositional contents. By taking this position, we follow Davidse & Vandelanotte (2011) and Declerck & Tanaka (1996). Some contextual factors are, therefore, being considered that can have an effect in the embedded tense option. The main factors are the following:

1. The subject of the reporting verb ("Who said that?") – we intend to distinguish the effect of a 1st, 2nd or 3rd person context in the embedded tense option/variation;
2. The subject of the embedded situation;
3. Reporting speaker's comments on the truth value of the embedded situation, when reporting and reported speakers are different;

The examples are organised according to these contextual clues and its relation to the two tense patterns. Some preliminary data of our study can be shown and briefly described in the following examples:

Context 1P+3P: "1st P-Reported speaker" + "3rdP embedded verb subject"

In this group of examples, reporting and reported speakers coincide. The speaker repeats his own words, in order to confirm them, correcting or not others' perceptions. In these cases, tense doesn't backshift and thus a 1st person context seems to have the expect effect on the embedded tense option.

(a) [...] *eu não disse que o problema do emprego era com o Sr. Ministro das Finanças, disse que a questão do desemprego foi discutida hoje de manhã e o Sr. Ministro das Finanças deu abundante informação [...]*

b) *Já aqui disse que, no decorrer de um século, o trigo que ali se produziu em abundância foi substituído pelo milho e este pelo arroz - única cultura arvensse possível dentro em breve.*

Context 2P+3P/2P: "2ndP-Reported speaker"+ "3rdP/2ndP embedded verb subject"

In this kind of context, reporting and reported speakers are different but they are part of the same communicative situation: they are "sender" and "receiver" in a face-to-face interaction. An important distinction has to be taken into consideration: whether the actual speaker is committed to the truth of the reported speaker's proposition, or whether he is not. Clues about this

commitment can be found in the context and, we believe, eventually also in the embedded tense's pattern, as shown in the following examples.

c) *Quanto à primeira parte da sua intervenção, o Sr. Deputado [...] disse que a sessão legislativa **tinha começado** mal, sobretudo por causa das questões regimentais. Quero dizer-lhe, Sr. Deputado [...], **que, na nossa opinião, começará menos bem**, por causa das questões regimentais, para se desenvolver melhor e terminar bem.* [you said that the legislative session had started wrongly]

d) *Sr. Presidente, relativamente a um debate a que assisti, há pouco, pelo circuito interno de televisão da Assembleia, **só queria corrigir um pequeno dado** factual constante da intervenção do Sr. Deputado [...], quando **disse que** o Orçamento de Estado para 1999 **tinha sido referendado** pelo Sr. Primeiro-Ministro no dia 6 de Janeiro.*

e) *Sr. Presidente, pedi a palavra para **fazer um pequeno protesto** em relação a uma afirmação feita pelo Sr. Deputado [...] quando **disse que** não se **tinha referido** a Deputados de, 1^a e 2^a porque, se a memória me não falha, **referiu-se efectivamente a eles**.*

f) *Srs. Deputados: Ouvimos a intervenção de um antigo Ministro dos Assuntos Sociais, onde **ele nos disse que tinha palmilhado** o País e que **tinha visto** situações horríveis. Acredito, porque é verdade que se vêem situações horríveis! Simplesmente, como Ministro, **o Sr. Deputado viu as que quis**, ou esqueceu-se dos óculos!*

g) *Sr. Presidente, Srs. Deputados, Sr. Presidente da Comissão de Assuntos Europeus, em primeiro lugar, devo dizer que **discordo do meu prezado** colega Deputado Luís Sá quando **disse que** hoje o Sr. Deputado Braga de Macedo **tinha repetido** a sua prática anterior - melhor diria que se trata de uma postura pois dois actos não fazem uma prática - de misturar a comunicação institucional do presidente da comissão com a posição do partido.*

h) *Em terceiro lugar, V. Ex.^a **disse que** na elaboração desta proposta **tinha tomado** em consideração apenas o artigo 27.º da Lei de Defesa Nacional e das Forças Armadas. **Não, Sr. Ministro!** Na nota justificativa da proposta de lei é dito claramente que também tomou em consideração o artigo 40.º, n.º 2 alínea g), dessa lei.*

i) *A propósito dos diplomas do V Governo, que o Sr. Ministro **disse que tinham sido feitos** à pressa já depois de conhecidos os resultados das eleições, **quero dizer que isso também não é exacto**.*

This first group of examples illustrates non-commitment contexts. And in all cases tense backshifts. In the following cases, in contrast, the reporting speaker happens to agree with reported speaker's words, as can be confirmed in the bold and underlined words in the context.

j) *A Sr.^a Deputada **disse que** o Orçamento **entrou** nesta Assembleia e **saiu** daqui muito modificado. O que é que a senhora diria se fosse ao contrário? A senhora não sabe que a competência nesta matéria, em matéria de política orçamental, em matéria de política fiscal, é da Assembleia da República? **Ainda bem que o Orçamento foi modificado!***

k) *Está a falar-se de 700 famílias que durante dois, três, quatro anos investiram nessa educação e, quando a Sr.^a Deputada disse que o Instituto foi avisado, quero lembrar que não houve só uma inspeção, houve três inspeções.*

l) *Ora, disse que quando o PS esteve no Governo não realizou acções deste tipo. O Sr. Secretário de Estado é uma das poucas e honrosas figuras deste Governo que passou por esta Casa, com o que me congratulo, mas os seus conhecimentos sobre o que se passou na Segurança Social são relativamente recentes. Gostaria de lembrar-lhe que o PSD é há 11 anos, sucessivamente e sempre, responsável pela área da Segurança Social.*

m) Sr. Deputado, V. Ex.^a disse que, historicamente, a Igreja teve o privilégio de dar o acesso ao saber, neste país. Não negamos isso [...].

Context 2P+1P: “2ndP-Reported speaker”+ “1stP embedded verb subject”

Moreover, in a particular kind of circular context, reporting and reported speakers are sharing and “switching” the other’s words or situations, in this way: reporting speaker takes the other speaker’s (2ndP) own words about some reporting speaker’s (1stP) alleged speech or attitude. Here are some examples:

n) Disse que eu não **tinha falado** do mais importante, uma vez que, na sua opinião, criar emprego para os deficientes não é importante, apoiar os deficientes e as suas famílias é pouco importante, e o mais importante são outras áreas. A Sr.^a Deputada tem um critério curioso!

o) No que concerne à eventual integração dos pensionistas e reformados do Caminho de Ferro de Benguela no sistema de protecção social portuguesa, o Sr. Deputado disse que eu **tinha recebido** um requerimento em que esses reformados solicitavam a sua integração na Caixa Nacional de Pensões. Ora, esta instituição não existe! Decerto, V. Ex.^a queria referir -se à Caixa Nacional de Previdência [...]

5. Conclusions

In this study, our aim was to discuss the conditions for *non-backshift* in Indirect Speech in Portuguese. We focused on the distribution of MQP (backshifting) and PPS (non-backshifting), in a “past in past” context. As this tense alternation cannot be ascribed to temporal conditions, we tried to observe other factors that can have some effect in the embedded tense option, namely those factors related to reporting speaker’s degrees of commitment to the reported contents. We have chosen parliamentary debate context and the results from the examples analysed here (from CRPC corpus) have shown that in fact tense option seems to be closely linked to the relation between speakers and contents.

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