Dissertation Abstract

Identifying and Computing Temporal Locating Adverbials with a Particular Focus on Portuguese and English

TELMO MÓIA

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This dissertation deals with the semantics of temporal locating adverbials, comprising two main topics: first, the identification of this class of expressions, by distinguishing between it and other classes – namely temporal measure adverbials and time-denoting expressions – whose semantic proximity raises important categorisation issues; second, the semantic computation of temporal locating adverbials in the formal framework of Discourse Representation Theory, taking the presentation of Kamp and Reyle (1993) as the basic reference. The second topic necessarily leads to the analysis of the interaction between adverbial temporal location and other semantic domains that significantly affect the relations expressed by locating adverbials, among which Aktionsart, causality and quantification stand out.

The semantic-syntactic identification of temporal locating adverbials, as opposed to the two mentioned "bordering" categories of temporal measure adverbials and time-denoting expressions, requires choices concerning their internal structure and their semantic function. Thus, temporal locating adverbials are analysed as containing a (basic or derived) time-denoting expression

as immediate constituent, and as having a double semantic role – on one side, defining a frame for temporal location out of the interval expressed by their time-denoting complement and, on the other, defining a (location) relation between that (location) frame and the located entities. As a consequence, the apparently ambivalent measure/locating adverbials – like *for the last three hours*, or *from nine to five* – are considered as mere temporal locating adverbials, and the apparently ambivalent locating/time-denoting expressions – like *yesterday*, *last week*, or *before 1980* – are regarded as mere time-denoting expressions. The outcome of this categorisation is argued to be a manifestly simple, structured and well-defined system (of adverbial temporal location), with evident generalisation power.

With respect to the semantic computation topic, a general DRS-construction mechanism (i.e. a set of rules), based on Kamp and Reyle's (1993) but departing from it in some significant aspects, is proposed. The changes suggested are essentially motivated by the analysis of structures that were not examined in that work. Within the subtopic of the interaction between locating adverbials and other semantic domains, the impact of Aktionsart values, causality and quantification on adverbial temporal location is studied, and a more fine-grained typology of location relations than the one normally used in the literature is proposed. With regard to this issue, particular emphasis is laid on a type of structure termed "full-scanning (inclusive location) construction", which, to the author's knowledge, has not been given in the semantic literature the distinguished status it rightfully deserves.

The dissertation is divided in three parts, as follows. Part I is introductory and aims basically at: positioning the dissertation topic within the area of temporal linguistic issues (Chapter 1); briefly describing the Aktionsart and Tense subsystems, given their special relevance to the analysis of adverbial temporal location (Chapter 2); succinctly presenting the formal framework used in the dissertation – Discourse Representation Theory (DRT) –, especially in what concerns its treatment of temporal issues (Chapter 3). Within the second chapter, a schematic view of the (indicative) Portuguese and English tense systems is provided, according with the descriptions of Peres (1993) and Kamp & Reyle (1993). Part II focuses on the definition of "temporal locating adverbial". Its first chapter (Chapter 4) is introductory and has two main purposes: to present some conflicting classifications of time adverbials in the literature, which evince the relevance of the categorisation issue, and to present the DRT mechanisms for building discourse representations that are directly related with temporal locating adverbials. The following two chapters address the already-mentioned categorisation issues, posed by apparently ambivalent temporal phrases: Chapter 5 – "The dividing line between temporal locating adverbials and temporal measure adverbials" – and Chapter 6 – "The dividing line between temporal locating adverbials and time-denoting expressions". The second part of the dissertation also contains a chapter (relatively marginal with respect to the categorisation topic) in which

a set of time-denoting expressions – involving, somewhat intricately, the domains of time-denotation, temporal measurement, and temporal location – is described and formally analysed (Chapter 7). Finally, Part III explores, in a relatively limited way, the diversity of temporal location modes. Its first chapter (Chapter 8) presents a typology of location relations which reflects the contribution of different sentence elements, such as: the locating connective (typically a preposition), Aktionsart values, causality values (possibly emerging when situational complements are used) and elements quantifying over the located entities. In what concerns this chapter, the analysis of a construction which has not been noted in the literature in the exact form presented here, is to be underline. This construction, where, arguably, the locating adverbial acts as an Aktionsart shifter, consists in the combination – associated with causality values – of an achievement and an extended temporal adverbial, as in the sentence *o Paulo deixou fumar desde que soube que tinha problemas nos pulmões* ("the Paulo stopped smoke$_{\text{INFINITIVE}}$ since that [he] knew that [he] had problems in-the lungs"), which is approximately equivalent to its counterpart with a state description *o Paulo não fuma desde...* ("the Paulo NEG smokes since..."). The second and last chapter (Chapter 9) focuses on "full-scanning inclusive location", a location mode that is distinguished from the "simple inclusive location" and that has not been autonomously identified in the literature. Full-scanning inclusive location involves location of non-atomic entities (sums of eventualities or intervals), with a maximality requirement with respect to the location interval. It is exemplified by sentences like *o Paulo escreveu três livros desde / em 1980* ("the Paulo wrote three books since / in 1980"), which requires that the totality of books written by Paulo within the relevant interval be taken into account.

The dissertation is currently available at http://www.fl.ul.pt/dlgr/pessoais/tmoia/index.html. Part of its content has been published (or is about to be published) in proceedings of different linguistic meetings, namely: (i) 2001, "Telling apart temporal locating adverbials and time-denoting expressions", *Workshop Proceedings: Temporal and Spatial Information*, 39th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics (Toulouse, France), 41-48; (ii) 2000, "On Temporal Constructions Involving Measurement and Counting from Anchor Points – Semantic and Pragmatic Issues", presented at the Second International Conference in Contrastive Semantics and Pragmatics (SIC-CSP 2000), University of Cambridge, England, September 2000 (to be published by John Benjamins); (iii) 2000, "Temporal Location of Events and the Distribution of the Romance Counterparts of *Since*-Adverbials", in Joaquim Camps & Caroline Wiltshire (eds.), *Romance Syntax, Semantics and L2 Acquisition, Selected papers from the 30th Linguistic Symposium on Romance Languages, Gainesville, Florida, February 2000*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam, 137-152; (iv) 1998, "On the Semantics of Temporal Operators Expressing Anteriority and Posteriority", presented at the

Conference “The Syntax and Semantics of Tense and Mood Selection”, University of Bergamo, Italy, July 1998 (to be published by Oxford University Press); (v) 1997/1998, “On the Expression of Duration and Temporal Location through Adverbials Containing Predicates of Amounts of Time”, in *Proceedings of the XVIth International Congress of Linguists* (CD-ROM), Elsevier Science, 1998.

FLUL, Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal
tmoia@mail.telepac.pt