

The varying prominence status of indirect speech in adversative contexts

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In this paper, we explore the temporal and argumentative anchoring potential of indirect speech realized as part of an embedded clause following *pero* ('but') + speech verb (in past tense). Traditional accounts of temporal discourse structure tend to analyze only the relationship of indirect speech with the preceding context (Rohrer 1985). By focusing on the following context and temporal anchoring relationships, we are able to investigate the hierarchical structuring in which the indirect speech takes part (Himmelmann/Primus 2015; Becker/Egetenmeyer 2018). The co-occurring conjunction *pero* ('but') assigns an argumentative value to the clause which may boost its prominence status (Egetenmeyer talk).

In a basic conception in the lines of discourse representation theory (Kamp/Rohrer 1983; Kamp/Reyle 1993), textual development is brought about by perfective main verbs. Therefore, an embedded clause of indirect speech is not expected to contribute to temporal development (Forăscu et al. 2006: 67-68). This entails that a following reference time (Becker/Egetenmeyer 2018) is not anchored to a time corresponding to the embedded speech (see (1)).

- (1) [1] *María llegó_{perf} a la oficina.* [2] *Dijo_{perf} [3] que hacía_{imperf} mucho calor allí dentro.* [4] *Abrió_{perf} la ventana.*
'[1] Maria arrived at the office. [2] She said [3] that it was very warm in there. [4] She opened the window.'

The three (main) sentences in the example express a sequence of three events, [1] > [2] > [4]. Crucially, the time point introduced via the event in [4] (*abrió*, 'opened') is temporally anchored to the time introduced via the speech verb in [2] (*dijo*, 'said') (Becker/Egetenmeyer 2018). The main verbs ([1], [2], [4]) are marked for perfective aspect. A verb marked for imperfective aspect often pertains to the background (Weinrich 1982) and fails to advance narrative time (Kamp/Rohrer 1983). However, in a habitual context, the basic sequentiality in (1) may also be realized by verbs marked for imperfective aspect (*llegaba*, 'usually entered', *decía*, 'usually said', *abría*, 'usually opened'). In such a case, the embedded speech would also be expected to be of low prominence and not to play a role in the anchoring relationships.

Countering the described typical constellations, corpus data show that embedded indirect speech may display a varying degree of prominence if the speech verb follows an adversative connector. The connector attributes argumentative force to its argument (Anscombe/Ducrot 1977), which licenses the variability of the prominence value (Egetenmeyer talk). We focus on Spanish and analyze structures including *pero* ('but'). What we take as evidence for the prominence status is whether the proposition following the indirect speech is anchored to it or not. Example (2) presents the structure of interest. Again, the indirect speech ([3]) is not part of the anchoring relationship as [4] is temporally anchored to [2].

- (2) [1] *Finalmente, el cacique admitió_{perf} que Azzo estaba_{imperf} enterrado en el oasis,* [2] *pero dijo_{perf} [3] que sus huesos eran_{imperf} inviolables.* [4] *Nos dijo_{perf} que aquel hombre no era_{imperf} del todo normal [...].* (CREA: Cardeñosa, *El código secreto*, 2001: 336)
'[1] Finally, the chief admitted that Azzo was buried in the oasis, [2] but said [3] that his bones were inviolable. [4] He told us that the man was not quite normal.'

However, as (3) shows, the embedded clause may become part of the anchoring relationship. Then, the prominence value is boosted yielding equal prominence with respect to the surrounding propositions (see Becker/Egetenmeyer 2018 for a formalization). Then it becomes available as anchor for a following proposition. In (3), the anchoring of sentence [4] to [3] is made explicit by the recurring use of *vender* ('to sell').

- (3) [1] *[D]e crío, sólo tenía_{imperf} dos [...] jaulas pequeñas [...], [2] pero mi madre me decía_{imperf} [3] que [...] los vendiera_{imperf.subj} en lugar de soltarlos. [4] Venderlos podría_{cond} haberlos vendido, porque algunos cantaban_{imperf} tan bien [...].* (CREA: Aguirre & Uña Zugasti, *Nuevas leyendas del Monasterio de Piedra*, 2000: 113-114)

‘[1] As a child, I only had two small cages, [2] but my mother told me [3] to sell them instead of letting them go. [4] I could have sold them, because some sang so well.’

While in example (2) the speech verb is marked for perfective aspect, it is marked for imperfective aspect in (3). However, the case of a prominence value which is elevated beyond equal prominence seems to be compatible only with speech verbs marked for perfective past. This elevated prominence can be shown when the indirect speech clause functions as anchor for a proposition realizing a subordinating rhetorical relation (Jasinskaja/Karagjosova 2020). In the corpus, we also find examples showing low prominence. Then, the indirect speech and the speech verb are both skipped in the anchoring relations (Egetenmeyer 2020). In the respective occurrences, the speech verbs are marked for imperfective past. We explain the variance on the grounds of a possible co-specification between the verb of speech or thought and the indirect discourse (Pustejovsky 1995). Co-specification paves the way for the influence of aspect.

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