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

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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 adver-
bials, 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-construc-
tion 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 sug-
gested 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 introdutory
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) –, espe-
cially 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 “tem-
poral locating adverbial”. Its first chapter (Chapter 4) is introductory and has
two main purposes: to present some conflicting classifications of time adver-
bials 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 appar-
etly 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
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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{\textsc{\textit{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 \text{\textsc{\textit{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.


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