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### **Switching tenses and switching times: towards a grammar of the Historical Present**

The HP is a narrative device in which eventualities in the Present Tense are actually past relative to the time of the "real" context of utterance (1a). HP should be distinguished from the play-by-play present, but also from the present in stage directions, screenplays, and plot summaries, in which pastness relative to UTT-T is not guaranteed. In spite of its intrinsic interest as a particular instance of context-shift (in which at least one of the coordinates of a Kaplanian context is shifted, giving rise to a "double K-context"), HP is underdescribed as a linguistic phenomenon (Schlenker 2004, Eckard 2015). In a series of recent papers, Anand & Toosarvandani (2017, 2018, 2021) have established certain hallmarks of the HP and proposed an explanation for them. These are: (1) the HP time interval does not overlap UTT-T (1a); (2) the HP is linked to narratives (it is infelicitous in simple information exchanges) (1b); (3) a sequence of sentences in the HP may not exhibit temporal inversion (1c); (4) the HP may anchor not only Present Perfects and Simple Pasts, but also Past Perfects (1d); and (5) the HP is not subject to the stative-constraint (1e). A&T's important contribution to the analysis of the HP has been made mostly on the basis of constructed English examples.

In this presentation, we report the first results of an ongoing qualitative corpus investigation of the HP in Spanish, French, Italian and Portuguese (parallel corpus of translations of J. Cercas' *Anatomía de un instante*), whose tense-aspect systems differ from English (no stative constraint for the Present; Imperfect vs Pfv-Simple Past contrast) and among themselves (differences in the semantics of the Present Perfect and of the Pfv-Simple Past). We focus on two phenomena, switching tenses and switching times.

**SWITCHING TENSES:** The HP cooccurs with other tenses not only when a narrative switches from HP-mode into non-HP-mode (2), but also inside HP-mode text stretches. Since the temporal relations between subsequent HP occurrences are restricted to narrative progression (*and-then*) and overlap (A&T 2018), backward-shifting requires a form indicating anteriority, so that there is also a H-PresPerf (cooccurring with definite temporal adverbials that are incompatible with the canonical PresPerf), a H-Pfv-SP and a H-PastPerf (3a-d). Our data show important crosslinguistic differences as to the availability of a H-Pfv-SP and as to the preference for either H-PresPerf and H-PastPerf. But the most interesting question in this regard concerns the existence in Romance of an Imperfect that is not backward-shifted, but simultaneous to a HP. Intrasentential tense switches involving H-Imperfects (4) have important consequences for the theory of Sequence of Tense. They appear to be restricted to relative clauses, thus substantiating the hypothesis that their SoT-behavior differs from that of other types of embedding (Kusumoto 2005).

**SWITCHING TIMES:** The HP-mode relies on the shift of the temporal coordinate of the context from UTT-T to a (past) time of assessment (ASSESS-T). Although the HP-mode may be sustained in an entire narrative, switches back and forth between the HP- and the non-HP mode are frequent. **Temporal adverbials** (Altshuler 2011) play a central role in those switches. The HP-mode does not support indexical adverbials (*yesterday/tomorrow*) – but for the possible exceptions of *now* (whose status as an indexical is at best doubtful) and of text stretches combining HP with Free Indirect Discourse. The HP-mode resorts instead to anaphoric adverbials (*the day before/after*). Thus, in the HP-mode tenses are interpreted relative to ASSESS-T, whereas indexical adverbials are interpreted relative to UTT-T. This suggests that a bicontextual analysis for the HP-mode, analogous to that of FID (Schlenker 2004, A&T 2017), is more adequate than an analysis in terms of indexical shift (Deal 2020).

- (1) a. *Entonces, en 1947 Gombrowicz sale.PRES a la superficie* (Piglia).  
Then, in 19747, Gombrowicz emerges to the surface. [UTT-T  $\subset$  april 2008]  
b. Who built this church? \*(In the 1630's) Borromini builds this church (A&T 2020)  
c. The administration fires (e1) Mike. He meets (e2) with the ambassador. \*e1 > e2 (A&T 2018)  
d. Rumors of Berlusconi's crimes swirl. His advisors confront him. He scoffs.  
He had paid off the prostitute for her silence already (A&T 2017)  
e. Bill wins the race. <sup>ok</sup>HP ; \*CANONICAL-PRES (A&T 2017)
- (2) Sp. *en las semanas que siguen.PRES diversos miembros de ese organismo tantean.PRES a dirigentes de partidos minoritarios [...] y durante el otoño y el invierno se extienden.PRES en Madrid rumores diversos [...] Eso fue.SP todo.* (Cercas)  
in the weeks that **follow** various members of that organization **sound out** leaders of minority parties [...] and over the course of the autumn and winter several different rumours **spread** around Madrid [...] That **was** all. (Cercas)
- (3) a. Sp. *antes del verano ha inquietado*PRESPERF *al país con la advertencia [...]* (Cercas)  
Fr. *Avant l'été, il avait inquiété.PQP le pays par un avertissement*  
before the summer **he'd worried** the country with the warning [...]
- b. Sp. *lo halagan.PRES los mismos empresarios y financieros que antes lo arrinconaron.SP*  
Fr. *il est flatté.PRES par les patrons et les financiers, ceux-là mêmes qui auparavant l'avaient délaissé.PQP*  
It. *lo incensano.PRES quegli stessi imprenditori e finanzieri che lo avevano messo.PQP da parte*  
businessmen and bankers who **used to exclude** him **flatter** him (Cercas)
- d. Sp. *y dado que este había promovido.PQP una candidatura derrotada, la elección supone.PRES un severo varapalo para el presidente* (Cercas)  
and given that he **had sponsored** a candidate who was defeated, this election **represents** a severe setback for the Prime Minister
- (4) *Lo que ocurre.PRES a continuación en la Zarzuela [...] ocurre.PRES en unos pocos metros cuadrados, en el despacho del Rey y en el de Fernández Campo, que era.IMPf el antedespacho del antedespacho del Rey* (Cercas)  
What **happens** next in the Zarzuela [...] **happens** in a few square metres, in the King's office and in Fernández Campo's, which **was** the outer office of the King's outer office

**REFERENCES:** Altshuler 2011, Toward a more fine-grained theory of temporal adverbials. *SALT* 21. 652-673; Anand & Toosarvandani, 2017 Unifying the canonical, historical, and play-by-play present *SuB* 21; 2018, No explanation for the historical present: Temporal sequencing and discourse. *SuB* 22; 2021, Embedded presents and the structure of narratives. *SALT* 30. 801-820; Deal 2020, A theory of indexical shift, MIT Press; Eckardt 2015, *The semantics of Free Indirect Discourse*. Leiden, Brill; Kusumoto 2005, On the quantification over times in natural language, *Natural Language Semantics* 13(4), 317-357; Schlenker 2004, Context of Thought and Context of Utterance (A Note on Free Indirect Discourse and the Historical Present). *Mind & Language*  
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