

# Between shared expectations and possibilities – the discourse particle *sempre* in European Portuguese

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# Thanks

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# Are there *modal particles* in European Portuguese?

If there are, how do we know how to classify them as such?

What are modal particles?

- ▶ Are particles a syntactic category? Or a semantic category? Or both?
- ▶ Coniglio (2008, pp. 14–16, 121–126, 148, 159): ‘modal’ particles are defective sentential adverbs, fixed position in the clause structure left
- ▶ Function and meaning of ‘modal’ particles
  - ▶ Most of the elements make reference to previous discourse moves
  - ▶ Some of the elements make claims of non-actual worlds/possibilities
- ▶ **Conclusion I** term ‘particle’ only useful as syntactic category, different from sentential adverbs
- ▶ **Conclusion II** EP *sempre* behaves like a prototypical discourse (‘modal’) particle – despite the fact that Amaral and Del Prete (2014, p. 135) consider confirmative *sempre* as adverb in both languages

# Are there modal particles in European Portuguese?

EP *sempre* occurs in two positions with preferences for different interpretations: preverbally and post verbally

- (1) O banho de imersão **é<sub>v</sub>** sempre demorado.<sup>1</sup>  
DET.M bath of immersion is always take.time-PPP  
'The full bath is **always** time consuming.'
- (2) Vocês ontem sempre **foram<sub>v</sub>** ao cinema?<sup>2</sup>  
you.PL yesterday after.all were at.the.M cinema  
'Did you go to the cinema **after all**?'
- (3) \*Vocês ontem **foram** sempre ao cinema?

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<sup>2</sup>CRPC-ORAL pfamcv06.txt.

# Are there modal particles in European Portuguese? II

	temporal	confirmative
pre-verbal	462	5
post-verbal	1512	0

1. The element *sempre* can have, at least, one temporal and a discourse use.
  - ▶ *sempre*<sub>temp</sub>:
    - ▶ pre-verbal position: 462 (contra Amaral and Del Prete 2014, p. 137 and Ambar, Gonzaga, and Negrão 2004, p. 3)
    - ▶ post-verbal position: 1512
  - ▶ *sempre*<sub>confirm</sub>:
    - ▶ pre-verbal position: ?5 (cf. confirming Franco, 1998, pp. 147, 150; Macário-Lopes 1998, p. 7, Brito 2001, p. 66, Ambar, Gonzaga, and Negrão 2004, pp. 2–5, Fiéis 2010, ?? and Amaral and Del Prete 2014, p. 137)
    - ▶ post-verbal position: 0

# Stacking of discourse particles in European Portuguese

In rare occasions possible (cf. Franco 1990, pp. 187):

- (4) Sempre lá se resolveram.<sup>3</sup>  
sempre lá REFL resolve-PST.3P  
'They eventually ended up in agreement'
- (5) \*Lá sempre se resolveram.<sup>4</sup>  
lá sempre REFL resolve-PST.3P

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<sup>3</sup>As quoted in Franco (1990, pp. 187) = ex. (17).

# Two versions of confirmative *sempre*

Apart from the temporal interpretation, at least two distinct readings of confirmative *sempre* (cf. Amaral and Del Prete 2014, pp. 140–145)

1. Plan-oriented/bouletic confirmative *sempre*: subject referent commitment to make prejacent proposition  $p$  become true
2. Epistemic confirmative *sempre*: some referent commits to the truth of the prejacent proposition  $p$



# Confirmative *sempre*: Plan-oriented/bouletic interpretation I

Based on Amaral and Del Prete's (2014, p. 135) observation: plan-oriented interpretation of confirmative *sempre* in EP, and Italian:

- (6) A Mafalda SEMpre vai ao cinema no  
DET.F Mafalda sempre go.3s in.DET.M cinema on.DET.M  
domingo á noite.  
Sunday at.DET.F night  
'Mafalda indeed/still is going to the movies this Sunday  
night.'

But here: example with 3s subject, to show that plan needn't be associated with the speaker, rather it is associated with the SUBJECT referent.

**Requirement:** *p* must contain a predicate that involves an event which can be controlled by an agent; cannot be stative predicate or predicate referring to some past event

# Confirmative *sempre*: Plan-oriented/bouletic interpretation II

1. SUBJ committed herself publicly to the plan  $p$  of going to the movies on Sunday
2. SPKR and ADDR were mutually aware at  $t_1$  spoke about SUBJ's original plan
  - ▶ Not necessary that SUBJ spoke to SPKR or ADDR about plan in person
  - ▶ But SPKR and ADDR previously spoke about  $p$
3. at  $t_2$  SPKR or ADDR obtained information that SUBJ no longer committed to come to the movies on Sunday
4. SPKR obtained new information that the SUBJ referent ADDR found herself in circumstances to recommit to the original plan
5. SUBJ changed her plans twice

Assumption here: following requirements are relevant:

1. subject referent needs to have committed to some plan
2. commitment to plan must have been made publicly

Amaral and Del Prete (2014, pp. 142–144): fact-oriented interpretation of confirmative *sempre*: only in EP, but not Italian

- (7) O João SEMpre morreu.  
DET.M João sempre die.PST.3s  
'João indeed has died.'
- (8) O Micha SEMpre é russo.  
DET.M Micha sempre be.PRS.3s Russian  
'Micha is indeed Russian.'

**Observation** *p* can contain predicate that (i) is either stative or that (ii) refers to an event in the past.

Assumption here: following requirements are relevant:

1. SPKR, ADDR or third party committed to truth of  $p$  the that João died/Micha was Russian
2. SPKR puts  $p$  into question/withdraws commitment to truth of  $p$
3. SPKR obtains new evidence suggests that João died/Micha was Russian, (re)-commits to  $p$

Fact-oriented *sempre* involves two roles: (i) referent who committed to truth of  $p$  (*believer*) and (ii) referent who puts  $p$  into question (*questioner*). Are there restrictions how these roles are distributed





Questioner can be identical to believer:

(12) A chave SEMpre estava na gaveta.  
DET.F key sempre be-IMPF.3S in.DET.F drawer  
'The key turned out to be in the drawer after all.'

1. SPKR thought the key was in the drawer and told ADDR about it
2. SPKR took a first look in the drawer, but didn't see a key there, concluded it must be somewhere else. Told ADDR about it.
3. SPKR another look in the drawer and found the key there.

Questioner and believer can also be both ADDR



# Nature on movement restriction

Portuguese, Italian modifier with similar meaning *afinal/alla fine* which differs crucially in some respects

1. nuclear stress (cf. Amaral and Del Prete (2014, pp. 139–140))
  - ▶ *sempre* always attracts nuclear stress: preajacent *p* is Given, speech participants know both that some referent committed to *p*
  - ▶ *afinal* compatible with various placements of nuclear stress/focus on other constituents
2. negated preajacent *p* (cf. Amaral and Del Prete 2014, p. 147)
  - ▶ *sempre* cannot embedded preajacent with negation *não*
  - ▶ *afinal* can embed propositions with *não*
3. placement
  - ▶ *sempre* only occurs in preverbal position
  - ▶ *afinal* can precede subject, can follow entire preajacent
4. epistemic change
  - ▶ *sempre* involves two changes (cf. Amaral and Del Prete 2014)
  - ▶ *afinal* at least one change (cf. Amaral and Del Prete 2016)

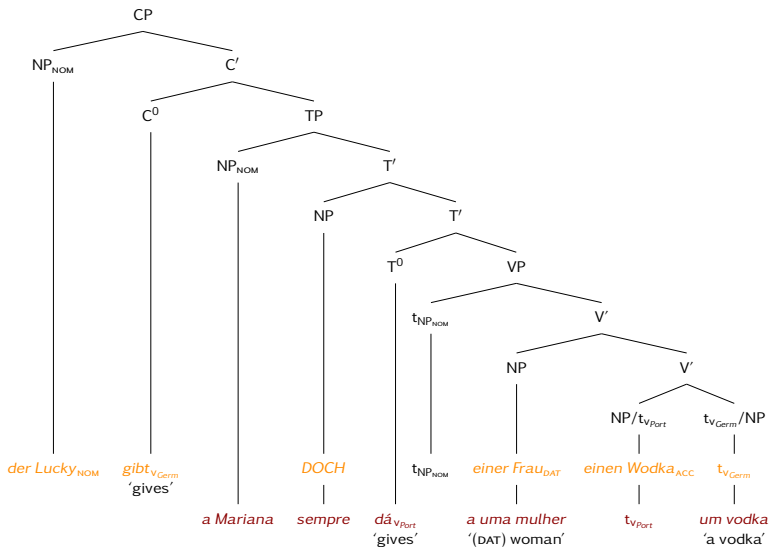
Nuclear stress on particles may be result of verum focus, e.g. German *DOCH* (cf. Gutzmann (2010), Egg and Zimmermann (2012, pp. 230–233))

- ▶ Prejacent  $p$  is destressed because already Given, speech participants know that at least some referent committed to its truth
- ▶ No other constituent can be fronted: would place focus on some constituent within prejacent  $p$

# Challenges for Amaral and Del Prete (2014)

1. They do not distinguish between different status  $p$  can have:
  - 1.1  $p$  being a shared belief/common ground: SPKR and ADDR both publicly commit to truth of  $p$
  - 1.2 content of  $p$  being known to both speech participants, without necessarily committing to its truth – what is known is that there is some referent who commits to truth or realisation of  $p$ 
    - ▶ Their claim:  $p$  has been part of the CG/shared beliefs – problematic because SPKR and ADDR can disagree on truth of  $p$
2. Amaral and Del Prete (2014, pp. 159–152) assume *sempre* is an epistemic modal operator in the style of Kratzer (1978), Kratzer (1981), which is evaluated against ‘general knowledge’ rather than beliefs of individual referents – no space for disagreement/conflicting beliefs

# Analysis without cartography

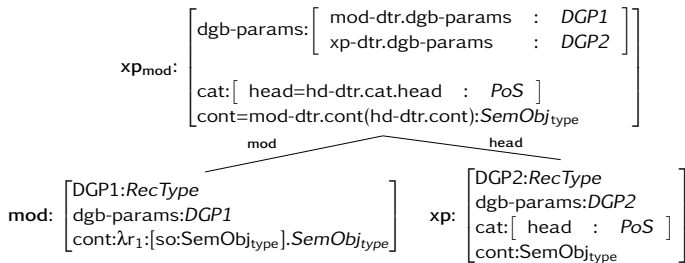


- ▶ According to Haider/Rosengren 1998: «Scrambling is adjunction to the VP, definite NPs tend to scramble»
- ▶ Position of particles - Adjunction to the VP

- ▶ PHON(ONOLOGY): represents phonological information of a sign
- ▶ CAT(EGORY): represents syntactic information of a sign
- ▶ CONT(ENT): represents semantic (mostly *at-issue*) information of a sign
- ▶ DGB-PARAMS (DIALOGUE GAMEBOARD-PARAMETERS) represents discourse and context specific informations of a sign, always *non-at-issue* meaning, containing resources such as:
  - ▶ current and future QUESTIONS UNDER DISCUSSION
  - ▶ FACTS ('common ground')
  - ▶ MOVES: list of previous moves in the discourse

# Head-adjunct scheme

$XP_{mod} =_{def}$



- ▶ Phrase structure scheme which licenses any type of tree combining a phrase with a modifier
- ▶ It combines
  - ▶ *Head Feature Principle* syntactic features of the mother, is projected by the syntactic features of the head-dtr (Pollard and Sag 1994, pp. 34, 56)
  - ▶ *Semantics principle* semantic content of the mother is projected by the semantic content of the modifier-dtr Pollard and Sag 1994, p. 56:
  - ▶ *Dialogue Gameboard-Parameters Principle*: the dgb-params of the mother is the union of the dgb-params of each dtr: (cf. Ginzburg 2012, p. 126)



# Discourse particles in TTR: the case of *sempre*

PHON = ⟨ /'sempre/ ⟩:list( <i>phonform</i> )																													
CAT:	HEAD = [ MOD = ⟨ [ CAT: [ HEAD=v:PoS COMPS=⟨ ⟩:LIST( <i>SYNSEM</i> ) CONT:[p:PROP] ] ] ]:LIST( <i>SYNSEM</i> ) ] : PoS ]																												
DGB-PARAMS:	<table border="0"> <tr><td>SPKR</td><td>: <i>Ind</i></td></tr> <tr><td>ADDR</td><td>: <i>Ind</i></td></tr> <tr><td>X</td><td>: <i>Ind</i></td></tr> <tr><td>Y</td><td>: <i>Ind</i></td></tr> <tr><td>C<sub>1</sub></td><td>: x=spkr ∨ addr</td></tr> <tr><td>C<sub>2</sub></td><td>: x=addr ∨ spkr</td></tr> <tr><td>UTT-TIME</td><td>: <i>Time</i></td></tr> <tr><td>P=CAT.HEAD.MOD.CONT.P</td><td>: <i>Prop</i></td></tr> <tr><td>M<sub>1</sub> = ASSERT(X,P)</td><td>: <i>IllocProp</i></td></tr> <tr><td>BASE</td><td>: <i>RecType</i></td></tr> <tr><td>IDEAL</td><td>: <i>RecType</i></td></tr> <tr><td>M<sub>2</sub> = ASSERT(y,(poss(y, ¬p, base, ideal)))</td><td>: <i>IllocProp</i></td></tr> <tr><td>C<sub>UTT</sub></td><td>: addressing(spkr,addr,utt-time)</td></tr> <tr><td>MOVES</td><td>: list(<i>IllocProp</i>) ⊕ m<sub>2</sub> ⊕ m<sub>1</sub> ⊕ list(<i>IllocProp</i>)</td></tr> </table>	SPKR	: <i>Ind</i>	ADDR	: <i>Ind</i>	X	: <i>Ind</i>	Y	: <i>Ind</i>	C <sub>1</sub>	: x=spkr ∨ addr	C <sub>2</sub>	: x=addr ∨ spkr	UTT-TIME	: <i>Time</i>	P=CAT.HEAD.MOD.CONT.P	: <i>Prop</i>	M <sub>1</sub> = ASSERT(X,P)	: <i>IllocProp</i>	BASE	: <i>RecType</i>	IDEAL	: <i>RecType</i>	M <sub>2</sub> = ASSERT(y,(poss(y, ¬p, base, ideal)))	: <i>IllocProp</i>	C <sub>UTT</sub>	: addressing(spkr,addr,utt-time)	MOVES	: list( <i>IllocProp</i> ) ⊕ m <sub>2</sub> ⊕ m <sub>1</sub> ⊕ list( <i>IllocProp</i> )
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CONT:	[p=cat.head.mod.cont.p]Prop																												
QUEST-DOM=⟨ ⟩:list( <i>RecType</i> )																													

Figure: Lexicon entry for the confirmative discourse particle *sempre*

- ▶ *sempre* is a propositional modifier, whose MOD value selects a VP with saturated complements, and an unsaturated subject
- ▶ *dgb-params* keeps track of information state of the discourse
  - ▶ MOVES-list taken to keep record of the speech participant's *Discourse Commitments* in the sense of Farkas and Bruce's (2010, pp. 84–90)
- ▶ Cooper's (2023, p. 247) translation of Kratzer's (1981) concept of modal operators into TTR as predicate of the arity  $\langle \text{Ind}, \text{Type}, \text{Type}, \text{Type} \rangle$ , taking as arguments:
  - ▶ an epistemic judge (here modelled as *Individual*)
  - ▶ a proposition (here modelled as *Type*)
  - ▶ an epistemic modal base *B* (here modelled as *Type*)
  - ▶ and a stereotypical ordering source of ideals *I* (here modelled as a *Type*)

1. Contrasting views on nature of the common ground
  - ▶ Stalnaker (1978), Steedman (2014, p. 10): extremely small set of proposition, only moves from ongoing conversation
  - ▶ Here: *sempre* can make reference to discourse states/MOVES from previous conversations

- ▶ Commitments can be done by third party, who did not participate in ongoing dialogue, hence which are not part of MOVES-list
- ▶ MOVES-list: keeps track of previous commitments to truth of  $p$  or to make  $p$  come true.
- ▶

1. EP *sempre* very similar to German discourse particle *DOCH* (cf. Franco 1998, p. 153, Egg and Zimmermann 2012, pp. 230–233)
  - 1.1 Similar movement restriction – fixed position in left edge of VP
  - 1.2 Similar meaning as stressed *DOCH* (with verum focus)
2. Prejacent *p* needn't have been part of *CG*, only requires some referent to commit to it's truth or realisation



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