

# SUBJECTIVITY AND INTERSUBJECTIVITY IN CONDITIONALS: TEMPORAL BACKSHIFTING STRATEGIES IN BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE

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- **ABSTRACT:** This work takes a Cognitive Linguistics perspective on Brazilian Portuguese conditional constructions. Based on mental spaces theory (FAUCONNIER, 1994, 1997; FAUCONNIER; SWEETSER, 1996) and on mental spaces work on conditionals (SWEETSER, 1990; DANCYGIER, 1998, DANCYGIER; SWEETSER, 2005; GOMES, 2008), the research relied on recent contributions on subjectivity and intersubjectivity (LANGACKER, 1990; TRAUOGOTT; DASHER, 2005; VERHAGEN 2005), and its developments based on the notion of Base Communicative Space Network (BCSN) ( SANDERS; SANDERS; SWEETSER, 2009; FERRARI; SWEETSER, 2012). Drawing on written corpus data, which includes journalistic and literary texts, we focus on conditionals which may alternate between the future of the subjunctive and the present of the indicative, in the protasis, and between the present and the future of the indicative, in the apodosis. Four groups of conditionals were identified that displayed distinct relations between mood/tense selection and cognitive motivations. The main contribution of the paper is that it provides a unified framework for relating tense/mood alternations in conditionals to the speaker's subjective and/or intersubjective perspective.
- **KEYWORDS:** Cognitive Linguistics. Mental spaces. Conditionals. Tense. Subjectivity

## Introduction

One of the main goals of Cognitive Linguistics is to investigate the relationship between linguistic structure and meaning construction. In particular, research on mental spaces has demonstrated that specific grammatical forms serve as prompts for dynamic on-line constructions of meaning. With respect to [If p, q] conditionals, the **if**-clause has been characterized as setting up a hypothetical space p which is the Foundation space for the causally related Expansion space q (FAUCONNIER, 1994, 1997; DANCYGIER; SWEETSER, 2005).

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Following this line of investigation, the aim of this paper is to analyze Brazilian Portuguese [If p, q] conditionals which use the present of the indicative to indicate future events. This phenomenon, usually referred to as **temporal backshifting** in the literature (DANCYGIER, 1998; DANCYGIER; SWEETSER, 2005), is claimed here to be related to two main tense alternations: (i) present of indicative/future of subjunctive in the protasis; (ii) present of indicative/future of indicative in the apodosis. It is then argued that these alternations can be accounted for in terms of subjectivity and intersubjectivity.

The paper is organized in three main sections. Section 2 describes the theoretical background for the research, and provides a review of work on mental spaces and conditionals (FAUCONNIER, 1994, 1997; DANCYGIER; SWEETSER, 2005; FERRARI, 2000, 2001, 2012; GOMES, 2008). It also relies on recent elaborations of the mental spaces approach which provide new insights into subjectivity and intersubjectivity (SANDERS; SANDERS; SWEETSER, 2009; FERRARI; SWEETSER, 2012). Section 3 deals with methodological issues, focusing on data-gathering and the definition of objectives and hypothesis. Section 4 presents an analysis of temporal backshifting in Brazilian Portuguese conditionals which relates formal characteristics and meaning construction in terms of degrees of subjectivity and/or intersubjectivity.

## **Theoretical background**

Cognitive approaches to deixis have pointed out that deictic elements are radial categories with prototypical central members and peripheral extensions. (MARMARIDOU, 2000). With respect to verb tense, Langacker (1991) has argued that the opposition between 'present' and 'past', for example, should be more generally defined as a proximal/distal contrast in the epistemic sphere (prototypically temporal, but of other types as well). Thus, prototypical present designates that the event is temporally immediate to the speaker (e.g. **I'm hungry**), while prototypical past conveys temporal non-immediacy (e.g. **I was hungry last night**). Interestingly enough, present tense may also refer to epistemically proximal events, either past (e.g. In 2002, Brazil **wins** the World Cup) or future (e.g. The train **arrives** tomorrow).

In particular, the concept of epistemic proximity, which implicitly refers to the speaker's/hearer's reasoning processes during ongoing discourse, has been brought to explain the use of present tense to signal future events in conditionals (e.g. If it **rains**, they'll cancel the game). In what follows, the

theoretical background which constitutes the basis for the present work will be presented.

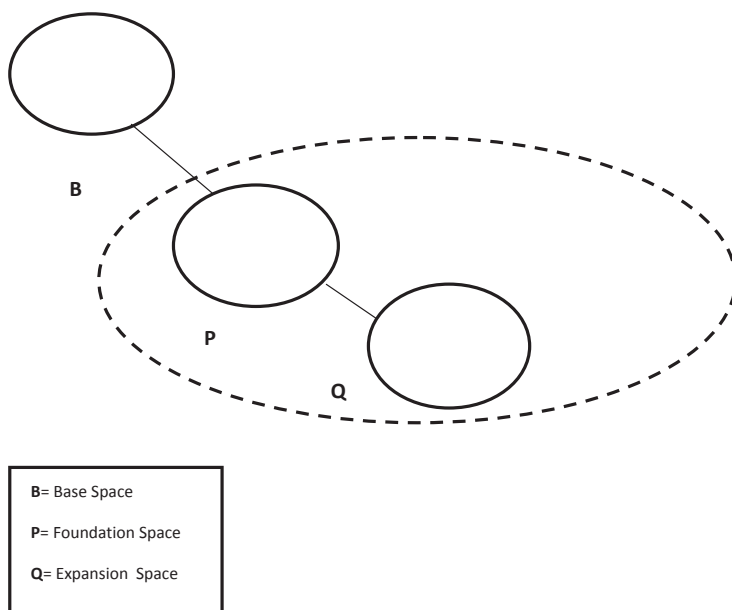
## **Mental space approach to conditionals**

Mental Spaces Theory has been built to explain meaning construction in terms of mental representations. Thus, mental spaces are described as “[...] partial structures that proliferate when we think and talk, allowing a fine-grained partitioning of our discourse and knowledge structures.” (FAUCONNIER, 1997, p.11). As pointed out by Lakoff (1987), mental spaces are structured by Idealized Cognitive Models (ICMs), i.e., frames which provide patterns for understanding cultural values and social relations.

Any space configuration includes four discourse primitives which are assigned to the discourse spaces dynamically. The BASE space is informally defined as an anchor for the configuration; the VIEWPOINT space is the one from which other spaces are currently being set up or accessed; the FOCUS space is where content is currently being added, and the EVENT space corresponds to the time of the event being considered.

If we consider conditionals of the form [If P, Q], we will note that they set up two successive spaces, a Foundation H and an Expansion J, which are normally built taking the BASE as Viewpoint (VP). So the conditional **If it rains, they will cancel the game** first sets up a space H, hypothetical with respect to the BASE; P becomes the FOCUS (F) where content is being added (“**it rains**”). Q is an expansion of P: it becomes the FOCUS’ (F’), since it inherits H’s explicit structure and acquire extra explicit structure of its own corresponding to “**they will cancel the game**”, as illustrated in the following diagram:

**Diagram 1** – Mental space representation of conditionals.



**Source:** Fauconnier (1997, p.132).

Dancygier (1998) has pointed out that, in conditionals of the type represented in Diagram 1, **if** has three functions: (a) at the cognitive level, it is a **space builder** for conditional spaces; (b) at the lexical level, it is a marker of non-assertiveness, indicating that the speaker presents the assumption as non-assertable; (c) at the constructional level, it introduces one of the clauses of a conditional construction and presents the assumptions in P and Q as connected.

At the cognitive level, another relevant parameter is the **speaker's epistemic stance** which refers to the "kind of commitment the speaker has to a proposition" (FILLMORE, 1990, p.42). Thus, while when-clauses are assumed to signal positive epistemic stance (e.g. **When I arrive home, I'll call them**), if-clauses may indicate either neutral or negative epistemic stance towards a future event. For example, the present tense **arrive** is indicative of neutral epistemic stance in **If I arrive home early, I'll call them**, while the past tense **arrived** indicates negative epistemic stance in **If I arrived home early, I would call them**.

At the constructional level, Sweetser (1990) has argued that conditionals are interpretable as joining clauses in different ways. There are cases in which the **content** of the two clauses is semantically related – that is, where the situations described are assumed to be causally related, as in **If the team wins this game,**

**it will win the Cup**. Other times the speaker's knowledge about a state of affairs is a precondition for establishing a conclusion, even though the causal relation between the content of the two clauses may be in the opposite direction; thus, the relation between protasis and apodosis is **epistemic**. For example, **If they ate all the cookies, they were really hungry** means not that eating is a condition for being hungry, but rather that knowledge of the eating is a condition for the speaker's conclusion about their level of hunger. Finally, the conditional construction relates a state of affairs and a **speech act**; e.g. **If you don't mind, could you turn off the fan?** makes a request as contingent on the addressee not minding to do what is asked.

Dancygier and Sweetser (2005) have argued that **prediction** is one of the main functions of content conditionals. In this case, meaning construction is based on alternatives. For example, the conditional **If it rains, they won't go hiking** simultaneously structures the alternative space **If it doesn't rain, they will go hiking**. On the other hand, epistemic and speech act conditionals are not, in general, predictive; although they may involve some kind of prediction, their main focus is on the conditional presentation of a conclusion or a speech act, respectively.

In this paper, tense alternation in Brazilian Portuguese conditionals will be examined. It is shown that the use of the present of the indicative is not restricted to content conditionals, but may also occur in epistemic or speech act conditionals which make reference to future events.

## **Cognitive approaches to conditionals in Brazilian Portuguese**

Recent cognitive linguistics research on Brazilian Portuguese conditionals has emphasized the correlations between formal and contextual parameters. Work by Ferrari (2000, 2001) has shown that verb form combinations, types of conjunctions (*se, caso, mesmo se, etc.*<sup>1</sup>), as well as clause types in the apodosis (e.g. declaratives, interrogatives or imperatives clauses) contribute in different ways to conditional meaning.

It has specially been noted that verb form is one of the most relevant parameters for conditional interpretation. Given that conditional protases posit a hypothesis that could be confirmed under appropriate conditions, the speaker's stance on this hypothesis is codified by verb tense (and mood), as shown in the following examples<sup>2</sup>:

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<sup>1</sup> The conjunctions 'se', 'caso' and 'mesmo se' correspond roughly to 'if', 'in case' and 'even if' in English.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout this paper, the following abbreviations will be used: FS (Future of Subjunctive); FI (Future of Indicative); PF (Periphrastic Future); P (Present of Indicative); PS (Past of Subjunctive) COND (Conditional); Pimp. (Past Imperfect of Indicative)

- (4) *Se o time ganhar (FS) o jogo amanhã, ficará (FI)/ vai ficar(PF) em 1º lugar no torneio.*  
*“If the team wins the game tomorrow, it will/it’s gonna get the first place in the competition”.*
- (5) *Se o time ganhasse (PS) o jogo amanhã, ficaria(COND)/ ficava (PImp) em 1º lugar no torneio.*  
*“If the team won the game tomorrow, it would get/got the first place in the competition”*

According to Sweetser’s classification (1990), conditionals (4) and (5) are examples of content conditionals, since there is a conditional and causal relation between the described events. Moreover, verb tense variation in the protasis signals different epistemic stances, as proposed by Fillmore (1990). Thus, the use of the future of the subjunctive (FS) in (4) indicates that the speaker takes a neutral epistemic stance towards the team winning the game; on the other hand, the past of the subjunctive in (5) signals distanced or negative epistemic stance (i.e., the speaker doesn’t believe that the team will win tomorrow).

In contexts like (4), Brazilian Portuguese also accepts the present of the indicative in the protasis. In the article “Three types of conditionals in English and Portuguese”, Gomes (2008) analyses temporal choice in Portuguese conditionals, focusing on the alternation between the present of the indicative and the future of the subjunctive in conditional protases. The alternation is illustrated by the simulation of two hypothetical conversational exchanges. In the first one, X says to Y that Maria has been studying hard, and Y may reply:

- (6) *Se ela estiver cansada, é melhor parar.*  
 If she be:FS tired, be:P better stop  
*“If she is tired, she would better stop”*

In the second one, X tells Y that Maria is tired because she has been studying hard, and Y replies:

- (7) *Se ela está cansada, é melhor parar.*  
 If she be:P tired, be:P better stop  
*“If she is tired, she would better stop.”*

Gomes (2008) explains the difference between (6) and (7) as follows. In (6), the future of the subjunctive indicates uncertainty on the speaker’s part; the speaker is not sure that Maria is tired. In (7), however, Y already knows that Maria is tired and the use of the present of the indicative reflects this knowledge. Thus, the choice between the future of the subjunctive and the present of the indicative is

motivated by the stance taken by the speaker to the proposition P. If the speaker takes the proposition as an **accepted fact**, she will choose the present of the indicative, but if she takes it as an **uncertain fact**, the future of the subjunctive is likely to be chosen.

Gomes's proposal sheds new light on the distinction between the present of the indicative and the future of the subjunctive in Portuguese conditional protases. Yet, the following questions still remain: a) what motivates the speaker to treat an event as accepted fact? b) conversely, what motivates the speaker to treat an event as uncertain fact?

In what follows, we aim at answering these questions by focusing on the speaker's cognitive construction of conditionality (and not on objective truth or falsity). Based on previous studies on apparently incongruent temporal sequences in spoken conditionals (FERRARI, 2012), we propose an analysis which articulates recent developments of mental spaces theory to the notions of subjectivity and intersubjectivity.

### **Cognitive approaches to subjectivity and intersubjectivity**

Subjectivity and intersubjectivity have been prominent concepts in research on semantic change and grammaticalization. Traugott e Dasher (2005) argue that, in the objective point of view, the speaker or the writer intends (or pretends) to describe things as they actually are. By contrast, the subjective perspective typically involves the representation of the speaker's point of view in discourse, as illustrated by overt spatial and temporal deixis, explicit markers of the speaker's attitude to the proposition, and so on. Finally, intersubjectivity has to do with interpersonal meanings which explicitly mark the speaker's attention to the addressee (e.g. overt social deixis, politeness markers and honorific titles).

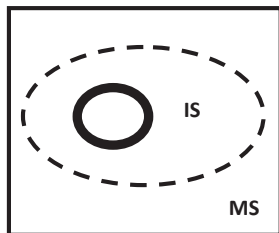
Albeit the contribution of grammaticalization studies to the understanding of subjectivity and intersubjectivity, cognitive approaches have added new dimensions to these concepts. In his groundbreaking work, Langacker (1990) distinguishes between "off-stage" and "on-stage" expression of the conceptualizer's point of view, and proposes that objectivity and subjectivity are related to the asymmetry between the conceptualizer and the object which he is conceptualizing. The asymmetry is maximal when the subject of conception is totally absorbed in apprehending the onstage situation (subjectivity), or when the object of conception is well-delimited (objectivity).

In Langacker's terms, the **Ground** (speaker, hearer, location and time of the speech event) may be coded in three different ways:

- a) The **Ground** remains external to the scope of predication, as in nouns and verbs in isolation:

**Figure 1** – Ground external to the scope of predication

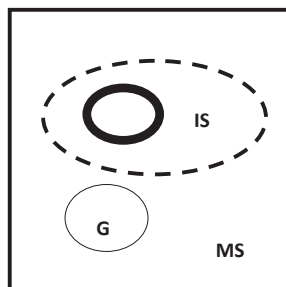
IS= immediate scope      MS=maximal scope



**Source:** Langacker (1990, p.10).

- b) The **Ground** is offstage, as an implicit, unprofiled reference point, as in deictic expressions like **yesterday, tomorrow, last year**:

**Figure 2** – Offstage Ground

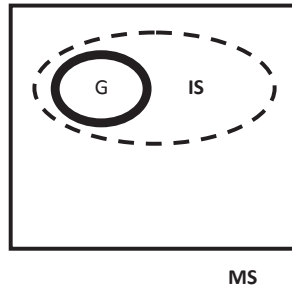


**Source:** Langacker (1990, p.10).



- c) some facet of the **Ground** is put onstage, as in expressions such as here, I, now, and so on:

**Figure 3** – Onstage Ground

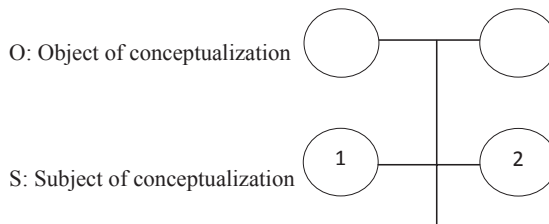


**Source:** Langacker (1990, p.10).

According to Langacker, (a) and (b) are subjectively construed, since the **Ground** remains external to the predication's maximal and immediate scope, respectively. However, (c) represents an objective construal in which the **Ground** is onstage as the focal point within the immediate scope of predication. Moreover, it is worth noting that (a), (b) and (c) should be placed along a continuum ranging from subjectivity to objectivity.

Although Langacker (1990) does not focus on intersubjectivity, his proposal has posed the foundations for further analyses of this phenomenon. For example, Verhagen (2005) has claimed that the **Ground** is not a homogeneous whole but has, in fact, a complex structure which includes, at least, two conceptualizers: the speaker and the addressee. As subjects of conceptualization, these participants engage in cognitive coordination by means of the utterance, with respect to some object of conceptualization, as illustrated in Figure 1:

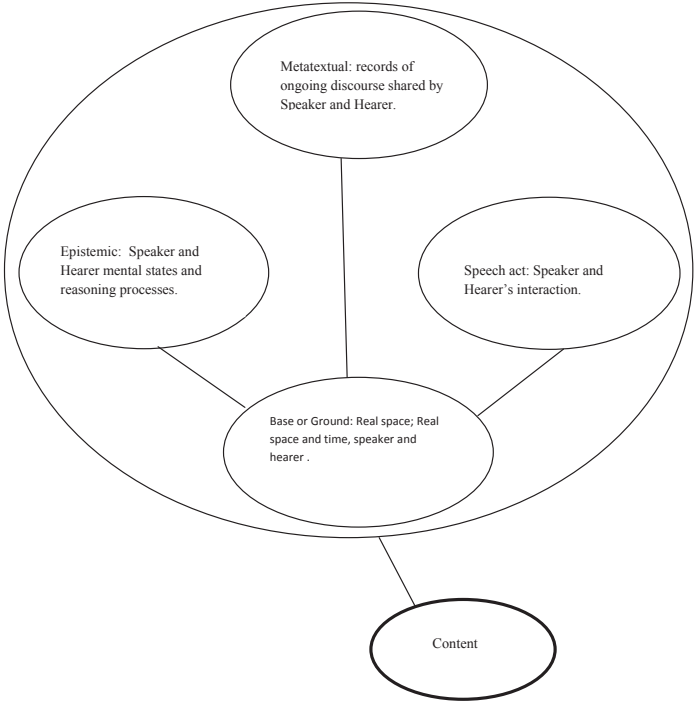
**Figure 4** – Basic elements of conceptualization



**Source:** Verhagen (2005, p.31).

Cognitive coordination is intersubjective; it occurs when the first conceptualizer invites the second to jointly observe the object of conceptualization by actualizing the common ground (which refers to the knowledge mutually shared by the conceptualizers, including models of each other and of the discourse situation). Verhagen’s initial insight was further elaborated by work on mental space structure (SANDERS; SANDERS; SWEETSER, 2009). The concept of Base Communicative Spaces Network (BCSN) was put forward to indicate the spaces which are implicitly built up by any communicative use of language. It includes at least: (i) a Ground Base Space, which contains the real speaker and hearer in their spatiotemporal setting; (ii) Epistemic Spaces (speaker’s and hearer’s mental states and reasoning processes); (iii) a Speech Act Space (speech interaction which defines the speech acts performed by speaker and hearer); (iv) a Metatextual Space, which contains the records of ongoing discourse. The BCSN can be diagrammed as follows:

**Diagram 2** – Basic Communicative Spaces Network (BCSN)



**Source:** Ferrari and Sweetser (2012, p.49).

As Ferrari and Sweetser (2012) pointed out, the Base Space is taken to be less subjective than Speech Act, Epistemic and Metatextual Spaces, which are assumed to be more implicit and, hence, more subjective. This is because the Base Space is more intersubjectively verifiable in experience than the more abstract spaces of speech interaction or mental processes.

## Methodology

The research is based on written data, including press articles from the newspaper “O Globo” and the magazine “Época” (PINHEIRO, 2010), and literary texts taken from the Portuguese Corpus (DAVIES; FERREIRA, 2006).

The investigation focused on [Se P, Q] conditional constructions which allow alternation between future forms and the present of the indicative (conveying future meaning):

### Schema 1 – Form and tense alternations

|   |
|---|
| <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <span>[ SE</span> <div style="margin: 0 auto; padding: 0 10px;"> <b>P</b> </div> <span>]</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center;"> <span>{</span> <div style="margin: 0 auto; padding: 0 5px;">             Future Subjunctive           </div> <div style="margin: 0 auto; padding: 0 5px;">             Present Indicative           </div> <span>}</span> </div> <div style="margin: 0 auto; padding: 0 10px;"> <b>Q</b> </div> <div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center;"> <span>{</span> <div style="margin: 0 auto; padding: 0 5px;">             Future Indicative           </div> <div style="margin: 0 auto; padding: 0 5px;">             Present Indicative           </div> <span>}</span> </div> </div> |
|---|

**Source:** Made by the author.

The schema reveals that the protasis may have the future of the subjunctive or the present of the indicative, while the apodosis may have the future or the present of the indicative in Brazilian Portuguese.

This paper aims at clarifying the mechanisms involved in meaning construction in these conditionals, as well as explaining the speaker’s tense choice in real usage contexts. The hypothesis is that these tense alternations are related to different strategies for indicating subjectivity and intersubjectivity.

In the next section, the analysis will be presented.

## Present and future alternations in conditionals

The analysis showed that the conditionals investigated allow four different temporal combinations. These combinations will be discussed in what follows.

## Group I: Future-Future

Group I includes conditionals which have the future of the subjunctive in the protasis and the future of the indicative/periphrastic future in the apodosis. The form-meaning pairings are the following:

**Table 1** – Future of subjunctive – Future of indicative

|                           | <b>PROTASIS</b>                  | <b>APODOSIS</b>                                     |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>MORPHOLOGICAL FORM</b> | Future of subjunctive (FS)       | Future of indicative(FI)<br>Periphrastic future(PF) |
| <b>SEMANTIC CONTENT</b>   | Event non-anterior to the Ground | Prediction  |

**Source:** Made by the author.

The following example illustrates the combination of the future of the subjunctive (FS) and the future of the indicative (FI) shown in Table 1:

- (8) Cameron quer inquérito sobre suposta relação do MI-6 com regime líbio. Se a ação *prosperar* (FS), *ficará* (FI) proibida a venda das ações do governo líbio nas duas empresas, e eventuais dividendos *terão* (FI) de ser depositados em juízo. A decisão do Brasil foi baseada em resoluções do Conselho de Segurança das Nações Unidas. (Corpus LINC)

*“Cameron wants an inquiry into the alleged relation between MI-6 and Libyan regime. If the judicial action goes forward, the selling of government shares by the two companies will be forbidden, and any dividends will have to be deposited in Court. Brazil’s decision was based on United Nations Security Council resolutions”.*

The combination of the future of the subjunctive (FS) and the periphrastic future (PF) is exemplified as follows:

- (9) A maioria dos endocrinologistas espera que a droga continue liberada no Brasil. “Se esse remédio *for* (FS) proibido, *vamos perder* (PF) um produto extremamente útil no combate à obesidade”, diz Ricardo Meirelles, presidente da Sociedade Brasileira de Endocrinologia e Metabologia.” (Corpus LINC)

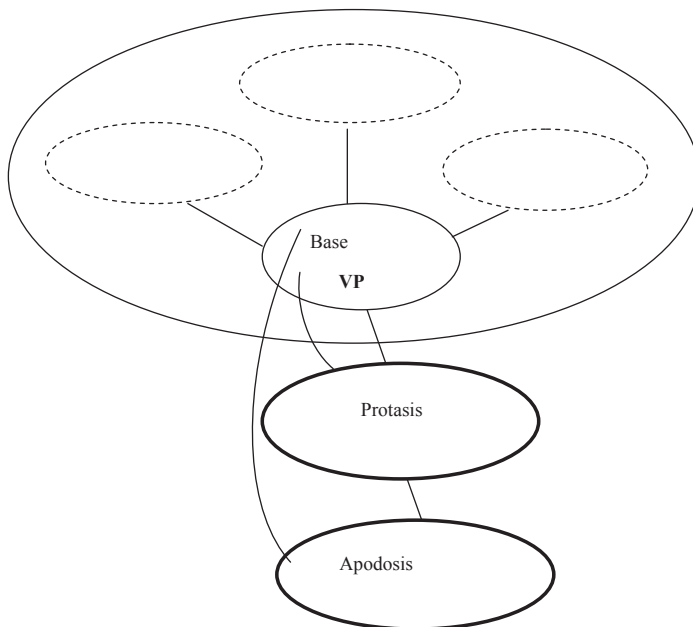
*“The majority of endocrinologists hope that the drug remains approved in Brazil. “If this medicine is forbidden, we will lose an extremely useful product in the fight against obesity”, says Ricardo Meirelles, chair of Brazilian Endocrinology and Metabolism Society”.*

(10) Além da superlotação, há os abusos de praxe, como espancamentos e humilhações. Se a denúncia feita pelo Conselho Estadual dos Direitos Humanos à ONU *for* (FS) adiante, o Brasil *poderá sofrer* (PF) sanções da Organização dos Estados Americanos (OEA). (Corpus LINC)

*“Apart from overcrowding, there are the usual abuses, such as beating and humiliation. If the denunciation made by the Human Rights State Council to the UN is acted on, Brazil may face sanctions from the Organization of American States (OAE)”*

Examples (9) and (10) have the auxiliary *ir* (roughly, to go) and the modal *poder* (roughly, may)<sup>3</sup>. Group I may be represented as follows:

**Diagram 3** – Meaning construction in Group I



**Source:** Made by the author.

Diagram 3 represents the construction of two Focus spaces relative to the Base, corresponding to the conditional protasis and apodosis, respectively. Given that the Base is one of the spaces of the Basic Communicative Spaces Network (BCSN), conditionals which conform to Group 1 show some degree of subjectivity.

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of periphrastic future in Portuguese, see Ferrari e Alonso (2009). The main claim is that periphrases such as [ir/poder/dever +Infinitive] indicate the construal of the future event from the speaker's viewpoint. The periphrases differ, however, in the degree of certainty indicated by each auxiliary.

However, as we shall see, these conditionals are less subjective than the ones that belong to other groups.

## Group II: Present-Future

Group II differs from Group I in that it has the present of the indicative in the protasis. Form-meaning pairings are shown below:

**Table 2** – Present of indicative – Future of indicative

|                           | <b>PROTASIS</b>                  | <b>APODOSIS</b>                                     |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>MORPHOLOGICAL FORM</b> | Present of Indicative (P)        | Future of Indicative(FI)<br>Periphrastic Future(PF) |
| <b>SEMANTIC CONTENT</b>   | Event non-anterior to the Ground | Prediction  |

**Source:** Made by the author.

Similarly to the previous group, conditionals in this group involve a prediction. But in this case the present of the indicative contributes to meaning construction in a slightly different way: it points to intersubjective information, previously mentioned in discourse.

In this vein, we suggest that the notion of “accepted fact”, proposed by Gomes (2008), could be replaced by “intersubjectively accepted fact”. The latter notion reflects discourse ‘reality’, not real facts or speaker’s belief systems. Consider the following example:

- (11) Há algum tempo estou para lhe dizer isso, mas não me atrevia. Não me parece bonito que nosso Bentinho ande metido nos cantos com a filha do Tartuga, e esta é a dificuldade, porque se eles *pegam*(P) de namoro, a senhora *terá* (FI) muito que lutar para separá-los. (*Corpus do Português*)

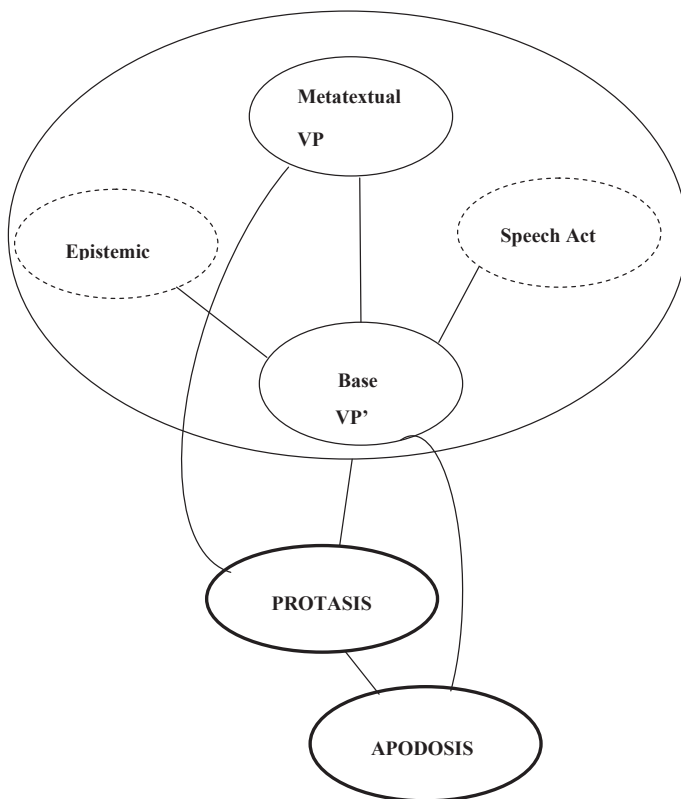
*“I’ve been wanting to tell you this for some time, but I didn’t dare. It doesn’t seem fitting that our Bentinho be hanging around with Tartuga’s daughter, and this is where the difficulty lies, because if they start going steady, it will give you a real hard time to split them up.”*

Example (11) is an excerpt of the novel *Dom Casmurro*, written by Machado de Assis. In this part of the plot, one of the characters, José Dias, is concerned about Bentinho, the main character, and Bentinho’s close friend, Capitu. José Dias warns Bentinho’s mother to be careful, because close friends can become

a couple. In (11), the present of the indicative (“**If they start going steady**”) signals that the information in the protasis has already been activated in previous discourse (i.e., **if Bentinho keeps hanging around with Capitu, they may start dating**).

Group II may be represented as follows:

**Diagram 4** – Meaning construction in Group II



**Source:** Made by the author.

Diagram 4 shows that both the Metatextual Space, which contains shared registers of ongoing interaction, and the Base Space are involved in meaning construction. Thus, conditionals in Group II are more subjective than conditionals in Group I because they activate a more implicit space in the BCSN (i.e., the Metatextual Space) for building up the Foundation Space.

### Group III: Future-Present

Group III includes conditionals with the present of the indicative in the apodosis. Form-meaning pairings are indicated in Table 3:

**Table 3** – Future of subjunctive – Present of indicative

|                           | <b>PROTASIS</b>                  | <b>APODOSIS</b>           |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>MORPHOLOGICAL FORM</b> | Future of Subjunctive (FS)       | Present of Indicative (P) |
| <b>SEMANTIC CONTENT</b>   | Event non-anterior to the Ground | Conclusion                |

**Source:** Made by the author.

Examples (12), (13) e (14) show conditionals which have the structure presented in Table 3:

- (12) “Ex-comandante militar da Amazônia e da Força de Paz no Haiti, o general Augusto Heleno entrou de cabeça na política depois que foi reformado, em maio. Armado com o Twitter, ele atira para todos os lados. Eis um de seus petardos: “Se o Brasil um dia *for (FS)* sério, o mensalão *vira (P)* um ‘case’ para mostrar como o judiciário era lento, inepto e ‘engavetador’.” (Corpus LINC)

*“Ex-Army Commander of the Amazon and of the Haitian Peace Force, general Augusto Heleno got deep into politics after his retirement in May. Armed with the Twitter he shoots everywhere. Here is one of his fire crackers: “If one day Brazil is a serious country, the Mensalão Scandal becomes a ‘case’ to show how the judiciary was slow, inept and inoperative.”*

In (12), the reported speaker sets up a hypothetical future space (“**if one day Brazil is a serious country**”), using the future of the subjunctive. In the apodosis, however, he uses the present of the indicative to indicate a present conclusion about a future event (“**become a ‘case’**”).

- (13) “Longe, em algum lugar, a mulher se revolta, os filhos brigam, ninguém sabe o que fazer agora que a escola vai começar. Júnior José Guerra está encurralado. Se *voltar (FS)*, *morre (P)*. Ele denunciou – e está sozinho.” (Corpus do Português)

*“Far away, in some place, the woman is outraged, her sons fight, no one knows what to do now that school is going to start. Júnior José Guerra is cornered. If he comes back, he dies. He made the denouncement – and he is alone”.*



Example (13) is part of a narrative, in which the narrator formulates an alternative line of action for the character (**if he comes back**) and established a conclusion about the consequences of this action (**he dies**).

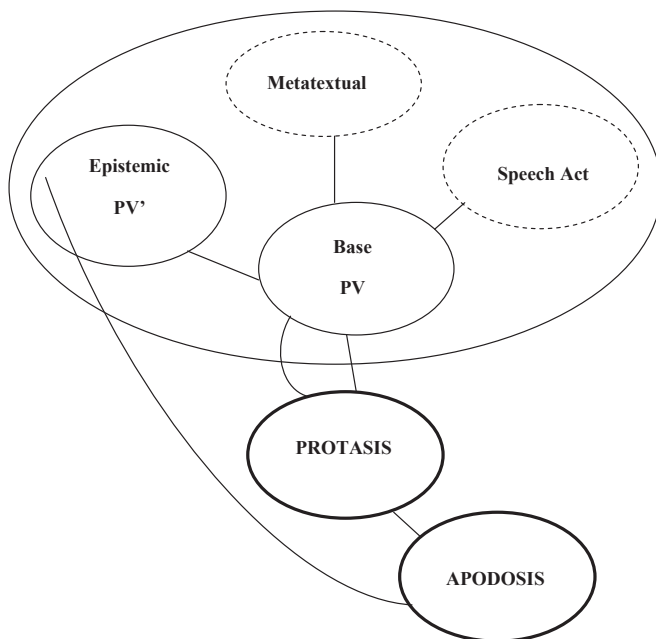
(14) “Se nenhum concorrente *fizer(FS)* oferta sobre o último lance colocado pelo sistema eletrônico, a Aneel *retoma(P)* o valor apresentado anteriormente e parte para uma nova forma de disputa, a das rodadas discriminatórias.” (*Corpus LINC*)

“If no competitor makes a bid on the last Eletronic Bid System, Aneel takes the value previously shown, and puts up a new form of contest, with discriminatory rounds”.

In (14), the present tense in the apodosis indicates a previous planning (“**Aneel takes the value previously shown**”) for a possible future event (“**if no competitor makes a bid**”).

In examples (12), (13) and (14), the present tense in the apodosis signals that the speaker makes a (present) conclusion about a situation which is posterior to the speech event. Thus, the apodoses have a more subjective perspective, as shown in Diagram 5:

**Diagram 5** – Meaning construction in Grupo III



**Source:** Made by the author.

Table 5 shows that meaning is constructed as follows in Group III: the protasis is constructed relative to the Base, whereas the apodosis is built up relative to the Epistemic Space.

#### Grupo IV: Present-Present

Group IV has the present of the indicative both in the protasis and in the apodosis, as shown in Table IV:

**Table 4** – Present of indicative-Present of indicative

|                           | <b>PROTASIS</b>                  | <b>APODOSIS</b>           |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>MORPHOLOGICAL FORM</b> | Present of Indicative (P)        | Present of Indicative (P) |
| <b>SEMANTIC CONTENT</b>   | Event non-anterior to the Ground | Conclusion                |

**Source:** Made by the author.

Group IV combines the alternations observed in Groups II and III. In the protasis, the use of the present of the indicative indicates that the event is part of discourse records, and in the apodosis the use of the present of the indicative points to a (present) conclusion about a future event.

Since the present of the indicative signals that both the protasis and the apodosis implicitly refer to the speaker, conditionals in this group may be considered more subjective than the ones in groups II and III.

Conditionals in (15) and (16) illustrate the tense/mood combination presented in Table 4. In (15), the conditional construction has the present of the indicative in the protasis, indicating that the “date of the end of the Summer” is based on intersubjectively shared background knowledge; the present of the indicative in the apodosis, however, indicates that the speaker makes a (present) conclusion about a future situation:

- (15) “... a frente fria deve derrubar as temperaturas e trazer mais chuvas até sexta-feira, segundo os meteorologistas. Se o verão *se despede* (P) dos cariocas no próximo sábado, a desordem nas praias, mesmo as beneficiadas pelas operações Choque de Ordem da prefeitura, *continua* (P)”. (*Corpus LINC*)

*“The cold front can make temperatures drop and bring more rain until Friday, according to meteorologists. If Summer says good-bye to Rio next Saturday, the*

*clutter on the beaches will continue, even in those beaches protected by Shock of Order operations”*

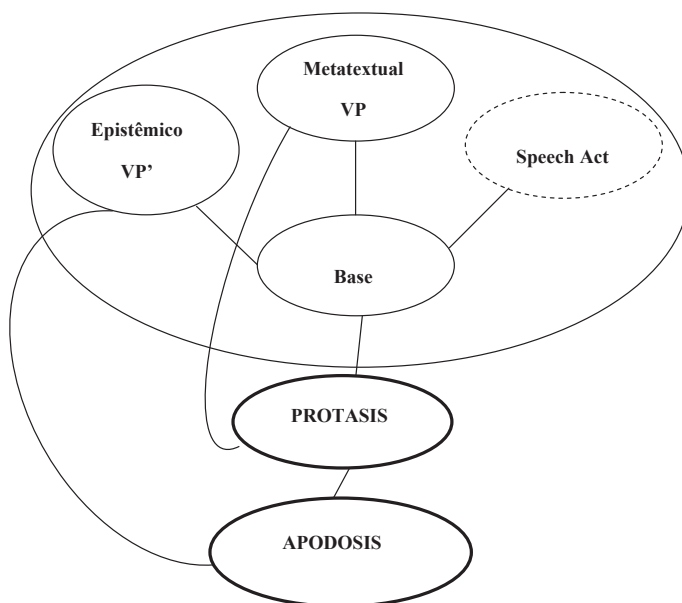
Example (16) reports the speech of a narrative character who presents himself as a fugitive; he conditionally establishes the hypothesis “if they catch me”, and then concludes “they hang me”:

(16) “Graças a Deus que já posso dizer – “não estou com os mascates”, dissera o matuto, penetrando na mata. Eu sei bem que se eles me *pegam* (P), me *penduram*(P) logo no primeiro pé de pau que encontrarem; porque antes de tudo, eu sou desertor .” (*Corpus do português*)

*“Thank God I can already say – “I’m not with the peddlers”, said the yokel, penetrating the woods. I know well that if they catch me, they immediately hang me on the first tree they find; because above all, I’m a deserter”.*

Group IV can be represented as follows:

**Diagram 6** – Meaning construction in Group IV



**Source:** Made by the author.

Diagram 6 shows that Group IV conditionals are more subjective, given that the protasis and the apodosis are related to more implicit spaces in the BCSN – respectively, the Metatextual and the Epistemic Spaces.

### **Concluding remarks**

This paper has proposed a descriptive and explanatory analysis of [If P, Q] conditionals in Brazilian Portuguese, focusing on structures which have the present of the indicative or the future of the subjunctive in the protasis, and the present or the future of the indicative in the apodosis.

The analysis has shown that different tense combinations in conditionals are associated to different degrees of subjectivity and/or intersubjectivity. On one hand, the use of the present of the indicative in the protasis (in comparison to the use of the future of the subjunctive) indicates a more intersubjective construal of the described event, since the speaker takes into account information previously mentioned in discourse. On the other hand, the use of the present of the indicative in the apodosis, instead of a future form, indicates that the speaker is drawing a conclusion (subjective perspective) regarding a future event. Finally, cases which have the present of the indicative (with future meaning) in both clauses can be characterized as the most subjective, because two implicit spaces – the Metatextual and the Epistemic Spaces – are involved in meaning construction.

Based on these results, the conditionals under investigation were organized in a continuum of subjectivity that extends from Group I (less subjective) to Group IV (more subjective), having Groups II and III as intermediary cases. At the same time, Groups II and IV indicate intersubjectivity.

The main contribution of the analysis presented here is to shed some light on the fact that tense/mood alternations are not equivalent options for expressing the same content; on the contrary, they signal specific cognitive processes of meaning construction, and its semantic-pragmatic implications. It is worth noting that such processes has not been yet fully considered in previous descriptions of conditionals in Brazilian Portuguese.

Drawing on recent developments of mental spaces theory, this work has associated tense/mood choices to different degrees of (inter)subjective perspective in the construction of conditional relations. In this vein, the model proposed here opens up new perspectives for the analysis of the relations between tense/mood and conditional meaning. Not only the tense/mood alternations discussed here may be observed in other kinds of corpora, but also other tense/mood alternations may be observed in other kinds of conditional structures, such as counterfactuals.

FERRARI, L.; ALMEIDA, P. Subjetividade e intersubjetividade em condicionais: Alternâncias entre presente e futuro no português brasileiro. **Alfa**, São Paulo, v.59, n. 1, p.91-112, 2015.

- **RESUMO:** *Este trabalho enfoca construções condicionais do português brasileiro, sob a perspectiva teórica da Linguística Cognitiva. A investigação tem como base a Teoria dos Espaços Mentais (FAUCONNIER, 1994, 1997; FAUCONNIER; SWEETSER, 1996), a partir de estudos sobre relações causais entre espaços condicionais (SWEETSER, 1990; DANCYGIER, 1998; DANCYGIER; SWEETSER, 2005), de contribuições recentes sobre subjetividade e intersubjetividade (LANGACKER, 1990; TRAUOGOTT; DASHER, 2005; VERHAGEN, 2005) e seus desdobramentos em termos da noção de Base Comunicativa (SANDERS, J.; SANDERS, T.; SWEETSER, 2009; FERRARI; SWEETSER, 2012). A partir de corpora escritos formados por textos jornalísticos e literários, a pesquisa enfoca condicionais que admitem alternância entre futuro do subjuntivo e presente do indicativo, na prótase, e entre futuro do indicativo e presente do indicativo, na apódose. As condicionais foram classificadas em quatro grupos, identificados a partir das relações entre seleções modo-temporais específicas e motivações cognitivas. A principal contribuição do trabalho consiste na utilização do modelo dos espaços mentais para propor um tratamento unificado das alternâncias modo-temporais nas condicionais investigadas, em que se evidenciam diferentes graus de sinalização da perspectiva (inter)subjetiva do falante.*
- **PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *Linguística Cognitiva. Espaços mentais. Condicionais. Tempo verbal. Subjetividade. Intersubjetividade.*

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