

11

Free Indirect Discourse and the syntax of the left periphery

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11.1 Introduction

The analysis of the grammar of literary texts is a very interesting issue and has been variously debated both by linguists and by experts of literature. The question is important because it tackles the interaction between human *creativity* and human *cognition*. The basic question concerns the constraints that might be posed to artistic expression by the properties of the cognitive system, and by Universal Grammar in particular. The general issue might be expressed as follows: Is literary expression free from any grammatical constraint? And if not, in what way does grammar limit the possibilities available for a narrator?

The thesis I will develop in this chapter is that language always complies with the rules of grammar. Namely, even if there is a certain degree of freedom in the choice of a particular narrative style, the possibilities are always to be individuated inside the *grammatical set* of options. In other words, the grammar adopted by a narrator using a certain literary style is the same as the grammar accounting for any *normal* sentence.

In this chapter I show that the peculiar flavor of a literary style such as free indirect discourse—henceforth, FID—is due to a slightly different setting of the value of certain parameters—such as the choice of temporal and spatial coordinates relevant for the interpretation of the events in the narration with respect to non-FID sentences. Crucially, however, the grammar describing and accounting for the phenomena of non-literary, “normal,” sentences, also accounts for the properties of the FID. I will additionally show that cross-linguistic comparison is a crucial step towards a theoretical account of these structures.

Some of the examples discussed here are taken from narrative texts in English and Italian. The “made up” examples, will mostly be from Italian, under the assumption that the analysis provided for Italian can be generalized to English, at least, and presumably to other languages as well.

11.2 Free indirect discourse: the properties

Free indirect discourse is a peculiar narrative style that gives the reader the impression of listening directly to the thoughts, or to the speech, of the main character of the narration. Consider for instance the following examples:

- (1) It was, he now realized, because of this other incident that **he** had suddenly decided to come home and begin the diary **today**. [Orwell, 1984, ch.1]
- (2) The thing that now suddenly struck Winston was that **his** mother's death, nearly **thirty years ago**, had been tragic and sorrowful in a way that it was no longer possible. Tragedy, he perceived, belonged to the ancient time. . . . Such things, he saw, could not happen **today**. **Today** there were fear, hatred, and pain, but no dignity of emotion. (Orwell, 1984, ch.3)

In these examples, the narration is not in first person and the character is identified by means of third person pronouns, such as *he* in example (1) and the possessive *his* in example (2). An interesting property of this style is that the temporal indexical items take the character as their interpretive *anchor* and not the external narrator, that is, the author of the story. In the examples above, in fact, the reference of temporal specifications such as *today* and *thirty years ago* are computed starting from *Winston's* temporal location, and not from Orwell's. Note also that the tenses appearing in these sentences are always past forms and that there is no incompatibility between past verbal forms and the presence of present or future temporal indexicals. *Had decided* in example (1) is compatible with *today*, and *tomorrow* is compatible with *was* in the following example:

- (3) **Tomorrow** was Monday, Monday, the beginning of another school week! [Lawrence, *Women in Love*, p. 185, London, Heinemann 1971; quoted in Banfield 1982: 98; Doron 1991; Schlenker 2004]

I will outline in more detail the properties of the FID in Section 11.4 below. For the time being let me simply state that there is a remarkable difference between the distribution of indexical expressions in the FID as opposed to “normal” uses. In normal usage, tenses must match the temporal orientation of the indexical temporal expressions. It would not be possible to combine a past with a future temporal indexical, as in example (3) above. Consider the following non-FID example:

- (4) Yesterday/*tomorrow I was happy.

Only *yesterday* is compatible with a past verbal form, whereas *tomorrow* is sharply ungrammatical.

Moreover, in normal usage, only the “external” speaker—the utterer—can provide a reference for indexicals. Consider for instance the following case:

- (5) Yesterday John told me that today there is a baseball match at school.

This sentence is a faithful report of the following direct speech:

- (6) Yesterday John said: “Tomorrow there will be a baseball match at school”.

Hence, in example (5) the indexical *today*, appearing in the embedded clause which reports the speech by John, refers to the day of the utterance, that is, it is computed starting from the temporal location of the speaker.

The problem I will address in this chapter concerns the nature of the rules that can describe and predict these differences and the peculiar pattern found in FID contexts.

As anticipated in the opening paragraphs, in this work I will argue in favor of the strongest possible hypothesis—a *reductionist approach*—namely, I will argue that to account for FID sentences there is no need for a special grammar which has only the role of accounting for FID phenomena. Accordingly, I will show that violations of the rules of grammar yield ungrammaticality in FID contexts just as in any other case. In other words, speakers have consistent grammatical intuitions about what is an acceptable FID and what is not, as they have on any sentence of their language.

This discussion will lead to a much more general hypothesis concerning the syntax of sentences, which I will briefly sketch at the end of the chapter. I will show that there is evidence enough for hypothesizing at the left of the clause a further syntactic layer, dubbed the *information layer*, which is visible not only in FID clauses, but also in exclamative and vocative sentences.

11.3 The syntax of the speaker’s temporal coordinate

In Giorgi (2010) I argued that the left-most position in the clause plays a very important role in the interpretation of sentences, in that it constitutes the *trait d’union* between the sentence and the context. This hypothesis proved useful not only for assigning an appropriate reference to the various indexical items appearing in the sentence, but also for the proper anchoring of tenses.

In particular Giorgi (2010) argues that the left-most position in the C-layer—dubbed *C-speaker*—identifies the speaker’s temporal and spatial coordinates. The reference of the speaker, however, changes according to the context, and trivially, it might do so in the same discourse, as for instance in the following example:

- (7) Yesterday John told me: “I will leave tomorrow”.

The main clause *me* and the first person pronoun *I* in the direct speech refer to two different speakers, and, accordingly, the indexical expressions *yesterday* and *tomorrow* identify different times according to the different temporal locations of the respective speakers.

The presence of the speaker's temporal coordinate permits the anchoring of tense, that is, allows the location of the various events along the temporal axis and with respect to one another.

Let us consider first the interpretation of clauses in isolation:

(8) John left.

(9) John will leave.

In sentence (8) the leaving of John is located in the past of the speaker—in a time *preceding* her utterance—and this interpretation is signaled by the presence of the past verbal form *left*. Conversely, in (9) the event is located in the future of the speaker—in a time *following* her utterance—as signaled by the future verbal form. These properties do not differentiate among languages, even if languages have various ways of expressing temporal relations—not necessarily, for instance, by means of morphological tenses as in English or Italian. In other words, independently of the way a particular language expresses temporal relations between events, sentences equivalent to (8) and (9) are located with respect to the speaker.¹

Hence, we might say that in main clauses the utterance event, and therefore, the speaker's temporal coordinate, is the default anchor for the temporal interpretation.

Let us consider now the situation in embedded clauses. It is a well-known fact that an embedded present tense in languages like English and Italian may have a peculiar interpretation, which is dubbed in the literature on the topic as the Double Access Reading—henceforth DAR. Consider the following examples:

(10) John said that Mary *is* pregnant.

For the sentence to be felicitous the embedded state of pregnancy must hold at the time John is speaking *and* at the time of utterance, that is, Mary must be still pregnant *now*, not only *then*, at the time of John talking about it. This interpretation obtains in Italian, English, and in many other languages, but not in all of them. It does not obtain in Chinese, or in Romanian, even if Romanian is a Romance language and has a verbal morphology to a large extent similar to the Italian morphology. Furthermore, this interpretation is obligatory, as shown by the following sentence:

(11) #Two years ago, John said that Mary is pregnant.

¹ I will not consider here the so-called a-temporal sentence, or generic ones, such as the following cases:

- (i) 2 and 2 is 4.
- (ii) John runs.

These sentences might be claimed to have a special status. Whatever the hypotheses with respect to these cases might be, however, nothing would follow in one particular way or another with respect to the analysis of the FID provided in the text.

This sentence is odd, given what we know about human beings: since pregnancy does not last two years, it is impossible to assign to the sentence a coherent interpretation where the state holds both *then* and *now*.

Giorgi and Pianesi (2001a) and Giorgi (2010) accounted for this phenomenon by hypothesizing a position in the C-layer of the clause devoted to the representation of the speaker's coordinates.

Importantly, Giorgi and Pianesi (2001a) propose a view of the DAR according to which it is not just a property of the present tense, but can be generalized to all tenses, in both Italian and English:²

- (12) John said that Mary left.
- (13) *Gianni ha detto che Maria è partita*
Gianni said that Maria left(PAST)
- (14) John said that Mary will leave.
- (15) John said that Mary would leave.
- (16) *Gianni ha detto che Maria partirà*
Gianni said that Maria will leave
- (17) *Gianni ha detto che Maria sarebbe partita*
Gianni said that Maria would leave

In example (12), and analogously in example (13) in Italian, the event is located in the past both with respect to the saying and—invariably, since the saying is itself a past form—with respect to the utterance event. Hence, the interpretation is *a fortiori* a DAR one.

In (14) the event is future both with respect to the saying and, importantly, with respect to the speaker's location.

This temporal location of the embedded event contrasts with the interpretation that can be assigned to it in sentence (15). In this latter case, in fact, the leaving must follow the saying, but it does not necessarily follow the utterance event. That is, the sentence is compatible with a situation in which the speaker knows that Mary had *already* left.

The same is true in Italian. In example (16) the simple future is compatible only with a temporal location of the leaving in which the event follows both the saying and the utterance event. In example (17), the interpretation in which the leaving only follows the saying, but not the utterance event is available.

² In the following analysis I will consider the Italian present perfect—aux+past participle—on a par with the simple past. There are, however, regional differences. The simple past is the form used in Southern Italy to express a past temporal value, whereas the present perfect is the form preferred in Central and Northern Italy. The general picture is more complex than that, and I refer the reader to the brief discussion in Giorgi and Pianesi (1997: ch.4).

To conclude, it can be said that the *will*-future, and its equivalent in Italian, are DAR forms, whereas the *would*-future, and its equivalent in Italian, are not. Note also that when a past verbal form is used in English, or an indicative imperfect in Italian, the pregnancy must not necessarily hold *now*:³

(18) John said that Mary *was* pregnant.

(19) *Gianni ha detto che Maria era incinta*
 Gianni said that Maria was(IND.IMPF) pregnant

In both examples the pregnancy must only hold at the time of the saying. In English this interpretation is available only if the embedded verbal form is a state, and not if it is an eventive predicate:

(20) John said that Mary left.

(21) John said that Mary was leaving.

With an eventive predicate, as in example (20) the only interpretation available is the one where the leaving precedes the saying. The simultaneous one is obtained only by means of a periphrastic progressive form, as in example (21).⁴

The properties of the imperfect and of the English past are very important in an analysis of the FID, and I shall get back to them later. In the meantime, it is enough to point out that these cases are exempt from DAR effects.

The proposal discussed in Giorgi (2010) amounts to saying that the DAR is a largely syntactically determined phenomenon. The relevant part of the tree is the left periphery, in that the temporal and spatial coordinates of the speaker are encoded in its left-most position. In the cases illustrated by the DAR examples (12)–(17), a relation must be established between T—encoding the temporal value—and C—along the lines originally suggested by Pesetsky and Torrego (2001, 2004).⁵ When such a relation cannot be established, no DAR obtains. As discussed in Giorgi (2010), certain conditions prevent establishing such a relation, such as, for instance, the lack of a proper verbal morphology or the unavailability of the syntactic position itself.

Here I will not discuss these topics, which mainly concern the differences between DAR and non-DAR structures, but I will focus on the relations between the properties of FID sentences and the C-speaker position.

³ It might still hold *now*, if the state can be a *persistent* one, but it does not *have to*. For instance the state of *pregnancy* in human beings is known to be persistent for nine months. For a discussion of DAR effects, see Giorgi (2010: ch.1).

⁴ For a discussion of the Italian imperfect, see Giorgi and Pianesi (2004) and Giorgi (2010).

⁵ Pesetsky and Torrego (2001, 2004) propose that the establishing of a relation between T and C can license a lexical subject of finite tense sentences. Such a relation might be expressed either in terms of overt or covert movement, or in terms of feature sharing.

11.4 FID and the C-speaker projection

Given the background illustrated in the preceding discussion, in Italian and English the temporal interpretation of embedded clauses works as follows: the embedded eventuality is located once with respect to the superordinate event, and once with respect to the speaker's temporal location.

As discussed in Giorgi (2010), anchoring to the above predicate is obligatory and holds in all languages. Anchoring to the speaker's location is a prerogative of DAR languages, and DAR structures, and takes place by means of T-to-C movement—or by some equivalent relation between the two positions.

In FID contexts the speaker must be identified with the narrator, which I call here *external source*. The character whose thoughts are reported is called the *internal source*. Descriptively, the data presented above, leaving aside for the moment the properties of the verbal form, point to a sort of contradictory generalization: the indexical temporal relations take as a *pivot* the internal source, that is, they are computed on the basis of the temporal location of the character of the narration, whereas the reference of pronouns takes the external source as a *pivot*. In other words, the pronoun *I* always refers to the external source and never to the internal one, as I will illustrate in what follows.

I will also refer to expressions appearing in FID contexts such as *he now realized*, in example (1), and *he perceived* and *he saw*, in example (2), as *introducing predicates*. In Section 11.5 I will argue that these expressions are crucial in defining the properties of FID sentences.

The analysis of tenses in these contexts, if not pursued cross-linguistically, might be misleading. For some scholars, the English past tense in these contexts must be considered an indexical verbal form, necessarily located with respect to the external source. However, this generalization is not tenable for languages with a temporal system richer than English. In languages like Italian, which distinguish a past form—present perfect or simple past—and an imperfect form, the one adopted in FID contexts is always the imperfect verbal form. I will address this issue in Section 11.4.2.

11.4.1 Temporal locutions and the role of the speaker

As briefly discussed above, the internal source in an FID sentence is identified by means of a third person pronoun. See for instance, (1) above, and the following examples in English and Italian:

- (22) Where was he this morning, for instance? Some committee, **she** never asked what [Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*, cited in Banfield 1982: 98; Schlenker 2004]
- (23) *Lo ricordò dopo uno sforzo di memoria anzi di ragionamento: [pro] doveva essere passata per quella via essendo giunta a quell'altra da casa sua. Il*

giovinotto era un suo cugino ritornato dagli studii. Un ragazzo cui non bisognava dare importanza.

[Italo Svevo, *La novella del buon vecchio e della bella fanciulla*, ch.8]

She remembered it with a memory effort, or better to say of reasoning: she should have passed through that street reaching that other house from her home. The young man was a cousin of hers, who had come back from school. A young man who should not be given importance.

[Svevo, *The story of the old man and the pretty girl*, Ch.8]

Note that, as illustrated, the third person pronoun holds of lexical pronouns, empty pronouns and possessives.

As pointed out in the preceding section, many scholars (Banfield 1982; Doron 1991; Schlenker 2004; Sharvit, 2004, see also Guéron, this volume), hypothesize that tenses receive their interpretation according to the speaker's coordinates. Hence, they propose the existence of a dissociation between temporal indexicals, on one side, and tenses and pronouns on the other, so that indexicals are interpreted with respect to the internal source's temporal location, whereas tenses and pronouns are centered in the *here* and *now* of the speaker, the external source.

In what follows, I challenge this view and propose that there is actually no dissociation, and that the properties of pronouns, tenses, and temporal locutions can be accounted for coherently by means of a general theory, which also holds for non-FID sentences.

Let us consider the distribution of first person pronouns. When a first person pronoun appears in a FID text, it becomes the *pivot for the interpretation of indexicals*. Consider for instance the following case, obtained on the basis of Orwell's sentence (24):

(24) The new ration did not start till **tomorrow** and **he** had only four cigarettes left.
 (Orwell, 1984, ch 5)

(25) The new ration did not start till *tomorrow* and he had only four cigarettes left,
I thought.

(26) Il nuovo razionamento non cominciava che *domani* ed egli aveva solo quattro
 sigarette, **pensai**.

The first person pronoun in this case appears in the introducing predicate, *I thought*. It was pointed out in the introduction that indexicals take as a reference point the temporal location of the internal source, as illustrated in examples (1) and (2). In the examples in (25) and (26), the first person refers to the internal source—that is, to the person thinking. As a result, the indexical *tomorrow* refers to the day after the day of the thinking. In these cases the internal source and the external one coincide, in that the *thinker* must also be the *speaker*. Therefore, the temporal

indexicals and the narrated events are interpreted on the basis of the coordinates of the speaker/ thinker.

In other words, the interpretation to be assigned to these sentences is the following: *I, the speaker, thought that tomorrow the new ration would start and he [NB: somebody else] had only four cigarettes left.* Therefore, according to both Italian and English native speakers the thinking must be located *today*, so that the events reported in the FID sentence are appropriately located *tomorrow*. Consider in this respect the following sentences:

- (27) The new ration did not start till tomorrow and he had only four cigarettes left, *I thought this morning.*
- (28) Il nuovo razionamento non cominciava che domani e (egli) aveva solo altre quattro sigarette, *pensai questa mattina.*

In these examples, the thinking is located *this morning*—that is, today—and the events can be coherently located *tomorrow*. The presence of a first person in a certain sense attracts the indexical. These properties have already been observed in the literature; Banfield (1982), for instance, refers to the *priority of the Speaker*.⁶

Compare the cases given above with the following examples:

- (29) The new ration did not start till the **next day**/***tomorrow** and he had only four cigarettes left, *I thought four days ago.*
- (30) Il nuovo razionamento non sarebbe cominciato che il **giorno dopo**/***domani** e (egli) aveva solo altre quattro sigarette, *pensai quattro giorni fa.*

In these examples, the presence of *four days ago* makes it impossible to locate the thinking—that is, the introducing predicate—coherently with the indexical *tomorrow*. In this case, in fact, the temporal location of the speaker could not work simultaneously as a *pivot* for both *tomorrow* and *four days ago*. By contrast, the anaphoric *the next day* yields an acceptable interpretation.

Consider now what happens when the first person pronoun is identified as a participant in the narrated event:

- (31) Lo ricordò dopo uno sforzo di memoria anzi di ragionamento: [pro] doveva essere passata per quella via essendo giunta a quell'altra da casa **mia**.
- (32) She remembered it with a memory effort, or better to say of reasoning: (she) should have passed through that street reaching that other house from **my** home.

⁶ See also Schlenker (2004) and Guéron (2006).

In examples (31) and (32) the first person is introduced by means of a first person possessive *mia* (my). Again, the third person pronoun in this case most naturally identifies somebody else, and the internal source and the external one coincide.

However, a different sort of interpretation can be forced, given the appropriate context. Consider, for instance, the following example proposed by Schlenker (2004):

- (33) Oh how extraordinarily nice I was, she told my father, without realizing that I was listening to the conversation. (From Schlenker 2004: ex.16)

The interesting property of this example is that the internal source is identified by means of the third person pronoun, appearing in the introducing predicate *she told my father*. However, a first person pronoun, *I was*, is present as well in the FID sentence. This pronoun refers to the external source, considered here as a participant to the events narrated in the FID, but not as the internal source. In other words, in this case, the first person is introduced *as part of* the narration, but not as the internal source of the narration. It must however, necessarily be the external source.⁷

Consider now what happens when temporal indexical locutions are introduced:

- (34) Oh how extraordinarily nice I was **yesterday morning**, she told my father **last night** without realizing that I was listening to the conversation.
 (35) Oh, come ero (stata) meravigliosa **ieri mattina**, Maria disse a mio padre **ieri sera**, senza rendersi conto che io stavo ascoltando la conversazione.

The peculiarity of these examples is that the days mentioned in the temporal locutions must be interpreted as the same one. The relevant day is identified on the basis of the external source's coordinates. It is impossible to refer to two different days, one identified on the basis of the temporal location of the internal source and the other on the temporal location of the external one. Consider in this respect the following examples:

- (36) #Oh how extraordinarily nice I was **last night**, she told my father **yesterday morning**, without realizing that I was listening to the conversation.
 (37) #Oh, come mi ero comportato bene **ieri sera**, Maria disse a mio padre **ieri mattina**, senza rendersi conto che io stavo ascoltando la conversazione.

By inverting the temporal indexicals in sentences (36) and (37), one obtains a deviant sentence, since it is impossible to interpret the day as the same one. That is to say, in these examples, the pivot is supposed to shift, and should be *Maria* for the FID sentence and *I* for the introducing predicate.

⁷ Schlenker (2004) also introduces the specification *without realizing that I was listening to the conversation*, in order not to deal with the potentially intervening factor, relevant in his theory, of the narrator being a witness. This consideration is here secondary with respect to the main discussion.

From this brief discussion we can conclude, as anticipated earlier, that a first person attracts the indexical. When a first person appears in an FID context, the temporal indexicals must be interpreted according to the coordinates associated with it. Note that the same reasoning applies to the spatial interpretation as well:

(38) I showed her **this room**, Maria told my father.

(39) Io le avevo mostrato **questa stanza**, Maria disse a mio padre.

The room in question is the one where the first person speaker is, and not the one where the referent of the third person is. This evidence is important because it shows that the relevant information for interpreting the sentence is the location in time *and* space of the speaker, and not only a temporal reference.

It is possible to state the following generalization:

(40) When the speaker is introduced in a given context, her temporal and spatial coordinates determine the interpretation of spatial and temporal indexicals.

From the discussion above, it clearly follows that *it is not the case* that in FID contexts the internal source is *always* the pivot for the interpretation of indexicals. In the examples (34)–(39) the FID pivot is the speaker, even if it is not the internal source, but just a participant in the narrated events. The pivot can be a third person internal source only if the speaker—or the hearer—is not around; in other words, the speaker, if present in the narration or in the introducing predicate, is always the pivot of temporal and spatial indexicals, both of the narrated sentence and in the introducing predicate.

This discussion still does not provide an answer to the question of how it is possible for a third person internal source to provide the anchoring coordinates for indexical locutions. I will address this issue in Section 11.5 below.

11.4.2 Tenses

Let us consider now the issues related to the nature and interpretation of tenses in FID contexts. In English all FID sentences feature a past tense. Hence, if this is taken to be the real, indexical, form of the past tense, the same one used in a “normal” context, one has to look for a pivot for tense interpretation. According to some approaches to the FID, for instance Schlenker (2004), the pivot is the external source and all the eventualities are placed in the past with respect to the utterance time. It can be added that this might be considered the effect of a *narrative convention*, which permits the narrator to locate everything in an imaginary past, where everything has already happened.

The issue to be investigated here is twofold. First, the precise temporal value of the past form appearing in English has to be considered. Importantly, it should be checked whether this is a cross-linguistically consistent property, that is, whether

in other languages with a richer verbal morphology a past verbal form also appears in the same contexts. Consider the fact that English has a very poor morphological system so that the same morpheme may play various functions.⁸

Second, the nature of the narrative convention should be clarified and possibly expressed in more formal terms. If such a convention cannot be expressed in a coherent way, it should presumably be abandoned. I argue here that this solution is problematic and even incoherent, once we consider languages with a morphological verbal system richer than English, such as Italian.

The first aspect to be questioned concerns the choice of a past form as a mere stylistic device. If this were the case, the choice of a verbal form other than the past should not give rise to ungrammaticality, but should simply be an instantiation of a slightly different literary style. This is not what happens, however. Native speakers have clear grammatical intuitions about the verbal forms that can be used in FID contexts.

Consider, for instance, Orwell's sentence given in (1) above and compare it with a sentence in which the past tense has been substituted for a present perfect:

- (41) It **was**, he now realized, because of this other incident that he **had** suddenly **decided** to come home and begin the diary today. (Orwell, 1984, ch.1)
- (42) #It **has been** ... because of this other incident that he **has** suddenly **decided** to come home and begin the diary today.

The presence of *has been* in sentence (42) might be deviant in itself—being a stative verbal form, it sounds odd with a present perfect morphology—but in any case, the contrast between *had decided* and *has decided* is striking.

Still more striking is the contrast in Italian. In FID sentences an indicative imperfect is habitually used, or the future in the past, and any other verbal forms, including various forms of past tenses, is strongly unacceptable:

- (43) *Era la sua forza—commentava Baudolino a Niceta—e in questo modo lo aveva menato per il naso una prima volta, lo stava menando ora e lo avrebbe menato per alcuni anni ancora.*

This was(IMPf) his strength—Baudolino was commenting to Niceta—and in this way he had led(IMPf) him by the nose once, he was leading(IMPf.PROGR) him by the nose now, and he would lead(FUT-IN-THE-PAST) him by the nose for some years still. [Eco, *Baudolino*, p.264]

⁸ See, for instance, the work by Iatridou (2000) concerning the double role of the past morpheme in various languages, which can express either a temporal value or a modal one.

- (44) # *È/è stata la sua forza [commentava Baudolino a Niceta] e in questo modo lo ha menato per il naso una prima volta, lo sta menando ora e lo menerà per alcuni anni ancora.*

This is/has been (PR/PR.PF) his strength—Baudolino was commenting to Niceta—and in this way he has(PR/PF / PAST) led him by the nose once, he is(PR) leading him by the nose now, and he will(FUT) lead him by the nose for some years still.

As shown by the examples above, a non-imperfect verbal form cannot appear in FID clauses at all, whereas there is no comparable constraint in non-FID cases. Compare in this respect the contrast between (43) and (44) with the following pair:

- (45) *Gianni ha detto che Maria era partita*

Gianni said that Maria had left(IMPF)

- (46) *Gianni ha detto che Maria è partita*

Gianni said that Maria left(PR.PF)

The difference in (45)–(46) is the same as that in (43)–(44). The first example of each pair contains an imperfect verbal form, whereas in the second pair a present perfect appears. Though there are differences, in both the morphosyntax and the interpretation, between examples (45) and (46), they are both grammatical. In the absence of any further context, there is no reason for preferring one to the other. This is clearly not the case in the first pair: sentence (44) is strongly degraded with respect to (43).

Hence, for some reason, a past tense is not possible in Italian FID sentences; and even in English free substitution of one past form with another one is not available. The theory according to which the past tense is externally anchored faces a second important problem. Take, for instance, example (24) above, repeated here:

- (47) The new ration did not start till tomorrow and he had only four cigarettes left.
 (Orwell, 1984, ch.5)

In this sentence two past forms appear—*did start* and *had*. Here the two events are ordered with respect to each other: the event expressed in the first part of the sentence is supposed by the internal source to follow the event expressed in the second one, as made clear by the presence of *tomorrow*. The two events, however, are not ordered with respect to the temporal coordinates of the external source, but with respect to the coordinates of the internal one. The second event—the starting of the ration—is future with respect to the temporal location of the internal source and the first one—having only four cigarettes left—is simultaneous with it. This means that there must somehow be an anchoring of the events with respect to the internal source. The point relevant to the present discussion is the following: under the hypothesis that the past morpheme is required because of the anchoring to the

external source, the necessity of an anchoring to the internal one does not follow from anything.

11.4.3 *Some generalizations*

From the considerations above, it is possible to draw the following conclusions:

- First person pronouns, as observed by Banfield (1982), can only identify an external source (the speaker). Hence, pronouns referring to an internal source must be third person pronouns.
- A first person pronoun attracts the indexical temporal locution. When a first person appears in a FID context, the temporal indexicals must be interpreted according to the coordinates associated with it. The same is true with respect to spatial interpretation.
- The role, meaning, and function of the past tense appearing in English must be re-considered in the light of the native speaker's judgments about these contexts and cross-linguistic data.

11.5 Towards a syntax of free indirect discourse

In this section, in order to provide an account for the generalizations given in previous sections, I consider first the role of the imperfect in Italian and then compare it with the properties of the English past. I then propose a general view of the FID, aimed at explaining the peculiar properties of the temporal locutions as well.

11.5.1 *The syntax of tense in FID sentences*

As shown in Section 11.4, in Italian FID sentences, only the imperfect or the future-in-the-past appear. Giorgi and Pianesi (2001b, 2004) pointed out that the imperfect of the indicative, and the future in the past are the only forms that can be used in *dream* contexts. In particular, it was argued that dream contexts are special, because the tense is not anchored. The clause embedded under the dream predicate expresses the content of the dream without locating it in the past, present, or future of the speaker (nor is the embedded event located with respect to the subject either).

Evidence in favor of this idea comes from the fact that other verbal forms, such as a present perfect or a simple past, cannot be freely substituted in these contexts:

- (48) *Gianni ha sognato che c'era un terremoto*
 Gianni dreamed that there was(IMPF) an earthquake
- (49) *#Gianni ha sognato che c'è stato/ ci fu un terremoto*
 Gianni dreamed that there has been(PR.PF/PAST) an earthquake

As discussed by the authors, there is a systematic contrast between a sentence such as (48), with an embedded imperfect, and sentence (49), with an embedded past. Sentence (48) is the sentence a speaker would normally use to refer to the content of the dream. The earthquake is presented here as something happening *inside* the dream, and certainly not as something to be located in the (real) past of Gianni.

If a past form appears instead of the imperfect—either a present perfect or a simple past—a very different interpretation necessarily obtains. Giorgi and Pianesi (2001b, 2004) dub it *evidential dream*, to capture the idea that in sentence (49) the content of the dream is presented as evidence for the occurrence of the earthquake in the real world.

Namely, the difference between the two cases can be captured by saying that the imperfect is *not* anchored to the temporal location of Gianni, whereas the present perfect and the simple past are. Hence, the *evidential dream* effect, where the event must somehow be connected to the real world.

The important point here is the availability of the imperfect as a special verbal form, which in the dream case cannot be anchored to the speaker. Other properties of the imperfect lead us in the same direction. One such important property of the imperfect is that in root sentences it requires a temporal topic, provided either by the sentence or, even implicitly, by the discourse:

- (50) #*Gianni mangiava un panino*
Gianni was eating a sandwich
- (51) *Ieri alle tre Gianni mangiava un panino*
Yesterday at three Gianni was eating a sandwich
- (52) *(Ieri alle tre) Gianni ha mangiato un panino*
(Yesterday at three) Gianni ate a sandwich

Giorgi (2010) proposed that the necessity of a temporal topic stems from the fact that the imperfect is marked as an anti-speaker tense. For this reason, it cannot be directly anchored to the speaker's temporal location, but needs a temporal topic to be explicitly provided. In other words, the temporal locution *ieri alle tre* 'yesterday at three' is the anchor for this verbal form, and not the utterance time.

The imperfect contrasts with the other tenses of the indicative which always require the speaker's coordinate to locate the eventuality. In (52), in fact, the temporal locution is not obligatory and the past form is interpreted, and must be interpreted, with respect to the temporal location of the speaker.

It can be concluded that the imperfect in sentence (51) is not a past form at all, but a sort of present tense, so that the event turns out to be simultaneous with the time provided by the temporal topic.

This reasoning carries over to dream contexts as well, since in those cases anchoring to the utterance event is not possible at all, as argued by Giorgi and Pianesi (2001b,

2004). Hence, the anti-speaker requirement of the imperfect is satisfied, given that the event is not anchored to the utterance time. Note that in this case, due to the peculiar properties of dream and fictional contexts, the embedded eventuality remains unanchored, whereas this is never allowed in non-fictional contexts.

Let us return now to FID sentences. The presence of the imperfect could be explained by hypothesizing that these cases represent just another context where the imperfect is not anchored to the speaker's temporal coordinate, given its anti-speaker requirement. My proposal is that the anchoring is not provided by the external source, but by the temporal location of the internal one.

Hence, tenses such as the present perfect, the simple past, and the Italian equivalent of the *will* future are excluded from FID contexts, because they do require the temporal location of the speaker, in this case of the external source, for proper anchoring. The imperfect and the Italian equivalent of the *would*-future do not.⁹ Note that from this reasoning it follows that in FID sentences the presence of a temporal topic with the imperfect is not required:

- (53) *Gianni mangiava un panino, pensò*
 Gianni was eating a sandwich, she thought

The event in the FID clause is interpreted as simultaneous with the temporal coordinate of the internal source, therefore the anti-speaker requirement is met. The same reasoning holds with respect to English as well. The past tense is the form appearing in dream contexts in this language. Consider the following pair:

- (54) John said that Mary left.
 (55) John dreamed that Mary left.

In example (54) the leaving is located in John's past and in the speaker's past. Namely, the embedded event obeys the anchoring requirements sketched in Section 11.3, giving rise to the following sequence:

- (56) leaving > saying > utterance

Example (55) contrasts with (54). In (55) the leaving is not located in both John's past and the speaker's past; it just represents the content of the dream. Example (55) can in no way express the idea that the leaving precedes the dreaming.

We conclude, therefore, that in these contexts the past tense in English plays the same role as the imperfect. In Italian a past form is obligatorily anchored to the utterance time, and therefore it is not available in dream contexts. In English the past tense is compatible with dreams, without giving rise to the erroneous sequence of events provided in (56).

⁹ On the anchoring properties of the *would*-future in Italian and English see also Giorgi (2010).

Another argument in the same vein comes from the analysis of the contrasts between stative and eventive predicates. Consider the following examples:

- (57) John said that Mary was happy.
- (58) John said that Mary was eating a sandwich.
- (59) John said that Mary ate a sandwich.

The past tense combined with stative predicates gives rise to an ambiguous temporal location. The embedded eventuality in example (57) can either precede or be simultaneous with the superordinate event. Giorgi and Pianesi (2001a) point out that embedded eventive predicates such as those of examples (58) and (59), do not give rise to an ambiguous interpretation in English for aspectual reasons. In (58) the eating is simultaneous to the saying, while in (59), it precedes the saying.

However, in Italian even stative predicates do not give rise to ambiguous readings. Consider the following examples:

- (60) *Gianni ha detto che Maria era felice*
 Gianni said that Maria was(IMPf) happy

In example (60) the state of happiness necessarily occurs at the time of the saying. If the speaker wants to stress that Maria was happy at a previous time, she has two possibilities:

- (61) *Gianni ha detto che Maria è stata/ fu felice*
 Gianni said that Maria was(PR.PF/PAST) happy
- (62) *Gianni ha detto che Maria il giorno prima era felice*
 Gianni said that Maria was(IMPf) happy the previous day

In example (61) with a past tense, the state of happiness must precede the saying event. Analogously, the temporal locution *il giorno prima* (the day before) can provide a past anchoring point for the imperfect—similarly to that illustrated in example (51). The imperfect alone, however cannot fulfill this function.

Therefore, in example (57), under the reading in which the embedded state is taken to hold simultaneously to the main predicate, the English past behaves like the Italian imperfect in (60). The English past “corresponds” both to the Italian simple past and to the Italian imperfect.

Therefore, according to the reasoning developed above for Italian, in English the past tense must appear in FID contexts. Similar reasoning applies for the *would*-future, which cannot be replaced by a present tense or a *will*-future.

Concluding, it can be said that temporal expressions such as *tomorrow* or *yesterday*, can identify the day preceding or following the day in which either the external source (non-FID contexts), or the internal source (FID contexts) is located. Under

this perspective, these expressions seem to behave in a semi-indexical way. They are not tied to the *speaker*, but under certain conditions, discussed in the next section, they are evaluated starting from the temporal location of a *pivot*, which is the internal source of the narration.

Conversely, in Italian and English the first person pronoun exclusively identifies the *speaker*, that is, the producer of the utterance. It can thus be said that the first person is the only *real* indexical of these languages. This is also presumably not a universal property if there are languages in which the reference of the first person pronoun varies according to the kind of context.¹⁰

The property characterizing the FID is that the internal source's temporal and spatial coordinates play the role of those of the speaker. As they cannot be identified with the speaker's coordinates, in Italian an ordinary indicative cannot appear, whereas an imperfect can and actually must.

In English FID contexts, the past tense can appear, given its basic properties, which permits both a *rigid* anchoring to the speaker's coordinate and anchoring to those of the internal source.

The question to be answered at this point concerns the syntactic trigger of the shifting in FID sentences from the external to the internal source. I address this issue in the next section.

11.5.2 *On the syntax of the “introducing predicate”*

In Section 11.3, I summarized Giorgi's (2010) proposal concerning the representation of the speaker's coordinate in the left-most position of the C-layer. According to the theory proposed there, T-to-C movement in embedded clauses permits anchoring of the embedded verbal form to the speaker's temporal coordinate present in C.

My proposal is that in FID sentences—namely, in the sentences pertaining to the narration—the temporal coordinates appearing in C are those of the internal rather than the external source. The *resetting* of the coordinates in C, so that they refer to the internal source, is made possible by the presence of the introducing predicate.¹¹ I briefly discuss here how the reference of pronouns and temporal locutions is retrieved under this hypothesis. Consider the following adaptation of Orwell's example:

- (63) The new ration did not start till tomorrow and he had only four cigarettes left, thought Winston.

¹⁰ This might be the case for the first person pronoun in Amharic, as proposed by Schlenker (2003).

¹¹ I take this to be the case even when the introducing predicate is not explicitly expressed in one particular clause. In that case, it is retrieved from the context and represented in the same way as an explicit one.

The introducing predicate *thought Winston* permits the identification of the internal source with Winston. Since Winston is not the speaker, and English is rigid in this respect, it is impossible to adopt the first person to identify the internal source. Hence, the third person pronoun *he* appears in the example. In other words, the temporal coordinate in the C-layer of the sentence “the new ration . . . left” is not the speaker’s, but that of the internal source. This process is common to all FID contexts.

The interpretation of the temporal expressions follows from this. *Tomorrow* places the event on the day following the one pertaining to the temporal location of the subject whose coordinate is present in C. In this sense, *tomorrow* is not as rigid as *I*. The reference of *tomorrow* in English and Italian depends on the coordinates represented in C, which are usually the speaker’s, but in FID cases belong to the internal source.

As I argued above, the change of coordinates in C is due to the presence of the introducing predicate, in this case *thought Winston*. For this reason, I propose that so-called indexical temporal expressions are actually semi-indexical, the only rigid indexical in Italian and English being the first person pronoun, and arguably the second person as well.

Note that inversion is possible, but not obligatory, as illustrated by the following example:¹²

- (64) The new ration did not start till tomorrow and he had only four cigarettes left, Winston thought.

Sentence (64) is also judged grammatical. In this case there is no clear preference for one or the other, even if there might be a preference in other cases, as for instance with pronouns:

- (65) The new ration did not start till tomorrow and he had only four cigarettes left, he thought.
 (66) ?-*The new ration did not start till tomorrow and he had only four cigarettes left, thought he.

Native speaker judgments on (66) vary from (slightly) bad to completely ungrammatical. I will return to inversion in a little while.

As illustrated by Banfield (1982; see also Guéron, 2008), FID sentences do not exhibit the syntax typical of subordinate sentences. This is true in Italian as well. Here I will only point out two relevant properties.

The FID sentence cannot be introduced by a complementizer, whereas this is in general possible, and actually obligatory, in left dislocated complement clauses, as well as in all other cases of complement clauses appearing to the left of the main one:

¹² On *quotative inversion* see, among others, Collins and Branigan (1997) and Matos (2013).

- (67) (**Che*) *era la sua forza—commentava Baudolino a Niceta*
 (That) this was his strength—Baudolino was commenting to Niceta [Eco,
Baudolino, p.264]
- (68) *Gianni ha detto che Maria era partita*
 Gianni said that Maria had left
- (69) *Che Maria era partita, Gianni lo aveva detto*
 That Maria had left, Gianni it-had said

In sentence (69) the complementizer cannot be omitted, contrasting with FID sentences. A second property is that in ordinary language, embedded complement clauses cannot begin with exclamative elements, as shown in (70).

- (70) *Ah, Ecco perchè era così, oggi.* [Deledda, *Le colpe altrui*, p.76]
 Ah, this was why she was like that, today
- (71) **Pensò che ah, ecco perchè era così, oggi*
 He thought that ah, this was why she was like that, today

The data suggest that FID sentences are not complement clauses. The issue therefore arises of the nature of the relation of the FID sentence to the introducing predicate.

Following ideas only partially discussed in Giorgi (2010), I argue here that the FID sentence is embedded as a complement of the introducing predicate, in X-bar theory terms. However, on the basis of Banfield's (1982) and Guéron's (2008) insights, I propose that the introducing predicate—for instance the verb *thought* in examples (63) and (64) above—does not occupy the “normal” position in the VP, but is base-generated in a much higher position, on the left of the main C-layer. Therefore the FID sentence is not the complement of the verb in the same way as an ordinary complement clause.

I propose that the introducing predicate projects a constituent, which can only appear at root level. In what follows I discuss some word order phenomena supporting this hypothesis.¹³ Consider the following examples:

- (72) *Francamente/ sicuramente/probabilmente, pensò, Gianni sarebbe partito domani*
 Frankly/ surely/ probably, she thought, Gianni would leave tomorrow

¹³ Note that this extra layer is not meant to contribute the *source* of the speaker's information, as in the evidential construal of the matrix verb in *John said Mary is pregnant*, as pointed out to me by J. Guéron (p.c.). This layer has the role of changing the value of the temporal coordinate present in the embedded C, relevant for the interpretation of the embedded clause, as discussed in the text. Hence, its function is to provide the *contextual information* crucial for the rest of the sentence.

- (73) *Domani, pensò, Gianni sarebbe partito*

Tomorrow, she thought, Gianni would leave

- (74) *A Maria, pensò, Gianni non avrebbe più fatto regali*

To Maria, (she) thought, Gianni would give no more presents

In (72)–(74) a phrase precedes the introducing predicate—in this case *pensò* (she thought). In (72), there are various adverbs: the speech act adverb *francamente* (frankly), and left-periphery adverbs *sicuramente* (surely) and *probabilmente* (probably). In example (73) the phrase preceding the introducing predicate is a temporal adverb and in sentence (74) a dative phrase. The phrases preceding the introducing predicate are interpreted as topic—that is, as given information, with respect to the context relevant to the internal source. If the preposed phrase is a focus, the FID sentence is quite marginal:

- (75) ??*A MARIA (non a Paola), pensò, Gianni non avrebbe fatto più regali*

TO Maria (and not to Paola), (she) thought, Gianni would give no more presents

For those who accept the sentence, the only possible interpretation is that the focused phrase is new information in the context relevant to the internal source, but it cannot be a focus provided by the *external source*. Furthermore, the introducing predicate can be simultaneously preceded and followed by a topic, or by multiple topics:

- (76) *Domani, pensò, quel libro, l'avrebbe finalmente venduto*

Tomorrow, (she) thought, that book, (she) it-CL would eventually sell

- (77) *Domani, a Gianni, pensò, quel libro, gliel'avrebbe finalmente venduto*

Tomorrow, to Gianni, (she) thought, that book, (she) to him-it-CL would eventually sell

Furthermore, the introducing predicate usually does not occupy the leftmost position. When this does happen, as for instance in example (23) above, it is separated from the narrated text by a very long pause, often represented in writing by means of a semicolon. Consider the following examples:

- (78) *Sarebbe partita domani, pensò*

She would leave tomorrow, she thought

- (79) *#Pensò sarebbe partita domani*

She thought should leave tomorrow

In sentence (78) the introducing predicate appears on the right of the FID sentence, showing that the sentence itself can be topicalized, analogously to what I illustrated above. However, it cannot appear on the left, as shown by example (79). Interestingly, this example is not *ungrammatical*, given that it can be interpreted as a main-complement clause structure, with deletion of the complementizer. However, in

this case an FID interpretation is not available, given that the indexical temporal expression can only be understood as referring to the day after the utterance time—that is, it can be evaluated only with respect to the external source’s coordinates, and not with respect to the internal source’s coordinates, as required by FID contexts.¹⁴

Finally, FID clauses cannot be embedded:

- (80) *Luigi disse che Gianni, pensò, sarebbe partito domani
 Luigi said that Gianni, she thought, would leave tomorrow

Example (80) is not a FID structure and it is judged as ungrammatical.

Summarizing, the following generalizations hold:¹⁵

- The syntactic realization of the introducing predicate is a root phenomenon.
- The introducing predicate (usually) does not precede the FID clause.
- The introducing predicate follows a topic phrase, but only marginally a focus one.

Hence, these data point to the conclusion that there is an additional layer at the left of the COMP.

In Giorgi (2011, 2014), I proposed that these structures, which are prosodically parentheticals, project their own constituent. Such a constituent, however, though projected according to the properties of syntax, has a prosodic head, where *prosodic* is opposed to *lexical*. I cannot reproduce here in full the arguments I provided in the quoted references, but I will briefly summarize the main arguments.

Selkirk (2005) proposed that parentheticals are delimited by the so called *comma intonation*—see also Dehé and Kavalova (2007) for a discussion—which is represented syntactically as a *comma feature* on the relevant constituents, that is, the parenthetical and the host.

Giorgi (2010, 2014) points out that interesting results might be obtained if, instead of a *comma feature*, a *comma head*, K, is present in the syntax, projecting its own constituent, KP. Following Selkirk (2005), both the host sentence and the parenthetical are dominated by a KP. The other proposal by Giorgi (2011, 2014) is that the

¹⁴ On Complementizer Deletion, see Giorgi and Pianesi (2004) and Giorgi (2010: ch.2).

¹⁵ The properties summarized in (81) resemble those observed for exclamative sentences—see Zanuttini and Portner (2003)—and vocative structures—see Moro (2003). Moro (2003) observes the following contrast in vocative sentences between topic, in (i), and focus, in (ii):

(i) ?I ragazzi, o Maria, li aiuta Gianni (Moro 2003: ex.12b)
 The boys, o Maria, them-cl. helps Gianni
 ‘The boys, o Maria, Gianni helps.’

(ii) *I RAGAZZI, o Maria, Gianni aiuta, non i conigli (Moro 2003: ex.13b)
 The boys, o Maria, Gianni helps, not the rabbits

This consideration might be quite relevant, because it is possible that the observed pattern follows from the presence of similar syntactic structures.

parenthetical is not adjoined to the host, but is hierarchally higher, in the spirit of Kayne's (1994) Linear Correspondence Axiom, which can be expressed, in a simplified version, in the following way:

(81) A precedes B iff A asymmetrically c-commands B.

Consider now example (64) above, repeated here for simplicity:

(82) The new ration did not start till tomorrow and he had only four cigarettes left,
Winston thought.

The derivation of this sentence, according to what has just been suggested, would be the following:

(83) $[_{KP} K [thought\ Winston\ [_{KP} K [COMP \dots]]]]$

The structure in (83) is the basic syntactic form. The actual linear order is derived via topicalization of the embedded sentence:¹⁶

(84) $[_{KP} [COMP \dots]_i K [thought\ Winston\ [_{KP} K e_i]]]$

The presence of the KP has the effect of resetting the context coordinates in the C-layer of the FID sentence, so that they become ones pertaining to the internal source. The syntactic mechanism underlying such a resetting is presumably to be assimilated to a control phenomenon. Topicalization does not necessarily concern the whole sentence. Consider for instance the following, hypotheticalal derivation:

(85) The new ration, *thought Winston*, did not start till tomorrow and he had only four cigarettes left.

The basic structure is the same as above:

(86) $[_{KP} K [Winston\ thought\ [_{KP} K [COMP \dots]]]]$

Topicalization concerns only a portion of the embedded COMP:¹⁷

(87) $[_{KP} [the\ new\ ration\]_i K [Winston\ thought\ [_{KP} K [COMP\ e_i]]]]$

¹⁶ The same proposal holds for parentheticals introducing quotations, as in the following case:

(i) I will leave tomorrow, *said John.*
 (ii) $[_{KP} K [said\ John\ [_{KP} K [COMP \dots]]]]$

With topicalization of the COMP:

(iii) $[_{KP} [COMP \dots]_i K [John\ said\ yesterday\ [_{KP} K e_i]]]$

¹⁷ Here I am not discussing in depth the nature of the linguistic material present on the left of the parenthetical and simply define it as *topic*, which might be a partial and sometimes incorrect characterization. Indeed the issue is not at all clear and deserves further study.

As observed previously, the topic is obligatory. One reason might be that the KP is the projection in the syntax of *prosodic* properties, in particular of the intonational contour corresponding to the edge of the parenthetical. Consequently, in order to realize it, some phonological material must precede the KP. This consideration, as discussed by Giorgi, is also compatible with the view of the derivation in (84) and (87) as purely phonological *spell-out* effects.

11.6 Conclusions

In this chapter I addressed the issue of the FID from the point of view of its syntactic structure. My goal was to determine what elicits the peculiar properties of this style, and in particular the apparent dissociation between tenses, pronoun, and temporal expressions. I proposed that the syntax of tenses and indexical temporal locutions used in “normal”, non-FID, contexts can give the correct results in this case as well, once the role of the introducing predicate is fully worked out. I proposed that the verbal form appearing in FID contexts is not the normal, indexical, past tense, but the same form appearing in *dream* contexts, and discussed both Italian and English data in this respect. The introducing predicate is responsible for the resetting of the temporal coordinate present in the C-layer, determining in this way the interpretation of the temporal adverbs. Finally, I suggested the existence of an additional root layer, at the left of the C-layer, hosting the parenthetical realizing the introducing predicate. I proposed that the prosodic peculiarity, that is, the comma intonation, associated with these structures, has a syntactic projection, the KP, which is then realized at spell-out as proposed by Selkirk (2005) by means of the *comma intonation*.