

## MULTIFUNCTIONALITY OF DISCOURSE MARKER *PORTANTO* IN BRAGA'S SPEECH

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Article history: Received 28 July 2023; Revised 2 November 2023; Accepted 12 November 2023;  
Available online 20 December 2023; Available print 31 December 2023.

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**ABSTRACT.** *Multifunctionality of discourse marker portanto in Braga's Speech.* This paper explores the multifunctionality and usage patterns of the discourse marker *portanto* in Braga's speech. Our main goal is to propose a revised description of *portanto*, while acknowledging the validity of previous research on the topic. The investigation focused on the co-occurrence of functions associated with *portanto*, emphasizing its pivotal role in speech construction. The frequency distribution of *portanto* usage was found to be consistent with earlier studies, affirming its most prevalent application as a filler (marker). Our study also highlighted that an excessive use of discourse markers can create the illusion of coherence, rather than genuinely ensuring it, especially in contexts characterized by frequent pauses, verbal hesitations, and syntactic interruptions. Furthermore, this research examined the influence of discourse genre on *portanto's* usage patterns. Notably, the two predominant uses observed in Braga's speech were linked to specific aspects of sociolinguistic interviews, particularly the recollection of life stories and features of spontaneous speech. The findings enrich our understanding of this discourse marker's multifaceted

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role in facilitating coherent communication and its significance in various speech contexts.

**Keywords:** *Braga's speech, colloquial register, discourse markers, European Portuguese, multifunctionality.*

**REZUMAT. Multifuncționalitatea marcatorului discursiv *portanto* în graiul din Braga.** Acest articol explorează multifuncționalitatea și modelele de utilizare ale marcatorului discursiv *portanto* în graiul din Braga. Scopul nostru principal este să propunem o descriere revizuită a marcatorului *portanto*, recunoscând în același timp validitatea cercetărilor anterioare. Cercetarea noastră s-a concentrat asupra co-ocurenței funcțiilor marcatorului *portanto*, care subliniază rolul esențial al acestuia în coeziunea discursului. Distribuția frecvenței utilizării lui *portanto* s-a dovedit a fi în concordanță cu studiile anterioare, confirmând că cea mai frecventă utilizare este de marcator. Studiul nostru a subliniat, de asemenea, că utilizarea excesivă a marcatorilor discursivi poate crea iluzia coerenței, fără însă a o asigura cu adevărat, mai ales în contexte caracterizate de pauze frecvente, ezitări verbale și discontinuități sintactice. În plus, cercetarea noastră a examinat și influența genului discursiv asupra modelelor de utilizare ale marcatorului *portanto*. Cele două utilizări predominante observate în graiul din Braga au fost influențate de aspecte specifice ale interviurilor sociolingvistice, în special nararea poveștilor de viață și trăsăturile discursului spontan. Concluziile noastre contribuie la înțelegerea rolului multifacțat al acestui marcator discursiv în facilitarea comunicării coerente și clarifică sensurile sale în mai multe contexte.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** *graiul din Braga, registrul colocvial, marcatori discursivi, portugheză europeană, multifuncționalitate.*

## Introduction

Drawing on a previous quantitative study (Marques and Aguiar 2014), this paper will focus on the uses and contextual values of *portanto* in Braga's speech. Example (1) is a good illustration of the type of data used both in our previous work and in the current study.

- (1) E à volta era tudo quintas que era miúdo e à volta daqui desta zona era tudo quintas, ((hesitação)) portanto • • • esta zona daqui da Sé e Maximinos ou isso. 'And there were farms all around when I was younger and, in this area, all there was were farms, ((hesitation)) **portanto** [that is] • • • Sé and Maximinos or something like that.' 16H2C.

In this paper, a qualitative methodology,<sup>3</sup> complemented by a quantitative analysis, within a discourse-pragmatic approach, was used to better describe the characteristics of *portanto* in Braga's speech and contrast them with the ones already described by Portuguese researchers. We will be working under the premise of *portanto's* multifunctionality (which is a nuclear feature of discourse markers, in general, as Bouchard (2000) and Lopes (2004) point out). This means that *portanto* displays a broad array of discursive functions. The main aim of this study is, therefore, to examine the uses of *portanto*, as a discourse marker, which Hansen defines as

linguistic item[s] of variable scope, and whose primary function is connective. By 'variable scope' I mean that the discourse segment hosting a marker may be of almost any size or form, from an intonational pattern indicating illocutionary function, (...) through subsentential utterances, (...), to a segment comprising several utterances (...). It is moreover part of the definition of markers that they do not contribute to the propositional content of their host units (in other words, they belong to that part of the utterance which is 'shown' rather than 'asserted' [cf. Nölke, 1994:115-116]), and that they function as instructions from the speaker to the hearer on how to integrate the host unit into a coherent mental representation of the discourse. (1997, 160-1)

### **Theoretical and methodological framework**

From a theoretical point of view, we will be working under the pragmatic assumption of the contextuality of meaning, that is to say, meaning is largely regulated by context. We will consider the importance of interactional restrictions on the construction of meaning in discourse, namely those concerning the concepts of genre and social practice (Adam 1997; Kerbrat-Orecchioni 2005; Maingueneau 2014; Charaudeau 2015, among others), and as such we believe that it is crucial to consider interactions from an interactional discourse analysis perspective.

We adopted a synchronic perspective to deliberately avoid debatable questions, such as the desemantization of *portanto* and the inevitable discussion on *portanto* nuclear values (see Hansen 1997). On this matter, Bouchard draws on the French discourse markers *alors*, *mais*, *donc* and *et* to argue that

ces usages – essentiellement écrits ou oralo-graphiques – très spécifiques sont plutôt des exemples exceptionnels de surspécialisation, de sursémantisation de ces unités, normalement utilisées de manière moins précise, à l'oral, par l'ensemble de la population native comme par les non-

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<sup>3</sup> See Paillé and Mucchielli (2012).

natifs ne possédant pas encore une maîtrise complète du français. C'est peut-être parce que les grammairiens font partie de la couche la plus scolarisée de la population et *a priori* la plus encline au travail intellectuel formel que nos analyses traditionnelles font découler les usages oraux à la fois premiers et plus fréquents des usages écrits pourtant seconds et les plus rares. Ne serait-ce pas là une survivance inconsciente d'une conception de l'oral comme un mauvais écrit ? (2002, 71)

The analysis will also consider the spoken and colloquial nature of the collected data, to the extent that unplanned speech means simultaneous discourse production and verbalization. As Hansen also points out

(...) where spoken language is concerned (barring the limiting case of a speaker reading aloud from a pre-prepared manuscript), discourse production is by definition an on-line, incremental process, involving the transformation of a non-linguistic hierarchically structured mental representation into linear linguistic expression. (1997, 155)

Discourse markers are a crucial part of this mental-to-linguistic transformation and, therefore, stand as evidence for enunciation and interactional co-management procedures. Hence, this study aims to provide a co(n)textual analysis of *portanto* that highlights its discursive features.

Bearing in mind that the sociolinguistic interview (as a discourse genre) is an oral interaction, marked (mainly) by a colloquial register (Briz 2010; Nossik 2011), five research questions were advanced, concerning the use of *portanto* as a filler (marker); the occurrence of unfilled pauses as a contextual characteristic of the uses of *portanto*; the critical role of the verbal context in determining the uses of *portanto*; the combined use of *portanto* as the most frequent, given the multifunctionality<sup>4</sup> of discourse markers and, finally, the relation between the most frequently recorded uses of *portanto* and the discourse genre, sociolinguistic interview.

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<sup>4</sup> As Mosegaard Hansen (1998, 240-241) points out: "Analysts who take this stance assume that words may indeed have different senses which are not merely a matter of pragmatics, but that rather than being homonymous and discrete, these various senses are related in an often non-predictable, but nevertheless motivated way, either in a chain-like fashion through family resemblances, or as extensions from a prototype. This obviates the minimalist need to find a single basic meaning which is common to all possible uses of a word, but at the same time allows for a certain indeterminacy of meaning which is not possible on a maximalist account, insofar as the senses instantiated in particular contexts may overlap. Thus, a maximalist description would require the analyst to specify whether the *alors* in (21) is resultative or whether it signals the return to a previous topic following a digression (these are two of the functions which may be fulfilled by *alors* on my analysis, cf. Hansen 1997, 1998: Ch. 13), since these meanings would be assumed to be distinct, whereas a 'polysemy' account can treat both as being potentially present."

The main goal of this study is to characterize the linguistic-discursive contexts for *portanto*, to determine in-context uses of *portanto* and then to compare these findings to the ones advanced in the recent literature on the topic. Thus, the adequacy of previously established taxonomies will be tested and a new description of the uses of *portanto* will be advanced.

Our analysis of *portanto* is based on a 6-hour sample of a data corpus of over 80 hours of recorded and transcribed sociolinguistic interviews (Labov 1972). A stratified sample according to three social criteria – gender, age and level of education – was used. The data collection was held under the research project *Perfil Sociolinguístico da Fala Bracarense* (Sociolinguistic Profile of Braga's Speech), which was supported by the FCT (Funding agency for science, research and technology) and hosted by CEHUM (Centre for Humanistic Studies of the University of Minho). The transcripts of the recordings selected for this study were previously annotated, within the PSFB project, with the help of the transcription software EXMARaLDA, using a slightly modified version of HIAT transcription convention (see Annexe 1). A random sample of 6 sociolinguistic interviews was selected, according to the frequency distribution of *portanto*. These were classified on the basis of the rates of occurrence of *portanto* into three categories (see Table 1 for a detailed description): group 1 – low frequency rate (maximum of 12 occurrences); group 2 – medium frequency rate (ranging from 12 to 90 occurrences; group 3 – high frequency rate (over 90 recorded occurrences). An overall of 290 tokens was attested.

**Table 1.** - *Portanto's* frequency distribution per group frequency

Low Frequency Group		Medium Frequency Group		High Frequency Group	
Group 1		Group 2		Group 3	
Interview	Occurrences	Interview	Occurrences	Interview	Occurrences
16H2C	7	66M2D	39	29H3C	93
61M2C	10	43H4D	48	75M3C	93

## Literature overview

### *So* and *donc*: English and French counterparts of *portanto*

One difficulty in studying discourse markers in general is their multifunctionality. The broad array of functions documented in the use of *portanto* calls for constant adjustment of the theoretical tools used to examine the discourse marker in *context*. There is, however, general agreement on particular uses of this type of discourse marker. Without intending to generalize the uses of discourse markers across languages, we believe that current

literature on English and French discourse markers *so* and *donc* may lend some useful insights to our discussion on the uses of *portanto*. Schiffrin's (1987: 218) pioneering work on discourse marker documents the use of *so* for marking inferential or causal connections and for marking turn-transitions. Two other functions are identified by Hansen's study of French discourse marker *donc*. Hansen demonstrates that *donc* is used to mark a conclusion and/or to mark a repetition of something previously introduced. Additionally, Hansen (1997: 165) argues that these "two broadly defined environments" – the one in which *donc* "marks a conclusion or a result" and the one in "which it marks a repetition of something said earlier" are not "mutually exclusive". Further, from their study of the use of *donc* in written and spoken texts, Bolly and Degand (2009) work (Table 2) advances prior research into the usage of the French discourse marker, concluding that the uses of *donc* may be divided into five functional categories.

**Table 2.** - Uses of *donc* in French – Bolly and Degand's taxonomy (2009)

Fonction syntactico-sémantique (Syntactic and semantic functions)	Marqueur de conséquence (marks a consequence)	
Fonctions discursives (Discursive functions)	Marqueur de répétition (marks a repetition)	Marqueur de répétition à orientation conclusive (récapitulation) (summarizes a prior topic and marks its conclusion)
		Marqueur de reformulation et d'explicitation (clarifies or rephrases a topic)
	Marqueur de transition participative (signals a turn-transition)	
	Marqueur de structuration conceptuelle (signals a topic transition)	
	Fonction de ponctuant du discours (acts as a filler)	

### Taxonomies of the uses of *portanto*

To date, several recent non-normative studies investigating *portanto* have been carried out, using both quantitative and qualitative methods, such as Lopes, Pezatti and Novaes (2001) and Novaes (2009), as well as Freitas and Ramilo (2003). Together these studies provide important insights into the syntactic, semantic and discursive features of *portanto*, which were crucial for the development of Lopes *et al.* (2001) initial classification, and its later reformulation in Freitas and Ramilo (2003).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Lopes *et al.* (2001) worked with a selected sample of CRPC to study *portanto* in European Portuguese. For the study of *portanto* in Brazilian Portuguese, Lopes *et al.* work with both NURC and a *corpus* of written journalistic texts. Freitas and Ramilo (2003) worked with REDIP, a *corpus* that includes spoken and written texts.

Taking into account the multifunctionality of *portanto*, Lopes *et al.* (2001) draw a distinction between the syntactic and the discursive uses of *portanto*. *Portanto* is thus considered to be a logical operator and a discourse marker. In fact, documented uses of *portanto* were classified into five functional categories (see Table 3) and proper attention was due to the discourse marker category, which is further divided into four subcategories.

**Table 3.** - Uses of *portanto* in European and Brazilian Portuguese – Lopes *et al.*'s taxonomy (2001)

Conector (signals a conclusion)	
Advérbio (adds a causal explanation)	
Articulador (resumes something said earlier)	Retomador de tópico (resumes a topic after a digression)
	Encaminhador de tópico (develops a topic)
	Fechador de tópico (closes a topic)
	Reformulador de termos (reformulates the information contained in the previous phrase)
Sinalizador de interação (metadiscursive. Reflects upon the interaction itself)	
Marcador conversacional (phatic. Acts as a filler)	

As aforementioned, an alternative classification (see Table 4) was later advanced by Freitas and Ramilo (2003). According to the authors, data collected from heterogeneous corpora showed sufficient evidence to claim that the use of *portanto* to rephrase something said earlier (*reformulador de termos*) should be treated as a separate category and that the *articulador* category should, as such, include only the cases in which a topic is resumed, developed, or closed.

**Table 4.** - Freitas and Ramilo's (2003) taxonomy

Conexão de tipo sintático (sintaticamente irregular)/ Syntactic type connection (syntactically regular)	Conclusivo (signals a conclusion)
	Adverbial (adds a causal explanation)
Conexão de tipo discursivo (sintaticamente irregular)/ Discursive type connection (syntactically irregular)	Articulador (summarizes a previously introduced topic, in order to close the topic)
	Reformulador (rephrases something that was just said)
	Sinalizador (summarizes a previously introduced topic, in order to begin a new topic)
Valor expletivo/ Expletive value	Marcador (acts as a pause filler)

### A new proposal for the classification of the uses of *portanto*

Although there are striking similarities between the aforementioned taxonomies for the use of *portanto* and Bolly and Degand's work (2009) on the French discourse marker *donc*, we believe Bolly and Degand's taxonomy suggests a far more adequate set of categories for the study of discourse markers in general. In fact, previous studies of *portanto* (Lopes *et al.* 2001 and Freitas and Ramilo 2003) have suggested categories that we believe to be, to a certain extent, overly compartmentalized and somewhat less clear.

We propose a revised typology of the uses of *portanto*. First of all, because we will be working under the assumption that all uses are discursive as they structure discourse and as they are not mutually exclusive, the typological distinction between syntactic-semantic functions and discursive functions will be dropped.

Taking Bolly and Degand's (2009) repetition marker category, we argue that *portanto* is used to resume or rephrase something said earlier, and when used in this way *portanto* either 1) marks a conclusion (by recapitulating the previous topic) or 2) rephrases or clarifies something previously said, which the hearer believes to need clarification. Further, the data yielded by this study will provide strong evidence for the addition of Bolly and Degand's third category that accounts for a particular use of *portanto*: *i.e.* when the discourse marker is used to mark a topical transition, either by resuming a preceding topic or by referring to the interlocutors' shared knowledge (similar to Fraser's *return to a prior topic*, a sub-category of *topic orientation markers* (2009, 893)).

A new description of the uses of *portanto* is put forward in Table 5.<sup>6</sup> As can be seen in Table 5, aside from the actual classification (which follows closely the definitions put forward in the aforementioned taxonomies), a description and the respective paraphrases for the different uses of *portanto* is also provided.

**Table 5** - Taxonomy of *portanto*'s uses

Uses	Description
Marcador inferencial/inferential marker	Prefaces a proposition that must be interpreted as a conclusion. Interchangeable by: logo, por conseguinte, deduzo que (ergo, thus, I infer that...).
Marcador adverbial /Causal marker	Resumes a previously introduced proposition, indicating a causal explanation. Interchangeable by: por esse motivo, por causa disso, ... (therefore, thereat...).

<sup>6</sup> Portuguese terminology and examples are provided in order to add to the growing body of Portuguese literature on *portanto* and discourse markers in general.



Uses		Description
Marcador de retoma /Topic resumption marker	Marcador de retoma com orientação conclusiva (recapitulação)	Topic recapitulation: Generally, follows a digression, acting as a summary for a previously introduced topic and marking a conclusion. Interchangeable by: em suma, em resumo, concluindo, ... (in sum, in short, to conclude...).
	Marcador de reformulação e de explicitação	Topic reformulation: Used to rephrase or clarify the current topic. Interchangeable by: por outras palavras, de outro modo, ... (in other words, otherwise ...).
	Marcador de estruturação conceptual	Topic returning: Signals a topic transition. The speaker returns to a previously introduced topic Interchangeable by: voltando ao que estava a dizer, ... (to return to the matter in hand ...).
Marcador de transição de turno /Turn transition marker		Signals a possible turn-transition (initial or closing transition). Interchangeable by: bom, bem, ... (well, ...).
Pontuador/Filler		Pause filler. Deployed in similar environments as the ones documented for pauses. It could possibly act as "discourse parasite". Interchangeable by: pronto, tipo, ahm, ... (yeah, like, um...).

Now we will present each use of *portanto* in context, to highlight its characteristics. We intend to illustrate the prototypical uses of each one of the advanced categories, assuming that these categories do not have clear-cut boundaries, but are rather fuzzy.

### Uses of *portanto*

#### Inferential marker

*Portanto* introduces a conclusion. Traditional approaches to written language consider that the use of *portanto* for marking a conclusion is its most common and preferred one. However, such use is rare in our data.

- (2) •• *Tinha alunos que que não comiam quase. •• Que comiam broa •• e mais nada ao almoço. Portanto, não podiam ser muito bons alunos, nem trabalhar muito, não é? •• Mal alimentados.*  
 '•• There were students that that barely ate •• that ate bread •• and nothing more at lunch time. **Portanto** [ergo], they couldn't be great students nor work hard, right? •• Being underfed like that.' 66M2D

### Causal marker

Lopes *et al.*'s work (2003) provides strong evidence to support the acceptability of a combination such as “and” (in Portuguese, “e”) followed by *portanto*. The high frequency recorded for this type of sequence in Braga's speech (to which the frequency of paratactic or additive structures in the sociolinguistic interview genre is a contributing factor) is not at all surprising. However, the use of *portanto* as an adverb is scarcely present in all the documented “*e portanto*” sequences.

When used as an adverbial marker, *portanto* may be paraphrased as “because of”.

- (3) *não querem, porque dizem que em Portugal que dão subsídios e, portanto, querem vir para Portugal, não querem estar lá.*  
'They don't want it, because they say that in Portugal benefits are given and **portanto** [because of] that they want to come to Portugal, they don't want to stay there.' 75M3C

### Topic resumption marker

This category displays a broad array of functions. It may be divided into three subcategories, illustrated by the following examples: to resume a topic and mark a conclusion (recapitulation) (4), to rephrase or clarify the current topic (5) and to return to a prior topic (6).

- (4) Entrevistador: • • Exatamente, agora também há tratamentos há • • Cada vez isto... • • Claro  
*Melhora. • • No meu tempo quando eu comecei a fazer hemodiálise • • fazia-se um transplante por semana. Hoje há dias de se fazer três e quatro só num hospital. Portanto, isto está está a evoluir muito. • • E as técnicas são melhores, não é?*  
'Interviewer: • • Exactly, now there's also treatments • • more and more... • • Of course.  
'It gets better. • • Back then, when I started hemodialysis • • they would perform a transplant a week. Nowadays they do three or four a day, in a single hospital. **Portanto** [in short] it's truly evolving. And the procedures are better now, right?' 16H2C
- (5) *Dizem as pessoas que vive/ que vivem • • agora que ainda vivem que na altura que também era alegre. Era alegre, mas o • • o ciclo de vida era muito pequenino. • • • Portanto, as pessoas tinham aquela vida, por exemplo, ir a uma festa era/já era já eram um • • acontecimento grande.*

'The people who live/ who lived • • the people who are still alive now say that back then it was also a cheerful time. It was cheerful, but the • • the cycle of life was very very short. • • • **Portanto** [in other words], they had that life and, for example, going to a party was already was already • • a big deal.' 66M2D

- (6) *Está/ também está/ a a a água perdida. Eles estão agora a ver se a captam para não sei quê, mas também ficou... Portanto, ali era uma junção • • de sete bicas de água, nascentes, • • mas com um caudal • • assim, • • e e que abasteciam a cidade, portanto, que era água • • que eu digo estou a beber água do Luso • • em piores condições do que a água dali.*

'There's there's also lost water. Right now they are trying to collect it for...I don't know what for, but...**Portanto** [to return to the matter in hand], therein there was a junction • • of seven natural springs • • but with a water flow • • or so, • • and and it used to supply the city. It was water... • • that's why I say I'm drinking Luso water • in worst condition than the water from there.' 75M3C

### Turn-transition marker

Previous studies of interactional markers have argued for different definitions of this type of use, and there is no general agreement about its deployment or its description.

The data yielded by this study has provided strong evidence to suggest that *portanto* should be characterized as a turn-transition marker when found in environments such as conversational closing sequences and turn-transition points. Previous published studies have failed to account for the use of *portanto* to preface turn-transition sequences. Furthermore, the combined use of *portanto* as a turn-transition marker and as a filler (marker) has also failed to be addressed in previous studies. This use is critical to help the speaker fill turn-taking silent pauses; *portanto* ensures, as such, that the speaker takes and maintains his turn.

- (7) Sou assistente técnica aqui da escola.  
 Entrevistador: ...E consiste mais ou menos em quê?  
 ...**Portanto**, isto quer dizer, era o antigo... • • a última, o último nome porque os nomes mudam e o trabalho é sempre o mesmo. • • • Assistente administrativa.  
 '...I'm the school's technical assistant.  
 Interviewer: ...And what does that mean?  
**Portanto** [Well], in other words, It was the former... • • the last, the latest denomination, because the names change but the work stays the same. • • • Administrative assistant.' 61M2C

## Filler marker

Fillers markers – or *ponctuants* as advanced by Vincent (1993) – act precisely as paused fillers, signaling to other participants that, even though the speaker has paused in order to think, he has not yet finished speaking. As such, this type of use plays a key role in turn-taking, which is a critical aspect of the structure and organization of conversation.

Acting as pause filler, *portanto* may be paraphrased by vocalizations, like *uh, er, um*, in English, as well as discourse markers with a similar function, such as *like* and *well*, and will most likely occur with false starts, frequent pauses, repeated syllables and syntactic interruptions.

- (8) Entrevistador: E acha que o o país precisava de outra revolução?  
*Agora? ••• Sei lá, olhe que isto está muito mal, portanto. ••• Está. ••• Levou um rumo um bocadinho ••• um bocadinho ••• diferente do que imaginava na altura que ia levar.*  
 ‘Interviewer: And do you believe that that the country needs another revolution?  
 Right now? ••• I don’t know, but this is looking really bad, **portanto** [uh]. ••• It is. ••• It has taken a turn a little ••• a little ••• different from what I’ve imagined at the time.’ 66M2
- (9) •• *Portanto, no fundo é a Anna Karenina e a vida dela através de/ e as relações que ela estabelece com •• com a sociedade russa, •• com os irmãos, a família, amigos •• e que atravessa •• portanto um casamento, •• uma separação em/ naquela época •• e a e as peripécias todas até chegar...*  
 ‘•• Well, in a nutshell, it’s Anna Karenina and her life through the/ and the relationships she establishes •• with the Russian society, •• with her brothers, her family, friends •• and the novel, **portanto** [like], follows a marriage, •• a divorce that/ at that the time •• and all all the adventures that happened until...’ 66M2D

## *The contexts of occurrences of portanto*

Overall, the data obtained from *portanto*’s frequency of distribution according to use (see Table 6) is consistent with other studies which have shown that the use of *portanto* as a filler marker is the most common. Indeed, the results advanced by Lopes *et al.* (2001) and Freitas and Ramilo (2003) have shown respectively a 50% and a 44% frequency rate for the use of *portanto* as filler (marker), which are in good agreement with the results documented for this type of use in Braga’s speech: in 46, 8% of the cases *portanto* is used as a filler (marker). These results have also provided further support for our

research question on the combined use of *portanto* as the most frequent one. From the results in Table 6, we can see that, in fact, the combined use of *portanto* occurs in 9, 6% of the cases, while the use of *portanto* to mark a conclusion (i.e. as an inferential marker), traditionally considered to be the prototypical use of *portanto*, occurs in 7, 2% of the cases.

**Table 6.** - *Portanto's* frequency distribution per use

Uses	Oc	%
Inferential marker	21	7,2
Causal marker	19	6,5
Turn-transition marker	6	2,0
Topic resumption signaling a conclusion	53	18,2
Topic rephrasing	23	7,9
Topic returning	2	0,6
Filler	136	46,8
Ambiguity	2	0,6
Combined use	28	9,6

As aforementioned, the selected sample of interviews was classified on the basis of *portanto's* frequency rates of occurrence into three groups: Group 1 (low frequency group), Group 2 (medium frequency group) and Group 3 (high frequency group). Table 7 shows a summary of *portanto's* frequency distribution per group.

**Table 7.** - *Portanto's* frequency distribution per group frequency II

	Low Frequency Group		Medium Frequency Group		High Frequency Group		Total	
	Group 1		Group 2		Group 3			
Frequency	Oc	%	Oc	%	Oc	%	Oc	%
		17	5,8	87	30	186	64,1	290

Turning now to Group 1, Table 8 clearly shows that the use of *portanto* to resume a topic while signaling a conclusion is the preferred one, with over half of Group 1's total of occurrences (9 out of 17).

**Table 8.** - *Portanto's* frequency distribution of the group-use correlation: Group 1

Uses	Oc	%
Inferential marker	1	5,8
Causal marker	0	0
Turn-transition marker	1	5,8
Topic resumption signaling a conclusion	9	52,9

Uses	Oc	%
Topic rephrasing	1	5,8
Topic returning	0	0
Filler (marker)	2	11,7
Ambiguity	1	5,8
Combined use	2	11,7
Total	17	100

From the data in Table 9, we can see that the use of *portanto* as a filler (marker) is predominant (occurring 36, 7% out of the 87 cases). The table also shows that the use of *portanto* to resume a topic while marking a conclusion (one of the three subcategories of the topic resumption marker) is the second most documented in Group 2 (24, 1% out of 87). Actually, *portanto* acts as a topic resumption marker for a combined total of 32 times (36,7% out of 87).

**Table 9.** - *Portanto's* frequency distribution of the group-use correlation: Group 2

Uses	Oc	%
Inferential marker	9	10,3
Causal marker	5	5,7
Turn-transition marker	1	1,1
Topic resumption signaling a conclusion	21	24,1
Topic rephrasing	9	10,3
Topic returning	2	2,2
Filler (marker)	32	36,7
Ambiguity	0	0
Combined use	10	11,4
Total	87	100

Similarly, from the data in Table 10, we can see that Group 3 also shows a preference for the use of *portanto* as a filler (marker): in over half of the cases, *portanto* occurs as a filler (marker) (54, 8% out of 186). Likewise, the topic resumption marker signaling a conclusion is as well the second predominant use, occurring, however, significantly less than in Group 1 and Group 2: only 12, 3% out of the 186 cases (and 19, 3% considering the global category of resumption).

**Table 10.** - *Portanto's* frequency distribution of the group-use correlation: Group 3

Uses	Oc	%
Inferential marker	11	5,9
Causal marker	14	7,5
Turn-transition marker	4	2,1
Topic resumption signaling a conclusion	23	12,3

Uses	Oc	%
Topic rephrasing	13	6,9
Topic returning	2	1,0
Filler marker	102	54,8
Ambiguity	1	0,5
Combined use	16	8,6
Total	186	100

Taken together, these results suggest that there is an association between the uses of *portanto* in Braga's speech and the particular discourse genre in hand. These sociolinguistic interviews are a part of an oral genre, with colloquial characteristics (Nossik 2011, 121) and a low degree of interactivity. In fact, it is the interviewer's goal to make the interviewee talk as much as possible about a given topic, such as his/her life experience or his/her opinions on a particular subject. As such we are working with unplanned speech, which may provide an explanation for the overwhelming number of occurrences of *portanto* as a pause filler (marker) (46, 8% out of the 290 documented cases). The recollection of life stories, which is common in these sociolinguistic interviews, may also explain the second most predominant use of *portanto*: the topic resumption marker, which occurs in 26, 8 % of the cases (see Table 6).

### Unfilled pauses and the uses of *portanto*

According to the transcription convention used, within PSFB project, unfilled pauses with a minimum duration of 0.3 seconds were annotated with the following signal •• (also referred to as 2 bullets), while unfilled pauses that lasted for more than 1 second were annotated with the 3 bullets signal •••. One major drawback of this transcription convention is precisely that it does not account for smaller pauses. The distribution of *portanto*'s pause context (see Table 11) therefore needs to be interpreted with caution.

**Table 11.** - *Portanto*'s immediate pause context frequency distribution

Left	Right	Double	No pause	Total
98	23	22	147	290

As shown in Table 11, *portanto* occurs with unfilled pauses in almost half of the cases, i.e., 49, 3% of the cases, which may be explained by the delimitation of intonation units. These results further support our working hypothesis that unfilled pauses are a key aspect to take into consideration for the characterization of *portanto*.

**Table 12** - *Portanto*'s frequency distribution of the immediate pause context-use correlation

	Unfilled pauses			No pause
	Left	Right	Double	
Inferential marker	10	1	2	8
Causal marker	0	3	0	16
Turn-transition marker	2	1	1	2
Topic resumption signaling a conclusion	26	2	6	19
Topic rephrasing marker	12	1	2	8
Topic returning	0	1	0	1
Filler (marker)	35	11	10	80
Combined use	11	4	1	12

Table 12 provides an overview of the correlation of the uses of *portanto* and pause contexts. First, the use of *portanto* as a filler (marker) is the one that mostly occurs with unfilled pauses, in general (56 out of 136). Secondly, it is noteworthy that out of the 56 times *portanto* (as filler) appears with unfilled pauses, 35 of those times the pause is on the left, which may indicate a moment of particular hesitation. Although, if we consider the sum of the three subcategories of the topic resumption marker, this category is actually the one that mostly co-occurs with left pauses.

### The scope of *portanto*

Our analysis highlights the wide-ranging scope of *portanto*, in the extent that it connects discursive segments of different length, which may even include other occurrences of *portanto*.

- (10) Olhe, não passei Páscoa, nem dei conta dela. •• ((risos)) Os meus filhos... Tenho um filho na Alemanha, outra em Lisboa. Nenhum deles veio. •• Quer dizer, eu ligo não não... ••• **Portanto**<sub>a</sub> não dou muito valor à/ não dou valor à parte religiosa, mas gosto de os ter cá.

'Look, I didn't celebrate Easter, nor did I noticed it. •• ((laughter)) My kids... One of my children is in Germany, the other one is in Lisbon. None of them came. •• I mean, I don't care about about... ••• **Portanto**<sub>a</sub> [uhm], I don't care for/ I don't really care for the religious side of it, but I do like to have them here.'  
66M2D

- (11) E o dar a beijar a cruz nas casas e nem nem o padre apareceu este ano. ((risos)) Sim, não sei o que é que se passou, •• não apareceu. •• Estava marcado para uma hora, teve qualquer problema e não veio. ••• **Portanto**<sub>b</sub>, não dei mesmo conta da ••• da Páscoa.



'This year, the kissing of the cross didn't happen nor did the priest show up. ((laughter)) Yeah, I don't know what happened, •• he didn't show up. •• It was scheduled for a given time, but he found some trouble and he did not come. ••  
 • **Portanto<sub>b</sub>**, [**To sum up**], I really didn't care for for ••• Easter.' 66M2D

*Portanto<sub>a</sub>* is used as a pause filler, which means its scope is local. In other words, *portanto<sub>a</sub>* links the segments of its host utterance that are repeated directly to its left and to its right "I don't care about about... Uhm, I don't really value/ I don't really value the religious part of it". On the other hand, *portanto<sub>b</sub>* is used to resume the topic "*I didn't celebrate Easter, nor did I notice it*", while marking it as a conclusion. Therefore, *portanto<sub>b</sub>* has a wider scope, including *portanto<sub>a</sub>* as well.

**Combined uses of *portanto*: the co-occurrence of discursive functions**

This study argues that a single instance of *portanto* can perform multiple and simultaneous functions and that this particular aspect of the uses of *portanto* may be explained by its multifunctionality, in the way that it favors multiple and sometimes contradictory interpretations/readings. As Hansen (1997, 155) points out:

in virtue of their multifunctionality and relative open-endedness of interpretation, markers like *alors*, *bon*, (*et*) *puis* etc. are to some extent comparable to 'all-purpose' nouns such as *truc* or *machin* (roughly: thingy or whatchamacallit), which speakers often use when more precise terms are not immediately accessible. This is in no way meant to imply that these items are devoid of coded content, or that there are no constraints on their possible uses, but merely that their range of applicability is typically quite broad.

Table (13) shows a summary of combination patterns of *portanto*. As can be seen from the table, the use of *portanto* as a filler (marker) is the most likely to co-occur with other uses of the discourse marker.

**Table 13** - Combined uses of *portanto*: the co-occurrence of discursive functions

	Filler (marker)	Turn-transition marker
Inferential marker	1	-
Causal marker	4	-
Topic resumption signaling a conclusion	9	-
Topic rephrasing marker	9	-
Topic returning marker	1	2
Turn-transition marker	2	-
Total	28	

Examples (12) and (13) illustrate how a single instance of *portanto* may be seen to perform different tasks: in example (12) *portanto* is used as a recapitulation marker and in example (13) *portanto* is used to indicate a causal explanation.

- (12) *Não. •• Há quem diga que que Coimbra que •• que são os que têm o melhor... •• Os que falam melhor não sei se é verdade ou não. •• É nós aqui temos algum, temos o/ •• uma maneira... Ainda hoje estávamos a falar com alunos do primeiro ano •• na palavra cereja. Nós não dizemos cereja cá em cima. Dizemos cereja. •• E depois temos que ensi/ os meninos têm que escrever cereja. •• **Portanto**, tem estas/ •• tem este... Que outra palavra era?*  
 ‘No. •• Some say that Coimbra/ •• that they are the ones who have the best... •• the ones who speak better [portuguese] I don’t know if it’s true or not. •• Here we have some/ •• we have a way... Even today, I was talking to my first grade students about the word “cherry”. Up in the north, we don’t say “cherry”. We say “cherry”. •• And thus we have to teac/ the kids have to write “cherry”. •• **Portanto** [So], there are/ •• there are this... What was the other word?’  
 66M2D

- (13) *•• E ficou a um milímetro •• da aorta axilar/ •• da artéria axilar. Foi uma sorte, foi uma sorte, pronto. Foi e a gente depois não esquece, não é? Estes anos todos ainda recorda e vê-se/ •• o impacto de receber assim a base do projétil debaixo do braço, porque eu estava com a arma apontada e, portanto, estava/ •• não estava baixo, portanto, estava assim e, **portanto** •• encaixou-se ali.*  
 ‘•• And [the bullet] was a millimeter away from •• the axillary aorta/ •• the axillary artery. I was lucky, I was lucky. I was and then we don’t forget about it, right? After all these years I still remember and we can see •• the impact of getting hit like that under the arm, because I was aiming the gun therefore, it was/ •• it wasn’t lowered, it was like this and **portanto** [therefore] it •• fitted right there.’ 26H3C

In addition to these primary functions, there is an underlying use of *portanto* as a filler (marker), which is triggered by its immediate syntactic context. As can be seen in both examples, *portanto* occurs in an incomplete syntactic structure, with repeated words and fragments as well as frequent pauses (“•• **Portanto**, there are/ •• there are this...” and “it was/ •• it wasn’t lowered, it was like this and portanto it •• fitted right there”), which constitutes, as mentioned before, a common environment in moments of verbal hesitation. Therefore, this use of *portanto* operates on a secondary level. Further evidence to support our claim that the discourse genre influences the uses of *portanto* can be found in the combined use of *portanto* as both a topic returning and a turn-transition marker (see Table 13). In example (14) *portanto* is used to sum up the topic. In other words, the speaker returns to the matter at hand to close

the topic of conversation and in doing so he may willingly relinquish his turn to speak; this type of use is, as mentioned before, particularly frequent in these sociolinguistic interviews.

- (14) *Agora ainda ainda no domin/ ainda/ toda a a água que se bebe por aqui é/ tem muito mais calcário, muito mais ((hesitação)) • • ((hesitação)) • • • bactérias e tudo, tem tudo. Vá ver a água de Luso cheia de ((incompreensível)) • • Portanto, a gente vê, • • não é?*  
 'Even this sunday/ even... All water that we drink/ has much more limestone in it, much more ((hesitation)) • • ((hesitation)) • • • bacteria and all, it has all of it. Check Luso's water ((incomprehensible)) • • Portanto [to sum up], we know it, • • right?' 75M3C

Cases of ambiguity may also be explained by the oral characteristics of unplanned speech. Example (15) is illustrative of this type of situation.

- (15) *São cinquenta cêntimos. Portanto, aquilo que sobra/ de que se paga dá para uma vacina, não é? • • E portanto tem grandes/ • • eu, portanto/ e depois outra • • ((hesitação)) que, portanto, infelizmente não é para todos. As convenções pode ir para todos, • • quem quiser participar.*  
 'It's fifty cents. So, what remains what remains from what you pay is enough for another vaccine, isn't it? • • E portanto [Therefore] it has great/ • • I, therefore/ and then another • • ((hesitation)) that unfortunately isn't for everyone. Everyone can attend the conventions, everyone who wants to participate.' 26H3C

On the one hand, it is possible that *portanto* is being used to introduce a causal explanation, especially considering it occurs in an "*e portanto*" sequence, which is, as discussed before, a strong indicator of this type of use. On the other hand, it is also possible that *portanto* is being used to resume the previously introduced topic, which concerns the polio disease and vaccination. It might also be possible that *portanto* is being used as a filler (marker), especially if we consider that it occurs with frequent pauses and interruptions. In other cases, such as the one depicted in (16), the co-occurrence of functions is a result of the ambiguity of interrupted utterances whose meaning is difficult to retrieve:

- (16) *Acho, pronto, é prejudicial no convívio em/ com outras crianças ((incompreensível)). Só convivem enquanto (es)tão na escola • • e • • portanto, não • • • e tem mais... Eu penso que as crianças hoje em dia que têm mais...*  
 'I find it harms hanging out/ hanging out with other kids ((incomprehensible)). They only hang out during school • • and • • portanto, they don't • • • don't have... I think that kids today that have more...' 06H2C

## Conclusion

The main goal of the current study was to determine the uses and occurrences of *portanto* in Braga's speech. A revised description of *portanto* was proposed, without, nonetheless, denying the validity of previous studies.

Particular attention was paid to the multifunctionality of *portanto*. This study has argued that the multifunctionality of *portanto* is a key aspect of its description because it favors the co-occurrence of functions.

Overall, the frequency distribution of *portanto* according to its use is in good agreement with other studies (Lopes *et al.* 2001; Freitas and Ramilo 2003), which have shown that *portanto's* use as a filler marker is the most common. In fact, we must add that if discourse markers assure cohesion or coherence, they are not necessarily creating it. The overuse of discourse markers only creates the illusion of a logic and coherent discourse, when in fact they are being used as pause fillers in an environment of frequent pauses, verbal hesitations, syntactic interruptions, and false starts.

We have also considered the influence of the discourse genre in the uses of *portanto*. We believe that the two most common uses of *portanto* documented in Braga's speech – the filler marker and the topic resumption signaling a conclusion marker – are directly linked to particular aspects of these sociolinguistic interviews, such as the recollection of life stories and certain characteristics of unplanned speech. These results are in agreement with those obtained by Lopes *et al.* (2001) and Freitas and Ramilo (2003). However, more research using comparative approaches is needed.

The findings of this study have several important implications for future descriptions. A possible area of future research would be to investigate the occurrences of *portanto* from a prosodic point of view.

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