Factors licensing embedded present tense in speech reports

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THE PUZZLE OF THE EMBEDDED PRESENT

Ogihara (1995): present tense can be used only if the cause of the belief still holds at the utterance time of the report.

John and Bill are looking into a room. Sue is in the room. John (near-sighted): ‘Look! Mary is in the room.’
Bill: ‘What are you talking about? That’s Sue, not Mary.’
John: ‘I’m sure that’s Mary.’

(1) One minute later, Kent joins them. Sue is still in the room. Bill (to Kent): ‘John said that Mary is in the room. But that’s not true. The one that is in the room is Sue.’

(2) Sue leaves the room. One minute later, Kent joins them. Bill (to Kent): ‘John said that Mary is in the room.’

CONCLUSIONS

□ When cause of false belief no longer holds:
  □ short-term properties disfavor present tense;
  □ knowledge state of others seems to effect present tense use: present tense better when people still entertain false belief.
  □ Surprisingly, whether the cause of the false belief still holds, did not make a difference.

RESULTS

Temporal stability of reported property (within-subjects):
Properties were either short-term stable (raining, being at the bar) or long-term stable (gender, being pregnant).

Venn diagram:
- Intersections (p<.001), short-term properties a stronger preference for PST
- no significant differences (p<.001)

Who is aware of the falsity (within-subjects, control condition):
Scenarios were manipulated such that the cause of the false belief still holds.

Venn diagram:
- no main or interaction effects (although simple comparison within condition C shows PRS>PST (p=.004))

Matrix verb: tell vs. say (between-subjects):

Venn diagram:
- no differences