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THE INTERRELATION OF TIME AND TENSE IN ENGLISH GRAMMAR

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ANNOTATION

The relationship between utterance time and the time of the situation described may be direct as in the case of Absolute tenses like the past tense or indirect as in the case of relative tenses like the future perfect (e.g. I will have left [by the time you read this letter]), in which the leaving events is represented as in the past relative to a point that is in the future relative to utterance time (the point at which the letter is read). Like other linguistic reference point that are anchored in the here and nouns the temporal zero point can, under the appropriate conditions, be identified with times that the time of speaking or writing. One such case is that in which writer uses the time of message interpretation, rather than the time of message construction, as the zero –point. For example, a not writer may choose the formulation I'm across the hall rather than I will be across the hall. The shifting of the temporal zero –point also occurs is subordinate clauses both temporal and conditional, as in e.g., When/ if you have finished your test [raise your hand]. Here, a present perfect predication is used despite the fact that is reference point is located in a (hypothetical) future rather than at the time of speaking.

KEY WORDS: *time and tense, the time of message interpretation, pragmatics, the temporal zero.*

When we talk about the "locative" of the temporal zero –point we are course making use of the space –time analogy. But if the zero –point is a temporal landmark, what is being located relative to it? Comrie tells us that "tenses locate situations either at the time as the present moment, or prior to the present moment or subsequent to the present moment". This definition appears transparent in that it partakes of the logic. Of the space –time analogy, but in fact there is reason to question whether tense "locates situations: If the situation in question is an event, then it is certainly true, for example, that a past tense sentence like (1a) locates the cab ride prior to the time of speech, but do past tense State predications, as in (1b), localize the situations that they denote in a similar way?"

(1) a. I took a cab back to the hotel.

b. The cab driver was Latvian.

If a speaker makes the assertion in (1b) following that in (1a), no sensible hearer will respond by asking whether the cab driver is still Latvian bow. This is presumably because the cab driver's Latvian identify is highly unlikely to desist following the cab ride. Why then has the speaker of (1b) chosen to "locate" the cab driver's Latvian identify in the past?

One such interaction is observed by Comrie, many languages have form that include specification both of location in time and of internal temporal contour: thus Spanish hobble is both perfective aspect and past tense. Here Comrie is illustrating the phenomenon is aspectual sensitivity as the Spanish perfective past invokes the class of events and processes. While aspectual

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sensitivity is generally illustrated by reference to the imperfective and perfective past tense of the Romance languages, aspectually sensitive tenses can be an aspectual –class selection, and that many of its uses can ascribed to this property. As observed by Langacher, Smith and others the present is construed as a single moment. Events have heterogeneous internal structure and for this reason they take time. Accordingly, one cannot confirm that an and for event of a given type has occurred states are effectively a temporal: they can be verified on the basis of a single momentaneous sample. This entails that the present tense is semantically compatible only with state predications. This account, however, appears to leave as with no explanation of the fact that event verbs do indeed appear with present inflection, as in (2-3).

(2) The flight arrives at noon.

(3) My sister walks to work.

Certainly neither the flights arrival nor an episode of my sister walking to work must overlap the time of speech in order for (2) or (3) to be truthful assertions. Therefore, this examples suggest that the present tense has functions beyond that of reporting situations ongoing at speech time; the majority of scholars of English tense indeed assume this to be the case. However as we will see in section 3, there is a way to analyze the functions exemplified in (2-3) that is highly compatible with the assumption that the present tense selects for the class of states. According to this view, both "scheduled future" present predications like (2) and generic present predications (3) are the products of Coercion or equivalently implicit type shifting Coercion can be illustrated in its applications to the grammar of English nominal expressions. English determined like the indefinite article select for nouns that denote countable entities as in an apple. However, when the indefinite article is combined with a nominal that entity as a bounded quality, as in, e.g., wine which denotes a portion or variety of wine. Here, as in the case at hand, the semantic features requirements of the grammatical marker cause it to override intrinsic semantic features of the word with which it combines, resulting in a shift in what the word designates. Similarly, the present tense, as a state selector can impose stative readings on any dynamic verbs with which it combines thereby resolving semantic conflict between the verb and the inflection that is attached to it. We will see that future and genetic reading of present tense predications can be analyzed as the products of this coercion mechanism.

In addition to interacting semantically, within a given grammatical construction exponents of tense and aspect also interact the system of time reference in English: aspectual constructions can express the same basic temporal relations that tense inflections do. These overlaps well be discussed in section 4. the English present perfect construction, e.g., We've lost our lease is a notorious case of such a functional overlap. Theorists are not in agreement concerning the appropriate treatment of the English perfect constructions: it has been analyzed as both a tense and an aspect. However, as we will see, there are good reason to regard the perfect as an aspectual construction and in particular as a stativizing constructions. This function reflects its history it emerged in old English as a resultative construction containing a passive participle in agreement with the direct object. Through subsequent reanalysis the participle to be construed as predicating an action of the individual to whom the subject refers. It is at this point that the present perfect and simple past tense come to be synonyms: as Mc Cawly points out, it makes sense to refer to the past perfect as a "past in past" form, but it makes much less sense to refer to the present perfect encodes

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the same temporal relation the same temporal relation that the simple past does anteriority of the denoted event to speech time. Thus the simple past and the present perfect do not appear to be distinguishable at the level of semantics. Instead, as both Slobin and Michaeles ague, the two forms of past time reference are distinguished by their use conditions. The development of this discourse –pragmatic division of labor served to differentiate the two converging constructions.

Additional evidence that an aspectual construction my function as a tense without losing its aspectual properties is provided by the so –called future tense of English, a periphrastic construction whose head is the modal verbs will. A number of scholars, including Binnich and Horntein have argued that the modal future of English does not have future reference but rather present time reference, as indicated by patterns of adverbial co –occurrence. This will lead to conclude that modal future analysis sentences are in fact present –time stative predications. As we will see I section 4, this analysis of the English modal future combined with the analysis of present tense developed in section 3, has a significant implication for our description of the tense system of English: this system rather than being based upon a past –nonpast division as based upon the opposition between past and present.

The primary insight behind Reichebach's modal of tense is that the meaning of every tense can be represented as a sequence of the three time points mentioned above: E, R and S In Reichenbach representations these points are separated either by a line, which is used to indicate that the left hand point precedes the right hand point or by a comma which is used to indicate that the two points are identical (i.e., not ordered with respect to one another). In the case of the simple tenses past, present and future –R and E are identical, the time referred to is also the time of the state of affairs denoted by the sentence. By contrast, in the case of the relative tenses, e.g., the past perfect, E and R are distinct the time that the speaker is referring to is a time that either precedes or follows the time of the state of affairs denoted by sentences. Reichenbach's representations of the simple tenses and the three perfect "tenses" are given in (4a-f). for each tense representation an example sentence is given along with specification of the R point (which may or may not be overtly referred to by a subordinate clause or adverbial expression).

(4) a. Present: E.R.S. (e.g., She's at home right now; R=right now).

b. Past: E.R.S. (e.g., She was at home yesterday; R=yesterday).

c. Future: E.S.R. (e.g., She will be home this evening; R=this everning).

d. Past Perfect: E.S.R. (e.g, The crowd had moved to the plaza when the police showed up; R=the time at which the police arrived).

e. Present Perfect: E.S.R. (e.g., The crowd has now moved to plaza; R=now).

f. Future Perfect: S.E.R. (e.g., The crowd will have moved to the plaze by the time you call the police; R=the time at which the police are called) or E.S.R. (e.g., That's Harry at the door; he will have bought wine; R=the time of Harry's arrival).**(Th. Dreiser)**

Hornstein extends the Reichenbech framework in order for constraints on derived tense structures which result either from adverbial modification or clause combining. According to Hornstein, derived tense structure (D.T.S) must preserve the tense structure of the point input sentence which he refers to us the basic tense structure (B.T.S). he states two conditions under which B.T.S may be preserved:

(5) a. No points are associated on DTS that are not associated in BTS.

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b. The linear order of points in DTS is the same as that in BTS.

Hornstein process that adverbial modification is the function that maps a BTS into a DTS that is identical to the BTS of the particular adverbial expression. For example, the BTS of the adverb yesterday is E.R.S., while that of tomorrow is S.E.R. accordingly the DTS of (6a) obeys (5) while that of (6b) violates (5).

(6) a. Harry arrived yesterday. **(Th. Dreiser)**

b. Harry left tomorrow.

It is not clear, however, that the constrains on derived tense structures also apply to modal uses of absolute and relative tenses in which tenses are used to express speakers' judgment either about the degree of likelihood pr the factuality status of an event denoted by the subordinated clause of conditional sentence. These examples include those in which the present tense, the past tense and the past sentences respectively:

(8) a. Of she arrives before midnight, she will catch the shuttle.

b. If she arrived before midnight, she would catch the shuttle.

c. If she had arrived before midnight, she would have caught the shuttle.

In (8a), present tense is used in the subordinate clause to denote a future event; in (8b) past tense is used to denote a future event that is presumed by the speaker to be relatively unlikely and in (8c)the past perfect is used to denote on event that is presumed by the speaker not to have occurred. Clearly, these subordinate tenses do not denote the relationship between E and S or R and R, that is shown in the representations in (4). Hornstein argues that while the constrains in derived tense structure do not predict the particular tense uses in (8) they do not rule them out either.

As a conclusion, all such sentences meet the conditions on derived tense structures on the assumption that simple modals one in the present tense, whereas modal + have are past tense forms. We will return to the question of why the modal or will future is generally barred from the subordinate clauses of future conditions like (8a) in section 4 below.

Another problem of clause embedding that is widely discussed in the literature on tense is that of sequence of tense. Sequence of tense phenomena involve the back shifting of the tense of present, past tense or future predication when that predication is the complement of past tense verb of speaking or thinking. Examples involving indirect speech are given in (9); the sentences in parentheses beside each example show the direct speech counterparts of each embedded clause:

(9) a. Debra said she liked the wine (I like the wine)

b. Debra said she had brought a bottle of wine (I brought a bottle of wine).

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