

**LIN241 Intro to Semantics
Winter 2021**

Tutorial 11

Learning objectives

- Review the notions of Utterance Time, Topic Time, and Situation Time and their application to the analysis of tense and aspect.
- Discuss the interpretation of embedded tenses in English
- Identify cross-linguistic variation in the expression of tense and grammatical aspect.

Exercise 1

For each of the following sentences, indicate which relations hold between Utterance Time, Topic Time and Situation Time:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| (1) It is raining. | $TT = TU \ \& \ TT \subseteq TSit$ |
| (2) It was raining. | $TT < TU \ \& \ TT \subseteq TSit$ |
| (3) It rained. | $TT < TU \ \& \ TSit \subseteq TT$ |
| (4) It will rain. | $TT > TU \ \& \ TSit \subseteq TT$ |
| (5) It will be raining. | $TT > TU \ \& \ TT \subseteq TSit$ |
| (6) Jess believes in Alex. | $TT = TU \ \& \ TT \subseteq TSit$ |
| (7) The train arrived at the station. | $TT < TU \ \& \ TSit \subseteq TT$ |
| (8) Chris played snooker yesterday. | $TT < TU \ \& \ TSit \subseteq TT$ |
| (9) Ryan leaves tomorrow. | $TT > TU \ \& \ TSit \subseteq TT$ |

Note: (9) is a futurate, in which the present tense is used to describe a future planned event.

Exercise 2

Describe situations that correspond to the following interpretations of the embedded past tense in (1):

- Forward-shifted interpretation
- Back-shifted interpretation
- Simultaneous interpretation

(1) Jess discovered that Alex was cheating.

Example of forward-shifted interpretation (unacceptable):

The discovery happened two weeks ago, the cheating happened later, one week ago.

Example of back-shifted interpretation (acceptable):

The discovery happened two weeks ago, the cheating happened earlier, three week ago.

Example of simultaneous interpretation (acceptable):

The discovery happened two weeks ago, the cheating happened at the same time.

Exercise 3

Based on the following data set, how would you describe the tense and grammatical aspect system of the Paraguayan Guaraní language? What do you think is the function of the suffix *-ta* in (3)?

(1) A: Mba'e-pa re-japo kuehe ro-henoi-vove?
what-Q you-do yesterday I.you-call-when
'What were you doing yesterday when I called you?'

B: A-jahu.
I-bathe
'I was bathing.'

(2) A: Mba'e-pa re-japo ko'ãga?
what-Q you-do now?
'What are you doing right now?'

B: A-jahu.
I-bathe
'I am bathing.'

(3) A: Mba'e-pa re-japo-ta ko'ẽro die-pe?
what-Q you-do-? tomorrow ten-at
'What are you going to be doing tomorrow at 10?'

- B: A-jahu-#(ta).
I-bathe-?
'I am going to bathe.'
- (4) A: Mba'e-icha-pa?
What-like-Q
'How are you?'
- B: Che-kane'õ.
I-tired.
'I am tired.'
- (5) A: Mba'e-icha-pa re-ĩ kuehe?
What-like-Q you-be yesterday
'How were you yesterday?'
- B: Che-kane'õ.
I-tired.
'I was tired.'
- (6) Context: What did Juan do last Sunday?
O-pu'a, o-jahu há o-rambosa.
he-get.up he-bathe and he-breakfast
'He got up, bathed and ate breakfast.'

Examples (1), (2), (4) and (5) show that predicates without tense inflection can have a past or present interpretation.

In examples (1) and (2), the relevant predicate is the dynamic predicate *ajahu* in B's answer. There is no tense inflection on the predicate, yet it has a past interpretation in (1) and a present interpretation in (2). Note that in both cases, A's question sets up the topic time for B's answer.

Examples (4) and (5) show the same with the stative predicate *chekane'õ*.

Examples (3) shows that, by contrast, the future marker *-ta* must be used in order to have a future interpretation.

In sum, these examples suggest that in Paraguayan Guaraní, predicates can be used without any kind of tense inflection, in which case they have a non-future interpretation (past or present). The examples also suggest that future interpretations must be marked by the suffix *-ta*.

All of these examples show that predicates can be used without morphological mark of grammatical aspect. Examples (1) to (3) show that predicates without aspectual morphology can be interpreted with progressive aspect, while example (6) show that they can also be interpreted with perfective aspect.

In sum, these examples suggest that grammatical aspect is unmarked in Paraguayan Guaraní, and that predicates without morphological marks of aspect can be interpreted progressively or perfectly.