'Nominal tense' in Ticuna is not tense

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1 Introduction

This is a talk about 'nominal tense.'

Nominal tense comes in two kinds (Nordlinger and Sadler 2004a):

- **Independent nominal tense** (INT): Marking on a noun phrase affects the temporal interpretation of the noun property -- like English 'former' and 'future'.
  - Best known from Tupi-Guaraní languages (Tonhauser 2007; Thomas 2014).
  - All cases described in detail represent aspect or relative tense; none are absolute tense (Tonhauser 2008).

- **Propositional nominal tense** (PNT): Marking on a noun phrase affects the temporal interpretation of the predicate that contains the noun phrase -- like verbal tense. Two kinds:
  - Australia: tense on verbs; tense controls case marking of arguments. Focus of Nordlinger and Sadler (2004a,b).
  - South America: no tense on verbs; demonstratives/determiners on arguments affect temporal interpretation of clause.
    Sparsely described: Chamicuro (Arawak) (Parker 1999), Movima (isolate) (Haude 2006)

I will discuss a demonstrative and a determiner in Ticuna (isolate) which on face appear to be the South American type of propositional nominal tense. I will argue that:

- The items have a deictic temporal meaning.
- The deictic temporal meaning initially appears to be a remote past tense.
- But it is not a tense: it is a presupposition about the discourse salience of a remote past time.

I assume the tense and aspect vocabulary of Klein (1994)

- **Utterance Time (UT):** time when the speaker produces the predicate
- **Topic Time (TT):** time that the predicate is about

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Roadmap:

- §2: Background: predicate tenselessness; introduce nominal temporal markers.
- §3: When nominal temporal markers resemble tense.
- §4: When nominal temporal markers fail to resemble tense.
- §5: Non-tense analysis.
- §6: Predictions of this analysis.
- §7: Conclude.

2 Background

2.1 Language and data background

Ticuna is an isolate spoken by 40,000-70,000 people in Brazil, Colombia, and Peru. It is still learned by children. Typological properties relevant today:

- Extensive grammatical and lexical tone.
- 5 semantically based noun classes.

Data in this talk:

- Collected in fieldwork over 8 months in Cushillococha/Caballooncocha, Peru, 2015-2017.
- Naturally occurring data and semantic elicitation with 5 speakers. Metalanguages for elicitation were Spanish and Ticuna.
- No claims about Ticuna varieties from other towns (cf. Soares 2012, Bertet 2018).

2.2 Tense and aspect in predicates

The Ticuna verb is tenseless: no obligatory or optional tense.

- No distinction between present (TT = UT) and past (TT<UT) temporal reference.
- Several ways to realize future discourse. Possible to have future TTs with no overt temporal marking: no evidence for silent TENSE (Matthewson 2006).

Instead, the verb is aspect-prominent.

- About 6 viewpoint aspect markers. All can have TT in past, present, or future of UT.
- Aspect is not an obligatory category.
- No overt perfective marker. Perfective is conveyed by absence of aspect marking (but this is defeasible).
2.3 Tense and aspect in noun phrases

There are two noun phrase markers that affect the temporal interpretation of the entire clause:

1. A determiner, $ga^4$ (DET.REMPST)
2. An anaphoric demonstrative, $je^7ma^4$ (ANA.REMPST)

The determiner, $ga^4$ DET.REMPST:

- Forms a paradigm with determiners that do not convey temporal information (DET).
- DET agrees in noun class with head noun of noun phrase, DET.REMPST does not

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun Class</th>
<th>Class I</th>
<th>Class II</th>
<th>Class III</th>
<th>Class IV</th>
<th>Class V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DET</td>
<td>(j)a³</td>
<td>(j)a¹</td>
<td>i¹</td>
<td>i²</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DET.REMPST</td>
<td>ga⁴</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- DET and DET.REMPST are extremely similar to the determiners of Pacific Northwest languages (Salish, Kw'akwala):
  - Introduce all noun phrases, including personal names and pronouns
  - Cliticize to preceding word
    * Delete if no acceptable host (i.e. no preceding word or preceding word is across a phonological phrase boundary)
    * Where no overt determiner, assume present underlingly but deleted for prosodic reasons
  - Fail to encode distinctions of familiarity or specificity or uniqueness
  - Unlike Pacific Northwest determiners, also fail to encode distinctions of spatial deixis or visibility or number

The demonstrative, $je^7ma^4$ ANA.REMPST:

- Appears in anaphoric noun phrases (individual and propositional anaphora)
- Forms a paradigm with another anaphoric demonstrative, $ŋe^3ma^2$ ANA, that does not convey temporal information
- Both ANA and ANA.REMPST agree in noun class with head noun of noun phrase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun Class</th>
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<th>Class II</th>
<th>Class III</th>
<th>Class IV</th>
<th>Class V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example N</td>
<td>$ki^3fi¹$</td>
<td>$tfe^3ra¹$</td>
<td>$ŋu^3te³$</td>
<td>$ta^3ra^5$</td>
<td>$pa^3ki^3$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANA</td>
<td>$ji^3te^3ma^4$</td>
<td>$ji^3ma^4$</td>
<td>$ji^3ma^4$</td>
<td>$ŋe^3ma^4$</td>
<td>$ŋe^3ma^4$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANA.REMPST</td>
<td>$gu^3te^3ma^4$</td>
<td>$gu^3ma^4$</td>
<td>$gu^3ma^4$</td>
<td>$je^3ma^4$</td>
<td>$je^3ma^4$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Why demonstrative and not determiner: Can appear as argument with no overt head noun (cf. DET and DET.REMPST can't).

Many other anaphors and discourse markers are morphologically derived from ANA and ANA.REMPST.
• 'Yes,' manner anaphors, location anaphors, 'because'...

• Everything derived from ANA.REMPS shares temporal requirements of ANA.REMPS; everything derived from ANA lacks temporal requirements.

3 Why the 'nominal tense' markers appear to be PNT

Prima facie, DET.REMPS and ANA.REMPS appear to be propositional nominal tenses that denote remote past tense.

In noun phrases denoting individuals, DET.REMPS and ANA.REMPS are unacceptable if their clause:

• Has present temporal reference (3)
• Has future temporal reference 4)

(3) Context: Your son Carlos lives in another town from you. He has a friend named Victoria. I live in the same town and see both of them every day. I call and ask you if Carlos is talking to Victoria right now. You reply, 

\[ \text{ŋɨ³, } \#ɟe⁴ma⁴/ \text{ŋe³ma² } \text{ŋe³ma⁴ã² i⁵ni⁴de⁴³ʔa².} \]

\[ \text{ŋɨ³ } \#je⁴ma⁴ / \text{ŋe³ma² } \text{ŋe³ } = \text{ma⁴ã² } i⁵ = \text{ni⁴ = de⁴³ʔa²} \]

\[ \text{yes } \#\text{ANA.REMPS(IV) / √ANA(IV) woman(IV) = COM/INST IMPF 3(I) = talk(I)} \]

'Yes, he's talking to that (#ANA.REMPS, √ANA) woman.'

(3/4 reject ANA.REMPS)

(4) Context: Same as (3), except that I call and ask you if Carlos will talk to Victoria tomorrow. You reply, 

\[ \text{ŋɨ³, mo⁴i² ri¹, } \#je⁴ma⁴ / \text{ŋe³ma² } \text{ŋe³ma⁴ã² ni⁴de⁴³ʔa².} \]

\[ \text{ŋɨ³ mo⁴i² ri¹ } \#\text{je⁴ma⁴ / √qe³ma² } \text{ŋe³ } = \text{ma⁴ã² } i⁵ = \text{ni⁴ = de⁴³ʔa²} \]

\[ \text{yes tomorrow TOP } \#\text{ANA.REMPS(IV) / √ANA(IV) woman = COM/INST 3(I) = talk(I)} \]

'Yes, tomorrow, he'll talk to that (#ANA.REMPS, √ANA) woman.'

(4/4 reject ANA.REMPS)

ANA.REMPS and DET.REMPS become acceptable in this type of context iff their clause:

• Has past temporal reference and
• Has topic time on a calendar day before the day of utterance time.

Speaking indexically, the markers are good if the topic time is yesterday (5) or earlier than yesterday (6); they improve with greater remoteness of the topic time.

(5) Context: Same as (3), except that I call and ask you if Carlos talked to Victoria yesterday. You reply, 

\[ \text{ŋɨ³, } iⁿe¹ ri¹, \sqrt{\text{je⁴ma⁴ / √qe³ma² } } \text{ŋe⁴ma⁴ã² ni⁴de⁴³ʔa².} \]

(5/6 reject ANA.REMPS)
'Yes, yesterday, he talked to that (√ANA.REMPST/√ANA) woman.'
(1/4 volunteer ANA.REMPST, 2/4 accept, 1/4 rejects)

(6) Context: Same as (a), except that you ask me if Carlos talked to Victoria on January 1, six months ago. I answer,

'Yes, on January 1, he talked to that (√ANA.REMPST/√ANA) woman.'
(1/4 volunteer ANA.REMPST, 3/4 accept)

ANA.REMPST and DET.REMPST are not acceptable if the topic time is earlier today (7).

(7) Context: I live with my sister and see her every day. It is 5pm and you come to our house and ask where my sister is. I answer,

'At 3pm, that (#ANA.REMPST) sister of mine, she went to Caballococha.'
(2/2 volunteer ANA, 2/2 reject ANA.REMPST)

Other properties:
• Optionality: It's never obligatory to use ANA.REMPST/DET.REMPST in place of ANA/DET, no matter how remote the topic time - both acceptable in (5, 6)
• Not a relative tense: ANA.REMPST/DET.REMPST only track the relation between topic time and utterance time, not between topic time and other reference times
  – No backshifting from a topic time that is already remote past - used throughout e.g. remote past narratives
  – Not acceptable with topic times in relative past of absolute future reference time

Given this, ANA.REMPST and DET.REMPST look like they denote an optional absolute remote past tense. The temporal component of their meaning could be modeled informally as in (8).

(8) ANA.REMPST and DET.REMPST are acceptable in a matrix clause iff:
1. Ordering component: The topic time of the clause precedes utterance time, and
2. Remoteness component: The distance between topic time and utterance time is large by contextual standards.

(remoteness component adapted from Bohnemeyer 2009)

4 Why the 'nominal tense' markers appear not to be tense

ANA.REMPST and DET.REMPST can also appear in sentences that do not have absolute remote past topic times. This is possible in two kinds of contexts:

- Propositional anaphora - pragmatically unmarked
- Individual anaphora - requires pragmatically unusual context

4.1 Propositional anaphora

ANA.REMPST is a propositional anaphor as well as an individual anaphor.

As a propositional anaphor, it requires that at least one of the matrix clause (clause that contains the anaphor) and the antecedent clause (clause that is the antecedent of the anaphor) has a topic time in the remote past of utterance time.

- Acceptable if only the antecedent clause is remote past (9)
- Acceptable if only the matrix clause is remote past (10)
- Acceptable if both antecedent and matrix are remote past (with no backshifting) (11)
- Not acceptable if neither are remote past (12)

(9) Context: Long ago, the mayor of Caballococha committed a terrible crime. Today a story came out in the newspaper saying this. Right now, everyone is talking about the story.

\[ \text{gu}^{5}\text{ʔ}_4\text{ma}^{3} \text{i}^{4} \text{du}^{i}^{3}\text{ʔ}_4\text{gi}^{4} \text{ri}^{1}, \sqrt{\text{je}^{4}\text{ma}^{4}\text{tʃi}^{1}\text{ga}^{3}} / \sqrt{\text{ŋe}^{3}\text{ma}^{2} \text{tʃi}^{1}\text{ga}^{3}} \text{ni}^{4} \text{de}^{43}\text{ʔ}_2\text{gi}^{4}. \]

\[ \text{gu}^{5}\text{ʔ}_4\text{ma}^{3} \text{i}^{4} \text{du}^{i}^{3}\text{ʔ}_4\text{i}^{4} = \text{gi}^{4} \text{ri}^{1} / \sqrt{\text{je}^{4}\text{ma}^{4}} + \sqrt{\text{ŋe}^{3}\text{ma}^{2}} \]

all(IV) DET(IV) person(IV) = PL TOP \sqrt{\text{ANA.REMPST}(IV)} + RN:about / \sqrt{\text{ANA}(IV)}

+ \sqrt{\text{ŋe}^{3}\text{ma}^{2}} \text{ni}^{4} = \text{de}^{43}\text{ʔ}_2\text{a}^{2} = \text{gi}^{4}

+ RN:about 3.I = talk(1) = PL

"Everyone is talking about that (ANA.REMPST/ANA)."
Comment on version with ANA.REMPST: Good because the newspaper story is about something long ago. (LWG; YCG)

(10) Context: It’s currently August. In June, I thought a lot about getting married later this year. In the end, I decided to get married in September. I report what happened in June by saying,

\[ \sqrt{\text{je}^{4}\text{ma}^{4} \text{gu}^{2}} / \sqrt{\text{ŋe}^{3}\text{ma}^{2} \text{gu}^{2}} \text{tʃa}^{3}\text{ʔ}_4\text{ʔ}_4\text{ni}^{3}. \]
(11) Context: Speaker is explaining why his parents moved to the area. He says, 'Where my parents lived, there were always big floods. They would lose their manioc and plantains [crops]. They didn't have food, they didn't have anything.'

a. \( ta^4\theta^2e^5ga^1\tilde{g}^4 \)
\( ta^4 = o^2e^5ga^1 = \tilde{g}^4 \)
\( 3(I).A = \text{feel.worried}(A) = \text{PL} \)
'They were worried.'

b. \( je^4ma^4ka^1t_i^3 \gamma^5 na^4w_1^?ti^1mi^2 \[ga^4 \tilde{g}^4\] \tilde{r}_i^1 \)
\( je^4ma^4ka^1 \gamma^5 = \gamma^5 \)
\( na^4 = w_1^?ti^1mi^3 \)
\( je^4ma^4 \)
\( \text{so.REMPST} \)
\( 3(I) = \text{IBEN} \)
\( 3.A = \text{be.tiring}(A) \)
\( \text{DET.REMPST ANA.REMPST(IV)} \) and
'So they got tired of that (ANA.REMPST) (i.e. worrying and not having food), and...'

(12) Context: It is August. There is a rumor that in December of this year, there will be heavy floods. We are worried about the December floods.

\( ta^3??o^3e^5ga^1\tilde{g}^4\tilde{g}^i na^3,i^1\gamma^5 na\tilde{r}_1^4 \tilde{g}_i^4 na^3,i^1\gamma^5 // \tilde{g}^4 \tilde{g}^4 \tilde{g}^4 \)
\( ta^4 = o^3 e^5 g^1 \tilde{g}^4 \tilde{g}^i = g^i \)
\( na^3,i^1 \gamma^5 = \gamma^5 \)
\( ka^1 \)
\( #g^4 \tilde{g}^4 \tilde{g}^4 \)
\( je^4ma^4 \)
\( / \)
\( 1\text{EXCL.A} = \text{feel.worried}(A) = \text{PL} \)
\( 3 = \text{PURP} \)
\( \text{DET.REMPST ANA.REMPST(IV)} \)
\( / \)
\( \sqrt{g^4} \)
\( \gamma^5 \)
\( ma^3 \)
\( \text{DET(IV) ANA.REMPST(IV)} \)

'We are worried about that (\( \sqrt{ANA} / #\text{ANA.REMPST})'. (LWG)

Besides ANA.REMPST/ANA, there is another pair of propositional anaphors: remote past \( je^4?gu^4ma^4 \) (< ANA.REMPST) and temporally neutral \( ge^4?gu^4ma^3 \) (< ANA). Their behavior is identical to that of the related Dnom.

- Remote past propositional anaphor \( je^4?gu^4ma^4 \): acceptable if at least one of antecedent and matrix has remote past topic time
  - Only antecedent (13)
  - Only matrix (14)
  - Both
- Temporally neutral propositional anaphor \( ge^4?gu^4ma^3 \): acceptable for any combination of temporal reference by matrix and antecedent.

(13) Context: The speaker is describing what she believes will happen at the Second Coming. Events then will be like events during Jesus' ministry on Earth. She says,

a. \( \text{je}^4?gu^4ma^4 \)
\( \text{ri}^5\gamma^7 \) \( ta^4 \)
\( ni^41?i^4 i^4 \) \( wi^43?i^4 i^4 \) \( ju^1ne^3\gamma^4 \)
\( \text{gu}^2 \)
\( \text{CONN.REMPST} \)
\( = \text{ri}^5\gamma^7 \) \( ta^4 \) \( ni^41 \) \( = t^4 \)
\( i^4 \) \( wi^43?i^4 i^4 \) \( ju^1ne^3\gamma^4 = \text{gu}^2 \)
\( \text{CONN.REMPST} \)
\( = \text{like FUT} \)
\( 3.1 = \text{COP(I) DET(IV) one} \)
\( \text{DET(IV) day(IV)} = \text{LOC} \)
'One day it will be like that (remote past anaphor) (like during Jesus' life).'

b. \( tʃo³¹rɨ³ Tu³pa³na¹ nu⁵a¹ ũ⁴³ʔgu², \( \text{je}⁴\text{gu}⁴\text{ma}⁴ \) \( \text{ta}⁴ \) \( \text{na}⁴ \) \( ni⁴¹ \) \( tʃo³¹ \) \( ʔɨ̃³ \) \( pe¹ \) \( da² \) \( ũ⁴ \).

\( tʃo³¹rɨ³ \) 1sg.al.poss Christian.God \( \text{nu}⁵a¹ \) dloc 1:all \( 3 \) \( a \) \( sc \) \( ũ⁴³ \) come/go:SgS = \( \text{gu} \) \( \text{ɟe}⁴ \) \( \text{gu}⁴ \) \( \text{ma}⁴ \) conn.rempst.

\( ta⁴ \) fut \( \text{na}⁴ \) comp \( 3 \) \( i \) \( = \) \( ũ⁴ \) cop.(I) \( tʃo³¹ \) 1sg. = \( ʔɨ̃³ \) acc \( pe¹ \) = \( 2 \) pl.sc.a = see(A) = sub.

'When my God comes here, LIKE THAT (remote past anaphor) you will see me (i.e. you will see me coming to him as people did to Jesus).'

(Christian sermon)

(14) Context: The speaker and addressees have been talking about the age of a 2-year-old who is with them. The speaker (aged about 70) guesses that he was the same age as the child when his parents first sent him to school.

\( \text{ma}³\text{ne}²\text{ka}² \) \( \text{tʃo}¹ \) \( \text{ma}¹ \) \( \text{ɟe}⁴ \) \( \text{ka}⁴ \) \( \text{tʃa}¹ \) \( \text{na}³ \) \( \text{ɟe}⁴ \) \( \text{gu}⁴ \) \( \text{ma}⁴ \) \( \text{ra}³ \) \( ũ² \) \( \text{ni}⁴¹ \) \( ũ⁴ \).

\( \text{ma}³\text{ne}²\text{ka}² \) \( \text{tʃo}¹ \) \( \text{ma}¹ \) = \( \text{je}⁴ \) \( \text{ka}⁴ \) \( \text{tʃa}¹ \) = \( \text{na}³ \) = \( \text{je}⁴ \) \( \text{gu}⁴ \) \( \text{ma}⁴ \) \( \text{ra}³ \) \( ũ² \) \( \text{ni}⁴¹ \) \( ũ⁴ \).

hedge 1sg = so.rempst 1sg.sc.a = 3obj.a = be.same.as = gu² \( \text{ni}⁴¹ \) ũ⁴ = sub.foc

'I guess, it was when I was that age (remote past anaphor) (lit., the same as that).' (conversation)

Propositional anaphora looks sensitive to the topic times of two clauses; individual anaphora only to one.

4.2 Individual anaphora

ANA.REMPST and DET.REMPST can also occur as part of a noun phrase denoting an individual (not a proposition) in clauses without remote past temporal reference.

- This is acceptable only if the speaker last perceived the referent individual in the remote past of utterance time (15)
- Call (15) the 'remote perception' use of ANA.REMPST/DET.REMPST.

(15) Context: A and B know each other and A also knows B's son. A travels away from town for 8 months and does not see B or B's son. A returns and comes to B's house. A asks B,

a. A: \( \text{ŋe}¹\text{ki}³ \text{ni}⁴¹\text{ʔi}⁴ \) \( \text{ja}⁴ \) \( \text{ji}²\text{ma}⁴ \) / \( \text{ga}⁴ \) \( \text{gu}²\text{ma}⁴ \) \( \text{ku}⁴³ \) ne³?

\( \text{ŋe}¹\text{ki}³ \) \( \text{ni}⁴¹\text{ʔi}⁴ \) \( \text{ja}⁴ \) \( \text{ji}²\text{ma}⁴ \) / \( \text{ga}⁴ \) \( \text{gu}²\text{ma}⁴ \) \( \text{ku}⁴³ \) ne³?

where(II) COP \( \text{ja}⁴ \) \( \text{ji}²\text{ma}⁴ \) / \( \text{ga}⁴ \) \( \text{gu}²\text{ma}⁴ \) \( \text{ku}⁴³ \) + ne³

'Where's that (✓ANA.REMPST/✓ANA) son of yours?'

b. B: \( \text{ŋu}⁵\text{e}³\text{pa}⁴\text{ta}³\text{ʔi}²\text{wa}⁵ \) \( \text{na}³\text{ŋe}²\text{ma}⁴ \) \( \text{ja}⁴ \) \( \text{ji}²\text{ma}⁴ \) / \( \text{ga}⁴ \) \( \text{gu}²\text{ma}⁴ \) \( \text{tʃau}¹ \) ne³.
That (♯ANA.REMPST/√ANA) son of mine is at school.

The remote perception use of ANA.REMPST/DET.REMPST is very pragmatically marked. Consistently accepted only:

- In contexts essentially identical to (15) - speaker last perceived in remote past, addressee perceived recently, nonlinguistic context makes gap since last percept highly salient
- As theme of verb of speech/cognition/perception - 'I miss that ANA.REMPST son of yours'

5 Non-tense analysis of 'nominal tense'

5.1 Space of potential analyses

First possibility to eliminate:

- ANA.REMPST and DET.REMPST are remote past independent nominal tenses, i.e. denote that referent had noun property in remote past
- Their clause-level temporal requirements are manner implicatures

Adopted by Bertet (2018) for another variety of Ticuna, but does not work for this variety because:

- Manner implicatures should be defeasible; temporal requirements of ANA.REMPST and DET.REMPST are not
- ANA.REMPST and DET.REMPST have no effect on temporal interpretation of noun property relative to ANA and DET: property can be interpreted at TT, UT, or another time

Second possibility: ANA.REMPST and DET.REMPST appear due to agreement with a remote past tense morpheme that modifies Tense. Reject because:

- No overt tense on predicates - so no reason to posit tense features
- Predicts that only matrix clause should matter in propositional anaphora - (9), (13)
- Doesn’t allow remote perception use in individual anaphora (15)

A better alternative: derive the distribution of ANA.REMPST and DET.REMPST not from temporal properties of noun phrase or of clause, but of entire discourse.

5.2 Not remote past tense, but remote past temporal salience

Define a set of discourse salient times for any clause, comparable to the set of discourse salient individuals that could be referred to by an (individual) pronoun in the clause.
(16) Discourse salient times in a clause c
  • Topic time of c
  • Topic times of propositions presupposed by triggers in c
  • Topic times of clauses preceding c in discourse
  • Event time of c
  • Event times of propositions presupposed by triggers in c
  • Event times of clauses preceding c in discourse
  • Other times made relevant by nonlinguistic context
  • ...

Temporal requirements of ANA.REMPST and DET.REMPST are not about relation of topic time to utterance time, but about relation of some time in the set of discourse salient times to utterance time. Rewrite (8) to this effect:

(17) ANA.REMPST and DET.REMPST are acceptable in a matrix clause iff: There is a time t in the set of discourse salient times such that:
  1. Ordering component: t precedes utterance time, and
  2. Remoteness component: The distance between t and utterance time is large by contextual standards.

This accounts for all three kinds of uses above:
  • Remote past topic time for matrix clause (propositional or individual anaphora): topic time is inherently in set of discourse salient times
  • Remote past topic time for antecedent clause (propositional anaphora): propositional anaphor presupposes existence of antecedent proposition, making its topic time discourse salient
  • Remote past perception (individual anaphora): pragmatically unusual situation can make time of perception of referent discourse salient

6 Discussion

The analysis in (17) predicts that ANA.REMPST and DET.REMPST should also be acceptable if:
  1. Event time of clause is in remote past - even if topic time is not
  2. Clause appears in a remote past discourse - even if its own topic and event time are not remote past
  3. Clause contains presupposition triggers (too, again) and presupposed propositions are in remote past - even if topic and event time of clause itself is not

Prediction about event times is definitely true; about remote past discourses, probably true; about presupposition triggers, unknown.
6.1 Event times

All clauses with aspect have event time, just like all have topic time; so event time should always be in the set of discourse salient times.

This predicts that in a pragmatically neutral context, in a clause with no presupposition triggers, ANA.REMPST/DET.REMPST should be acceptable if event time is in the remote past, even if topic time is not.

- We can test this by constructing contexts where ET<UT, but TT=UT (or UT<TT).
- This can be done with the perfect aspect.

Will test with the resultative perfect ma³rɨ³. About ma³rɨ³:

- Combines with accomplishments, achievements, and states.
  - Accomplishment or achievement: Requires that state resulting from culmination holds at topic time.
  - State: Coerces change-of-state (achievement-like) reading. Requires that (a) subject changed into state before topic time (thus no individual-level or sourceless states), and (b) state holds at topic time.

- Regardless of lexical aspect, this requires that ET<TT; where ET is the event proper for telic verbs, and the change into the state for statives.

As predicted, ANA.REMPST and DET.REMPST are acceptable in a clause with ma³rɨ³ if event time is in the remote past of utterance time, even if topic time is not.

Seen in (18): event time (time when I learn the words) is months ago, but topic time is now (since unacceptable if result state fails to hold now).

(18) ma³rɨ³ ni³1nɨ³, tʃa³kʷa¹ ga⁴je⁴ma⁴ o⁴³re⁴i.

ma³rɨ³ ni³1 = ?i³ tʃa³ = kʷa¹ ga⁴ je⁴ma⁴ o⁴³re⁴i
PERF 3i = ACC 1SG.A = know(A) DET.REMPST ANA.REMPST(IV) word(IV)"'
'I've come to know those (DET.REMPST + ANA.REMPST) words.'

a. #Unacceptable in context where result state does not hold at TT: I learned a Bible verse months ago, but now I've forgotten it.

b. ✓Acceptable in context where result state does hold at TT: I learned a Bible verse months ago, and I still remember it.

(LWG)

6.2 Remote past discourses

Topic times of preceding clauses in the discourse should also be salient (modulo some effect of textual distance). This predicts that ANA.REMPST and DET.REMPST should be acceptable in a clause if the preceding clauses of the discourse have topic (or event) times in the remote past of utterance time, even if the clause with the items doesn't.

Prediction is correct: ANA.REMPST and DET.REMPST are acceptable in this context (19).
Context: 'Last week I went to a store where they sell bicycles.'

a. jə^3majə^4^4 ga^4 bicicleta, tjə^3ja^2tu^3, tjau^3eja^1ka^1.
   je^3ma^2 wi^4^4tij^4 ga^4 bicicleta, tjə^3= jau^2+ tjau^1 + e^3ja^1 = ka^1
   DLOC6:ALL one DET.REMPST Sp:bicycle 1SG.A = get(A) 1SG + sister = PURP
   'There I chose a bicycle for my sister.'

b. na^3ti^4ri^2 tau^4ta^2 na^4^3?ka^1 tjə^3ta^e^3, e^3ri^4 ta^4ma^3 we^5na^1 je^5ma^2 tjə^3tu^43.
   na^2ti^4ri^2 tau^4ta^2 na^43 = ka^1 tjə^3 = ta^e^3 e^3ri^4 ta^4ma^3 we^5na^1 je^5ma^2
   but not.yet 3 = PURP 1SG.A = buy(A) because NEG again DLOC6:ALL
   tjə^3 = u^43
   1SG.A = come/go:SgS(A)
   'But I didn't buy it, yet, because I didn't go there again.'

c. na^3ti^4ri^2 mo^5i^2 ri^1 ta^4 we^5na^1 je^5ma^2 tjə^3tu^43.
   na^2ti^4ri^2 mo^5i^2 ri^1 ta^4 we^5na^1 je^5ma^2 tjə^3 = u^43
   but tomorrow TOP FUT again DLOC5:ALL 1SG.A = come/go:SgS(A)
   'But tomorrow, I will go there again.'

d. ri^1 [✓je^3ma^2 / ✓je^4ma^4] bicicleta = ka^1 ta^4 tjə^3ja^e^3.
   ri^1 [✓je^3ma^2 / ✓je^4ma^4] bicicleta = ka^1 ta^4 tjə^3 = ja^3 =
   and [✓ANA(IV) / ✓ANA.REMPST(IV)] Sp:bicycle(IV) = PURP FUT 1SG.A = AM=
   ta^e^3
   buy(A)
   'And I will buy that ✓ANA✓ANA.REMPST bicycle.'

The context could also potentially represent the remote perception use.

(3/3 volunteer ANA, 3/3 accept ANA.REMPST)
(adapted from Tonhauser (2007))

7 Conclusions

ANA.REMPST and DET.REMPST are as good candidates for propositional nominal tense, if not better, than anything described in the literature. But they are not tense.

• In the (pragmatically and aspectually) simplest contexts, they behave like they require an absolute remote past topic time for the entire clause.
• But they don't behave like tenses in pragmatically and aspectually richer contexts: can track time of antecedent clause (of propositional anaphor), topic times of preceding discourse, event time, time of perception...
• To model this, we need an 'omnivorous' kind of deictic temporal meaning (not topic time-ivorous tense).

Next step: Is the type of analysis in (17) appropriate for other funny 'tenses'?

• Can the analysis be extended to examples of apparent propositional nominal tense in other (South) American languages (e.g. Movima, Haude 2006)?
Can the analysis be extended to other examples of verbal 'tense' that can track either the TT-UT relation, or the relation between another time and UT?

– Another South American example - at least one Matses (Panoan) 'tense' that can relate TT to any of UT, ET, or time speaker gains evidence for evidential proposition (Fleck 2007)

– Similar descriptive claims about Highland New Guinea languages (San Roque and Loughnane 2012)

References

Bertet, Denis. 2018. When tense is marked only on nominals: the case of Ticuna (isolate, Western Amazonia). Presentation at Berkeley Linguistics Society annual meeting.


