

THE EXPRESSION OF TEMPORAL DISTINCTIONS IN MAPUDUNGUN

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The system of tense in Mapudungun, which makes a two-way distinction between future and non-future, is presented here, briefly discussing three morphemes which perform the function of tense. Three examples of modal and aspectual morphemes are then examined in terms of the role they play in the expression of temporal distinctions, demonstrating the interrelatedness of the categories of tense, mood, and aspect.

INTRODUCTION

This paper investigates the interaction between the categories of tense, mood, and aspect in Mapudungun¹, discussing first of all the morphemes which function as tense and then explaining the way in which the time frame is either established or manipulated by the addition of certain optional aspectual or modal morphemes.

TENSE IN MAPUDUNGUN

The system of tense, the grammatical markings by which events are placed in time, in Mapudungun is one in which there is no overt marking for the past/present, but the future is marked. This type of tense system which makes a two-way distinction between future and non-future has been referred to as *retrospective*, contrasted with a *prospective* system, which makes a distinction between past and non-past (cf. Ultan 1978: 88). Consider the following examples which show no morphological difference in the form of the verb for past and present.

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| 1) Amun Temuco. | <i>I went/go to Temuco.</i> |
| 2) Ngümay ti pichiche. | <i>The baby cried/cries.</i> |
| 3) Küpay tañi wenüy. | <i>My friend camel/comes.</i> |

It is natural that the native speaker of a language with a tense system unlike that of Mapudungun will assume that the lack of a distinction in form between past and present must necessarily give rise to ambiguity. How is this potential ambiguity resolved?

¹Mapudungun is also known as Mapuche or Araucanian.

In order to provide an answer to this question, ten individuals were asked to give the Spanish translation for ten "potentially ambiguous utterances" such as examples 1)-3) above².

All individuals gave past tense Spanish translations for these utterances. The next question to be asked, then, is whether any ambiguity really exists if the translation given for examples like these is always past tense. From an analytical, morphological point of view, the *form is ambiguous* in that the same form is used for either past or present tense, whereas the *meaning is not ambiguous* since it is past unless other mechanisms, which will be discussed later, are employed to place the action in present time.

In the section which follows, three morphemes which clearly delimit time, performing the function of tense, will be considered.

Morphemes functioning as tense

-a: future

This set of examples shows the same utterances 1)-3) above with the addition of the future morpheme *-a*³:

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| 4) Amu-a-n Temuco. | <i>I will go to Temuco.</i> |
| 5) Ngüma-ya-y ti pichiche. | <i>The baby will cry.</i> |
| 6) Tañi weñüy küpa-ya-y. | <i>My friend will come.</i> |

The future morpheme, in addition to its function as a marker of tense, is also used to mark other unrealized, potential events. This morpheme is used, for example, to mark obligation as seen in example 7)⁴ and in subordinate clauses with verbs such as "like to" in example 8).

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| 7) Eymi amu-a-yimi. | <i>You will go.</i> |
| 8) Ayün tañi kimael. | <i>I like to know.</i> |

-pe: recent past

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| 9) Amu-pe-n Temuco. | <i>I recently went to Temuco.</i> |
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²The ten utterances used in the survey are:

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|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Amun Temuco. | <i>I went to Temuco.</i> |
| 2. Küpay tañi weñüy. | <i>My friend came.</i> |
| 3. Ngümay ti pichiche. | <i>The baby cried.</i> |
| 4. Dewmay mürke. | <i>He/she made "harina tostada".</i> |
| 5. Matetuyngün. | <i>They drank "mate".</i> |
| 6. Tripalay tañi ñuke. | <i>My mother didn't leave.</i> |
| 7. Wiñoy tañi chaw. | <i>My father returned.</i> |
| 8. Newentu dunguy. | <i>He/she spoke loudly.</i> |
| 9. Ketrmapuy. | <i>He plowed.</i> |
| 10. Müna nütramkayu. | <i>We (dual) talked a lot.</i> |

³The future morpheme *-a* is realized as *-ya* when it follows another "a", for example, *küpa-ya-n I will come.*

⁴The future can be used to form a mild command rather than use the imperative mood which tends to be a stronger, more direct command.

- 10) Ngüma-pe-y ti pichiche. *The baby recently cried.*
 11) Tañi wenüy küpa-pe-y. *My friend recently came.*

The translations of many examples show the recent past tense being used in what may normally be conceived of as belonging to the present. Consider the following examples:

- 12) Nüttramkapa-pe-eyu. *I've come to talk with you.*
 13) Aretupa-pe-n mansun. *I've come to borrow the oxen.*
 14) Fewla müten aku-pe-n. *I'm just now arriving.*

It is necessary to consider, however, that the apparent conception of the past is anything close to and almost including speech time.

-wiye: already, relative in time to another action

- 15) Juan amu-wiye-y Temuco... *John had already gone to Temuco...*
 16) Ngüma-wiye-y ti pichiche... *The baby had already cried...*
 17) Eymi küpa-wiye-y mi... *You had already come...*

Each of the preceding three examples requires another event in order to be complete. For example, "John had already gone to Temuco *when I arrived.*" The event marked by *-wiye* is prior to the other event.

With any of the three time-reference morphemes just mentioned, the time frame is clearly established. There are other morphemes, however, which are not tense nor do they strictly establish any time frame. They do, however, influence the delimitation of the time frame within which an action takes place. Examples of these morphemes will be considered in the next section.

MOOD AND ASPECT IN MAPUDUNGUN

In this section, we will define the terms mood and aspect as used in this paper. Mood "describes the actuality of the event in terms such as possibility, necessity or desirability." (Chung and Timberlake 1985: 202), whereas aspect is the kind or type of action that is realized or, according to Chung and Timberlake, aspect is that which "characterizes the internal temporal structure of the event." (1985: 202).

If the distinctions between tense, mood, and aspect are not clearly laid out, it is often not possible to arrive at a clear analysis of the temporal structure of an event. It is also important, however, to consider the ways in which these three categories interact to form the total perception of an event's temporal structure. In the section which follows, we will consider the modal *-fu* and two aspectual morphemes, *-küle* and *-ke*. (The meanings are given in their respective sections.)

The modal -fu

One of the morphemes which traditionally has been analyzed as tense is -fu, as seen in examples such as these:

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| 18) Amu-fu-n Temuco... | <i>I had gone to Temuco...</i> |
| 19) Ngüma-fu-y ti pichiche... | <i>The baby had cried...</i> |
| 20) Küpa-fu-y tañi weñüy... | <i>My friend had come...</i> |

Augusta's treatment of -fu (1903: 27) is as copreterite: akufun = *I was arriving* or post-preterite (afu): akuafun = *I would arrive*⁵. Moesbach also treats -fu as one of the indicators of tense, assigning it to the same tense categories as his predecessor, Augusta. Moesbach says that "the copreterite in Mapuche performs the functions of the imperfect, perfect and pluperfect." (1962: 67)

In the present analysis, the three morphemes briefly mentioned above (-a, -pe, and -wiye) clearly perform a function of tense. The morpheme -fu, however, is not seen as tense; nonetheless, it does manipulate the *perception* of time. Chung and Timberlake (1985: 206) discuss the correlations that exist between tense and differences in mood and aspect, stating that "a consequence of these correlations is that temporal distinctions may be expressed by morphosyntactic categories that have wider modal or aspectual functions." This is the case with -fu in Mapudungun. -Fu is mood which brings the modal meaning of counterexpectation to the verb (see either Fernández Garay (1981: 5) or Croese (1984: 67)) in which the action of the predicate is either not realized as anticipated or, if it is realized, with consequences other than those normally expected. This additional meaning is well exemplified by the following examples from Salas (1984: 37):

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| 21) tripan | <i>I left</i> |
| 22) tripafun | <i>I had left (but came back in)</i> |
| 23) tripaafun ⁶ | <i>I would leave (if they would let me)</i> |

The aspectual morpheme -küle

One of the ways in which the morpheme -küle *stative, progressive* interacts with the temporal structure is by establishing present tense as the default perception of time. In the examples given above of verbs with no additional morphemes (e.g. 1) – 3)), the default time frame is past. With the addition of -küle, however, the expected time frame is present, in that the action specified in the verb overlaps with the moment of speech. This overlap is in focus rather than the amount of time that has transpired since the action was initiated.

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| 24) Küdaw-küle-n | <i>I work, I am working</i> |
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⁵Translation mine.

⁶This example, tripaafun, consists of tripa -a -fu -n, which is -fu being used in combination with the future.

- 25) Amu-le-n *I go, I am going*
 26) Anü-le-n *I sit down, I am sitting
 down*

One of the ways in which this overlap with speech time is seen is when this morpheme is used together with the future tense. Consider the following example:

- 27) Treka-le-tu-a-n⁷ *I'm on my way (back or home).*

In the preceding example, which is typically spoken at the moment in which someone is at the point of leaving, the morpheme *-a future* is used since the action has yet to be realized. The use of *-le* (from *-küle*, see footnote) in the same example, however, brings the action into an even more imminent, nearer future.

The aspectual morpheme -ke

The use of *-küle*, however, is not restricted to present tense, thus eliminating the possibility of it being strictly a marker of tense. To use *-küle* in the past, however, requires an additional aspectual morpheme, *-ke habitual*. Consider the following examples:

- 28) Küdaw-küle-ke-n. *I have been working.*

-Ke is often used by itself with the basic form of the verb with the subsequent meaning of a habitual and/or typical activity and/or action. Consider the difference between the following utterances:

- 29) Rume mawün-i faw. *It rained here.*
 30) Rume mawün-ke-y faw. *It always rains here.*
 31) Rume mawün-ke-fu-y faw. *It used to always rain here (but not anymore).*

Several observations can be made from the three utterances 29)-31). First of all, the basic form of the verb is seen in 29) with its corresponding translation in past. The aspectual function of *-ke* is seen in 30), with the addition of the meaning component of *-ke* translated here as *always*, but *-ke* also removes the utterance from past time to an essentially timeless expression of fact. This is an example of how *-ke* expresses a temporal distinction, even though its main function is that of aspect.

In example 31) the modal function of *-fu* is seen in the addition of the component of meaning of counterexpectation to an utterance which without *-fu* is expected to be a statement of general and essentially timeless fact, because of the use of *-ke*. The manipulation of tense by *-fu* is seen here in this example, in that the expected continuation of the action is countered by the use of *-fu*. This is an example of the way in which

⁷The morpheme *küle* has the following realization rule: *küle* → *le/ V--*; *küle* / *C--*, as in *amu-le-n* and *lef-küle-n*.

the modal function of this morpheme is carried out while, at the same time, it manipulates the perception of time.

CONCLUSION

There are other morphemes which could provide further examples of the way in which temporal distinctions similar to tense are expressed by modal and aspectual morphemes. It would be necessary, however, to include other interrelated categories of verbal morphemes in our discussion.

One of the observations that can be made from the function of the morphemes discussed here is that the traditional distinction between tense, aspect, and mood is not clear-cut. It is absolutely necessary to consider the differences between the three categories, but without ignoring their interrelatedness in the temporal structure of an event.

The examples discussed here also give a glimpse of the interrelationships which exist between distinct verbal morphemes and supports the position that it is not possible to understand the complexity of the verbal structure of Mapudungun by merely isolating and assigning the components to specific grammatical categories. The same components must also be considered in terms of their interrelationships with other categories in order to arrive at a clearer understanding of their function.

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