

Tense or aspect? A prefix of future time in Lushootseed

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Presenting data from personal narrative, traditional oral narrative, and direct elicitation in fieldwork settings, this paper explores the Lushootseed prefix *tu-*, which has been analysed variously in the literature as being either an irrealis ASPECT or a future TENSE. The data support a characterization of the morpheme as a tense marker and show that Lushootseed employs a type of relative tense, in which a situation can be located on a timeline with reference to either the moment of speech or a time established within a discourse. The morpheme in question, *tu-*, is optional. It marks a predicate designating a situation subsequent to the reference time. Of particular interest are examples of *tu-*-marking an event prior to the moment of speech, yet subsequent to the reference time.

1 Introduction

In the overview essay to their collection of recent papers on Salish linguistics, Czaykowska-Higgins and Kinkade (1998) note the importance of aspect in Salish languages but also the dearth of published work on this topic.

- (1) Aspect is clearly a central category in the morphology and syntax of Salish languages, but neither its forms nor its functions have been much studied to date.
(Czaykowska-Higgins and Kinkade 1998:28)

As a small step toward addressing this lack of generally available information on temporal matters in Salish, we present this short discussion of the Lushootseed prefix *tu-* glossed as *anticipated but unrealized*, i.e., *future*. In particular, we ask whether this morpheme expresses tense or aspect. It has been categorized as aspect in some recent publications but as tense in others. Czaykowska-Higgins and Kinkade cite the former analysis, which appears in Hess (1995) and other work by Hess and his former students.

- (2) Other types of aspect include what is often called FUTURE or UNREALIZED (taking forms such as *kat-* in Columbian, *ka-* in Bella Coola, *seʔ* in Saanich or *tu-* in Lushootseed)...
(Czaykowska-Higgins and Kinkade 1998:28)

The other analysis, that *ʔu-* is a tense morpheme, is to be found in Bates (1999). Similarly, Montler (1986, section 2.6.2.3) and Jelinek (1998) write about the FUTURE TENSE in Saanich and Norther Straits generally. N. Mattina (1999) compares the utility of an IRREALIS versus a FUTURE categorization for certain morphemes in Colville-Okanagan. Clearly, this issue has not been resolved in work on the Salish family to date.

The present paper takes the position that Lushootseed *ʔu-* marks a FUTURE TENSE, rather than an UNREALIZED ASPECT. A definitional distinction between tense and aspect will serve as our starting point.

- (3) While tense locates events in time, aspect characterizes the internal temporal structure of a situation. (Mithun 1999:165)

As we show in the next sections, Lushootseed *ʔu-* can be described quite adequately in an analysis that employs a basic timeline. Furthermore, there seems to be no particular focusing of the internal temporal structure of the situation described with a predicate in *ʔu-*, although the current paper will not develop this argument in detail.¹

2 Definitions

Suzanne Rose gives a clear statement of what one would expect of a future tense; she is arguing that Kyuquot Nuuchahnulth lacks such:

- (4) There is no simple future tense in Kyuquot; that is, an inflectional affix indicating that an event will occur subsequent to the utterance-defined present. (Rose 1981 section 4.3.2)

Rose's informal notion of an UTTERANCE-DEFINED PRESENT is missing in our earlier work on Lushootseed, and we now have come to believe it is quite useful for describing the future morpheme *ʔu-*. More technically, we draw on Mithun's (1999) survey of North American languages, in which she discusses a phenomenon in Native tense systems that, when taken into account, would identify the Lushootseed future marker *ʔu-* as a simple tense morpheme in Rose's sense.

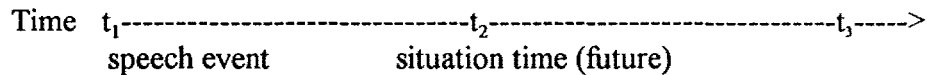
- (5) Tense categories may vary in another important way. In languages like English, where tense markers are ABSOLUTE, the temporal point of reference is always the moment of speech. Past tenses consistently locate events before the speech event, and future tenses after it. Certain North American languages show a kind of RELATIVE tense. In these languages the point of

¹Neither will we treat the epistemic semantics that often accompanies *ʔu-* affixation. Montler (1996:213) makes some interesting observations in this regard for *ʔʔ*'future' in Saanich. The similarities between Lushootseed and Saanich on this point will be interesting to explore in detail at a later date.

reference may be either the moment of speech as in English, or the time under discussion, such as the time line of a narrative. (Mithun 1999:160)

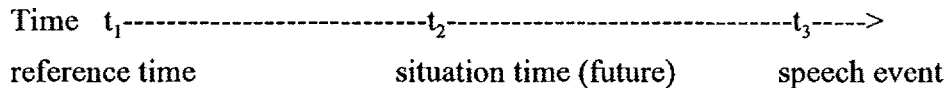
The following graphic representation revises Bates' (1999) presentation of temporal relations in Lushootseed narrative to accommodate the possibility which Mithun suggests in the quote above. In face-to-face discourse, English and Lushootseed futures function similarly, the future marking a situation referred to in the discourse but actually occurring at a subsequent time.

(6) Future in Face-to -Face Discourse



As seen in (7), Lushootseed parts company with English by its use of a RELATIVE future which marks a situation subsequent to some reference time determined in the discourse—for example, the general setting of a narrative in myth time—yet still previous to the storytelling event.

(7) Relative Future



Mithun describes relative tense in several language families of native North America, although none of her examples illustrating this point comes from Salish. She points out that relative tense may appear without any particular rhetorical force.

- (8) [In some languages, the relative tense is] in some ways reminiscent of the historical present of English, in which speakers may shift to present tense to increase the immediacy of a narrative. It differs in that it is not primarily a device reserved for heightening drama; the tense markers systematically take as their point of reference the narrative moment whenever there is a narrative line. (Mithun 1999:162)

The data reviewed in this paper show that the Lushootseed relative future behaves in accordance with Mithun's description above.² Before illustrating the current

²Mithun also notes that in some languages relative tense systems are restricted to subordinate clauses. In addition to detailing some embedded clause futures, we give examples of main clause relative tenses where, in Mithun's words (1999:162), "the point of reference is established by the narrative pattern rather than the syntactic structure."

analysis, we briefly review the relevant previous analyses.

3 Review of previous work

3.1 Hess (1995)

The Lushootseed future functions differently from the English future, and Hess's (1995) pedagogical grammar, intended for native speakers of English, stresses the irrealis meaning of the prefix, as shown in the quote in (9).

- (9) *ʔu-* shows that an event or state is expected in the future or, at least, that it might occur. At the moment of speaking, however, the event or state has not become a reality. Hess (1995:62)

Note that the pedagogical treatment introduces the notion of anteriority to the time of speech as relevant to the distribution of *ʔu-*. The present analysis includes one more notion—that of a reference time that can be independent from the time of speech.

The examples in (10-12) show that various English modal and adverbial constructions can translate the Lushootseed future. Although the analysis in (9) mentions expectation, as we currently understand it, *ʔu-*, does not by itself indicate probability or expectation but rather temporal sequencing. These data are from direct elicitation in fieldwork; the consultants were translating English sentences into Lushootseed (cf. Hess 1995:62).

- (10) *ʔu-gólk̚* *čəd*
 fut-tangle 1S
 '[If something happens] I might get tangled.' (LG 1/29/63)

- (11) *ʔu-t'káci[ʔ]-d* *čəd* *ʔ(u)-g^{wə}ʔəl^əlad-əx^w-əs*
 pnt-slap.hand-tr 1S fut-stop-cos-3S
 'I slapped his hand so he would stop.' (551.LL)

- (12) *ʔu-t'íwi-t-tx^w* *čəd* *ʔu-ǰili-d-əs* *g^wa(h)-tx^w* *dx^wʔal d^zid^zəlalič*
 pnt-pray-caus 1S fut-ride-tr-3S accompany-cause P Seattle
 'I asked him to please take her along to Seattle.' (543.LL)

- (13) ʃu-ɖʷəʃ-əb ʃəd ʃ(u)-ʃ(u)-əstagʷəxʷ-əd
 fut-tire-mid 1S hab-fut-hungry-1S
 'I get tired when I'm hungry.' (LG)

Examples (11) and (12) are particularly clear with regard to the sequencing (as opposed to epistemic) function of *ʃu-*, since they could be uttered after the *ʃu-* marked event had already occurred (A: *I can't find Mary.* B: *I asked Bill to take her along to Seattle.*) Example (13) could be glossed 'I will get tired upon becoming hungry.'

These data show that although Hess (1995) is on the right track, the analysis of *ʃu-* requires an additional statement. We will return to that statement after reviewing another published treatment of *ʃu-*.

3.2 Bates (1999)

Bates (1999), in an analysis of time and spatial relations in a traditional story told by Martha Lamont, proposes that the reference time and place are determined by the narration setting as the story begins. Smith notes that in ordinary, face-to-face discourse (cf. 6 above), the reference time is aligned with the time of speech (RT=SpT). Bates defends the analysis of *ʃu-* as a tense marker with the following observation.

- (14) In the introduction to this paper, I described two tense morphemes in Lushootseed, signaling a past and a future tense. One bit of evidence that these are indeed tense morphemes, rather than aspect morphemes, is the fact that in this narration, these two morphemes are almost entirely restricted to direct quotes. (Bates 1999:7)

As Bates argues, since tense morphemes relate the time of a situation to a time of speech, the fact that *ʃu-* is almost entirely restricted to direct quotes is consistent with her claim that *ʃu-* is a tense mark. Bates' analysis requires an assumption in order to account for the appearance of *ʃu-* in direct quotes, but this assumption seems reasonable within any analysis of time in oral narrative: in a passage containing direct quotes, the narrator can calibrate the speech time to the narrated scene.³ In Bates' words, "the reference time shifts to the time of speech (inside the narrative)."

Bates's examples in (15) and (16) show the future morpheme being used in direct quotes; the speaker, Pheasant, completes the task marked with *ʃu-* shortly after completing these statements. So, future is not calibrated to the 1963 storytelling event, as one would expect if a narrator did not have the power to

³All direct dialogue in English fiction employs the same device: *He said to her, "I'm leaving." And then he left.*

shift the reference time.

- (15) ɬu-čubə čəd [čəda] ɬu-ʔibəš
 fut-travel.inland 1sgS 1sgS fut-travel.overland
 'I'm going traveling up from shore.' (direct quote)

- (16) p̄aʔaʔ čəd tuχ^w ɬu-ʔibəš
 unimportant 1sgS adv fut-travel
 'I'm going on a journey of no consequence.' (direct quote)

Bates' analysis of (15) and (16) is repeated in (17), with the labels from (7) added.

(17) Narrative Time: t-----t₀-----t-----

Smith labels	SpT,RT	SitT
labels from (7)	speech event	situation time (future)
	reference time	

Bates' analysis handles the future morphemes in these direct quotes quite well. We will show, however, that her analysis cannot account for every instance of the future morpheme in this text, *Pheasant and Raven*. The current analysis, however, can do so.

4 Analysis and data

4.1 Current analysis

To restate our introductory comments in slightly more formal prose, the tense relations in (18) come from Smith (1998) and represent the common case cross-linguistically.

- (18) SpT=RT no tense marker
 SpT > RT future tense
 SpT < RT past tense

The current analysis of Lushootseed future morpheme, *ʔu-*, is as follows.

- (19) SitT > RT future tense

In Lushootseed, the future *ʔu-* can pinpoint any event that is posterior to a reference time. Following Smith, and common sense, we claim that in regular, face-to-face discourse the reference time equals the time of the speech event. In a past-time narrative, the situation time is in the past, and any reference time is set in the discourse.

4.2 Examples from personal narrative

The narrative in (20-26) contains an example (26) of a reference time set in the past. Martha Lamont tells a personal narrative about her girlhood. She sets a reference time when she mentions (habitually) climbing a tree. She later mentions an event posterior to the tree-climbing, yet still anterior to the speech event (the narrative event), and marks it with the future *ʔu-*.

Martha Lamont to Thom Hess (June 2, 1964)

A personal narrative, told by adult Martha about her childhood.

- (20) ʔal tiʔəʔ dx^wlilap ʔal tiʔəʔ čaʔk^w.
[It was] at Tulalip, down by the shore.
- (21) g^wəl diʔ tu-c-əx^w-ʔuk^wʔuk^w ʔal tiʔiʔ tu-d-s-čačas.
And it was there where I played when I was child
- (22) ʔu-k^watač čəd ʔə tiʔiʔ qax^wac ʔal tiʔəʔ čaʔk^w.
I climbed a crabapple tree down by the shore.
- (23) huy čəd tu-saʔ-il-əx^w dx^wʔal tsiʔiʔ tu-s-ḱ^wuy.
Then I got into trouble with mother.
- (24) [l]əs-k^wədad tiʔiʔ q^wi+q^wʔayʔ.
She carried a little stick.

(25) ʔu-kʷəd-yi-t-əb-əxʷ čəd ʔə tiʔiʔ qʷtəyʔ.
She took that stick to me.

(26) cut(t)əb-əxʷ čəd tʰu-xʷtʰagʷil-əd.
I was told I should climb down

We're not sure if (25) and (26) represent the chronological order of events on any specific day in Mrs. Lamont's childhood, but we are certain that in (26) the telling, *cut(t)əb-əxʷ*, preceded the climbing down, *xʷtʰagʷil-əd*.

4.3 Examples from traditional narrative

4.3.1 Crow is Sick, Martha Lamont as told to Leon Metcalf

The following examples of the future morpheme come from Martha Lamont's "Crow is Sick" story (Hess 1998:56-59). We believe each of these examples requires a relative future interpretation of *tʰu-*. The examples in (27) and (28) come from an introductory plot summary Mrs. Lamont provides in this telling (Langen 1999). Each of these events comes to pass in the story.

(27) gʷəl xʷiʔəxʷ gʷəsəs(h)aydxʷs ʔəsčal[əs] kʷi tʰudəxʷhuydxʷs, kʷi
gʷədəxʷləkʷdxʷs tiʔiʔ sʔətəd ʔə tsiʔəʔ ʔalš[s].
'But he did not know how he was going to eat it, [how] he could eat his
sister's food.'

(28) xʷiʔ gʷəs(h)aydxʷs ʔəs čal[əs] kʷi tʰudəxʷ(h)əliʔs.
'She did not know how she was going to get well.'

Example (29) is interesting, because it is consistent with a relative future interpretation, even though it is inside a direct quote.

(29) . . . gʷəl yaʷ čəxʷ kʷət tʰupigʷəd čxʷa tʰuhəliʔ.
'and it is said only if you have a spirit-power ceremony will you get well.'
(direct quote)

That is, the holding of the ceremony must precede the healing, even though both

situations follow the speech event described in the quote. This is marked in the utterance, as well as being generally true in the culture.

The following example is from direct speech and contains two instances of the prefix.

(30) ʃ^wul' čəd ʃuləsax^wəbtx^w čəda ʃuləʔahəd əlg^wəʔ tə ʔaciʔtalbix^w ʔə tiʔiʔ sʔəʔəd.

I will just run it [over] and I will give [lit.: will place] the food to the people.

More research needs to be done on the temporal sequencing, if any, implied in the double use of the prefix in (30).

4.3.2 Crow is Sick as told by Martha Lamont to Thom Hess

Hess (1995:60-64) presents another telling of Mrs. Lamont's "Crow is Sick"; it also contains interesting uses of the future prefix.

(31) ʔucut ʃub ʃ^wul' ʃupaqad cədiʔ.

He had said that he should just distribute this [food].

(32) tucutəb ʃupaqadəs ti sʔəʔəd.

He had been told that he will distribute the food.

Or, He had been told to distribute the food.

The transcription in (32) corresponds to (31) in Hess's original field notebook. Both representations (31-32) are grammatical, and both conform to the audiotape record to a reasonable degree (ML speaks very fast.) Each was confirmed by a different native speaker under different consulting conditions (i.e., the very earliest consulting sessions were hampered by the playback technology available, and consultants would on occasion alter a phrase slightly when attempting to restate what was on the tape. Interestingly, both renditions indicate the use of a relative future.

4.3.3 Pheasant and Raven, Martha Lamont as told to Thom Hess (Hess 1995:78-89)

This story, discussed in Bates (1999), contains examples of the relative future

construction; the current analysis captures these facts, which go unexplained in Bates (1999).

In the example in (33), Pheasant uses the relative future to thank his spirit guides, who have just given him food to take home to his starving children.

- (33) ʔu· siʔiʔab, tuχ^w čələp ʔuhəliʔdx^wəx^w k^wi dbədbədaʔ.
 Oh, sir+red only 2plS fut-/live-tr-cos
 D(irr) 1sg.poss-red2+/offspring
 'Oh, sirs, You have made my children live.'

In (33) and (34) below, the English translation employs the perfect construction to render the event setting up the condition for the predicate marked with Lushootseed relative tense. The perfect tenses in English require a reference time (Smith (1998)); this perhaps makes them particularly suitable for translating the Lushootseed future.

- (34) huy čələp ʔu-k^wax^wdubšəx^w.
 adv 2plS fut-help-tr-1sgO-cos
 'You folks will [really] have helped me now!'

In another example, Pheasant talks to himself later in the story, and uses a past tense marker when he reviews his encounter with the hunters. Note the use of the past tense and the future tense in this line:

- (35) tu-cut-(t)-əb čəd ʔu-x^wiʔ-əd lə-d^zalq^w-us.
 past-/speak-tr-pass 1sgS fut-neg-1sgS subjunct-turn=face
 'I have been told not to look over my shoulder.'

The example in (36) comes from scene narration.

- (36) ʔil-t-əb-əx^w tsiʔəʔ čəg^was-s ʔə tiʔəʔ ʔu-s-əs-q^wəl[s].
 give.food-tr-pas-cos D(prx) wife-3possPD(prx) fut-nom-st-cook-3S
 '[Then Pheasant] gave food [to Raven] for his wife to cook.'

In Mrs. Lamont's closing statements in this telling, she explains "That was why Raven was so worked up [at the beginning of the story]" and adds the explanation in (37).

(37) ʔəs-čal-əx^w k^wi ʔu-s-huy-s
 st-how-cos D(irr) fut-nom-do-3S

k^wi g^wə-dəx^w-k^wəd-(d)x^w-yi-d-s tiʔəʔ cədiʔ ʔiışəd-s
 D(irr) subjunct-nom-/take-tr-bf-tr-3SD(prx) D(emph) kin-3poss

ʔə k^wi s-u-ʔəʔəd-s
 P D(irr) nom-pnt-eat-3S

'How could he do it, manage to get the food away from his relative?'

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