

## Narrative functions of past tense marking in a Lushootseed text

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This paper adds to the growing body of knowledge about the discourse functions and meanings of tense and aspect morphemes in Lushootseed. The distribution of the remote past marker *tu-* in a personal narrative is exhaustively reviewed and its narrative functions are detailed.

### 1 Introduction

Bates and Hess (2001) discuss the distribution of the future tense prefix *tʉ-* in Lushootseed narrative, concluding that it signals a relative future, sensitive to a reference point indicated in a given narrative or at a given moment of speech. The present paper discusses a past tense prefix *tu-* (and its reduced form, *tə-*), glossed 'past, especially remote past', examining its distribution in a published text.

### 2 Past marking in a personal narrative

Bierwert's (1996) edition of *Lushootseed Texts* includes several traditional oral narratives and one personal narrative by Mr. Edward (Hagen) Sam. Mr. Sam's personal narrative tells of a traditional doctoring session by his grandfather, a shaman, in an event witnessed by Mr. Sam when he was quite young and relayed to Thom Hess in 1963-4. T.C.S. Langen, who wrote cultural and literary notes for Bierwert's volume, carefully circumscribes the culturally sensitive material that Mr. Sam is not at liberty to share with Hess, pointing out the significant silences in the descriptive particulars of the narrative. As Langen notes, Mr. Sam focuses his story not on his grandfather's procedures, but on the effect of those procedures on the people seeking help and the witnesses to the event.<sup>1</sup>

Of interest here is the way Mr. Sam begins his narrative, and his use of the remote past morpheme *tu-* in transitioning from the storytelling moment to the time of the narrative. The sentence in (1) begins the narrative as it is presented in Bierwert's volume; Mr. Sam employs the *tu-* prefix four times. Bates and Hess (2001) note that the tense and aspect prefixes are optional in Lushootseed; the preponderance of the remote past marking in (1) is in accordance with Bates and Hess (2001), who argue that tense morphemes can be used in Lushootseed narrative to direct the hearer to shifts in the REFERENCE TIME

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<sup>1</sup> The presentation in (9) below gives the events in the story and can be used as a plot summary.

of the discourse. Normally, the reference time is the time of the speech event, and past and future are marked with reference to it. In a narrative, however, the storyteller has the option to shift the reference time to a point in the narrative; tense markers subsequent to that shift will reference narration time.

- (1) čəda tu-/laχ-dx<sup>w</sup> tiʔiʔ tu-d-s-/capaʔ  
 1sgS-conj past-/remember-tr DET past-1sg.poss-nom-/grandfather  
 tə-c-əx<sup>w</sup>-u-/luʔ-il ʔi tsiʔiʔ tu-d-/kiaʔ.  
 past-1sg-nom-pnt-/old-intr conj DET-f past-1s.poss-/grandmother

I remember my grandfather and my grandmother who raised me.  
 (Bierwert (1996:150-151))

Langen comments on Mr. Sam's use of the past tense marker in her endnote (1), reproduced here as (2).

- (2) *tudscapaʔ*. My grandfather, who is now dead. Note the frequency of the use of *tu-* to place events in the historical past. In *syəyəhub* [traditional stories-DB] *tu-* appears relatively infrequently and is not crucial to creating a sense of the past. (Langen, in Bierwert (1996:154))

Bierwert arranges *Lushootseed Texts* so as to present traditional stories first and last, with two historical narratives as the fourth and fifth texts in the seven-story volume. Langen's introduction to the text—titled "Shaman Cure" in Bierwert's volume—explains, (p. 146) "With 'Shaman Cure' we leave the time of myth and enter the time that can be remembered."

The present paper details every use of *tu-* in "Shaman Cure," noting its narrative function. The next two sections introduce distinctions employed in the discussion of narrative function.

### 3 Textual divisions

Text divisions, similar to paragraphs or episodes, are relevant to the analysis of the distribution of *tu-* below, so I will introduce them here. Bierwert (1996:25) explains a graphic convention she employs to signal text divisions in her presentation of the original Lushootseed and its translation. She explains that her conventions mark three different narrative devices, "depending on the story." The three are listed below.

- (3) a) changes in scene  
 b) shifts in the focus of the narrative  
 c) narrative repetitions

Bierwert goes on to say that her text divisions are to aid the reader, who she presumes is literate in English and unfamiliar with Lushootseed literary convention. However, most of the text divisions Bierwert posits are signaled by morphemes in the original Lushootseed text and, in my opinion, Bierwert's text divisions reflect, authentic features of the original Lushootseed performances in question. In particular, the text divisions correspond to a conventional distribution of tense and aspect markers, as I show below.

Lushootseed text divisions are often signaled by morphemes that Fabb (1997:194) identifies as connectives. A CONNECTIVE is a linguistic element that connects one sentence with another (usually a preceding one). Fabb notes that connectives are often glossed 'and then'. Fabb further notes that connectives tend to be concentrated at episode beginnings.

Fabb discusses Ghezzi (1993)'s analysis of a connective in Ojibwe narratives. Ghezzi notes that a specific particle marks the first sentence in 4 out of 5 episodes in a given narrative. Fabb responds with the segment in (4).

- (4) Fabb on consistency in narrative form:  
This analysis suggests two things. First, specific linguistic forms—here a specific connective—can be used to indicate the beginning of episodes. Second, this use need not be totally consistent. Clues to narrative form are often used inconsistently; this is what we would expect, if we see narrative form as something which is communicated. Communication typically involves the presentation of partial evidence for something and need not be fully explicit. (Fabb 1997:195)

Bates, Hess and Hilbert (1994) define at least two Lushootseed words that are probably best analyzed as connectives.

(5) Lushootseed Connectives

huy	'then, next'
g <sup>w</sup> əl	'and, but, or, then, next'

Each of these entries includes the following grammatical comment.

- (6) sentential adverb, used especially to introduce sentences in long narratives, often in combination with other sentential adverbs

With this short introduction to Lushootseed connectives, the next section introduces a distinction in narrative function that helps clarify further the use of the remote past morpheme.

#### 4 Storyline clauses

Fabb (1997:168) discusses the linguistic cues to certain narrative structures from several different literary traditions. He employs a distinction between STORYLINE CLAUSES, which express the sequence of events that form the core of the story told in a given narrative, and NON-STORYLINE CLAUSES, which give circumstantial information, background, setting, and the narrator's comments on the story. This difference in narrative function is encoded differently by different researchers, but I find Fabb's discussion useful for the present paper, since it allows a succinct description of the distribution of tu-. To Fabb's binary distinction I add one more value to describe the narrative function of a given line: the value of DIRECT QUOTE. Mr. Sam and many other Lushootseed storytellers present much of the story as direct dialogue between the characters. Inside a direct quote, all the linguistic cues to narrative form refer to the moment of speech inside the narrative (cf. Bates (1999)). Below, I present the first 17 lines of "Shaman Cure," with the lines categorized for the storyline/non-storyline/quote variable. The leftmost column gives the number of the textual constituent, which Bierwert presents in paragraph form. The second column identifies the narrative function of each line. The translation is Bierwert's.

Mr. Sam's story comprises 98 lines in Bierwert's presentation; generally, a line contains a single independent clause and any required complement clauses.

- (7) "Shaman Cure" by Edward Sam (Bierwert 1996:150-153)  
 (Y = storyline clause, N = non-storyline clause; quote = direct quote.)

Episode; paragraph	story- line	Connec- tive	Bierwert translation	Lushootseed
(Bierwert)	clause ?	<i>huy</i> (h) or <i>g<sup>w</sup>əl</i> (g)		(Bierwert transcription)
1	N		1. I remember my grandfather and my grandmother who raised me.	1. čəda tulaχdx <sup>w</sup> ti?iɬ tudscapa? təcəx <sup>w</sup> ulu <sup>λ</sup> 'il ?i tsi?iɬ tudkia?.
1	N		2. My grandfather's name was <i>sʔadacut</i> .	2. sʔadacut ti?iɬ tusda? ʔə ti?iɬ tudscapaʔ.
1	N	g	3. And my grandmother's name was <i>sk<sup>w</sup>uyaɬ</i> .	3. g <sup>w</sup> əl sk <sup>w</sup> uyaɬ ti tusda? ʔə tsi?iɬ dkia?.
2	Y		4. A man came to see us with his wife and children.	4. tuɬčiseb čəɬ ʔə ti?əʔ stubš ?i tsi?iɬ čəg <sup>w</sup> as(s) ?i ti?iɬ bedbədəʔs.
2	N		5. He was in trouble when he came to see us where we lived far off, close to Quilceda.	5. tuɬčiseb čəɬ ʔə ti?iɬ ʔəsʔušəbābdx <sup>w</sup> il dx <sup>w</sup> ʔal tudi? tədəx <sup>w</sup> əsɬaɬlil čəɬč'itbid ʔə ti?iɬ q <sup>w</sup> əl'sideʔ.
3	Y		6. The man spoke with his wife by his side.	6. tucutəx <sup>w</sup> ti?əʔ stubš ?i tsi?iɬ čəg <sup>w</sup> as tesəsq <sup>w</sup> 'uʔs.
3	quote		7. "Oh, I am in trouble.	7. "ʔu• ʔušəbābdx <sup>w</sup> il čəd.

## (7), continued

Episode; paragraph	story- line?	Connec- tive	Bierwert translation	Lushootseed
3	quote		8. My daughter has become a wraith.	8. skayuhəx <sup>w</sup> tsiʔəʔ dbədaʔ.
3	quote		9a. She is sick	9a. ʔəsduk <sup>w</sup> əx <sup>w</sup>
3	quote		9b. and I thought of you, my uncle; this is why we have come.	9b. čada laxdubicid, dæg <sup>w</sup> i dyələb, tiʔəʔ dəx <sup>w</sup> əiʔčil čəʔ.
3	quote		10. This is why we have traveled from a long way off.	10. tul'ʔal tudiʔ tulil, tədəx <sup>w</sup> uʔibəš čəʔ. <sup>2</sup>
3	quote		11. I am asking help from you, <i>siʔab sʔadacut</i> .	11. ləʔuʂəbtədabut čəd dx <sup>w</sup> ʔal dæg <sup>w</sup> i, siʔab sʔadacut.
3	quote		12. I want you to help my daughter.	12. xaʔ'tx <sup>w</sup> čəd k <sup>w</sup> i g <sup>w</sup> adsk <sup>w</sup> ax <sup>w</sup> ad tsiʔiʔ dbədaʔ.
3	quote		13. She is sick.	13. huy ʔəsduk <sup>w</sup> əx <sup>w</sup> .
3	quote		14. She is weak.	14. ʔəsc'udəx <sup>w</sup> .
3	quote		15. Have pity on us, <i>siʔab</i> .	15. ʔuʂəbitubuʔ čəx <sup>w</sup> , siʔab.
3	quote		16. You could help my daughter."	16. g <sup>w</sup> ək <sup>w</sup> ax <sup>w</sup> dx <sup>w</sup> čəx <sup>w</sup> tsiʔiʔ dbədaʔ."
4	Y	hay g	17. Then my grandfather, <i>sʔadacut</i> , spoke.	17. hay g <sup>w</sup> əl tucutəx <sup>w</sup> tiʔəʔ dscapaʔ, sʔadacut.

<sup>2</sup> Bierwert's edition analyses *tə* in the fourth word as a determiner, a separate word. I believe the current analysis, that *tə* in line 10 is the reduced form of the past tense prefix, renders a grammatical Lushootseed line as well.

The bold lines are initial in their paragraph, and the third column identifies the connective morphemes Mr. Sam uses, in part, to signal the episodic divisions that Bierwert signals with paragraph form. Line 17 of (7) shows the connective *hay* 'then, next', combining with the connective at the main textual division in *g<sup>w</sup>əl* to mark the most salient textual division in the excerpt, separating the end of paragraph 3 from the beginning of paragraph 4.

In what follows, I note the connectives as they appear in Mr. Sam's narrative.

The next section explores the use of the past tense marking in the quoted speech passages in Mr. Sam's text.

### 5 Past tense marking in quoted speech

The table in (8) gives all the direct quotes in "Shaman Cure," in order of occurrence, through line 31, approximately one-third through the text. The last past tense marker within quoted material appears in line 30. The right three columns detail where the remote past morpheme *tu-* appears in the Lushootseed line.

(8) Quoted Speech in "Shaman Cure"

Episode; paragraph	Connective	Bierwert translation	tu- on main clause verb	tu- on main clause noun	tu- in subordinate clause
(Bierwert)	<i>huy</i> (h) or <i>gwel</i> (g)				
3		7. "Oh, I am in trouble.			
3		8. My daughter has become a wraith.			
3		9A. She is sick			
3		9B. and I thought of you, my uncle; this is why we have come.			

(8), continued

Episode; paragraph	Connec tive	Bierwert translation	tu- on main clause verb	tu- on main clause noun	tu- in subordinate clause
3		10. This is why we have traveled from a long way off.			travel; a long way off
3		11. I am asking help from you, si?ab s?adacut.			
3		12. I want you to help my daughter.			
3	h	13. She is sick.			
3		14. She is weak.			
3		15. Have pity on us, si?ab.			
3		16. You could help my daughter."			
4		18. "What is wrong with your daughter?"			
5	Oh	19. "Oh, an Indian doctor far away wants her.	want		
5		20. He wants to take her.			take
5		21. He wants to settle down with her,			settle down
5	g	22. and make her his wife.			make
5	g	23. But she said no.	refuse		
5		24. Your grandniece said no.	refuse		
5		25. Because of this, the shaman 'shot' her with his killing power when she said no.			shoot; refuse

(8), continued

Episode; paragraph	Connec tive	Bierwert translation	tu- on main clause verb	tu- on main clause noun	tu- in subordinate clause
5		26. In this situation, we thought of you.			
5		27. I discussed it with my wife, and I said,			
5		28. 'There is sʔadacut.			
5		29. He would help us.'			
5		30. This is the reason we came, <i>siʔab</i> .			arrive
5		31. Have pity on us."			

The table in (8) shows that the distribution of *tu-* inside direct quotes is extremely limited. Even though the discussion of (2) above showed that Mr. Sam was particularly careful to mark some passages with the remote past marker, in only two passages do his narrative characters use the *tu-*, in lines 19-25, when the father is relaying the events that led to his daughter's illness, and in line 30, when the father is wrapping up his subnarrative and returning to the moment of speech within the major narrative.

In each case here, the *tu-* here marks an event prior to the moment of speech inside the narrative. This use of a relative tense, sensitive to a reference time set in the discourse, is one noted for a prefix of future time in Bates and Hess (2001), who follow Mithun (1999) in this part of their analysis.

Since quoted speech serves to move the narrative along, a function similar to that of storyline clauses, we might expect the distribution of *tu-* in storyline clauses to parallel its distribution in quoted speech. The next next examines the data.

## 6 Past tense marking in storyline clauses

The table in (9) gives all the storyline clauses in "Shaman Cure," in order of occurrence. As in (8), the right three columns detail where the remote past morpheme *tu-* appears in the Lushootseed line.

## (9) Storyline Clauses in "Shaman Cure"

Episode; paragraph	Conne ctive	Bierwert translation	tu- on main clause verb	tu- on main clause noun	tu- in subordinate clause
2		4. A man came to see us with his wife and children.	arrive		
3		6. The man spoke with his wife by his side.	speak		
4	hay g	17. Then my grandfather, s?adacut, spoke.	speak		
6	Oh	32. Oh, my grandfather and grandmother agreed.			
6		33. They prepared themselves.			
6		34. s?adacut washed his hands.			
6		36. My grandmother sang as usual.	sing (intrans)		
6	g	37. Then he knew.	knew (trans)		
7		40. My grandfather said,	say (intrans)		
8	hay g	47. Then her father said that should not be.	say (intrans)		
9	h	52. Then my grandfather began the healing. (better without 'began'?)	heal (trans, pass)		
11	hay	59. Then this woman was helped.	help		
12	g	64. And at that point the child was possessed.			

(9), continued

Episode; paragraph	Conne- ctive	Bierwert translation	tu- on main clause verb	tu- on main clause noun	tu- in subordinate clause
12		65. She laughed at my grandfather.	laugh		
12		71. The woman just laughed again.			
12		72. That woman sounded just like the shaman.			
14	g	80. And the woman awoke.	wake		
14		81. My grandfather had helped her.	help		
14		82. She sat up.	sit.up		
14	g	83. And she spoke to her mother and father.	speak (trans)		
14		86. The woman brushed back her hair.			
14		87. She sat up.			
15		91. Her mother said,			

Contrary to the constrained distribution of *tu-* in quoted speech, the table in (9) shows that Mr. Sam uses the past tense marking quite often in his storyline clauses. However, out of fourteen storyline clauses marked *tu-*, eight are initial in their episode, and seven appear with the connectives that indicate textual divisions. It appears that Mr. Sam could be using the past tense marker to indicate a re-entry into the time of the narrative at the start of a storyline episode.

The final section of this paper discusses the distribution of the past tense marker in non-storyline clauses.

**7 Past tense marking in non-storyline clauses**

The table in (10) shows the distribution of *tu-* in the non-storyline clauses in Mr. Sam's narrative.

(10) Non-storyline Clauses in "Shaman Cure"

Episode; paragraph	Conne ctive	Bierwert translation	tu- on main clause verb	tu- on main clause noun	tu- in subordinate clause
1		1. I remember my grandfather and my grandmother who raised me.	remember	grandfather; grandmother	raised me
1		2. My grandfather's name was sʔadacut.		name; grandfather	
1	g	3. And my grandmother's name was sk'wuyalh.		name	
2		5. He was in trouble when he came to see us where we lived far off, close to Quilceda.	arrive		dwel

(10), continued

Episode; paragraph	Connec tive	Bierwert translation	tu- on main clause verb	tu- on main clause noun	tu- in subordinate clause
6	g	35. And he prepared himself for curing this sick woman. She was his grandniece who was sick; she was his own blood, his grandniece.			
6		38. The back of her head was where she'd been 'shot'.	back-of-head		
6	g	39. And it lay up above her eye.			
0	1	53a. I was scared.	scare		
0	1	53b. I was just a child.			
0	1	54. I was peeking through the door with a little girl next to me.	peek		
0	1	55. I was crouching down.			

(10), continued

Episode; paragraph	Connec tive	Bierwert translation	tu- on main clause verb	tu- on main clause noun	tu- in subordinate clause
0	1	56. I was always forbidden by my grandfather.	forbid		
1	1	60. She was not very old.			
1	1	61. She was just a child.			
1	1 g	62. And her father, her mother, and her older sister were afraid.	afraid		
1	1	63. They were all just afraid.			
3	1	73. I heard this when I was a child; that's how I know what my grandfather did.			
3	1	74. Because he was a shaman.	shaman		
3	1 g	75. So I believe with all my mind, with all my heart, to this day.			

(10), continued

Episode; paragraph	Connec tive	Bierwert translation	tu- on main clause verb	tu- on main clause noun	tu- in subordinate clause
3	<sup>1</sup>	76. Now, I am a man.			
3	<sup>1</sup>	77. I'm getting older, I am, and that's why I know.			
3	<sup>1</sup>	78. This is no story.			
3	<sup>1</sup>	79. This the truth of what I know, what I saw of my grandfather who raised me.			
6	<sup>1</sup>	<b>93a. I saw this with my own eyes, <i>si?ab</i> friend,</b>	see		
6	<sup>1</sup>	93b. and I heard this with my own ears. That is why I know.	hear		
6	<sup>1</sup>	94. I was raised with this, and I knew my grandfather.		grandfather	
6	<sup>1</sup>	95. He was a great shaman.	big	shaman	

(10), continued

Episode; paragraph	Connec tive	Bierwert translation	tu- on main clause verb	tu- on main clause noun	tu- in subordinate clause
6	1	96. He was a great man.	man		
7	1	97. <b>That is all there is to tell you, <i>si?ab</i>.</b>			
7	1	98. I have finished.			

The details in (10) show that the use of *tu-* is generally restricted to the beginning and the end of the entire narrative, when Mr. Sam is distinguishing the time of the narrative from the moment of telling. Notice that when he uses *tu-* in the middle of the text, as in lines 53 and 54, the content of the line is often a narrator's comment, when Mr. Sam references himself, at an earlier stage of his life. Line 38 contains another example of the use *tu-* to mark a relative past, marking an event prior to the moment in the narrative discourse.

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