

Deictic tense in intensional complements: evidence from Albanian

The phenomenon and the previous analyses The standard assumption in syntactic literature is that tenses embedded in subjunctive complements in Balkan languages have different meanings when compared to the tense in matrix clauses (e.g. Landau 2004 on Balkan languages, Krapova 2001 on Bulgarian, Varlokosta & Hornstein 1993 on Greek). In particular, it is assumed that tenses in matrix clauses are *deictic*, i.e. they are interpreted with respect to the Speech Time (ST), while tenses in embedded subjunctive complements are *relative*, i.e. they are interpreted with respect to the matrix clause Event Time (ET).

However, the data in (1) and (2) from Albanian show that such analysis cannot be maintained. In Albanian the present tense in matrix clauses, as in (1), locates events in the future with respect to the ST or at the ST, but it is incompatible with the past time reference. Examples in (2) show that the present tense in embedded subjunctive complements has the same meaning; it is felicitous only in the contexts which make reference to the future (2a), but not to the past with respect to the ST (2b). In the latter case the past tense must be used.

My proposal I propose that tenses in Albanian matrix clauses and in subjunctive complements has the same meaning. I adopt Gennari's 2003 analysis of English, and propose that the present tense in Albanian has the meaning in (3a). According to this definition, Albanian present tense is deictic, i.e. it makes direct reference to the ST and encodes that the ET cannot precede the ST, i.e. $\neg (t' < st)$. It also requires that the ET overlaps the local evaluation time, i.e. the time with respect to which clauses are located in time ($t'o t$). In matrix clauses the evaluation time is the ST, and according to the semantic derivation of a simple sentence given in (5) the event of singing overlaps the ST. In embedded subjunctive complements, the local evaluation time is the ET of the matrix verb, so the semantic derivation of a sentence with the subjunctive complement given in (6) correctly predicts that the time of singing can overlap with the wanting time and that the singing cannot be located prior to the ST. This explains incompatibility of the present tense with the adverbial clauses which make reference to the time prior to the ST, as in (2b). Note, that since the present tense in Albanian is deictic, i.e. it is always interpreted relative to the ST, this analysis predicts that in complements of propositional attitude verbs such as *say* or *believe*, the Albanian present tense would produce the so-called Double access reading. This is confirmed by the data in (8). (8b) is infelicitous in the context of (8a), since the present tense in (8a) requires that that the state of pregnancy overlaps the ST.

Conclusions The proposed analysis challenges the view that deictic tense cannot appear in intensional environments (e.g. Abusch 1997, Ogihara 1996, von Stechow 1995 on the meaning of the present tense in English). While the latter have to assume a movement mechanism by which the embedded tense moves to the matrix clause, so that it can be interpreted relative to the ST, no such mechanism is needed in the current analysis, where the reference to the ST is directly encoded in the meaning of the present tense.

Typological implications It is widely recognized that the embedded tense in English is atypical in that (i) the embedded present tense shows the so-called Double Access reading (cf. the English translation of (7a)) and (ii) the embedded past tense produces an overlapping reading (cf. the English translation of (8)). While the majority of the literature (e.g. Ogihara 1996, Abusch 1997) treat these two facts as unrelated phenomena, more recently it has been proposed that the two are actually connected (Sharvit 2003, Gennari 2003). The Albanian data presents additional support for the view proposed in Gennari 2003. The unusual overlapping reading arises as a pragmatic consequence of the indexicality of the present tense. Since in Albanian the present tense always makes reference to the ST, it cannot express the overlap between the two events in the past, therefore, this is compensated by the past tense. Without this, the language would have no means to express the simultaneity.

The data

(1) Present tense in matrix clauses

Unë (po) këndo-j tani /nesër /#dje.
I (PROG) sing-1SG.PRES now/tomorrow/#yesterday.
'I'm singing now./'I sing tomorrow./'#I sing yesterday.'

(2) Present tense in subjunctive complements

- a. Dësh-a [të këndo-j në Paris në 2012].
want-1SG.PAST TË sing-1SG.PRES in Paris in 2012
'I wanted to sing in Paris in 2012.'
- b. Dësh-a [të #këndo-j /këndo-ja në Paris në 2005].
want-1SG.PAST TË sing-1SG.PRES /sing-1SG.PAST in Paris in 2005
'I wanted to sing in Paris in 2005.'

The analysis

(3) The meaning of Tenses in Albanian:

- a. PRES: $\lambda P \lambda t \exists t' [t'o t \& \neg (t' < st) \& P (t')]$ b. PAST: $\lambda P \lambda t \exists t' [t' < t \& P (t')]$
where $t' = ET$, $t = \text{evaluation time}$

(4) Sentence radicals:

I sing: $\lambda t [\text{sing}'(t)(sp)]$ b. *I want*: $\lambda P \lambda t [\text{want}'(t)(sp)(^P)]$

(5) Derivation of a simple Albanian sentence (1)

- a. *I sing*: $\lambda t [\text{sing}'(t)(sp)]$
b. PRES: $\lambda P \lambda t \exists t' [t'o t' \& \neg (t' < st) \& P (t')]$
c. PRES (*I sing*): $\lambda t' \exists t' [t'o t' \& \neg (t' < st) \& \text{sing}' (t')(sp)]$
d. (5c) applied to the ST yields: $\exists t' [t'o st \& \neg (t' < st) \& \text{sing}' (t')(sp)]$

(6) Fragment of semantic derivation of (2):

- a. PRES (*I sing*): $\lambda t' \exists t' [t'o t' \& \neg (t' < st) \& \text{sing}' (t')(sp)]$
b. *I want*: $\lambda P \lambda t [\text{want}'(t)(sp)(^P)]$
c. *I want*: $([[[(6a)]]]): \lambda t [\text{want}'(t)(sp)(^{\lambda t' \exists t' [t'o t' \& \neg (t' < st) \& \text{sing}' (t')(sp)]})]$
d. PAST: $\lambda P \lambda t''' \exists t''' [t''' < t''' \& P (t''')]$
e. PAST $([[[(6c)]]]): \lambda t''' \exists t''' [t''' < t''' \& \text{want}'(t''')(sp)(^{\lambda t' \exists t' [t'o t' \& \neg (t' < st) \& \text{sing}' (t')(sp)]})]$
f. (7e) applied to the ST = st yields (6g):
g. $\exists t''' [t''' < st \& \text{want}'(t''')(sp)(^{\lambda t' \exists t' [t'o t' \& \neg (t' < st) \& \text{sing}' (t')(sp)]})]$

Wider Implications

(7) Present tense in indicative complements:

- Double Access reading $[ET_{\text{pregnant}} \circ ET_{\text{say}} \& ET_{\text{pregnant}} \circ ST]$
a. Pjetri tha [se Maria është shtatzënë].
Peter say.3SG.PAST that Maria be.3SG.PRES pregnant
'Peter said that Maria is pregnant.'
- b. #Ajo lind-i vajzë. [infelicitous in the context of (7a)]
She give.birth-3SG.PAST girl.
'She gave birth to a girl.'

(8) Ambiguity of the embedded past tense

- Pjetri tha [se Maria ishte shtatzënë].
Peter say.3SG.PAST that Maria be.3SG.PAST pregnant
Overlapping reading: 'Peter said that Maria was pregnant.' $[ET_{\text{pregnant}} \circ ET_{\text{say}}]$
Back-shifted reading: 'Peter said that Maria had been pregnant.' $[ET_{\text{pregnant}} < ET_{\text{say}}]$