

kansas
working
papers
in
linguistics

volume 5
1980
no. 1

edited by

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Acknowledgements

The editors would like to express their thanks to the faculty and staff of the Linguistics Department for their invaluable assistance in the preparation of this volume. Funding for this journal is provided by the Graduate Student Council from the Student Activity Fee.

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PREFACE

As far as is known, all languages have ways of expressing modality, i.e., notions of possibility, necessity, contingency, etc. But this pervasive phenomenon has so far been the object of little systematic linguistic analysis. In fact, investigators do not even agree on the scope of the term modality. Very roughly speaking, two kinds of modality have been distinguished, namely epistemic and deontic. The former involves the speaker's judgment as to the degree of certainty of an event or state of affairs being referred to. Deontic modality, on the other hand, has to do with such notions as obligation, permissibility and necessity. However, as useful as this distinction is, little is known so far concerning the linguistic patterns which express those ideas. It is clear that the modality systems of a great many languages will need to be thoroughly scrutinized and compared before any conclusions can be drawn as to their place in 'universal grammar.'

The papers included in this volume of the Kansas Working Papers in Linguistics were written by graduate students at the University of Kansas for a seminar on modality taught by Professor Choon-Kyu Oh in the spring of 1979. They deal with a variety of topics bearing on modality and with a variety of languages and language families. It is our hope that these papers will stimulate comments from colleagues at other institutions.

The Editors

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A CROSS-LINGUISTIC LOOK AT FUTURE MARKERS

Patricia J. Hamel

Abstract: In an effort to contribute to a determination as to whether English will is a future tense marker or a contingency marker, the uses of future markers as traditionally analyzed in Spanish, Alsatian, Turkish, Hebrew, Malay and Korean are investigated. Means of indicating future time, ranges of meaning of future-marked sentences, and the use of future in contingency clauses are compared cross-linguistically. It is concluded that when alternatives exist, speakers prefer to reserve the future marker for situations in which they are less than certain regarding the occurrence of an event.

The question has been raised in the literature¹ as to the nature of English will: whether it is in fact a future tense, marking future time only, or whether it is a contingency marker, expressing a predicted result given certain conditions. In view of the recent research on language universals, and the possibility that data from other languages may be able to shed some light on the discussion, it is useful to investigate the so-called future marker in several languages, both related and unrelated to English. Because of the existence of several types of future-like constructions in English, and the apparent relationship among them, the following hypothesis was the basis for the cross-linguistic study:

If a language has more than one verbal construction used to refer to future time, the construction which is traditionally considered to be the future will be more of an atemporal presumptive marker than a temporal (future) assertion.

To test the hypothesis, data on the future constructions and their usage were gathered in personal elicitation from native speakers of English, Spanish, Alsatian, Hebrew, Turkish, Malay and Korean.² Since each of the consultants spoke English as well as his/her own language, data were elicited by asking questions regarding the types of future marker employed (whether verbal affix, periphrastic construction or other means), alternate constructions which may indicate future time, the range of meanings of the future-marked sentences, and the co-occurrence of the future marker with conditional clauses and past-time markers.

Types of Future Markers

Of the seven languages surveyed, three have verbal suffixes (Turkish, Spanish and Korean), one (Hebrew) prefixes the future marker on the verb, and three have periphrastic auxiliary-type constructions (Alsatian, Malay and English).

	<u>Verb Stem</u>	<u>Future Marker</u>	<u>Example</u>
Turkish	gel-	-EjEk	ahmet gelejek 'Ahmet will come'
Spanish	ir	-é, -ás, -á, -emos, -án	el irá 'He will go'
Korean	ka-	-l kəsi	nə ka kalkəsita 'I will go'
Hebrew	g-m-r	e-, ti-, yi-	ani egmor 'I will finish'
Alsatian	drinə	vuxt	əx vuxt drinə 'He will drink'
Malay	pergi	akan	saya akan pergi 'I will go'
English	go	will	I will go

Other Constructions Which May Indicate Future Time

In all the languages surveyed except Hebrew, the present tense (aorist in Turkish) can be used to refer to future time. In English, Spanish and Turkish, the progressive may also be used. Alsatian has no verbal construction denoting progressive. In English and Spanish the 'going to' construction is very commonly used for future time. Following are examples from Turkish, Spanish, Korean, Malay and Alsatian which illustrate such future reference. (Note that the glosses exemplify similar usage in English.)

<u>Turkish</u>	Aorist	yarın ahmet gelir	
		tomorrow A. come-aor	'Ahmet comes tomorrow'
	Prog.	yarın ahmet geliyor	
		come-prog	'Ahmet is coming tomorrow'
	Future	yarın ahmet gelejek	
		come-fut	'Ahmet will come tomorrow'

In Turkish, the use of the aorist or progressive to indicate future time is strongly dependent on context or on the presence of a time adverb to specify futurity. The use of the aorist implies that the speaker has less evidence for his assertion than is required for use of the future suffix -EjEk, while the progressive implies more evidence, practically certainty. This situation differs from English in that the speaker in Turkish makes a weaker assertion using the aorist than he makes when using the future. In English, use of the present constitutes a stronger assertion than use of the future. In both languages, however, use of the progressive is more of an assertion than use of the future.

<u>Malay</u>	Present	saya pergi beso?	
		I go tomorrow	'I go tomorrow'
	Future	saya akan pergi	
		fut	'I will go'
		saya akan pergi beso?	'I will go tomorrow'

The difference among these examples is again based on speaker's knowledge and degree of certainty, but here the time adverb adds to the strength of the assertion. In the akan sentences, the speaker is making an assertion when he uses the time adverb beso?; without it, he is only predicting.

<u>Spanish</u>	Future	el saldrá mañana he leave-fut tomorrow	'He will leave tomorrow'
	'going to'	el va a salir mañana goes to leave	'He is going to leave tomorrow'
	Present	el sale mañana leave-pres	'He leaves tomorrow'
	Prog.	el está saliendo mañana is leaving	'He is leaving tomorrow'

The Spanish speaker makes a distinction among these four alternatives again based on how certain he is regarding the prediction being made. If the event is scheduled, tickets bought, bags packed, the present or present progressive would be used. The 'going to' future, like the English equivalent, also requires strong evidence on the part of the speaker, such as having been told so by the actor. The future, on the other hand, requires only some knowledge of the actor's previous behavior patterns or other such indirect evidence.

<u>Alsatian</u>	Present	ex driŋkt hit o:və he drink-pres today evening	'He drinks tonight'
	Future	ex vuxt driŋe hit o:və fut	'He will drink tonight'

Here the speaker uses the present tense form of the verb to refer to future events only when he is certain of the occurrence, and uses the vuxt form as a probability construction, basing his conjecture on prior knowledge of the actor's behavior patterns.

<u>Korean</u>	Present	John-in naju kimyoil-e pongkip-il pat-nin-ta topic next Friday-on paycheck-obj receive(pres) week	'John gets his paycheck on Friday next week'
		John-in nail ohu-e thöwën ha-n-ta tomorrow aft.-in hospital leave(pres)	'John leaves the hospital tomorrow afternoon'
	Future	John-in nail ohu-e thöwën ha-l kësita leave (fut)	'John will leave the hospital tomorrow'

Note that the example given as the future tense may also be understood to mean 'I presume that John will leave the hospital tomorrow'. Thus the future marker in Korean may indicate conjecture rather than certainty; to express the latter, the speaker will choose the present tense form of the verb.

Range of Meaning of Future-Marked Sentences

In five of the seven languages surveyed (English, Spanish, Turkish, Korean and Alsatian), the informants were quite clear in expressing the usage of the future marker as indicating possibility or probability. The words

used to describe the differences among the future and the various other possible future-time constructions were most commonly 'not as certain about it', only stating a possibility', or 'probably but not definitely'. In Hebrew, however, the response was quite different. For the Hebrew speaker, there is no other possible way to refer to future time save the above-mentioned prefixes, and the absence of a tense marker indicates aorist or generic/habitual action. The future construction in Malay (akan + verb) also appears to imply more certainty than the future in the five other languages (Turkish, Alsatian, Spanish, English and Korean). In Hebrew and Malay, other modal constructions are used to express possibility and probability.

English, Spanish, Korean, Turkish and Alsatian also use the future marker to predict unwitnessed or possible events or states co-occurring with the moment of speech, and in combination with a past or perfective marker to state a presumption about a past state or event. The following are examples of such usage.

<u>English</u>	He'll be at home now. It's after 5:00. You'll have heard about Jack already, I'm sure.	
<u>Turkish</u>	ahmet gelejekdi come-fut-past ahmet şimdi evde olajak now house-loc be-fut	'Ahmet would have come' 'Ahmet is probably at home now'
<u>Alsatian</u>	əx vuxt əm̥tsvɛlfə ɔnkome he fut 12:00 come dü vurš rä:št hɔn you fut right have dü vurš m̥:t s̥n gs̥n tired be be-part.	'He'll probably come by 12:00' 'You are probably right' 'You were probably tired'
<u>Korean</u>	John-i cik̥m̥ c ^h äk-ɨl ilk-ko iss-ɨl k̥s̥-i-ta subj now book-OM read-prog. be-fut-decl.marker 'John will be/is probably reading the book now' John-i əce to ^h ak ha-əss-ɨl k̥s̥-i-ta yesterday arrive past future 'John will have arrived yesterday'	
<u>Spanish</u>	Juan tendrá treinta años have-fut 30 years Juan saldrá enojado leave-fut angry Juan habrá llegado ayer have-fut arrive-part. yesterday	'John is probably 30 years old' 'John will probably leave angry (if...)' 'John probably arrived yesterday'

Contingency Clauses and the Future Marker

Since the nature of clauses dealing with conditions is inherently contingent, and the future marker was hypothesized as more contingent than

other possible future forms, it would seem to follow that the future marker would be redundant, and would not normally appear in such clauses. In five of the seven languages (Alsatian, English, Spanish, Malay and Korean) this was in fact the case, even in sentences very clearly referring to future time. In Turkish, the future marker can be used, but there is some question as to when and why. In Hebrew, the future must be used in any if or when clause as well as in the consequent clause.

Spanish si estudias mucho el año entrante saldrás mejor
if study-pres much year coming come-out-fut better
'If you study hard next year, you'll do better'

Alsatian wemex pol færxɔs sɪn verə mæx esse ge'n
when-we soon finish be fut we eat go
'When we finish, we will (probably) go eat'

Malay jika dia pergi dia akan bawa? keretaña
if he go he fut bring car-his
'If he goes, he'll take his car'

Korean John-i näil o-myën mulë po këss ta
tomorrow come-if ask will decl
'John will ask him if he comes tomorrow'

Turkish In normal future-referent if clauses, where no particular outcome is being predicted, the aorist is used:

ahmet gelirse ban gidejeim 'If Ahmet comes, I will go'
come-aor-if I go-fut-1st s.

But for situations where there is definite evidence that the condition will be fulfilled (e.g. Ahmet has accepted the invitation), the progressive would be used in the if-clause:

ahmet geliyorsa ban gelmiyejeim 'If Ahmet is coming, I won't
come-prog-if I come-neg-fut come'

The future can be used in a situation somewhat intermediate to these two:

ahmet gelejekse ban gelmiyejeim 'If Ahmet comes, I won't come'
come-fut-if I come-neg fut

Hebrew Hebrew requires the use of the future marker in both condition and consequent:

im ata ti'ʔe oti anaxmo nesev yaxad
if you see-fut me we sit-fut together
'If you see me, we will sit together'

kese ata tihiye benesrim ata tilmad bæ universita
when you be-fut old-20 you learn-fut in university
'When you are twenty years old, you will study in the university'

Conclusion

In all the languages included in the study except Hebrew, there was at least one other verbal construction available for referring to future time:

Present tense as future: English, Spanish, Alsatian, Malay, Korean
 Progressive as future: English, Spanish, Turkish
 Going-to constructions: English, Spanish

In all cases except the Turkish aorist examples, the use of the future marker indicates less certainty of the occurrence on the part of the speaker than use of either the present, present progressive or going to future. In Turkish, the use of the future marker indicates less certainty than the use of the progressive. One can therefore conclude that there is a strong indication that in those languages where there is a choice, the speaker will normally choose the future marker rather than the available alternatives when he is less certain, and has less evidence at his disposal that the conditions for the occurrence of the future event will be fulfilled.

Footnotes

1. See Binnick 1971 and 1972.

2. I am grateful to the following people for their cooperation in providing me with language data: Feryal Yavas, Marguerite Hessini, Abdul Aziz Idris, Nora Vera, Amparo Restrepo, Etti Dromi, and Professor Choon-Kyu Oh.

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