

Morphological Strategies for Past Temporal Reference

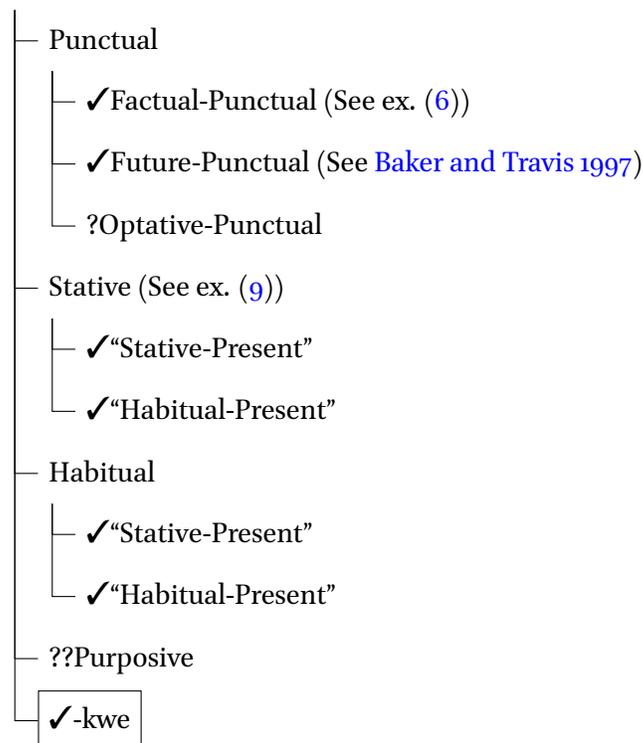
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1 Introduction

- For now, I'm interested in all the ways Kanien'kéha can express things in the *past*.
- This is especially interesting since there seem to be **several strategies for doing so**, and some of these **may overlap in meaning** and have **multiple interpretations** making the contexts of use difficult to determine.
- To the right are the ways I've seen in the linguistic literature, and in talking with you all.
- In the remainder of the handout:
 - I show some examples pulled from some papers about past reference
 - I have a few test sentences that fill in some basic descriptive gaps that exist in the literature, to my knowledge

Past Reference



2 Tense and temporal reference

One definitional preliminary: TENSE and TEMPORAL REFERENCE overlap in their meanings, but are not the same thing. I will use the terms as follows:

- (1) a. TEMPORAL REFERENCE:
The ability of a language to discuss event(ualitie)s located at various points in time, which may be achieved in numerous ways (tense/aspect morphology, adverbials, pragmatic inference).
- b. TENSE:
A specific relation established between the Utterance Time (or Evaluation Time) and the Topic Time (or Reference Time)

There are many possible tenses:

- (2) A past tense (English):



- (3) A non-past tense (Japanese, Russian):



- (4) A non-future tense (St'át'imcets; Matthewson 2006):



These tenses are often come with further inferences that lead to the overall temporal reference of the sentence.

- Japanese and Russian NON-PAST TENSE is used with perfective verbs to make to *future* temporal reference, a subset of the temporal restriction made by this tense.

Many languages are TENSELESS, including Kanien'kéha:

- For example Mandarin has no overt tense morpheme.
- The sentence in (5) is compatible with both present and past reference; the resolution is arrived at through context and world knowledge (Smith 1997: 364f)

- (5) Zhangsan xiuli yige luyingji
Z. repair one CL.tape.recorder
'Zhangsan repaired/is repairing a tape recorder.'

3 Kanien'kéha past reference

There are several ways to refer to things in the past in Kanien'kéha, but very few of these appear to be described *exclusively* as referring to the past. I'll show two of these here.

3.1 Factual-Punctual

With most eventive verbs, it appears that the default reading of Factual-Punctual forms is one with past reference.

(6) Factual-Punctual with past time reference

waharaste'
wa-ha-rast-e'
FACT-M.SG.AGT-draw-PUNC
'he drew it'

However, some verbs are described as also having a present referring use, including but not restricted to motion verbs (7).

(7) Present time reference of Factual-Punctual verbs (Baker and Travis 1997)

- a. Ka' wahse'? Kanatakon wa'ke'.
Ka' wa-hs-e-'? Ka-nat-a-kon wa'-k-e-'.
where FACT-2.SG.AGT-go-PUNC N.SG.AGT-town-Ø-in FACT-1.SG.AGT-go-PUNC
'Where are you going? I'm going to town.'
- b. Wahtsken-' ken thi ronkwe...?
Wa-hts-ken-' ken thi ronkwe...?
FACT-2.SG>M.SG-see-PUNC Q that man
'Do you see that man (with the fur coat and the straw hat)?'

Furthermore, some verbs are also translated into English with an immediate future ("going to") construction (Wishe Mittelstaedt, p.c.).

- (8) Tho wà:ke'
tho wa-k-e-'
there FACT-1SGS-go-PUNC
'I am going there (tomorrow, next week).'

3.2 Stative

(9) Stative with “perfect” and “simple past” readings ([Baker and Travis 1998: 199](#))

- a. Ónen tehowénrie
Ónen te-ho-awénrie-Ø
now/already DUP-M.SG.O-stir-STV
'He has already stirred it.'
- b. Éntie tehowénrie
Éntie te-ho-awénrie-Ø
noon DUP-M.SG.O-stir-STV
'He stirred it at noon.' (Contrast English: '??He has stirred it at noon.')

However, we know that a subset of verbs (Stative Present; non-consequential) have a present reading with this aspect, as well as a pure state present reading with stative-only (adjectival) verbs.

4 States and habits, past states and past habits

Remainder...

The rest of this handout details some of the questions I have about specific kinds of meanings and how to express them.

Question

How do we talk about past states and past habits? Is there an effect of “consequentiality”?

(10) Possible test sentences (STV Present/non-consequential)

- a. I (habitually) smoke.
b. (When I was younger) I used to smoke.

(11) Possible test sentences (HAB Present/consequential)

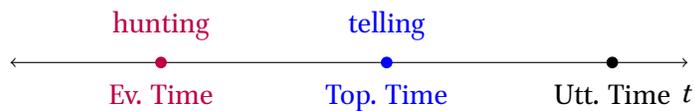
- a. I (habitually) swim.
b. (When I was a child) I used to (habitually) swim.

5 Past-in-the-past contexts

(12) **Backshifted example from Baker and Travis (1998: 184)**

Theténre' Sak wahakhróri' tsi Tyer (óya tsteténre') rotoratónhne'.
 Theténre' Sak wa-hak-hróri- tsi Tyer (óya tsteténre') ro-[a]torat-ón-hne'.
 yesterday Sak FACT-M.SG>1SG-tell-PUNC that Tyer the.other.day M.SG.O-hunt-STV-PST
 'Yesterday Sak told me that Tyer had hunted (the other day).'

(13) **Backshifting:**



Question

1. Is the remote past suffix required for backshifted contexts?
2. Is a backshifted reading obligatory with the remote past, with respect to the matrix topic time?
3. What happens if *-kwe'/-hne'* is on the embedding predicate?

- (14) a. (Yesterday) Mary said she went to Kahnawake (the day before).
 b. (Yesterday) Mary said she was going to Kahnawake (while I was speaking with her on the phone).

Question

How do states behave, especially with the simultaneous reading?

- (15) a. (Yesterday) Mary said she was sick (the day before).
 b. (Yesterday) Mary said she was sick (while I was speaking with her on the phone).

So is the remote past a past tense?

- Probably not. We can demonstrate this by finding cases where the remote past appears in clearly non-past contexts.
- I don't have examples from Kanien'kéha (yet), but here are analogous examples from Wendat (16) and Seneca (18), which shows that it does not restrict the Topic Time in the expected way if it were a tense.

- (16) Wendat “future perfect”, [Lukaniec 2018: 325, \(557\)](#)
 e8andatarontak e_iia_ien_ha'
 e-wak-naʔtar-qt-∅-ahk e-k-yakeḥ-h-aʔ
 FUT-1SG.PAT-bread-put.in.fire-STAT-PAST FUT-1SG.AGT-go.out-INCH-PFV
 «je sortirai dès que j’aurai mon pain au feu»
 ‘I’ll go out as soon as I’ll have put my bread on the fire.’

- (17) Backshifting in the future (schema for 16):



- (18) Seneca “future perfect passive”, [Chafe 2014: 81](#)
 a. ëöwönyok, ‘they will have killed him’
 b. ëgáhsadök, ‘it will have been buried’
- (19) Possible test sentences, translations of English future perfect
 a. By the time you get here, I will have eaten all the food.
 b. By the time Terrance arrives here, the class will have started.

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