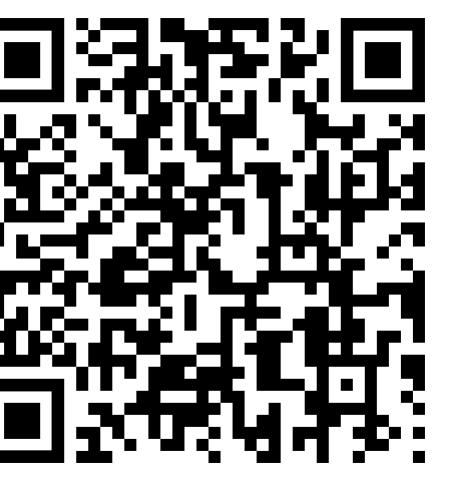


DEEP AND MORPHOLOGICAL TENSELESSNESS: EVIDENCE FROM KANIENT'KÉHA CONDITIONALS

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SUMMARY

Observation. In Kanien'kéha (ISO 639-3: moh), verbs in counterfactual conditionals (CF) require the presence of a non-PFV aspect (either IPFV or PERF).

- (1) a. OPT-V-IPFV/PERF $\rightsquigarrow$ ✓ CF
b. OPT-V-PFV $\rightsquigarrow$ ✗ CF

Claims.

- ① The CF contrast in (1) is linked to the contrast in **tense**:
- CF interpretation of (1a) is possible due to IMFP/PERF being **semantically tensed** (Gatchalian 2025)
 - CF interpretation of (1b) is impossible due to PFV being **semantically tenseless** (Baker & Travis 1997, 1998)
- ② Counterfactuality can be used as a diagnostic for tenselessness for languages with the correct morphosyntactic profile (see Bohnemeyer, 2019)

BACKGROUND

Kanien'kéha morphological asymmetry between aspects

– IPFV and PERF markers can be optionally followed by past tense suffixes; PFV markers never are.

- (2) k-atawen-s-kwe' (3) wa'-k-atawen'-(*kwe')
1SGA-swim-IPFV-PST FACT-1SGA-swim-PFV-PST
'I used to swim' 'I swam'

– PFV requires one of three 'modal' prefixes (FACTUAL, FUTURE, or OPTATIVE); IPFV and PERF require a 'modalizer' suffix to co-occur with 'modal' prefixes

- (4) en-k-atawen- (5) en-k-atawen-hs-*(eke')
FUT-1SGA-swim-PFV FUT-1SGA-swim-IPFV-MDZ
'I will swim' 'I will be swimming'

Gatchalian (2025): tense is obligatory (possibly covertly) with PERF/IPFV aspects

Baker & Travis (1997, 1998): morphological patterns in (2)–(5) suggest that PFV lacks tense

– However, since tense in Kanien'kéha may be covert, we need an independent argument to rule out tenses in PFV forms.

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EMPIRICAL GENERALIZATIONS

Form and meaning of Optative-marked conditionals

meaning	OPT-{IPFV/PERF}	OPT-PFV
past CF	✓	*
pres CF	✓	*
fut CF	✓	*
possible fut	*	✓

Gen. 1: OPT is **necessary** for CF interpretations (ex. (8))

Gen. 2a: OPT is **not sufficient** for CF interpretations. It requires either a IPFV or a PERF aspect (ex. (9))

Gen. 2b: OPT+IPFV/PERF forms have free temporal reference (see handout)

Gen. 3: OPT+PFV conditionals give rise to a possible future interpretation (ex. (10))

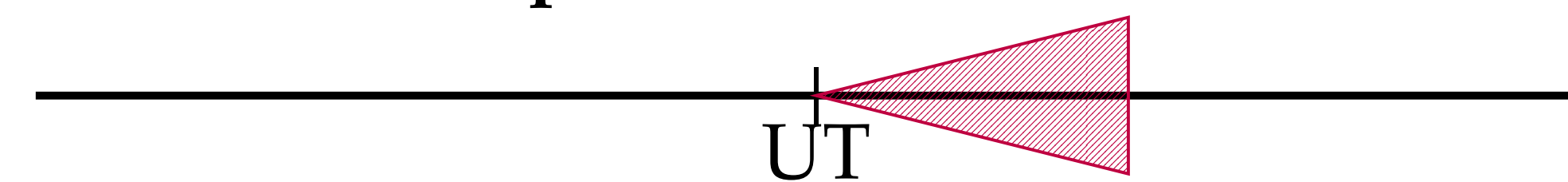
TOWARDS AN ACCOUNT

Any account where CF comes from the contribution of tense, either with its usual temporal value (e.g., Arregui 2005, 2009; Ippolito 2014) or a modal value (e.g., Iatridou 2000, Schulz 2014) predicts **lack of tense** entails **lack of counterfactuality**.

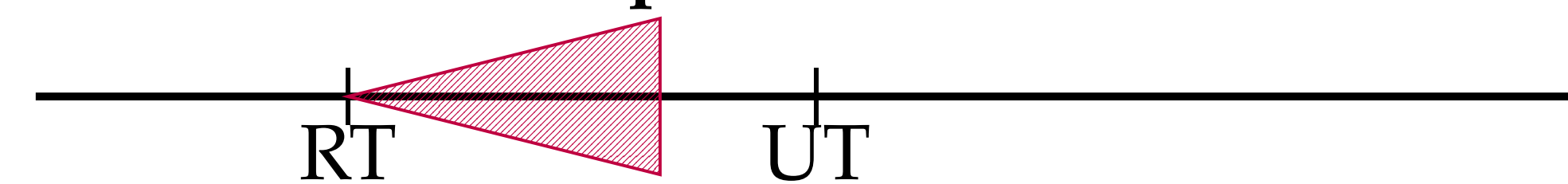
Proposal

- ① OPT signals quantification over continuations of w from t (6a)
② TENSE backshifts time of modal's accessibility relation, allowing quantification over CF worlds (6b)

- (6) a. **OPT accesses possible continuations from the UT**



- b. **OPT+T accesses possible continuations from the RT**



③ PFV lacks T and obligatorily anchors modal's time to the UT, hence only possible futures are in modal domain (7a).

④ IPFV/PERF anchors modal's time to RT, allowing for the backshift of the modal base relative to the UT (7b).

- (7) a. [Mod_{OPT} [Asp_{PFV} [VP]]]
 $\rightsquigarrow$ modal base: worlds accessible from UT
b. [Mod_{OPT} [T_{MODZ} [Asp_{IPFV/PERF} [VP]]]]
 $\rightsquigarrow$ modal base: worlds accessible from $t < UT$

DATA

- (8) **CF requires the presence of OPT**

Context: Kó:r never does his chores! He didn't do the dishes and now we have flies in the house.

- a. PERF: infelicitous, only indicative past interpretation

#Tóka' Kó:r ro-ks-oharé-nion

if Kó:r MSGP-dish-wash-DISTR.PERF

Only: 'If Kó:r washed the dishes...'

- b. OPT-PERF: CF past interpretation possible

Tóka a-ho-ks-oharé-nion

ne Kó:r, iah ki

if OPT-MSGP-dish-wash-DISTR.PERF NE Kó:r NEG just

th-a-ionkwa-nahskw-aién:t-ake' ne tsí'ks!

NEG-OPT-1PL.EXP-pet-have.PERF-CONT NE fly

'If Kó:r had washed the dishes, we wouldn't have flies.'

- (9) **CF requires the presence of a non-PFV aspect**

There will be dance performances at the gathering next week.

My *late mother* was a great dancer, and people loved to watch her.

- a. OPT-PFV: CF future interpretation impossible

*toka isten'-kenha tsiahiakhsera tawe'

if my.mother-DECESS week coming

t-a-ie-nonniahkw-e'

DUPL-OPT-FI.A-dance-PFV

Int.: 'If my late mother had been dancing next week...'

- b. OPT-PERF: CF future interpretation possible

toka isten'-kenha tsiahiakhsera tawe'

if my.mother-DECESS week coming

t-a-iako-nonniahkw-en

DUPL-OPT-FI.P-dance-PERF

'If my late mother had been dancing next week, ...'

- (10) **OPT-PERF can have a possible future interpretation**

There will be dance performances at the gathering next week.

My *mother* is a great dancer, and people love to watch her.

- a. OPT-PFV: possible future interpretation

toka isten'ha tsiahiakhsera tawe'

if my.mother week coming

t-a-ie-nonniahkw-e'

DUPL-OPT-FI.P-dance-PFV

'If my mother dances next week, ...'

- b. OPT-PERF: only CF future interpretation

#toka isten'ha tsiahiakhsera tawe'

if my.mother week coming

t-a-iako-nonniahkw-en

DUPL-OPT-FI.P-dance-PERF

'If my mother **had been** dancing next week, ...'

Implication: she won't be dancing