

TAM markers in Paraguayan Guaraní: relative order and semantic scope.

There is a tendency in the languages of the world to place aspect inflection closer to the predicate stem than tense inflection and tense inflection closer to the stem than mood inflection (Bybee 1985, Boland 2006). One of the exceptions to this tendency is presented by suffix ordering in Paraguayan Guaraní (Gregorez & Suárez 1967; Liuzzi & Kirtchuk 1989; Tonhauser 2006). In Guaraní, aspectual suffix *-pa* (totalitative) appears closest to the verbal stem, followed by future tense suffixes (future *-ta*, immediate future *-pota*, intentional *-ne*), which are in turn followed by the perfect suffix *-ma*. Progressive/durative aspect and past time reference are expressed by postverbal clitics. Usually the progressive/durative marker *(h)ína* precedes past tense particles, but a few examples of opposite ordering have been collected. Relative ordering of basic tense-aspect markers in Guaraní can be summarized in the following scheme:

- (1) BASE-PERFECT1-FUTURE-PERFECT2 (PROGRESSIVE PAST)

(Tonhauser 2006) presents arguments in support of the claim that the main future marker *-ta* has in fact a modal rather than temporal nature and that Guaraní is thus a “tenseless” language. (Less radically, Guaraní can be described in (Bhat 1999) terms as a mood-prominent language, where irrealis marking is employed to express reference to future). In the light of these arguments the ordering summarized in (1) appears only the more surprising.

Our main claim is that the observed ordering can easily be explained by taking into consideration the semantic scope of markers in question, in spirit of (Rice 2000). Each tense-aspect marker has a scope over all markers placed to the left of it. The typological peculiarity of Guaraní is thus not in the ordering of suffixes as such, but rather in the fact that certain aspectual markers have wider scope than tense and modality markers.

In particular, the durative marker *(h)ína* has a scope over future tense/irrealis operators. It has already been observed in (Tonhauser 2006) that *(h)ína* can freely combine with static predicates, in which case it marks relevance of the situation in question at the time of reference. Cf. (2):

- (2) A-sẽ-**mbota**-ité-ko'-**a-ína** pé-icha-rõ.
1SG.A-exit-IMMFUT-AUG-EMPH-1SG.A-PROG DEM-MNR-COND
'If such, I will soon leave this place' (=such is the relevant situation, that I will soon live)
*'If such, I will soon be leaving this place' (=will be engaged in the process of leaving)

When followed by past tense markers (simple past *kuri*, remote past *ra'e*, etc), *(h)ína* has a narrower scope than the past time reference operator and behaves like a normal progressive:

- (3) Ichu-gui o-kañy-**hína-kuri** pe Vito oi-kuaa porã-ité-va.
3-ABL 3A-hide-PROG-PST DEM Victor 3A-know good-AUG-REL
'The things that Victor knew perfectly well had been obscured from him [for a period of time]'.

It seems that when following a past tense marker, *(h)ína* has a scope over it, but such examples are too scarce to draw any firm conclusions. Similar semantic scope effects can be shown with respect to perfect suffix *-ma*, which occupies the slot between future and past tense markers. These findings allow us to revise the description of aspectual meanings conveyed by *(h)ína* and *-ma*. Finally, some typological parallels from genetically and areally distinct languages will also be presented.

References:

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