The Construal of Embedded Tenses in Romanian
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Goals:
Investigate the status of Romanian tenses with respect to the traditional typology: SOT vs. non-SOT languages
Examine the construal of past and present in embedded complement clauses (CCs) and relative clauses (RCs) in SOT vs. non-SOT languages
Present two traditional analyses according to which in SOT languages simultaneous (SIM) construals arise via a “null” (past) tense, while in non-SOT languages SIM construals arise via either a “null” (present) tense (Japanese) or a “shifted indexical” present tense (Russian).
Discuss the distribution of Romanian past and present in CCs & RCs and show that in Romanian
(i) past always expresses anteriority
(ii) present may be indexical under past and the realization of a “null” tense under semantic future.
Suggest an account according to which the denotation of the present is determined by the speaker’s commitment to the truth of the embedded clause: present under past can be construed as SIM only when the speaker is not committed to the truth of the subordinate clause. Otherwise, present is indexical.

1 Past under past
Sequence of Tense (SOT): morphological past can express simultaneity with respect to the matrix SIT-T

(1) John said that Mary was ill.
(1) can be used in a situation in which Mary’s illness overlaps John’s saying-time.
One analysis (Ogihara, 1996, Abusch, 1997, Kratzer, 1998, Kusumoto, 1999): the embedded past can be uninterpreted (i.e., it behaves as a semantically “null” tense)
Evidence: sentences with multiple embeddings, where a morphological past is simultaneous with a semantic future.

(2) a. John decided a week ago that in ten days at breakfast he would say to his mother that they were having their last meal together. [Abusch, 1988]
   b. I WEEK AGO UT-T 10 DAYS LATER
      ———[———|———]———|———[———|SAYING]———|———>
      DECIDING HAVING MEAL
In (2), the tense in the most embedded clause is past, but the temporal relation between the subordinate and the higher embedding clause is not anteriority, but simultaneity. This clearly shows that past tense does not convey a past meaning. Instead there seems to be an instance of semantically “null” past.
Non-SOT languages: morphological past always conveys anteriority

(3) John-wa Mary-ga ninsinsi-te i-ta to it-ta
   John-TOP Mary-NOM pregnant-PROG-PAST COMP say-PAST
   ‘John said that Mary was pregnant.’ [Ogihara, 1996]

1 I would like to thank Hamida Demirdache and Orin Percus for very helpful comments on the topic. All errors are mine.
with a past embedded under a matrix past, can only be used in a situation where Mary’s pregnancy is claimed by John to precede John’s saying-time.

In Japanese, embedded past is semantically interpreted.

**Generalization 1** (to be revised)

The difference between SOT and non-SOT languages (with respect to the construal of (embedded) past tense):

In SOT languages past can be used to express simultaneity whereas in non-SOT languages, past can only convey a past tense meaning.

To distinguish between SOT & non-SOT languages: check for the availability of the SIM past.

This is not completely correct.

The availability of the SIM does not suffice to prove that a language is a SOT language.

Consider Russian (another non-SOT language):

(4) Dina videla, čto/kak voda lilas’/l’jötsja iz vedra.
Dina saw that/how water poured/pours from basket
‘Dina saw that/how the water was pouring from the basket’ [Khomitsevich, 2008]

past can be used in a SIM context (the matrix and the embedded SIT-Ts overlap)

**BUT,** unlike in English, in Russian, the SIM construal cannot arise via a semantically “null” tense.

Consider the sentences in (5).

(5) a. # The Earth was round.
   b. ✔ John said/thought that the Earth was/is round.

(5a) expresses a universal truth -> in both English & Russian, past cannot be used in this context
(5b) expresses John ‘s belief about a permanent state of the world, a state that (according to John) holds at John’s saying-time but also before and after John’s utterance.

In English, both present & past can be used.

Past is a “null” past used to report the content of John’s belief: “The Earth is round.”

In Russian, only present can be used.

Past is odd; it implicates the state described by the embedded clause is believed by Ivan to hold only at the interval at which Ivan has the belief.

Khomitsevich (2008): sentences like (5b) provide evidence that Russian past in SIM construals is not a “null” tense.

**Generalization 1** (final version)

The difference between SOT and non-SOT languages (with respect to the construal of (embedded) past tense): a past can be construed as simultaneous in SOT & non-SOT languages. However,

(6) i. SOT languages: the SIM construal of past under past arises via a semantically “null” tense
   ii. non-SOT languages: in SIM environments, both the matrix & the embedded past express pastness (with respect to the UT-T) and overlap.
2 The construal of embedded present

2.1 SOT languages

Present under past

(7) *Present under past is indexical*

a. Max said that Rosa is pregnant.

b. Rosa talked to the boy who is crying.

(7') *Double Access Construal*  

\[
\begin{array}{c|c}
\text{SAYING} & \text{UT-T} \\
\hline
<\text{PREGNANCY/CRYING}> & \end{array}
\]

a. \[---[---]---l---\]

b. \[---[---]---l---\]

(7a) with a CC: used appropriately to describe a situation in which the embedded subject, Rosa, is claimed to be pregnant during an interval including both Max’s saying-time and the UT-T.


(7b) with a RC: the boy’s crying must hold true at UT-T, and can (but need not) hold true in the past at Rosa’s talking time.

\* Non-DA / Indexical construal of present: the embedded event holds at UT-T irrespective of whether it also extends into the past so as to include the matrix SIT-T.

Summary 1

In SOT languages, present under past in both CCs and RCs is indexical, i.e., it requires that the embedded event be evaluated at an interval that obligatorily includes the UT-T, and the interval that present refers to can extend into the past so as to include the matrix SIT-T (the latter condition being obligatory, if the embedded clause is a CC).

Present under "future"

(8) *Present under semantic future in both CCs & RCs allows a sim interpretation*\(^2\)

a. John will buy a fish that is alive. \(^3\)

b. Mary will think that someone is trying to steal her car.

\[^2\] In contrast, the following sentence shows that present in a RC under a semantic future can express temporal overlap with either the UT-T or the matrix SIT-T:

(i) Mary will marry a man who is (now) studying archeology.

\[^3\] The intuitions for RCs do not seem to be as clear as those for the CCs. For some authors (Stowell, 1996, among others), the simultaneous reading of present in a RC under a semantic future is restricted to certain contexts. This is also supported by the fact that in other SOT languages (i.e., French), examples like (8a) are odd. However, French does allow the simultaneous construal of present under future. Consider (i):

(i) Amina épousera un homme qui aime l’archéologie.

‘Amina will marry a man who likes archeology.’

The sentence in (i) is true in a situation where the man likes archeology at the time where Amina marries him, not at UT-T.

For this talk, I will assume that SOT languages allow a simultaneous construal of present under semantic future in RCs, and leave the issue concerning the salience of such a reading within/across SOT languages for future research.
Simultaneous Present

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{UT-T} & \text{BUY/THINK} & \text{BE ALIVE/STEALING} \\
\end{array}
\]

RC in (8a): the time of the fish being alive is naturally understood as overlapping the future time of John’s buying it ((9)), and not the UT-T.
CC in (8b): the embedded present relates the embedded event to the future matrix SIT-T ((9)).

\(\rightarrow\) in these contexts, present tense seems to behave as though it were a “null” tense.

Summary 2

SOT languages: present under past, in CCs & RCs, is always indexical (expresses temporal overlap with UT-T), whereas present under “future” can be a relative tense, relating the time of the embedded event/state to the matrix SIT-T, and not to UT-T.

2.2 Non-SOT languages

Present under past

(10) **Japanese present under past is sim in both CCs & RCs**

a. Taroo-wa Hanako-ga ninsinsi-te i-ru to it-ta
   Taroo-TOP Hanako-NOM pregnant-PROG-PRES COMP say-PAST
   ‘Taro said that Hanako was pregnant.’

b. Taroo-wa [ nai-te i-ru otoko ]-o nagu-ta
   Taroo-TOP cry-PROG-PRES boy ACC hit-PAST
   ‘Taro hit a/the man who was crying.’

(10a): present under past in CCs requires that the state/event described by the embedded verb (Hanako’s pregnancy) overlap with the matrix SIT-T (Taro’s saying)
(10b): present under past in RCs has a default simultaneous reading where the man’s crying overlaps with Taro’s hitting time.
Japanese present under past, in both CCs & RCs, yields a sim construal.
Japanese present under past is a relative tense, expressing a temporal dependency between the subordinate SIT-T and the matrix SIT-T.

(11) **Russian present under past is sim in CCs & indexical in RCs**

a. Ivan skazal, čto Maša boleet.
   Ivan said that Masha ail-PRES
   ‘Ivan said that Masha was ill (at the time of saying).’

b. Ivan uvidel devočku, kotoraja (sejčas) sidit na skamejkje.
   Ivan saw girl who (now) sit-PRES on bench
   ‘Ivan saw a girl who is sitting on a bench (now).’

CC in (11a): Masha’s illness is understood as overlapping Ivan’s saying-time

\(^4\) As Ogihara (1996) points out, the present in (10b) unlike (10a) can also yield an indexical construal, where the man’s crying includes the UT-T, but this is not the most salient construal of the present, unless an indexical adverb such as now is added in the RC.
RC in (11b): the sitting on a bench event is understood as being true at UT-T, and it may extend to include the matrix SIT-T, but need not.

Russian present under past yields a SIM construal (∼ Japanese) in CCs, and an indexical construal in RCs (∼ English)

Present under semantic future

(12) **Russian Present under future in RCs is a strict indexical**

Ja postavlu ocenki tol’ko tem, kto sidit v pervom rjadu.
I put-FUT marks only those-DAT who sit-PRES in first row
‘I will only give marks to those (students) who are sitting in the front row (right now).’

RC in (12): the sitting event is understood as being true at UT-T and not at the future interval introduced by the matrix tense.

Unlike its English counterpart, the Russian present (in a RC) under a matrix future does not yield a SIM construal, where the eventuality described in RC overlaps with the matrix SIT-T.

Unlike both English and Japanese, the Russian present in the RC is always indexical.

Summary 3

In non-SOT languages, present is simultaneous in CCs (under past & semantic future) In RCs, present (under past & semantic future) is simultaneous in Japanese, and indexical, in Russian

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<th>Japanese</th>
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<td>Present under “future”</td>
<td>simultaneous indexical⁵</td>
<td>simultaneous</td>
<td>indexical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Generalization 2

The construal of present in SOT versus non-SOT languages:

In SOT languages, present is by default indexical under past and can be simultaneous under “future”

In non-SOT languages, present is by default simultaneous under past & “future” in CCs. In RCs, it is indexical under past & “future” in Russian, and simultaneous in Japanese.

3 Theories of tense

3.1 Simultaneous construals in SOT languages

Ogihara (1996) posits an SOT/tense deletion rule, which optionally deletes an embedded tense under c-command by a matrix tense with the same temporal feature.

(13) a. John PAST say that Mary PAST be ill. [(1)]
    b. John PAST say that Mary ⊙ be ill.

⁵ See footnote 2.
When SOT rule applies, the embedded clause becomes tenseless ((13b)); its predicate is evaluated relative to the matrix SIT-T \(\Rightarrow\) SIM construal.

When SOT rule does not apply, the second occurrence of past semantically contributes a past meaning \(\Rightarrow\) backward shifted construal (the embedded state is located at a time prior to matrix SIT-T).

SOT rule may extend to present, when it occurs in the scope of another PRES.

(14) a. John woll-PRES buy a fish that PRES be alive. \(\text{[(8a)]}\)
    b. John woll-PRES buy a fish that \(\varnothing\) be alive.

The future meaning in (8a) is contributed by an auxiliary WOLL and a present tense.

Problems with Ogihara’s account:

(15) a. John said that Mary would be home.
    b. John PAST say that Mary woll-PAST be home.
    c. John PAST say that Mary soll-PAST be home.

(15’) a. SAY UT-T BE HOME
    b. SAY BE HOME UT-T
    c. past BE HOME SAY UT-T

(15a) can be used in two contexts: one where the time of Mary’s being home is subsequent to both John’s saying time and the UT-T (15’a) and another one where the time of Mary’s being home is subsequent to John’s saying time but anterior to the UT-T (15’b). \(\Rightarrow\) both arise if the tense deletion rule applies

If the SOT rule does not apply (15c), we get an interpretation according to which Mary is at home at a time which is in the future with respect to a past time which precedes John’s past saying-time (15’c) \(\Rightarrow\) unattested in English.

Kusumoto (1999, among others): to exclude (15’c), Ogihara must say that in this case the SOT rule is obligatory! \(\Rightarrow\) SOT rule seems to be optional in some contexts ((13)/(1)) and obligatory in others ((15a)). Ogihara does not seem to have a good explanation for this.

3.2 Simultaneous construals in non-SOT languages

<table>
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<td>Relative clauses</td>
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</table>

For Ogihara, ‘present tense’ is the same “null” tense that we find in SOT languages in certain contexts. \(\Rightarrow\) Japanese SIM reading follows naturally; no need for an additional tense deletion rule

(16) a. Taro PAST say that Hanako \(\varnothing\) be pregnant. \(\text{[(10a)]}\)
    b. Taro PAST hit a man who \(\varnothing\) cry. \(\text{[(10b)]}\)

CCs & RCs clauses in (10a) & (10b) are understood as having no tense, which automatically yields SIM interpretations (the embedded events are co-temporal with the matrix SIT-T).

Ogihara’s “null” tense approach cannot explain the asymmetry between Russian CCs & RCs.

Schlenker (2003): Russian present is a “shifting indexical”
“indexical-shifting” occurs in attitude environments, where the attitude verb acts as a quantifier that quantifies over speech contexts. Shifting is related to the possibility of combining with a variable over contexts bound by a higher attitude verb. This option is available to Amharic indexicals / Russian present, but not to English indexicals.

Amharic I:

(17) a. John Jägna näNNyt-lall
   John hero I am say-3 SG.M
   ‘John, says that he, is a hero.’

   b. Shifted reading
   John says [\(\lambda C\ldots[I C]\ldots]\) a hero…]

   \[\text{[(17b)]}\] = \(\lambda w.\) for all contexts \(c'\) compatible with what John says in \(w\) at the time of \(c\), the \textit{author of} \(c'\) is a hero in the world of \(c'\) at the time of \(c'\)

   c. Indexical reading
   John says [\(\lambda C\ldots[I C^*]\ldots]\) a hero…]

   \[\text{[(17c)]}\] = \(\lambda w.\) for all contexts \(c'\) compatible with what John says in \(w\) at the time of \(c\), the \textit{author of} \(c\) is a hero in the world of \(c'\) at the time of \(c'\)

Russian present:

(18) a. Petja skazal, čto Maša plačet
   Petja said that Maša cry-PRES
   ‘Petja said that Maša was crying [at the time of his utterance].’

   b. Shifted reading
   Petja said [\(\lambda C\ldots[PRES_{\text{pres}} C]\) cry…]

   \[\text{[(18b)]}\] = \(\lambda w.\) for all contexts \(c'\) compatible with what Petja says in \(w\) at a time before the time of \(c\), Maša is crying in the world of \(c'\) at the time of \(c'\).

\[\text{adapted from Schlenker, 2003}\]

(18a): embedded present is evaluated with respect to the context of the reported speech and not to the current context.

Like any indexical, present takes a context variable, which is bound by the embedding attitude verb. Shifting depends on the lexical requirement of the indexical item that appears in an attitude environment.

(19) Schlenker’s prediction:
An indexical which exhibits a shifting behavior in one environment (under a certain attitude verb), is expected to be able to shift in another environment of the same kind (under other attitude verbs).

4 Romanian tenses

4.1 Past under past in CCs

(20) Acum doi ani, Alex mi-a spus că Alina era însârcinată.
   now two years, Alex me has said that Alina be-IMP pregnant
   ‘Two years ago, Alex said (to me) that Alina was pregnant.’

(20) is true in a situation in which the state of pregnancy is understood as being in the past with respect to the UT-T and overlapping the matrix SIT-T (as well as in a situation in which the pregnancy is prior to the matrix SIT-T).
The SIM construal of past is also available in Romanian.

What is the nature of Romanian past that is responsible for the SIM construal? Can past be an instance of “null” tense as in English, or is it a “real” past as in Russian?

(21) Mircea credea că prietena lui avea ochii verzi.  
‘Mircea believe-IMP that his girlfriend have- IMP green eyes.’

In (21), the past on the embedded verb implicates that Mircea’s girlfriend is dead or no longer has green eyes. In Romanian, like in Russian, only present can be used in order to convey the intended meaning. The sentence can be used in a SIM context, but it has the effect that the property denoted by the embedded predicate holds only for a particular moment in the past. This effect is not observed in English (or French). Romanian past unambiguously yields a past meaning (≈ Russian past). The simultaneous construal of past under past in Romanian does not arise via a ‘vacuous’ tense (≈ English). Embedded past in Romanian is always semantically interpreted, conveying pastness with respect to the UT-T.

4.2 Present under semantic future

One way of expressing a future meaning: a morphological present on an auxiliary verb (a vrea ‘to want’) + the infinitive form of the verb.

Can Romanian present under a semantic future be a “null” tense as in English or is it a strict indexical as in Russian?

(22) a. Voi fotografia o pereche care dansează vals.  
aux.PRES.1sg photograph a couple that dance-PRES.3sg waltz  
‘I will photograph a couple that is dancing a waltz.’

b. Amina va crede că cineva îi citește corespondența.  
Amina aux.PRES 3sg. believe that someone read-PRES her letters  
‘Amina will think that someone is reading her letters.’

For (22a) to be true, the dancing event need not be true at the UT-T, it is rather understood as co-temporal with the picture-taking event. Romanian present in a RC under a matrix future can yield a SIM construal. The SIM construal of present under “future” seems to arise via a “null” (present) tense. The sentence in (22b) can be used in a situation where the letter-reading event overlaps the future belief-time, not the UT-T. In Romanian (≈ English), present under semantic future in both CCs and RCs can be construed as a “null” tense.

Summary 4

Past under past configurations: Romanian behaves like Russian (a non-SOT language), where embedded past is always interpreted under a matrix past. 
Present under semantic future configurations: Romanian behaves like English (an SOT language), allowing the possibility to delete the embedded tense under identity with a matrix tense with the same feature.

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Romanian has several ways of expressing a future meaning. In this talk, I will discuss one form—the canonical “future”—and leave the other possibilities of expressing a future meaning for further research.
4.3 Present under past

(23)  
a. Alex a vorbit cu băiatul care plâne.  
  ‘Alex talked to the boy who cry-PRES  
  ‘Alex talked to the boy who is crying/cries.’

b. Alex mi-a spus că Alina este însărcinată.  
  ‘Alex me has said that Alina be-PRES pregnant  
  ‘Alex told me that Alina is/was pregnant.’

RC in (23a): the boy’s crying is understood as overlapping the UT-T, without necessarily overlapping the matrix SIT-T.

Romanian present in a RC under a matrix past seems to behave as an indexical tense (≈ English & Russian). CC in (23b): can be used in a context where Alex informed me (the speaker) at a past time that Alina was pregnant at that time (the time when Alex’s speech act takes place).

Romanian present in a CC under a matrix past allows a SIM construal (≈ Russian).

Unlike Russian present, which yields a SIM construal under all attitude verbs, Romanian present apparently conveys a SIM meaning only under certain attitude verbs (for certain speakers).

(24)  
a. Acum zece ani, Alex mi-a spus că Alina este însărcinată.  
  ‘Ten years ago, Alex said that Alina was pregnant (at that time)’

b. Acum zece ani, Alex a știut că Alina este însărcinată.  
  ‘Ten years ago, Alex knew that Alina was pregnant.’

c. Acum zece ani, Alex credea că Alina este însărcinată.  
  ‘Ten years ago, Alex believed that Alina was pregnant.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4. Simultaneous present in Romanian</th>
<th>Group A Speakers</th>
<th>Group B Speakers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>spune ‘say’/’tell’</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ști ‘know’</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crede ‘believe’</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is variation among speakers with respect to which verbs allow the purely SIM present. Two different groups:

Group A’s speakers indistinguishably allow the SIM construal of the present under the three types of verbs. (These speakers have a Russian-like grammar.)

Group B’s speakers are more restrictive; they allow the SIM present only under the verb crede ‘think’. For these speakers present under verbs like spune ‘say’/ști ‘know’ is infelicitous because it would imply that the pregnancy still holds at UT-T, thus enforcing a DA reading.

Summary 5. In Romanian:

Past under past in CCs is indexical (≈ Russian)  
Present under past in CCs can be simultaneous (≈ Russian), but in a more restricted set of contexts  
Present under past in RCs is indexical (≈ English / Russian)  
Present under semantic future in CCs & RCs can be a “null” tense (≈ English)
5 Proposal

Q: What is the status of the Romanian present that appears in CCs?

Null hypothesis (assuming that Russian present is a shifting indexical):

Romanian present (at least in the aforementioned contexts) is a shifting indexical.

(25) Schlenker’s prediction:

An indexical which exhibits a shifting behavior in one environment (under a certain attitude verb), is expected to be able to shift in another environment of the same kind (under other attitude verbs).

But, in Romanian, present shifts in some but not all attitude contexts.

Schlenker’s theory cannot account for this variation.

Hypothesis: Romanian present is not a shifting indexical.

Romanian has two PRES.

Indexical PRES (PRES_{ind}):
can be used only under factive verbs and in contexts where the speaker commits herself to the truth of the embedded clause (p).
PRES_{ind} is speaker-oriented.

Relative/”null” present (PRES_{∅}):
can be used only in cases where the speaker merely reports a situation without committing herself to the truth of p.

This kind of present appears under past as well as under a PRES (semantic future).

This hypothesis captures well the contrasts observed in Romanian.

Recall that:

➢ There is a difference between the 3 classes of embedding verbs say, know, think (for some speakers) concerning the construal of present:

(26) Present under “know”

# (Acum zece ani) Alex a știut că Mirela așteaptă un copil.
‘(Ten years ago) Alex has known that M. expect-PRES a baby.’

Ști ‘know’ is factive --> the embedded clause is true--> the speaker is committed to the truth of the embedded clause - only PRES_{ind} is appropriate. But PRES_{ind} cannot be used (the embedded situation no longer holds at UT-T).

- PRES_{∅} cannot be used either because the speaker is committed to the truth of the sentence.

- The IMP is required.

(27) Present under believe

a. ✔ (Acum zece ani) Alex a crezut că Mirela așteaptă un copil.
‘(Ten years ago) Alex has believed that Mirela expect-PRES a baby.’

b. ✔ (Acum zece ani) nu am crezut că Mirela așteaptă un copil.
‘(Ten years ago) I didn’t believe that Mirela expect-PRES a baby.’

Crede ‘believe’ : both PRES_{∅} & PRES_{ind} are available.

So, in (27a-b) (where only PRES_{∅} is felicitous), present is accepted because it does not imply the speaker’s commitment to the truth of p.

Present under say/tell

(28) The speaker does not commit herself to the truth of the CC

A. “I have no idea whether or not Mary was ever pregnant.”

B. “I know as a matter of fact that Mary was never pregnant. I was there when doctor told her out
she cannot have children”.

✓ (Acum zece ani) Mircea mi-a spus că Mirela aşteaptă un copil.
‘(Ten years ago) Mircea told me that Mirela expect-PRES a baby.’

In A, the speaker does not know whether the embedded clause is true or false
In B, the speaker knows the embedded clause is false.
In both A & B -> the speaker does not commit herself to the truth of the embedded clause
PRES∅ can be used.
PRES∅ cannot be used because one cannot be pregnant for 10 years.

(29) The speaker commits herself to the truth of the CC
(Two years ago, I spoke to Anca on the phone. She was in Seattle. Anca: “It is raining.”)

# Acum doi ani, Anca mi-a spus că plouă.
‘Two years ago, Anca told me it was raining.’

-> the speaker has evidence for the truth of the CC -> she is committed to the truth of the CC.

Present on the embedded verb can only be the realization of PRES∅, but “two years ago” excludes PRES∅

Advantages:
➢ It explains the difference between the interpretation of present in RCs and CCs embedded under a matrix past.

Relative Clauses
RCs, unlike CCs, are not attitude contexts. The speaker is always committed to the truth of the embedded clause.

-> When present is used, it can only be a PRES∅.

(30) Mircea a vorbit cu studentul care așteaptă pe bancă.
‘Mircea talked to the boy who wait-PRES on the bench.’

(30) can be used only in a situation where the student is now waiting on the bench.
To describe a situation where the student is waiting on the bench at the time Mircea talked to him, IMP is required.

Prediction: PRES∅ should be available when the RC appears below crede ‘believe’.

(31) ✓ Mircea credea că doctoral care îl operează e spion.
‘Mircea believed that the doctor who was operating-PRES on him is a spy.’
The prediction is borne out.

6 Romanian “future”

English: PRES+ WOLL -> will
PAST + WOLL -> would
 ➤ will is used when the reference-time is the UT-T.
 ➤ would is used when the reference-time is the matrix SIT-T

(32) a. * Last week John said that Mary will leave in two days (from then).
 b. ✓ Last week John said that Mary would leave in two days (from then).
Romanian:

- `PRES∅ + WOLL + INF` equivalent to `will`, used only in a context where the speaker is committed to the truth of p
- `PRES∅ + WOLL + INF` equivalent to `would`, used only in a context where the speaker does not commit himself to the truth of p

(For RCs) prediction: `PRES∅ / PRES∅ + WOLL` should be illicit in a situation where the embedded (true) event is subsequent to the matrix SIT-T and prior to UT-T.

This prediction is borne out.

(33) a. In 1850, a man was born who would become the greatest Romanian poet.
   b. ‘In 1850, s-a născut un om care va-PRES deveni.INF cel mai mare poet român.’
   c. In 1850, s-a născut un om care avea-IMP să devină.PRES.SUBJ cel mai mare poet roman.

(33b) shows that the Romanian paraphrase of the English example in (33a) cannot be constructed with a ‘future’ in the embedded clause.

To convey the same meaning as the English sentence in (33a), Romanian has to use a past (`IMP`) on the auxiliary ((33c)).

“Future” under past in CCs

(34) “Future” under ‘factive verbs’

(Mirela left for Paris in August.)

a. (In iulie, M. has found out that M. aux.PRES.3sg. leave.INF to Paris (a month later) ‘(In July) Mirela found out that Mirela would leave for Paris (a month later).’)

   a’. [ PAST … SAY … [ CP *PRES∅ + WOLL ]]

The sentences in (34) contain the factive verb `find out` in the matrix clause -> the speaker is committed to the truth of the embedded clause. In this case, only `PRES∅ + WOLL` is possible. In (34a) the embedded event is completed before the UT-T -> `PRES∅ + WOLL` is infelicitous, which explains why (34a) is odd.

b. A aflat că mâine va pleca la Paris. ✓
   has found out that tomorrow aux. PRES.3sg. leave.INF. for Paris ‘He found out that he will leave for Paris tomorrow.’

   b’. [ PAST … SAY … [ CP PRES∅ + WOLL ]]

In contrast, in (34b), the embedded event is not completed before UT-T -> `PRES∅ + WOLL` is felicitous.

(35) “Future” under ‘tell’ is relative when the speaker is not committed to the truth of p. Otherwise, it is indexical.

a. (The speaker knows that there is an interesting Romanian exhibition opening in Paris tomorrow.)
   John mi-a spus că va avea loc o expoziție de pictură românească la Paris. ✓
   John me has told that aux.PRES.3sg. have.INF. place an exhibit of picture Romanian to Paris
   ‘John told me that there will be an exhibition of Romanian paintings in Paris.’

   a’. [ PAST … SAY … [ CP PRES∅ + WOLL ]]

7 In (33c), the future meaning is contributed by an imperfective form of the auxiliary ‘avea’ have + present subjunctive. This form is restricted to contexts where the reference-time is in the past. In this talk, I will discuss one form—the canonical “future”—and leave the other possibilities of expressing a future meaning for further research.
(35a) illustrates a case where the speaker commits herself to the truth of p→ \textit{\textsc{pres}}_{\text{sub}}+ \textit{\textsc{woll}} \textit{is} felicitous in this context yielding an indexical interpretation.

b. (Three years ago I met John. He was in Bucharest. I \textit{\textsc{know}} that a year later he moved to Paris. Now, he lives in Paris. Three years ago….)

\textit{\textsc{Ion nu mi-a spus că un an mai târziu se va muta la Paris.}}

\textit{\textsc{John not me has told that a year later refl.3sg aux.\textit{\textsc{pres}} move.inf to Paris \#}}

\textit{\textsc{\textsc{John didn’t tell me that a year later he would move to Paris.’}}}

b.’ \[ \text{\textsc{past}} \text{\ldots} \text{\textsc{say}} \ldots \text{\textsc{cp}} \quad \text{\textit{\textsc{pres}}}_{\text{sub}}+\textit{\textsc{woll}} \]

In (35b), the speaker is committed to the truth of the sentence→ \textit{\textsc{pres}}_{\text{sub}}+ \textit{\textsc{woll}} \textit{is} required. But, \textit{\textsc{pres}}_{\text{sub}}+ \textit{\textsc{woll}} \textit{cannot} be used because the event described in the embedded clause has taken place before \textit{\textsc{ut}}-\textit{\textsc{t}}-→ the sentence is rejected as infelicitous. → morphological past required

c. (There was a conference last year in December. The speaker met John in September and he told her that Mary would be there. But, the speaker didn’t attend the conference, so she does not know whether Mary was at the conference.)

\textit{\textsc{John mi-a spus că Maria va merge la conferință.}}

\textit{\textsc{John me has told that Maria aux.\textit{\textsc{pres}}.3sg. go at conference \✓}}

\textit{\textsc{‘John told me that Mary would be at the conference.’}}

c.’ \[ \text{\textsc{past}} \text{\ldots} \text{\textsc{say}} \ldots \text{\textsc{cp}} \quad \text{\textit{\textsc{pres}}}_\varnothing+\textit{\textsc{woll}} \]

In (35c), the speaker does not know whether Mary attended the conference. Therefore she does not commit herself to the truth of the embedded clause. In this context, only the relative future (\textit{\textsc{pres}}_{\varnothing}+\textit{\textsc{woll}}) \textit{is} allowed.

Consider now (36):

(36) a. Acum două săptămâni, Vlad a spus că zece zile mai târziu îi va spune \✓

\textit{\textsc{Two weeks ago, Vlad has said that ten days later Cl-DAT aux.\textit{\textsc{pres}} 3sg say}}

\textit{Mirelei că prăjitura este delicioasă.}

\textit{\textsc{Mirela-DAT that cake be.\textit{\textsc{pres}} delicious}}

\textit{‘Two weeks ago, Vlad said that in ten days (from then) he would tell Mirela that the cake was delicious.’}

b. \[ \text{\textsc{2 \text{weeks ago}} \quad \text{\textsc{10 \text{days later}} \quad \text{\textsc{ut-t}}}} \]

\[ \text{\textsc{saying}} \quad \text{\textsc{be \textit{\textsc{delicious}}}} \]

\textit{\textsc{PRES 1}}

c. \[ \text{\textsc{past}} \quad \text{\textit{\textsc{cp}}}_1 \quad \text{\textit{\textsc{pres}}}_\varnothing+\textit{\textsc{woll}} \quad \text{\textsc{tell}} \quad \text{\textit{\textsc{cp}}}_2 \quad \text{\textit{\textsc{pres}}}_\varnothing \quad \text{\textsc{-be delicious}}} \]

\textit{\textsc{PRES 1}}

\textit{\textsc{PRES 2}}

In (36a): the \textit{\textsc{telling}}-event is in the future with respect to Vlad’s saying time but before \textit{\textsc{ut-t}}, and the speaker does not commit herself to the truth of \textit{\textsc{cp}}→ \textit{\textsc{pres}} 1 (on \textit{\textsc{tell}}) \textit{is} an instance of relative present (\textit{\textsc{pres}}_{\varnothing}+\textit{\textsc{woll}})

\textit{\textsc{-state} in \textit{\textsc{cp}}2 is understood as co-temporal not with the \textit{\textsc{ut-t}} but rather with Vlad’s future \textit{\textsc{telling}} event which is in the \textit{\textsc{past}} with respect to the \textit{\textsc{ut-t}}→ \textit{\textsc{pres}} 2 \textit{cannot} have an indexical meaning → it corresponds to a relative/null tense (\textit{\textsc{pres}}_{\varnothing}) \textit{which contributes a relation of temporal identity and can be deleted under identity with \textit{\textsc{pres}}_{\varnothing} on the higher verb.}
Selected References


