

Time in Anggor Discourse

Robert Litteral

Summer Institute of Linguistics

(Received September 1971)

0. The purpose of this paper is to discuss some of the surface manifestations of time relationships in Anggor discourse. Anggor is a non-Austronesian language belonging to the Senagi family (Loving and Bass 1964) which is distantly related to the Ndu Language family (Laycock 1965) located primarily in the East Sepik District¹. Anggor is spoken by approximately 1250 people living north of the Sepik River near the West Irian border in the Amanab subdistrict of the West Sepik District.

Anggor time relationships are indicated primarily in three ways: by tense, temporal adverbs, and aspect. Time relationships between clauses within a discourse are usually not overtly marked when the sequence of clauses parallels the temporal sequence of events (Labov and Waletzky 1967).

1.1 Anggor has three tenses: past, future, and present. The past tense is marked by the affix m. It cooccurs with the final-indicative affix a prefixed to class I verbs, and cooccurs with the final-indicative affixes -a, -e, -ai suffixed to verbs of all other classes. In either case the order is past tense affix followed by final-indicative affix [+past + final-indicative]. Examples are : m-a-sin-u (past-final-indic-come-3mascsg) 'he came' and hoe-m-a-ri-hea-ndi (see-past-final-indic-trans-lsg-3femsg-obj) 'I saw her'. Past tense indicates that the action of the verb to which it is affixed occurred before the time of the narrator's speaking.

Past tense is not used extensively in discourse, even in narratives that relate past events. It is found mainly in four contexts within discourse: with final-indicative verbs in quotations, with verbs having the chaining affixes -ambo and -ani / that indicate change of subject, with verbs that refer to a previous event in the discourse, and with the last verb in the discourse.

Quotations within a narrated discourse are like conversations in that the past tense affix is used on final-indicative verbs to indicate that the action referred to occurred before the time of speaking. An example of a quotation in a discourse is 'mai nin+sa-hoa-s-eh ngga main+ m-a-sih-ih.sa-fe he-na'. (not something eat-ldu-eat-ldu- but nothing past-final-

indic-come-up-1du say-femdu completive-dual) ' "we didn't eat anything but came up with nothing, " they said'.

Past tense may cooccur with the change of subject affixes found in chaining. Chaining occurs in Angkor discourse to indicate a change of subject from one participant to another (S. Litteral ms). For example, hoe-m-ai o-ambo-i-ef m-a-mar-ef . (rain-past-final-indic-3femsg-change-of-subject-non-indic-1pl past-final-indic-sit-1pl) 'it rained and so we remained'. The subject changes from 'rain' to 'we'. Change of subject affixes cooccur with the past tense affix m or the affix -hind+ 'then'.

When there are two verbs in sequence and the action of the second verb occurs before that of the first verb, then the second verb is affixed for past tense. For example, the following occurs in a text where a bird sees a sick man who had sat down: hombo-iu-ani m-a-mar-u-ambo-i-o ... (see-non-indic-3mascsg-change of subject-non-indic-3femsg) 'he saw him sitting...'. The act of sitting down occurred before the act of seeing, therefore the verb for 'sit' mar- is affixed for past tense.

Past tense is often found on the last verb in a historical narrative or a folk tale. The last sentence of one discourse consists of ra-ma-ri-hu-nd+ (that-past-final-indic-trans-1pl-3femsgobj) 'we did that'. It is the only verb with past tense in the discourse although every event mentioned occurred before the time of the narration. The last verb of a discourse is usually a final-indicative verb and as such must be inflected for tense. The past tense of these verbs appears to serve the function of bringing the audience back to the time of the utterance, the past tense indicating that the action of the discourse took place in the past.²

A survey of seven texts consisting of a total of 223 sentences reveals that 46 of the sentences (20.6%) have verbs inflected for past tense. Of the 46, 35 are verbs having the change of subject affix -ambo, four are the last verb of the text, four are verbs in quotations, two are verbs affixed with -hind+ 'then' and one is a verb in the middle of a discourse that fits none of the above categories and remains unexplained³.

1.2 Future tense in Angkor is represented by a morphophonemic change in the roots of certain verbs to give future roots or by the use of the future morpheme -nd+. Example of these changes are sin- 'come' → did- 'will come', and na-ri- 'shoot-transitive' → na-ndi- 'shoot-future' (see appendix I). In final-indicative verbs the future is also indicated by the future suffix -mboe, e.g. na-ndi-hea-mboe-ah (shoot-fut-1sg-fut-1sg) 'I will shoot it'. Unlike present and past tenses, future tense is indicated with all moods and not just the final-

indicative. The future tense differs from the past and present also in its distribution in discourse. If a narrative indicates events that are to occur after the time of the utterance, each verb has a future tense form, either with affixation or a future root.

1.3 Present tense is only indicated on final-indicative verbs and on some response verbs. There is no morpheme for present tense on final-indicative verbs as it is indicated by the absence of other tense affixes on these verbs. With present tense the action is represented as occurring during the time of the utterance. Responses to questions that contain class I verbs have a present tense response prefix mb-. For example, 'Kaunsil ni-mar-u-ai?' 'Mb-a-mir-+' (Councillor non-indic-sit-3mascsg-inter? Present-response-final-indic-sit-3mascsg) ' "Is the councillor here?" "He is here". ' Present tense is rarely found in narrative discourse. A few texts do conclude with a present tense verb rather than a past tense one, indicating that the state indicated by the last verb continues at the time the narrator concludes his narration. Present tense is found most frequently in conversation.

2. Temporal adverbs function mainly to establish specific points of time within a discourse and to relate one event to another temporally. Horombo 'before' indicates that the time referred to was previous to the time of speaking or is the time of the ancestors in contrast to the present. It may also limit a time span by reference to some event in the past. For example, Horombo masta ostin mai sifu mai masta horihupr+ (Before Mr Austin not come not European-man we-see-them) 'Before Mr Austin came we had never seen any Europeans'. The coming of Mr. Austin is the event that establishes the terminal point of the time referred to as horombo 'before'. Sunggun+ and nggoesimboan 'after', 'later' indicate periods of time after a specified event or state in the text, or after the time of speaking if no event or state is specified. Rasimboan 'at that time' indicates that some events or states overlap in time with other events or states. This adverb is a temporal referential and serves as a means of cross reference between sentences. As such, it cannot be adequately described by a sentence oriented grammar. Mamisimboan 'at the same time' indicates that two events or states are simultaneous. Simbu 'tomorrow' and haman+ 'yesterday' are equivalent to their English counterparts. Of special interest are asinggo 'two days removed', rihundi 'three days removed' moved'. Asinggo means 'day after tomorrow' when it cooccurs with a verb inflected for future tense and means 'day before yesterday' when it cooccurs with a past tense verb. The specific meanings of the other two forms are determined in like manner (see appendix II). This would seem to be a counter example to the hypothesis that temporal adverbs are basic to semantic or deep structure and that tenses are derived from them.

3. Aspect does not directly indicate time relationships as tenses and temporal adverbs do but rather indicates a type of action. However, indirectly it may indicate a time relationship between two verbs. Both he- and mburi- 'completive' are auxiliaries that are affixed for person, number, and gender. Mburi- also has a future form mbundi-. They indicate that the action of the verb with which they cooccur is completed before the action of the following verb begins. For example, hninggiri-ho-ri he-hi bukare-hi (leave-3fempl -3mascsg completive-3femsg go-away-3fempl...) 'they leave him and go away...'. Their function is to focus attention upon the completion of one action with respect to another one.⁴

4.1 Different types of discourse have different relationships to time. Longacre (1968) states that procedural and hortatory discourses have projected time whereas narratives have accomplished time. However, he gives no criterion for discriminating between projected and accomplished time. In Angkor the tense of the final sentence of a discourse could serve as a criterion. When a tense affix occurs on a verb within a discourse it relates the time of one event to another. The tense on the verb in the last sentence of non-future discourses relates the time of the discourse to the time of the narration.⁵ In non-future discourses most verbs are tenseless. One could use the last sentence of a discourse as an indicator of projected or accomplished time. However, the results are inconclusive for Angkor. Of the fourteen procedural texts investigated, ten use future tense throughout the text. One procedural text has present tense in the final sentence while three are without any indication of tense in the final sentence. In the one hortatory text in the collection of texts future tense is used throughout. For folk tales time is not overtly indicated for 14 of 22 of the texts in that they end with tenseless sentences. The other eight end with a sentence having a past tense verb. 14 of 17 historical narratives end with a past tense verb. One text each ends with a present tense verb, a future tense verb, and a verb with a completive auxiliary. From this one must conclude that the data seem to exclude tense as a means of distinguishing projected and accomplished time in Angkor discourse.

4.2 When one uses a criterion based on temporal adverbs, Angkor folk tale narratives may be considered as having projected time in that they lack temporal adverbs that associate the action of the text with real time. Historical narratives, on the other hand, do contain temporal adverbs with an associative function. The hortatory discourse analyzed uses temporal adverbs that give unspecified reference to future time. The procedural texts are mixed: some have temporal adverbs with explicit time reference whereas others do not. Those with explicit time reference usually provide details on how some future ceremony is to be performed. It may be better to classify those with explicit time reference as explanatory

nervousness before a microphone. The same person gave a similar text (travel narrative) in 1969 that is well-formed and follows the expected pattern by having a past tense verb only in the last sentence of the discourse.

3. The analysis of *-hɨndɨ* 'then' is not complete at present. Its function may be emphasis as it adds no new semantic information on time that could not be obtained by observing the sequence of clauses in the text.
4. A topological theory of time perception is formulated in Rhetorical Predicates and Time Topology in Anggor (ms) by the author.
5. Discussion following the reading of this paper at the Annual Congress of the Linguistic Society of Papua New Guinea on August 28 revealed that this is a common feature of several New Guinea languages. For some the tense of the verb in the first sentence of the discourse gives the time setting for the events narrated. For others the Anggor pattern is followed with the setting being indicated by the tense on the last verb in the discourse.

Appendix I

Examples of morphophonemic changes for future roots.

Non-future	→	Future	
ses-	→	ded-	'eat'
kis-	→	kod-, kud-	'come down'
sif-	→	dif-	'come up'
han-	→	gad-	'go down'
haf-	→	gaf-	'go up'
h-	→	ngg-	'go'
hif-	→	gof-	'go upstream'

Appendix II

Temporal adverbs for days.

	<i>asɨnggo</i>	<i>rɨhundi</i>	<i>runɨhundi</i>
Past tense -m-	day before yesterday	two days before yesterday	three days before yesterday
Future tense -nd-	day after tomorrow	two days after tomorrow	three days after tomorrow

discourses rather than as procedural and limit procedural discourses to those that have no references to explicit time or specific events. At present it appears that for Anggor temporal adverbs may provide a better means of distinguishing projected and accomplished time than tense does.

5. Methods of indicating time in Anggor discourse are similar to those of New Guinea Pidgin in several respects. For both languages it is not necessary to have a marker for completed or past action in every sentence of a discourse that narrates events that occurred in the past. They differ from English in that well formed English discourses require that independent verbs which refer to past action be inflected for past tense. For both languages non-future time settings are given for whole paragraphs or discourses by temporal adverbs such as asde, long taim bilong tumbuna, or bipo without other indicators of time being necessary. In both languages a discourse about events to occur in the future requires that there be a grammatical indication of future time in each sentence. In this respect they are similar to English. Anggor and Pidgin differ in that Anggor indicates future with a future tense morpheme or future verb root whereas Pidgin uses bai or bambai.

Contemporary linguistic theory has largely restricted linguistic study to the sentence. As a result it is unable to describe linguistic competence with respect to time in discourse. The present study has shown that time must be studied within the domain of the discourse. Preliminary analysis reveals that the rules for indicating time in Pidgin discourse are closer to those of Anggor than they are to those of English.

FOOTNOTES

1. The phonemes of Anggor are p, t, k, b, d, g, mb, nd, ng (ngg), m, n, n (ng), f (bilabial fricative), s, h (velar fricative), w, y, r, i, e, ÷ (high and mid central), a, u, and o. The data for this paper were gathered in field trips to the village of Bibriari in the central dialect between 1965 and 1969 under the auspices of the Summer Institute of Linguistics. A concordance of Anggor texts prepared by the Computer Laboratory of the University of Oklahoma under NSF Grant Gs-1605 was used in the preparation of this paper. Mr. Waf Sahayao has been of special help in clarifying the intricacies of his language.
2. A text by a young man collected in 1965 has a past tense verb at the end of every sentence in the discourse. This is the only case where this happens. It is considered to be the result of his inability to produce a well-formed discourse, possibly due to

REFERENCES

- Labov, William and Joshua Waletzky. 1967. Narrative Analysis: Oral Versions of Personal Experience. Essays in Visual and Verbal Arts, ed. by Une Helm. Seattle, University of Washington Press.
- Laycock, D.C. 1965. The Ndu Language Family. Canberra. The Linguistic Circle of Canberra (Australian National University).
- Litteral, Robert. ms. Rhetorical Predicates and Time Topology in Anggor.
- Litteral, Shirley. ms. Orientation to Space and Participants in Anggor.
- Longacre, Robert. 1968. Discourse, Paragraph and Sentence Structure in Selected Philippine Languages, Vol. 1. Final Report on Contract 0-8-062828-0391 U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Santa Ana, Summer Institute of Linguistics.
- Loving, Richard and Jack Bass. 1964 Languages of the Amanab Sub-district. Port Moresby, Department of Information and Extension Services.