

## Some Tenses are State Selectors and why this Matters for Conditional Uses

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In earlier work (Michaelis 2004, 2011), I proposed a selection-based model of aspectual constructions like the Progressive and Perfect, extending this model to aspectually sensitive tenses of English and French. The proposal is that tenses are constructions, and in particular *inflectional constructions*, as per Sign Based Construction Grammar (Sag 2012, Michaelis 2012, Kay and Michaelis forthcoming). The tense-aspect interface is seen as a construction-verb interface: each aspectually sensitive tense construction selects the appropriate portion of the Aktionsart representation of the verb with which it combines. Aktionsart representation is impoverished, consisting only of transitions and states (Bickel 1998). What does it mean to select the 'appropriate portion' of the verb's temporal representation? A construction denotes a situation that holds at or within some time; that situation is identified with a portion of the situation denoted by the verb.

Some tenses are state selectors. Following Langacker (1991) and Smith (1991), I assume that the present tense is a state selector. This selectivity is connected to the 'see and say' problem: you cannot report a situation that might change to another type of situation while you are formulating your report. What is novel is the claim that English has a state-selecting *past* tense too. I will try to show that the stativity of present tense and (imperfective) past tense can be used to describe a wide variety of tense construals, some of which have been treated as falling outside ordinary tense significations. These construals include relative and absolute past tenses in SOT contexts, the performative present, the futurate present and protases of predictive and hypothetical conditionals. The moral of the story is that tense constructions are aspectual constructions, and many funny tense uses can be connected to aspectual selection properties.

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