

Tense in Korean

Chungmin Lee 1987. "Temporal Expressions in Korean." Jef Verschueren and Marcella Bertuccelli-Papi (eds.), *The Pragmatic Perspective*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 435-53.

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|---|--|--------------------------|
| 1 | kər -əs' -ta
walk past Dec
'He walked' | |
| 2 | Insu-ni n mikuk-e ka-as' -ta
Insu-TOP US -to go-PAST Dec
'Insu went to the U.S.' | |
| 3 | Insu-ni n mikuk-e ka-as' -əs' -ta
Insu-TOP US -to go-R-PAST Dec
'Insu has been to the U.S.' | |
| 4 | t.a.t.i.c.rain SM come FUT Dec
'It seems it will rain'
[taking all things into consideration...it will rain] | (subjective) presumption |
| 5 | pihæki-kaŋ ... kot tochakha -l k ə s - i -ta i l - k ə s - i
plane-SM ... soon arrive FUT Dec
The plane ... will soon arrive
[because the plane departed as scheduled...] | (objective) future |

In what follows I will present a schematic summary of Lee's findings involving complement clauses and relative clauses without citing specific examples in full. You are directed to the source above for the complete data.

Past tense in a complement clause under a main clause past tense intensional verb yields an unambiguous past shifted reading:

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|---|--|
| 6 | John-i n Mary-ka t'əna -as -ta -ko malha- jəs' -ta
John-TOP [Mary-SM leave -Past -Dec] -Comp say -Past -Dec |
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When past tense is replaced by present, a simultaneous reading results (though this would be compatible with a double access situation presumably); thus *present* in Korean is not a **pai**:

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|---|---|
| 7 | ... [Mary-ka ca -i n -ta] ... say-Past
sleep Pres |
|---|---|

To unambiguously convey double-access type construal in contexts like 7, Korean needs to use overt indexical adverbs. This can also be forced by the use of factive verbs and in certain pragmatically influenced examples involving timeless laws that (of necessity) hold at both times;

