



The plot

- **Past-under-past** in Russian can yield simultaneous readings in limited scenarios.
- These readings trigger a previously unobserved **anti-double access effect** - the inference that the embedded state does not continue into the actual present.
- This suggests that the pragmatic competitor for such readings is the **double access reading** of the present tense.
- It is commonly assumed that the double access reading is derived through a **de re construal** of the present tense.
- Consequently, the properties of simultaneous readings of past-under-past can be explained by the following:
 - These readings are derived through a **de re construal**.
 - The competitor is computed structurally by replacing past with present in the **LF**.

Background

This work is about past-under-past.

(1) Three years ago, John **said** he **loved** Ann.

These type of sentences in English are compatible with two types of scenarios.

Scenario I (the back shifted scenario): Three years ago, John came to me and said: 'I loved Ann in the past, now I love a different person'.

Scenario II (the simultaneous scenario): Three years ago, John came to me and said: 'I love Ann!'.

- The debate is about how the second type of reading is derived.
- Not every language allows for this reading as readily as English.

Three ideas have been proposed:

SOT rule

- the past tense in the embedded clause is not interpreted (Ogihara 1989; Abusch 1997; Kusumoto 1999, among others).

De re construal

- The past tense in the embedded clause is interpreted in the matrix clause;
- The two past tenses are independent of each other and can overlap;
- The attitude report establishes an isomorphism between the matrix past and the past from the embedded clause on the one hand, and the local 'now' of the attitude holder and the time of the state described by the embedded predicate on the other.

Pragmatic competition account

- Neither of the two above mechanisms exists;
- Both past tenses are interpreted in situ and contribute to the semantics;
- The lower past is relative

$$[(1)]^{w_0, t_0} = T \text{ iff } \exists t [t < t_0 \& \forall \langle w', t' \rangle [\langle w', t' \rangle \in \text{Say-Alt}(\text{John}, w_0, t) \rightarrow \exists t'' [t'' < t' \& \text{John loves Ann at } t'' \text{ in } w']]]$$

- In matrix clauses, past marking on a stative verb triggers a cessation implicature, which arises through competition with the present tense:

(2) John **loved** Ann. *Inference:* It is false that John **loves** Ann.

- The same applies to embedded clauses;
- In English, the present tense cannot be embedded and can only receive a *de re* interpretation, resulting in the double access reading;
- Consequently, cessation inferences do not arise;
- In languages where the present tense is embeddable (relative), such as Russian, cessation inferences arise, blocking the simultaneous reading.

The empirical puzzle

Anti-double access effect in Russian:

Context: 3 years ago, Vanya came to me and said: 'I love Anya!'

(3) Tri goda nazad Vanja skaza.l, čto on ljubi.l Anju.
three years ago Vanya say.Past that he love.Past Anya.
'Three years ago, Vanya said that he loved Anya'.

Context: Yesterday, Vanya came to me and said: 'I love Anya!'

(4) #Včera Vanja skaza.l, čto on ljubi.l Anju.
Yesterday Vanya say.Past that he love.Past Anya.
Intended: 'Yesterday, Vanya said that he loved Anya'.

- The only difference between these cases is in the temporal adverbial in the matrix clause: 'three years ago' versus 'yesterday';
- The adverbial restricts the time of the saying event.
- When the saying event occurs too close to the actual present moment, as in (4), the simultaneous reading becomes unavailable

The simultaneous reading becomes available for (4) if we are setting the context in such a way that the expectation that the love continues to the actual now is lifted.

(5) **Context:** Vanya is an unreliable guy. The day before yesterday he told me: 'I love Masha!'. yesterday he told me: 'I love Anya!'.

(6) The empirical generalization:

Simultaneous readings of past-under-past in Russian trigger the inference that the state of the embedded clause does not extend to the actual present.

Another illustration of the same phenomenon:

Context: Yesterday Biden said: 'Xi is a dictator!'

(7) #Včera Biden skaza.l, čto Si by.l dictatorom.
Yesterday Biden say.Past that Xi be.Past dictator.
Intended: 'Yesterday, Biden said that Xi was a dictator'.

Context: In 1933 Mandelstam said: 'Stalin is a dictator!'

(8) V 1933 godu Mandelštam skaza.l, čto Stalin by.l dictatorom.
In 1933 year Mandelstam say.Past that Stalin be.Past dictator.
'In 1933 Mandelstam said that Stalin was a dictator'

- The use of the past tense triggers the inference that the embedded state no longer holds, thus, Xi is no longer a dictator now;
- That would require that Xi died between yesterday and today or that he changed his ways.

Double access in English

- What we observe in Russian is the mirror image of the double access reading of the present tense in English.
- In English this is the only reading available for present-under-past.
- This reading is standardly derived via a *de re* construal (Abusch 1997)

(9) **Yesterday/#2000 years ago**, John said he **loves** Ann. (Ogihara & Sharvit 2012)

This reading requires two things (hence, double access):

- that the loving relationship holds at Vanya's 'now'
- that continues up to the actual present time

- Consequently, placing the speaking time too far away in the past makes (9) infelicitous, as the second condition cannot be satisfied (no one lives 2000 years).

The proposal

Abusch 1997:

- Past-under-past can receive a *de re* analysis
- A *de re* reading of past-under-past is compatible with the simultaneous interpretation.

Step 1: res-movement of the past tense into the matrix clause

(10) [PAST [yesterday Vanya [[said PAST][λ2 t₂ Vanya love Anya]]]]

Step 2: QR of the past tense

(11) [PAST [3[PAST yesterday [Vanya [[said t₃][λ2 t₂ Vanya love Anya]]]]]]

- The attitude verb introduces quantification over temporal concepts fitting for the holder
- The relation between the time of the state of loving with respect to the time when Vanya locates himself in his doxastic alternatives is the same as the relation between the past of the main clause and the past of the embedded clause.

(12) [(11)]^{w₀, t₀, c} = T iff ∃t[t < t₀ & ∃t'[t' < t₀ & t' ∈ yesterday & ∃P [t = the time z such that P(w₀)(t')(z) & ∀⟨w'', t''⟩ ∈ Say-Alt(Vanya, w, t'): Vanya loves Anya at the z such that P(w'')(t'')(z)]]

The relation can be the one of overlap:

(13) λw. λt. λt''. t'' covers the time t when Vanya was looking at Anya

The presence of PAST on the stative triggers the cessation inference.

(14) [Exh_{ALT} PAST [3[PAST yesterday [Vanya [[said t₃][λ2 t₂ Vanya loves Anya]]]]]]]

- Alternatives are computed structurally (in the LF) (Katzir 2007, Fox and Katzir 2011).
- The moved past is substituted by its competitor: the present tense.

(15) Alt: [PRES [3[PAST yesterday [Vanya [[said t₃][λ2 t₂ Vanya loves Anya]]]]]]]

- The resulting alternative is the *de re* LF for present tense.
- This is the LF that results in the double access reading of the present tense! (Abusch 1997).
- Exh negates this alternative and asserts the prejacent.
- The double access reading requires two things: that the loving relationship holds at Vanya's 'now' and that continues up to the actual present time.
- Its negation is: either the loving relationship does not hold at Vanya's 'now' or it does not continue up to the actual present time.
- In other worlds: if the loving relationship holds at Vanya's 'now', then it does not continue up to the actual present time.
- Given that the readings of past-under-past we are focusing on are the simultaneous, the inference we get is: love does not continue up to the actual present time.
- This correctly captures the cessation inference we perceive in the Russian examples.

Comparison with the other approaches

Other approaches cannot account for the observed contrast between (3) and (4).

- SOT rule predicts that the simultaneous reading should be available in both cases;
- The relative past analysis predicts that the same competitor in both cases: the relative present construction:

(16) ∃t[t < t₀ & t ∈ yesterday/three years ago & ∀⟨w', t'⟩ [⟨w', t'⟩ ∈ SayAlt(Vanya, w₀, t) → Vanya loves Anya at t' in w']]]]

- The negation of this alternative results in the cessation relative to Vanya's now, thus it will block the simultaneous reading altogether in both cases.