Deictic tense in intentional contexts: The meaning of the embedded Present tense in Albanian

It is generally assumed in the literature on temporal semantics that deictic tense cannot appear in intentional contexts (e.g. Abusch 1997, von Stechow 1995). According to the standard assumptions, the events denoted by clauses embedded under propositional attitude (PA) verbs, such as believe or say are evaluated with respect to the matrix clause Event Time (ET), and not with respect to the Speech Time (ST) (e.g. Ogihara 1996, Arregui & Kusumoto 1998). The English present tense is rather anomalous, since even in complements of PA verbs it is evaluated with respect to the ST. The indexicality of the English present tense is observed in constructions like Peter said that Mary is pregnant, where the time of Mary’s pregnancy includes both, the Peter’s report time, and the ST. In this paper I present the data from Albanian, and show that in intentional contexts, i.e. in complements of the PA verbs, and in subjunctive complements, the Albanian present tense has indexical meaning.

The evidence for the indexical reading of the Albanian present tense comes from the fact that that (1a) can only be followed by the question in (1b), (1c) being infelicitous in this context. This data shows that similarly to English, the Albanian present tense in intentional contexts makes reference to the ST. In light of this data the question arises of how to derived the indexical reading in intentional contexts.

In this paper I adopt the compositional semantic framework presented in Gennari 2003, and assume that the present tense has the meaning as in (2a) PRES: λP λt Ǝt' [t'o t & ¬ (t'<t) & P (t')], where t' is the ET, and t is the ‘evaluation time’, the time with respect to which events are interpreted in time. In matrix clauses, the evaluation time is identified with the ST, but in embedded complements, the ET of the matrix clause serves as the evaluation time. According to the semantic derivation of (1a) given in (5), the ET of saying (t'') is located in the past with respect to the ST in the actual world. In Peter’s belief world, the ET of Mary’s pregnancy (t') overlaps the evaluation time (t), which in this case is identified with the attitude holder’s now, i.e. the ET of the matrix clause. This assumption allows us to derive the reading in which the ET of Mary’s pregnancy overlaps both, the ET of Peter’s saying, and the ST, producing the Double-Access reading.

Additional evidence for the indexicality of the present tense in Albanian comes from constructions with embedded subjunctive complements. In (7) the event of singing can only be located in the past with respect to the ST, and, as expected, the present tense is ungrammatical in this context. This data challenges a widely-held assumption that tense in subjunctive complements in Balkan languages is ‘defective’ (e.g. Watanabe 1993, Iatridou 1993, Varlokosta & Hornstein 1993, Terzi 1997, Krapova 2001). If the tense in subjunctive complements in these languages was defective, we would find the indexical reading in these constructions.
1) **Double Access reading in Albanian PA complements:**
   a. Pjetri tha [se Maria është shtatzë].
      Peter say.3SG.PAST that Maria be.3SG.PRES pregnant
      ‘Peter said that Maria is pregnant.’
   b. Nendo-n se do të jetë vajzë?
      think-2SG.PRES FUT SUBJ be girl
      ‘Do you think it will be a girl or a boy?’
   c. #Ajo lind-i vajzë.
      she give.birth-3SG.PAST girl
      ‘She gave birth to a girl.’

2) **The meaning of Tenses in Albanian:**
   a. PRES: $\lambda P \forall t' [t' \in t & \neg (t' < t) & P (t')]$
   b. PAST: $\lambda P \lambda t'' \exists t'[t'' < t''' & P (t'')]$

3) **Lexical entries:**
   a. Maria: m, Peter: p;
   b. be-pregnant': $\lambda x \lambda t'' [be-pregnant' (x) (t'')]$
   c. say': $\lambda Q \lambda x \lambda t''' [say'(^Q)(x)(t''')]$
   d. say': $\lambda Q \lambda x \lambda t''' [say'(^Q)(x)(t''')]$

4) **Derivation of a simple ALB sentence: Mary is pregnant**
   a. (Maria-be-pregnant’): $\lambda t'' [be-pregnant’ (m) (t'')]$
   b. PRES (Maria-be-pregnant’): $\exists t' [t' \in t & \neg (t' < t) & be-pregnant’ (m) (t')]$
   c. The result of this semantic derivation is applied to the ST= st, which yields (d):
   d. $\exists t' [t' \in st & \neg (t' < st) & be-pregnant’ (m) (t')]$
      According to (5e) there exists a time t', which overlaps the ST and that Mary is pregnant at t'

5) **Fragment of semantic derivation of (1a):**
   a. (Maria-is-pregnant’): $\lambda t \exists t' [t' \in t & \neg (t' < st) & be-pregnant’ (m)(t')]$
   b. P.-say’(M.-is-pregnant): $\lambda x \lambda t''' [say'(^\lambda t \exists t' [t' \in t & \neg (t' < t) & be-pregnant’(m) (t')] (p) (t'')]$
   c. PAST (P.-say-that-M.-is-pregnant):
      $\lambda t''' [t'' < t''' & say'(^\lambda t \exists t' [t' \in t & \neg (t' < st) & be-pregnant’ (m) (t')] (p) (t''')]$
      The result of this semantic derivation is applied to the ST= st, which yields (h):
   h. $\exists t'' [t'' < st & say'(^\lambda t \exists t' [t' \in t & \neg (t' < st) & be-pregnant’ (m) (t')] (p) (t'')]$

**Indexical reading of present tense in subjunctive complements:**

7) Unë planifikova [*të këndo-j / të këndo-ja* në Paris në 2005].
   I plan-1SG.PAST SUBJ sing-1SG.NPAST / SUBJ sing-1.SG.PAST in Paris in 2005.
   ‘I planned to sing in Paris in 2005.’