On the Relativity of Irreality

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0. Introduction

A modality distinction reported in languages in a number of parts of the world is that between Irrealis and Realis. The terminology has been applied to constructions in languages of Australia (Comrie 1985; Palmer 1986), Austronesia (Dempwolff 1939, Chung & Timberlake 1985), Papua New Guinea (Foley 1986; Roberts 1990), Africa (Givón 1994), Europe (Chung & Timberlake 1985; Givón 1994), South America (Wise 1986, Payne & Payne 1990), Mesoamerica (Craig 1977; Givón 1994), North America (Buckley 1988; Miller 1990) and to various creole languages (Romaine this volume) to mention only a few. It has been used widely in both grammars of individual languages and general discussions of modality.

As pointed out by Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca (1994), however, the grammatical categories referred to by the terms are far from uniform cross-linguistically. Construction types marked as Irrealis in one language may be marked as Realis in the next. In some languages Imperatives are classified as Irrealis, in others as Realis; futures, questions, and negatives also show some variation. The formal expression of the distinction varies cross-linguistically as well. In some languages, only the Irrealis category is expressed overtly, in others both Irrealis and Realis are expressed, and in still others one or the other is expressed by multiple markers. The distinction may be indicated in various areas of the grammar: by particles, by clausal clitics, by verbal inflection, and perhaps even by verbal derivation (Eatough ms on Nisenan). In many languages it is carried as a feature of markers that also express other functions, such as tense or aspect, clause linking, or pronouns, as in Caddo...
(Chafe this volume) and Amele (Roberts 1990). Irrealis/Realis distinctions may even appear in several different parts of the grammar of a single language. Buckley (1988) describes pairs of Completive and Inchoative suffixes in Alsea; one member of each pair is Irrealis, the other Realis. In addition, an Irrealis/Realis distinction is carried in this language by complementizers: $s\bar{c}s$ introduces Irrealis clauses, $m\bar{s}$ Realis clauses. Jamul Diegueño contains both an inflectional Irrealis suffix $-\times$ and an Irrealis/Realis distinction carried on the switch reference suffixes marking dependent clauses (Miller 1990).

Given this variation, the utility of the labels 'Irrealis' and 'Realis' for cross-linguistic comparison is open to question. If there is no common semantic or pragmatic basis for the terminology, its application to such diverse phenomena could lead to unnecessary confusion. In what follows, the Irrealis and Realis categories of several languages will be compared. It will be suggested that despite the apparent heterogeneity of the categories to which the distinction is applied, indeed perhaps because of it, the Irrealis/Realis terminology can prompt fruitful cross-linguistic comparisons with potential for furthering our understanding of certain processes of grammaticization.

1. Central Pomo

Languages of the Pomoan family, spoken in northern California, contain several pairs of verb-final markers that link clauses. The markers distinguish Irrealis and Realis moods. Their forms are listed in (1).

(1) Central Pomo clause linkers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Same</th>
<th>Different</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.</strong> Irrealis</td>
<td>‘while’, ‘and’, ‘then’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.</strong> Realis</td>
<td>- Simultaneous ‘and’, ‘while’, ‘as’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Sequential ‘and’, ‘then’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Irrealis markers in the top row ($-hi$, =$hla$) are used to link clauses expressing actions or states that the speaker portrays as purely within the realm of thought. Such constructions convey ideas known through imagination rather than direct perception (Chafe, this volume). The Realis markers in the bottom two rows ($-in$, =$da$, -$ba$, =$li$) link clauses expressing events portrayed as actualized, having occurred or actually occurring. The choice of markers within each of these categories reflects further distinctions: whether
the linked actions or states are presented as components of a single event
(SAME) or as distinct events (DIFFERENT), and, if they are Realis, whether the
linked activities or states are simultaneous (overlapping in time) or consecu-
tive (occurring in sequence).

The uses of each marker are described below. Except where otherwise
specified, examples cited here are drawn from spontaneous speech, generally
conversation or narrative embedded within conversation. Speakers quoted
here are Mrs. Frances Jack and Mrs. Kate Daniels of the Hopland rancheria,
Mrs. Salome Alcantra and Mrs. Florence Paoli of the Yokaya rancheria, and
Mrs. Eileen Oropeza of the Point Arena rancheria. All material was tran-
scribed and translated with the help of Mrs. Jack.*

1.1 The Central Pomo Irrealis Clause Linkers

The markers identifying Irrealis dependent clauses are -hi and =hla. The first,
-hi, links clauses expressing what are portrayed as components of the same
event.

(2) Irrealis same event linker: FJ
\[ Me\cdot n=\text{?i m}i=\cdot \text{ lálil } \text{ cÁ=n-ma-hi} \]
\[ \text{so=but that=at back run-IMPFV-COOPERATION-SAME.IRREALIS} \text{ too} \]
\[ \text{‘But we could drive back there and} \]
\[ \text{ya } \mu l \text{ da } \text{?m}i=\cdot \text{=li} \]
\[ \text{hlá-qáa=\text{?le}.} \]
1.AGENT that road COF=that=at=with go.PL-up=CONDITIONAL
go up that road.’

The second Irrealis marker, =hla, links clauses expressing what are portrayed
as different events.

(3) Irrealis different event linker: FP
\[ Ma \text{ cÁlél } qów=\text{?ne=hla} \]
2.AGENT just out=by.gravity-set=DIFF.IRREALIS
\[ \text{‘If you just threw it out} \]
\[ \text{í= } \mu l \text{ bá-\?i?le.} \]
\[ \text{feel that big-INCHOATIVE.PFV=CONDITIONAL} \]
\[ \text{I guess it would grow.’} \]

The clauses bearing the linkers are grammatically dependent, since they
cannot stand alone as independent sentences, but they are not necessarily
subordinate semantically. In (2), for example, ‘We could go back up there and
drive up that road’, the Irrealis marker links two semantically and pragmatically equivalent constituents of a larger sentence expressing root possibility. (The free translations were provided by Mrs. Jack, who was present at all conversations and aware of both the linguistic and extra-linguistic context.) Irrealis linkers appear in a wide variety of constructions that express events portrayed as non-actualized.

(4) Irrealis linker in counterfactual construction: KD
\[
\text{Me·n} \quad \text{mí-hla} \quad \text{mu-l}
\]
so say=DIFF.IRREALIS that
‘If she’d said that
?a. \quad ?\text{há}=?le \quad ?a.\\
1\text{.AGENT} \quad \text{sit=}\text{CONDITIONAL} \quad 1\text{.AGENT}
I’d stay longer.’ [But she said ...]

(5) Irrealis linker in conditional construction: FJ
\[
\text{Wá-q-hí} \quad ?e
\]
go-level-SAME.IRREALIS COP
‘If I go
\text{lo-}h-\text{du-w=}k^{b}\text{e.}\\
\text{help-IMPV-IMPV-PFV=FUTURE}
I’ll be helping out.’

(6) Irrealis linker in deontic construction: FJ
\[
\text{čá-w=}h\text{gow} \quad ?\text{y}=\text{yo-hi}
\]
house-LOC=from away=go-SAME.IRREALIS
‘He should leave home and
\text{táw}\text{hal} \quad \text{da-}\text{cé}=?le.\\
work handling-catch=CONDITIONAL
get a job.’

(7) Irrealis linker in future construction: FJ
\[
\text{Té-nta=lil} \quad \text{wá-n-hí}
\]
town=to go-IMPV-SAME.IRREALIS
‘I’ll bring it back
\text{?a.} \quad \text{qó=be-w=}k^{b}\text{e.}\\
1\text{.AGENT} \quad \text{toward=}\text{carry-PFV=FUTURE}
on my way to town.’ (‘I’ll go to town and bring it back.’)
(8) Irrealis linker in hortative construction: FJ
\[ Ya=ka \quad h\acute{a}y \quad \check{s}i\check{d}i\check{c}ma\check{h}i \]
1.PL.AGT=INF wood drag-carry-INCH-CO-SAME.IRREALIS
‘Let’s get some wood and
\[ q^h\acute{a}=kay \quad \check{s}i\check{d}i\check{c}ma-w=\check{h}i. \]
water=too dragging-carry-INCHOATIVE-CO-PFV=FUTURE
haul in some water.’

(9) Irrealis linker in imperative construction: EO
\[ Q^h\acute{a} \quad \check{c}hni=\check{h}i \]
water bread=the make-SEMFACTIVE-SAME.IRREALIS
‘Make the water bread and
\[ m\acute{u}tu-ya-l \quad qa-w\acute{a}-\check{c}ka-m. \]
3-PL-PATIENT biting-go-IMPFV.PL-CAUSATIVE-IMPERATIVE
invite them to eat it.’

1.2. Central Pomo Realis clause linkers

There are two pair of Realis dependent markers. They link past or present events. (There are no past or present tense markers.) One pair, -in and =da ‘while’, link simultaneous actions or states. The actions or states need not be simultaneous for their full duration, but simply overlapping at some point. The first marker, -(i)n, links what are portrayed as components of the same event.

(10) Simultaneous Realis, same event: EO
\[ ?a. \quad Edna=to \quad \acute{c}a=\check{h} \quad y\acute{o}-h-du-n. \]
1.AGENT =PATIENT house=to go-PFV-IMPFV-SAME.SIM-REALIS
‘I go to Edna’s house and
\[ h\acute{i}ntil=\check{h}i \quad \check{c}a-n\acute{h}-d-an=ya \quad m\acute{u}tu. \]
Indian=the talk-IMPFV-IMPFV=EVID 3.PATIENT
talk Indian to her.’

The other, =da, links what are portrayed as distinct events.

(11) Simultaneous Realis, different events: SA
\[ Mu-l \quad ?o\check{c} \quad qa\check{s}\check{o}y=da \]
that still alive=DIFF.SIM.REALIS
‘While he was still alive,
I dreamed that he touched me and said something.

The second Realis pair, -bal=li ‘and then’, link clauses expressing consecutive events.

(12) Sequential Realis, same event: SA

Mu·l šód-č-ba qamát iá-ʔ-du-w.
that hear-SML-SAME.SEQ.REALIS angry sense-RFL-IMPFV-PPV
‘I heard that and got mad.’ or ‘When I heard that, I got mad.’

(13) Sequential Realis, different events: FP

meʔi -nə-ya-w=li
1.PATIENT such gravity-set-DEFOCUS-PPV=DIFF.SEQ.REALIS
‘I was nominated and

míya· mé dá-ʔ-du-w ñdʒ-dʒ-w.
3.Poss father like-RFL-IMPFV-PPV not-PPV
his father didn’t like it.’
(or ‘When I was nominated, his father didn’t like it.’)

Clauses expressing habitual and past habitual events are also linked with Realis markers.

(14) Central Pomo past habitual: FP

Behé·m...
pepperwood
‘Pepperwood,

méʔi=li mu·l qʰá- qó·m-ad-an
that.kind=with that water-LOC bathe-IMPFV-IMPFV
‘he would bathe with that

qasīl=da s̱é·maʔwi.
be.cold=DIF.SIM.REALIS early.morning
early in the morning when it was cold.’
Multiple markers can appear within a sentence. In (15), ‘grab’ and ‘pull out’ are joined by -ba, both of which are in turn linked by =da to the verb ‘cut’.

(15) Central Pomo linked dependent clauses: SA

\[ t^1 \text{haná} = ?e \text{el da-čé-ba} \]

hand=the handling-seize-SAME.SEQ.REALIS

‘When they grabbed his hand and

\[ ŝ-t^b \text{š-č-na-w=da}, \]

drawing-open-SEMFELACTIVE-AWAY-PFV=DIFF.SEQ.REALIS

pulled it (a knife) out,

\[ \text{špúm mu-l ča-q^b \text{á-č-ka-m=} ma}. \]

self that sawing-cut-RFL-CAUS-PFV=FACTUAL

he cut himself.’

1.3 The classification of questions

Questions show the same Irrealis/realis classification as their declarative counterparts. The future question in (16) contains an Irrealis linker.

(16) Irrealis question: FP

\[ ?i=wa ma ša-čó-t= ?k^h \text{e} \]

be=Q 2.AGENT swinging-whip-MULTIPLE.EVENT=FUTURE

‘Are you gonna whip us

\[ ya-l ča=l dé-m-ma-hi? \]

1.PL-PATIENT house=to lead.PL-M.E.-CO-SAME.IRREALIS

when you take us home?’

The question about the past in (17) contains a Realis marker.

(17) Realis question: FJ

\[ t^1 \text{haná da-še-č-ba=wa} \]

hand pulling-wash-RFL-SAME.SEQ.REALIS=Q

‘Did you wash your hands and

\[ ma ?é- čh^p \text{ol-či-w?} \]

2.AGENT hair comb-RFL-PFV

comb your hair?’
1.4 The classification of negatives

Similarly, negatives show the same Irrealis/Realis categorization as their positive counterparts. The negative counterfactual construction in (18) contains an Irrealis linker, as would its positive counterpart.

(18) Irrealis negative counterfactual: FJ

\[Mu-l \ q\mu \ yh\-n \ \hat{c}h\-w=hla\]
that 1.AGENT that do-IMPFV not-PFV=DIFF.IRREALIS

‘If I hadn’t done that

\[s\-n \ b^hta \ ya \ s\-\=\nu, \ bel \ ma\=\-\, \ nap^h\=\?le.\]
how wonder 1.PL now this day sit.PL=CONDITIONAL

I wonder where we’d be today.’

The negative conditional construction in (19) contains an Irrealis linker, as would its positive counterpart.

(19) Irrealis negative conditional: SA

\[Ma \ me\-n \ ?\-w \ \hat{c}h\-w=hla,\]
2.AGENT such do-PFV not-PFV=DIFF.IRREALIS

‘If you don’t do that,

\[m\-d\=\=\=\, \ bas\-\=\=i \ ?e\=\, \ p^h\-w\-w=\?k=e.\]
2.AGT this=at things bad lie-INCH-PFV vis-perceive-PFV-FUT

you’re going to see some bad things happening around here.’

The negative imperative in (20) contains an Irrealis linker, just like positive imperatives.

(20) Irrealis negative command: FJ

\[D\=\-\=\=\, \ ?\=\=\, \ hi\]
road=on stop-SAME.IRREALIS

‘Don’t stop and

\[k^h\=\=\, \ sw\-\=\=\, \ ?e\=\, \ t^h\=\, \ ?e\=\, \ 2.AGENT\]

play on the way home.’
The negative statement about the past in (21) contains a Realis linker, just like positive statements about past events.

(21) Realis negative past: FP
Ranch =?el ḍdί yhé-t-ac ḍhó-w Ṯ-l-n
=the good do-M.E-IMPFV.PL not-PFV be-SAME.SIM.REALIS
'Because they didn’t keep up the rancheria,
ya-l qó=.l mčá-w dá-v-či-w.
1.PL.PATIENT out=to throw.PL-PFV WANT-RFL-IMPFV.PL-PFV
they wanted to throw us out.’

The Central Pomo Irrealis/Realis distinction is strikingly similar to those in a large number of other unrelated languages. In the Papuan language Amele, for example, described in Roberts (1990), dependent clauses are also identified by markers that carry an Irrealis/Realis distinction. Counterfactual, conditional, obligatory, future, hortatory, and imperative constructions appear with Irrealis markers, essentially the same construction types as in Central Pomo. Past, present, and habitual actions are linked with Realis markers. The Realis markers further distinguish simultaneous and sequential events. Questions and negatives show the same Irrealis/Realis classification as would their positive declarative counterparts. It is not difficult to discern a motivation behind the choice of terms ‘Irrealis’ and ‘Realis’ for this distinction. Statements categorized as Irrealis portray events as still within the realm of thought alone, while those categorized as Realis are portrayed as actualized, actually occurring or having occurred.

Categories identified as ‘Irrealis’ and ‘Realis’ are not uniform across all languages, however. While many languages show patterns strikingly similar to those in Central Pomo and Amele, some show minor differences, and a few show substantial ones. The variation suggests that either the distinction underlying the categories is not in fact comparable across languages, or that the distinction is constant, but its application differs. If the basic distinction varies, then the common terminology could be misleading. If the distinction is the same, and differences are confined to its application, the variation might be explicable in terms of the diachronic developments of grammatical categories in individual languages.
2. Some cross-linguistic differences

Some kinds of constructions, such as counterfactuals and conditionals, are generally classified as Irrealis in all languages with a grammaticized Irrealis/Realis distinction. Several constructions show somewhat more variation across languages than these, however, in particular imperatives, futures, questions, and negatives. In what follows, suggestions will be made for kinds of diachronic explanations that might underlie the variation.

2.1 Imperatives

In Central Pomo and Amele, commands are classified as Irrealis, as in (9) above. The classification seems motivated, in that commands can easily be conceived of as expressing thoughts of actions rather than the realization or actualization of them. In some languages, however, imperatives are classified as Realis. In Maricopa, for example, a language of the Yuman family in Arizona, reality is indicated by verbal suffixes. Gordon reports that the Irrealis suffix -h(a) "is used typically in cases in which no part of the action or state expressed by the verb is realized [...] It can be used to mark simple future, though it is far more usual for it to be used to signal an exhortive or contrary-to-fact sense [...] -h(a) is also used in Irrealis (future, possible, or obligation) nominalizations" (1986:109).

(22) Maricopa Irrealis: (Gordon 1986:27, 109)

a. ny-aa-y-ha
   1/2-give-IRREALIS
   'I will give it to you.'

b. haat  nyi-tlooy-nt-ha
   dog.PL  PL.OBJ-kill-PL.ACTION-too-IRREALIS
   'It might kill dogs too.'

c. aanylyviim   m-vaay-kis   ?nym-yuu-ha
   yesterday  2-come-COND  2/1-see-IRREALIS
   'If you had come yesterday, you would have seen me.'

Realis suffixes indicate that 'the speaker is presenting the information as fact, not as possibility, inference, or preference. A verb marked with [a Realis suffix] expresses an action, event, or state which is taking place in the present or has taken place in the past' (1986:24).
(23) Maricopa Realis: (Gordon 1986:24)

a. aham-m
hit-REALIS
‘He hit him.’

b. hot-hot-m
good-good-REALIS
‘It is very good.’

Imperatives appear with Realis suffixes.

(24) Maricopa imperative: (Gordon 1968:25)

k-tpuy-m
IMP-kill-REALIS
‘Kill it!’

Several kinds of diachronic developments could lead to a categorization of imperatives as Realis. One possible explanation could come from the order in which an emerging Irrealis form might be applied to new contexts over time. The distinction might first be made only in indicative clauses, then spread only later into other contexts, among them the imperative. Systems in which imperatives are not classified as Irrealis could represent the intermediate stage in such a development. A second possible explanation could come from differing expectations of actuation. While counterfactual propositions are expected not to occur or have occurred at all, imperatives could be seen to imply reasonable expectations of compliance: in some societies, for example the utterance of a command might be taken conventionally to entail immediate and certain performance of an action. A third possible explanation could come from ways in which speakers might exploit the option of overtly marking expectation. Speakers might intentionally mark commands as Realis to imply strong certainty of their immediate actualization. In fact, many languages contain two options: a polite imperative, classified as Irrealis, and a strong imperative, classified as Realis.

Jamul Diegueño, a Yuman language of southern California, contains an Irrealis suffix -x that is cognate with the Maricopa -h(a). Miller (1990:119) reports that the suffix appears with counterfactuals, conditionals, potentials, obligations, warnings, desideratives, and futures, as well as in adversative, purpose, and hypothetical relative clauses and nominalizations. It marks action that is ‘desired, potential, or otherwise unrealized’. Realis constructions show no -x. Jamul contains two kinds of Imperative constructions: a
Polite Imperative, containing the basic second person Subject Prefix and an Irrealis Suffix, and a Basic Imperative, containing a special Second Person imperative Prefix and no Irrealis Suffix.

(25) Jamul Diegueño Imperatives (Miller 1990:119),
a. nya-m-mápa-pu m-rar-x-s
   INDEF-2-NOM.want-DEM 2-do-IRREALIS-EMPH
   ‘Do whatever you want (polite imperative)’

b. k-naw
   2-run
   ‘Run! (basic imperative)’

Roberts (1990:390) notes that Alamblak, an East Sepik language of Papua New Guinea, shows a similar choice. Polite Imperatives are categorized as Irrealis, and strong imperatives as Realis. Roberts points out the parallel with English commands: Would you be seated versus Sit down!. The presence of both Irrealis and Realis imperatives in these languages shows that both options are semantically possible.

2.2 Futures

Future events are often classified as Irrealis cross-linguistically, in languages that have such a category, since they have not (yet) occurred (Comrie 1985:45; Givón 1994). In a few languages, however, including Caddo (Chafe this volume), future events are classified as Realis.

One possible explanation for the existence of Realis futures is parallel to one of those proposed for Realis imperatives. Futures can vary in their probability of occurrence. Speakers could exploit the Irrealis/Realis distinction to mark their expectation of actuation. The Central Porno Irrealis/Realis distinction is in fact used for this very purpose. While most Futures are categorized by speakers as Irrealis, as in (5), (7), and (16) above, some are categorized as Realis. Discussing how they would spend the Fourth of July, Mrs. Paoli remarked that they would go to the annual community picnic, then continued with (26).

(26) Central Pomo Realis Future: FP
Maʔá qa-wá-č-in
food  biting-go-IMPFV.PL-SAME.SIM.REALIS
‘We’ll go around
On another occasion, Mrs. Jack related what her mother had told her as a child.

(27) Central Pomo Realis Future: FJ
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{hlá-} & \text{?w-} ač' & = k^h e. \\
\text{walk.PL.-around-IMPFV.PL.=FUTURE} \\
\text{eating.'}
\end{align*}
\]

On another occasion, Mrs. Jack related what her mother had told her as a child.

(28) Central Pomo: FJ
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ma-báya} & \quad \text{čá-l} & \quad \text{yó-w=da} \\
\text{poss-man} & \quad \text{house=to} & \quad \text{go-PFV=DIFF.SIM.REALIS} \\
\text{‘When her husband gets home,} \\
\text{?e} & \quad \text{mu-l} & \quad \text{maʔá} & \quad \text{čʰú-w=?kʰe.} \\
\text{COP that} & \quad \text{food} & \quad \text{eat-PFV=FUT} \\
\text{she’ll eat.’}
\end{align*}
\]

The use of the Realis linkers with futures was not a mistake. The choice was significant. Mrs. Jack produced the sentence in (28) as an elicited translation.
When asked about the use of =da in this context, she replied, ‘With =da he’ll get home for sure.’ The Irrealis counterpart =hla would suggest some uncertainty. The Realis futures cited in (26) and (27) above were used for events the speaker portrayed as certain to occur: eating at the picnic, getting older, and dying.

The Central Pomo option of categorizing futures as either Irrealis (frequent) or Realis (rarer) shows that both are semantically coherent combinations. A system in which futures were systematically categorized as Realis could conceivably arise because the Irrealis form was so highly marked semantically that speakers used it sparingly with futures. Such a scenario is certainly not the only way in which such a pattern could develop. Chafe (this volume) describes a possible path of development of a different sort for Caddo, in which structural characteristics of the markers shape the system.

2.3 Questions and negatives

In many languages, including Central Pomo and Amele, interrogation and negation have no effect on the reality marking of clauses. Questions about hypothetical situations are generally categorized as Irrealis, while questions about actualized events are generally categorized as Realis, just like their declarative counterparts. Similarly, negative constructions show the same Irrealis or Realis categorization as their positive counterparts. The situation is quite different in Caddo, however, where questions and negatives are systematically categorized as Irrealis.

In fact the differences between the two systems are not as chaotic as they may first appear. They reflect a contrast in the semantic scope of the reality markers on the one side and the interrogative and negative markers on the other. In Central Pomo, basic propositions are categorized as Irrealis or Realis, independently of their status as statements or questions.

(29) Central Pomo Questions

QUESTION ( REALIS ( PROPOSITION ))

In (30), cited earlier as (16), the basic proposition is categorized as Irrealis on the basis of its futurity. The Irrealis proposition is then questioned.
In (31), cited earlier as (17), the basic proposition is categorized as Realis on the basis of its past perfective status. The complete Realis past perfective event is then questioned.

(31) Central Pomo questioned Realis: FJ

\[ \text{Thäná da-sé-č-ba=wa ma } ?\text{é. } \text{čh?6l?w?} \]

hand wash-SAME.SEQ.REALIS=Q you hair comb.PFV

‘Did you wash your hands and comb your hair?’

QUESTION ( + REALIS ( you washed your hands and combed your hair))

Caddo questions show the opposite scope relations. Reality marking is sensitive to the status of sentences as questions.

(32) Caddo Questions

- REALIS ( QUESTION ( PROPOSITION ))

All Caddo questions are categorized as Irrealis: questioned propositions are not asserted to have occurred.

(33) Caddo Irrealis question: Chafe this volume

\[ \text{süyybáwnah} \]

\[ \text{sah?}-\text{yibahw-nah} \]

2.AGENT.IRREALIS-see-PERFECT

‘Have you seen him?’

- REALIS ( QUESTION ( you saw him ))

Similar semantic scope differences can be seen by comparing the negative constructions in Central Pomo and Caddo. In Central Pomo, propositions are categorized as Irrealis or Realis independently of negation.

(34) Central Pomo Negatives

NEGATION ( REALIS ( PROPOSITION ))
In (35), cited earlier in (19), the proposition is categorized as Irrealis on the basis of its conditional status. The Irrealis conditional clause is then negated.

\[(35)\] Central Pomo negated Irrealis: SA
\[\text{Ma me-n } ?`hw \text{ } \ddot{c}h`ow=\text{hla} \ldots\]
you such do.PFV not.PFV=if.IRREALIS
‘If you don’t do that, [you’re going to see some bad things happening].’
NEGATIVE ( - REALIS ( you will do that ))

In (36), cited earlier in (21), the proposition is categorized as Realis because it expresses a past perfective event. This Realis construction is then negated.

\[(36)\] Central Pomo negated Realis: FP
\[\text{Ranch= } ?'el \text{ } \dot{q}d'T \text{ } \text{yhetac } \ddot{c}h`ow \text{ } ?t-n \ldots\]
the good do not-PFV not be.REALIS
‘Because they didn’t keep up the rancheria, [they wanted to throw us out].’
NEGATIVE ( + REALIS ( they kept up the rancheria ))

The opposite scope relations can be seen in Caddo. Reality categorization is sensitive to negation.

\[(37)\] Caddo negation
- REALIS ( NEGATIVE ( PROPOSITION ))

All negative statements are categorized as Irrealis in Caddo, since they report non-actualized events or states.

\[(38)\] Caddo Irrealis negative (Chafe this volume)
\[\text{kut'aybah}\]
\[\text{kay-t'a-yibahw}\]
NEG-1.AGENT.IRREALIS-see
‘I don’t see him.’
- REALIS ( NEGATIVE ( I see him ))

Such cross-linguistic differences in semantic scope are not unusual. English and German show a similar contrast in must not (‘it is necessary that one not ...’) versus muss nicht (‘it is not necessary that one ...’).
The scope relations described here for Central Pomo and Caddo correctly predict the categorization of negative commands, or prohibitives in each language. In Central Pomo, prohibitives are systematically categorized as Irrealis on the basis of their imperative status.

(39) Central Pomo scope relations: imperatives
commands: - REALIS ( IMPERATIVE )
prohibitions: NEGATIVE ( -REALIS ( IMPERATIVE )).

(40) Central Pomo prohibitive: FJ
Dá·wi ʔčʰá·ʔ-hi ʰkʰyá swé·lanʔkhe ʰtʰin ʔe ʰma.
road.on stop-SAME.IRREALIS game play not it.is you
‘Don’t stop and play on the way home!’
NEGATION ( - REALIS ( IMPERATIVE ( you stop and play on the way home )))

In Caddo, prohibitions are systematically categorized as Irrealis as well but on the basis of their negativity.

(41) Caddo scope relations: Imperatives
commands: + REALIS ( IMPERATIVE )
prohibitions: - REALIS ( NEGATIVE ( IMPERATIVE ))

(42) Caddo Prohibitive: (Chafe this volume)
kaššáʔbah
kaš-sahʔ-yibahw
NEG-2.AGT.IRREALIS-see
‘Don’t look at it!’
- REALIS ( NEGATIVE ( IMPERATIVE ( you look at it ))

Such scope differences could arise in a number of ways. A simple hypothesis would be that scope differences might result from differences in the order in which the distinctions are grammaticized. Their paths of development can be much more complex, however. Scope relations may even shift within the history of a single language.

Mesa Grande Diegueño, a Yuman language of southern California closely related to Jamul, contains an Irrealis suffix -x cognate with the Jamul Irrealis suffix of the same form (Langdon 1970:158-9). The suffixes appear in all of the same contexts except for one: in Mesa Grande, negated clauses obligatorily carry the Irrealis suffix, but in Jamul they do not.
In Mesa Grande, negation is indicated by an inflected negative auxiliary verb. In the sentence in (43), the verb ‘for me to go’ carries the Irrealis suffix as the hypothetical complement of want, but the verb ‘they want it’ carries the Irrealis suffix only because the sentence is negated.

(43) Mesa Grande negative (Langdon 1970:159)

\[ \text{2anya. puy 2axap-x-vu əwa-p-x uma-w} \]

\[ \text{I there I.go.in-IRREALIS-SPEC they.want.it-IRREALIS they.not} \]

‘They didn’t want me to go there.’

In Jamul, negation is indicated by a clause final negative word, such as xemaaw in (44) below. The negative sentence contains no Irrealis suffix unless required for some other reason, such as a conditional context.

(44) Jamul negative (Miller 1990:113)

\[ \text{nya'wach yu'ip xemaaw} \]

\[ \text{we.SUBJ hear.PL NEG} \]

‘We didn’t hear.’

An examination of the forms of the Jamul Negative words indicates that there has been a shift within Jamul. All three negatives, xemaaw ‘not’, xchan ‘almost, but not’, and xmir ‘not yet’, begin with x. The Irrealis suffix which originally appeared on the verb immediately preceding the negative has been reanalyzed as part of the negative marker itself. Miller (1990:203-5) reports that the negative words, which she terms ‘expiring auxiliaries’, have lost characteristics of auxiliaries, and no longer bear inflectional prefixes for person of subject.

3. Conclusion

The comparison of the Irrealis/Realis distinctions described here suggests some fruitful directions for the investigation of grammaticization patterns. In Central Pomo, as in many other languages, counterfactual, conditional, deontic, future, hortative, and imperative constructions all contain Irrealis markers. Some of these types, such as counterfactual and conditional constructions, are widely categorized as Irrealis cross-linguistically. They are in fact often cited as the best evidence for the appropriateness of the label ‘Irrealis’ for a marker. Counterfactual and conditional constructions convey ideas that are most clearly within the realm of thought (imagination) rather than actualized reality (perception).
Imperatives are classified as Irrealis in many languages, but not all. Several kinds of diachronic explanations might underlie the discrepancy. An emerging Irrealis distinction might first be applied within a small grammatical context in a language, such as statements, before expanding to other construction types such as commands. An alternative explanation might come from the fact that imperatives could be viewed as closer to potential actuation than counterfactuals or conditionals. The utterance of a command might imply an expectation of immediate compliance. A third kind of explanation could involve speakers’ exploitation of the distinction for expressive purposes. Speakers might choose to use Realis imperatives to reinforce the implied expectation that the act is certain to be carried out, soon to be actualized. The possibility of such a scenario is strengthened by the existence in a number of languages of two options: a polite imperative classified as Irrealis, and a strong imperative classified as Realis.

Futures are classified as Irrealis in most languages; they represent events that have not yet occurred, events still within the realm of thought. On occasion, however, they are marked as Realis. Again, several possible paths of diachronic development might lead to this cross-linguistic variation. Chafe (this volume) shows how the presence of a future suffix in Caddo may have obviated the need for the development of a new construction based on newly emerging Irrealis forms. Alternatively, Realis futures might result from conditions similar to those hypothesized to underlie Realis imperatives. Futures might be seen to assert imminent actuation. Speakers might choose to exploit the Irrealis/Realis distinction to express varying expectations of actuation. In fact in Central Pomo, futures may be classified as either Irrealis or Realis, depending on the speaker’s portrayal of the event in question as merely probable or certain to occur.

Interrogation and negation have no effect on reality classification in many languages. In Central Pomo, for example, questioned or negated futures are Irrealis, just like their positive declarative counterparts, while questioned or negated past perfectives are Realis. In other languages, however, such as Caddo, questions and/or negatives are systematically classified as Irrealis. These differences are not as obviously attributable to varying expectations of actuation. They may instead reflect a difference in the relative semantic scope of the markers within the languages. In languages like Central Pomo, reality categorization has narrower scope than interrogation and negation. Propositions are categorized as Irrealis or Realis independently of their status as questions or negatives. In languages like Caddo, the scope relations are
reversed. Question formation and negation have narrower scope than reality categorization. The Irrealis/Realis classification is thus sensitive to the status of constructions as questions or negatives. A number of diachronic paths could lead to such differences in semantic scope. One might be a difference in the order of grammaticization of the individual constructions within a language. Others might be more complex, such as the Jamul formal reanalysis of the negative construction.

The comparison of these seemingly disparate systems shows complete accord in the nature of the basic Irrealis/realis distinction that underlies them. In all of the languages, events and states classified as nonactualized, those that remain within the realm of thought and imagination, are overtly distinguished from those portrayed as actualized, having occurred or currently occurring. The differences among the systems lie in the application of the distinction to various contexts, the categorization of individual grammatical constructions within each language. Some differences may result from special uses of the distinction for expressive purposes, such as the classification of Imperatives as Realis to indicate certainty of immediate actualization. Some may stem from differences in the degree of probability deemed necessary for Irrealis marking, as in the case of futures. Some may mirror differences in the relative semantic scope of the Irrealis/Realis distinction and other grammatical distinctions, such as interrogative or negative. Such scope differences could arise in many ways, only a few of which have been explored here.

If the 'Irrealis/Realis' terminology were not used, the cross-linguistic convergences in the semantic nature of the distinction, and the contrasts in its application, might go unnoticed. Of course special care should be taken in cross-linguistic comparisons of these categories, as with any modal categories, to ensure that the distinctions on which they are based are indeed comparable. Grammarians describing particular languages can help to prevent misunderstandings if they provide sufficient evidence that a particular marker does indeed represent the nonactualization of Irrealis mood in a variety of contexts, for example, rather than the temporal deixis of future tense. With such care, this area of modality will give us much to discover about processes of grammaticization that lead to the convergence and divergence of grammatical systems.
ABBREVIATIONS

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<th>CO</th>
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<tr>
<td>DIFF</td>
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NOTE

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REFERENCES


