Not All Fake Pasts Are Real.

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Section 1

Introduction: what do we mean by “fake” past?
At least two domains where past inflection seems to be “fake”:

- **Sequence of Tense (SOT)**

  (1) My sister told me that her friend *liked* frogs.

- **Counterfactuals (CFs)**

  (2) CF: If it *was* raining (now), I *would* wear my boots.

  (3) CF: I wish it *was* raining (now).
Both SOT and CFs have been analyzed in terms of **feature licensing**:

- Past tense morphology merely reflects another **higher** past tense

  \[ \text{disconnect between interpretation and realization of PAST.} \]

- Arregui (2009) and Romero (2014) make this connection directly.
Today’s Argument In Brief:

- If SOT and CFs both have “fake” PAST, we expect predicates under PAST to be interpreted the same way in both.
- As it turns out, predicates show very different effects in SOT and CFs:
  - Viewpoint and situation *aspect* have different effects.
  - Contribution of *perfect* somewhat different in both.
  - Availability of *present* inflection differs.
- Differences suggest only *one* involves real “fake” PAST.
- Evidence suggests CFs, not SOT, involve “fake” PAST.
  - Implications for the typology of tense systems.
Why should we care?

Languages divide up temporal space in different ways:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>past progressive</th>
<th>simple past</th>
<th>perfect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>imparfait</td>
<td></td>
<td>passé composé</td>
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</table>

- Could be an arbitrary difference.
- More appealing possibility: arises from differences in representation.

→ how is time represented in features

“Fake” inflection = a way to dissociate form from meaning
Section 2

SOT and CFs are similar
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>SOT and CFs are similar</th>
<th>SOT and CFs are different</th>
<th>Which fake pasts are real?</th>
<th>Implications</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bronwyn M. Bjorkman</td>
<td>UofT</td>
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<td>Not All Fake Past Are Real.</td>
<td>8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Taking a step back: **Why would we compare SOT and CFs?**

Answer: Reasons to think past morphology shows the **same** behaviour in **both**.
The profile of PAST in Sequence of Tense

**SOT languages:** English, Dutch, Norwegian, French, Italian...

**Past-under-Past:** Simultaneous Reading

(4) My friend *said* she *was* in Paris. [=“I am in Paris.”]

**Present-under-Past:** “Double Access” Reading

(5) My friend *said* she *is* in Paris. [=“I am in Paris.” *and still is*]

**Past Perfect-under-Past:** Backshifted Reading

(6) My friend *said* she *had been* in Paris. [=“I was in Paris.”]
### Non-SOT languages:
Russian (Comrie, 1985), South-Baffin Inuktitut (Hayashi, 2011), Japanese (Ogihara, 1995), Hebrew (Sharvit, 2003)...

**Past-under-Past:** Backshifted Reading  
[S. Baffin: Hayashi, 2011]

(7) jaan uqa-lauq-tuq miali  
Jaan say-PAST-PTCP.3SG Mary  
singai-lau-ngmat  
pregnant-PAST-CAUS.3SG  
"John said that Mary was pregnant."

**Present-under-Past:** Simultaneous Reading

(8) jaan uqa-lauq-tuq miali  
Jaan say-PAST-PTCP.3SG Mary  
singai-∅-ngmat
Where does SOT PAST come from?

A standard view: embedded past tense (in SOT) is purely morphological

Over time:

- Ross (1967): embedded tense is inserted by a rule.
- Ogihara (1995): embedded tense is deleted by a rule.
- Grønn and von Stechow (2010), Zeijlstra (2012): embedded tense features are formally uninterpreted, but licensed by matrix counterparts.

→ relationship between uPAST and iPAST.
A (brief) introduction to PAST in CFs

The profile of past tense in Counterfactuals

Many languages use PAST morphology to mark modal statements as **unrealized** (counterfactual) or **unlikely** (Anderson, 1951; Hale, 1969; Steele, 1975; James, 1982; Palmer, 1986; Fleischman, 1989; Iatridou, 2000; Van Linden and Verstraete, 2008, a.o.).
(9) Present-oriented CF:
   If they were here (now), we could ask them.

(10) Future-Less-Vivid:
   If they left tomorrow, they would arrive next week.

(11) Past-oriented CF:
   If they had left yesterday, they would have arrived next week.
Similarly, PAST (imperfective) marks CFs in Modern Greek (Iatridou, 2000):

(12) An eperne afto to siropa θα γινηταν kala
    if took(IMPF) this syrup FUT became(IMPF) well
    “If he took this syrup, he would get better.” (FLV)

(13) An o Kostas iχ₁ε χ₁ rimata θα αγοραζε afto to spiti
    if Kostas had money FUT buy this house
    “If Kostas had money, he would buy this house.” (PresCF)

(14) An iχ₁ε pari to siropi θα iχ₁ε γινητα kala.
    if had taken the syrup FUT had become better
    “If he had taken the syrup, he would have gotten better.”
    (PastCF)
Introduction

SOT and CFs are similar

SOT and CFs are different

Which fake pasts are real?

Implications

A (brief) introduction to PAST in CFs

PAST in Zulu CFs (Halpert and Karawani, 2011):

(15) [ukuba be- ngi- thimul- ile ]  
if PAST.IMP- 1SG- sneeze- PFV  
be-angi-zo-dinga ithishi  
IMP-1SG-FUT-need 5tissue  
‘If I had sneezed, I would have needed a tissue.’

PAST in Palestinian Arabic CFs (Halpert and Karawani, 2011):

(16) [iza tîlef hala? ,] kaan b-iwsal fal  
if leave.PAST.PFV now, be.PAST B-arrive.IMPF on  
wa?t la l-mu?haadara  
the-time for the-lecture  
‘If he left now, he would arrive on time for the lecture.’
Languages with PAST in CFs: (a very partial list)

**Germanic, Romance, Slavic, Zulu** (Halpert, 2010), **Arabic** (Karawani, 2014), **Hebrew** (Iatridou, 2009), **Korean** (Han, 2006), **Walpiri** (Legate, 2003), **Turkish** (Aygen, 2004)...
The Syntax of CF PAST

Is CF PAST in the same place as real temporal PAST?

Consensus: No.

Reasons for this consensus:

1. Semantic interpretation
2. Morpheme Order (Turkish)
3. Correlation with V-to-C Movement
Reasons from **semantic interpretation** to think CF PAST is high:

- **Formal semantics**: PAST is temporal but scopes high, composes with modal outside antecedent (Ippolito, 2013; Arregui, 2009; Romero, 2014)

- **Formal syntax**: a formal feature received different interpretations in different positions. A COINCIDENCE feature is temporal in $T^0$, but modal in $C^0$ (Ritter and Wiltschko, 2010; Bjorkman, 2011).
A (brief) introduction to PAST in CFs

Morphosyntactic reasons to think CF PAST is high:

Turkish morpheme order: (Aygen, 2004).

Indicative: V-PAST-COND

(17) Dün gece Can erken yat-đi-ysa sabah erken kalk-abil-ir.

‘If John went to bed early last night, he can get up early this morning.’
Morphosyntactic reasons to think CF PAST is high:

Turkish morpheme order: (Aygen, 2004).

Counterfactual: **V-COND-PAST**

(18) Dün gece Can erken yat-*sa-ydı* sabah erken kalk-ar-dı.
    get-up-AOR-Past
    ‘If John had gone to bed early last night, he would have got up early in the morning.’
A (brief) introduction to PAST in CFs

Reasons from movement to think CF PAST is high:

Conditional Inversion: T-to-C movement in antecedent.

(19) Had they read the book, they would have liked it.

(20) Were it raining, we would have a leak.

Limited in current English to had, were, should.

More widely available in other languages, linked to CFs (Iatridou and Embick, 1994).

[Exception: V2 Germanic languages—which have more general V-to-C anyway.]
In conclusion... 

\[
\text{SOT, CFs} \begin{cases} 
\text{In both:} \\
\quad \text{PAST} \neq \text{past meaning} \\
\quad \text{PAST} = \text{higher} \\
\quad \text{Past Perfect} = \text{backshifted} \\
\to \ u\text{PAST}
\end{cases}
\]
Section 3

SOT and CFs are different
**So far:** T in both SOT and CFs has “fake” PAST features.

**Prediction:** SOT and CFs should have the same (temporal) interpretations.

**Not borne out** → SOT and CFs interact differently with **aspect**.

*(situation type)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imperfective</td>
<td>Perfective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(viewpoint aspect)*

(PROG, HAB, GEN)

Both track this distinction, but with different results...
We saw that SOT PAST can be “fake” in embedded clauses.

**However:**

- SOT effects occur only with *states/imperfective events*.
- Perfectives interpreted as (relative) past
  \[\rightarrow \text{like non-SOT languages}\]
Differences in the Simple Past

(21) The student claimed that they knew the answer.

[know the answer] = state $\rightarrow$ ✓ simultaneous interpretation

(22) My friend said it was snowing.

[be snowing] = progressive $\rightarrow$ ✓ simultaneous interpretation

(23) The students claimed that someone cancelled the exam.

[cancel the exam] = perfective $\rightarrow$ * simultaneous interpretation
In CFs, by contrast, PAST is *always* “fake”.

Nonetheless there is a (different) interaction with aspect:

- States/imperfectives are present oriented.
- Perfectives are *forward* shifted.
Differences in the Simple Past

(24) If the student knew the answer, they would be calmer.

[know the answer] = state $\rightarrow$ present

(25) If it was raining (right now), the snow would melt.

[be raining] = progressive $\rightarrow$ present

(26) If we cancelled the exam (tomorrow), the students would celebrate.

[cancel the exam] = event $\rightarrow$ future
In both SOT and CFs, Past Perfect yields back-shifted readings. a “second layer” of PAST.

- In CFs this is straightforward:

  (27) If the student had known the answer yesterday, they would have been calmer.

- But in SOT, somewhat more complicated...
Past Perfect with the state in (28) is back-shifted, as expected.

(28)  
   a. She said that she had been in Montreal.  
   b. She said that she was in Montreal.

Similarly with the perfective event in (29).

(29)  
   a. They claimed someone had called them.  
   b. They claimed someone called them.

But the same readings are available with the simple past!
Finally: different interactions with present tense.

- SOT: present-under-past results in “double access” readings.

(30) She said that she is in Montreal.

She said: “I am in Montreal.” And she still is. PRES (unlike PAST) is real.

- CFs: present tense is impossible.

Fake PAST is required across the board.
### In sum:

CFs and SOT interpretations are systematically **different**:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impf / State</td>
<td>simultaneous</td>
<td>simultaneous or back-shifted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pfv Event</td>
<td>forward-shifted</td>
<td>back-shifted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfect</td>
<td>back-shifted</td>
<td>back-shifted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>“double-access”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This should **surprise** us if both have the same “fake” PAST.
Section 4

Which fake pasts are real?
"Fake" PAST has different interpretive effects in SOT and CFs.

→ so perhaps only one has real "fake" PAST.

- One has truly uninterpreted PAST features on T.
- The other has regular semantic PAST tense.

But which one is which?
A problem for fake PAST in SOT: **locality**

- If PAST is “fake” it needs to be licensed.
- Syntactic licensing is always subject to locality requirements.
- SOT requires licensing between matrix and embedded T:
  - This is a *cross-clausal* relationship.
  - Across a *finite* clause boundary.
  - This is what locality is *designed* to exclude.

In more detail: Zeijlstra (2012); Grønn and von Stechow (2010).
Zeiljstra (2012): Upwards Agree

Standard Agree: Probes (uF) look down.

Upwards Agree: Probes (uF) look up.

- Used to account for Negative Concord, Inflection Doubling, **Sequence of Tense**.

- Constrained by **Relativized Minimality**:
  - Not possible across another [iF] of the same type

- Also constrained by **phases**.
Zeiljstra (2012): Upwards Agree

Upwards Agree as applied to SOT:

```
TP
  \--- iPAST
      \--- V
          \--- C
              \--- uPAST . . .
  \--- VP
      \--- CP
          \--- TP
```

Bronwyn M. Bjorkman

Not All Fake Pasts Are Real.
Grønn and von Stechow (2010): Feature Transmission
(following Heim 2008)

Basic idea: how do bound pronouns get their features?

(31) Only Aaran said that her bike was stolen.
    → Zac didn’t say that his bike was stolen.

If tenses are pronouns (Partee, 1973), we expect the same thing:

(32) Aaran said ($t_1$) that her bike was ($t_1$) stolen.
Grønn and von Stechow (2010): Feature Transmission

For Grønn and von Stechow:

- Embedded $t_1$ is bound by matrix verb.
- PAST feature is transmitted via two binding relations.
Locality problem 1: licensing across domains

A general theme: some constituents block syntactic relations.

Barriers → Phases / Spell-Out Domains.

What is a phase? A constituent that gets spelled out before the derivation continues.

“Spelled out” = phonologically realized and semantically interpreted.

Which constituents are phases? vP, DP, CP.
Locality problem 1: licensing across domains

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{TP} & \quad \text{iPAST} \quad \text{VP} \\
\text{V} & \quad \text{CP} \\
\text{C} & \quad \text{TP} \\
\text{uPAST} & \quad \ldots
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{TP} & \quad \text{PAST} \\
\text{VP} & \quad \text{t}_1 \\
\text{CP} & \quad \text{t}_1 \\
\text{C} & \quad \text{TP} \\
\text{claimed t}_1 & \quad \ldots
\end{align*}
\]
Locality problem 2: licensing across the matrix verb.

Verbs block inflection. In English, this is often referred to as “affix hopping”.

A progressive auxiliary blocks PAST from appearing on V:

(33) My friend was *walked / *walkinged / ✓walking.

But SOT is possible when the matrix verb is progressive:

(34) My friend was saying that she liked Toronto.
Locality problem 2: licensing across the matrix verb.

Given the impossibility of licensing uPAST on V, how can uPAST reach embedded T?
A non-locality consideration:

If PAST is “fake”, interpretation should resemble present tense.

- Present is “default” tense.
- Without shifting by PAST, time of evaluation stays at ‘now’.
A non-locality consideration:
How does the present tense interact with aspect?

(35) She is in Montreal. state → now

(36) It is snowing. progressive → now

(37) We leave (tomorrow). perfective → futurate / planned
In sum:

**CFs**, not SOT, resemble present tense:

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</tr>
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<td>back-shifted</td>
<td>forward-shifted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfect</td>
<td>back-shifted</td>
<td>back-shifted</td>
<td>back-shifted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And **SOT**, not CFs, would violate locality of licensing.

**Conclusion:** **CFs involve real “fake” PAST, SOT doesn’t**
Why is CF PAST present-oriented?

Suggested above that uPAST = present.

- Why would this be? Assumes present = absence of tense.

Reasons to think this is wrong (for English):

- Overt copula and auxiliary in the present tense (Bjorkman, 2011)

But if CFs can be specified as [iPRES], how can this feature co-occur with [uPAST]?
Why is CF PAST present-oriented?

On the other hand, if present CFs do not have [iPRES]:

three-way feature system corresponds to a two-way meaning difference:

\[
\begin{align*}
&[\text{iPAST}] \rightarrow \text{semantic past} \\
&[\text{iPRES}] \\
&\emptyset \quad \text{semantic present}
\end{align*}
\]

(Another issue: do iPAST and uPAST co-occur in past CFs?)
Resolving the (apparent) conflict

This is resolved if we decompose tense features.

(Cowper, 2003, 2005; Grønn and von Stechow, 2010, a.o.):

ANCHOR: (or DEIXIS) the time at which a clause is interpreted vs.

PAST: an optional feature that introduces back-shifting.
Introduction

SOT and CFs are similar

SOT and CFs are different

Which fake pasts are real?

Implications

Why is fake past present?

Resolving the (apparent) conflict

- Semantic past (relative to now) = \([ i\text{ANCHOR} + i\text{PAST} ]\)
- Semantic present = \([ i\text{ANCHOR} ]\) alone
- Morphological realization:
  - PAST, ANCHOR \(\leftrightarrow\) -ed (i.e. simple past)
  - ANCHOR \(\leftrightarrow\) -Ø/-s (i.e. simple present)
In sum:

Attributing uPAST to CFs $\rightarrow$ consequences for inflectional features.

- Decomposing tense maintains idea that PRES is “less specified”
- More (featurally) complex PAST can “pre-empt” PRES in the morphology

Remaining issue: The past perfect
Section 5

Implications
If CFs, but not SOT, involve licensing, what does this tell us?

**Possibly:** forms that occur in SOT are *semantically* anterior.

But only forms that occur in CFs are *featurally* PAST.
A recurring puzzle: PERFECT vs PAST

In English:

- PERFECT participates in SOT (Stowell, 2007)
- PERFECT expresses non-finite pastness.
  
  but PERFECT can’t mark CFs.
A recurring puzzle: PERFECT vs PAST

In French / Italian: preterite largely supplanted by compound past (=perfect)

- compound PAST participates in SOT
- compound PAST expresses non-finite pastness

but still not possible in CFs, which require IMPF past

Points to a continued featural distinction between compound and simple pasts, even as functional difference changes.
More generally:

If licensing is responsible for CF inflection, what about doubled particles/modals?

Russian (Sergei Tatevosov, p.c.):

(38) a. Esli by Dzon umer, my poxoronili by ego
dif SUBJ John died we buried SUBJ he.ACC
na gore.
on mountain
‘If John died, we would bury him on the mountain.’
More generally:

Non-standard English (Stowell (2008): English “Konjunktiv II”)

(39) If you hadn’t a done that, they wouldn’t a left of ’ve

(40) %/* If you hadn’t have done that, they wouldn’t have left.
Next steps:

When looking at less described languages, grounds for distinguishing PAST / PERFECT / PFV.

- All three are associated with “anterior” meanings
- But (perhaps) only true PAST can be used in CFs

Back to SOT:

- typologically restricted
- how do simultaneous readings compose?
Thank you!


Karawani, Hadil. 2014. The real, the fake, and the fake fake: In counterfactual conditionals, crosslinguistically. Doctoral Dissertation, Universiteit van Amsterdam.


