Time Reference of Aspectual Forms in Wan (Southeastern Mande)

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This paper addresses the problem of encoding temporal dependency in Wan, a Southeastern Mande language spoken in Central Côte d'Ivoire.[1] I focus on strategies the language uses to encode a specific temporal relation between two events, such as precedence, succession or overlap in time, and in particular on the strategy of using aspectual forms for this purpose. Section 1 contains an overview of three major types of finite verb form used in Wan (tense forms, aspectual forms, and combinations of aspectual forms with a past tense marker). In Sections 2 and 3, I describe two strategies of expressing temporal relations between two events and discuss the use of specialized markers of deictic shift in the temporal interpretation. Section 4 concludes the paper.

1. Overview of verb forms

1.1. Tense forms

In this paper I focus only on the simple past form, which is distinguished from other uses of the verb by its tonal pattern. One-syllable verbs change their lexical tone to mid, while two-syllable verbs fall into two classes, both tones changing to mid in one, and just the last tone changing to mid in the other. The use of the past tense form is illustrated in (1) with the verb *zò* 'come' (the lexical tone of this verb is low; the past tense tone in (1) is mid).[2]

(1)   è   *zō*   zɔ̰̀
       he   came   today
       'He came today.'

In characterizing temporal meaning I will use, somewhat informally, the notation developed by Reichenbach (1947), in which tense is treated as a predication over three times: the Event time, the Speech time (the moment of speaking, or the "now" of the speech situation), and the Reference time (the time we are talking about, or the time that is relevant for us).[3] The semantics of the simple past form is represented in this notation in (2). The Event time (E) and the Reference time (R) coincide, since the simple past form describes an event (the coincidence of R and E is marked by a comma). For example, the simple past form in (1) describes an event (his coming) that took place before the moment of speaking. Both E and R precede the speech time S, since the event described precedes the moment of speaking.

[2] Tones are marked in the following way: *à* —low, *ā* —mid, *á* —high. Abbreviations are as follows: COP copula, DEF definite marker, INCL inclusive first person, NEG negation marker, NMLZ nominalizing suffix, PAST past tense marker, PL plural marker, PRF perfect auxiliary, PROG progressive marker, PROSP prospective marker, PSP postposition marking a verbal complement.

[3] In the respects that are relevant here, Reichenbach's Event time, Speech time and Reference time correspond to Klein's (1994) time of situation, time of utterance and topic time, respectively; on the relation between topic time and reference time, see especially Klein (1994:24-6).

(2)   E, R < S   (event preceding the time of speaking)

1.2. Aspectual forms

There are three basic aspectual forms in Wan. The progressive describes events that are in process at speech time, as in (3a), where the process of eating is ongoing at the moment of speaking. The progressive is marked by the postposition *lé* following the verb, with an (optional) copula functioning as the finite element. The progressive derives from a periphrastic construction with a locative postposition *lé* 'at, on' and can be literally understood as 'be at X-ing'.

(3a)   yāá   pɔ̄   lɔ̀   lé
        he+COP   thing   eat   PROG
        'He is eating.' (Lit. 'He is at eating.')

The meaning of the progressive is represented schematically in (3b), where the speech time S coincides with the reference time R (the progressive describes a state at the present moment) and both S and R are included in the event time E (the event is ongoing at the moment of speaking).

(3b)   Progressive[4]   S, R ε E   (event ongoing at the time of speaking)

The second aspectual form is the perfect, which denotes a state resulting from an event in the past and is formed by a special marker *ŋ̀* in the auxiliary position (after the subject but before the lexical verb and its object). For example, (4a) describes a state following the completion of an unspecified activity.

(4a)   nã̀   ŋ̀   bò
        I.PRF   PRF   finish
        'I have finished.'

The meaning of the perfect is represented in (4b): the reference time R coincides with the speech time S (the perfect describes a state at the present moment) and both S and R follow the event time E (the state described results from the event expressed by the verb).

(4b)   Perfect   E < S, R   (state at present related to an event in the past)

Finally, the prospective denotes a state related to some situation in the future, as in (5a), where there exist some indications in the present that the event will follow.

(5a)   è   zòŋ   siá-ŋ   trɔ́ɔ́   mì
        he   PROSP   fall-PROSP   ground by
        'It [= the knife] is about to fall on the ground.'

For the prospective, the reference time R coincides with the speech time S (the prospective describes a state at the present moment) and both S and R precede the event time E (the state described precedes the anticipated event).

(5b)   Prospective   S, R < E   (state at present related to an event in the future)

It is important that in contrast to tense forms, the reference time R of the aspectual forms coincides with the speech time S: they all tell us something about the state of affairs at the moment of

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[4] Like in some other languages (Dahl 1985: 112), the same form can be used with the progressive or future meaning. Only the non-future reading is treated in this study.

speaking (rather than describe an event as such), and it is relative to the speech time that the event itself is localized in time.

1.3. Aspectual forms with the past tense marker

Forms of the last type can be characterized as combinations of an aspectual construction with a past tense marker *bī*, which shifts the interpretation from the present into the past. The use of this marker is illustrated in (6a) and (6b) with a non-verbal sentence (the predicate is a postpositional possessive construction).

(6a)   nɛ̃́   ã̀   ɔŋlé   ɔ́
       child   they   in.possession   NEG
       'They have no children.'

(6b)   nɛ̃́   *bī*   ã̀   ɔŋlé   ɔ́
       child   PAST   they   in.possession   NEG
       'They had no children.'

When the marker *bī* combines with aspectual forms, in particular, with the prospective and the progressive (it is not attested with the perfect), it yields interpretation relative to a point in the past. In (7), a combination of the past tense marker with the progressive is used to describe an event as ongoing at a point in the past; in (8), a combination of the same marker with the prospective describes an unrealized action, or an event that was about to happen at some point in the past (but didn't).

(7)   ã̀   *bī*   ɓé   wò   lé
       they   PAST   this   do   PROG
       'They were doing this.'

(8)   è   *bī*   zòŋ   ká-ŋ
       he   PAST   PROSP   die-PROSP
       'He almost died.'

2. Strategies for expressing temporal relations in Wan

In Section 1 I presented an overview of the three main groups of verb forms used as verbal predicates in Wan; these are tense forms, aspectual forms (which specify a state of affairs at the time of speaking), and combinations of aspectual forms with a past tense marker (which specify a state of affairs at a moment in the past). In this section I outline two major strategies that speakers of Wan resort to in order to encode a specific temporal relation between two events, when the temporal interpretation of one event is *relativized* to another point (or interval) in time —a temporal anchor, which can be provided by the time of another event.

There is a number of specific types of temporal relations between two events that can be encoded in language (a given event may be interpreted as preceding the other, overlapping with it, or following it), and there is a number of ways in which a specific type of temporal relation can be encoded. In English, detailed information about a specific temporal relation is typically encoded by temporal subordinators like *while*, *until*, *as soon as*, *just after* (many such subordinators can be further specified: *an hour before, at the very moment when*). This strategy of encoding a temporal relation can be characterized as the *lexical strategy*, since the information about the temporal relation is expressed in such cases by means of a specialized lexical item (in English —a subordinator).

2.1. Lexical strategy

Although Wan has no class of temporal subordinators comparable to those of English, the function of encoding a specific temporal relation between two events can be attributed in Wan to other classes

of lexical items, such as postpositions with temporal meaning. Examples (9) and (10) illustrate the use of postpositions 'before' and 'after'.

(9) piágà   pɔ̄   lɔ̀   é   *bīgó*   ɓé   yí   bɔ̄   ā̀   tēŋ   yā
     midday thing eat DEF after   and   sleep passed they all   with
     'After lunch they all took a nap.'

(10) ā̀   gā   ŋ̀ klá   é   *lé*
     they   went.away   I   arrive DEF before
     'They left before I arrived.'

In both sentences, the event of the main clause is located in time relative to another event; i.e. localization in time of the event described by a finite verb form is confined to an interval prior to or after the anchoring time. The anchoring time is provided by the event expressed in a nominalized form as an argument of the postposition, and the postposition specifies the actual relation between the two events: the event of the main clause follows the event expressed within the postpositional phrase in (9) and precedes it in (10).

The example in (11) illustrates a different type of construction that can be described in terms of the lexical strategy. Here, the two events are related by the temporal dependency marker *ɓé* with the general meaning 'and', 'then', and the type of temporal relation (immediate precedence) is expressed by the particle *té* 'just' after the nominalized clause.

(11) è   mlā̂   é   bā   é   lé *té*   ɓé   bɔ̀lè mù é tēŋ glūŋ
     she   come.out DEF field DEF at just   then bird PL DEF all flew.up
     'As soon as she came out into the field all the birds flew up.'

The particle *té* 'just' shares some properties with ideophones (it stands in the clause-final position, following all adverbs and postpositional phrases, and is pronounced with emphasis). Just like postpositions with temporal meaning, the particle *té* 'just' is used to specify lexically the intended type of temporal relation between the two events, anchoring the temporal interpretation of the finite form to the time of the event described in a nominalized clause.

2.2. Use of aspectual forms with a shifted deictic center

As an alternative to encoding the specific temporal relation in a specialized lexical marker, speakers of Wan may use a different strategy, which relies on the information about anteriority, posteriority and simultaneity as it is encoded in the aspectual forms. Thus, a specific temporal relation between two events can be established by assigning a relative interpretation to aspectual forms, and such relative use is signaled by a special marker *ké*. The use of this strategy is illustrated in (12).

(12) è   zō   *ké*   ā̀   ŋ̀   gà
     he   came   KE   they   PRF   go
     'He came after they left.' (Lit. 'He came, KE they have gone.')

The sentence in (12) consists of two finite clauses connected by the marker *ké*. The first clause is in the simple past; the second clause is in the perfect. The perfect is normally interpreted relative to the speech time and describes a state that resulted from an event and holds at the moment of speaking (cf. representation in 4b). However, when the perfect is introduced by the marker *ké* in (12), its deictic center —the "now" of the perfect, which in the default case is the speech time— is identified with the reference time of the preceding clause, i.e. the event of "their leaving" is located in time not relative to the speech time, but relative to the event described in the first part of the construction ("his coming").[5]

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[5] For a comprehensive discussion of time reference as a deictic system, see Comrie (1985), esp. pp. 9-18.

The temporal relation of precedence (the event of the second part of the construction precedes the event of the first part) is encoded through the use of the perfect with a shifted deictic center, and this shift is signaled by a specialized marker *ké*.

Another example of the use of this strategy is (13), with a combination of the progressive with the past tense marker in the first clause and the progressive form in the second part of construction, introduced by *ké*.

(13)   lē   é   bī   nɛ̰̀mì gò   lé   *ké*   nà̰ɑ̰̀   blɑ̰̀   lé
       woman   DEF   PAST   sweep   PROG   KE   I+COP   watch   PROG
       'The woman was sweeping while I watched her.'
       (Lit. 'The woman was sweeping, KE I am watching.')

The temporal overlap between two events is encoded in (13) by the progressive in the second clause. Normally, the progressive describes an event that is ongoing at speech time ('I am watching'). When introduced by the deictic shift marker *ké*, it describes an event that is ongoing at the previously specified reference time; in (13), it is a point in the past at which the woman was sweeping.

The use of the perfect in (12) and of the progressive in (13) reveals a difference between aspectual forms in Wan and aspectual forms in a language like English. In English, finite aspectual constructions are marked for tense, as in *When he calls I **will** have done / **will** be doing the work*, so that every event is situated in the past or future independently of previous discourse. In Wan, finite aspectual forms need not be marked for tense when used in a clause sequence: their interpretation can be shifted to a previous reference time, which can be situated in the past or future, by means of a specialized marker.[6]

The uses in (12) and (13) are also interesting in that they can be characterized as instances of an *anaphoric* strategy, where the second verb form in the construction (the aspectual form introduced by *ké*) shifts its temporal reference. Its interpretation is relativized to the point of reference provided by a preceding verb form, which thus serves as a temporal anchor for the interpretation of the form introduced by *ké*. For example, the temporal interpretation of the perfect and the progressive in (12) and (13) is dependent on the previously established reference time (which can be localized in the past or future), since the forms no longer describe a state at the time of speaking but rather a state at the previous reference time, which serves in this sense as a temporal anchor of the form.[7] This temporal anchor (the event relative to which the aspectual form introduced by *ké* is interpreted) always precedes the clause with the relative interpretation. In other words, the temporally dependent part of the construction is marked by the deictic shift marker *ké* and always follows the part that establishes the reference time to which the deictic center of the following form is shifted.

The fixed order of the parts of constructions with *ké* constitutes a difference between such constructions and English sentences with temporal subordinate clauses, where reordering of the parts does not lead to a change in meaning, cf. *You left after he came* vs. *After he came you left*. In translating my examples into English I tried to preserve the order in which the events are described in the original sentence. Furthermore, I translated the second part of the construction as a temporally subordinate clause (with the exception of cases when the first part of the construction is non-finite, as in (14) and (15) below), since that part is introduced by an overt marker in Wan. Thus, although the sentence in (12), translated above as 'He came after they left', could in principle be translated as 'By the time he came they had left', I chose the former translation, since it seems to reflect better the fact that the first part of the construction is unmarked and the marker *ké* introduces the second clause (in

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[6] The presence or absence of the marker *ké* corresponds to a distinction between absolute and relative temporal interpretation of a verb form, as it is described by Jakobson (1957) in terms of the category of *taxis*; the use of the marker *ké*, which signals that the time reference of a verb form is established with respect to another event or state, falls into the category of 'connector'.

[7] As discussed in Partee (1973, 1984), the relation between the temporally dependent and the anchoring clause is in many respects similar to the relation between an anaphor and its antecedent. Partee (1973) points out that in English temporal subordinate clauses define the reference point relative to which the main clause is interpreted, in the same way as a noun phrase defines the reference of an anaphoric pronoun.

speech, the marker *ké* is often preceded by a pause, and intonationally, it seems to belong to the clause that follows it).

As was earlier described, in constructions with *ké* the default interpretation of finite aspectual forms is overriden by an anaphoric interpretation, so that aspectual forms can no longer be treated as having an independent deictic center that coincides with the time of speaking. The function of the marker *ké* is to dissociate the interpretation of the following form from the moment of speaking (which is the default deictic center in the interpretation of aspectual forms) and to anchor it to a previously established reference time. That reference time can be established in a number of ways. It can be provided by a tensed clause, as in (12), or by a combination of an aspectual form with a past tense marker (13). It can also be introduced by an adverbial clause (14) or by a nominalized clause in the topic position[8] (15).

(14)　à　zò　é　mì　　bā　é　lé　ké　　kā̰　ŋ　pɔ̄ é　tē̄ŋ tú　lɔ̀
　　　 his come DEF after　　field DEF at　KE　　we.excl PRF thing DEF all entire eat
　　　 'By the time he came from the field we had [already] eaten all the food.'[9]
　　　 (Lit. 'On his coming from the field, KE we have eaten the entire thing.')

(15)　Yōlē　bò　é　　pɔ̄ trɔ̰́　yā　ké　yrā̰ mū　ā̰　　ɓí-tà̰　lé　　pí
　　　 Y.　　finish　DEF　　thing pound PSP KE　children COP　dance　PROG　still
　　　 'When Yole finished pounding, children were still dancing.'
　　　 (Lit. 'Yole finishing pounding, KE children are still dancing.')

Finally, the previous reference time can also be established by an aspectual form, as in (16) and (17).

(16)　ŋ̀　　nã̰kàó　é　　zō　　klá　　ké　　nã̰　　ŋ　　gà　　yí-té
　　　 my　　brother DEF　PROSP　arrive　KE　　I　　　PRF　　go　　sleep
　　　　'My brother arrived after I went to sleep.'
　　　 (Lit. 'My brother is about to arrive, KE I have gone to sleep.')

(17)　lā　klē̄ŋkɔ̄lē　á　　zò　　lé　　ké　　lā　　ŋ　　bò　　gà　　yā
　　　 your friend　COP　come　PROG　KE　　you　PRF　finish　go　　PSP
　　　 'Your friend came just after you went away.'
　　　 (Lit. 'Your friend is coming, KE you're already gone.)

In spite of the variation in the structure of the first part of the construction, the examples in (12)-(17) share the property of expressing a temporal relation between two events through the use of aspectual forms with a shifted deictic center. I return to the problem of shifting the deictic center in Section 3, where I argue that this phenomenon is better described in terms of a deictic shift, and not just a shift of the reference time.

2.3. Use of aspectual forms with tense marking

In the previous section I showed how aspectual forms are employed in Wan for expressing temporal relations in constructions with anaphoric interpretation of the second verb form (the deictic center in the interpretation of that form is dissociated from the speech time and shifted to the preceding

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[8] The relation between the marking of adverbial clauses and that of topics is discussed in Thompson and Longacre (1985).
[9] When neither part of the construction contains a tense form or a past tense marker, the sentence may be ambiguous out of context as to whether it refers to events in the past or in the future. Only past tense readings are treated here.

reference time, which may be located in the past or future).[10] Temporal relations between two events can also be expressed by combinations of forms that are located in time independently of each other. In the examples below, the second part of the construction is a combination of the progressive (18) and the prospective (19) with the past tense marker *bī*, which independently shifts the interpretation of an aspectual form to a moment in the past. The temporal interpretation of aspectual forms (the progressive in (18) and the prospective in (19)) is therefore determined by the past tense marker (the form is independently "tensed"), hence the absence of the marker *ké* (there is no need to shift the "now" of the speech situation to a different point). The general marker of temporal dependence *ɓé* 'and, then' is used instead.

(18)   Yōlē   bō   pɔ̄   trɔ̋   yā   ɓé   è   bī   làlè   glà   lé
         Y.   finished thing   pound   PSP   then   she   PAST   song   give   PROG
         'Having finished pounding Yole was singing.'
         (Lit. 'Yole finished pounding, then she was singing.')

(19)   à   bɛ̀nì   gbɛ̀   ziè   ɓé   è   bī   zòŋ   ká-ŋ
         his   fear   manner bad   then   he   PAST   PROSP   die-PROSP
         'He was frightened so badly that he almost died.'

The marker *ɓé* 'and, then' has a very general function of coordinating two clauses but does not by itself contribute any specific information about the temporal relation between the events (typically, like with English *and*, the events are understood to take place either in the order in which they are reported or simultaneously).

3. Shifting deictic center with aspectual forms
3.1. The marker *ké* as a deictic shift marker

In Section 2.2 I discussed the anaphoric strategy of encoding temporal relations in Wan, when the temporal relation is expressed in the second part of the construction by an aspectual form with a shifted deictic center, and this form is interpreted relative to the reference time established in the first part of the construction. Such constructions are marked by *ké*, which I characterized as a marker of deictic shift. As a deictic shift marker, *ké* cannot introduce verb forms whose temporal reference is established independently (e.g. if the state described is localized in the past due to the use of the past tense marker and there is no need to shift the deictic center; see Section 2.3). The status of *ké* as a deictic shift marker is further supported by examples where it introduces a clause in the simple past tense, such as the clause with *ɔ̄* 'finished' in (20a).

(20a)   wì   dèŋ   mù   é   zò   é,   ké   è   yrē   tēŋ   ségé-ségé   ɔ̄
          animal   rest   PL   DEF   come   DEF   KE   he   work   all   entirely   finished
          'When the rest of the animals came, he had [already] finished the work.'
          (Lit. 'The rest of animals arriving, KE he finished all the work.')

For the simple past form *ɔ̄* 'finished' in (20a), the time of the event (finishing of the work) is understood to precede the time of speaking. Like with aspectual forms, however, the marker *ké* shifts the deictic center of the form to a previously established reference time (which is the time when the animals came). Hence, the time of the event in the second clause ("his finishing the work") is interpreted as **preceding** the time of the anchoring event (the animals' arrival). As a result, the

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[10] Although this paper focuses on expression of events in the past, temporal relations between events in the future seem to be encoded in the same way, cf. the example below in (i), which can receive the reading where the deictic center of the progressive in the second part of the construction is shifted into the future.

(i)   kà   flɛ̋   é   sé   ké   cī̃ŋ   á   zò   lé
      we.INCL   breath   DEF   a.little   KE   rain   COP   come   PROG
      'It is about to rain.' (Lit. 'Our waiting [=breathing] a little, KE it is raining.')

sentence is interpreted non-iconically; this interpretation is consistent with a shift of the deictic center, not just the reference time, of the form. Substitution of the general dependency marker *ɓé* for *ké* in the same example results in an iconic interpretation of the events: with *ɓé*, it would mean that he finished the work **after** the animals came. This difference in interpretation is explained by *ké* shifting the deictic center of the speech situation.

(20b) wì   dèŋ mù é   zò   é,   ɓé   è   yrē tēŋ ségé ségé ɔ̄̄
       animal rest PL DEF come DEF   then he   work all   entirely   finished
       'When (=after) the rest of the animals came, he finished the work.'
       (Lit. 'The rest of animals arriving, then he finished all the work.')

The difference in interpretation of the simple past form in (20a), where it is introduced by *ké*, and in (20b), where it is introduced by *ɓé*, is illustrated in the following two diagrams. Diagram (21a) corresponds to the reading when the form has a shifted deictic center (DC), and the event of the second clause is understood as preceding the previously established reference time.

(21a)   Interpretation of the simple past form in constructions with *ké* (shifted deictic center, 20a)

Time line:
          $E_{FINISHED}$ $DC_{FINISHED}$ = prior R = $E_{ANIMALS\ CAME}$ Moment of Speaking

The interpretation in (21b) does not have a shifted deictic center, and it coincides with the moment of speaking. The event described by the past tense form is then understood to precede the moment of speaking, i.e. is simply located in the past, and is by default interpreted as following the previously introduced reference time (this results in the iconic interpretation).

(21b)   Interpretation of the simple past form in constructions with *ɓé* 'then, and' (20b)

Time line:
          $E_{FINISHED}$ $DC_{FINISHED}$ = Moment of Speaking

3.2. Aspectual forms as temporal anchors

Up to now we have only seen examples of aspectual forms used in the second part of a complex construction, where their temporal interpretation was relativized to an anchoring time. This last section deals with the problem of using aspectual forms to establish an independent anchoring time. This use of an aspectual form also requires a dissociation of the deictic center from speech time, but now in a clause that establishes a point of reference for the temporal interpretation of a following clause.

The marker used for this purpose derives from the marker of spatial deixis *gɛ̄* 'here'. Its spatial use is illustrated in (22).

(22)   Dèlɔ̀tɔ́   bā   é   *gɛ̄*
        D.   field DEF here
        'Here is Deloto's field.'

When an aspectual form (the prospective, the progressive, or the perfect) establishes a temporal point of reference for a verb form in the simple past, the same marker *gɛ̄* stands in the auxiliary position (immediately following the subject) and introduces an independent reference time for the aspectual form. For example, in (23) the state of being prepared to start working (described by the prospective) is detached from the deictic center (the "now" of the speech situation), and the event of the second clause (in the simple past, 'he said') is linked to that state by the temporal dependency marker *ɓé* 'and, then'.

(23) è   *gē*   zòŋ   yrē   ló-ŋ   ságlà   ɓé   è   gé
      he   here   PROSP work   do-NMLZ   begin then   he   said
      'When he was about to start working, he said…'
      (Lit.: 'Here he is about to start working, then he said.')

Similarly, in (24) the anchoring clause is in the progressive (lit., 'The child is here playing'). The following (temporally dependent) clause is marked by the deictic shift marker *ké*, since it is in the progressive, too, and also requires dissociation from the moment of speaking.[11]

(24) nɛ̃́   gē   srɛ̃́ŋ-lɔ̀   lé   kɛɛyēgó   ké   à   nã̀ã̀   lɔ̀ŋ-pɔ̄ drò   lé
      child here play   PROG at.this.time   KE his mother food   prepare PROG
      'The child was playing while his mother prepared the meal.'
      (Lit. 'At this time the child is here playing, KE his mother is preparing food.')

4. Conclusion

The data from Wan shows how a language without a rich inventory of specialized lexical subordinators can express a wide range of temporal relations relying on the relative interpretation of aspectual forms (as well as tense forms). In Wan, the use of specialized markers of temporal relations, such as postpositions, adverbs, and particles, co-exists with the use of aspectual forms with a shifted deictic center. Finite aspectual forms need not be tensed in Wan in the sense of having an independently established temporal reference. Although normally and in an isolated clause the forms of the prospective or the progressive cannot be used to refer to events in the past, the temporal interpretation of any aspectual form can be shifted into the past or future in a clause sequence.

Shifts in the deictic center can be marked by one of two special markers, depending on the part of the construction where the form is used. The marker of the relative interpretation *ké* is used in the second part of the construction and links the shifted deictic center to a previous reference time. The marker *gē* ('here') is used in the first part of the construction, where it establishes a temporal anchor — an independent reference time relative to which the next clause is interpreted. Both markers signal a shift in the deictic center of the form away from the time of speaking. In other words, dissociation of the deictic center of a verb form from the "now" of the speech situation is encoded in Wan as a grammatical category.

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[11] In examples like (24), the marker *gē* 'here' tends to be optional, since a shift in the deictic center of the second clause (introduced by *ké*) already implies that the preceding reference time does not coincide with the time of speaking, i.e. that the state described by the first aspectual form also holds at a moment in time other than the time of speaking; cf. (16) and (17).

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