Syntactically independent but pragmatically dependent: precautioning temporal markers

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Syntactically independent but pragmatically dependent: precautioning temporal markers

Syntax of the World’s Languages, Paris, 4 September 2018

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Ingredients of precautionary scenarios

apprehension-causing situation
Ingredients of precautionary scenarios

pre-emptive situation

apprehension-causing situation

... with a culturally salient understanding that the apprehension-causing event is possible if the pre-emptive situation fails to apply
Quasi-conditional structure of precautionary (apprehensive) scenarios

Pre-emptive event \((q^+)\) \(\implies\) no apprehension-causing event \((p^+)\)

No pre-emptive event \((q^-)\) \(\implies\) apprehension-causing event \((p^-)\)

Discussed for apprehensive/precautionary markers e.g. by Lichtenberk (1995: 298) and Dobrushina (2006: 30), as well as by François’ (2003:307), and many individual language descriptions

Discussed for Warnings and Threats as Conditional Speech Acts, e.g. by Wunderlich (1977), Dominicy & Franken (2002), Salgueiro Blanco (2010), Wray et al. (2016), ...
Centrality of the apprehension-causing situation

- The mention of the apprehension-causing situation may be sufficient for the addressee to undertake the appropriate pre-emptive response (cf. Dobrushina 2006: 30)

→ Apprehensive expression
In the linguistic encoding of precautionary scenarios:

What kind of markers are suited to conveying an apprehension-causing event?

- p is possible at reference time t
- p is undesirable
Verstraete (2006: 195) [emphasis ours]

Two categories of markers contribute to the semantic specification of complex sentence relations (including in precautionary scenarios):

- **Relational Markers**, e.g. *conjunctions or complementizers*: generally found only in complex sentences and thus serve as specialized markers for labeling complex sentence relations like *causal, conditional* or *temporal* relations

- **Intra-Clausal Markers**, e.g. tense, aspect and *mood* markers: by specifying component clauses for particular temporal or modal features; these markers can contribute to the semantics of complex sentence relations (but have main clause uses)

Verstraete (2006: 201-202) acknowledges the issue of distinguishing the two in the context of precautionary clauses, and the existence of dependent mood.

➡️ But: *can a marker be both?*
Claim:

Some originally temporal connectives (relational markers) have apprehensive uses

- Situation p is possible at reference time t
- Situation p is undesirable

and in those contexts show characteristics of modal markers

(Wear your hat), ‘later/afterwards/possibly’ you get sunburnt.
Overview

- Temporal connectors in precautionary/apprehensive function as a cross-linguistic phenomenon

- A case study:
  - Standard colloquial German *nachher*
  - Compared with Northern Australian Kriol *bambai*

- From temporal to apprehensive: what pathway of semantic change?
What do we know about temporal precautionary markers?

Very little.

- Dobrushina (2006: 47-49), in a typological overview of apprehensive constructions, mentions temporal markers with the semantics of ‘before, not yet’ (citing Mangarrayi and Rapanui as examples) and with the semantics of ‘suddenly, immediately’ (citing Russian вдруг [vdrug])

- Boogaart (2009) discusses in detail the precautionary functions of Dutch straks ‘soon, immediately’ – but apparently without awareness of the cross-linguistic category

- Angelo & Schultze-Berndt (2016) describe the precautionary functions of Northern Australian Kriol bambai ‘later, afterwards’
  - Also found comparable reflexes of bye and bye in other English-lexified Pacific creole languages: Hawai’ian Creole (Sakoda & Siegel 2008: 536; Siegel 2011: 545); Norf’k (Mühlhäusler 2010: 3567)

- A number of brief remarks in language-specific descriptions
Some examples...
Northern Australian Kriol (English lexifier; across northern Australia)

- The particle bambai (< English by and by) has both a temporal and an apprehensive function (with a partially distinctive distribution in some varieties) (Angelo & Schultze-Berndt, 2016)

(1) a. *Im maidi gada dagat thed daga bambai.*
   3SG POSSB FUT/OBL eat DEM.there food later
   ‘She might be going to eat the food later.’

b. “*Yumob lib=um! Bigis enamul danjeya!*”
   2PL leave=TR very.large animal DEM.there
   *Bambai im han=i yumob na” ai bin latha [...]*
   later/APPR 3SG hunt=TR 2PL SEQ 1SG PST do/say
   “You leave it alone! That animal is huge. (Watch out or else) it **might** chase you” I said [...] (fieldwork Angelo)
Mangarrayi (affiliation debated; Australia)

- *balaga* ‘before, lest’ with non-past marking expresses “evitative anticipatory” meaning

(2) a. *dayi nga-yirri+wa-ya-b gurrji,*
   NEG 1SG/3SG-see-AUG-PNEG long ago/before
   *balalaga ga-nga-wa-n*
   *today/now 3-1SG/3SG-go.to.see-PRES*

   ‘I didn’t see it before, **today** I'm going to see it’ (Merlan 1982: 138)

b. *barrgji Ø-nama balaga nya-way-(y)i-n*
   hard 2SG-hold.IMP **lest** 2SG-fall-MP-PRES

   ‘Hold on tight **lest/before** you fall!’ (Merlan, 1982, p. 147)
Gaagudju (affiliation debated; Australia)

• *baleeru* ‘later, lest’ with ‘evitative mood’ expresses apprehensive meaning

(3) a. awoy *baleeru* nj-djorr'nggooma arree-yu,
   yes later 1.FUT-go.in 1.FUT-sleep

   ‘Yes, later on, I will go in and sleep’ (Harvey 2002: 374-5)

b. marree-ya, *baleeru* maadada ng-geema-ya
   1+2-go.FUT later/APPR night IV-become-EVIT

   ‘You and I had better go, lest it become night!’ (Harvey, 2002, p. 297)
Nhanda (Pama-Nyungan; Western Australia)

- The form *urdaa / urdamundi* is only explicitly described as a temporal adverb ‘directly, soon’ by Blevins (2001, p. 116), but occurs in precautionary contexts:

(4) a. *urda* ngayi yatka-ndha
   
   **soon** 1 **go-NPAST**
   
   ‘I'll be going **soon**.’ (Blevins 2001: 121)

   b. *abarli-nu mika-nda-a uthu; urdamundi aja-ndha-ndha*
      
      **child-PL** **play-CAUS-PRS** **dog directly** **bite-FUT-3PL.O**
      
      ‘The children are playing with the dog; **directly** he will bite.’
      
      (Blevins 2001: 80)
Pidgin Hawai’ian (Hawai’ian lexifier)

Note: *Traditional* Hawai’ian has an apprehensive marker *o ‘if, lest’* of unclear origin (Elbert & Pukui, 2001, p. 168)

(5) a. **Mahope** kela Kepani kii mai hopu iaia hele.
     later DET Japanese fetch DIR seize 3SG go

     ‘Then the Japanese took us away.’ [Roberts 2013, APICS online, ex. 74-154, naturalistic written data]

b. **Wau olelo iaia noho malie,**
     1SG speak 3SG stay quiet

     **mahope** huhu kela kahunapule.
     later/APPR angry DET priest

     ‘(That woman Auroria returned to the church with some girls [...].) I told her to be quiet, **or else** the priest would get angry.’

     [Roberts 2013, APICS online, ex. 71-9, naturalistic written data]
(6) a. *Nachher* geht er noch zum *Sport.*

‘Later he will go to his sports class’

b. *Ich* würde dir aber *raten,*

‘I would however advise you not to fiddle around with the battery it *might* break (and that would be a bad thing)’

German (Bavarian) (Fenk-Oczlon 2018)

(7) a. Kimm \textcolor{red}{gach} amoi her
\hspace{1em} \text{come.IMP quickly/suddenly PART here}
\hspace{1em} \\
\hspace{1em} \text{‘Come here quickly’}

b. \textcolor{red}{Gach} brichst da no an Haxn
\hspace{1em} \text{APPR break:2SG.PRS 2SG.DAT PART a leg}
\hspace{1em} \\
\hspace{1em} \text{(Don’t ski too fast!) ‘You might break your leg’}
The apprehensive function of German *nachher* – a closer look
**Temporal nachher ‘later, afterwards’**

A temporal **adverb** expressing a subsequence relation

... to the deictic ‘now’ (present tense) (Eisenberg, 2013, p. 459)

(8) a. *Ich gehe nachher noch schwimmen.*
     1SG go:PST later PARTICLE swim:INF

‘I’ll go swimming in a while [from now]’

... anaphorically, to a contextually specified point in time (all tenses):

(9) *Bis 1793 bildete das Dorf mit Givisiez eine Gemeinde,*
     until 1793 form:PST DEF village with G. one commune

     erst nachher wurde es selbständig.
     only later become:PST it independent

‘Until 1793 the village formed one commune with Givisiez; only later did it become independent.’
Temporal *nachher* ‘later, afterwards’ (cont.)

- It is an adverbial connective, not a subordinator: its main clause status is clearly demonstrated by V2 constituent order
- It has variable position
- In initial position, it is stressed (a frame-setter)
- A clause containing it can be embedded

(10) a. *Ich gehe nachher noch schwimmen.*

    1SG go:PST later PARTICLE swim:INF

    ‘I’ll go swimming in a while [from now]’

b. *Nächher gehe ich noch schwimmen.*

c. *Ich gehe noch schwimmen nachher.*

d. *...weil [‘because’] ich nachher noch schwimmen gehe.*
Apprehensive *nachher*

... is not described in ANY of a dozen grammars and works on German sentence connectives surveyed.

Preliminary analysis:

- Always (?) clause-initial
- Categorically unstressed
- Typically in combination with a present tense verb, but also possible with past perfect, past tense, and counterfactual ("subjunctive") past (see below)

- Other syntactic properties of a main clause adverb not affected

Semantically apprehensive?
Conventionalisation of undesirability

- Searching for combinations of (non-temporal) nachher with verbs such as ‘win’ only returned examples where the event was nevertheless judged undesirable by the speaker/writer:

(11) Ich glaube, ich nehme lieber nicht am Gewinnspiel teil.

I think:PRS I take rather NEG P:DEF lottery part

Nachher gewinne ich noch,

APPR win:PRS I PARTICLE

und kann das CL Finale nicht zu Hause schauen.

and can DEF CL final NEG at home watch:INF

‘I think I’d rather not participate in this lottery.

I might win [a trip], and

would not be able to watch the Champions League final at home.’

(http://www.hifi-forum.de/viewthread-144-7707-4.html)
Conventionalisation of undesirability (cont.)

Context:
Offer of a last-minute start place at a motor race (on a racing forum)

(12) a. Ne, lass *mal!*
   no  let   PART
   *Nachher* haue ich da noch jemanden raus!
   APPR/later hit:1SG.PRS 1SG there PART someone out

   ‘No, (let’s) leave it. I might end up kicking someone out!’
   
   https://www.well-rc.de/include.php?path=forumsthread&threadid=1300&entries=0

b. # Oh super! *Nachher* haue ich da noch jemanden raus!
   oh  great

   Intended: ‘Great! I might actually get to kick someone out!’
   
   (own judgement ESB)
Conventionalisation of undesirability PLUS lack of intention

- Apprehensives in some languages can be used in warnings but not threats, i.e. cannot be used to encode a potential undesirable event that the speaker *intends* to bring about (Vuillermet 2017, 2018 SLE)

- This also seems to be the case for German *nachher* in apprehensive function (ok with temporal interpretation).

Context:
Boy reluctantly accepting the challenge for a play fight by a girl:

(13) *Nachher* tu ich dir weh und dann heulst du

*I might hurt you (accidentally), and then you’ll cry’*

(story by G Ruck-Pauquet)
‘In case’ reading


‘Take an umbrella – it might rain’

*(constructed)*
Counterfactual use (rare)

The reference time for evaluating a subsequent event/state as potential and undesirable can be in the past:

(15) Vielleicht war es doch gut, dass sie schnell gestorben ist,
‘Maybe it was good that she died quickly,

\textbf{nachher hätte sie noch schlimme Schmerzen gehabt}

\begin{tabular}{p{0.2\textwidth}p{0.2\textwidth}p{0.2\textwidth}p{0.2\textwidth}p{0.2\textwidth}}
\textit{APPR} & \textit{would.have} & \textit{3SG PART bad} & \textit{pains} & \textit{have:PRTCP} \\
\end{tabular}

\begin{tabular}{p{0.2\textwidth}p{0.2\textwidth}p{0.2\textwidth}p{0.2\textwidth}p{0.2\textwidth}}
\textit{she might have ended up suffering terrible pain’}
\end{tabular}

(adapted from https://www.das-hamsterforum.de/index.php?page=Thread&threadID=90384)

Thanks to Martina Faller for this example and discussion.
No entailment of temporal sequence

• In (16), the (possible) state of the recipient having too many clothes for her baby overlaps with utterance time (t) rather than following it

• Clearly epistemic-apprehensional (cf. Lichtenberk 1995) use of nachher: speaker doesn’t know whether this state holds or not

• But also: the relevant undesirable consequence follows t

Context: A is wondering what recommendation to give friends asking for gift ideas for a baby shower. B replies:

(16) Dann sind in dem Fall Gutscheine wirklich gut! Then are in that case vouchers really good

Nachher hat sie schon zu viele Klamotten. APR has she already too many clothes

‘Then in that case vouchers are really good. She might already have too many clothes.’
No entailment of temporal sequence (cont.)

- In (17), the (possible) state of the rumour of the border falling being false overlaps with utterance time \( t \) rather than following it, but speaker doesn’t know whether it holds or not (epistemic component of \( nachher \))
- the potential discovery, and any undesirable consequence, follows t

Context: retrospective discussion of the speaker’s and her husband’s moves on the night that the GDR border fell. Husband had suggested to go to the border. Wife had said:

(17) *du spinnst, ich geh doch jetzt nich in der Nacht los*

\[ \text{2SG be.crazy:PRS:2SG 1SG go PART now NEG in DEF night off} \]

\textit{nachher} is an dem \textit{überhaupt nichts} dran

\[ \text{APPR is on DEM absolutely nothing on it} \]

‘you’re crazy; I’m not going to go off now in the middle of the night, it \textit{might} (turn out to be) be a rumour’ (IDS corpus)
Summary: Properties of German *nachher* and Kriol *bambai*

Both function as anaphoric or deictic temporal adverbs (not subordinating)

In apprehensive function:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Undesirability encoded</th>
<th>Only undesirable situations unintended by speaker</th>
<th>Present tense clauses w. future reference</th>
<th>Past counterfactual clauses</th>
<th>Use w/o temporal sequence</th>
<th>Combination w. epistemic modals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>nachher</em></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>bambai</em></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>(+)*</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>−/?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*not in the data used for Angelo & Schultze-Berndt (2016), but reported by Philips (2018 SLE)*

Yet to do: investigation of compatibility with epistemic modal particles.
Preliminary conclusion

An originally temporal connective, German *nachher* ‘later, afterwards’, has apprehensive uses:

- **Situation p is possible at reference time t**
  - Epistemic possibility: situation may be settled, but speaker does not know whether or not it holds

- **Situation p is undesirable**

- Undesirability (to the addressee) not intended by speaker

Similarly for Northern Australian Kriol *bambai*  
(Angelo & Schultze-Berndt 2016)
Temporal to apprehensive?
Hypothesis 1: temporal > causal link to failed pre-emptive event


You are teasing the dog, later it bites you

>> Because you are teasing the dog, it bites you.

(Illocutionary force: ‘Stop teasing the dog!’)

BUT:

“It appears (...) that what is needed for a causal inference to arise is partial temporal overlap, not sequence” (Traugott & König, 1991, p. 197)

- Markers of causation arise from markers of **temporal overlap** (e.g. Engl. *since*, German *weil* ‘while > because’)

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Hypothesis 2: temporal subsequence to t > possibility at t

Central component for the grammaticalisation of a temporal adverbial like *nachher* or *bambai* is not the semantic (temporal) link to a (failed) preemptive situation, but rather the temporal subsequence to the reference time t.

- In line with main clause status of the connective.
- Semanticisation of undesirability arising from typical contexts

(at t) Later it bites you

> It is possible (at t) that it bites you (and that’s undesirable)

additional component: inertia – no change in circumstances

Pragmatic effect:

‘Change the circumstances so that the possibility no longer arises’
Potential bridging contexts for German *nachher* (1)

Combination with logical connective *sonst* ‘or else’:

(18) *vielleicht*   *sollt*   *ich*   *mich*   *wirklich*
maybe   should   1SG   REFL:1SG   really

*drum kümmern*   *das*   *mal*   *zuzumachen*
concern_with:INF   DEM   PART   close:INF

*sonst*   *geht*   *das*   *nachher*   *nie*   *mehr*
otherwise   go:PRS:3SG   DEM   later/APPR   never again

(Context of playing a game) ‘maybe I should concern myself with closing this (possibility of a move), otherwise *later* this will never be possible again’ (IDS corpus)
Potential bridging contexts for German nachher (2)

Combination with negative purposive?/optative? nicht dass ‘not that’:

(19) wir können auch gern jetzt zum esse gehen (…)  
we can also happily now to meal go:INF

nicht dass = man nachher für die Magischtrale 1Std brauchet  
not that = one later/APPR for DEF “magistral” 1hr need

und dann s Mittagesse noch weiter nach hinten schieben muss  
and then DEF lunch even further to back push must

(Context of a meeting) ‘We could go to have a meal now, so as not to later take an hour for the magistral (meeting), and then have to postpone lunch even further’ (IDS corpus)
Concluding remarks

Various (grammaticalisation) strategies can be used for conveying apprehensive meaning (undesirable possibility).


Some strategies appear to involve pragmatic strengthening (semanticisation of an undesirability component) of a semantically more general marker:

- **non-specific possibility modal > undesirable possibility modal** (Dobrushina, 2006; Pakendorf & Schalley, 2007)

The temporal connectives (“relators”) illustrated here can be analysed as possibility modals, but only in their apprehensive use ...

- What type: root modal? epistemic? Something else?
- Additional component of semantic coherence with (failed) pre-emptive situation?
References


