Aspects of Tense and Aspect in Fas

Wietze Baron   **1984**

Preamble

The following notes were written in 1983-1984 as part of a first rough draft on Fas grammar. The Fas language was studied at intermittent periods from 1978 to 1988. The rather abrupt and untimely end of the research programme meant that much data and rough drafts remained unpublished and unavailable.
Given a renewed interest in Papuan languages and the accommodating emergence of the Internet, it seemed a good idea to make these data as yet available. The notes have only been slightly edited in favour, hopefully, of greater clarity.
For more information on Fas consult the SIL PNG Language Resource Site.
See Kwomtari for general information on Fas and the Kwomtari phylum language area.

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Table of Contents

The Perfect Aspect Particle 'NUW' in Fas

UNIVERSAL VERBAL CATEGORY LABELS

"A grammatical category, such as the "perfect", will not have exactly the same range of uses in one language as it does in another, given that this is true why are linguists willing to use the same name for the category in two different languages? How can we sensibly compare languages?"

L.B ANDERSON 82:227

Although we may assume that any conceivable semantic category (say "done with one's toes") is (potentially) a conceivable semantic category in every language, the question is whether there are constraints on the kinds of categories that are actually grammaticalized in languages and how and to what extent they are distributed around the linguistic globe.

Linguists have apparently found that certain (similar) semantic categories are encoded in a wide variety of languages and consequently we find typical categorical taxonomies in wide-spread usage. For verbal categories this would be the typical tripartite distinction between TENSE, ASPECT and MODALITY.

This major differentiation is probably no more than an historic accident, reflecting categories required in early European linguistics (like the Aspect category which was developed in Slavic studies). General reluctance to proliferate basic categories need not indicate substantial universal homogeneity, rather the terms have generally come to be used as rough tags for roughly related phenomena, providing at least some kind of comparative key. This could be accomplished a. By defining the basic categorical notions in such general terms that they would cover many more specific definitions, at the risk of becoming semantically vacuous. b. By subcategorizing basic categories, sometimes accommodating categories which put strain on the basic semantic reading of the major category.

Comrie (76) for instance, defines the *perfect* in terms of lacking the *imperfect* characteristics and *imperfect* as "explicit reference to the internal temporal structure of a situation, viewing a situation from within", he then moves on to discuss the *Perfect*:

"More generally, the perfect indicates the continuing present relevance of a past situation. This difference between the perfect and the other aspects has led many linguists to doubt whether the perfect should be considered an aspect at all. However, given the traditional terminology in which the perfect is listed as an

aspect, it seems most convenient to deal with the perfect in a book on aspect, while bearing in mind that it is an aspect in a rather different sense from the other aspects treated so far."

<div align="right">Comrie 76.5</div>

Comrie's table of aspectual oppositions looks at follows:

Classification of aspectual oppositions
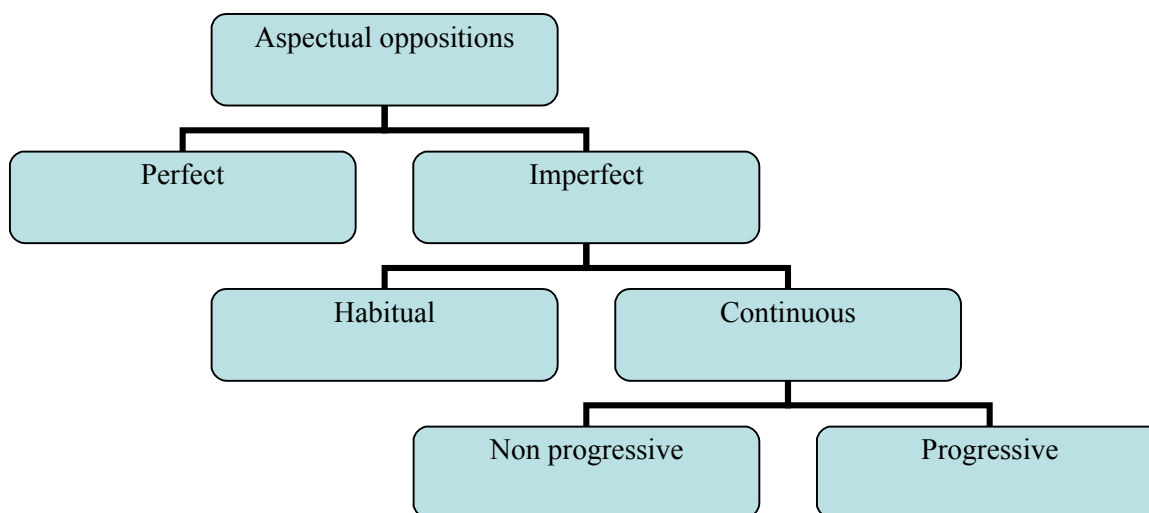
It is clear that for Comrie the Aspect category is simply and solely filled by the (im)perfect. Notice that the Perfect is not included in this hierarchy. Doing so would involve a -perfect (imperfect) and an (im)perfect/(im)perfect distinction or the ordering of one category over the other. As these basic categories intersect, a unitary hierarchy would be impossible. An oppositional approach may in fact not be all that helpful as it tends to force the postulation of (often non substantial) categories essentially defined in negative terms: *"-X is characterized by the lack of X characteristics."* In spite of attempts at a positive definition (the view of a situation as a whole), this is what Comrie's definition of the Perfect appears to boil down to. (p.21:*"lack of explicit reference to the internal temporal constituency of a situation"*). From the lack of a definition for *"non progressive"*, we may conclude that a similar negative definition is implied (lack of progressive characteristics). As already mentioned, Comrie assigns no place to an Imperfect in his basic taxonomy. The implication is again that the Imperfect would be defined as -Perfect. What this oppositional inconsistency may shows is that, generally, only one (the positive(?)) pole of an opposition has psychological reality.
As Comrie already implied, the use of certain terminology is often pragmatically justified. The universal labels provide a quick guide to similar phenomena in other languages. The exact definition of each category is language dependent. It is not clear that progressive/and or habitual forms in every language conform

to the definition of the imperfect as given, yet it is not
unlikely that the descriptive linguist would want to label such
forms as Imperfects, thus indicating a link with imperfect
categories in other languages. The exact definition on one end of
the "labelling chain" may in fact differ substantially from the
one in a language on the other end.

Comrie criticizes certain definitions of the perfect, amongst them
the idea that it indicates a completed action. Whereas the Perfect
involves the idea of completeness, it does not as such include the
idea of completion, that is emphasis on the termination of a
situation. Such a view would render the *completive* unacceptable as
an Aspectual. (cf.Reesink 84.88, Davies 81.171)

In the absence of a clearly defined universal definition of
"ASPECT", such criticism becomes somewhat less relevant. What is
at stake is pragmatic labelling of categories in such a way that
comparison is facilitated.

It appears likely that the English perfect got its Aspectual
status via associative labelling, simply because part of its
semantic field overlapped with the semantic field of categories
called by this term in other languages.

In Russian the imperfect covers "Action in progress", so does the
same category in English. As far as the opposites go, the Russian
Perfect covers a clear "completed action" usage, whereas this is
not so or less so in English (cf. Timberlake 82.306 on Russian).

On the other hand the English Perfect (have/has/had + prtc.) often
carries a strong completive flavour and consequently its adoption
into the Aspect category on a par with the Russian Perfect, is
pragmatically not unjustified.

In the end what remains important are the various semantic
definitions themselves.

FROM FORM TO MEANING OR MEANING TO FORM?

*"In relating language-particular categories to language-
independent semantic characterisations, it is possible, in
principle, either to start from the language-particular categories
and associate them with their meaning or meanings, or to start
from the semantic distinctions and see how, if at all, these are
grammaticalised in the individual language (in addition to the
possible combination of the two approaches)"*

Comrie 76.10

Moving away from terminological reflections let us consider a more
substantial question. Given that at least some subset of semantic
categories are grammaticalised in multiple languages, should such
semantic categories be taken as starting points in descriptive and
analytical approaches? Or should the syntactic and morphological
forms of the language be the starting point? The question in not
trivial. Starting from the semantic category the descriptive

linguist may correlate various forms with the same semantic notion (one meaning/several forms !)

Take the notion of **Habituality** (subsumed under Imperfect by Comrie). In English the notion may be realized by various forms:(Comrie 76.25)

Simple Past: John worked here

Habitual: John used to work here

Progressive: John was working here

All of these forms, often brought out by context, may signal **Habituality**. There is, however, no end to such an approach. As already mentioned, every conceivable semantic notion can overtly or covertly be conveyed in any language, and one would not know where to stop tracing the expression of grammaticalised notion X in language A in language B, where it may not have a direct grammatical realisation. Such an approach may also easily become ethnocentric, where the analyst traces the expression of category X, simply because it is grammaticalized in his/her own language. This approach appears to have its greatest merit in the area of transfer between languages (as in translation and language teaching) For descriptive purposes it would probably be more appropriate to start with the contrasting forms of the language and line them up with semantic categories. The (increasing) pool of semantic features, grammatically realized in other languages, then becomes a source for hypothesis. A successful link up of form and meaning, in turn, increases our understanding of the universal situation.

We are now ready to turn to a more detailed exposition of the notion PERFECT.

THE PERFECT ASPECT

As should be clear by now, we are using the label Perfect Aspect in a pragmatic sense, roughly relating it to the Perfect in other languages. As has already been pointed out, the Perfect is somewhat of a stepchild in the aspectual family.

It has been variously defined as:

"The English Perfect has a GENERAL MEANING 'current relevance of an anterior(earlier) event' with main clause verbs(but merely 'anterior' in certain subordinate contexts)"
<div align="right">L.B Anderson 82.230</div>

'indicates the continuing present relevance of a past situation'
<div align="right">B.Comrie 76.52</div>

Calling it Orientation:

'express(ion) of anteriority'
<div align="right">L.D.King 83.118</div>

'bringing states of affairs into the "current" situation for the Perfect'
<div align="right">Li,Thompson & Thompson 82.20</div>

(See for a further discussion of King's ideas the final section.)

The first three definitions all involve an anterior point of time, though the reference point need not be the moment of speech, or even, as suggested by King (see last section) have reference to time in the real world at all.

Relevance of this anterior situation to some other time ("current" time) is reflected in the first two and last definition.

Explicitly in one case and not unlikely in the others, the first three definitions, at least, appear to reflect the function of the Perfect in English.

The Perfect is retrospective, in that it establishes a relationship between a state at one time and a situation at an earlier time. Notice that in that sense a relationship between a FUTURE and an anterior situation should also be considered.

PERFECT IN MANDARIN

Li,Thompson & Thompson (1982) discuss the Perfect in Mandarin and especially the function of the particle LE.

In their definition of the Perfect Aspect they base themselves on Friedrich(l974) who appears to suggest that the function of the Perfect is 'of bringing states of affairs into the *"current"* situation'. Whether so intended or not the definition frees the Perfect from the *"current-anterior"* link up, also bringing *"future states of affairs"* into the picture. In line with King's comments on the relative irrelevance of real world time (cf.last section), L.T.T replace *"current"* situation by REFERENCE TIME and then state that *"The Perfect is found in COMMENTS which relate situations TO A REFERENCE TIME"*

This is important in that it allows for an explanation of the function of "LE" (and we will see "NUW" in FAS) in Narratives also where *"the Perfect functions to inject background comments which are RELEVANT to the situation existing AT A GIVEN POINT in the narrations"*

The function of LE then is:

"to signal a 'Currently Relevant State' (=CRS). That is, LE claims that A STATE OF AFFAIRS HAS SPECIAL CURRENT RELEVANCE TO SOME PARTICULAR REFERENCE TIME."

LTT consider the "current" that is Moment of Speech(MOS) time to be the unmarked case and its function in narratives as derived.

This "dual" usage may be brought out by their following illustration:

If someone calls Mr.Liao, who is out, the person who answers the phone may say:

> ta qu mai dongxi LE
> he go buy things CRS
> 'he's gone shopping'

In the absence of an explicit or understood time reference, his going shopping is understood to be relevant to the present (moment of speech).

However, suppose two people are discussing whether mr.Liao made a long distance call two days ago; in this situation one can say:

> (nei tian) ta qu mai dongxi Le
> (that day) he go buy thing CRS
> (that day) he went out shopping

meaning that the state of his having gone shopping was relevant to the time which was discussed, namely 'that day' in the Past.

At the same time, if someone wants to see you next month, but you
know you are away then, you may say:

        (xiage yue) wo jiu zai Riben LE
        (next month) I then at Japan CRS
        (next month) I'll be in Japan

*"Now why should this be a function important enough to be
considered one of three cardinal aspect points and to be marked
explicitly in so many languages? the reason is simply that it is
the speech situation which is of MOST IMMEDIATE CONCERN to the
participants in it. It is often important to signal that a
proposition bears upon the immediate speech situation because the
knowledge that it does may determine what the participants do
next. In other words, in a broad sense, the Perfect aspects say
that some events, state, or comment is relevant to the "here and
now" of the speech situation. Precisely what the relevance is,of
course,must be inferred by the hearer, but as a participant in the
speech event, he can be expected to carry out this inferential
process with minimal difficulty."*

                                                          LTT 82.

LE is constrained as follows:

a. Never used when the speaker is simply asserting a truth.

b. Generally not used for general states or ongoing situations
   involving no change.

c. Not found for a simple assertion of an event which happended in
   the past.

d. Rare in expository and scientific writing.

e. Practically non-existent in news-reporting, speeches, lectures
   and proclamations.

h. In WRITTEN NARRATIVE only when it serves to bring a state of
   affairs into the time at which the narrative is taking place.

LTT then, for expository reasons only, group the function of LE
into 5 categorical situations:

  A. is a changed state
  B. corrects a wrong assumption
  C. reports "progress sofar"
  D. determines what will happen next
  E. is the speaker's total contribution to the conversation
     at that point/Closing Statement.

THE FUNCTION OF 'NUW' IN FAS

The Aspectual-Perfect definition given by LTT appears very
appropriate to FAS also: relevant to the time of Reference(by
default: time of speech)
If inquiring about someone (who was scheduled to go some time)
whether he is there, the answer may be:

> *nuw pin*

> CRS went

> "he has (already) gone"

Or if you tell someone that the plane came last week to pick him
up (but he was not there), the answer may be:

> *te nuw pin*

> I   CRS went

> (by then) I had (already) left/gone

The moment of going was relevant to the moment of pick up.
When asking someone whether he will go somewhere, the answer may
indicate a person's present readiness or preparedness to go:

> *teh nuw pimu*

> I   CRS go-fut

> I am (all ready) to go/ I will go

In comparing future moments/events, two constructions have been
noticed:

1. No tense marking.

This is probably done if future time is strongly given or highly
irrelevant:

  Statement: *te uik afa-b wa-wan-mu*

>   I   week next-Temp you-see-Fut

>   "I'll see you next week!"

```
  Response:   te nuw pin-ya

              I  CRS  go-emph

              "I'll have gone"
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(notice use of perfect in English!)

2. With -meta

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  Statement as above.

  Response: tikuw momu sikwune, nuw pi-meta-i

            work  not    like/if  CRS go-TFut-I

            "If there is no work, I will have gone then"
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See p. for discussion of future tenses.

The construction FE (intensifier) + NUW+ "'V+m' saying"(='want to V')+b (subordinate) has the typical meaning of "when just about to":

```
 fe nuw fukwob-m penu-m yenu-wa-b,..

 INT CRS village-Case arrive-C saying-while/when

 'when he was about to arrive at the village,..'
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The required use of *'nuw'* here follows naturally, as the function of the construction is to bring out the relevance of that particular moment of time to some other situation.

Investigation of about twenty five random stories (mostly narrative, some descriptive) give the following picture

   1. *NUW* is rare in the body of the texts.

 This is not surprising as in narratives one would expect it to occur only when the relevance of two situations to each other will have to be signalled. The cases that do occur seem indeed to have this effect.

2. It is very common in opening and closing statements:

te nuw momsemu ....

I CRS tell-FUT

I'll tell a story (now) about...

Final statements:

nuw feseru

CRS   enough

"(that's) enough"

mony to nuw ukta

talk my CRS finished

"my talk is (now) finished"

The initial use of *'nuw'* alerts the audience that the story is starting NOW and wrapping up the story with *'nuw'* brings the focus back to the present.

The Mandarin use of 'le' for "wrapping up" a story is explicitly mentioned by LTT (p.39)

Let us investigate the remaining usage of *'nuw'* in the given stories:

From: *Hunku Fasnwu* 2 (7)

 Some fellows follow a patrol officer. At one point while the officer is out of sight, a fellow who walks ahead is called back: "come and look! The outsiders' footprint! They must have gone up looking for fish!"

The fellow comes and sees that it is his own footprint. He gets mad and wants to go back. They spent some time convincing him that it was only a good natured joke. By the time they get to the next village, the officer was already there:

yina ont nanamuy NUW puwe aiwa-b

go saw-1Pl expat CRS came was-SubOrd

"(by the time) we went we saw the officer was already there"

Notice that two situations are compared here: the one of their
late) arrival and the one of the officers (already) being there.
The officer's already being there was relevant to their arrival.
(It implied that they were late.)

Hunku Fasnwu 2 (p.15)

 An Ancestor Story:

This fellow (Mab) fixes a bird trap, which makes use of a string
with a loop. The bird trying to get to some food will put its head
into the loop, and the hunter will then quickly pull the rope from
his hiding place. Mab had set it all up and tied the other end of
the string to himself! While he watches and looks around, then
there is a cassowary!

eyta erya yyime wotyine onyi-pin-b tue nuw eryo

watch was man for his part look-go-SbOr cassowary CRS was

"While the man himself watched and let his eyes wander around,
was there a cassowary (a cassowary appeared)"

The cassowary then gets caught in the loop and pulls Mab with him.
He is not freed till someone else comes to his rescue.
Once again the state of affairs of the cassowary being there is of
utmost relevance to the narrated situation.

Hunku Fasnhu 2 (p.22)

The story of patrol officers introducing(outside) salt. Once the
people had tasted it they said: From now on (now that we have
tasted this) we will leave our bad ways.

 .. *nuw pun-t-ya bebekuw tanu-bu..*

    CRS take-1Pl-emp this sweet-Char(acteristic)..

 "having gotten this sweet thing..(we will leave our bad talk)

And later on as final statement before the story is formally
concluded:

 ne hanb yery nuw nanamuy mwueke-b hana-t-u

 and today we CRS expat   custom-Case/sub.ord. are-1Pl-focus

"And today we live according to expat customs"

The first instance very clearly brings out the relevance of
receiving the salt for the resolution to change life style.

The second one brings out the effect of the event on the present: it is still like that.

Hunku Fasnhu 2 (p.23)

The story of a man "coiled up" by a snake. By the time others came to rescue him

    yyime eru-ne nuw sen-u

    man that-one CRS died-foc

    that man had already died

A relevance relation is clear between the (belated) arrival of the rescuers and the man's death.

Hunku Fasnhu 2 (p.25)

An old man-still with children- was hungry and went to get young sago shoots. He went to the sago scraping place which tends to attract wild pigs.

    wotyine   nuw   uneb   afa tonuw

    he-(for his part) CRS sago-inside one got out

 He (for his part) worked on getting the sago-marrow(?) out.

 The story then continues: meanwhile ..

  baso wobuw afa nuw erya pin mokyi

  child his one CRS was go   later

'one of his children had gone later'

The relevant situations have now been sketched to set up the background for what is to follow:

The child treads on dry sago leaves. When the father hears the sound of breaking leaves, he thinks it is a wild pig. He takes to his heels and climbs up a tree before the eyes of his bewildered boy. Only when he feels safe enough to look down does he realize his mistake.

In conclusion then the characterisation of the semantic category involved as:

"Comment which relates (relevant) situations to a reference time"

seems to capture quite adequately the functional meaning of NUW.

CONTEXTUAL MEANING, SUBJECTIVE TIME AND THE PERFECT.

In structuralist linguistics, generally, members could belong to the same unit (allo X's of the same X'eme) without sharing an exclusive (set of) invariant(s) on the basis of complementary distribution. In this way [p] and [b̶] may be considered allophones if e.g. [b̶] would occur between vowels and [p] elsewhere. If /f/ and /b/ also occur, it will be impossible to abstract an invariant shared exclusively by the phoneme /p/ [p,b̶], the shared components like labiality and orality are also shared by /f/ and /b/. The phoneme /p/ will therefore have to be defined in terms of complementary distribution, that is in terms of context. Semantic forms frequently receive a similar treatment. Allosemes of the same sememe, where the precise(?) meaning depends on context. L.D.King (83) illustrates this approach with a common account of the various meanings of the simple present tense (based on Leech 71, and Quirket al 72):

> (a) Universal (eternal) time:
>   The Ohio River flows into the Mississippi.
> (b) Habitual occurrence:
>   We have liver and onions for supper once a week
> (c) Instantaneous present occurrence:
>   I hereby inform you that...
> (d) Future occurrence:
>   We arrive in San Francisco on the 21st.
> (e) Past occurrence:
>   Dad tells me you want to quit school.

The "present tense" then could be given as a closed set of contextually determined meanings. A strong believer in the hypothesis that *"each grammatical form conveys a single invariant meaning"*, King is uncomfortable with this type of characterization and insists on a single semantic reading.

Quoting Calver (l946:319) King argues that *" Confusion of the meaning of the verb-form with some part of its context has been frequent when the theory of time has been mistaken".*

 Is the 'future element' in

        We arrive in San Francisco on the 21st.

signalled by 'arrive' or by the context?(lexical context here, but non verbal context may function similarly). In other words is [future] in this sentence part of the meaning of 'arrive' or simply separately given by the context?

We would agree with King that inappropriate transfer of meaning is involved in this case, yet, on the other hand, it should be recognized that there are non accidental homophonous forms sharing features of meaning and yet lacking an exclusive invariant. Attempts to establish an invariant in such cases can only be 'successful' to the extent that the definition of their meaning is insubstantial.

King argues convincingly that in the (English) tense system, apart from the TOC (time of communication) not the real world time but subjective time, that is the temporal perspective with which the speaker associates the reported situation, is expressed. For him the meaning of the Present Tense is:**"Present Temporal Perspective"**, i.e included in and viewed as a part of the TOC. At the same time one is left wondering whether such a definition retains any substantial content. It seems that Kings stretches his hypothesis definitely too far when he defines the meaning of the "future tense" as *"REMOVED FROM THE PRESENT PERSPECTIVE AND ASSOCIATED WITH THE FUTURE PERSPECTIVE"* and then seeks to accommodate various occurrence of "will" under the same definition. At least two epistemic meanings of 'will' have been recognized (Steedman 77):

> Sense A:
> Oil will float on water
> The class will be over by now
>
> Sense B:
> He will be here tomorrow

King 83:111,112

The previous sentence, given the appropriate intonation, may in fact also be used to convey an A sense. The following sentence clearly has two potential senses:

> You will be the boss

A "future" sense A "Statement of future occurrence"

A "strong conviction" sense B "Statement based on deduction /acquired knowledge"

The only way King can get his definition to fit both cases is by associating sense B with Prediction and Prediction with Future. Such leaps surely are unacceptable and it seems clear that in most cases of Sense B usage, the characterization of THE meaning of "will" as "removed from the present perspective and associated with the future perspective" is not only uninformative but wrong as basic reading.

Another, albeit unintended, example of (over application of) the hypothesis of "one form one meaning" is provided by King's use of

"s/he" where traditionally "he" would be used. Though undoubtedly encouraged by the present social climate, this sympathetic use of "s/he" is linguistically unjustified and it seems a result of King's theoretical perspective: the form "he" requires the same invariant in all its uses. Consequently when this is hard to achieve, one may alter the form to save the hypothesis. In isolation "he" in English refers to a 3PSingular Male<animate (Note: there are extensions of meaning in the realm of pictures/statutes etc. of), but in a sentence like:

"..whenever the speaker includes the situation, s/he is reporting.."

<div align="right">King id:106</div>

"he" would be used in traditional (normal ?) English and it would be stripped of the "male" reading. There is no way that an invariant meaning can be defined, fully and solely accounting for both usages.
(Note: The implication of this approach for a language like Dutch e.g. would be even more far reaching. The use of Dutch "hij" 'he' violates both social propriety as well as the 'one form one meaning hypothesis'. In isolation, its meaning would involve 'maleness', yet it is used as the reference term for most (non neutrum) nominals. Surely it would be inappropriate not to distinguish between males and things and the Dutch should be encouraged to follow English in extending their neutrum form "het" 'it' to refer to all non-animate nominals. cf.

    Ik zag je jas. Hij hangt in the hal

    I saw your coat. It is (hanging) in the hall.

We contend then that the 'one form one meaning' hypothesis is a healthy analytical working/starting assumption, preventing inappropriate transfer of contextual meaning, but that it should not be pushed into vacuity and that it should be allowed for that non accidental homophonous forms exist which never the less lack an isolatable exclusive invariant. This non accidental homophony still needs to be accounted for. Such an account will involve two broad parameters. One involves diachronic change and the other the tendency in language towards economic usage of its available forms, allowing for complementary distribution of forms where such is non confusing and prompted by associative meanings (say a set of, though not exclusively, shared characteristics, like "3PSg ref" for English 'he'.)

A comparison with the recent history of phonological theory might instructive. The search for the "invariant" appears to be on a par with the Generative Phonological search for the singular "underlying form" from which all the surface forms can be derived by P-rules. Especially in earlier work in TG phonology this

objective was often achieved by synchronically recapturing a diachronic development, postulating rules and diacritic underlying forms whose synchronic reality is at least dubious. Subsequent interest in Naturalness and Psychological reality posed further questions to the original "abstract" approach. It seems to me that "one form one meaning" theory will (have to) be shaped by a similar development.

For the present we are satisfied that the definition given for "*nuw*" in Fas is workable and insightful, though it may turn out that the definition would require an added sense of "completion of the situation involved" especially when used in the Past:

> *te nuw pin*
>
> I   CRS go
>
> I have/did go(ne)

Typically rendered by bilingual speakers in Tok Pisin as:

> 'mi go pinis'
>
> I   go finish

Finally, in his treatment of the English perfect, which he prefers to call Orientation, King dismisses the "Current Relevance" part of the typical definition and only retains "anteriority".

King produces an example from Mcoard(78:31) to illustrate the "Current Relevance" hypothesis:

> "he has gone to bed"

and concludes that "current relevance" implies that 'he is still in bed'.

This is compared with:

"he's gone to bed at midnight before, let him stay up"

where 'the context clearly indicates that 'he' is not in bed'

While this situation clearly demonstrate the potential elusiveness of broad definitions, 'current relevance' need not mean that a situation has persisted up to the TOC/MOS. The situation referred to may be 'currently relevant' in other ways:

"Precisely what the relevance is, of course, must be inferred by the hearer, but as a participant in the speech event, he can be

expected to carry out this inferential process with minimal difficulty"

<div align="right">(LTT 72:22)</div>

In King's example the relevance of the reference to previous practice for the present situation is abundantly clear (It provides the basis for a decision to be made at the TOC!).

One could possibly argue that "current relevance" is not a reading of the perfect but signalled by the Tense form (in this case Present Tense) of the Verb, this would imply that "Current(Present) Perspective" implies "Current Relevance":
  e.g:

[+ present] -> present(current perspective
[+ perfect] -> anteriority

If the combined features then could be read as " anterior situation viewed from present perspective (=currently relevant)", King's approach may still have major merits.

For this type of feature approach to Dutch verb categories see Ebeling ( ).

He would e.g. present the Dutch "present perfect" as a composite: PERFECT and PRESENT

Where PRESENT is defined as:

'an event belonging, wholly or for its later part, to the natural flow of time starting at the speech moment'

And the PERFECT AS:

"A thing(person)carrying a certain feature at a time anterior to the time mentioned"

Further investigation of this venue and its application to Fas is outside the scope of the present paper

THE FUTURE TENSE IN FAS

The fine gradations employed in Fas Future Tense marking have not yet been paralleled by a satisfactory semantic analysis. For the present we distinguish two broad categories, which themselves are subdivided into two even less understood categories:

    A. mu
       mamu

    B. meta
       me

A. appears to be somewhat on a par with English 'BE going to' and the semantic reading of this form by Leech (71:54) will be tentatively adopted:

  FUTURE FULFILMENT OF THE PRESENT

The B set appears to be more strictly Temporally oriented, that is focuses exclusively on a point in Future time.

Before we discuss the details and special functions of this system we will consider the Fas Future Tense system in the light of universals tentatively proposed by Russel Ultan (1976[72].).

Ultan observes that Future tenses often differ from other tenses more than present of past tenses do from one another. They tend to differ in terms of "markedness" (less likely to be grammaticalized) and in terms of their 'atemporal functions'. A major distinction is made between retrospective and prospective languages. For retrospective languages the future-non future dichotomy is primary and for prospective languages past-non pas. Though the rationale for the respective labels is not immediately clear, we will abide by them for pragmatic taxonomic purposes.

A prospective language then tends to have finer gradations in the past and a retrospective language in the future. The dichotomy runs somewhat counter to the basic assumption that future tenses tend to be more marked as the implication is that the future tenses in retrospective languages are less marked (grammaticalisation is more prevalent) than the non-future tenses. The earlier assumption, therefore, requires a RELATIVE INTERPRETATION: i.e: Future tense tends to be more marked in retrospective languages then Past Tense would be in prospective languages.

With only '-ta' as a Non-Future Tense(?) (cf.section..), Fas clearly belongs to the group of retrospective languages.

Comparison of some putative universals

In this section we will systematically discuss the universals presented by Ultan:

Universals relating to markedness:

Boundness:

> *Future tense markers may be less bound than present or past but never more so.*

A comparison with '-ta' (Non-future,present/habitual) confirms the universal for Fas:

Cf. *pin* 'to go'

   te pi-ta-i 'I go' *pintai

   I go-Pr-1S

   hay pi-ta-f 'you go' *pin-f-ta-f*
                            ?pi-f-ta-f
   you go-Pr-2S

   te pinmu/pimu   'I am going'

   I go Fut

   hay pinfmu/pifmu 'you are going

   hay pinfmeta(f)/pifmeta(f) 'you will go'

 But not: * *hay pimu/ pimeta(f)*

In other words, the future tense forms may retain the stem final n, where in close phonological forms n would be deleted . For the (potentially) somewhat more loosely connected future tenses a shwa is inserted to make the form pronounceable where required. e.g *pinmu --> pinimu*. Also the PN suffixes is obligatorily retained by the stem if the Future markers are used but frequently dropped with -ta

Auxiliary Forms

> *If the future is periphrastic, the auxiliary will always be a present tense or unmarked form.*

The future 'suffixes'in Fas seem bound in that speakers do not seem to treat them as separable. Where as 'nuw' CRS could be used on its own e.g:

> *wob nuw pinfa*

> he CRS went ?

Answ: *nuw* '(yes,) he has'

The future markers could never be used on their own.
They seem periphrastic, however, in that they do not prevent the main verb from loosing its PN markers. -meta especially appears to function as a "loosely serialised" verb(cf.p...), with its own (optional) PN markers

> cf: *ina-t on-t* 'we went and saw' (loosely serialised)

> *ina on-t*   'we went and saw' (close serialisation)

with: *on-t-meta-(t)* 'we will see
     *onmeta-(t)

Whereas the -ta form may also leave the preceding PN suffixes in place, such a situation is obligatory for the Future.

Temporal gradation

> *Regarding tense gradation: retrospective languages tend toward finer gradation in the past than in the future and prospective languages tend toward no or equal gradation.*

The gradation universal tends to be cyclic in that the basic categorisation (retro/prospective) tends to be based upon it, never the less, as a statement of fact, it is clear that in Fas finer distinctions are made in Future marking than in Non-Future.

Obligatoriness of occurrence

> *In retrospective languages, obligatory occurrence of an MOS past tense implies the same for an MOS future tense, the converse holding for prospective languages.*

As Fas has no Past Tense marker this universal is not applicable to Fas. Future tense is normally marked, though if the future point of time is as such irrelevant, the marker may be left off. e.g when discussing not the time but the "need" or simple fact of seeing something:

    pwen-osen yeb on

    come- after/cond then see

    'Once he has come I'll see it"

Neutralization:

A. Subjunctivity

> *The chronological ordering of tense neutralization in a subjunctive or semantically comparable category is always unidirectional: the future-non future contrast is neutralized first, the past-non past last.*

The universal as it stands is somewhat hard to interpret in that neutralization between non future and future naturally implies neutralization between past and non past especially as neutralisation tends to go towards sole use of future marking (id.94) The latter is confirmed in Fas in that main clause contra-factual statements employ -meta also in the Past tense:

    hay tikuw ikaktafua nwai-metai

    you work do well give-you-FUT

  'If you had done you work well, I would have given you it"

    tikuw momu sikwune pimetai

    work not like go-Fut

    If there is no work I'll go

(for further discussion see p.   )

Notice that the contra-factual in the subordinate clause is neutralized for an other (universal) reason (p.   )
The universal may further entail that one may expect subjunctive type distinctions to operate for non-future tenses and to be unutilized for the future tense.
The so called "evidential" is operative in Fas only for progressive present tense:

a-ku-ta   '(I think) he is sleeping'

cont.-sleep-PR

eria ku-(wa) ' he is sleeping'

be   sleep-emph

 (check on Similarities with Spanish progressive)
(also check usage of *eria* + V in stories)

B. Negative:

In several of the languages examined the future tense is
neutralized in negative constructions without a corresponding
neutralization of the past.

This typical tendency is confirmed in Fas, where Negative
neutralization takes place in the future tense:
Fas employs two negation processes, one is Nominal and the other
Verbal:

hyime-m onfa (see ? check also in other PNG L's?)

man-Case Nom.NG '(that is) not a man'

hyime momu   'there are no men'

 man   V.NG

pin-o momu   'he did not go'

go-Link/(gen?) V.NG

pin-o-m onfa

go-Nominalizer-Case N.NG

 'I(emph) did not go/ It was not such that I went'

 Future tense only allows *"-mu-m onfa"*:

 te pi(n)-mu(-u?)-m onfa

 I go-Fut(-Nom?)-Case N.Ng

 'I am not going/ I will not go'

 *te pi-metai-u momu

C. Gapping:

Deletion of past tense in non-initial (or non final) verbs of conjunctive series implies deletion of future tense in the same environment

As no past tense marking is used the universal is inapplicable in Fas. It may be noted however, that both the *'-ta'* form and the future forms are not permitted non finally in serialized constructions.

D. Subordinate clauses:

Clauses referring to events always anterior to those of the corresponding main clauses (AFTER-clauses) are rarely marked by future; in retrospective languages they are usually unmarked or non future and in prospective languages either present or past (indicative of perfect or anterior event).

Clauses referring to events anterior to (or near-simultaneous with) those of the corresponding main clauses (WHEN-clauses) are in most languages marked by future or present (non future in retrospective languages)tenses. Among prospective languages there are a few instances where an atemporal or present subjunctive is used.

Conditional clauses referring to probable events anterior to (or near-simultaneous with) those of the corresponding main clauses (IF1-clauses) are marked principally by present or future tenses in prospective languages and are unmarked (or nonfuture), or more rarely marked by future or present, in retrospective languages.

Clauses referring to events always posterior to those of the corresponding main clauses (BEFORE-clauses) are usually marked by present or present subjunctive, more rarely by future or simply unmarked in prospective languages.

Clauses denoting purpose and hence of necessity referring to posterior time are chiefly marked by present or present subjunctive in prospective languages but also less commonly by future or atemporal subjunctive. In retrospective languages future is the commonest marker.

Clauses that form the objects of certain verbs of perception or mental activity (expectation, fear, supposition, etc) referring essentially to posterior events (OBJECT-clauses) are marked primarily by future in retrospective languages and by present, present subjunctive or future in prospective languages.

Apart from the intentional or purpose clause all subordinate clauses loose their tense marking (Check on Habitual *-ta*):

> *hay puif-osen te yeb taimu*
>
> you come-Temp.C I then do-will
>
> "After/once you have come, I'll do it"
>
> *hay puifua te taimu*
>
> you come-emph?/COND. I will do
>
> If you come I'll do it
>
> *hay puifua te taimetai*
>
> 'When you come I'll do it'

 All of this is in line with the postulates.

 The intentional also fits the pattern in that Future *-mu* is used:

> *puin mu-m na-mu-m*
>
> came woman-Case marry-Fut-case
>
> 'he came to get married'

When clauses fill object slots in Fas they are Nominalized and not marked for Tense (cf. .....)

 Verb 'to say' *"yenu"* requires special attention.

It's object position may be filled with a quote. This quote retains tense marking.:

> te pi-mu-m yeni
>
> I go-will-Case said I
>
> "I said that I wanted to go"

If the object contains what the speaker THINKS the same conditions obtain.

```
    wob pi-mu-s yeni

    he go-will-Exclusive said I

    I thought that he was going
```

However in the sense of "desire" or "being about to" the
objectivized clause may not retain Tense marking:

```
    te pin-m yeni

    I  go-Case said/say

   'I want(ed) to go (but I may/did not)'

    fe nuw penu-m yenu

    INT CRS arrive-Case said

   'he was about to arrive'
```

E. Backshifting:

Under this heading Ultan subsumes subordinate clause which tend to
neutralize using a past tense, and one similarly conditioned main
clause (result of contrary-to-fact condition.
The subordinate clauses include Future/Past clause, Fut in
indirect discourse clause and contrary-to fact or hypothetical
condition.
The subordinate clauses have already been discussed in the
previous section. We also saw that the Future in the Past
(FPclause) (he would have given) in the main clause employs the
future marker (-meta). This agrees with what Ultan predicts for
retrospective languages. Indirect discourse in the sense of
changes in perspective, reference etc, is not employed in Fas
(well, better check). Any way, tenses would be used as when
actually spoken.

E. Participles:

> *A future participle implies both past and present participles
> but neither of the two converses is necessarily true*

The participle construction *'eria V-(w)a'* "be V-ing" can not be
used with Future or *"-ta"* marking. We have dubbed this form
"evidential" as it's usage requires evidence (cf.p.....). This is
probably why it never seems to be used in reference to a future
situation. It may be used in vivid narrative recollection.

The Use of -MU and -Meta

Fas future forms include the following markers:

> *-mu*
> *-mamu*
> *-m(e)*
> *-meta*

The major (most frequently used) competing forms are *-mu* and *-meta*, the forms *-m(e)* and *-mamu* are discussed in ...

Both forms are bound, that is don't occur in isolation (for discussion of *'meta'* as interrogative verb and the verb *'ta'* "to do" cf.. and ..).

Yet morphologically and phonologically they do not affect the verb stem in the same way as for instance the present/habitual and P/N suffixes.
Morphologically they differ from the hab/present in that the Vstem retains its P/N suffixes whereas with *'-ta'* deletion is unmarked (though optional). This comparison makes only sense for *-meta* which, like *-ta* is declined for P/N, unlike *-mu* which can not be declined.

However, *-meta*, unlike *-ta*, need not employ the P/N suffixes, thus becoming more like -mu:

> *hay pi-(f)-ta-f*
>
> you go-(2S)-PR-2S
>
> (I think) you are going
>
> (For 'evidential aspect' see..)
>
> *hay pi-f-mu*
>
> you go-2S-FUT
>
> *hay pi-f-meta-(f)*
>
> you go-2S-Fut-(2S)

Though it would seem likely that the *'-ta'* in <u>*'-meta'*</u> is non-accidentally homophonous with *'ta'* "to do" and at least some of the affixal uses of *'-ta'* (cf...)a substantial invariant which would tie these occurrences together has so far elided us.

Phonologically the forms differ in their effect on the stem from the P/N suffixes in that they do not change the stress pattern of the stem and as a result the stem does not undergo the usual phonological changes that accompany stress reduction:

        te ki   'I sleep'

        hay [kəf]   'you sleep'

        nib [kəsi]   'they sleep'

        te kimu   'I will sleep'

        te *[kəmu]

As in our analysis of the Fas words this resulting Fut. type pattern is allowed, the treatment of the Future markers as periphrastic units is not necessitated. Consequently from now on we will treat all tense marking as affixation.

Usage determined by context.

Before attempting to define the semantic reading of each future suffix, I will list the grammatical and clear semantic contexts which enforce a choice.

-meta:

A. Used for warning or objection:

   baso tu-meta

   child fall-FUT

   'the child will fall (do something about it!)'

   'hay pryipaf-meta-f'

    you break- FUT

   '(Take care) You'll break it'

   'fafota-meta'

     long -fut

   '(I am not going to that meeting) IT will be too long'

B. For 'unfulfilled past'

   wob pwenu skwune te pi-meta-i

   he   came   like   I   go-Fut-1SgSu

   'If he had come I would have gone'

  cf: *puinu sikwune te pi-mu*

       came   like   I   go-Fut

       'if he had come I would go'

-mu

 A. In intentional subordinate clauses:

   wob pi mu-m na-mu-m

    he go woman-C get-FUT-C

    he went to marry a woman

   minyi-e-m pi-ta tapwa-mu-m

    snake(sp)-that-C go-PR cut-Fut-C

    'I'll be on my way to kill that snake'

 B. Negated Future

Negated future tense is strongly restricted. In the first place it
does not take a Verbal negator, but only the nominal one. (see ...
for discussion of negation)
Secondly, the Future suffix has to be '*-mu*':

   cf: *te pin-u momu*

       I go-link.V not (Verb.Neg)

       'I did not go'

       te pin-u-m onfa

       'I go-NOM.-C NOT (NOM.NEG)

       *te pi-mu-u momu

         I go-Fut-LV not

> *te pi-mu-(u?)-m onfa*
>
> I   go-Fut-(NOM?)-C not (NNg)
> 'I am not going?It is not the case that I am going'
>
> ** te pi-metai-u-m onfa*
>
> (but see ....)

C. Habitual

Habituality/regularity is expressed by '*-ta(-w-a)*' or the Future
suffix '*-mu*'. The use of the latter in (past tense) narratives is
striking. Though '*-meta*' may also occur in an MOS past it is not
nearly as common and appears to have a meaning of its own
(cf....):

 Story of historical tribal warfare:

 ....mu nibuw esy kanise nisosen tetkyi-tasa-ne, yeb yina-ta-se

 women their sago-pudding cooked shared-, then they packed it
(hab) and went(hab-3Pl)

After their women had cooked and given them the sago, (then) they
would pack/wrap it up and go.

Having gone and stayed in the bush two men secretly went :

> *fukwob-m onsi-mu*
>
> village-C see-2Pl-Fut
>
> (would go and) see the village

....onsi fenosen yeb napuin yeninsimu

> see   leave-Seq then came tell-them-Fut.
>
> Having seen it they would go and tell them (the men).

The situation described need not be appropriate for the past only:
Stories explaining customs to outsiders frequently run as follows:

pufku-f kakfyi foka-f kimas pun-f pi-f-mo

get up-you tobacco roll-you bow(etc) take-you-Fut.

You (will) roll a cigarette and get your bow and arrows (check on
plural form for 'get') and go.

Interrogatives (without interrogative word) appear to be
incompatible with '-*metai*' (for a marginal exception cf....),
though '-*me*' is acceptable:

> **hay pif-metaf-fa*
>
> you go-Fut-Q
>
> *hay pif-me-fa*
>
> "Will you go/are you going?"
>
> *hay pif-mu-fa*
>
> "are you going, do you want to go"

We will tentatively conclude that neutralization between '-*me*' and
'-*meta*' takes place in interrogatives. In Hua (Haiman 1980)
neutralization between what seem to be near parallels of -mu and -
meta takes place and at this stage the situation is far from
resolved.

In relative clauses, -meta appears to be conspicuously absent:

> **te hyime PM-m pi-mu-m on**
>
> I man Port Moresby go-Fut-C saw
>
> **te hyime PM-m pi-meta-m on*

Finally forms with the preverb '*biom*' "unable,not wanting"
obligatorily take –*mu*:

> *te biom pi-mu*
>
> I can't go-Fut
>
> I can't/don't want to go.

Towards a semantic analysis of -mu and -meta:

Many Papuan languages with dual future marking have been analysed
in terms of a subjunctive and non subjunctive future.
"Subjunctive" is a rather broad cover term which may signify
uncertainty, doubt, unreality, expectation, apprehension etc. on
the part of the agent. (Ultan 76.94) In Hua (Haiman 1980), Usan
(Reesink 83) the subjunctive is described as signalling 'wishes'
(Haiman id.141) or 'uncertainty' (Reesink id.87), which both
authors tend to gloss with 'may' (cf. may I go/I may send) . They
probably refer both to the same -hard to define-semantic

correlate. Both authors also indicate that in certain contexts the distinction is subtle and/or (for Hua) neutralized.

In Hua subjunctive -su and future -ku are used. Their distribution is somewhat similar to Fas:

The subjunctive appears to parallel Fas -mu and the straight (avolitional) future -meta in many ways:

As discussed in ... *-meta* appears to be morphologically made up of *-me* + *-ta*. That *-ta* is non accidentally homophonous with the free verb 'ta' "to do" is suggested by the frequent incidence of the same type of correlate (usually involving 'to do') in other Papuan languages. In Fas *-ta* also functions to indicate habituality and (plus continuative) as 'non evidential' progressive. In Hua two forms -hu 'to do' and -ro ('ro' has the meaning 'burn, shine', which seems unrevealing, yet it is of interest that the same situation is found in ....) carry many of the same functions as Fas '*-ta*'.

The Future marker -ku has to cooccur with -ro, which is comparable to the usual co occurrence of *-me* with *-ta* in Fas.

The subjunctive in morphologically unmarked contexts is glossed as a wish:

    hi+su+e

    do SF desinence

    'may I do, let me do'

Notice that Fas *-mu* also often has a volitional flavour, the Tok Pisin glosses would be typical Native speaker translations:

    te pi-mu

    'mi laik i go'

    "I like to/want to go"

    te pi-meta-i

    'mi bai go'

    I later/behind go

    "I will go"

As 'avolitionals' both -su and -ku occur in Hua (each with -ro). They are said to be in free variation, though "exactly what they

mean is not totally obvious". Haiman gives rough meanings such as
"it would be to bad if..., let me not ..."

The semantic context of 'threat' appears to only allow for -ku.
This appears to be similar to Fas usage of -meta as 'warning',
Haiman actually mentions a special case of the use of -ro-ku when
"the imperative clause is understood" which it seem equals
'warning':

    HUA:

Threat: do+ro+gu+e

               eat-Fut-desinence

          '(Watch out or) I'll eat it'

Imperative understood:
        Kosa K hau + ro +Ki +e + ke

     fall 2s.o happen FUT desinence

     'You'll fall:(sc. do something!)'

  Cf.Fas:
          te kiy-meta-i

        I   eat-FUT

  This form would have to be used if it was to mean:
        '(Watch out or) I'll eat it"

        hay ti-f-meta-f

         you fall-you-Fut-you

     'you'll fall !'

Hua has to employ the subjunctive in Relative clauses and the
purposive just as Fas has to use *-mu* in these cases. In many other
subordinate clauses in Hua only one form would be allowed. Fas has
zero neutralisation in these cases so that comparison is not
possible here.

In Usan, Reesink analyzes the dual future forms in terms of
"(un)certainty", though pragmatic considerations interplay leading
to the use of the "mellower" subjunctive at the expense of the
straight future. The "(un) certainty" hypothesis appears to find
strong motivation in the preponderant occurrence of the
subjunctive in subordinate (that is generally presuppositional)
clauses.

Zero neutralization in Fas renders comparison impossible. Of
interest is, however, Negative Neutralisation in Usan. In Negated
future Usan has to employ the subjunctive. Notice that this
parallels the use of Fas -mu and would lead to the hypothesis of -
mu as subjunctive, a hypothesis also indicated by the comparison
with HUA.
It should be noticed, however, that the particular examples in
Reesink (p.93) would be rendered in Fas with the use of a preverb:

 ya dar-a   qomboni me yar-iner-ei

 water come.down-3s.DS airplane not come-3s.UF-?

"When it rains, the airplane will (=can) not come"

    nyifo tuw-a parus biom pui-mu

   rain rain-Emp. plane unable come-Fut

Another interesting parallel with Usan is the use of Future tense
for the description of customary processes, even if placed in the
Past. If Fas -mu were to be interpreted as a subjunctive, the
Usan usage would then be contrary to the one in Fas where the
"subjunctive" -mu would be used. (notice the use of subjunctive
'would' in English and its less common but more vivid(?) 'will')

Thirdly, let us look at the situation in an unrelated(?),though
neighbouring language, Imonda (Seiler 1983). (forshared features
see..)

Seiler identifies four tense suffixes in Imonda. Three situate the
event in the past and one is used to indicate non-past. Tense
marking is not "obligatory" and the untensed core is used for a
wide variety of purposes. the non-past is used for events without
a time reference, that is "general truths, interrogatives, if-
clauses etc…..ordinarily the events depicted or the states
described occur or hold at the time of the speech act."

Notice the following: Although '-f' (the non-past) may refer to
future events, often the pro-verb 'MAKE,DO',(which itself displays
'-f') (id.196), is used for this purpose. As in many other Papuan
languages the verb for "to do" is used for various purposes, and
interestingly enough both in Fas and Imonda it is employed for
future marking. Unfortunately, Seiler does not provide any detail
of its usage in this respect. Another suffix of interest is dubbed
'-i'. The '-i' "expresses immediate future with and additional
modal overtone, which varies according to person.."

"With the first person, '-i' renders "going to" with an element of
will:

        po   ka   ne-i

    water I drink-IMM

 "I am going to/ I want to drink water"

With the second person this element of will is very slight. With
the inclusive, '-I' is hortative (let us):

        pel e-wagl-wal-i

    ICL DL-go-DL-IMM

    "let us go!"

With the third person, -i is used to issue indirect orders:

        sapoh ka-m f-ai -h -i -e

    tobacco 1-GL CL-give-REC-IMM-D

    "he shall give me tobacco"

Finally, '-I' tends to replace the past tense marker in negations
and questions.

On the working assumption that there is some kind of tie-up
between most Papuan languages and that they often are subject to
similar features, comparative indicators suggest a number of
hypotheses for '-mu/-meta'.

'-mu' then would be a subjunctive and roughly on a par with the
Usan uncertain Future and the Hua volitional, it would also
largely coincide with Imonda '-I', which also has a volitional
flavour, apart from its immediate future aspect.

All of these semantic readings appeared at various stages and in
various contexts to be applicable to Fas.

There appears to be a volitional element attached to -mu. As
already indicated bilingual speakers with TOK PISIN would
translate the following sentence as follows:

        te pi-mu

    I go-FUT

    'mi laik i go'

    "I like to/want to/will go"

Altough Tok Pisin "laik" does not have the same strong volitional
sense as its English ancestor, and though it may in fact be on its
way to becoming a mere future marker (as English 'will'), at
present, and in the Fas area it is clearly distinct from 'mi bai
go' "I'll go" and usually does carry the volitional sense. Fas has
actually a clear volitional construction, involving the verb "to
say": 'V-m yenu'

> *te pin-m yeni*
>
> I go-Case say-1s
>
> "I want(ed) to go"

The construction is commonly (but not necessarily)restricted to
unfulfilled desires:

> *te pin-m yeni-a, wana wob tit pin*
>
> I   go   said-emp, but he first went
>
> "I wanted to go but he went first"

Secondly and as in Imonda the volitional sense would be very low
and often absent in the third person. The 'indirect order'
reading, postulated for Imonda, is unsatisfactory in general (an
invariant meaning (if available) would be preferable) and also
because in Fas, though it would be a possible reading in certain
contexts, it would be deficient in others. Fas '-mu' is for
instance, used in question sentences like:

> *wob menbuf puwe-mu*
>
> he   when   come-fut
>
> "when will/(is) he (going to) come?"

Although in many languages questions may have 'order/command'
functions, the general context of this question definitely lacks
this association.

Also notice the following type of expression, paralleled in Tok
Pisin:

> *kuo pukuwenai-mu*
>
> tree   fall down-Fut
>
> 'diwai i laik i pundaun'
>
> "The (rotten) tree will fall down/is about to fall down."

Some imperative flavour would be attached to the former form when used with the inclusive, very much like Imonda:

    sey, yerybwu ina-t-mu

    alright, we(incl) go-1pl-Fut

    "alright, let's go"

In conclusion, I am not satisfied that 'volition' crucially defines the basic function of '-mu', and would hope that a more invariant primary reading would be available.

Immediate Future occurred regularly as a native speaker's first explanatory response, usually in comparison with -meta, which was then glossed as '-bihain' "later". Again this reading is probably only secondary and contextual, for the following are quite common:

    mebke afa-b fik-m et-mu

    star   other-TEMP hous-OBJ build-FUT

    "I'll build a house next year"

    te mokyi mokyi puwe-mu

    I   later later   come-FUT

    "I'll come a lot later"

If volitional involves "wishes" and "wishes" are associated with an element of uncertainty, then the Usan and Hua subjunctives are properly put into the same "subjunctive" class. As the Fas use of '-mu' appears to parallel this subjunctive in many ways, we might hypothesize that '-mu' is associated with "uncertainty" or weaker "lack of evidence". This distinction is already independently needed in the Fas tense/aspect/mood system (cf.p..) and as such would not be unusual for the future tense.

Such a hypothesis might find confirmation in the fact that '-mu' naturally occurs with questions and -meta is basically banned as such ('-me' but not '-meta' occurs). Curiously enough, as the hypothesis involving "(un)certainty" arose in isolation from studies in other PNG languages, it centred on '-meta' as the 'less certain one'.

Apart from vague intuitions, it centred on the preponderant use of '-meta' for warnings, related to events which, if the warning is heeded, in most cases would not eventualize. It would be cognitively hard to associate 'certainty' with this usage, unless

we could resort to a 'functional over use' explanation. Also the use of '-mu' as purposive seemed to suggest 'definiteness', especially as a desirative is available to express uncertainty:

>*te puwe nai-mu-m*
>
>I   came   get-Fut-Case(purp)
>
>"I came to get it"
>
>*te puwe na-m yeni-a*
>
>I came   get-Case say-EMPH
>
>"I came (hoping/wanting) to get it"

Further more, and still on the assumption that the 'evidential' aspect would also operate in the future, morphologically '-meta' was a better candidate for the 'non evidential' as it employs the '-ta' suffix which also characteristically marks the Present Tense Non-evidential.

Finally, if uncertainty could be linked to questions, the occurrence of '-me' as part of Fas question verbs and a few question words is striking. See p.. for fuller discussion of interrogation.

As a sample cf.:

>*me-nbuf*   "when"
>
>*me-na*   "which direction"
>
>*me-(me)yer* "how do it"
>
>*me-(me)yen* "how say it"

In this series also '-me -(me)ta' occurs. In isolation the verb is intransitive and means something like "how to do(it)" In serialized construction it basically adds a "in what manner/how or how many" feature to the verb:

>*hay me(me)ta(f) pun-f-mu-a*

you   how-do-(you) get(pl.obj)-you-Fut-emp.

>how will you get them?
>
>how many will you get?

Cf.   *wob pi meta ?*

he go how-do

'what did he go to do ?'

and

wob pi-meta

he go-Fut(1)

Phonologically, the main distinction is intonational. The first sentence carrying an intonational contour.

It appears unproductive to try and postulate a synchronic basic reading which would encompass both uses, but one wonders if a diachronic development could have been possible. If so, an 'uncertainty' feature would make sense as it would embody a surviving link between the two forms.

As it is the hypothesis may be hard to maintain. The '-meta' form is frequently used in forms of reassurance:

te puwe-meta-i

I   come-fut-1s

"(don't worry) I'll come!"

Also with the intensifier:

te fe puwe-meta-i

I   INT come-FUT-1s

"I really will come"

Also notice that the meta verb may be -meta future suffixed.

hay pi meta-f-meta-f-ua

you go how-do-you-FUT-you-emph

"What are you going to be doing?"

So far then, an analysis in terms of the indicative/subjunctive dichotomy, though employed in other Papuan languages, has not been satisfactory for Fas.

In the following section we will attempt an analysis in terms of "orientation"

Notice that an important aspect of the volitional is that it is 'status' oriented, that is, it indicates that "X has " a certain desire to "V.." at a specific time of reference (TOR)" If "status at TOR" could be assumed, then the sense of 'volition' in certain context would also be explained, yet not forcing such an interpretation or one of 'indirect order' on subjects unable to exercise volition or obey orders, like:

   kuo pukuwen-mu

    tree fall-Fut

     "the tree will fall/the tree is in such a condition that it will fall"

Although, this expression might be used to co-express the intention or will of the speaker in the appropriate context, it would be inaccurate to enforce such an interpretation on each such case, as they are less commonly used in such a context and consequently usually lack a sense of volition.

Notice that Leech(71) analyzes English 'be going to' in similar terms, attaching to it as general meaning "FUTURE FULFILMENT OF THE PRESENT"

This in turn he subdivides into:

   FUTURE CULMINATION OF PRESENT INTENTION

and

   FUTURE CULMINATION OF PRESENT CAUSE

 The first sub-meaning would be illustrated by (p.54):

   I'm going to stay at home and write letters

Notice "It is found chiefly with human subjects, and with 'doing' or 'agentive' verbs which implies conscious exercise of the will"

Leech also notes that the 'be going to' form "brings with it a strong expectation (if not quite a prediction)that the intention will be carried out"

It appears that this type of "status orientation" naturally carries with it a sense of volition and certainty, which have also been sensed in the use of "-mu".

The second sub-meaning covers a wider range of contexts(p55):

She's going to have another baby

  (i.e. 'she's already pregnant')

I think I am going to faint.

  ('I already feel ill')

 There is going to be a storm in a minute

('I can see the black clouds gathering')

"In each of these there is the feeling that factors giving rise to the future happening are already present; or (to be meticulous) it is as if THE TRAIN OF EVENTS LEADING TO THE FUTURE HAPPENING IS ALREADY UNDER WAY"

Notice furthermore: "From this, it is easy to see why be going is often used in reference to the immediate future"

As already pointed out native speakers sometimes resort to an immediate vs. more distant future distinction to explain the distinction between '-mu' and '-meta', and notice that Seiler suggest a similar link-up.

What we suggest here is that volition, certainty and immediateness are derived meanings, naturally associated with 'status orientation' in the proper contexts.

'-meta', it seems, could most profitably be interpreted as 'future event oriention' a less modal and 'more colourless'(Leech 72.52) future. It would be oriented towards the point of (future) time in which the event is to take place. Such 'event orientation' may help towards making sense of the use of the 'event verb' "to do" as support verb to indicate future in a number of Papuan languages (expand!). This receives confirmation from the probable absence of this orientation if only '-me' is used (cf...).

Let us look at some more data:

    cf. ***kuo pukwenai-meta***

       tree fall - EF (event future)

       kuo pukwen-mu

       tree fall - SF (status future)

This first sentence suggests that the tree is in such a state that it will fall down. It might also be used if it expresses the knowledge that the tree is about to fall. The second usage has the

sense of warning -given appropriate context-. It focuses on the potential event, on what would happen if.. In another context it could merely be a prediction. "that tree will fall down one day, (mind my words)"

 Also compare the following:

      te ai-mu

     I be/stay-SF

     te ai-meta-i

     I be/stay-EF

The first sentence would be used in a typical response to the question:

    "Who is staying?"

    te aimu

    "I am staying"

The second sentence would be a typical answer to the question:

    "Will you be there when I come?"

    te aimetai

    "I'll be there"

The EF is typical for unfulfilled past tense apostasis:

   suknu momu skwune nuw pi-metai

   sick not like   CRS go-EF

   "If I had not been sick I would have gone."

Take the following situation:

Someone had been promised a radio to look after someone's garden for work well done. Upon return the garden proves to be a mess, the worker still expects his present and after waiting for a while comes to claim it. A typical answer would be:

 Hay tikuw ikakita a-tafu skwune te nwai-metai

  you work well-do be-do like I give(you)-EF

"If you had done your work well, I would have given it to you"

If the thing had been bought and the worker does not wait to claim his pay, the response is likely to be:

hay tikuw ikakita atafu sikwune, te yeb nwai-mu

"If you had done your work well, I would (now proceed to/be able to) give it to you"

The second sentence appears to be "status or present situation oriented", whereas with the counterfactual the orientation seems to be to the (unfulfilled) event

Grammatical neutralization may well interplay with semantic criteria. Past apostases with counter-factuals appear to take '-meta' obligatorily. We suggest that where appropriate we may expect neutralization to favour the form which is semantically most naturally or more generally equated with the neutralizing context

The Intentional and the Negated future appear to fall within the same category. Intentions and goals have a strong "status" orientation. Intentions and goals are present at the TOR.

Also negated future is hard to associated with a Future'event', as it tends to focus on the STATUS or FACT of something not taking place.

If modal association comes in (volition, inability etc.) another form would be used. Cf.

te pin-mu-m onfa

I go-SF-C NNG

"I am not going. It is not the case that I am going"

te biom pi-mu

I unable go-SF

"I am unable to come/don't want to come/will not come"

As already pointed out the 'biom' form also take '-mu' obligatorily, and its status orientation is obvious.

Further more the usage of '-mu' for discription of habitual/customary processes, appears to be status oriented describing "the way things are"

Finally sole occurrence of -mu in relative clauses, points to status orientation, as the function of the relative clause is to provide information on the status/condition of the antecedent.

Our conclusion then is that though both forms are neutralized in certain context(usually in favour of '-mu'),the direction of such neutralizations is not necessarily accidental, in the forms in which they don't neutralize a basic distinction is most profitably made in terms of EVENT OR STATUS ORIENTATION

Before finalizing this section let us consider a few more contextual examples:

An old man told to go and see a famous politician, answers:

  fukwob-m puwen-ua yeb on-meta-i

 village come-emph/Cond then see-EF-1s

 "If/when he comes to the village I'll see him/Let him come to the village and I'll see him then"

but: told to go and see his son in town

    puwen-ua yeb on-meta-i

      come-Emp/Con then see-EF-1s

 "(This is the way it is with us/me:) When he comes here I'll see him"

Some one staying with brother. Brother says :"next week I'll go and cut you a bunch of banana's." Response:

      te nuw pi-meta-i

       I go-EF-1s

      "(By then) I will have gone"

 Inquiry about someone still being at Imonda at a certain date:

   tikuw momu-a te nuw pi-metai

    work not-emp I CRS go-EF

   "If there is no work I will have gone by then"

Someone is sick but feels he will be better in time for a certain meeting:

te emsi-ta-i-meta-i

I good-do-1s-EF-1s

"I will be well (by then)"

But if result oriented:

hay tem saspara-f-sen yeb emsitai-mu

You me work healing-2s-FTS then better-SF

"Once you have done your healing ceremonies I will be better"

To unwanted outsider:

hay misis puwen-af-ua, te pupwar-mu

you again come-2s-Con, I beat-you-SF

"If you come again, I'll beat you"

To naughty child, unwilling to come for his spanking:

hay misis pwen-af-ua, te yeb pupwar-metai

you again come-Cond, I then beat-you-EF

"When you come here, I'll beat you"

When visiting:

Wanting to leave:

te nuw pi-mu

I CRS go-SF

"I better go now"

When with someone else when he is leaving:

te pi-metai

I go -EF

"I'll go in a minute"

In response to the question: Will you go pig-sago (set a pig trap) with me:

te pi-mitai   *te pi-mu

(Notice English parallel: *alright, I am going! But: alright, I'll go)

In response to a confirmative question: Are you going pig-sago with X? , the natural answer would be:

te pi-mu-ya

I go-SF-conf.

"yes, I am going"

Cynical response to question: when will they build a road our way?

te sen-metai-a

I die -EF -emp

"I will have to die first"

NON FUTURE FORM FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

The use of non-future or present tense or non-marking for future reference which can be observed at various stages in other languages (cf. Dutch in which the simple present tense is standard for future reference and English in which it is used more sparingly) is also witnessed in Fas, though it appears only when the future reference is contextually given and of low importance:

wues afab te nuw pin

moon other I CRS go

"Next month I will have gone"

As has already been pointed out, tense zero neutralisation occurs in subordinate clauses, except Intentionals and Relative clauses.

Summary:

'-mu' entails "future of a TOR status"

'-meta' entails "Post TOR event orientation"

The forms neutralize in the following contexts, some of which (especially when purely semantic) are hard to separate from the basic semantic distinction:

'-meta' "Warnings and threats"

     "Past unfulfilled apostasis"

'-mu'   "With intentionals"

     "With the proverb 'biom' "be able to"

     "In Negated future"

     "As alternative to the habitual in the description of customary processes"