Irrealis in Pilagá and Toba? Syntactic versus Pragmatic Coding

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Abstract. Despite the agglutinative tendency encountered in the grammars of Toba and Pilagá (both Guaykuruan languages), verbs do not exhibit tense and mood categories. We argue that "irrealis" is signaled by the 'distal' markers ga' in Pilagá and ka in Toba. We show that signaling is at the pragmatic level of coding, and not yet at the syntactic level. 'Distal' deictics occur attached to demonstratives and proforms, nouns, and interrogative words in declarative and nondeclarative speech acts. They apply to any nominal participant perceived as 'absent' or 'unknown'. From the stance of both the speaker and the hearer, ga' and ka may pragmatically code that the event in question has not been realized, is hypothetical, or is a future projection. In addition, we hypothesize a diachronic path for development of negative existential constructions in these languages and a possible relationship between the 'distal' markers, "negation," and "irrealis."

1. Introduction. Guaykuruan languages constitute a subset of South American native languages that has been relatively understudied. Speakers of Toba, Pilagá, Mocoví, and Kadiwéu are found in northeastern and central Argentina and in the Brazilian and Paraguayan Chaco, with numbers that vary greatly from one linguistic population to another.¹ Another language of this family, Abipón, has become extinct. While Kadiwéu speakers are found solely in the Brazilian province of Mato Grosso do Sul, the vast majority of Toba, Pilagá, and Mocoví speakers are located in the Argentinean provinces of Chaco, Formosa, and Santa Fe.

One characteristic of the languages of this family is that they do not exhibit a temporal-modal system encoded in the verb, albeit they do distinguish progressive versus nonprogressive aspect through verbal suffixes. Consequently,

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the existence of the modal notion "irrealis" must be explored in other word classes, such as nouns, and in markers of referentiality, such as pronouns and demonstratives.

In this article, we argue that "irrealis" is cued by a classifier in at least some Guaykuruan languages. Thus, we present a comparative study of two Guaykuruan languages, Pilagá and Toba, and examine the cognates ga' (Pilagá) and ka (Toba) and speculate about their function as irrealis markers. Ga' and ka belong to the syntactic category of classifiers that, in Guaykuruan languages, occur within the noun phrase and are attached to nouns, proforms, and demonstratives. Neither of these classifiers is found in the context of numeral expressions, nor do they have an agreement function. Semantically, ga' and ka convey a set of notions relevant to nominal participants—notions involving canonical position or shape, movement towards or away from the speaker's perception, and nonmotion involving distance from the speaker.

In their most basic meaning, ga' and ka indicate nonpresence, here labeled 'distal'; they occur with both declarative and nondeclarative sentences (interrogatives and commands). From the point of view of their function, the use of ga'and ka may indicate that the speaker wants the hearer to infer that the event in question has not been realized, since the object of reference to which ga' or ka is attributed is distal. However, this relationship between the form ga' or ka and the irreality of the event is not necessary. We will argue that the use of ga' or kadoes not immediately yield the association in the mind of the speaker that the event is nonactual. Since the participant referred to by the nominal expression is conceptualized as 'distal', the hearer understands that the nominal participant is out of sight and, by inference, that the event in which it is embedded is an expression of the ignorance, the desires, or the intentions of the speaker, rather than a realized event. Thus, the form is associated with the pragmatic function of irrealis by inferential connection and, therefore, depends on the context set up by the discourse.

This article also provides additional evidence for the characterization of irrealis (or nonactuality) proposed in several sources (e.g., Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca 1994:239; Chung and Timberlake 1985:241; Mithun 1995). Chung and Timberlake (1985:241) argue that in the expression of mode there is a "source" that constitutes the perspective from where the actuality or nonactuality of an event (its possibility, necessity, and desirability within the event world) is evaluated. Thus, for Pilagá and Toba, *ga*' and *ka* are, in fact, a special type of deictic that describes the relative distance of the participant from the speaker—a condition that is anchored in the frame of the temporal or spatial circumstances of the speech scenario.²

2. Classifiers in Guaykuruan languages. All classifiers in Toba and Pilagá behave much like clitics in that they are not bound to a particular position or to a particular word class. They attach to nouns, demonstratives, and indefinite

proforms and may lose their stress, becoming phonologically dependent on their host. Nonetheless, there are constraints on where they can appear. In particular, they occur attached to the left of their host noun, proform, or demonstrative, but to the right of an interrogative word.

There are basically six classifier morphemes in both Pilagá and Toba. Semantically, they are organized according to the following crosscutting parameters: (a) proximity or distance of the referent from the perceiver (identified primarily with the speaker); (b) position; and (c) motion.

For Pilagá, the parameters of proximity or distance and motion of the entity are conflated in three single forms: *na*' coming, present'; *so*' going away, past', and *ga*' absent or far, not in motion'. When the entities are classified according to their position, their presence within the visual field is implied since their configuration is observable. According to their internal semantics, classifiers in Pilagá have been grouped into two sets, namely, the *deictic classifiers* (those that convey proximity or distance and motion of the nominal participant, given above), and the *positional classifiers* (those that strictly mark physical disposition in space or shape) (Vidal 1995:60).

The set of positional classifiers in Pilagá also includes three forms: da' 'standing, vertically extended', $\tilde{n}i'$ 'sitting, nonextended', and di' 'lying, horizontally extended'. Both positional and deictic classifiers may occur with a feminine prefix ha-, depending on the gender of the referent. Pilagá classifiers are shown in table 1.

DEICTIC CLASSIFIERS
(ha-)na' '(fem.) coming, proximal' (ha-)so' '(fem.) going away, past' (ha-)ga' '(fem.) absent, distal'
Positional Classifiers
(ha-)da' (fem.) vertically extended' (ha-)ñi' (fem.) sitting, nonextended' (ha-)di' (fem.) lving, horizontally extended'

In Toba, the six classifiers have been called "locative nominal particles" (Klein 1973:223-31) or "noun classifiers" (Klein 1979:85-95). The semantic specification of Pilagá classifiers given in table 1 differs from the one presented by Klein (1979:86-87) for Toba noun classifiers, where she primarily divides noun classifiers into two categories, namely, "presence in the visual field" versus "absence from the visual field." Klein's parameter "presence in the visual field" subsumes the ideas of 'coming into view' (i.e., motion towards the point of reference) and 'in view' (i.e., where there is no sense of motion implied,

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Table 1 Pilagá Classifiars

only physical presence of the referent). She further subcategorizes each group according to two more distinctions: "anticipated presence" versus "realized presence" (i.e., the arrival or appearance of the referenced entity is taking place while the speech act develops or the referent was already present prior to the constitution of the setting) and "anticipated absence" versus "realized absence" (i.e., the departure or disappearance of the referenced entity is taking place while the speech act develops or the referent was already absent prior to the constitution of the setting). The referent was already absent prior to the constitution of the setting). The relationships among Toba noun classifiers are represented in figure 1.



Figure 1. Toba noun classifiers (from Klein 1979:91).

The three positional classifiers in Pilagá (see table 1) coincide with the three classifier morphemes in Klein's (1979:91) subcategory of "realized presence in the visual field" (see figure 1), while Toba *na*, cognate to Pilagá *na*', encodes the idea of "anticipated presence."³ The Toba noun classifiers *so* and *ka* (equivalent to Pilagá *so*' and *ga*') indicate "anticipated absence" and "realized absence" of the referent, respectively.

Positional (or 'in view, motionless') classifiers in both languages embody the notion of "shape." The positional meanings of both sets of classifiers are analogous to three of the basic shapes found in classifier systems around the world,

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i.e., flat, round, and long (Vidal 1995:65). Thus, the 'vertical, standing, long-line' class groups human referents, trees, and, in Pilagá, big animals (e.g., horses).⁴ The form for the nonextended, roundish shape marks the canonical position for mammals (not including humans or horses), insects, birds, and fruits. Entities such as, for instance, fire, stones, fishes, and towns are normally classified as spread or extended, i.e., of flat shape.

Deictic (or 'motion-like, absent') classifiers encode the ideas of "movement" and "proximity" with respect to a point of reference, which generally coincides with the speaker. Basically, entities that belong to different classes in terms of their position can either be moving within the visual field or be potentially absent.

As shown in table 1 and figure 1, Pilagá and Toba deictic (or 'motion-like, absent') classifiers each include three morphemes: *na*' and *na*, *so*' and *so*, and *ga*' and *ka*.

The forms *na*' and *na* have been attested carrying the meaning of 'in movement, coming into view, present'. Examples (1a)–(1e) are typical illustrations of "movement into the visual field."⁵

- (1a) na'-m'e yawo pitlale' (Pilagá) CL.proximal-DEM woman Pilagá 'that Pilagá woman (who is coming)'
- (1b) *ña-wege-ge' na' n-qiyala* (Pilagá) 1SG-take-DIR.out CL.proximal INAL.POSS-table 'I am pulling out the table.' (From the speaker's perspective, the table is coming.)
- (1c) lakwalero n-waxa-t-ega na-wataxanak (Toba) ART-student 3PL-fight-PRG-INT CL.proximal-police 'The students are fighting the police (who are approaching).'
- (1d) ya-laqcigi na-pigem (Toba) 3SG-thunder CL.proximal-sky 'There is thunder in the sky.'
- (1e) yapak hana-'ayat (Toba) ADJ CL.proximal-mosquito 'There are lots of mosquitoes (drawing near the speaker).'

There is also some possibility that *na*' and *na* represent a general category for whatever entities are present in the visual field, i.e., 'proximal', without implying anything about their position or movement.

In terms of the motion rendered by the referent, so' and so index "movement away from the visual field." In (2a)–(2c), Pilagá so' conveys movement away from the vantage point of the speaker. Example (2d), which would contrast with (2c), is unacceptable, since the action of chasing the mouse requires that, from

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the point of view of the chaser, the mouse be going away even though the chaser may be gaining on the mouse.

- (2a) so'-m'e siyawa i-laeke l-alonek qaqaeri de-wose (Pilagá) CL.going.away-DEM person 3SG-go.for POSS.3SG-wood CONJ 3SG-cook 'That person (going away) goes (to look) for wood for cooking.'
- (2b) *so'-ca-ge'-lo yawo-'* (Pilagá) CL.going.away-DEM-DIR.outwards-PAUC women-PAUC 'those women (going away)'
- (2c) hayim s-ka-tak so' cigonae (Pilagá) 1SG.PRO 1SG-follow-PRG CL.going.away mouse 'I am following/chasing the mouse.'
- (2d) *hayim s-ka-tak na' cigonae (Pilagá) 1SG.PRO 1SG-follow-PRG CL.PROX mouse 'I am chasing the mouse (that is coming towards me).'

Examples (3a) and (3b) show the use of Toba so 'going out of view'. Note the contrast between (3a) and (1c), which uses Toba *na* 'coming into view'.

- (3a) lakwalero n-waxa-t-ega so-wataxanak (Toba)
 ART-student 3PL-fight-PRG-INT CL.going.away-police
 'The students are fighting the police.' (The police are moving away from the students).
- (3b) Ø-wayo-ta so-'i-loqoy (Toba) 3SG-fly-PRG CL.going.away-POSS.1SG-bird 'My bird is flying away.'

The semantic values of so' and so range from 'in sight' to 'out of sight'. In principle, if the figure is going away, it can still be visualized. In other words, it is mostly within the visual field, even though it is leaving the setting.

The classifiers ga' and ka pair up with the classifiers so' and so according to the parameter of "nonproximity," but unlike so' and so neither "movement" nor "position" are involved with ga' and ka. In (4a)–(4d), we show ga', ka 'distal' (in boldface) used with noun phrases in declarative sentences. In these examples, ga' or ka indicates that the referent is conceptualized as 'unknown' or 'out of sight' of the speech participants.

For instance, in (4a), the referent (the sister) is absent, but the sentence may also imply that the speaker does not know her, as happens with ga' lwa in (4b). Example (4c), from Toba, is similar to (4a) in that the referent is also 'out of sight'.

- (4a) s-ciyo-ge' ga' ar-qaya (Pilagá) 18G-come-DIR.towards CL.distal POSS.28G-sister 'I came from your sister's.' (The referent is out of view.)
- (4b) w'o ga' *l-wa* (Pilagá) EXIST CL.distal POSS.3SG-spouse/wife 'He has a wife (but I never saw her or I do not know her).'
- (4c) hayem wo'o ka-pio'q (Toba) PRO.1SG EXIST CL.distal-dog 'I have a dog.' (The referent is out of view.)

In Guaykuruan languages, if the referent is out of sight, the speaker conceptualizes it as either 'already gone' (so' or so) or 'potentially coming into view' (ga' or ka). The forms ga', ka 'distal' indicate that the referenced entity is, in principle, potentially coming into view and, thus, of future projection, as in (5a) and (5b).

- (5a) *ñi-woren-a* ga' harina (Pilagá)
 1SG-buy-AGR.SG CL.distal flour
 'I will buy flour.' (The flour is not present, but the speaker implies that it will be.)
- (5b) ramari ya-nim haka-lere ka-Juan (Toba)
 PRO.3SG 3SG-give FEM.CL.distal-book CL.distal-Juan
 'He will give the book to Juan.' (Neither Juan nor the book are present, but the speaker implies that they will be.)

In addition to "distalness," "indefiniteness of the referent" is another semantic extension associated with ga' and ka. In (6a), the presence of ga' indicates that the noun phrase does not point to any individual in particular. In both (6a) and (6b), the referent of the Pilagá proform ga'm'e is nonspecific, as is the referent of Toba ka-sixawo in (6d). In (6c), ga' yaqayaripi denotes 'Pilagá brothers' who are not blood relatives.

- (6a) ga'-m'e Ø-waen-di (Pilagá) CL.distal-DEM 3SG-faint-horizontally.extended 'Somebody fainted.'
- (6b) da'-m'e yi-yi-natek **ga'**-m'e aw-anat (Pilagá) CL.vertical-DEM 1SG-3SG-ask CL.distal-DEM 2SG-want 'He asked me: "What do you want?"'
- (6c) w'o ga' ya-qaya-ri-pi (Pilagá) EXIST CL.distal POSS.1SG-brother-PAUC-COL 'I have brothers (Pilagá people but not blood relatives).'

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(6d) hek **ka**-sixawo (Toba) 3SG-go CL.distal-person 'Someone goes.'

Indefinite expressions containing ga' and ka are very common. The Pilagá indefinite phrase ga' macaqaega' 'somebody, anybody' or the Toba form to'oka 'something, somebody else' can be used with both animate and inanimate referents.

In sum, ga', ka 'distal' or 'out of sight' are classifiers that function as deictics, i.e., marking distance with respect to the speaker. "Unknown" or "indefinite participant or referent" are metaphors associated with the particular circumstances of that referent, absent from the visual perception and the speech scenario of both the speaker and the hearer.

3. Other contexts for ga' and ka: the pragmatic coding. In section 2, we showed that the basic semantics of the deictics ga' and ka correspond to whatever is distal or invisible to the speaker and to his or her scenario and that, as such, they occur as part of the noun phrase. In the following sections, we argue that, in a communicative exchange, the production of ga' or ka may activate in the hearer the emergence of inferences relative to the actuality of the event. The distribution of the forms ga' and ka is important in this respect; they can be found with declarative sentences, and with questions, commands, and negations as well. However, the occurrence of ga' and ka involves a type of pragmatic bond between the forms themselves and the nonactuality of the event, since the hearer may conventionally derive the pragmatic function of irrealis when these forms are encountered.

According to Tomlin (1987; Tomlin and Pu 1991:73), there are two types of functional interaction: structural coding and pragmatic signaling. A syntactic form syntactically codes a given function if the presence of the function in the message requires the speaker automatically and invariably to use the specific form and the hearer, upon hearing the specific linguistic form, automatically and invariably recovers the associated function. A syntactic form *pragmatically signals* a function if the presence of the form permits the hearer to infer a particular function, but there is no automatic production requirement on the part of the speaker.

We claim that the relationship between ga' or ka and the irrealis function is not one of necessity; there is no production requirement on the speaker to utter the form when the function obtains. When these forms occur, the hearer may conventionally infer that the event is "hypothetical," "unrealized," or "future." Even when these pragmatic interpretations are systematic, the pragmatic meanings are outside of the grammar of the languages; only 'distal', 'out of sight', and 'unknown' are the grammaticalized meaning of ga' and ka. Even though ga' and ka occur in commands, questions, and negative existentials,

other, "nondistal" deictics may appear as well. For this reason, we maintain that this level of coding of irrealis in Pilagá and Toba is not structural, but pragmatic. We will elaborate this point more fully in sections 3.1 and 3.2.

3.1. Ga' and ka as markers of 'unrealized' or 'hypothetical' events. In section 1, we mentioned that, in Guaykuruan languages, verbs are tenseless. There is no inflection for mood, and, as far as the aspectual system is concerned, only progressive and nonprogressive suffixes occur (Klein 1973; Vidal 1992). Being so restricted in terms of temporal-aspectual-modal distinctions, Guaykuruan languages are noteworthy for redeploying certain forms to convey tense-aspect-modality—categories that in many languages are expressed within the verb or through auxiliaries.

The use of ga' and ka 'distal' in (5a) and (5b) suggests that, in certain contexts, these forms have the potential of contributing to the temporal-aspectual interpretation of the utterance. Moreover, a detailed analysis of (7a) versus (7b) and of (7c) versus (7d) will help to further elaborate this idea.

- (7a) am-sa-nem so' paan (Pilagá) 2SG-1SG-give CL.absent/going.away bread
 - 'I gave you bread.' (The bread is not there, but both the speaker and hearer know that it was.)
- (7b) *am-sa-nem* **ga'** *paan* (Pilagá) 2SG-1SG-give CL.distal bread

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I'll give you bread.' (There is no bread out there, but the speaker implies that there will be some, and then she/he will give it to the hearer.)

(7c) so'ote y-ali so' aros (Pilagá) before 1SG-eat CL.absent/going.away rice

'I ate rice.'(The rice is not in view, but both the speaker and the hearer know that it was; consequently, it must have been eaten.)

(7d) qomle qance y-aliq **ga'** aros (Pilagá) after and 3SG-eat CL.distal rice

'He will eat rice.' (The rice is not out there, but it is going to be sometime afterwards. In that case, he will eat it.)

In (7b) and (7d), where the referent is marked with ga', the action is expected to be completed after the speech event takes place. In (7b), the referent (the bread) is conceptualized as potentially existent and that is why ga' occurs in that example. Here, since the object will become existent in the future, the action cannot yet be completed; in fact, the forthcoming existence of the referent is a condition for the action to be successfully carried out in the future. Since ga' thus indicates that the action has *not* been completed, we can certainly interpret ga' as an indicator of modal meaning. In (7a) and (7c), the absence of the pre-

existing bread or rice is evidence for inferring that the action *has been* completed. That is, the hearer figures out that the bread or rice is not there, so the action of giving or eating must be interpreted as accomplished. It seems quite evident that the condition of the bread in (7b) is such that it will be present after the utterance time; in this sense, the speaker pictures the bread as potentially present, in which case it will be given to the speaker.⁶ The form *ga*' in (7b) and (7d) is attributed to nonindividuated, collective NP arguments. Analogous situations where the nonindividuated, plural, or partitive status of object referents contribute to imperfective aspect readings of clauses have been described by Hopper and Thompson (1980:261).

In (8a), the celebration and the time to carry it out are distant but potentially coming. In (8b), the book referred to (a grammar of the Pilagá language) is potentially coming, since the speaker knows that the researcher is working on it. In (8c), the Toba morpheme ka indicates that, although the referent does not know something now, he will come to do so someday.

(8a) w'o ga' nlo-' qance w'o ga' EXIST CL.distal day-PAUC CONJ EXIST CL.distal qar-maa-q (Pilagá) POSS.1PL-celebration-PL
'In a few days, we will have a celebration.'

(8b) w'o ga' qar-de walege na' qar-aqta-q w'o
EXIST CL.distal 1PL-write/book LOC CL.present POSS.1PL-language EXIST
ga' n-lo (Pilagá)
CL.distal 3SG-day
'There will be a book about our language someday.'

(8c) ka-maji ya-yate-n (Toba)
CL.distal-3 3SG-know-NON.PRG
'He doesn't know (but will someday).'

This same morpheme ka also occurs with conditional clauses.⁷ One might expect hypothetical events to take an irrealis marker because they inherently embody a low degree of certainty about the informational content of the predicate. Example (9) attests the use of ka on the NP of the apodosis of a conditional sentence.

(9) nagi qohawot sa-hañi ka-waloq (Toba) when rain 1SG-sow CL.distal-cotton
'When it rains, I will start to sow cotton.'

Certain styles or genres, such as hortatory speeches, can be considered as expressing hypothetical situations, since what is stated is not factual but recommended. Examples (10a) and (10b) are excerpts from a Pilagá native recipe

elicited from a female speaker. They deal with food preparation, and, in both instances, the referent coded with ga' is projected as potentially existent.

(10a) qo-ya-wo na'nwosek qo-Ø-wenake ga' lapat t'aa ga' PASS-3SG-do food PASS-3SG-need CL.distal meat CONJ CL.distal *l-alke* (Pilagá) POSS.3SG-ingredients

'To cook the stew, meat and ingredients are necessary.'

(10b) qo-ya-saañi ga' lapat (Pilagá) PASS-3SG-throw CL.distal meat 'The meat is/should be added.'

Thus, in Guaykuruan languages, categorizing the nominal referents through the use of ga' or ka yields the association in the mind of the speaker between the construal of the event as of future projection (thus, as yet unrealized) or hypothetical and the affected referent as not yet present. The speaker manipulates these forms so that the hearer infers that the proposition has not been fulfilled. Thus, the hearer assumes that the speaker, in using ga' or ka, is seeking to convey the irrealis status of the events described. In Pilagá, so' absent' and ga''distal' are semantically associated with the distinction between 'actualized' versus 'unrealized', respectively. In terms of the relationship between tensemodality and irrealis, the temporal framing of the event is either inferred from ga' or so' being attached to the nominal arguments, or lexicalized through a time expression, such as so'ote' before', as in (7c), and *qomle qance* 'after', as in (7d).

3.2. Nondeclarative sentences and irrealis. The category "irrealis" has been primarily identified with a particular set of speech acts, namely counterfactuals, conditionals, obligations, futures, hortatives, and imperatives. Questions and negations have sometimes been included in this group, but as Mithun (1995) shows, the categorization of all such speech acts as belonging to an irrealis mode is highly variable. In Central Pomo, for instance, some future tenses and interrogatives are categorized as "irrealis" and some as "realis," and the same holds true for imperative sentences in Maricopa (Mithun 1995:373–84). Mithun has argued that the distinction realis-irrealis may yield different categorizations in different languages for a number of reasons. Among them are the scope of questions and negations (what is being asserted beyond the questioned or the negated constituent), the pragmatic purposes involved in commands, and the varying degrees of certainty in expressions of "future" (Mithun 1985:385).

Of interest in this connection between nondeclarative sentences and irrealis is the emergence of Pilagá and Toba ga' and ka in questions, commands, and negative existentials (the last will be considered in section 4). In all these instances, the forms ga' and ka do not serve to syntactically code a nondeclarative

sentence, but to signal that the referent is out of sight or unknown, and then, by inference, that the overall meaning of the event or request is unknown, expected, or probable. In a questioning-asking circumstance, the speaker assumes that the hearer has some information unknown to the speaker and solicits it through a question. Commands that include ga' or ka indicate that what is asked for is out of the sight of both the speaker and the hearer and, in that sense, that the speaker is not sure whether his or her desire will be accomplished. In these contexts, it is this optional occurrence of ga' or ka that provides the link between these grammatical forms and irrealis. However, we will show that ga' and ka are not obligatory in questions and commands, nor is their presence a sufficient structural element to derive the interrogative or imperative nature of the utterances in which they are found.

3.2.1. Questions. One use of ga' or ka is exhibited in interrogative sentences, where the speaker is asking for new or unknown information, as in (11a)–(11f). As has been described for other languages, questions may include some overt indication of the speaker's ignorance of what is being asked. In Menomini (Algonquian), questions may be formed within the modal system, "as essentially an expression of the speaker's ignorance of the facts, with merely the implication that it is hoped that the hearer will supply them" (Palmer 1986:31). In Serrano (Uto-Aztecan) the "dubitative" particle "is often the only indication of a question" (Palmer 1986:31).

In Pilagá, when ga' appears in a question, it may be part of the interrogative phrase, as in (11a), (11d), and (11e), or it may appear as part of a NP referent, as in (11b). Moreover, it may be duplicated, appearing with *both* the interrogative marker and a NP referent, as in (11c) and (11f). This means that, in terms of its constituency, ga' may be postposed to the interrogative marker, preposed as an operator, or both postposed and preposed, as in (11c). The second and third occurrences of ga' in (11f) do not constitute a case of duplication, since they are referencing different discourse referents.

- (11a) qalqo' **ga'** barbara (Pilagá) INTERR CL.distal Barbara 'Where is Barbara?'
- (11b) qo'li w'o ha-ga' ar-wa (Pilagá) INTERR EXIST FEM-CL.distal POSS.2-spouse 'Do you have a wife?'
- (11c) nae-ga' ga' ad-naat (Pilagá) INTERR-CL.absent CL.distal POSS.2-name 'What is your name?'

(11d) nae-ga' eta (Pilagá) INTERR-CL.absent way/manner 'What is it like?'

(11e) caqaga' l-naat na' n-lo (Pilagá) INTERR-CL.distal POSS.3SG-name CL.present INAL.POSS.-day 'Which day is today?'

(11f) naecaqa-ga' ga' inaat kiryo ga' INTERR-CL.distal CL.distal knife already CL.distal awa-pyag-a-na (Pilagá) 2SG-cut-OBJ.SG-INSTR 'Which knife did you use to cut it (meat) with?'

In Toba, the lack of knowledge of the speaker is expressed by the use of an interrogative word and by marking of a following noun or verb phrase, as in (12a)-(12c). NPs in clauses that include an interrogative form must contain the morpheme ka, whether the head is a full pronoun, as in (12a), or a noun, as in (12b).

- (12a) Wa'age ka-mari (Toba) INTERR CL.distal-3SG 'Where is he?'
- (12b) Neget to'oko-ka (Toba) INTERR thing-CL.distal 'What else?'
- (12c) Nege' ka-m-wirwo' (Toba) INTERR CL-3SG-arrive 'Who arrived?'

In Pilagá, form ga' occurs in questions when the referent is not present or the speaker has no clue about what the answer to that question will be. However, as discussed in section 3.2, it is possible to formulate an interrogative sentence without ga', as in (13a) and (13b). In (13a), although the referent is going out of view, both the speaker and the hearer can still visualize him. In (13b), the interrogative marker is *naeso'*, not *naega'*, as in (11c) and (11d).

- (13a) naera do'ho so-ca-ge' (Pilagá) INTERR 3SG 3SG-go-DIR.away 'Who is he (who is going away)?'
 (13b) nae-so' an-Ø-tagtaat-pe-n (Pil
- (13b) nae-so' an-Ø-taqtaat-pe-n (Pilagá) INTERR-CL.going.away 2SG-3SG-say-DIR-PUNCT 'Who told you that?'

Thus, it is not the case in Pilagá that all questions must contain ga'. Interrogative sentences where the questioned referent is visible are thus possible. Moreover, interrogative markers containing classifiers with different deictic values, such as so' going away', may occur in these cases, as in (13b).

3.2.2. Commands. We will discuss the use of ga' and ka in commands containing transitive verbs, where the NP acting as a patient of the verb is marked by ga' or ka. Commands have inherent second person subjects; subjects in Toba and Pilagá are manifested in the verb through pronominal prefixes, rather than through full independent pronouns.⁸ So, in (14a)–(14c), the only nominal NP argument that occurs is the object of the verb.⁹

(14a) ana-saa-ña ga' qa' (Pilagá)
2SG-throw-DIR.downwards CL.distal stone
'Throw somebody/me that stone.' (The one I/you saw sometime ago. Do you remember it?)

- (14b) 'aw-layke ka-lashik (Toba) 2SG-look.for CL.distal-firewood 'Go search for firewood.'
- (14c) 'an-waq ka-polenta (Toba) 2SG-cook CL.distal-corn.flour 'Cook the corn flour.'

The marking of NPs with ga' or ka in (14a)–(14c) can be explained as follows. In (14a), the speaker pictures the referent as out of sight, since the entity (the stone) is far from the speech act participants. In (14b) and (14c), the speaker indicates that the searching for firewood or the cooking of corn flour have not been completed because the marked entities (firewood, corn) are not in sight or are not present. With ga' and ka, the speaker thus indicates his or her intention for the act to be performed by the hearer. A command is a way of expressing this form of manipulation and of ensuring that an event will happen—at least imaginarily—by requesting it.¹⁰

In Pilagá and Toba, the mere presence of ga' or ka does not immediately turn a proposition into a command. An imperative sentence, such as in (14a), is formally identical to a declarative sentence; that is, (14a) may have two possible readings, i.e., as a declarative sentence 'you will throw (somebody) a stone (which is out of sight/distal)', or as a command 'throw me/somebody that stone (out of view/distal)'. What is conclusive about the presumable status of (14a) as either a command or a declarative sentence is the intonation pattern.

Different intonation contours clearly distinguish one type of speech act from another. With regard to Toba, Klein (1986:217) argues that pitch plays a fundamental role in recognizing modal specifications. In recorded conversation, Toba

speakers place a rising contour on the final segment of a question. Statements are characterized by lengthening the level contour or by short contours with faling pitch at the end of each. Imperative sentences exhibit a long level pitch that ends abruptly with a rising pitch that drops on the stressed syllable. Intonation contours interact with syntactic structure (for instance, with order arrangements in questions where the interrogative word is placed at the beginning of the sentence) and vocal qualities (dramatization of voice, speed, and loudness) (Klein 1986:218). Intonation in Pilagá has not been systematically studied, but we noticed that Pilagá speakers raise and lower pitch when producing short conversations containing requests. Even if we are not able at this point to describe in detail the different intonation patterns in Pilagá, we believe that the intonational schema for Pilagá commands coincides with the one described by Klein (1986) for Toba imperatives. Thus, we can confidently predict that the interpretation of a sentence such as (14a) as either declarative (assertive) or imperative will rest upon the pitch contour imposed by the speaker on it, rather than on the presence of the deictic classifier ga'.

Conversely, a command without ga' is not necessarily ungrammatical. The same observation with respect to the optional usage of ga' and ka for interrogative sentences applies to commands: imperatives bearing another kind of deictic classifier, such as na' 'proximal', are possible if the referent is close to both the speaker and the hearer, as in (15).

(15) an-saa-ña na' qa' (Pilagá) 2SG-throw-DIR.downwards CL.proximal stone 'Throw somebody/me that stone (pointing at it).'

In Pilagá, commands may include *na*' 'proximal', as in (15), or *ga*' 'distal', as in (14a), but not *so*' 'going out of view, past', as attested by (16). The presence of *so*' 'absent, going away' in (16) rules out the interpretation of this sentence as a command, no matter what kind of intonation contour it bears. Likewise, a Pilagá speaker will only accept the declarative reading. This is because commands express circumstances that are hoped for, and therefore unrealized. But *so*' 'going away/past' indicates the opposite notion—that, being out of the sight of the speaker and the hearer, the act of throwing the stone must already have been undertaken.

(16) an-saa-ña so' qa' (Pilagá) 2SG-throw-DIR.downwards CL.absent stone

'You threw (me/somebody) a stone (out of sight/going away).', not 'You! Throw (me/somebody) a stone (out of sight/going away).'

3.2.3. Irrealis-inducing verbs: modality, cognition-utterance, and manipulation verbs. What Givón (1994:271) has shown for English also holds true for Pilagá. Modality, cognition-utterance, and manipulation verbs create an

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irrealis scope over the proposition they take as a complement.¹¹ In Pilagá (and also in Toba), the employment of a manipulation verb, such as 'want' in (17a), or of a cognition-utterance verb, such as 'told' in (17b), in the principal clause typically co-occurs with ga' in the targeted NP of the embedded clause. In (17c) and (17d), which include a modality verb 'want', the objects of the subordinate verbs 'build' and 'prepare', i.e., *emek* 'house' and *nwosek* 'food', are marked with ga', since these objects' referents belong to the universe of "the desires of the subject." The main verbs in (17a)–(17d) have been translated as past tense, in accordance with the context in which they were elicited.

- (17a) yiset da' so-mawe ga' nitaayaq (Pilagá) 38G-want CPTZ 18G-meet CL.distal place.of.reunion 'He wanted me to meet/organize/have a meeting.'
- (17b) hayim da-qtanem da' Ø-qaya-ge' ga' t'aeyi (Pilagá) PRO.1SG 3PL-tell CPTZ 3SG-go-DIR CL.distal far 'He told me that he would go far.'
- (17c) hada'm'e soote n-oma da' setake qo-y-iet ga' FEM.PRO.3SG before 3SG-know CPTZ want 3.INDET-3SG-make CL.distal emek (Pilagá) house 'She knew that he wanted to build a house.'
- (17d) soote sa-noma da' setake aw-'et ga' nwosek (Pilagá) before 1SG-know CPTZ want 2SG-make CL.distal food 'I knew that she wanted to prepare the food.'

In Pilagá, moreover, NP objects of a modality verb such as 'plan' may occur with classifiers other than ga'. In (18a)–(18c), which are of basically the same form except for the classifier, the speaker is mostly concerned with the position or relative distance of the referent object, rather than with the irrealis status of the utterance. In (18a), the speaker conceptualizes the house as distal, potentially existent, or unknown. In (18b), the construction is in progress, or semifinished, as attested by the presence of the canonical classifier $\tilde{n}i'$ for houses and buildings in general. Sentence (18c) indicates, by means of the classifier di''horizontally extended', that the house has been torn down.

- (18a) Ø-wentetpa n-oo-sem ga' emek (Pilagá)
 3SG-plan 3SG-build-DIR.upwards CL.distal house
 'He plans to build a house.' (He has an idea of a house in mind, but he has not started building it yet.)
- (18b) Ø-wentetpa n-oo-sem ñi' emek (Pilagá)
 3SG-plan 3SG-build-DIR.upwards CL.nonextended house
 'He plans to build a house.' (He has started already; the house is partially built.)

(18c) Ø-wentetpan-oo-semdi'emek(Pilagá)3SG-plan3SG-build-DIR.upwardsCL.horizontally.extendedhouse'He plans to build a house.' (The house is ruined/demolished, and he must rebuild

it.)

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Thus, the presence of ga' is sometimes required with modality, manipulation, and cognition-utterance verbs in Pilagá. This fact indicates that the meaning of the marker is important in determining its distribution and that, therefore, ga' may be moving towards the syntactic coding of an irrealis function.

In Romance languages, verbs of request functioning as manipulation verbs may require a complement clause whose verb occurs in the subjunctive mood. In Pilagá, ga' may show up on the nominal of a complement clause that is governed by a verb of cognition-with-manipulation, depending on what kind of information the speaker is emphasizing. Such information may include the distance of the object referent, as in (19a), or the shape of the house, as in (19b).

- (19a) da'm'e hayim Ø-enap-ega da' se-kew'o ga' harina (Pilagá) PRO.3SG PRO.1SG 3SG-ask-DIR CL.CPTZ 1SG-buy CL.distal flour 'He asked me to buy flour (for him).'
- (19b) ya-se'tem da' se-kat-a di' l-acaqa (Pilagá) 3SG-allow CPTZ 1SG-go-OBJ.SG CL.horizontally extended POSS.3-house 'He allowed me to go to his house (canonically extended in terms of its position).'

So far, we have presented the distribution of ga' and ka in main clauses (declarative speech acts and nondeclarative speech acts including questions and commands) and in the complements of certain manipulation and cognition verbs, arguing that its presence is nonobligatory and that, when it occurs, it may either indicate that the nominal participant is out of sight, distal, or unknown, or it may suggest to the hearer that the event described is unrealized, desirable, or potential. We now turn, in section 4, to the last context to be considered here, that of negative existentials, in order to show the correlation between these constructions, irrealis, and the forms ga' and ka.

4. Irrealis and negation. Ga' and ka must be attached to the particles qa and qay, respectively, as parts of the negative existential markers qaga' and qayka, as shown in (20a)–(20d). Qaga' and qayka are the negative counterparts of Pilagá w'o and Toba wo'o 'to have, to exist'. No other deictic classifier apart from ga' and ka can occupy this slot.

(20a) qa-ga' ha-ño-ho naaña (Pilagá) NEG.EXIST FEM-CL.nonextended-DEM room 'There was no room.'

- (20b) qa-ga' so' i-wa (Pilagá) NEG.EXIST CL.going.away POSS.1SG-spouse 'I do not have a spouse (because he/she left).'
- (20c) qay-**ka** ka-nayom ram-ñi-garen (Toba) NEG EXIST CL.distal-money CL.vertically.extended-POSS.1SG-curing 'There is no money to cure me.'
- (20d) hañi-'i-xaynole qay-ka ka-l-we (Toba) FEM.CL-3SG-old.lady NEG.EXIST CL.distal-POSS.3SG-teeth 'The old lady has no teeth.'

From a semantic point of view, the connection between negative existential forms and the irrrealis mode is quite straightforward, since the concept of 'non-existence' may have arisen from notions such as "distalness" or 'nonvisibility' involved with ga' and ka.

We hypothesize that a possible derivation of the negative existential is from the demonstratives.¹² Toba has demonstratives that are reduplicated forms of the classifiers: *rara* 'that-present', *kaka* 'that one-absent', and *soso* 'that onemoving away'. Reduplicated demonstratives themselves can be phonologically reduced in Toba (Klein 1973:234-37), dropping all of the sounds to the left of the glottal stop. Thus, *re'era* 'he-standing there' becomes '*era*; *hana'ana* 'she-coming towards here' becomes '*ana*; and *haji'aji* 'she-lying' becomes '*aji* (Klein 1978:157). In its current form, Pilagá lacks reduplicated demonstratives, although the negative existential may suggest that it might have formerly had them.

The Toba negative existential qayka can also occur as qaykaka, as shown in (21).

 (21) qalqa'a jiwo'ora ñi-ke'enxak ca'aji qaykaka yoqta but equal 1SG-suffer because NEG.EXIST sufficient qan-tawnagek (Toba) POSS.1PL-help

'But just the same, I suffer because there is not sufficient help for us.' (Klein 1996:60)

It appears that the Toba negative existential form *qaykaka* resembles the reduplicated demonstrative form *kaka*. If *qaykaka* was originally a reduplicated demonstrative, and if reduplicated demonstratives are commonly reduced in Toba discourse, Toba *qaykaka* and *qayka* may have come from the same morpheme.

From this fact, we can derive two major ideas. First, that the forms ga' and ka are the 'distal' morphemes in the Pilagá negative existential qa-ga' and in the analogous Toba form qay-ka. Second, that the obligatory presence of ga' and ka with negative existential forms gives us additional evidence for the pragmatic connection between the distal classifiers ga' and ka and irrealis. In the

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examples discussed throughout section 3, we highlighted the nature of the relationship between ga' and ka and the irrealis function, making clear that the association between form and function was not a necessary one. On the other hand, with negative existentials, grammaticalization has taken place. The forms ga' and ka have specialized in this context, since no other deictic classifier, neither in Pilagá nor in Toba, can combine to form a negative existential. Far from contradicting our hypothesis that in Guaykuruan languages ga' and ka are pragmatically associated with irrealis, the presence of ga' and ka in negative existentials reveals that the proposed connection does indeed exist, and that it has become grammaticalized for the expression of negation (of existence) in these languages.

5. Summary and conclusion. The basic meaning of ga' and ka is 'out of view' or 'distal' or 'unknown'. When using ga' or ka, the speaker represents some referent as out of sight or unknown, but, by semantic extension, he or she may also imply that the object referent is 'potentially present' or that the event is 'hypothetical' or 'unrealized'. In commands, negations, and interrogatives, the propositional content is hoped for, not believed, or unknown. In declarative contexts, ga' or ka may convey the idea that something will happen once the conditions for the realization of the event are satisfied. In most cases, the condition is not made explicit, and the hearer must infer it.

Our analysis has demonstrated that, unlike what happens with other South American languages, in the Guaykuruan languages Pilagá and Toba, semantic information about tense and mood is "packaged" in the NP expressions or expressed lexically, rather than being morphologically marked within the verb.

It should be emphasized that, in the absence of other factors, the presence of ga' or ka per se does not define a command or a question. In both Toba and Pilagá, commands are intonationally distinct from interrogative sentences and declarative speech acts. Interrogative sentences also have a different syntactic organization than do declaratives. Moreover, in Pilagá, there are instances of interrogative sentences occurring without ga'.

The same morphemes ga' and ka occur as part of the negative existential marker. It is necessary to underscore that only the deictic classifiers ga' and ka surface with negative existentials, to the exclusion of the other deictics. Thus, the required presence of ga' and ka in negative existentials indicates that, in this particular case, a correlation between the occurrence of these forms and the reality of the event exists.

Table 2 represents the stages in the semantic shifts that would presumably have to occur if "irrealis" were to be grammaticalized as the meaning of ga' and ka. Stage I presents the actual grammaticalized meanings of ga' and ka; stage II, the pragmatic inference that arises possibly from sense 3, 'unknown entity'; stage III, the already-grammaticalized meaning of 'negative existence'; and stages IV and V, developments not yet consolidated, either in Pilagá or in Toba.

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Except for the negative existential (stage III), ga' and ka have not acquired the grammatical function of an irrealis modal, although, in a more distant stage of the history of these languages, they might be reanalyzed into future markers.

I. SYNCHRONIC SENSES of ga' and ka		1. 'distal' 2. 'out of sight' 3. 'unknown entity'
II. PRAGMATIC INFERENCE		- · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
from sense 3	-	ga and ka are typically interpreted as 'unrealized, non-actual, uncertain', which leads to reanalysis as
III. GRAMMATICALIZATION in the negative		
existential forms	-	qaga' and qayka
IV. POTENTIAL FURTHER		
GRAMMATICALIZATION	+	inference of 'unrealized' \rightarrow "irrealis"
V. POTENTIAL REANALYSIS	→	"irrealis" \rightarrow "future"

Table 2. Stages in the Grammaticalization of Irrealis in Pilagá and Toba

Only if ga' and ka were to become obligatory to the extent that no complement of modal and manipulation verbs, commands, or interrogative sentences could occur without them, or if ga' and ka were to become established as modal auxiliaries to the main predicate, thus distinguishing predictions from actual events both formally and semantically, would we be in a position to say that ga' and ka had developed from being merely pragmatic signals of an irrealis mood to the full syntactic coding of it (i.e., to stage IV in table 2).

In conclusion, we believe that the Toba and Pilagá languages lack a grammatical category "irrealis," but that instead they each have a form that can be characterized as pragmatically serving to express the irrealis function through inferential connection, based on its syntactic distribution and underlying semantics. It remains intriguing to us how these two Guaykuruan languages, which (a) lack tense inflection, (b) exhibit very few aspectual distinctions, and (c) each have a single form that marks 'distal' and is most centrally a deictic or locative classifier, nevertheless cope with the pragmatic signaling of the irreality of events.

Notes

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Abbreviations. The following abbreviations are used: 1 = first person; 2 = second person; 3 = third person; ADJ = adjective; ART = article; CL = classifier; COL = collective person; 3 = third person; ADJ = adjective; ART = article; CL = classifier; COL = collective person; CONJ = conjunction; CPTZ = complementizer; DEM = demonstrative; DIR = frectional; EXIST = existential copula; FEM = feminine marker; INAL.POSS = inalienable person; INDEF = indefinite; INDET = indeterminate; INSTR = instrumental; INT = intentive; INTERR = interrogative; LOC = locative copula; NEG.EXIST = negative existential; SON_PRG = nonprogressive; OBJ = object agreement (for number); PASS = impersonal pessive; PAUC = paucal number; PL = plural; POSS = possessive marker; PRG = progressive; PBO = pronominal; PUNCT = punctual; SG = singular.

Transcription. The consonants p, t, k, q, d, g, s, h, m, n, l, w, and y have thir usual values; x is a postvelar voiced stop; ' is a glottal stop; sh is a voiceless alveopalatal fricate; \tilde{n} is a voiceless palatal affricate; \tilde{j} is a voiced alveopalatal affricate; \tilde{n} is the palatal nasal [n]; ly is an alveopalatal lateral; and r is an alveolar tap [r], occuring in contexts V-V, V-C, and C-. In borrowed words, r is realized as a retroflex tap [r]. The vowels are a, e, i, and o. Vowel lengthening is indicated by doubling the vowel. In polysyllabic words, Pilagá marks a noncontrastive ultimate stress, plus a secondary shifting phonetic accent; Toba marks a noncontrastive ultimate stress also. For convenience, we have left words unaccented.

1. There are about 25,000 speakers of Toba, about 5,000 speakers divided between Plaga and Macoví, and about 600 speakers of Kadiwéu (Klein 1985:694–702).

2. For the characterization of these classifiers within the realm of the extant typologies of nominal classification, see Vidal (1995, 1996).

3. Since the Pilagá and Toba masculine forms are shorter and almost identical, we are using these forms, rather than the female ones.

4. However, these forms in Toba can also be used to disambiguate or clarify a change in the inherent shape. With regard to Pilagá, see note 5 and Klein (1979:88–90).

5. Note that in (1b), what is moving is the table, as indicated by the classifier na', whereas the table is by nature horizontally extended or flat and therefore usually categorized by di', as in (i).

D na'-ho n-qiyaki netalege qali' di' CL.proximal-DEM INAL.POSS-plate LOC before CL.horizontally.extended

n-qiyala (Pilagá) INAL.POSS-table

'The plate was on the table.'

6. Bybee's survey of tense-aspect-mood in a representative set of different languages has shown that most of the so-called future morphemes bear the primary function of coding mood or modality, rather than tense or 'future time'. This is the case in, for instance, Zapotec, where the "future marker" is essentially an "incompletive" (Bybee 1985:156).

7. Since we lack data from Pilagá on conditional sentences, we only provide examples from Toba.

8. In Pilagá and Toba, person marking of the subject through pronominal clitics is frequently the only overt reference to participants, since full NPs are relatively infrequent after the first mention (Vidal 1993:12; Klein 1986:221-23).

9. Commands formed by a single intransitive verb are possible, as in Toba sa-'arigalaq-c-igi 'Don't come back soon' (Klein 1986:218). Since our focus is NP arguments marked ga', ka 'distal', this example is not relevant to the present discussion.

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10. Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca (1994) argue that the future sense gives rise to the imperative function through an indirect speech act. They state that "in a situation in which the speaker has authority over the addressee, a prediction about the addressee can be interpreted as a command" (1994:211).

11. Givón (1994:272) explains that epistemic adverbs such as maybe, probably, possibly, likely, presumably, supposedly, surely, or undoubtedly create an irrealis scope, overriding realis tense-aspects such as past, present-progressive, or perfect, as in Maybe she left, He is probably reading in the library, or She has undoubtedly finished by now. This also applies to complement-taking verbs (i.e., modality verbs, manipulation verbs, and perception-cognition-utterance verbs), which do not imply that the event in their complement has taken place, and which induce a valuative-deontic irrealis mode over their complements, as in He wanted to find another job, He wanted him to buy a new car, or He thought that she loved another man.

12. Linguists have argued for the development of modals, copulas, and auxiliaries from demonstratives (cf. Li and Thompson 1977; Gildea 1993). Cognates of ga' and ka, in demonstratives or negative existentials, are apparent in other languages of the Guay-kuruan family (Klein 1996:45–66). However, a full exploration of the issue is outside the scope of this article.

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