This dissertation investigates the semantics of tense and the temporal interpretation of
tensed and tenseless predicates in natural language. The central question we are concerned
with is whether natural language employs explicit quantification over times in the object
language. Our answer to the question is "yes, but to a limited extent." We argue (i) that the
evaluation time of tense operators is represented by what we call the distinguished time
variable, and (ii) that the event time of simple tensed predicates is represented by tense
morphemes. Tense morphemes are analyzed as temporal variables that saturate the time
argument slot of the predicates they are affixed to. As a consequence, the proposal implies
that the event time of tensed predicates is realized in syntax as a temporal variable while the
event time of tenseless predicates is not. Evidence for this distinction is provided from the
temporal interpretation of nouns, differences between the temporal interpretations of relative
clauses and participles, and cross-linguistic differences regarding the temporal interpretation
of relative clauses. Evidence for explicit quantification over the evaluation times of tense
operators is also provided from the tense interpretation of relative clauses, and from cross-
linguistic differences regarding the distribution of tense and its interpretation in temporal
adjunct clauses.

The introductory Chapter 1 presents background assumptions and reviews the
previous literature. Cross-linguistic data regarding tense in relative clauses and temporal
adjunct clauses are also introduced. Special attention is paid to a previously relatively
unnoticed difference among languages that do not exhibit the so-called sequence of tense phenomena, such as Japanese, Polish, and Russian. In Chapter 2, a theory of tense is proposed that employs explicit quantification over times. The temporal interpretation of relative clauses and participle constructions in English, Japanese, Polish, and Russian is examined. Cross-linguistic differences are shown to follow from the proposed tense system and structural differences in relative clauses among these languages. Chapter 3 examines the distribution of tense and its interpretation in temporal adjunct clauses. Again, cross-linguistic differences are derived from our proposal regarding the tense system in conjunction with differences in the structure of temporal adjunct clauses.