

Analysis of lexico-semantic and stylistic means of expressing verb tense in Russian and English

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Abstract

Time, being a philosophical and logical category, is one of the main forms of the existence of matter. Also, time is a universal form of successive change of phenomena. From the standpoint of linguistics, the linguistic category of tense is a grammatical-lexical category with its forms and units for nouns, verbs, adjectives, numerals and adverbs. Tense as a category of personal forms of the verb and its stem is a grammatical and lexical category that is inherent in all verbs (which is the grammatical parameter of the category) and is somewhat different for each verb individually due to its formal and semantic features (which is the lexical parameter of the category). The subject of this article is tense as a lexical and grammatical category. The authors carry out a semantic, idio-stylistic and comparative analysis of the lexico-semantic field of the category of tense in Russian and English using observational methods, continuous sampling of lexical units, linguistic description and comparative analysis.

Key words: lexical category, lexical and grammatical analysis, lexical-semantic analysis, onomasiology, phraseology, stylistic means, tense category, English language, Russian language

Introduction

Logical, philosophical time is a consistent, endless change in the forms of matter from the past to the present and future. The language category of tense is a grammatical and lexical category that has its own forms and units for *nouns, verbs, adjectives, numerals and adverbs*. Tense as a category of personal forms of the verb and its stems is a grammatical-lexical category that is inherent in all verbs (which is the grammatical parameter of the category) and is somewhat different for each verb individually due to its formal and semantic features (which is the lexical parameter of the category).

In the category of tense *absolute verb tense*, as well as *taxis* (relative verb tense), are identified. Tense is formed for almost all verbs from a simple verb stem and special tense morphemes or words. The verb stem is considered the infinitive without the particle "to" excluding inflection in English. Historically, this is false since the stem was formed earlier than the infinitive.

The study of the category of tense and lexical ways of expressing it is one of the key areas of cognitive linguistics (Levickij & Lučak, 2005; Eide, 2020), areas of linguistic research on the semantics of tenses (Levickij & Lučak, 2005), text analysis (Nesterov & Demina, 2021; Isaev, 2021; Kobylarek & Wotus, 2011).

Time in philosophy and logic

Time, first of all, is a philosophical and logical category. "This is one of the main (along with space) forms of existence of matter, expressed in the regular and consistent replacement of these objects, phenomena by those objects, phenomena; replacement of these phases of development of objects by those phases of objects, processes, development. Time is a universal form of successive change of phenomena...." Time is irreversible: the sequence of development of objects in time moves only in one direction, namely: from the past to the present and then to the future. This process has no end. Time is endless." (Kondakov, 1976: 95). Modern technologies change the speed of social interaction, and the emergence of virtual

worlds introduces alternative concepts into the phenomenon of subjective time, not limited by the laws of the physical world (Bylieva, Lobatyuk & Zamorev, 2020: 72-85).

Logical time has the following parameters: 1). Time is the universal form of the coexistence of objects and phenomena. It is the universal form of the successive change of phenomena. 2) Time has only one dimension: from the past to the present and future. 3) Time is infinite. In recent years, Russian scientists have put forward a theory according to which the black hole itself is an object where gravity is so strong that even light cannot escape from it, more precisely, its particles - photons. It is at this point that the zone of the so-called singularity begins, where there is neither space nor time, and the density is infinite.¹

In modern fantasy, it is assumed that there are special corridors where time and space are absent, i.e. one can travel vast distances outside of time and space. Why not assume that the movement of material objects in time and space is one of the many perceptions of objective reality by mankind. Time and space are special perceptions of mankind of moving objects. Each nation perceives and measures this time and space differently.

It seems that the Cosmos is an infinite sphere, drawn by countless special "wires", where the opposite sides touch, i.e. time and space disappear. There is no need to invent special channels and matter moving faster than light, and black holes are the points of contact between the opposite sides of the cosmic sphere.

Tense in language

Temporality is the whole set of ways expressing the essence of the physical and philosophical aspects of the category under consideration by means of language (Desherieva, 1975; Bondarko & Belyaeva, 1990; Israeli, 2001; Vendler, 1957).

Logical time is not a process but a successive change of things and phenomena from the past to the present and future for a person. Not only the fact of the change of phenomena is important, but also the *duration, the nature* of these phenomena, and their relationship with respect to their order. Therefore, the grammatical category of tense is distinguished in the language. It is expressed in different ways in different languages. This gives us the right to put forward a hypothesis according to which there is only a moving matter, and time and space, for example, in the conditions of a singularity, are equal to zero. This means that for humanity, the understanding of time and space, on the one hand, is unity, but this is *one of an indefinite set of understandings of time/space*, and each language sees time and space in its own way, divides time with verbs and other parts of speech in an original way.

Tense in language is a lexical and grammatical category (Tsybova, 2019). It is represented in the language by many parts of speech, for example, by nouns denoting periods of time.

Maslov Yu. S. defines tense as follows: "Verbal tense is a grammatical category of a verb, which is a specific linguistic reflection of objective time and serves for temporal localization of an event or state referred to in a sentence. This localization is deictic, that is, related directly or indirectly to the real or imaginary *hic et nunc* 'here and now'.... The meanings of simultaneity, precedence and following of actions, and other temporal relations between actions, expressed by verb forms, are distinguished by some linguists into a special language category - *taxis* ..." (Maslov, 1990).

"Linguistic time is the language form and concept unity consisting of a certain space-time event" (Dekhnich, 2015).

¹ <https://rg.ru/2011/10/13/vselennaia-site-anons.html>

The study of the verb tense is one of the central sections of morphology. In the grammatical tradition, considerable attention is paid to the verb tense. The content of the grammatical category of the verb tense is the transfer of relations of objective or physical time. For a person, time is divided into the past, then not yet arrived - the future and the moment of being that separates them - the present (Birenbaum, 1993: 23). Bondarko defines time as follows:

1. Contrasting the present with the past, as present and former reality.
2. Contrasting the past and the present with the future as real and unreal (that is, inaccessible to perception) (Bondarko, 1997: 32).

Tense is understood by linguists in approximately the same way. *Tense* is a grammatical category of the verb that expresses the ratio of the time of the situation described in the speech to the moment of pronouncing the statement (i.e., to the moment of speech or the length of time, which in the language is denoted by the word "now"), which is understood as a reference point (*absolute tense*) or relation time to another relative time reference point (*relative tense*).

Absolute tense expresses how much the given action correlates with the moment of speech, and indicates that the action occurs either at the moment of speech, or precedes the moment of speech, or follows it. The category of absolute tense is generally considered to have three main meanings:

present - the action takes place at the moment of speech, "now";

past tense (preterite) - the action precedes the moment of speech, that is, the situation took place or began before the moment of speech;

future tense (futurum) - the action follows the moment of speech, that is, the situation should or can begin after the moment of speech, "then".

Relative tense (taxis) has the meanings of simultaneity, precedence and following of actions, expressed by verb forms, in comparison with another action (Comrie, 1985).

For the Russian language, only absolute grammatical tense is characteristic, for English - both absolute tense (indefinite tense) and taxis (long, perfect and perfect-long tenses).

The grammatical category of the verb tense characterizes only the verb, i.e. process (imperfect tense) or completed action (perfect tense). Even a simple non-common sentence: *Я читаю* (I read) can mean the process (may) occur *usually, always* or *now*. The verb *читаю* is explained by the circumstance: *Я читаю сейчас. Я читаю по вечерам* (I am reading now. I read in the evenings). These examples mean *the moment of speech* and *always*.

The moment of speech is one of an indefinite set of moments that leave the present. This means that the present tense is a certain period of time between the past (earlier) and the future (later), experienced psychologically or physiologically by the speaker.

Absolute tense is closest in semantics to logical time and does not include temporal designations by other parts of speech: precedence, simultaneity and following actions later. Absolute tense is the most independent, and other words attached to it form other members of the sentence. You can say with sufficient correctness: *I read this book five days* - (*Я читаю эту книгу 5 дней*), and *I have been reading this book for five days*.

The existence of verb tenses is not necessary for all languages. Even in Russian and English, the combination of the words *Я – читать (чтение) - эта- книга -завтра* - is quite understandable since there is an indicator of the time «завтра» ("tomorrow") and Russian and English grammatical structures of the sentence are easily restored: *Я буду читать эту книгу завтра* (I shall read this book tomorrow).

The grammatical category of the verb tense in the language may be completely absent, and then the temporal reference of situations is determined from the context - for example, using lexical means such as adverbs "earlier", "yesterday", "long

ago", "later", etc. types are found in sufficient numbers in Southeast Asia and in other areas.

In Russian, the grammatical category of tense is also conveyed by other parts of speech, but it is expressed lexically in these and in the verb grammatically (synthetically or analytically). "An extensive lexical and phraseological composition and structure has a semantic field of time:

1. nouns: time, moment, *beginning, end, day, night, day and night, January, February, March, April, year, period, century, eve, half-year, anniversary, epoch, era, month, week, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, weekdays, ten-day period, minute, second, hour* and so on;
2. adjectives: *today's, tomorrow, the day before yesterday's, daily, of that time, long, year-round, semi-annual, last year's, January, February, July, Saturday (sabbatic), Sunday, minute's* and so on;
3. adverbs: *long, in (on) time, temporally, simultaneously, leisure, no time (busy), now, immediately, today, yesterday, tomorrow, sometimes, always, never, once, suddenly, late, at first, as before (as usual), at first, long ago, afterwards, early, late, often, repeatedly, eternally, forever, continuously, immediately, in advance, henceforward (from now on)* and so on;
4. conjunctions and connective words: *when, meanwhile, up to, as, hardly, since and so on;*
5. free word-combinations: *last night (вчера вечером), tonight (сегодня вечером), early in the morning (рано утром), late evening (поздно вечером), next day (на следующий день), from time to time (время от времени), lately (в последнее время), at leisure (в свободное время)* and so on.
6. phraseological units: *in the old days (во время оно), long time passed (много воды утекло), in no time (как одна минута), occasionally (от случая к случаю), every minute (с минуты на минуту), every day now (не сегодня-завтра), at once (сию минуту), well before dawn (свет ни заря), in the year one (при царе Горохе), not in a month of Sundays (после дождичка в четверг), till one's dying day (до гробовой доски), never in a month of Sundays (когда рак на горе свистнет), immediately (одна нога здесь, другая там), very seldom occasion (кои веки), never (до второго пришествия)* and so on. (Tichonov & Kim, 1991: 120-121).

However, Russian language preferred the grammatical method of time expression by a verb leaving for other parts of speech a role of additional secondary means of time indices. All verbs in finite form have the category of tense. It can consist of: 1) many tense categories of absolute and relative tenses, 2) aspects (character of action). The aspect can be perfect or non-perfect.

The aspect is a grammatical and lexical category as it can be formed mainly by synthetic morphological means (by derivational affixes) and can be presented by separate relative words in Russian language; in English, it is formed by analytic means in the forms of the word combination.

Time, as language category, can be expressed by many parts of speech in English. Nouns of time are:

time (время), epoch (эпоха), minute (минута), second (секунда), yesterday (вчера), today (сегодня), tomorrow (завтра), eternity (вечность), season (время года), period (период), moment;

seasons (winter, spring, summer, autumn);

names of months are: January (январь), May (май);

days of a week are: Monday (понедельник), Thursday (вторник);

parts of the day and night are: morning (утро), day (день), evening (вечер), night (ночь);

periods of a man's life are: *childhood (детство), youth (молодость).*

Temporal adjectives are: *long (длинный), aged (пожилой), young (молодой);*

temporal prepositions are: *before (раньше), after (после), for (в течение), in (через), within (в пределах).*

It is this vocabulary that mainly forms the temporal area in fiction (Babenko, 2004: 464).

Temporal adverbs are: *today (сегодня), tomorrow (завтра), soon (скоро), yet (еще), lately (недавно), still (все еще), then (тогда)* and others.

Absolute grammatical tense denotes present time, which expresses the action under consideration as 1) a constant, usual, neutral action, as 2) the action which is taking place at the moment of speech. It is one of the moments of constant, usual, neutral action. We consider that opposition of Indefinite and Continuous Tenses in the English language (as equal members of opposition) is not correct as, in many cases, Indefinite tense denotes a prolonged action too. Sentences *I am reading a book, I read a book now* are approximate equivalents.

This point of view is confirmed by the existence in English of some verb classes which are not used in continuous (progressive) tenses in traditional meanings. They are: stative verbs expressing feeling, perception and intellectual state (*love v, like v, hate v, see v, hear v, feel v, want v, understand v, forget v, consist v, remember v* and so on. They have the *duration* seme in their semantic structure. One can suppose that majority of verbs have this *durative* seme in their semantic meaning (with the exception of verbs denoting instant actions, beginning and end actions) and may not be used in progressive tenses denoting durative actions).

Methodology and research results

Category of tense in Russian

Three members of the tense category exist in Russian verbs: the past tense (an action took place before the moment of speech), the present tense (the action takes place at the moment of speech), and the future tense (the action will take place after the moment of speech).

The category of tense is closely connected with the category of aspect. Non-perfect verbs of Russian have three tenses: present (пишу – write), past (написал – wrote) and future (буду писать – will write). Russian perfect verbs have two tenses: past (написал – wrote) and future (напишу – will write). Twin-aspectual verbs have three forms of tenses, but one aspectual verb has two or three forms of tenses. The verbs in the indicative mood have forms of tenses.

Traditionally two meanings of verbal present tense are expressed in Russian language:

1) The present proper action, i.e. the real, experienced action. It denotes situations directly connected with the moment of speech. It describes the real evidence: *'Я читаю интересную книгу'* (I am reading an interesting book)

2) Non-proper present tense denotes a process of constant, usual and neutral action regarding the moment of speech: *Зимой дети катаются на коньках.* (In winter, children skate).

In indirect moods, the opposition of tenses in the Russian language is absent or reduced to a minimum. Category of tense was thoroughly studied since XVIII century in Russian language. Vinogradov V.V. described its history (Vinogradov, 1938: 424-450). The majority of researchers differently considered this category, but they always emphasized its connection with aspect.

Means of formal expression of tense category in the world's languages are various: suffixes, prefixes, special flexions, root alternations, combinations with particles or with auxiliary verbs, and change of tone.

Smirnitskiy A.I. writes: "The grammatical verbal tense is known to be such a grammatical category which forms determine temporal relations between the process

denoted by this form of this verb and the moment of the speech, and this moment plays the role of "nil" in the area of time. Needless to say that "the moment of speech" is any moment of the world's existence that is characterized by an infinite number of different events, phenomena and so on. Among them, this fact may occupy a very negligible place. But this fact is taken (not by chance) as leading to determining grammatical temporal "nil" (Smirnitkiy, 1959: 328-329).

Vinogradov V.V. stated that a special form of the past perfect tense exists in Russian language: "In Russian verb system a "common" non-flexional form historically appeared in the old strong aorist group of such type as (*двиг* – move v.; *толк*–push v.; *стук* –nock v. *порх* – flit v.; *трах*- hit v.; *хлоп* - slap v.; *шмыг* – slip v. and so on)" which also denote an instant action in the past with coloring of randomness, suddenness but without the meaning of inevitability, definiteness in the contemporary English. We called this category an ultra-momentary aspect of the Russian verb. They refer to verbs ending on –*нуть* with instant meaning (for example, *прыгнуть* – jump, *скакнуть* - gallop and so on), from which they are mainly formed as the superlative degree of an adjective in comparison with the comparative degree. When we say *прыг* instead of *прыгнул* we want to express limited movement in time and usually symbolize it by special articulation sounds" (Vinogradov,1938: 435).

Peshkovskiy A.M. thinks that the non-flexion form is taken from the verbs with a suffix –*нуть*. That is doubtful. We distinguish a root and a stem. If one takes a verb *прыгать* (jump v.) he can see that its root is *прыг*, its *non-perfect aspect* suffix is –*а* and a non - perfect stem is *прыга-*. The perfect aspect stem is *прыгну-*; –*ть* is the infinitive suffix. *Jump* (*прыгать*) is an abstraction (stative form) that characterizes the general semantics of the verb and process of the action but not the definite action itself. Non-perfect aspect is secondary by nature. It denotes an action in general; *прыгнуть* denotes a real, completed action. It is evident that a man denoted first a completed action used in a situation and then an abstract one that needed generalization. Linguistic economy caused the nomination of close actions by one name i.e. for definite, concrete activity and communication a man united in one sound complex two aspects. Both a speaker and a listener understood each other perfectly what aspect they meant in the concrete situation. One can think that *прыгнуть* (*jump up*) can be formed from the root *прыг-*, which can belong to any part of speech: noun, verb and so on. Later, the perfect tense of the verb *precipitated* (*came forth*) – *прыгать* (jump). So, the perfect form of the verb is primary, and the non-perfect form is secondary. But the root gives the possibility to use it both in the meaning of the perfect tense and in the meaning of the non-perfect tense depending on a definite communication situation. In mainly primitive, face-to-face communication great role played order of words and kinetic means of communication. Thus, there was no necessity for complex word forms. Such necessity rose up when life complicated and intertribal relations of close one-language tribes developed.

Hierarchically the most abstract is a philosophic, logical time. It has no length and is characterized by successive replacements of facts, phenomena, and processes from the past through the present to the future. Then follows the category of time, which is realized in different parts of speech: nouns, verbs (tense), adverbs, adjectives, prepositions, and conjunctions. Verbal grammatical tense category hierarchically is higher than the category of aspect though they are closely connected. Tense is always present. It is the background on which forms of aspect are realized. A lot of research devoted to the category of tense in texts is published in modern scientific editions.

In recent decades, this problem has been studied (Povalko, 2016).

Russian verbs have only absolute tense at the system level. There are no forms of relative tenses, but in speech, it is quite possible to use relative opposition of two actions in subordinate clauses: for example, *Он сказал, что читал (читает, будет читать) эту книгу.* - *He said that he had read (was reading, would read) this book.*

Category of tense in English

In English, the category of tense is expressed by morphological, lexical and syntactical means, which are identified within the limits of the grammatical category of tense (comp. Sweet. Oxford, 1977; Weinrich, 1977).

The tense category, first of all, is formed with units of present and past tenses in modern English as these words are synthetic (*he works, he writes - he worked, he wrote*) (Zhigadlo, 1956: 43). The category of the future tense is always an analytical one. The future tense isn't fully formed, and it is often connected with modality.

Ilyish B.A. stated: "The Old Germanic languages have a system of two tenses - present and past. Comparing the facts of Germanic languages with those of other Indo-European languages, particularly Greek, we come to the conclusion that originally the distinction was not between tenses, but between aspects, that is, between forms characterizing the way the action is developing" (Ilyish, 1973: 27-28). Ilyish's assertion that "process of action in time" means that time had already been expressed and had been the background of the aspect, which was obligatory formed in the definite tense. The category of tense had already been existing. Language must reflect real life, in which there is past, present and future. His assertion that an aspect appeared first in English is not proved and thus is doubtful:

1. There aren't such facts in Germanic languages.
2. Reference on the Greek language is rather a tradition and not the result of an analysis of the semantics aspect. Modern science accepted the Greek approach to language, notion, and verb.
3. To be more precise, there were no outlined differences between the aspect and the tense. Each aspect is associated with definite tense: durative with the present, instant with past, resultant with perfect.
4. Present perfect occupies an intermediate position between "real" past and present. In ancient Germanic mentality, it is a peculiar prolongation of present, recent past closely connected with the present tense.
5. The aspect was then considered to be the most important for communication.
6. It can be considered that then absolute present, including customary actions and actions at the moment of speech (now), and absolute past (instant past) were formed.
7. Absolute tenses are phenomena (units) of the language, but the aspect is the phenomenon (unit) of both: language and speech. In language, the aspect was not formally expressed.

Besides perfect tense other indicators of action priority normally expressed by other parts of speech exist. For example: "After(1) I had written (2) a letter I went to the post office" This uttering would keep the same sense if one writes, "After I wrote a letter I went to the post office." It means that the perfect tense is excessive and, in the future may disappear.

G. Sweet distinguishes simple and compound tenses. Indefinite Tenses are simple and Perfect Tenses are compound (Sweet, 1985: 211).

Prof. N.F. Irtenyeva divides the tense system into two parts:

- Present Tenses (Present Indefinite, Present Perfect, Present Continuous, Present Perfect Continuous);
- Past Tenses (Past Indefinite, Past Continuous, Past Perfect, Past Perfect Continuous, Future in the Past) (Irtenyeva, 1956: 77).

Smirnitskiy A.I. truly stated: "Thus, simple and prolonged (durative, progressive) forms in English language denote neither tense distinctions nor duration distinctions. They fix other action characteristics: prolonged (durative) form concentrates on the action process and its development but the simple form – on the commitment of action" (Smirnitskiy, 1959: 322).

Smirnitsky A.I. singles out the opposition of perfect and non-perfect in tenses as a binary privative opposition, the strong member of which (perfect) is formally and meaningfully marked. This is a special verb category - the category of temporal reference, which does not belong to either the temporal category or the aspect category [Smirnitskiy, 1959].

It is absolutely right not to oppose long-term forms (Continuous / Non-Continuous) in general since the opposition of perfect/imperfect tenses is more significant (Perfect / / Non-Perfect). Indefinite (general) tenses are in many cases synonymous with long tenses: they both can denote an action at a certain moment, a long-term action, retaining only a slight stylistic shade between them. Our viewpoint that the Continuous//Non-Continuous opposition is not basic but optional and stylistic goes down in history.

It can be easily seen from observation by Vorontsova G.N.: "...a lot of the most common verbs are regularly used in the Present Indefinite even if they denote the action which takes place exactly at the moment of speech. Among such verbs are: *want, wish, require; know, believe, find, understand, realize; see, hear, feel, love, like; admire, prefer, hate; ask, say, mean, suppose, think, hope, expect, intend; occupy, hold, possess, owe, renounce, refuse, declare, approve; remember, remain* and many others. They include, of course, *am, have, seem, appear, move, make* and so on in some of their meanings. They also include a number of negative (*do not mind*) and many others with inanimate subjects such as *it contains, consists, marks* and so on. Finally, they are numerous and quite popular in impersonal sentences. I am far from saying that the usage norms don't differ. Present "simple" undoubtedly serves in main cases to denote an action that takes place in the present in the wide sense, often repeated systematically or constant, but present "continuous" is used to denote an action that takes place at present in the narrow sense and approaching somehow the moment of speech" (Vorontsova, 1960: 190-191).

As if she was afraid of her bravery Vorontsova G.N. tried to justify herself in the last paragraph, but it doesn't change the main idea. One may suppose that these verbs are stative, have the duration seme in their semantic structure and the use of continuous is excessiveness, a violation of language economy law.

Smirnitskiy's statement that perfect has nothing to do with either tense or aspect can be easily challenged. Perfect tenses can be present, past and future. The connection with the durative (progressive) aspect is carried out with perfect continuous tenses, but non-perfect tenses denote absolute time. They belong to language. They are self-sufficient and directly reflect objective reality, but perfect tenses belong to language/speech¹⁾ level as they need to function as a definite moment of speech expressed by another action or by an adverbial modifier of time.

Language/speech level is the level at which forms, meanings, and syntactical structures of language units are full equivalents of speech units. They cover mainly texts of real communication: administration, policy, science, technique, medicine and texts of neutral, oral communication.

All classes with the exception of the present and past of the basic class, are expressed analytically (Ivanova, 1981: 54). We consider:

- English absolute tense exists in language and is expressed by Indefinite Tenses. They denote an independent action taking place only in the direct present, past and future: *I work - Я работаю, I worked - Я работал, I shall work - я буду работать*. Additional co-meanings are rendered by lexical units of other parts of speech. The non-perfect aspect of the verb is mainly formed in English from the verb stem, and the perfect aspect is formed in a phraseological verb unit in modern English... For example, *smoke v (курить) - have a smoke (покурить), nap (дремать) v - take a nap (вздремнуть)*.

- Relative tense belongs to language/speech level. It is mainly expressed by Perfect and Perfect Continuous Tenses. For example, *have slept* requires (*already, today, recently, lately, this night*); *had slept* requires a whole sentence: conjunction *after* and another action. For example, *After I had slept I went to my office*. It is possible only in speech. Continuous Tenses occupy an intermediate position as they are connected with absolute tense, which is expressed by verb analytical forms: (I) *am reading* automatically refers to the moment of speech (*now*), (I) *was reading* requires the whole sentence in speech. Present Perfect and Perfect Continuous Tenses consider the "moment of speech", "now" metaphorically. "Moment of speech" (Coll-Florit & Gennari, 2011) may be equivalent to words *today, lately, recently, this day, this week, this year* and so on. Actually, the action must take place before these "moments of speech", *recently*. For example, *В этом году я опубликовал мой новый роман – This year I have published my new novel*. The year is still in progress, but my work has already been completed.

Past and future Continuous and Perfect-Continuous tenses refer to the relative verbal tenses as the actions aren't opposed to the moment of speech but to the definite moment in the past and future. For example, *I was reading a book when he came in - Я читал книгу, когда он вошел, I shall be reading a book when he comes in - Я буду читать книгу, когда он войдет. After I had written a letter I went to a post office - Когда я написал письмо, I пошел на почту. After I had been writing a letter for two hours I went to the post office- После того как я написал письмо за два часа, я пошел на почту and so on.*

We consider that English tenses can be divided into different principles:

- Dependence/independence on the moment of speech and on a definite moment, i.e. on absolute tense (belong to the language level, independently expressed by the indefinite tenses) and relative tense (belong to the language/speech level, dependent, expressed by continuous, perfect continuous tenses).
- Taxis tenses are subdivided into those which denote actions at the definite moment (continuous tenses) / before the definite moment of speech (perfect tenses).
- Taxis tenses are also subdivided into those denoting durative (progressive) actions at the definite moment (continuous tenses) and durative actions before the definite moment (perfect continuous tenses).

In all cases of taxis tenses using, they can be replaced (without great loss of meaning and emotion) by indefinite tenses. So, the indefinite tenses are universal and can (within understanding) replace taxis tenses using nonverbal markers of time.

This is the most significant trend in English grammar development, which appeared, first of all, in American English.

The category of tense in modern English is formed firstly by verbs in the present, and past tense as these forms are synthetic (*he works, he writes - he worked, he wrote*) (Zhgadlo, 1956: 43).

Category forms of future tense are always analytical ones. Future is always connected with modality as it isn't completely formed.

Relative taxis tenses are sure to be located "within" absolute tense. Relative tenses are traditional, but the particular (special) case of indefinite tenses use.

They are excess (surplus) and mean nothing.

For example:

После того как он написал письмо, он пошел спать –

- *After he had written a letter he went to bed.*
- *After he wrote a letter he went to bed.*

The perfect tense is surplus and has no meaning. The meaning of priority is rendered by conjunction *after*. Past perfect and past indefinite only render absolute past.

- От: Я работал, когда он пришел –
- I was working when he came,
- I worked when he came.

От: Я работал два часа, когда он пришел –

- I had been working for two hours when he came
- I worked two hours when he came. Semantically there is no difference between the two tenses.

It means that indefinite tenses are quite sufficient and quite economic to render a variety of meaning shades of continuous, perfect, perfect continuous tenses.

Conclusion

Thus, both absolute tense expressed by Indefinite tenses depending on the moment of speech and relative tense (taxis) expressed by continuous, perfect, perfect continuous verb tenses exists in modern English. They depend on the definite moments of the present, past and future. English relative tenses can be considered to belong to language/speech level as their form exists in language, but the definite moment is obligatory and required to be expressed by another action or an adverbial modifier of time relative to which a given action occurs simultaneously or earlier: it occurs only in speech.

The statement that an aspect was primary is doubtful. In the ancient pre-written languages period, there was no distinct difference between aspect and tense. But each aspect was associated with definite tense: durative with the present, instant with past, resultant with perfect. Then, the verb aspect was considered important for communication, but its background were tenses – present, past and future. Aspect is always realized in tense.

Russian tenses are absolute. Absolute tenses are of the language level and are approximately equal to philosophic and logic time, taxis (continuous, perfect, perfect continuous tenses) belong to language/speech level and refer to relative tense. English tenses are of absolute and relative types.

Absolute tense is expressed by English indefinite tenses and, partly, continuous tense; relative tense is expressed by perfect, perfect continuous tenses and, partly, by continuous tense. As for taxis the text markers of priority and simultaneity are obligatory.

In ancient Russian and English, the verbs were of two aspect type; past and present tenses were only formed.

Polysemy of grammar forms was explained in ancient languages by economy and simplicity of communication objectives.

It's necessary to make an explicit difference between *meaning* and *usage*. In a language, verbs have limited meanings, but their usages are unlimited. Close usages give one meaning. The most characteristic seme for perfect tense is the completeness of action; for non-perfect tense the most characteristic seme is a process; lexical peculiarity verb semes form the meaning. Other semes identify their usage. It's a mistake to consider semes of meaning and semes of usage as equal ones.

From individual observations, one can make general conclusions. Meanings are studied in traditional grammar, but usages are considered communicative ones. The first one is created on the basis of generalization and perception of speech facts; the second one is created on the basis of direct observation and fixation of language forms usage by individuals. The first one is general and obligatory for the majority. The second one is individual and advisable for narrow specialists. The number of traditional grammar is mostly limited, a number of communicative grammar is a great lot. For language perception, it is necessary to know traditional grammar to understand the person (a speaker, an author of fiction). For professional translation, communicative grammars are necessary to deal with. A traditional grammar is written

on the material of real, common, neutral texts; a communicative grammar is written on the material of the emotional (fully dependent on psychological structure, spirits, feelings of a person and his social status, role, communication conditions.) texts of individual oral speech and individual fiction.

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