Different Views of English Tense System

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ABSTRACT

This article is depending on the tense category is universally recognized. Nobody has ever suggested to characterized the distinction, for example, between wrote, writes, and will write as other than a tense distinction. So the question is how to define the category as such, and what distinctions within the category of tense can be found, in other words how many tenses there are in English.

Keywords:	distinguishes, subordinate clauses, verbal, anterior tenses, dynamic, linguistic concept.

According to his point of view the main divisions of time are represented in the English verbal system by the three tenses (past, present and future). Each of them may appear in the common and in the continuous aspect. Thus we get six tense-aspect forms.

Besides these six B.A. Ilyish separately distinguishes two more, namely, the future-in-the-past and the future-continuous-in-the-past. It is common knowledge that these forms are used chiefly in subordinate clauses depending on a main clause having its predicate verb in one of the past tenses, e. g., This did not mean that she was content to live. It meant simply that even death, if it came to her here, would seem stale [5, 89]. However, they can be found in independent clauses as well.

A different view of the English tense system has been put forward by N. Irtenyeva. According to this view, the system is divided into two halves: that of tenses centring in the present, and that of tenses centring in the past [2,77]. The former would comprise the present, present perfect, future, present continuous, and present perfect continuous, whereas the latter would comprise the past, past perfect, future-in-the-past, past continuous, and past perfect continuous. The latter half is characterized by specific features: the root vowel (e.g. sang as against sing), and the suffix -d (or -t), e.g. looked, had sung, would sing, had been singing. This view has the advantage of reducing the usual threefold division of tenses (past, present, and future) to a twofold division (past and present) with each of two future tenses (future and future-in-the-past) included into the past or the present system, respectively. However, the cancellation of the future as a tense in its own right would seem to require a more detailed justification.

A new theory of English tenses has been put forward by A. Korsakov. His definition is rather short and simple. He considers the category of tense as verbal forms denoting different time relations [6, 12]. A. Korsakov offers new division within the English tense system into absolute and anterior tenses, and static and dynamic tenses. By dynamic tenses

he means what we call tenses of the continuous aspect, and by anterior tenses what we call tenses of the perfect correlation.

Conceives of tense as a "linguistic concept which denotes the form taken by the verb to express the temporal relation between the time of the situation in question and an 'orientation time' which may be either the which is usually the time of speech or another orientation time that is temporally related to the temporal zero-point." The orientation time is "any time that can provide the known time or one of the known times required for the expression of the temporal relation(s) encoded in a tense form". The temporal zero-point is the point in time from which all expressed temporal relations take their starting point. It is usually but not necessarily the time of the utterance.

In below, the orientation time corresponds to, whereas in, the past tense form confessed locates the time of the confession in the past, and the past perfect form had stolen expresses that the situation (namely the theft) was committed even before the confession. In the latter case, the time of the confession is thus the orientation time for the past perfect form, which in turn lies before (and therefore does not equal). The form had stolen locates the situation relative to an orientation time which is itself located relative to speech time.

o *I met him last night.*
o *Last night he confessed that he had stolen the money.*

According to their morphological structure verbs are divided into:
a) simple (read, live, hide, speak);
b) derived, i.e. having affixes (magnify, fertilize, captivate, undo,
c) compound consisting of two stems (daydreamer)
d) composite, consisting of a verb and a postposition of adverbial origin (sit down, go away).

Semantically verbs divide into notional and seminotional. Some speak of a 3rd group – auxiliary verbs. Notional – possess full lexical meaning. Semi-notional (Structural) – have very general, "faded" lexical meaning. (*e.g be,*

have, become, seem, can, may). They include 2 peculiar groups: link-verbs and modal verbs. As I have already mentioned according to their meaning and function in the sentence English verbs are classified into notional and structural ones. Notional verbs always have a lexical meaning of their own and can have an independent syntactic function in the sentence. *e.g. During the war he lived in London.* When a verb is used as a structural word, it may either preserve or lose its lexical meaning. But even if it has a lexical meaning of its own, the latter is of a specific character and the verb cannot have an independent syntactic function in the sentence – it is always closely connected with some other word. Here belong modal verbs and link-verbs. A modal verb is always accompanied by an infinitive –together they form a modal predicate. *e.g. The party is at eight. You must dress suitably for it.* I couldn't do anything under the circumstances. A link-verb is followed by a predicative; together they form a nominal predicate. He was a middle-aged man. It became very hot by noon. The hotel remained empty all through the winter. The cottage seemed deserted. Sometimes a verb is entirely devoid of lexical meaning and is then called an auxiliary verb. Combined with a notional verb it serves to build up analytical forms. *e.g. We had arranged to meet in the usual place. Do you know why he said that?*

The young man was sitting at the table alone. Polysemantic verbs may be notional as well as structural words. e.g. He is married and has three children a notional verb used in the meaning "to possess". I had to reconsider my position (a structural word: a modal verb denoting obligation, part of a modal predicate). "It has happened now," he said, "so there's nothing to do" (a structural word: an auxiliary verb which serves to build up an analytical form). He looked at me, waiting for the next words (a notional verb meaning "glanced"). He looked quite happy (a structural word: a link-verb meaning "seemed"). According to their relation to the continuous forms, English verbs fall into two groups:

dynamic verbs*, i.e. verbs which admit of the continuous form.*

stative verbs*, i.e. verbs which do not admit of the continuous form*.

a) We were eating dinner when he called. You"ll find Mother in the kitchen. She is making a cake.

b) I understand what you mean. I don't see him in the crowd.

The distinction between dynamic, and stative verbs is fundamental in English grammar, and it is also reflected in a number of other ways than in the continuous form. English verbs are also classified according to the type of object they take.

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