

Chapter Three: Time and Tense

Prepared By

Assist. Lecturer

Ahmed F. Majeed

University of Basrah

College of Arts

Dept. of Translation

Tense vs Aspect

Tense and **Aspect** can be defined as grammatical categories that are closely related. **Tense** indicates the location of an action or an event in time. For each grammatical tense, there are sub-categories named **aspects** which indicate how an action is to be viewed with respect to time, rather than to its actual location in time

Tense vs Aspect

Therefore, the **main difference** between tense and aspect is that **tense indicates the location of an action in time** whereas **aspect indicates how that particular action is to be viewed with time.**

What is Tense?

Tense refers to the location of an action in time. It indicates whether the action is in the present or the past. Tense can be identified by the inflections of the verb. For example,

He cleans his room.

He cleaned his room.

- ❖ There are only two tenses in English. They are **past** tense and **present** tense. As their names suggest, past tense is used to talk about actions and events in the past whereas present tense is used to talk about the actions and events in the present.
- ❖ **Future** is not considered as a separate tense since it does not involve any inflections of the verb. English uses the modal verb *will* or the present continuous tense to talk about the future.

What is Aspect?

Aspect indicates how an action, state or an event is related to the flow of time. By looking at the aspect of a verb, we can decide whether the action is completed or ongoing. There are four aspects in English grammar. They are simple, progressive, perfect and perfect progressive.

TENSE VERSUS ASPECT

Tense indicates the location of an action or an event in time.

There are two tenses in English: past and present.

Tense is a major grammatical category.

Aspect indicates how an action, state or an event is related to the flow of time.

There are four aspects in English: simple, progressive, perfect and progressive perfect.

Aspect is a sub-category of tense.

Simple Aspect

This is used to indicate facts. It merely states whether or not an action occurs. This aspect can be used with habitual or repeated actions.

Formation

Present: Base form of the verb by itself (if it's the third person singular add 's', 'es' etc. to the base form)

He visits his aunt on Saturday.

Past: Base form of the verb + ed (for regular verbs) or irregular past tense verb

He visited his aunt on Saturday.

Progressive Aspect

The progressive aspect is formed with **be** and the **present participle**.

❖ It combines with present, past and future for forms that express ongoing action at different times.

❖ **There are three forms:**

1. Present progressive.
2. Past progressive.
3. Future progressive.

This indicates an ongoing action. Therefore, the action is not complete.

Present: 'is' or 'are' + present participle

He is reading a poem.

Past: 'was' or 'were' + present participle

He was reading a poem.

Future: 'will be' + present participle

He will be reading a poem.

The Present Tense ~ Progressive Aspect

- ❑ It's formed with a present form of to be and present participle of the main verb.
- ❑ It's used to express ongoing action at the time of speaking.
- ✓ I'm **giving** a presentation right now.
- ✓ She's **watching** a Korean movie right now.

The Past Tense ~ Progressive Aspect

- ❑ The past progressive, or past continuous, is formed with past form of be and the present participle of the main verb.
- ❑ It expresses an ongoing action in the past, including in relation to another action. In other words, often the action expressed with the past progressive at the time another action occurred.

E.g.

- ✓ She accidentally **cut** her hand while she **was chopping** vegetables.
- ✓ I **was writing** essays when the bell **rung**.

The Past Tense ~ Progressive Aspect

- ❑ It's also used in situations in which two ongoing actions in the past were occurring simultaneously:
 - ✓ I **was working** on grammar exam when my whole family **was spending** enjoyable time on the beach.
- ❑ It's also occurs with time expressions that indicates a point in time when the action was ongoing
 - ✓ I **was studying** in the library at **16:00**.

Future Progressive

- ❑ It's consists of **will** followed by **be** and the **present participle** of the main verb.
- ❑ It's used for an action that will be ongoing in the future.
- ✓ We **will be having** grammar course at ten o'clock tomorrow.
- ❑ It's also used to talk about an action that will continue in the future for a long time.
- ✓ Iraqi government **will be fighting** against bribery and corruption for a long time.

Perfect Aspect

This indicates a complete action. This is often used with actions in the recent past.

The perfect aspect formed with **have** and **past participle** of the **main verb**, which expresses ongoing action.

❖ **There are three forms:**

1. Present Perfect.
2. Past Perfect .
3. Future Perfect.

Present: ‘has’ or ‘have’+ past participle

They have fallen in love.

Past: ‘had’ + past participle

They had fallen in love.

Future: ‘will’+ have+ been+ past participle

The Present Tens ~ Perfect Aspect

- ❑ The present perfect is formed with a **present** form of **have** and a **past participle** of the **main verb**. It occurs with a time expression of duration.
 - ✓ for six years, since 1999 and so on.
- ❑ It expresses a situation that started in the past and continues to the present
 - ✓ I **have taught** English language for 5 years.

- ❑ It also expresses a recently completed action.
- ✓ Korean drama **has become** popular around the world **recently**.
- ✓ Prof X **has just postponed** verb phrase assignments which makes me happy all the day.
- ❑ It expresses an action that occurred at an unspecified time .
 - ✓ He **has read** all Shakespeare's play.

The Past Tens ~ Perfect Aspect

- ❑ The past perfect tense is formed with the **past** tense form of the verb **have** and **past participle**.
- ❑ It is used for an action completed prior to another event or time in the past. The past perfect often occurs in sentences with a main clause and a subordinate clause, where both clauses express the events in the past.

✓ He **had** already **left** when I **arrived**.

□ It's also used in **counterfactual sentences**.

Which express speculations or regrets about unfulfilled events. (conditional sentences)

- ✓ If he **had worked** hard, he would have passed the exam.
- ✓ If she **had driven** carefully, she wouldn't have had an accident.

The future perfect

- ❑ The future perfect is formed with **will** followed by **have** and the **past participle** of the main **verb**.
- ❑ It's generally used to express an action that will be completed prior to or by some specific future time.
 - ✓ He **will have read** the tempest by 10 o'clock.
- ❑ It can also express states that will have endured for a period of time as measured at some future date.
 - ✓ They **will have been** married for 20 years this summer.

Perfect Progressive

This is used with actions that began in the past and continues to the present.

Present: ‘has been’ or ‘have been’+ past participle

✓ I have been studying for five years.

Past: ‘had been’ + present participle

✓ I had been studying for five years.

Future: will+have+been+present participle

✓ In next July, they will have been studying grammar for three years.

Present Perfect progressive

- ❑ It's formed with **has** or **have**+been+present participle.
- ❑ It expresses ongoing past action that continues up to the present. It often occurs with time expressions such as **for** and **since**.
- ✓ I **have been taking** English courses in the American language center **for** a year.

Past perfect progressive

- ❑ It's formed with **had+been+present participle**.
- ❑ It expresses an ongoing action in the past that is related to another past action, which is often expressed in the simple past tense. This other action frequently occurs in a subordinate clause, particularly with when.
- ✓ He **has been working** on the assignments for over two hours when his mother **came** home.

Future Perfect Progressive

- ❑ It's formed with **will+have+been+present participle**.
- ❑ It's expresses an action that will continue into the future up to a specific time. The duration of the action is usually specified in a time expression with **for**. That time is frequently indicated in a subordinate clause beginning with **when** or **by the time**.
- ✓ I **will have been studying** for two hours by the time you arrive.

Good Luck