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THE "TIME-TENSE" RELATIONSHIP

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Abstract: Many languages have gramatical means to indicate the "time" when an action or event occurs, or when a state or process holds. Languages are capable of expressing events happening in different times.
"Time" is a universal, non-linguistic concept with three divisions: past, present and future, whereas tense is a linguistic concept and can be defined as the form a verb used to indicate the time, and sometimes the contribution or completeness of an action in relation to the time of speaking. "Tense" is a grammatical category which involves changing the form of the verb to reflect the location of an event in time.

Keywords: tense, time, grammatical category, concept, verb action, state

The Romans and Greek made no very strong distinction between a marker and a concept that it marked. Consequently, for more than two millennia, the different forms of the verbal paradigm were called 'times' or 'tenses'.

Only in the twentieth century a clear distinction began to be made between two kinds of meaning distinctions morphologically marked in synthetic languages, namely "tense" as an indication of different times, and a quite different indication of time, namely "aspect", although that distinction was not unknown in the ancient world.

The word "time" comes from Middle English "*time, tyme*", from Old English "*tima, tīma"* which means "time, period, limited space of time, season, lifetime, fixed time, favorable time, opportunity,". In Proto-Germanic languages "*timon, *tīmô*" had the signification of "time", as well as the Proto-Indo-European "**dī-*". The English word "time" is cognate with Scots "*tym, tyme*" ("time"), Alemannic German *"Zimen, Zīmmän"* ("time, time of the year, opportune time, opportunity"), Norwegian "*time*" ("time, hour"), Icelandic "*tími*" ("time, season"). There are similarities with Old Norse "*timi",* having the sense of "time, proper time", and Swedish "*timme"* which had the meaning of ", an hour"

"Tense" means the form of a verb that is showing time of an action or state ("*tens*" → "time"). It comes from Old French "*tens"* which means "time, period of time, era; occasion, opportunity; weather". The Modern French word is "*temps*", derived from the Latin "*tempus*", having the meaning of "a portion of time"; also source of Spanish "*tiempo*" and Italian "*tempo*".

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Time is a measure in which events can be ordered from the past through the present into the future, and also the measure of durations of events and the intervals between them.

Regarding to Collins Dictionary, time is the continuous passage of existence in which events pass from a state of potentiality in the future, through the present, to a state of finality in the past. In classical mechanics, time is absolute in the sense that the time of an event is independent of the observer. According to the theory of relativity it depends on the observer's frame of reference. Time is considered as a fourth coordinate required, along with three spatial coordinates, to specify an event.

Time is a nonspatial continuum that is measured in terms of events which succeed one another from past through present to future. It is the measured or measurable period during which an action, process, or condition exists or continues. Events in time are normally thought of in terms of notions of past, present, and future. Regarding to Peter Ludlow, "we actually have a general notion or intuition of time as a smooth flowing continuum in which everything in the universe proceeds at an equal rate, out of future, through a present, in a past"

Time is a single unbounded dimension that stretches indefinitely into the past and future. To locate events and states in time we need an orientation point. Prototypical linguistic communication provides it: the speaker is the center of linguistic communication, and *Speech Time* is the default orientation point. This is the Deictic Principle, basic to linguistic communication. Following the deictic principle we take Speech Time to be the Present, and locate other times with reference to *Speech Time*. The Past precedes, the Future follows. The pattern discussed here appears in discourse of many types. There are two other patterns: situations may be related to each other or to a previous time, as in narrative and description. The Deictic Principle locates situations with respect to *Speech Time*. The principle allows any type of situation to be located in the Past, Present, or Future.[7]

Tense refers to the absolute location of an event or action in time, either the present or the past. It is marked by an inflection of the verb:

e.g. *Peter walks to the cinema.* (present tense)

Peter alked to the cinema. (past tense)

Reference to other times, the future for instance, can be made in a number of ways, by using the modal auxiliary *will*, or the semi-auxiliary *be going to*:

e.g. *Peter will walk to the cinema tomorrow*.

Peter is going to walk to the cinema tomorrow.

Tense is a category which defines a situation in time – when it takes place. "Whenever we meet 'grammaticalization of location in time' we are dealing with tense". In grammar, this term is used do define any of the forms of a verb which distinguish when an action or state of being occurs or exists. Tense is a grammaticalization of time reference, often using three basic categories: "before now" – to express an action taking place in the past, "now" – present

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action and "after now" – to express a future occurrence. Tense places temporal references along a conceptual timeline. This differs from aspect, which encodes *how* a situation or action occurs in time rather than *when.* Typical tenses are present, past and future. "The crucial fact about tense […] is that it is a deictic category. A tensed proposition, therefore, will not merely be time bound; […] it will contain a reference to some point or period of time which cannot be identified except in terms of the zero-point of the utterance".

Tense "refers to the grammatical expression of the time of the situation described in the proposition, relative to some other time. This other time may be the moment of speech: e.g., the Past and Future designate time before the moment of speech; Tense is expressed by inflections, by particles, or by auxiliaries in connection with the verb". The distinction is that "tense refers to the grammatical changes made to the form of a verb, as opposed to time, which refers to the semantic functions such changes signal".

So, "*time*" is a concept which is related to our perception of reality; "*tense*" is a grammatical category which is marked by verb inflection and expresses when an event or action happens in the flow of time. Tense classifies verbs as present tense or past tense, while time classifies situations described by verbs according to whether they occur at some time, in the present, in the past or in the future.

The grammatical category of tense was not clearly distinguished from the logical category of time. Time is doubtlessly not the same thing as tense, but because tenses were seen as reflecting times, this took a long time to be understood; in Greek, Latin and in the descendent Romance languages such as French, the same word makes do for both: "*khronos*" (Greek), "*tempus*" (Latin), "*temps*" (French); this usage obtains in German "*Zeit*" as well, and in the case of English "*time*".

Nevertheless the two terms 'time' and 'tense' apparently have the same meaning, they have two different indications. Time is a universal, non-linguistic concept with three divisions: past, present, and future, whereas tense is a linguistic concept and can be defined as the form of a verb used to indicate the time, and sometimes the contribution or completeness, of an action in relation to the time of speaking.

"Tense" is a linguistic phenomenon, whereas "time" is an extra-linguistic concept. Tense is the grammatical category which correlates with distinctions of time. Differentiating between time and tense in language is far from trivial. It has proved to play an important part in language learning and translation. This has resulted in the fact that there is no one-to-one correspondence between time and tense, within a certain language, on the one hand, and between different languages, on the other hand. The recognition of the time-tense dichotomy plays a crucial role in language learning and translation. Tense is "the relationship between the form of the verb and the time of the action or state it describes".

The word tense is often mistakenly used to refer to time in general or for anything related to time within language. Tense is not time. It is merely a contrast between temporal references. A verb cannot have tense, because verbs alone are just words. Tense is an attribute of an utterance, and a verb outside of an utterance cannot express tense because there is nothing to compare it to.

The English tense system is quite complicated, the most common problem being not how to form tenses, but deciding which tense to use in a given situation. It is important not to confuse the name of a verb tense with the way we use it to talk about time. Every language is capable of expressing events happening in different times.

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If we analyze time and tense without considering the difference between time and tense some interesting facts can be found. Time is primarily used as a noun in different situations while sometimes it is used as a verb too. Also, time was originated from the Old English word "tīma". Tense, on the other hand, is used as an adjective, verb and most importantly as a noun when it comes to the field of Grammar. Tense is "a grammatical category which involves changing the form of the verb to reflect the location of an event *in time*. The usual distinction is between past, present and future".

The time has the three directions, the past, the present and the future. The speaker will regard them at the enunciation, thus, (s)he used tense and aspect at that time. English has two tenses, the past tense and the present tense. Tense is comparative to the time closely. It expresses the point as the time relationship. The past tense conveys the past events and the present tense conveys the present events.

Time suggests the position of the Sun; on the other hand, tense indicates the time of the occurrence of some event. It can thus be said that time is a subset of tense; meanwhile the tense of a sentence gives you an idea of the time when the incident mentioned in a statement takes place. At the same time, it is that critical factor that can most commonly leads people to mistakes while framing a sentence or while identifying the time of events.

Notionally, a past tense form refers to past time, but that a distinction must be drawn between past tense and past time is shown by two facts. It is worthy of mention that although different tenses may be utilized to express the same time, the implied meaning may be different, as it is shown in the following pair of sentences given by Hewings:

"*She teaches English in a school in London.*" → a permanent arrangement;

"*She is teaching English in a school in London."* → implies that this is not, or may not be, permanent.

It is also notable that certain tenses in English may refer to a different time than that expressed by their names. For example, the present continuous tense may refer to either present or future time:

e.g. → present reference: *„What are you doing?"*

„I'm reading."

→ future reference: *„What are you doing on Wednesday evening?"*

„I'm visiting my grandma."

The above examples illustrate the lack of one-to-one correspondence between time and tense intra-lingually. On the other hand, there is no time-tense one-to-one correspondence inter-lingually. In other words, while time is a universal concept, the way of expressing time, tenses, may differ from language to language.

Location in time can be linguistically acquired in many different forms varying from barely by lexical to grammatical. On account of being regarded as a (grammaticalised) tense, the expression of location in time has to be structured into the grammatical system of the language.

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The category of tense delimits the part of speech called the verb and, like the categories of aspect and mood, it does not characterize any other part of speech. A common mistake in approaching the category of tense is the belief that tense inflections alone mirror time. As we shall see, at the level of natural languages, beside tense inflections marked upon the verb, temporal adverbials and temporal specification of tenses are present. The generally accepted definition of the category of tense explains tense relationship as representing a chronological order of events in time as perceived by the speaker at the moment of speaking. This definition makes use of a number of undefined notions such as time, chronological order, moment of speaking, which must be clarified to grasp the import of the definitions.

The notion of change and motion – the later understood as change of place are possible only through and in representation of time. For example, the presence of a thing in one place and the non-presence of the same thing in the same place can be perceived by a human subject if and only if these two contradictory properties of an object we have to represent them under the condition of time in sequence. In this case, time does not have absolute reality outside the form of our perception; in this sense then time has empirical reality. This is the form of our experience of the world. Objects, as results of our perception are possible only through and in the representation of time.

These observations lead to the idea that time is an epistemic notion, not an ontological one: we speak of the objective reality of time meaning by it that no object can be presented to our experience which does not come under the condition of time. If time is not determination of outward phenomena, than it has to do neither with shape nor position; and because it presents to us no shape or form we endeavor to supply this want by analogies and represent the course of time by a line progressing to infinity. This linear representation of time allows us to interfere its other properties in addition to linearity namely durational infinite and segmental into an infinite variety of magnitudes.

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