

ON THE GRAMMATICAL CATEGORY OF TENSE IN THE WORLD LANGUAGES

Ganieva Dildora Azizovna

Doctor of Philology, Professor of Ferghana State University

**Abstract:** The article discusses the existence of grammatical category of tense in the world languages. The author focuses on distinctive features of this category in terms of agglutinating and inflecting languages.

**Key words:** agglutinating languages, inflecting languages, grammatical category, grammatical form, tense.

One of the grammatical categories characteristic to agglutinating and inflecting languages is the category of tense. It is worth mentioning that topics related to verb tenses are the most widely covered parts in the study of a certain foreign language. The main reason for this is explained by the importance of using the appropriate form of the verb tense to present events that occur at different times by the correct expression of an idea in the target language.

There are languages in the world that do not reflect the time of an action performance by a tense category, which means that these languages do not have such a category. B. Comrie writes about it the following: "Indeed there are such languages. We will illustrate this point with examples from one such language, Burmese. In this language, there are two sets of sentence-final particles that will be relevant to our discussion (the choice of an individual particle within one of these two sets is determined by considerations not germane to the present issue): realis *te/thlz/ta/hta* and irrealis *me/mlz/hma*. The realis particle can only be used on sentences that have present or past time reference (with no grammatical distinction between past and present time reference), and so might seem to be an indicator of non-future tense, as in the following examples: *sanet-neitain mye? hpya?-te* 'Saturday-every grass cut-te', i.e. '(he) cuts the grass every Saturday'; *da-caunmou ma-la-ta* 'that-because: of not-come-ta J'because of that (they) didn't come'. For future time reference, the irrealis series of particles must be used, as in: *mane?hpan sa-me* 'tomorrow beginme', i.e. '(we) will begin tomorrow'. However, more detailed examination of the functions of the *me* series shows that time reference is not its prime function. It can be used with present or past time reference provided the reference is not restricted to our actual world, i.e. provided there is modal value to the particle: *hman-Iein-me* 'be: true-undoubtedly-me', i.e. 'that may well be true'; *macithi sa-hpu-me h tt-it-te* 'tamarind: fruit eat-ever-me think-te', i.e. '(I) think (he must have eaten tamarinds before'. Note in particular the use of both particles in this sentence, realis *te* to indicate what I actually think, and irrealis *me* to indicate a supposition as to what he may have done - even though the time reference of the irrealis *me* is in fact prior to that of the realis *te*, indicating clearly that time reference is not basic to the opposition between these particles. What Burmese shows us, then, is a language where time reference per se is not grammaticalised, i.e. there is no tense" (Comrie, 1985:51).

The Internet searches show that Dyirbal also does not have the grammatical category of tense, and that there is not this category in many dialects of Chinese, Malay, Thai, and Vietnamese.

The grammatical category of tense is a set of grammatical forms used to indicate the time when the action represented by the verb takes place. Professor A. Khojiev defines this term as follows: "Indeed, the performance of an action denoted by a verb occurs at a certain time. Hence, the action is related to the concept of time (tense). Just as an action expressed by a verb is a linguistic expression of an objective action, so a tense in verbs is the linguistic expression of an objective time associated with the performance of the action. However the linguistic expression of the objective time itself is not a grammatical tense category. The category of grammatical tense represents the

relation of the action to the moment of speech” (Khojiev, 1973:127). The Russian linguist A.Karpov's description on the category of tense also emphasizes the relation between an action and the moment of a speech: “The grammatical content of the tense category of the verb is the concept of relation of an action to the moment of speech” (Karpov, 2019:51).

An English researcher F.Palmer states that tense has three functions, first to mark purely temporal relations of past and present time, secondly in the sequence of tenses that is mainly relevant for reported speech and thirdly to mark 'unreality', particularly in conditional clauses and wishes (Palmer, 1988:37).

There are different views on the number of verb tenses in Uzbek, which is one of the agglutinating languages. Sh.Rahmatullaev says that there are three different tenses: “The tense of a verb is defined referring the time of an action to the objective time, in which the time of the speech is considered as a measurement: if an action is expressed that it occurred before the speech time, it is defined as the past tense; if it is expressed that is occurring during the speech time, it is the present tense; if an action is expressed that it will occur after the speech time, it is defined as the future tense” (Rahmatullaev, 2010:199). A.Khojiev, in his monograph on verbs, also emphasizes the difference between three different tenses of the verb: past, present and future. But in the further pages of this monograph he writes the following: “...the tense forms of the Uzbek verb cannot be divided into three groups, just as the verbs can be divided into three groups according to their relation to the moment of speech of the action they denote. For example, in modern Uzbek it is known that the verb has the present-future tense form. In most researches this form is given in the section "The present tense", in some works it is given in the section "The future tense". However we consider that neither is true. Because it is not a form of the present tense or the future tense, but a form that can express the meanings of the present and future tenses” (Khojiev, 1973:129). Thus, according to him, the Uzbek verb has past, present and future tenses, but the tense forms of verbs are divided into past, present and present-future tense forms in the Uzbek language. The distinction between past, present and future tenses of verbs is also given in the textbook by Tursunov, Mukhtorov, Rakhmatullaev (1992:332).

Opinions also differ on the tenses of verbs in English, which is an inflecting language. It should be noted that many literature and Internet sites dedicated to the study of the English language state that there are 16 or even 28 verb tenses in this language. Meanwhile, the aspect, the voice in the verbs, as well as the categorical forms that A.Smirnitsky (1959:91) put forward as a category of relation to time or as a grammatical category of the phase mentioned by F.Palmer (1988:32) are also considered as forms of verb tenses.

F.Palmer, on the other hand, emphasizes the idea that there are only the present tense and the past tense, and that the form of the future tense does not exist: “The traditional statement of tense in terms of present, past and future, exemplified by *I take*, *I took* and *I shall take*, has no place in the analysis presented here. The basic reason for this is quite simply that while *I take* and *I took* are comparable within the analysis, in that they exemplify the formal category of tense as established in the primary paradigm, *I shall take* belongs to the modal paradigm, and ought not to be handled together with the other two” (Palmer, 1988:37). Moreover, he does not consider present continuous forms or the *be going to* form, which are often used to represent the future tense, to be categorical forms.

R.Declerk states that the grammatical category of tense in English is divided into present, past, and future tenses, and expresses his opinions against such views as above. He, based on the definition of the concept of "tense" as a linguistic expression of the sense of a special time through a separate form, states that the *will+ the present infinitive* form corresponds to such a definition and therefore there is the future tense in English (Declerck, 2006:103).

The existence of the different contradictory ideas in terms of verb tenses indicates semantic fusion within the forms denoting this grammatical category, i.e., their syncretic nature.

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