

Thus, we see in the situation of contemporary globalization we are moving from the using English as a foreign language to the using it as the single second language and as the intermediate language. This is the only way to overcome the language barrier.

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GRAMMATICAL CATEGORIES OF TENSE AND ASPECT IN ENGLISH COMPARED TO CHINESE AND JAPANESE

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The aim of this paper is to review the tense system of the English language in comparison with two non-Germanic languages of Asia, namely Chinese and Japanese. Comparing of different grammatical categories of heterogeneous languages is a mainstream trend in contemporary linguistics. It is based on the cross-lingual matches that may signalize the genetic relations between the two or more languages compared. In our case the three languages belong to three different language families – Germanic branch of Indo-European language family (English), Chinese branch of Sino-Tibetan

language family (Chinese in its northern dialectal manifestation) and an isolated language, which is hypothetically related to Altaic family (Japanese). Nowadays there is no scientifically documented proof of their homogeneity in any aspect, but typological correspondence may occur due to the common features of human thinking.

Grammatical category of tense manifests the time reference in the text [1, 2]. It may be expressed by various grammatical means, generally inflections and auxiliary verbs depending on the synthetic or analytical tendencies in a language. Past, present and future construct the basic tenses in most world's languages which corresponds to the time disposition of events within the human mind. Still many languages show the absence of distinct division between the three time references and have only perfect and non-perfect verbal forms which is somehow equal to traditional division between present, past and future. Thus, Chinese language being the representative of isolating (or amorphic) languages has no affixal explicators of time reference, and Japanese, no matter how intricate its grammar is (especially conjugation system), only has the suffix **-ta*, which denotes either the past simple/past perfect depending on the context or past progressive if preceded by the suffix **-te*.

A disputable question is the correlation between the notions of tense and aspect. In terms of English it is clearly visible that tense forms are opposed to aspect forms, making the two patterns

"I saw him yesterday at the meeting"

and

"I have seen him at these meetings many times"

very different in both grammar and pragmatics. Here aspect denotes the relation of the action or event to the time flow. If we try to translate the above-used patterns into Chinese and Japanese respectively, we will have the following:

昨天我在会议看到他 – *zuótiān wǒ zài huìyì kàndào tā ~*

我好几次看过他在这些会议 – *wǒ hǎojǐcì kànguò tā zài zhèxiē huìyì.*

for Chinese and

私は彼を機能の会議に見た – *watashi wa kare wo kinou no kaigi ni*

mita ~私は彼をこの会議に何度も見た – *watashi wa kare wo kono kaigi ni nando mo mita*

for Japanese.

As one can see, in the Chinese examples the so called affixes 到 *dào* and 过 *guò* (they are actually grammaticalised verbal stems with the respective meaning 到 *dào* 'to reach, to come' and 过 *guò* 'to cross, to pass') manifest perfective aspect rather than past time, because Chinese does not have

grammatical markers of tense. The Japanese language, similarly, expresses the perfective aspect with the affix -た *-ta for both past simple and present perfect tenses in English.

Thus we see that in Chinese and Japanese the pragmatic difference between the two perfective aspectual verb forms is expressed rather lexically than grammatically, not to speak of isolating Chinese language, which was originally claimed as “having no grammar”. This misconception was caused by the inflectional poorness of the language keeping in mind that inflection is a widely spread grammar means in Indo-European languages. Japanese has a vast variety of grammatical verbal means and there is still no consensus about its verb conjugation [3], but the aspect is typically expressed with the above-mentioned affix *-ta.

Within the framework of this paper we distinguish between perfect and imperfect verb forms and perfective and imperfective aspects, which can comprise both simple and perfect forms. E.g. the English *I was there* and *I've been there* both manifest perfective aspect, but only the latter represents perfect verb form, while the first is non-perfect past form. However there's still much fluctuation between the perfect and non-perfect verb forms in terms of expressing the concept of a past action or event, as can be inferred from the examples above.

Similarly the two questions

Where were you?

and

Where have you been?

with different verb forms in English mean some past event, which makes little difference in Chinese and Japanese:

あなたはどこにいた？ – *anata ha doko ni ita* ? ~

当时你在哪儿？ – *dāngshí nǐ zài nǎ'r* ? or 你去哪儿了？ – *nǐ qù nǎ'r le* ?

The Japanese language utilizes the aspectual affix た *-ta, while in Chinese either the adverbial modifier of time 当时 *dāngshí* ‘at that time’ or a perfective aspect marker 了 *le* can be used.

Let's review the English tense system with the subsequent comparing of it with Chinese and Japanese examples, which can be somehow semantically close to each of English tense pattern. We are not considering any future tenses below, because neither Chinese nor Japanese languages have any grammatical means of expressing future actions unlike English, which has special auxiliary *shall~will*. Basic comparison will be made between perfective and imperfective aspects, which can be found in both Chinese and Japanese.

Present tense imperfective aspect (simple)

I read a new book every week

to read = Inf.

我每个星期看一本新的书

wǒ měi gè xīngqī kàn yī běn xīn de shū

わたしは毎月新しい本を読む *wata shi wa maigetsu atarashii hon wo yomu*

読む *yomu* ‘to read’ (Inf.)

看 kàn ‘to read’ (Inf.)

Present tense imperfective aspect (progressive)

I am reading a book right now.

am read-ing = present copula + Inf. + participial affix *-ing*

我(正在)看着一本书

wǒ zhèngzài kànzhe yī běn shū

私は今本を読んでいる

watashi wa ima hon wo yondeiru

正在 *zhèngzài* ‘right now’ – a temporal adverbial, indicating that an action is taking place at the moment of speech

着 *zhe* – an imperfective aspect marker, denoting an ongoing action or state

読んでいる *yondeiru* = 読んで (*-te* stem of 読む *yomu*) + いる (possibly, a grammaticalised copula, denoting an ongoing action or state)

Present tense perfective aspect

I have read all the books by that author.

have read = Aux. + past participle of *to read*

我看过那位作者写的所有的书
wǒ kànguò nà wèi zuòzhě xiě de suǒyǒu de shū

过 *guò* – an experiential aspect marker, denoting the action, that has already taken place

私はあの著者のすべての本を読んだ

watashi wa ano chosha no subete no hon wo yonda

読んだ *yonda* = *-ta* stem of 読む *yomu* + だ *-da* – an allophone of **-ta*, indicating an action, that has already taken place

Past tense imperfective aspect (simple)

I read that article two weeks ago.

read = past form of *to read*

两个星期之前我看了那篇文章 この記事二週間前読んだ
liǎng gè xīngqī zhīqián wǒ kànle nà kono kiji nishuukan mae yonda
piān wénzhāng

了 *le* – a perfective aspect marker, denoting the action, that took place before
之前 *zhīqián* ‘before’ – a temporal adverbial, indicating that an action took place before the moment of speech
読んだ *yonda* = *-ta* stem of 読む *yomu* + だ *-da* – an allophone of **-ta*, indicating an action, that has already taken place
前 *mae* ‘before’ – a temporal adverbial, indicating that an action took place before the moment of speech

Past tense imperfective aspect (progressive)

I was always reading in class

was read-ing = past copula + Inf. + participial affix *-ing*

我那时一直看着书上课 クラスにいつも読んでいた
wǒ nà shí yīzhí kànzhe shū shàngkè kurasu ni itsu mo yondeita

那时 *nàshí* ‘at that time’ – a temporal adverbial, indicating that an action took place before the moment of speech
一直 *yīzhí* ‘repeatedly, all the time’ – an adverbial of manner, denoting a repeated or habitual action
着 *zhe* – an imperfective aspect marker, denoting an ongoing action or state
読んでいた *yondeita* = 読んで *yonde* – *-te* stem of 読む *yomu*, denoting the ongoing action + いた *ita* – *-ta* stem of いる *iru*, denoting the action, that has taken place

Past tense perfective aspect

I had read a pamphlet about the city a week before I visited it

had read = past Aux. + past participle of *to read*

<p>我访问那个城市一个星期之前，读过关于它一个小册子</p> <p><i>wǒ fǎngwèn nàgè chéngshì yīgè xīngqī zhīqián, dúguò guānyú tā yīgè xiǎo cèzi</i></p>	<p>あの都市訪れる一週間前にあの都市についてパンフを読んだ</p> <p><i>ano toshi otozureru isshuukan mae ni ano toshi ni tsuite no pam-fu wo yonda</i></p>
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<p>之前 <i>zhīqián</i> ‘before’ – a temporal adverbial</p> <p>过 <i>guò</i> – an experiential aspect marker, denoting the action, that has already taken place</p>	<p>前 <i>mae</i> ‘before’ – a temporal adverbial</p> <p>読んだ <i>yonda</i> = <i>-ta</i> stem of 読む <i>yomu</i> + だ <i>-da</i> – an allophone of <i>*-ta</i>, indicating an action, that has already taken place</p>
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Conclusion. Tense and aspect are immanent characteristics of any language. They construct the basic parameters of the verbal action and can be explicated with various language means. Keeping in mind that “language is grammaticalised lexis, not lexicalized grammar” we can conclude from the comparison above, that **English** has clearly structured system of tense and aspect, which is expressed both lexically and grammatically, but grammar means prevail. One can distinguish between perfect and non-perfect aspects and past and non-past tenses by the verb forms.

Chinese has a number of affixes, that make the verb perfect with the further differentiation, or can indicate the ongoing state of the action, but the degree of their grammaticalisation is not clear, since many of them preserve the original semantics.

In terms of tense and aspect **Japanese** is closer to Chinese rather than English – it has two main verbal types – perfective and imperfective, without their grammatical reference to past. But it does have inflection, which brings it closer to English.

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