

言語の意味的二重性と誤解

(動詞III：時制，相，態，法)

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The Double-Entendre and Misunderstanding of Language (Verb III : Tense and Aspect, Voice, Mood)

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1 Tense and Aspect

1.1 Definition

Tense is the form taken by a verb to indicate the time (also continuance or completeness) of an action. It is important to keep the two concepts Time and Tense strictly apart. The former is common to all mankind and is independent of language; the latter varies from language to language; it is the linguistic expression of time-relations. It is worth mentioning that time-relations can be shown not only by the tense, but they are also made clear by the word-order, sentence structure, context, modifier, and so forth. For example, in the sentence, "We went to school and studied English," the act of studying English takes place later than that of going to school. The difference between the two concepts Time and Tense (e.g. the relation between the action and its future or consequent state) is humourously shown in the following jokes:

The future of "I give" is "you take."

What is the future of "he drinks?"

He is drunk.

Aspect indicates the aspect, the type, the characteristics of the action (Curme, Syntax). The English language is devoid of sufficient means to express the temporal aspect of a verb, which is indicated or implied by (i) the ordinary meaning of the verb itself, (ii) the occasional meaning of the verb as occasioned by context or situation, (iii) a derivative suffix, and (iv) a tense-form. I shall here discuss what tense form expresses what aspect of the verb.

1.2 Simple Tense Form

(A) *Simple Tense Form of Verb Be*

This tense-form can often make no clear distinction as to whether the condition or state denoted by the

complement is transitory, habitual, or real. In the present-day colloquial English the transitoriness is often made clear by the use of *be*.

"I *was* foolish when I married you."

"Guess you *were*, and still you *are*. But I *was* too infatuated to notice it."

(B) *Simple Tense Form of Other Verbs*

Some verbs cannot show specially whether an action is completed or whether something comes into existence at a given or an indefinite time. Nor can they make the distinction between conclusive and non-conclusive. During the period denoted by a temporal clause, phrase, or word, it is often difficult to ascertain whether an action is continuously in progress, or whether the state or condition is existent or progressing through the period.

A farmer who went to a large city to see the sights engaged a room at a hotel and before retiring asked the clerk about the hours for meals.

"We *have* breakfast from 7 to 11, dinner from 12 to 3, and supper from 6 to 8," explained the clerk.

"Look here," inquired the farmer in surprise, "what time am I goin' to see the town?"

(Moulton 32)

Politician A: "I don't know why I am called bad by the press. In my whole life I *never committed but one act of wickedness*."

Politician B: "But did you ever stop committing it?"

The Pan-American Bank, of California, with commercial assets of \$2,200,000 and savings of \$2,217,123, *closed* its door today. (Temple 41)

"It is the duty of the court to charge that the warden of the state penitentiary shall closely hold you in confinement until the 31st day of May next, when, *between the hours of sunrise and sunset* he shall *put* you to death by the electric chair."

"May I ask a dying favuh of the co't? the prisoner queried. And when given permission he said, "I ain't got no quarrel with da date. But I fails to see the point *keepin' me sittin'* in dat chair from sunrise till sunset."

The simple tense form of some verbs expresses the ingressive aspect.

While a small boy was fishing he accidentally tumbled into the creek. As an old man on the bank was helping him out he said:

"How did you *come* to fall into the river?"

"I didn't come to fall into the river. I came to fish," replied the boy.

Some verbs refer to a final state or result that has been reached, as: "The robber *killed* him," but some do not, as in the *call* in the following:

Glendower: "I can *call* spirits from the vasty deep."

Hotspur: "Why, so can I, and so can any man. But will they come when you do *call* for them?"
(Shakespeare, Henry IV, Prt I, III, i, 53)

"Why does a woman say she's been *shopping* when she hasn't bought a thing?"

"Why does a man say he's been *fishing* when he hasn't caught anything?"

(Copeland 617)

Verbs of this kind often convey an idea that a final state or result from the action has been attained or achieved.

1.3 Construction 'Be + Present Participle'

(A) *Simple Progressive Form*

This form marks an act as being in progress, or as taking place in a near future, or as repeated or habitual action or happening.

A lady vacationer sauntered into a Miami bar, and spotted a friend sipping a cocktail.

"Ah, there, Marie," she called. I see you're *having* one."

"Nonsense," frowned Marie. "It's just the cut of this made-to-order dress that makes me look that way." (Cerf, Laugh 141)

Married Granddaughter: "Tom and I have arranged our holiday *We're going* to hike."

Grandma: "It's wonderful how popular that place has become. Everybody seems to *be going* there nowadays.

(B) *Perfect progressive form*

Of all the aspects which the progressive perfect expresses, the following two may be the most liable to confusion: (i) the action or state which, whether it may have stopped or not, must for a time have been of an enduring character and (ii) the action repeated or carried on habitually up to the time of speaking.

Proud Mother: "Yes, he's a fourteen months old now and he's *been walking* since he was eight months old!"

Bored Visitor: "Really? He must be awfully tired."

(H. Hoke 125)

1.4 Construction 'Have + Past Participle'

The perfect form '*have + Past Participle*' is used to mark an act or state as completed at a time previous to the moment of speaking. Without the aid of appropriate adverbs or context and so forth, however, the form itself cannot clearly express whether the completion of an action takes place in the past when the past is thought of as running on to the present without any interval, or whether it takes place in a past so recent as not to be thought of as separate from the present by any interval.

A couple of tramps sat on a bench in Central Park while the sun slowly set. "*Have you eaten?*" asked the first tramp wistfully.

"Ah, yes," answered the other with a sigh, "Quite often!"

The perfect form marks an act or state as continuing.

Waiter: "These are the best eggs we *have had* for years."

Diner: "Well, bring me some you *haven't had* so long."

(Copeland 66)

1.5 Indication of Time-Relations of Substantives

No indication of time-relation is inherent in a substantive denoting an action and the state or condition of something. According to contexts or situations, *his efforts*, in the following examples, may be construed as referring to an action or state in the past, as in: "*His efforts* were crowned with success," or to that in the future, as in: "We expect *his efforts*," or to that in the present, as in: "*His efforts* are striking."

Two bums down Galveston found a newspaper. One headline said. MAN WANTED FOR

BURGLARY IN CALIFORNIA.

"Now if that job was only in Texas," said one bum, "I'd take it."

A little girl, a "child prodigy" in the eyes of her parents, finished her selection on the piano, and her proud papa asked a visitor, "What do you think of her *execution*?"

"What date is it set for?" asked the visitor.

(Meier 196)

2 Voice**2.1 Definition**

Voice is a technical term referring to the relation of the action asserted by the verb to the subject of the sentence as indicated by a special form of the verb. The English language has two verb forms (voices) to show this: the active voice and the passive voice.

English Prof.: "What is the difference between an active voice and a passive voice?"

Co-ed.: "An *active* voice shows action and a *passive* voice shows passion.

(Copeland 382)

Give the *passive* of "John shot my dog." "My dog shot John."

2.2 Restriction on Use of Passive Voice

In general, the active voice can be changed into the passive, but there are certain restrictions, as mentioned below, on the use of the passive.

(i) Some indirect object or object of the nature of a dative cannot be the subjects in the passive without adding the retained objects (the subject in the active) or prepositional phrases denoting the logical objects.

A wine and spirit merchant's advertisement runs: "*Families supplied* by the cask or in bottle."

(Anon. Ha 122)

(ii) Passive constructions which sound illogical or uncouth are not approved by some purists or grammarians for the alleged reason that, for instance, such a subject as noted below, can from the logical standpoint, be under no obligation to perform any action: *Money ought not to be spent* uselessly."

All cattle please read!

The following sign appears on a bridge near a Pacific coast city: "*Cattle unaccompanied by driver are forbidden* to cross this bridge."

(Williams 473)

2.3 Uses of Passive Voice

The simple passive form is used to denote (i) an act as a whole and (ii) a state generally resulting from the act. In the first instance, it is implied that an act is done, although it is difficult to determine whether it is done once or repeatedly without referring to the context, while in the second instance it is generally implied that such a state is continuing.

Robert Southy, a minor English poet, had the unquestioning certainty that posterity would one day rank him alongside Shakespeare and Milton. One afternoon he was gleefully extolling his own virtues to a scholar, who was running out of patience and politeness.

"Yes," finally asserted the scholar, "Your work will indeed *be read* when Shakespeare's and Milton's *are forgotten*, but (and he rose to leave) not till then.

The construction *is worn* in the following example may mean either a style of door-mat that is fashionable (implying the act of wearing done repeatedly) or an individual mat which is the worse for wear (implying the state of the mat consequent upon the act of wearing)

A salesman had sold everything that was necessary for the furnishing of the lawyer's office. "Oh, yes, I nearly forgot," he exclaimed, "You need a door-mat!"

"Fine! But bring me one that *is well worn*."

(Golden, Legal 12)

A verb phrase made up of a substantive verb and present participle, like *be making*, is looked upon either as an active formation or as a passive one, according to the context or the nature of the subject, as with: "No progress *was making*," and "He *is making* no progress in his study." To meet the demand that the passive idea should be distinctly expressed, a new verb consisting of a substantive verb and past participle compounded with *being*, like 'No progress *is being made*...', came into existence in the 18th century. With this in mind a distinction might be made in usage or significance between the door-mat mentioned in the preceding paragraph, as 'door-mat that *is being well worn*' and 'door-mat that *is well worn*'.

But the clumsiness of the new formation is still felt, especially in the case of the perfect tense: for such a form as 'No progress has *been being made*...' has not yet found its way into the English language. A single method for the two ideas, active and passive, frequently renders confusion or ambiguity unavoidable in such cases.

"I've *been cooking* for ten years."

"You ought to be done now." (Lieberman 87)

The infinitive at first was neither active nor passive but in the course of time the passive form developed. At present the active form is still used to express the passive idea, and in some cases there is no perceptible difference in significance and implication between these infinitive forms, such as: "There is nothing *to report*" and "There is nothing *to be reported*."

"Is a chicken big enough *to eat* when it's two weeks old?"

"Of course not!"

"Then how does it manage to live?" (Moulton 20)

The above observation applies to the gerund; that is, the active form can idiomatically be used both as notional active and as notional passive.

What is the best way to keep fish from *smelling*?

Cut off their noses. (Weigle 15)

The gerund used as an object of the verbs *want*, *require*, *deserve*, generally denotes the passive idea.

A washerwoman applied to a man for work, and he gave her a note to the manager of a certain club. It read as follows:

"Dear Mr.X-- This woman *wants washing*."

Shortly afterwards he answered back: "Dear Sir - I dare say she does: but I don't fancy the job."

2.4 Active and Passive Substantives

Nouns denoting transitive actions are originally neither active nor passive, but, may, according to circumstances, be looked upon as one or the other.

To many women "*Love*" means "*being loved*." (Wain 59)

Two Nazis met on a Berlin boulevard. "I have inside information," whispered the first, about England's *invasion*."

“Wonderful!” enthused the other. “When are they coming?”

(Cerf, war 188)

The jailbird was explaining his presence in prison.

“I got here through mistaken *identity*,” he said. “I didn’t know he was a cop.”

3 Mood

Mood is defined as: “Any one of the groups of forms in the conjugation of a verb which serves to indicate the function in which the verb is used: whether it expresses a predication, a command, a wish, or the like.”

The subjunctive mood indicates that the assertion of the verb is not thought of as stating what is, but what might be, or ought to be. The past subjunctive, which expresses or implies a rejected condition, and which, so far as the form is concerned, expresses this past event or condition if no rejected one is given, is also used as a weaker or diffident variety of the present tense form.

“You have told the court,” said the attorney for the defense, “that this is the person who knocked you down with his car. *Could* you swear to the man?”

“I did,” returned the complaint eagerly, “but he only swore back at me and drove on.”

For the subjunctive modal forms indicatives are now being used to state supposition, condition, uncertainty, possibility, etc., especially when they are found after conjunctions denoting condition or concession. But in some cases there may be a hardly perceptible or definable differences in use and implication between both forms.

Holdup: “Stop! If you *move*, you’re dead.”

Student: “Say, you should be more careful of your English. If I *should move*, it would be a positive sign that I was alive.”

The subjunctive modal forms can be replaced by the indicative, but the former forms often convey a gentler or politer tone than the latter.

At a Washington reception during World War II, a Pentagon general was noticeably silent when the conversation turned to military matters.

“General,” asked an untactful lady, “What is your opinion? Will we invade Europe through the ‘Underbelly or the Riviera or-or what?”

“Madam,” replied the general, “if I *did not* know I *would* tell you.

(House, Squelches 73)

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(昭和63年10月31日受理)