

Grammatical subclasses of verb category of verb tenses

Marjona Gafurova

Jasmina Negmatilloevna Xabibova

Supervisor: Parvina Ilkhomovna Khotamova

Samarkand State Instituted of Foreign Languages

Abstract: This article examines the grammatical category of tense through a comparative analysis of English and Uzbek verb systems. The study focuses on structural and functional differences in the expression of temporal relations, highlighting the analytical nature of English tense formation and the predominantly synthetic character of Uzbek tense morphology. Particular attention is given to the interaction between tense and aspect in English, especially the role of the perfect and progressive forms, which have no direct grammatical equivalents in Uzbek. The paper also discusses how Uzbek tense forms rely more heavily on contextual interpretation and morphological suffixation, including pragmatic nuances such as evidential meaning. By contrasting these two typologically different systems, the research identifies key areas that present difficulties for Uzbek learners of English. In the context of ongoing educational reforms in Uzbekistan aimed at strengthening foreign language competence, understanding these grammatical distinctions becomes especially important for improving both theoretical knowledge and pedagogical practice. The study argues that a comparative grammatical approach can significantly enhance learners' awareness of tense usage and reduce structural interference between the two languages.

Keywords: verb category, grammatical tense, aspect, English tense system, Uzbek tense system, comparative analysis, morphological markers, progressive aspect, perfect tense, language education in Uzbekistan

INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, the Republic of Uzbekistan has undergone substantial reforms in the field of language education, particularly in strengthening the status of foreign languages in secondary and higher education. Within the framework of national development strategies aimed at expanding international cooperation and academic mobility, special emphasis has been placed on improving English language proficiency among students and teachers. These reforms are not limited to communicative skills alone; they also require deeper grammatical competence, especially in areas that traditionally cause difficulty for Uzbek learners of English.

One of such areas is the category of verb tense. Although tense appears to be a basic grammatical concept, its structural realization differs significantly across

languages. For Uzbek students learning English, tense is not simply a matter of memorizing forms but rather understanding how temporal relations are grammatically conceptualized in a different linguistic system. Therefore, a comparative analysis of tense categories in English and Uzbek is not only theoretically relevant but also practically necessary within the context of current educational modernization.

The category of tense has long occupied a central position in grammatical theory. In general linguistic terms, tense is understood as a grammatical category that expresses the relation between the time of the event and the time of speaking. However, this seemingly simple definition conceals considerable complexity.

In English grammar, tense is traditionally described in connection with aspect, and many scholars argue that English tense cannot be analyzed independently from aspectual distinctions. Huddleston and Pullum (2002, pp. 116-119) note that English formally distinguishes only two morphological tenses - present and past - while future reference is expressed analytically through auxiliary constructions. This interpretation challenges the traditional pedagogical classification of twelve tenses, suggesting that the system is structurally more compact but semantically richer.

Uzbek linguists, in contrast, approach tense primarily as a morphological category expressed through verbal suffixes. According to Sayfullayeva (2010, pp. 245-248), Uzbek tense forms are closely connected with evidentiality and speaker perspective, which adds a pragmatic dimension to temporal reference. This observation is particularly important because it demonstrates that tense is not purely chronological but also interpretative.

Thus, even at the theoretical level, English and Uzbek represent different typological approaches: English relies heavily on auxiliary constructions and aspectual contrast, whereas Uzbek employs synthetic morphological markers combined with contextual interpretation.

In English, temporal reference is expressed through a combination of tense and aspect. The interaction between these two categories allows speakers to convey not only when an action takes place, but also how it unfolds in time and how it relates to other events.

For example, the contrast between:

She wrote the article.

She has written the article.

Leech (2004, p. 17) emphasizes that the English perfect form does not simply indicate completion but establishes a relationship between two time points. This relational character makes it particularly difficult for learners whose native language lacks a direct structural equivalent.

Moreover, the progressive aspect further complicates the tense system. The difference between "She works" and "She is working" lies not in time reference alone,

but in the speaker’s perspective on the internal structure of the action. The progressive form foregrounds duration and temporariness, whereas the simple form often indicates habitual or general activity. Such distinctions illustrate that English tense system is not linear but multidimensional.

Uzbek tense formation is primarily based on verbal suffixation. The present-future form, for instance, can express both habitual present and near future depending on context:

Men yozaman.

This single form may correspond to “I write,” “I am writing,” or even “I will write,” depending on situational cues. Rahmatullayev (2006, p. 318) notes that Uzbek tense system relies more on pragmatic interpretation than on strict aspectual differentiation. Unlike English, Uzbek does not possess a grammatical equivalent of the present perfect. Instead, completion is usually conveyed through the simple past form:

Men ishni tugatdim.

Although this sentence may functionally correspond to “I have finished the work,” it lacks the explicit grammatical marker of present relevance found in English perfect constructions.

Tense Frame	Simple	Continuous	Perfect	Perfect Continuous
<i>Present</i>	works	is working	has worked	has been working
<i>Past</i>	worked	was working	had worked	had been working
<i>Future</i>	will work	will be working	will have worked	will have been working

Another important feature of Uzbek tense system is the use of evidential forms, which can indicate whether the speaker witnessed the event directly or reports it indirectly. This semantic nuance has no direct grammatical counterpart in English tense morphology, which again demonstrates typological divergence.

When English and Uzbek tense systems are examined side by side, several fundamental differences emerge.

First, English tense is analytically structured and deeply integrated with aspect, whereas Uzbek tense is predominantly synthetic and context-dependent. English distinguishes between simple and progressive forms with strict grammatical rules, while Uzbek often conveys similar meanings lexically or contextually.

Second, the English perfect tense establishes a temporal bridge between past and present, a function that Uzbek typically performs without a specialized morphological construction. This structural absence frequently leads to transfer errors among Uzbek learners of English.

Third, Uzbek tense system incorporates pragmatic nuances such as evidentiality, which English expresses through lexical means rather than grammatical tense markers. Despite these differences, both languages share the universal function of locating

events in time relative to the moment of speaking. The variation lies not in communicative intention but in grammatical strategy.

In the context of educational reforms in Uzbekistan, understanding these structural contrasts becomes particularly significant. Teachers who recognize the typological differences between the two tense systems can better anticipate common learner difficulties and design more effective instructional strategies.

For example, instead of presenting the English present perfect as an isolated rule, it may be more productive to contrast it explicitly with Uzbek past forms and emphasize the concept of present relevance. Such comparative explanation can reduce mechanical memorization and promote deeper grammatical awareness. Therefore, comparative grammatical analysis is not merely theoretical but directly applicable to classroom practice.

CONCLUSION

The category of tense represents a central grammatical domain in both English and Uzbek, yet the structural mechanisms used to encode temporal relations differ substantially. English tense system is characterized by analytic constructions and strong aspectual differentiation, whereas Uzbek tense system relies more heavily on morphological suffixes and contextual interpretation.

A comparative approach reveals that these differences are not random but reflect broader typological distinctions between the languages. In light of ongoing language education reforms in Uzbekistan, such analysis contributes not only to linguistic theory but also to pedagogical development.

References

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