

University of Mohammed Boudiaf – Msila
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English
Module : Translation
Level 3rd Year (License)
Teacher: Dr. Fadila ABADOU

Chapter Five: Translation of Tenses (Arabic –English/ French –English)

5. 1. Tense and Aspect in English

Tense is a grammatical device by which we understand the connection between the form of the verb and our concept of past, present, and future times. Jarvie states that “the word tense is from Latin tempus, ‘time’ and it is used to show the time when the action of a verb takes place” . In English, there are present and past tenses and several means of expressing future time. Taking into account that tense is often considered in relation to the perfective and progressive aspects; the manners in which the verbal action is experienced or regarded. Tense and aspect play a great role in various languages. Aspectual differences and time relations are expressed through these two categories. While the former is concerned with locating an event in time, the latter takes account of the temporal distribution of an event, i.e., is it complete or non-complete, momentary or continuous.

Jarvie claims that Aspect is a category indicating the point from which an action is seen to take place. Two contrasts of aspect are marked in English: progressive aspect and perfect (or perfective) aspect. The progressive states that the action is in progress, ongoing or continuous at the point of time; whereas the perfect states that the action is retrospective or has been completed.

There are 12 tenses in English which have resulted from the combination of both tense and aspect system.

5.1.1.The Present Tense(S):

The present tenses in English are divided into simple, continuous, perfect, and perfect continuous. **The present simple** is represented by the form (**I do**), e.g., 'I work in a bank.' **The present continuous** is represented by the form (**I am doing**), e.g., 'Please, don't disturb me. I'm working'. **The present perfect simple** is represented by the form (**I have done**), e.g., 'I've lost my key.' **The present perfect continuous** is represented by the form (**I have been doing**), e.g., 'I'm tired. I've been working all day.'

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- **The present simple:** It is used

- To denote scientific facts, universal truths and work done on daily basis.
- **To indicate present time that coincides with the time of utterance, (things happen repeatedly).**
- **For situations located in future time (timetables, programmes).**

- **The present continuous:** it is used

- To express an action taking place at the time of speaking.
 - Future meaning, when you have already decided and arranged to do it (a fixed plan, date)
- Non-durative verbs in the present progressive can indicate future reference, such as *go, come, leave, arrive, land, die, start, return, join, etc.*

- **The Present perfect:** It is used

- To show an action that started in the past and has just finished.
- Action started in the past and continuous up to the present.

The present perfective is marked by the auxiliary *have* or *has*, highlighting the situation located in the past. To some extent, the present perfective is similar to the simple preterit, but the difference lies in that the current relevance. “With the present perfect the past time situation is conceived of as having some kind of current relevance, relevance to the present, whereas the preterit does not express any such relationship.” For example, I have closed the door.

The example mentioned above indicates that the door is closed now.

- **The present perfect continuous:** it views a continuous situation located in the past, presented as being in progress and predicated to continue in the future, For example:

She **has been teaching** English for ten years.

Ever since their marriage, the couple **have been getting** along well with each other

This tense shows the action which started in the past and is still continuing in the present.

5.1.2. The Past Tense(s):

The past tenses in English include: The **past simple** which is represented by the form (I did), e.g., 'The parcel arrived last week.' The **past continuous** takes the form (I was doing), e.g., 'I was feeling ill.' The **past perfect simple** is represented as (I had done), e.g., 'I had read his books before I met him.' The **past perfect continuous** is represented as (I had been doing) e.g., 'It had been raining, and the streets were still wet.'

- **The Simple Past:** it is used to indicate an action completed in the past, and used for past habits.

The preterit is mainly used to locate the situation or the part of it in past time, usually accompanied by the indicator of time. Actually, "It is not necessary, however, for the past tense to be accompanied by an overt indicator of time."

- **The Past Continuous:** The central meaning of the preterit progressive is

- To present the situation being in progress in past time, for example:

She **was waiting** for us this time yesterday.

- (while) an action happened in the middle of another action, for example:

I **was reading** when someone **knocked** on the door.

- **The Past Perfect:** it is the past of the present perfect, used to describe an action completed before a certain moment in the past, usually a long time ago. If two actions happened in the past, past perfect is used to show the action that took place earlier.

For example: The patient **had died** before the doctor came.

- **The Past Perfect Continuous:** it used

- To indicate a continuous situation located in the past relative to some other past time.

For example, He **had been waiting** for you before I **called** him up.

- Used to denote an action that began before a certain point in the past and continued

up to sometime in past. For example, I **had been learning** English in this school for 20 days.

1.3.The Future

Although there is no clear future in English similar to that of the present and past, yet there are several means of expressing future time. Futurity is often rendered via modals, semi modals, simple present or progressive forms because futurity, modality, and aspect are closely related in English.

- **Future Simple** is expressed by several means:

○ Using the modal verbs 'will' and 'shall' is a way of expressing future and takes the form (I will or 'll/shall + infinitive), e.g., 'I will/shall arrive tomorrow.' It is also expressed by some other auxiliaries, e. g., 'may', as in: 'He may leave tomorrow.' = 'He will possibly leave ...'

Using (I Be going to + infinitive), e.g., 'she is going to have a baby.'

○ The (Present Progressive, i.e., 'I am doing') is also used to express future time, e.g., 'The plane is taking off at 5:20.'

○ Also the 'Simple Present', i.e., 'I do' expresses the futurity, but it should be "always used with an adverbial expression of future time", e.g., 'The train leaves tonight from Chicago.' Similarly, the use of (Be to + infinitive) expresses futurity, e.g., 'We are to be married soon', and 'you are to be back by 10 o'clock.'

○ And finally (Be about to + infinitive) which is used to express near future, i.e., imminent future.

For Example: 'The taxi is here and we **are about to leave.**'

- The **Future Continuous** takes the form of (I will/shall + be doing), e.g., 'He will be doing his best.' This form is used to express 'pure' future because it 'is used for future situations which are set and will take place as a matter of course" i.e. It is used to express an ongoing or continued action in future.

For example:

He **will be distributing** sweets in temple tomorrow at 12 o'clock.

In the example, the action will start in future (tomorrow) and will be in progress at or around a

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time in the future.

- The **Future Perfect** is represented as (I will have done). It is used to express an action which will happen/occur in future and will be completed by a certain time in future.

For example:

They **will have shifted** the house by Sunday morning.

- The **Future Perfect Continuous** takes the form (I will have been doing). It is used to talk about actions that will commence at a fix time in future and will continue for some time in future. If there is no time reference, then it is not a Future perfect continuous tense. Without continued time reference, such sentences are Future Continuous Tense.

For example:

This time tomorrow, I **will be enjoying** the cricket match in the stadium.

The future perfect progressive emphasizes the duration of an activity that will be in progress before another time or event in the future. It is also used to talk about planned actions or actions expected to happen. For example:

They **will be staying** for a week.