

Breithutová, Helga

## The function of tenses used in modern English temporal clauses

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## THE FUNCTION OF TENSES USED IN MODERN ENGLISH TEMPORAL CLAUSES

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### INTRODUCTION

Some twelve years ago, I. S. BLOKH called attention to the problem of the use of tenses in English temporal clauses.<sup>1</sup> The aim of his investigation was to find an explanation (i) of the use of the perfect and the non-perfect forms of the finite verb in temporal clauses expressing an action that precedes the action of the governing clause, as well as (ii) of the use of the progressive and the non-progressive forms of the finite verb in temporal clauses expressing an action that is simultaneous with the action of the governing clause. His inquiry has indeed shown that there is a certain regularity in the use of tenses in English temporal clauses which is dependent, on the one hand, on the lexical meaning of the finite verbs occurring in these clauses and, on the other hand, on the objective relation of the two actions in the extralinguistic reality. I. S. BLOKH restricts his interest to the former problem, analyzing the interdependence between the lexical meaning of the verb and the tense employed. When referring to the lexical meaning of the verb, he is mainly concerned with the capability or incapability of the English verb to express a limit of an action. In his opinion, all English verbs can be divided into two groups, verbs expressing a limit of an action (i.e. its beginning or end), and verbs expressing the action in its progress. Verbs belonging to the former group may be referred to as non-continuative ('predel'nyye glagoly' in BLOKH's article), those belonging to the latter group as continuative ('nepredel'nyye glagoly' in BLOKH's article).

The conclusions presented by I. S. BLOKH may be summarized as follows. If the relation between the action of the temporal clause and that of the governing clause is denoted with sufficient clearness by lexical means, i.e. the lexical meaning of the verb and/or the conjunction and/or the context, it need not be denoted by any grammatical means, i.e. the perfect or the progressive forms of the verb. The temporal clauses opening with the conjunction *after* are the only exception to this rule. In these clauses both lexical and grammatical means are used to denote the priority of the action expressed in the *after*-clause in relation to the action expressed in the governing clause.

These conclusions, however, hold good only for temporal clauses expressing an action that is either simultaneous with or precedes the action of the governing clause. According to BLOKH, no similar regularity can be observed in

temporal clauses expressing an action that follows the action of the governing clause. In these clauses different tenses are used to express different temporal relations of the two actions in the extralinguistic reality.

The use of tenses in modern English temporal clauses has also been discussed in two unpublished diploma theses presented by V. DOKOUPILOVÁ and J. KUČEROVÁ at the Brno Department of English in 1962. The purpose of their theses was to verify BLIOKH's conclusions on the basis of new language material. The present paper<sup>2</sup> is based on an examination of further language material and is an attempt at a summary of the results yielded by the investigations undertaken so far. (See H. BREITHUTOVÁ, *Tenses*, V. DOKOUPILOVÁ, *Tenses*, J. KUČEROVÁ, *Tenses*.)

The material examined in the present paper has been excerpted chiefly from 13 English books.<sup>3</sup> Part of the examined temporal clauses has been taken from 2 English translations of German books and has been used as control material.<sup>4</sup> For the purpose of comparison we have also examined the use of tenses in German temporal clauses taken partly from 2 original German books and partly from 3 German translations of English books.<sup>5</sup>

BLIOKH's discussion of the use of tenses in English temporal clauses presupposes the possibility of dividing all English verbs into two clearly separated groups according to their continuativeness or non-continuativeness. Most scholars agree on the existence of two or more different groups of English verbs according to the character of the action expressed. B. TRNKA, e.g., distinguishes between inchoative, continuative and terminative (see his *Podstata*, p. 195), O. JESPERSEN and A. S. HORNBY between conclusive and non-conclusive verbs (*Grammar*, p. 252, *Guide*, p. 116). Many scholars, e.g. B. TRNKA and R. W. ZANDVOORT, warn against confusing the grouping of English verbs according to their lexical meaning or, as I. P. IVANOVA terms it, according to their aspectual character, with the division of Slavonic verbs into perfectives and imperfectives (cf. TRNKA, *Podstata*, p. 196, ZANDVOORT, *Aspect*, p. 20, IVANOVA, *Vid i vremya*, p. 63). Whereas the Slavonic verbal aspect is a grammatical category, the English verbal aspect is not (cf. ZANDVOORT, *Aspect*, p. 20, JINDRA, *K otázkám*, p. 97). When grouping the English verbs according to their aspectual character, I. P. IVANOVA points out that besides the two groups of continuative and non-continuative verbs, there is a group of verbs of double aspectual character, which, according to the context, may appear either as continuative or as non-continuative (*Vid i vremya*, pp. 67–70). The importance of the context for the eventual aspectual character of the English verb is stressed by V. MATHESIUS (*Problems*, pp. 101–102) and J. VACHEK (*Characterology*, p. 81). MATHESIUS holds that the English verb as such does not belong to any particular aspect type; in various contexts it may therefore express various verbal aspects without any formal change (*Problems*, pp. 101–102). Thus the verbal aspect in English is not expressed merely by the verb itself, but also by the whole context.

In the light of the above mentioned opinions, BLIOKH's division of the English verbs into continuative and non-continuative seems a rather simplified procedure. If we are to examine the interdependence between the aspectual character of the finite verb and the tense employed, we have to pay attention to the capability of the English verb to change its aspectual character in different contexts. Thus when referring to continuative or non-continuative verbs, we

shall always mean the respective aspectual character of the verb as it appears in the context in which it is used.

Roughly speaking, the temporal clause may express an action that either precedes, or is simultaneous with, or follows, the action expressed by the governing clause. The corresponding temporal relations will be denoted as priority, simultaneousness and succession. The following chapters will be devoted to the discussion of the use and function of tenses in expressing these three basic temporal relations.

## CHAPTER ONE PRIORITY

Priority may be expressed by the semantic content of the conjunction, the grammatical form of the finite verb or the context. Some temporal conjunctions, such as *after*, *as soon as*, *no sooner... than*, *once*, *directly*, exclusively introduce temporal clauses expressing priority, while other conjunctions, such as *when*, *as*, *whenever*, and conjunctive phrases, such as *now (that)*, *the moment*, *each time*, *every time*, *the first time*, etc., may also be used to introduce temporal clauses expressing simultaneousness. Some of them (*when*, *as*) may even introduce temporal clauses expressing succession.

The temporal relation denoted as priority may be of two kinds: (i) The temporal clause expresses an action that is completed before the action of the governing clause begins, e.g.,

1. On the Tuesday after the Government had fallen Michael went up to town and summoned a meeting of his "down and outs". — GSi 87.24

(ii) The temporal clause expresses an action already in progress before the action of the governing clause begins, but remaining in progress afterwards and providing a kind of background to the action of the governing clause, e.g.,

2. That night, after she seemed asleep, he lay awake, gnawed by uncertainty. — GSw 210.21.

The following is a graphical representation of the two types of temporal relation under discussion. The action of the governing clause is indicated with a solid line, that of the temporal clause with a thin broken line.



It can be seen that the temporal clause expressing the (i)-type of temporal relation indicates the priority of the whole action, while the temporal clause expressing the (ii)-type of temporal relation indicates the priority of the initial part of the action only. We shall further refer to the former type as complete priority, and to the latter as partial priority.

In an attempt to analyse the function of tenses in temporal clauses conveying priority, it is important to distinguish between the two types of priority. In expressing partial priority, perfect forms are never used, while in expressing complete priority both perfect and non-perfect forms may be used.

As can be seen from the following table, the proportion of perfect forms used

in denoting complete priority varies with the conjunction introducing the temporal clauses.

TABLE I  
Frequencies of Perfect Forms in Expressing Complete Priority

Conjunction	Number of Finite Verbs	Number of Perfect Forms	Perfect Forms Forms per cent
<i>When</i>	567	120	21.2
<i>As</i>	92	2	2.2
<i>After</i>	70	29	41.4
<i>As soon as</i>	28	1	3.6
<i>Once</i>	21	9	42.9
<i>Now that</i>	14	11	78.6
<i>Whenever</i>	8	0	0.0
<i>No sooner</i>	4	3	75.0

A comparison of the frequency of the conjunctions *after* and *when* and of the proportion of perfect forms used after these conjunctions in denoting complete priority shows that *when* is used much more frequently than *after*. The proportion of the perfect forms in *after*-clauses, on the other hand, is much larger than the proportion of these forms in *when*-clauses. It is obvious that in *after*-clauses the use of the perfect forms is not necessary for the indication of the temporal relation between the action of the governing clause and that of the temporal clause because the relation is conveyed unambiguously by the semantic content of the conjunction. On the other hand, though the semantic content of the conjunction *when* does not convey priority, the proportion of the perfect forms in *when*-clauses is smaller than that in *after*-clauses. Although J. NOSEK holds that different temporal relations are expressed by *when*-clauses and *after*-clauses, the *when*-clauses expressing mere temporal relationship and the *after*-clauses indicating a close sequence of actions (cf. his *Contributions*, pp. 29 and 32), in temporal clauses expressing complete priority the two conjunctions seem to be interchangeable without essentially affecting the interpretation of the temporal relation. The difference between the two conjunctions seems to be rather on the stylistic level. Thus one of the two conjunctions, the considerably more frequent *when*, seems to be used when the author does not desire to stress the temporal relation (cf. instances 3 and 4), while the other one, the less frequent *after*, is used in special cases in order to put emphasis on the temporal relation of the two actions concerned. The emphasis is often achieved by an accumulation of means: the conjunction, the perfect form of the finite verb and sometimes also the lexical meaning of the verb (cf. instances 5 and 6). The emphatic function of the perfect forms is especially obvious in temporal clauses with finite verbs, such as *to finish* or *to end*, clearly expressing priority by their semantic content (cf. instances 7 and 8).

3. They embraced the knees of Norah Curfew when she came within reach. — GSi 126.38

4. And when MacGown sat down, she said: — GSi 100.35

5. Unfortunately, after the engines had arrived, he was struck on the head by the frame of a picture... — GSw 268.15

6. ...after he had exhausted all his resources in an attempt to find out the truth, Narouz telephoned to say: — DB 108.19
7. And, for some time after he had finished, he remained kneeling on the very soft carpet, ... — GSw 274.06
8. Anyway, I shouldn't think people will want to be reminded of that peculiar man's plays after Harvard and Yale have finished with him. — OL 79.34

An analogous comparison can be made between the conjunctions *as soon as* and *no sooner... than*. Besides conveying priority, both conjunctions suggest quick succession of two actions. Contrary to JESPERSEN, who claims that *no sooner*-clauses indicate the same temporal relationship as *as soon as*-clauses (cf. *MEG V*, p. 356), J. NOSEK holds that *no sooner* expresses a temporal point surprising the speaker while *as soon as* does not (cf. his *Contributions*, pp. 33—34). In any case, the two conjunctions can be regarded as a semantically related pair. As can be seen from the above table, the conjunction *as soon as* is used more frequently than the conjunction *no sooner... than*. Thus the conjunction *no sooner... than* seems to be used only in order to emphasize the temporal relation and/or to perform an emotive function. Here again a similar accumulation of means may be observed as in *after*-clauses. Besides the conjunction capable of emphasizing the temporal relation because of its semantic content and rare use, the perfect forms are used much more frequently than in *as soon as*-clauses.<sup>6</sup> Let us adduce at least three examples in illustration.

9. As soon as I realized that — I kept dark. — GM 129.16
10. No sooner had we left than Justine entered. — DB 104.31
11. No sooner has darkness fallen than the maskers begin to appear in the streets — ... — DB 159.31

We have seen that the use of perfect forms in denoting priority is not compulsory. This conclusion is supported by the fact that there are significant individual differences between authors in their use of the perfect forms. This is evidenced by Table 2 below and Table 3 on p. 134.

TABLE 2  
*When*-clauses

Type of Text	Number of Finite Verbs	Number of PerfectForms	Perfect Forms Forms per cent
Galsworthy	155	42	27.1
Heinemann	115	13	11.3
Dramas	56	7	12.5

Since the perfect forms may, but need not, be used in denoting complete priority, their frequency may easily be affected by the individual style of the author or, in a translation, by the original text. E.g., the high frequency of perfect forms in *after*-clauses found in translations of German books can be explained by the high frequency of perfect forms in German *nachdem*-clauses (100 per cent in the examined German texts).

TABLE 3  
After-clauses

Type of Text	Number of Finite Verbs	Number of Perfect Forms	Perfect Forms per cent
Galsworthy	19	12	63.2
Heinemann	11	4	36.4
Dramas	20	3	15.0
Translations from German	17	16	94.1

In concluding that the use of the perfect forms is not compulsory in denoting priority, we are in agreement with I. P. IVANOVA. According to her conclusions, in temporal clauses expressing priority, perfect forms may be substituted for by non-perfect forms without any essential change in the meaning of the sentence. She points out, however, that such substitution is impossible with continuative verbs (*Vid i vremya*, pp. 140—141). After conjunctions whose semantic content does not convey priority, perfect forms are compulsory with continuative verbs if complete priority is to be denoted. If the verb *to read* in the example adduced below were used in the non-perfect form, it would denote an action simultaneous with the action of the governing clause.

12. When you've read it, I'll tell you. — GSi 123.43

I. S. BLOKH's conclusions concerning the use of tenses in expressing priority are similar to those of I. P. IVANOVA. Only, as has already been shown, his division of English verbs according to continuativeness or non-continuativeness is less precise than hers and does not take into account the important part played by context (cf. I. S. BLOKH, *Upotrebleniye*, pp. 33—34). He has, however, been led to the conclusion that in *after*-clauses the use of perfect forms is compulsory, the only exception to this rule being verbs denoting the opening or the final moment of motion, such as *to arrive, to come, to go away, to go to bed, to leave, etc.* In BLOKH's opinion, these verbs are generally used in the non-perfect form (I. S. BLOKH, *Upotrebleniye*, p. 35).

As can be seen from the above tables, perfect forms in *after*-clauses cannot be considered compulsory. Many verbs used in the non-perfect form are other than those denoting the opening or the final moment of motion. e.g. *to part, to boil up, to hit, to die, to say, to marry, to break.* Cf. the following examples.

13. It comes to me with faint surprise that we never used our upstairs after the lodger died in it. — GF 67.23

14. After we tried it like that it went much better. — HA 229.07

On the other hand, out of 11 verbs expressing the opening or the final moment of motion in our material, only 7 are used in the non-perfect form, while 4 are used in the perfect form.<sup>7</sup>

In this connection, the results of J. NOSEK's investigation are worth mentioning. It follows from them that the perfect form is not compulsory in *after*-clauses, though it is the most frequent verbal form in them. (Cf. J. NOSEK, *Contributions*, p. 32.)

We have seen that perfect forms are not compulsory except in denoting complete priority with verbs that would remain continuative in the particular context. Such cases are, however, extremely rare because verbs that remain

continuative in every context (cf. I. P. IVANOVA, *Vid i vremya*, pp. 65—75) are, as a rule, not used in temporal clauses expressing complete priority. Consequently, in the temporal clauses discussed so far, the perfect forms are chiefly a means of emphasis. Let us conclude by adducing a few examples in illustration.

15. Trees still lived at the top, though perilously after the rock had torn most of their roots away. — GI 126.08
16. The great dockyards were maintained long after the Thallasacratia had passed from the Rhodians. — RD 98.23
17. ... it's obvious he only abstains after he's stuffed his skin so full it won't hold any more. — HA 69.23

\*

The use and function of tenses in sentences containing *since*-clauses deserves special treatment. The action of a *since*-clause may be either simultaneous with, or precede, the action of its governing clause.

*Since*-clauses expressing simultaneousness are rather rare (only 7 instances in our material). Both the temporal clause and the governing clause express actions that start at some moment in the past and continue either up to the present moment (the moment of utterance) or up to a limit set by another past action expressed by the context. Both in the temporal and in the governing clause, perfect forms (present perfect and past perfect) are used and function as means of denoting the continuance of the action up to the present moment or up to some moment in the past.

18. You've said that ever since I've known you. — HA 325.03

19. She had not, she realized, seen him alone since they had lived here, and she felt a little troubled. — HA 276.09

*Since*-clauses expressing priority are more frequent (72 instances in our material). The priority expressed by *since*-clauses is of a different kind than that expressed by temporal clauses opening with other conjunctions. The action of the *since*-clause functions as a one-sided limit to the action of the governing clause, the latter continuing up to the present moment (the moment of utterance) or up to a limit set by some past action expressed by the context. The action of the governing clause is, in most cases, expressed by the perfect form of the finite verb (cf. ex. 20). Only with the verb *to be*, mostly in combination with an adverbial element of time, the non-perfect forms are used (cf. ex. 21).

20. I've been worried to death about George ever since he told us that story. — PL 48.03

21. It was so long since he had ridden at this wild gallop. — DB 72.02

If the action of the *since*-clause functions as a limit to an action (or state) expressed by the present or the present perfect, the preterite is used after *since* (cf. ex. 22). If it functions as a limit to an action expressed by the past perfect, either the preterite or the past perfect is used (cf. instances 23 and 24). In the examined material, out of 29 *since*-clauses expressing priority in relation to a governing clause containing the past perfect, 12 clauses show the finite verb in the preterite and 17 in the past perfect.

22. Since I went out to the Boer war I've never heard of him. — GSw 40.09



23. Since he parted from Hallorsen nearly six months ago, no word had passed between them. — GM 109.35
24. Since in the coppice at Robin Hill Fleur had said "Jon!" in so strange a voice, he had known queer moments. — GSw 95.30

To sum up. In the governing clause, with all verbs but *to be*, the perfect form is compulsory and functions as what may be termed after R. W. ZANDVOORT continuative perfect (*Handbook*, pp. 59 and 61). On the other hand, in a *since*-clause expressing priority, the perfect form is not compulsory; in a *since*-clause dependent on a governing clause containing the present or the present perfect, the perfect forms are not used at all.

## CHAPTER TWO

### SIMULTANEOUSNESS

Like priority, simultaneousness may be expressed by one, some or all of the following means: the semantic content of the temporal conjunction, the grammatical form of the finite verb, the context. Some temporal conjunctions, such as *while* and *so (as) long as*, introduce exclusively temporal clauses expressing simultaneousness, whereas other conjunctions, such as *when*, *as*, *whenever*, and conjunctive phrases, such as *now (that)*, *each time*, *every time*, *the first time*, etc., may also be used to introduce temporal clauses expressing priority. Some of them (*when*, *as*) may even introduce temporal clauses expressing succession.

There is more than one type of the temporal relation denoted as simultaneousness. The frequencies of the types vary with the conjunctions introducing the temporal clauses. (i) Both actions (i.e. of the temporal and of the governing clause) are in progress within the same limited period of time, e.g.,

25. There was silence in the polished room while they waited for the bell to ring; and Soames brooded. — GSw 111.06

(ii) The action of the temporal clause takes place within a longer period of time and forms a kind of background to the short action expressed by the governing clause, e.g.,

36. Next day, while he was shaving, and she was in her bath, he cut himself slightly and said: — GSi 17.37

(iii) The longer action of the governing clause forms a kind of background to the shorter action expressed by the temporal clause, e.g.,

27. When Fleur came down he was still reading MacGown's. — GSi 103.11

Among the types just described it is type (i) that is most frequent after all temporal conjunctions. Type (ii) is relatively more frequent after the conjunctions *as* and *while* than after *when*, whereas type (iii) is relatively more frequent after *when* than after *while* and *as*.

The problem we are chiefly concerned with when discussing temporal clauses expressing simultaneousness is that of the use and function of expanded verbal forms. The following is a tabulation of the numbers and relative frequencies of expanded forms as they occur after different conjunctions in our material. Conjunctions after which no expanded forms have been found are not tabulated

TABLE 4

## Frequencies of Expanded Forms in Expressing Simultaneousness

Conjunction	Number of Finite Verbs	Number of Expanded Forms		Expanded Forms per cent	
		Temp. Cl.	Gov. Cl.	Temp. Cl.	Gov. Cl.
<i>When</i>	724	55	71	7.6	9.8
<i>While</i>	342	44	19	12.9	5.5
<i>As</i>	326	11	24	3.4	7.4

The temporal conjunctions *when* and *as* are semantically and stylistically neutral in the sense that they may introduce both temporal clauses expressing simultaneousness and those expressing priority or succession. *While*, on the other hand, is specialized in its function, being used only to introduce temporal clauses expressing simultaneousness. It seems to be used when it is desired to stress the progress, the duration of the action. While the conjunctions *as* and *when* are used in mere reference, the conjunction *while* seems to be often used if appeal is involved, i.e. if the author specially wants to draw the reader's attention to the action.<sup>8</sup> The effect is all the more marked if the verb is used in the expanded form. This interpretation is in keeping with the expanded forms occurring more frequently in *while*-clauses than in *as*-clauses or *when*-clauses. It is also in keeping with MATHESIUS' interpretation of the function of the English expanded forms (cf. V. MATHESIUS, *Rozbor*, p. 73).

Expanded forms are, as a rule, not used in temporal clauses beginning with the conjunctions *so long as*, *as long as*, *whenever* and others. Among the 57 *so long as*-clauses and *as long as*-clauses of our material, there is none with the finite verb in the expanded form. This seems to be due to the fact that the *so (as) long as*-clause is merely used to set temporal limits to the action of the governing clause. No special need seems to be felt to draw the reader's attention to the action itself.

It is obvious that after temporal conjunctions conveying simultaneousness the expanded form is not necessary for an unambiguous expression of the temporal relation. In regard to *while*-clauses assigned to (ii) in the present chapter, I. S. BLOKH, however, maintains that non-continuative verbs are, as a rule, used in them in the expanded form (*Upotrebleniye*, pp. 35–36). But in our opinion, even verbs that are non-continuative in most contexts, such as the verb *to return*, can express an action in its progress and not a completed event when used in a *while*-clause. Cf. the following example.

27. "I respected old Forsythe," he said to his son, while they returned on foot from the churchyard... — GSw 280.25

I. P. IVANOVA also quotes several instances of *while*-clauses with non-continuative verbs used in the simple form. Although she finds a slight difference in the way the expanded and the simple form of a non-continuative verb in a *while*-clause present the action in its progress, she regards the expanded and the simple form as interchangeable without any essential change in meaning (*Vid i vremya*, p. 104).

According to I. S. BLOKH, continuative verbs are, on the other hand, used

in the simple form in the examined type of clause, the only exceptions being the verbs *to speak* and *to wait*. He maintains that these verbs are mostly used in the expanded form (*Upotrebleniye*, p. 35). In our material, however, there are several (ii)-type *while*-clauses with the verbs *to speak* and *to wait* in the simple form (see ex. 28), whereas other continuative verbs, e.g. *to stand* and *to hope*, are used in the expanded form (see ex. 29 and 30).<sup>9</sup>

28. ... and while the impassive black servants waited they put on the velveteen capes and adjusted their masks... — DB 168.30

29. At the end of prayers while we were still standing in rows, the music changed and became marching music. — GF 33.22

30. Then while I was still accepting the warmth with good faith and hoping the pain would go away, the door opened and the tall parson bowed himself through. — GF 68.15

According to the results of БЛЮКН's investigation, in (i)-type *while*-clauses all verbs are, as a rule, used in the simple form. If, exceptionally, an expanded form occurs in this type of temporal clause, it is to stress that the action of the governing clause takes place only within the temporal limits set by the *while*-clause (*Upotrebleniye*, p. 36). As for the frequency of expanded forms in *while*-clauses of type (i) and of type (ii), our material yields the following results: Out of 271 *while*-clauses of type (i) 25, i.e. 9.2 per cent, use the finite verb in the expanded form, and out of 62 *while*-clauses of type (ii) 19, i.e. 30.6 per cent, use the finite verb in the expanded form.

Let us compare I. S. БЛЮКН's conclusions with the results yielded by our material as far as *as*-clauses and *when*-clauses are concerned. According to I. S. БЛЮКН, in *as*-clauses and *when*-clauses of type (i) all verbs are used in the simple form (*Upotrebleniye*, p. 36). As for *as*-clauses, our results are in agreement with his conclusion. As for *when*-clauses of type (i), however, our material shows a number of finite verbs used in the expanded form. The expanded form is also used with continuative verbs, that is to say in cases where no need is felt to denote the temporal relation unambiguously (see ex. 31 and 32). I. S. БЛЮКН maintains that in *as*-clauses and *when*-clauses of type (ii) the expanded forms are used with non-continuative verbs if the context by itself cannot indicate the temporal relation unambiguously (*Upotrebleniye*, pp. 36—37). Our material shows that in temporal clauses of this type not only non-continuative but also continuative verbs, e.g. *to talk*, *to sit*, *to serve*, *to pose*, *to ride*, occur in the expanded form (cf. ex. 33 and 34).

31. He had talked to me in the break when the master on duty was not looking. — GF 58.29

32. ... but when I was talking to Curly today I had to think of Bunyan's hymn: — HA 77.18

33. When we were sitting at the marble-topped table my plans became to come apart. — GF 85.26

34. ... and show us the scar he got when he was serving on the north-west frontier. — GF 228.26

If the context by itself cannot denote whether the action of the temporal clause is to be considered prior to, or simultaneous with, the action of the governing clause, the use of the expanded form may be necessary for an unambiguous indication of the temporal relation, e.g.,

35. She passed Dinny and Adrian as they were coming in. — GM 151.02

On the other hand, there is a number of sentences in our material that permit of the temporal relation between the action of the temporal clause and that of the governing clause to be interpreted in two different ways. The verbs occurring in these temporal clauses are such as are termed by I. P. IVANOVA verbs of double aspectual character, i.e. verbs in which both the continuative and the non-continuative aspectual character are potentially present (*Vid i vremya*, p. 104). In most contexts these verbs appear either as continuative or non-continuative. Sometimes, however, even the context does not show in which aspectual character the verb is used, and consequently the temporal relation may be interpreted in two different ways, viz. either as priority or as simultaneousness. Cf. the following examples.

36. The Captain bored in, face to face so that his grip on the rock tightened as he remembered. — GF 102.01

37. He flushed and joined his hands together as he looked at his brother. — DB 79.03

38. I ceased to listen when the verger went on. — GF 73.31

In such cases, of course, the conjunctions used are those of neutral semantic content in regard to priority or simultaneousness. In our material, there are 21 *when*-clauses and 49 *as*-clauses expressing an action that may be interpreted either as simultaneous with, or prior to, the action of the governing clause. All these instances show that an unambiguous indication of the temporal relation is not always considered necessary.

I. S. BLOKH calls attention to two groups of *when*-clauses in which the expanded form of the finite verb is, as a rule, used: (i) when the temporal clause and the governing clause express two actions that usually take place at the same time; (ii) when the temporal clause specifies an adverbial adjunct of time occurring in the governing clause (*Upotrebleniye*, p. 37). The following examples will successively illustrate types (i) and (ii).

39. Then he hung downwards, sagging as he always did when he was thinking seriously as if the very weight of the thought itself bore down upon him. — DB 30.02

40. The policy alluded to by the Member for Mid-Bucks under the label of Foggartism, because it emanates from the veteran Sir James Foggart, has a certain speciousness in these unsettled times, when everyone is looking for quack specifics. — GSi 107.20

Our material yields some *when*-clauses that belong to the two types pointed out by BLOKH, but use the finite verb in the simple form. The fact is, however, that the number of such cases is rather low when compared with the number of those that are in agreement with BLOKH's conclusion. It may therefore be safely stated that there is a marked tendency to use expanded forms in the two described types of temporal clause.

Summarizing the comparison of BLOKH's and our conclusions, we can say the following. According to BLOKH, the expanded forms display fairly regular dependence on the aspectual character of the verb. Our material does not testify to such regularity. The use of the expanded forms does not seem to be in connection with the aspectual character of the verb, but seems to be due to other causes.

J. NOSEK holds that the expanded verbal forms in subordinate clauses have the same verbal functions that they have in the principal clauses (cf.

*Contributions*, p. 131). According to V. MATHESIUS, the expanded form "is (from the purely synchronic point of view) primarily a means of expressing the actuality of the implied action or process..." (*Problems*, p. 102). According to him, the basic meaning of this form has several shades. It denotes particular duration of the action, its parallel progress with another action and may even convey emphasis (*Rozbor*, p. 73). As in other syntactic conditions, in temporal clauses expressing simultaneousness, the expanded forms are first of all used to actualize the action. When necessary, they may at the same time function as a means of denoting simultaneousness of the action of the temporal clause with the action of the governing clause.

The actualizing function of the expanded forms is also evident from the results of an investigation undertaken by F. STANZEL (*Erzählsituation*). His examination of three novels by Anthony Trollope has shown the dependence of the narrative situation (*Erzählsituation*) on the frequency of the expanded verbal forms. The frequency of expanded forms is higher if the story is told in detail, and lower in passages of brief accounts of events extending over longer periods of time. F. STANZEL defines the difference in function as displayed by the simple and the expanded forms as follows: " 'He wrote' occurring in an informative account denotes merely the event or the result of an action, while 'he was writing' occurring in a scenic representation shifts the process as an action before the eyes of the reader" (*Erzählsituation*, p. 228). The basic function of the expanded forms is similarly interpreted by G. DIETRICH, who terms it 'das Erleben' (*Erweiterte Form*, pp. 36, 48—49 and 125).

## CHAPTER THREE

### SUCCESSION

In the present chapter we shall focus our attention on two important problems. Besides discussing the function of the perfect forms in temporal clauses expressing succession, we shall also pay attention to a problem analogous to that dealt with in Chapter One, viz. the function of the perfect forms in expressing priority of the action of the governing clause in relation to the action of the temporal clause.

Besides temporal conjunctions specialized in expressing succession, such as *before*, *until* and *by the time*, even the conjunction *when* may, though not very frequently, open temporal clauses expressing succession. For the purposes of our paper we shall not distinguish between the conjunctions *till* and *until* as both of them express the same meaning and are syntactically fairly synonymous (cf. J. NOSEK, *Contributions*, p. 34).

Let us first examine the function of the perfect forms in governing clauses expressing actions prior to the actions of the respective temporal clauses. Table 5 adduced below gives numbers and frequencies of perfect forms as they occur in the governing clauses of our material. The governing clauses have been recorded under the respective subordinating conjunctions.

The temporal relation between the governing and the temporal clause introduced by the conjunction *before* or *until* remains the same regardless of whether the finite verb of the governing clause is used in the perfect or the non-perfect form. Both with continuative and with non-continuative verbs the perfect

TABLE 5

Frequencies of Perfect Forms in Expressing Succession (Governing Clauses)

Conjunction	Number of Finite Verbs	Number of Perfect Forms	Perfect Forms per cent
<i>Before</i>	316	42	13.3
<i>Until</i>	477	21	4.4
<i>By the time</i>	39	13	33.3
<i>When</i>	31	28	90.3

forms seem to be used to emphasize the temporal relation between the two actions.

As to the proportion of perfect forms, it is smaller in clauses governing *until*-clauses than in clauses governing *before*-clauses. This is quite understandable if we realize that the perfect forms are mostly (not always, of course) used to stress the fact that the action of the governing clause is completed before the action of the temporal clause sets in or is finished. The *until*-clauses express actions that put an end to, or interrupt, the progress of the main actions. They usually stand either after a clause employing a positive continuative verb to express the duration of an action or a state, or after a clause employing a negative non-continuative verb to express the impossibility of the realization of an action until the action of the *until*-clause begins. Let us adduce two examples in illustration.

41. Michael travelled till the bus put him down under Big Ben and it was nearly twelve. — GSi 76.19

42. I shan't say a word about to-night, of course, until you let me. — GSw 232.02

The action of the governing clause is, as a rule, not completed before the beginning of the action of the *until*-clause; perfect forms cannot therefore be used to stress the final moment of the action of the governing clause.

On the other hand, governing clauses on which *before*-clauses are dependent often express actions that are completed before the beginning or the end of the action of the *before*-clause; the proportion of perfect forms is therefore higher in them than in governing clauses on which *until*-clauses are dependent.

43. He was up, had grabbed her before the fat woman had time to turn again. — GI 210.18

Two different temporal relations are denoted by the perfect and the non-perfect forms in governing clauses on which *by the time*-clauses are dependent. (i) During the action of the temporal clause, there already exists a state which is to be looked upon as a result of the action expressed by the governing clause and, at least in our material, is always conveyed by the perfect form.

(ii) When the action of the temporal clause begins or is completed, the action or state expressed by the governing clause and conveyed by the non-perfect form of a continuative verb has been in progress for some time and continues to exist simultaneously with, or sometimes even outlasts, the action of the temporal clause. Similarly to partial priority (discussed in Chapter One), which is a combination of priority and simultaneousness, the described temporal relation is in fact a combination of succession and simultaneousness. Analo-

gously to the sphere of priority, the described two types of temporal relation may be accordingly termed complete succession and partial succession. The following is a graphical representation of the two types of temporal relation. The action of the governing clause is indicated with a solid line, that of the *by the time*-clause with a thin broken line.

- (i) \_\_\_\_\_
- (ii) \_\_\_\_\_

Let us adduce two examples in illustration of the two types of temporal relation described above.

44. By the time he came back to the tavern we had sorted the baggage and prepared such food as we had to carry up the acropolis. — DR 129.19

45. By the time you wake and read this I shall be swimming. — DR 55.13

As can be seen from the above table the highest proportion of perfect forms is shown by the governing clauses on which *when*-clauses are dependent. Here the use of the perfect forms is often necessary if the temporal relation is to be understood as succession. Cf. the following example.

46. Fleur had returned when he got home, and Michael realized suddenly that in calling on June Forsyte he had done a thing inexplicable, save in relation to her and Jon! — GSw 83.06

Only exceptionally, if the temporal relation is sufficiently denoted by the context, may the finite verb be used in the non-perfect form, e.g.,

47. He had just time to realize that the age-long nightmares of falling and death were past and that the morning was come, when he heard the sound again. — GL 182.04

We may conclude that it is not necessary to use perfect forms in clauses governing *before*-clauses and those governing *until*-clauses; perfect forms, however, are compulsory in clauses governing *by the time*-clauses if complete succession is to be denoted, as well as in clauses governing *when*-clauses if the temporal relation is not clear from the context.

Let us now examine temporal clauses expressing succession, and attempt to ascertain whether the perfect forms are compulsory and, in any case, what function they perform.

The following table gives the numbers and the frequencies of perfect forms in temporal clauses expressing succession.

TABLE 6

Frequencies of Perfect Forms in Expressing Succession (Temporal Clauses)

Conjunction	Numbers of Finite Verbs	Numbers of Perfect Forms	Percent Forms Forms per cent
<i>Before</i>	317	23	7.3
<i>Until</i>	472	28	5.9
<i>By the time</i>	39	9	23.1
<i>When</i>	31	0	0.0

The function of the perfect forms in *before*-clauses is well demonstrated by a change of an affirmative sentence containing a *before*-clause into a negative sentence containing a *when*-clause, e.g.,

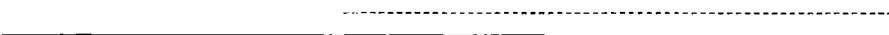
48. I met George before he had heard the news.

When I met George he had not yet heard the news.<sup>10</sup>

It follows that in the *before*-clause the perfect form functions as what may be termed after R. W. ZANDVOORT 'continuative perfect' (*Handbook*, pp. 59 and 61) or after V. MATHESIUS 'inclusive tense' (*Rozbor*, p. 70). Under the circumstances, it denotes a (non-realized) action or state, beginning in one temporal sphere (in the past) and continuing into another, the limits of which are set by the governing clause. The function of the perfect forms in *until*-clauses and *by the time*-clauses could be explained in a similar way.

As can be seen from the above table, in the three types of temporal clause, introduced by *before*, *until* and *by the time*, the perfect forms are used only with a small proportion of verbs. Although, in general, the use of perfect forms does not seem to be compulsory in these temporal clauses, the question still remains open whether it is not necessary to employ them at least under certain conditions. To ascertain this we have to distinguish between two different types of temporal relation expressed in sentences containing *before*-clauses, *until*-clauses or *by the time*-clauses. (i) The action of the governing clause is finished before the beginning of the action expressed by the temporal clause. (ii) The action of the governing clause is finished only before the end of the action expressed by the temporal clause. The following is a graphical representation of the two types of temporal relation under discussion. The action of the governing clause is indicated with a solid line and that of the temporal clause with a thin broken line.

(i) 

(ii) 

The first of the two examples adduced below illustrates the temporal relation of type (i), the other one that of type (ii).

49. He sat by me in Art and it was an understood thing that I would do his work quickly before I did my own. — GF 219.31

50. He forced his feet to move until they had carried him out on to the neck of land. — GL 100.27

Naturally, there is practically no difference between these two types of temporal relation if the action in the temporal clause is rendered by a verb that is non-continuative in the particular context. Thus it is only with continuative verbs that these two types of temporal relation may occur. As can be seen from the two above examples, the temporal relation referred to under (i) is expressed by a non-perfect form, while the temporal relation referred to under (ii) is expressed by a perfect one.

While with continuative verbs perfect forms may be necessary if a particular type of temporal relation is to be denoted, with non-continuative verbs they are



used merely to put emphasis on the final moment of the action expressed by the temporal clause.

No perfect forms are used in *when*-clauses expressing succession. This is understandable if the following is taken into account: the semantic content of the conjunction *when* does not denote any specific temporal relation and under the circumstances (i.e. in *when*-clauses expressing succession) the use of the perfect form would lead to the interpretation of the implied temporal relation as priority.

## CONCLUSIONS

A number of scholars are agreed that the basic meaning of the perfect form is priority, the action expressed preceding some point of time or another action.<sup>11</sup> According to them, priority may also be denoted by a non-perfect form; it is, however, not implied in the form as such, but conveyed by the context. "Thus the opposition between perfect and non-perfect forms is shown to be that between a marked and an unmarked item, the perfect forms being marked both in meaning (denoting precedence) and in morphological characteristics (have + second participle), and the non-perfect forms unmarked both in meaning (precedence not implied) and in morphological characteristics (purely negative characteristics: the collocation have + second participle not used)" (B. A. ILYISH, *Modern English*, p. 99). According to J. NOSEK, "perfectness has an inclusive character to indicate the ties between the past and the present, and is rather apart from the distinctions of simultaneity : anteriority : posteriority." (See his *Contributions*, p. 31.)

As the preceding discussion of temporal clauses has shown, the perfect forms are not necessarily used to denote priority if it is conveyed by the context (the term context including the semantic content of the conjunction and the aspectual character of the finite verb). Cases in which the perfect form is called upon to denote priority unambiguously are rather rare, and a number of temporal clauses permitting of the implied temporal relation to be interpreted in two different ways show that an unambiguous indication of priority is not always considered necessary. If, however, the perfect forms are used in expressing priority, they primarily perform another function — that of drawing the reader's attention to the temporal relation between the two actions concerned.

If two conjunctions therefore form a semantically related pair, but one of the two predominantly serves reference and the other, in addition to reference, also expression and appeal (cf. note<sup>8</sup>), the frequency of perfect forms will be higher after the latter. (Cf. such pairs as *when* and *after*, *as soon as* and *no sooner...than*.)

In the sphere of simultaneousness the situation is similar. The expanded forms are primarily used to actualize the temporal relation, and only if necessary function as a means of denoting simultaneousness of the actions concerned. If two conjunctions denoting the same temporal relation come into comparison, the frequency of the expanded forms will be higher after the one of stronger or more concrete semantic content (cf. *as* and *while*).

Generally speaking, in indicating the temporal relations between temporal and governing clauses, the use of perfect or expanded forms cannot be consid-

ered compulsory. These relations are expressed by the context rather than by the verbal form itself, and "the verbal tenses are carriers of those grammatical categories that they have also in the head clauses." (J. NOSEK, *Contributions*, p. 131)

V. MATHESIUS and J. VACHEK have shown that the tense system of the English verb is more delicate and precise than the tense system of the Czech verb (cf. V. MATHESIUS, *Rozbor*, pp. 69–75 and J. VACHEK, *Characterology*, pp. 77–79). While denoting the absolute temporal relations, i.e. those between the time of the action and the time of utterance, in a more precise way than the Czech verb, the English verb expresses the relative temporal relations, i.e. those between two actions, less precisely than its Czech counterpart. This is due to the different positions of aspect in the structures of the two languages. Whereas in Czech, "each verb is, through its very formal character, assigned to a special aspect class" (V. MATHESIUS, *Problems*, p. 101), and consequently is, by its very form, capable of expressing priority or simultaneousness, most English verbs may pass from one aspectual sphere into another without any formal change, and consequently cannot, as such, express priority or simultaneousness.

V. MATHESIUS and J. VACHEK have characterized the English verb as neutral in respect of perfectiveness and imperfectiveness, transitiveness and intransitiveness, positiveness and negativeness. They have pointed out that the English verb assumes one of these qualities only after its incorporation in a context. (Cf. V. MATHESIUS, *Problems*, p. 103, J. VACHEK, *Characterology*, pp. 88–89 and J. VACHEK, *Zápor*, p. 70.) J. FIRBAS has linked up this characteristic of the English verb with its comparatively low communicative value.<sup>12</sup> In view of the conclusions arrived at in the present paper, the statement on the neutral character of the English verb is valid also in regard to the indication of relative temporal relations, that is to say, the English verb is to a high degree neutral also in respect of priority and simultaneousness and frequently expresses these temporal relations only when incorporated in a particular context.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See his paper *Upotrebleniye*.

<sup>2</sup> The paper is based on the present author's *Tenses*.

<sup>3</sup> DB — LAWRENCE DURRELL, *Balthazar* (Faber and Faber, London 1963);

DR — LAWRENCE DURRELL, *Reflections on a Marine Venus* (Faber and Faber, London 1960);

GF — WILLIAM GOLDING, *Free Fall* (Faber and Faber, London 1961);

GI — WILLIAM GOLDING, *The Inheritors* (Faber and Faber, London 1961);

GL — WILLIAM GOLDING, *Lord of the Flies* (Penguin Books, London 1961);

GM — JOHN GALSWORTHY, *Maid in Waiting* (William Heinemann, London 1931);

GSI — JOHN GALSWORTHY, *The Silver Spoon* (Collins, London, the year of publication not stated);

GSw — JOHN GALSWORTHY, *Swan Song* (Collins, London, the year of publication not stated);

HA — MARGOT HEINEMANN, *The Adventurers* (Seven Seas Publishers, Berlin 1962);

OE — JOHN OSBORNE, *The Entertainer* (Faber and Faber, London 1961);

OL — JOHN OSBORNE, *Look Back in Anger* (Faber and Faber, London 1960);

PB — J. B. PRIESTLEY, *The Plays of J. B. Priestley*, Volume II (William Heinemann, London 1949): *Bees on the Boat Deck*;

PL — J. B. PRIESTLEY, *The Plays of J. B. Priestley*, Volume II (William Heinemann, London 1949): *Laburnum Grove*;

- WI — ARNOLD WESKER, *I'm Talking about Jerusalem* (Penguin Books, London 1960). The instances from the excerpted material quoted in the present paper will be followed by an abbreviation of the respective book, and by an indication of the page and line on which the quoted instance begins.
- <sup>4</sup> JACOB WASSERMANN, *The Goose Man*, the name of the translator not stated (George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London 1934); F. C. WEISKOPF, *The Firing Squad*, translated by James A. Galston (Seven Seas Publishers, Berlin 1961).
- <sup>5</sup> JAKOB WASSERMANN, *Das Gänsemännchen* (S. Fischer Verlag, Berlin 1915); F. C. WEISKOPF, *Lissy — Himmelfahrtskommando* (Dietz Verlag, Berlin 1960); JOHN GALSWORTHY, *Der silberne Löffel*, translated by Leon Schalit (Paul Zsolnay Verlag, Berlin—Wien—Leipzig 1928); JOHN GALSWORTHY, *Ein Mädchen wartet*, translated by Leon Schalit (Paul Zsolnay Verlag, Berlin—Wien—Leipzig 1931); JOHN GALSWORTHY, *Schwanengesang*, translated by Leon Schalit (Paul Zsolnay Verlag, Berlin—Wien—Leipzig 1928).
- <sup>6</sup> J. NOSEK's examination of the use of the past perfect has also shown that in *no sooner*-clauses it is more frequently used than the preterite (cf. his *Plusquamperfektum*, p. 202).
- <sup>7</sup> The non-perfect form is used with the verbs *to come aboard*, *to go abroad*, *to go back*, *to go to college*, *to go down*, *to go to the West Indies*, *to leave*; the perfect form with the verbs *to arrive*, *to go to bed*, *to go out*, *to leave*. J. KUČEROVÁ has found 4 verbs denoting the opening or the final moment of motion in *The Forsyte Saga* by JOHN GALSWORTHY and in *Collected Stories* by CATHERINE MANSFIELD. Two of them (*to come* and *to go to Eton*) are used in the non-perfect form, the other two (*to come* and *to leave*) in the perfect form (see J. KUČEROVÁ, *Tenses*, pp. 75—77). V. DOKOUPILOVÁ has found 3 verbs denoting the opening or the final moment of motion in the *after*-clauses taken from 12 plays by G. B. SHAW. All of them (*to arrive*, *to go to bed*, *to leave*) are used in the non-perfect form (V. Dokoupilová, *Tenses*, pp. 110—113).
- <sup>8</sup> Cf. the three functions of language, reference, expression and appeal, as discussed by K. BÜHLER in *Sprachtheorie*, pp. 28—29.
- <sup>9</sup> J. KUČEROVÁ also quotes several (ii)-type *while*-clauses using continuative verbs in the expanded form (*to eat*, *to heat*, *to laugh*, *to play*, *to shave*, *to smile*, *to talk*). Cf. J. KUČEROVÁ, *Tenses*, pp. 100—119.
- <sup>10</sup> The example is quoted after A. S. HORNBY (*Guide*, p. 103), who has suggested the above transformation.
- <sup>11</sup> Cf., e.g., A. I. SMIRNITSKIY, *Perfekt*, pp. 23 and 27, and B. ILYISH, *Modern English*, p. 99.
- <sup>12</sup> See his *Communicative Function*, p. 91. Cf. also his *Communicative Value*.

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## SOUHRN

### FUNKCE ČASŮ POUŽÍVANÝCH V NOVOANGLICKÝCH VĚTÁCH ČASOVÝCH

Studie vychází z podnětného článku I. S. Bliocha *Ob upotreblenii glagol'nych vremennykh form v pridatočnykh predloženijach vremeni v anglijskomazyke* (Inostrannyje jazyki v škole 1954, str. 32—38), který upozornil na důležitý, ale dosud málo povšimnutý problém anglické syntaxe — používání časů ve vedlejších větách časových. Blioch se pokoušel najít závislost mezi užíváním časů v časových větách a lexikálním významem slovesa (jeho kontinuativností nebo nekontinuativností). Došel k závěru, že taková

závislost skutečně existuje, a uvedl jednotlivé typy časových vět, v nichž je užívání perfektních nebo průběhových tvarů povinné.

Problémem užívání a funkce časů v anglických větách časových se zabývají také tři diplomové práce, předložené na katedře anglistiky brněnské university. Jejich cílem bylo ověřit, popř. korigovat a doplnit Blichovy výsledky, a to na základě zkoumání nového jazykového materiálu. Resumovaná studie je založena na dalším jazykovém materiálu a chce být současně shrnutím výsledků dosavadního zkoumání.

Zatímco Blichovo zkoumání časových vět předpokládá, že každé anglické sloveso patří svým lexikálním významem k jedné z dvou jasně oddělených skupin sloves kontinuativních a nekontinuativních, vychází autorka z Mathesius a Vachkovy charakteristiky anglického slovesa, podle níž je jeho kontinuativnost nebo nekontinuativnost dotvářena teprve kontextem.

V jednotlivých kapitolách pojednává práce o užívání a funkci slovesných časů při vyjadřování předčasnosti, současnosti a následnosti děje vedlejší věty časové vzhledem k ději věty řídicí. U dějů věty časové, které předcházejí ději věty řídicí, rozlišuje autorka částečnou a úplnou předčasnost. Při částečné předčasnosti, tj. začal-li děj vedlejší věty časové dříve než děj věty řídicí, ale pokračuje souběžně s ním, se neuzívá perfektních tvarů. Při úplné předčasnosti, tj. skončil-li děj věty časové před začátkem děje věty řídicí, se slovesa vyskytují jak v perfektních, tak i v neperfektních tvarech. Je však zřejmé, že užívání perfektních tvarů není povinné. Případy, ve kterých kontext není schopen vyjádřit předčasnost jednoznačně, jsou poměrně vzácné a ani v mnohých z nich není užito určitého slovesa v perfektním tvaru, což svědčí o tom, že nejednoznačná interpretace časového vztahu není vždy považována za nežádoucí. Značné rozdíly ve frekvenci perfektních tvarů u jednotlivých autorů a v překladech z němčiny ukazují, že užívání perfektních tvarů může být ovlivněno individuálním stylem autora a v překladech originálem. To vše rovněž svědčí o tom, že užívání perfektních tvarů při vyjadřování předčasnosti není povinné.

Tvoří-li dvě časové spojky sémanticky příbuznou dvojici, jako např. *when* a *after* nebo *as soon as* a *no sooner... than*, je frekvence perfektních tvarů vyšší po spojce, která má výraznější sémantickou náplň. Této spojky autor většinou používá, chce-li čtenáře na časový vztah zdůrazně upozornit. V takových případech můžeme často pozorovat hromadění prostředků: kromě časové spojky, která zdůrazňuje předčasnost svou sémantickou náplní, užívá se perfektního tvaru a někdy je časový vztah zdůrazněn i lexikálním významem slovesa. Perfektní tvary tedy primárně vykonávají v časových větách funkci stylistickou, emotivní.

Ve vedlejších větách časových vyjadřujících děj současný s dějem věty řídicí je situace obdobná. Zatímco Blich došel k závěru, že užívání průběhových tvarů závisí na lexikálním významu slovesa, autorka ve zkoumání jazykovém materiálu takovou pravidelnost nezjistila. Podobně jako v časových větách vyjadřujících předčasnost jeví se i v oblasti současnosti tendence užívat příznakových (průběhových) slovesných tvarů častěji po časových spojkách s výraznější sémantickou náplní než po spojkách sémanticky neutrálních. Je zřejmé, že při vyjadřování současnosti není užiti průběhových tvarů povinné. Ve shodě s Mathesiem dochází autorka k závěru, že primární funkcí těchto tvarů je aktualizace.

Perfektní tvary ve větách časových vyjadřujících následnost označují skutečnost, že děj věty časové se neuskutečnil do doby, ve které probíhá děj věty řídicí. Jak ukazují poměrně nízká frekvence perfektních tvarů v časových větách tohoto typu, není jejich užiti povinné. Ve velké většině případů nemá užiti perfektního tvaru vliv na interpretaci časového vztahu. Pouze u kontinuativních sloves, nevyjadřuje-li kontext, zda děj věty řídicí trval do začátku nebo až do konce děje věty časové, užívá se perfektního tvaru k označení toho, že hranici děje věty řídicí je konec děje věty časové, a neperfektního tvaru k vyjádření toho, že touto hranicí je začátek děje věty časové.

Z předcházejících pozorování plyne, že časový vztah mezi dějem věty časové a dějem věty řídicí je v angličtině většinou vyjadřován kontextem a nikoliv pouze slovesným tvarem. V. Mathesius a J. Vachek charakterizovali anglické sloveso jako neutrální, pokud jde o dokonavost a nedokonavost, přechodnost a nepřechodnost, pozitivnost a negativnost. Anglické sloveso nabyvá jedné z těchto vlastností, teprve je-li včleněno do kontextu. Na základě zkoumání užívání časů v časových větách dochází autorka k závěru, že tuto charakteristiku lze rozšířit i na vyjadřování relativních časových vztahů v angličtině. Také po této stránce se totiž anglické sloveso jeví do značné míry neutrální a vyjadřuje určitý časový vztah často teprve za spolupráce kontextu.