Chapter 4
Verbal Inflections
(Auxiliaries and Bound Morphemes)

Functional Domain

• Tense
• Aspect
• Modality
• Negation

Chinese

Form?

English

Form?
**Tense**

1. **Def:** The relation between Event time and Speech time 事件發生的時間點
   
   past  present  future
   
   \[<---------*---------|---------*--------->\]
   
   Speech Time

- **Past:** ET preceded ST
- **Future:** ET follows ST
- **Present:** ET is right at ST
- **Habitual:** always, timeless, unspecified
**Past Tense: Verbal morphology**

- Regular Past: –ed
- Irregular

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<th>base form</th>
<th>past tense form</th>
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Future Tense

- Future:
  a) Modal Aux ‘will’
  b) Complex Aux ‘be going to’ (be gonna)
  c) Progressive Aux ‘be…Ving’

  e.g. I will leave soon.
  
  I am going to leave soon.
  
  I am leaving soon.
Functional Distinctions - Future Marking

1. Formality
   - Most formal: ‘will’

2. Time distance:
   - Most distant future: ‘will leave’
   - Most immediate: ‘am leaving’

3. Degree of certainty
   - Higher certainty: will leave / am leaving
Present: Active vs. Stative

- **Active V**
  - **Past**: He chopped wood.
  - **Present-progressive**: He is chopping wood.
  - **Habitual**: He (always) chops wood.

- **Stative V** (state)
  - **Past**: He knew the answer.
  - **Present**: He knows the answer.
  - **Habitual**: He (always) knows the answer.
  - **Present-progressive**: He is knowing the answer.
Non-active vs. Active: Agent-control

‘See’
- I see her.
- *I am seeing her now.
- I am seeing her first thing tomorrow.
- He’s seeing the delegation right now. (visit? meet?)

‘Be’
- Joe is tall.
- *Joe is being tall.
- Joe is being obnoxious. (act as?)

‘Have’
- *Mary was having long legs.
- Mary was having dinner at six. (eat)
- Mary was having her first baby at six. (give birth)
- Mary was having a good time in Hawaii. (enjoy)
Active vs. Stative Vs in Mandarin

- 他在 打球/吃飯/睡覺
- 他 打球/吃飯/睡覺 了/著/過
- 他在 知道/愛/快樂
- 他在 瞭解/追求/高興
- 他 知道/愛/快樂 了/著/過
- 他 瞭解/追求/高興 了/著/過
Habitual

- The simple-unmarked-form of the English verb is often labeled, mistakenly, the ‘present’. This is the verb-form that requires third-person-singular subject agreement.

- He/She/It falls. They fall.

- Only with stative verbs, ones that cannot take the progressive aspect, does the unmarked form double up as both the habitual and present.
Week 7 questions

- Are there the 4 tense distinctions in Mandarin?
- How are they encoded (marked) in Mandarin syntax?
Aspect

Def.: The internal temporal property of an event

Involves:
- Temporal properties of the event
- Pragmatic notion of relevance
- Speaker’s perspectives
Progressive

- Marks three semantic properties:
  - Unboundedness (ongoing vs. terminated)
  - Proximity (close vs. remote perspective)
  - Simultaneity (simultaneous vs. sequential)

She was cutting the log. (ongoing and repeated)
When I came in, all students were smiling. (ongoing and simultaneous)
When I came in, a student smiled at me. (bounded past)
In Discourse:

- *Within the mouth of draw, he drew reins again. With his first glance he recognized the body or what it was, but only when he was quite sure that he was alone did he approach it. He circled it as warily as a wolf, studying it from all angles, and…*

- Past /perfective: Mainline, foregrounded sequence of events
- Progressive: backgrounded, dependent clause
The habitual progressive (no specific time reference)

- She is watching TV right now. Whenever I came in, she was watching TV.

- Q: What does he do for a living? Ans.: He works at a gas station.

- Q: What’s he doing these days? Ans.: He’s working at a gas station.
Other Progressive Aspects

1. Continuous-Repetitive Progressive:
   - Compare:  
     He \textit{was} working. 
     \textbf{He kept} working.
   - ‘Keep’:
     \begin{itemize}
     \item The activity was going on for some time before: \textit{continuous} 
       \textit{The baby kept sucking his thumb (on and on)}
     \item Repetition or habitual action: \textit{repetitive} 
       \textit{He kept spraining his ankle (again and again)}.
     \end{itemize}
- ‘Continue’:
  - **Progressive V+V-ing**
    
    *He continued playing basketball.* (=‘keep’)
    
    He continued playing basketball for 3 hours.
  
  - **Modality (V+ to V 時間上不連貫、可分割)**
    
    *He continued to play basketball.*
    
    After a year of rest, he continued to play basketball.

- ‘Go on’:
  
  - He went on singing. (He was singing before)
  
  - He went on to sing. (after doing something else)
2. Inceptive-Progressive Aspect

‘start’ ‘begin’ ‘resume’

- He started singing, when I came in.
  He started to sing after dinner.

- He started kicking the ball, then stopped.
  (Kicking several times before stopping)
  He started to kick the ball, then stopped.
  (wanted/ready to, but didn’t)
3. Terminative-Progressive Aspect
‘stop’ ‘finish’ ‘quit’

- 結束單一的動作或事件：
  He stopped reading his book and listened.
  (termination of an on-going action)

- 結束多年的習慣：
  He stopped reading comic books.
  (termination of repetitive/habitual action)

- What about ‘finish’?
  He finished reading comic books.
Habitual Past

- She used to play guitar. (現在不彈了)
- She would play guitar when feeling down. (現在仍有可能彈)

Semantic difference:
- She used to do it, but no longer does.
- She would, and still may do it.
The Perfect Aspect

Involves a cluster of features:

- Anteriority
- Perfectivity
- Counter sequentiality
- Relevance
1. Anteriority

Prior to the temporal reference:

- Present Perfect:
  \[ \text{event time} \quad \text{reference time} \quad \text{speech time} \]

- Past Perfect:
  \[ \text{event time} \quad \text{reference time} \quad \text{speech time} \]

- Future Perfect:
  \[ \text{speech time} \quad \text{event time} \quad \text{reference time} \]
2. Perfectivity

Event has been terminated, completed or accomplished before the Reference Time.

A: Why don’t you listen carefully?
B: I’ve already read the chapter.
3. Counter-Sequentiability

A event out of temporal sequence in the narrative

- **Sequential (perfective):**
  He came back into the room (A), looked around (B), spotted the buffet (C) and went to get a sandwich (D).

- **Perfect:** He came back into the room and looked around. He had spotted the buffet earlier (A), so he went to get a sandwich.

- **Event sequence:** ABCD → BCAD
4. Relevance

Relevant to the reference time

- Difference between event and states:
- Temporal Gap between event and reference time:

She has read this book.
She has been a club member.
She has been reading this book. (she is still reading.)
Immediate Aspect

- Remote (written)
  - I gave him his instructions and I told him to go ahead.

- Immediate (oral narrative)
  - I give him his instructions and I tell him I say go ahead and do it. And he says he will…

--> literary usage (short stories/novels)
Homework 7

- What is LE doing in Chinese? What is the syntactic and semantic functions of LE?

- Bonus: What is the difference between LE and GUO?
我去年去日本  past-tense
我去年去了日本  perfective
我去年去了日本了  perfect
我去年去過日本  experiential
( or 小時候)
Data

- 去年六月畢了業
- 去年八月畢過業
Data

- 下雨了
- 下了雨
- 下過雨
- 下了雨了
- 下過雨了