



# **TENSE & ASPECT SYSTEMS**

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Foreign Language Acquisition & Communication I

Class 6 Nov 14, 2024

# RESEARCH ISSUES

- How do L2 learners learn/acquire tense & aspect systems of the target language?
- Does learners' L1 influence a learning/acquisition process of L2 tense & aspect systems?

## Time

Human beings perceive  
time and mark it  
linguistically

## Aspect

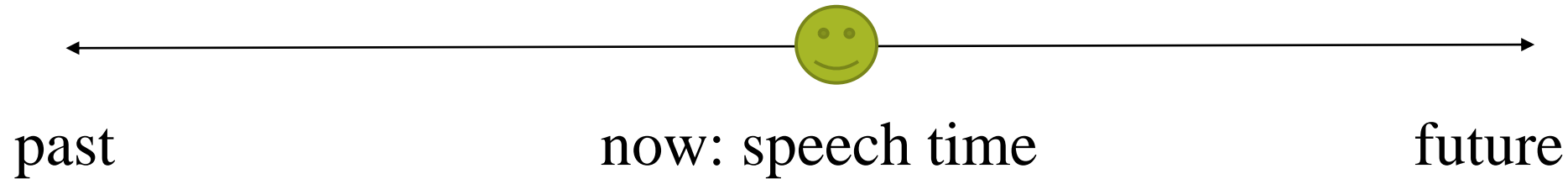
Human beings perceive an event  
as completed or uncompleted  
and mark it linguistically

## **How it is linguistically marked differs according to languages.**

- Linguistic marking = temporal adverbs, verbs, and grammatical devices
- L1 transfer
- \*I am knowing him.
- \*I am belonging to a tennis club.

# How to perceive time: *Tense*

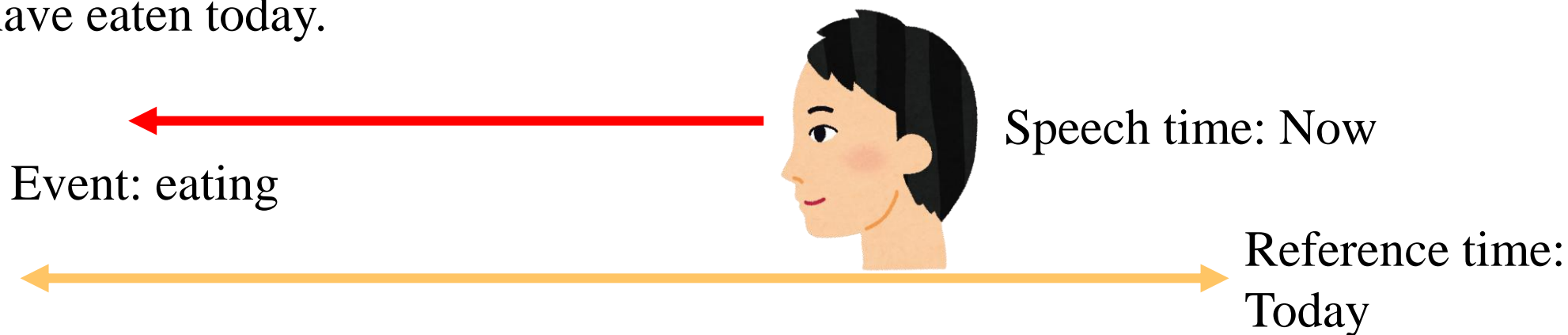
- An event on a timeline



- Relation of an event with other time indicators
- Lexical marking: yesterday, next year, will, be going to
- morphological marking: -s, -ed
- John *runs* every day.
- John *ran* yesterday.
- John *will run* Honolulu marathon next year.

# How to perceive an event: Grammatical aspect

- Focusing on a single event
- [External view] Has a certain action completed? → perfective aspect
- [Internal view] Is the action in the middle of reaching to the end point? → imperfective aspect
- Perfect: present perfect in English (has/have + past participle)
  - I have eaten today.



- Marking by linguistic devices: auxiliaries and inflections



# *Tendency of morphological making*

1. Write as many –ている sentences as possible in a minute.
2. Write as many –*ing* sentences as possible in a minute.
3. Underline a verb in each sentence.
4. Analyze the verbs. Can you categorize them into some groups?

あつ、 \_\_\_\_\_

Oh, \_\_\_\_\_





# The Japanese imperfective/durative marker *-te i* vs. the English progressive marker *-ing*

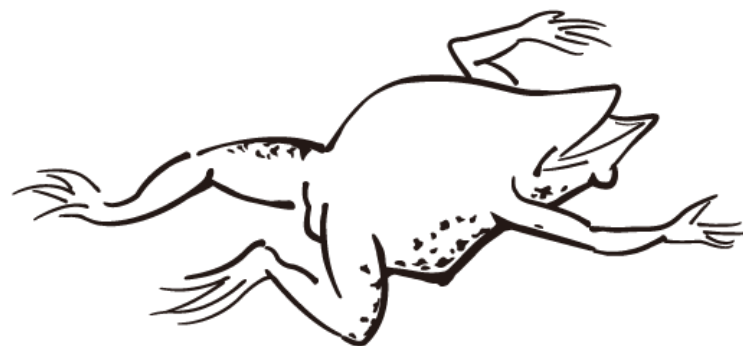
English

Japanese

die(instantaneous action)

Ken is dying.

*Ken-wa sin-de i-ru*



## *Lexical aspect: Vendler's four classification*

1. Achievement (punctual event) – that which takes place instantaneously and is reducible to a single point in time (e.g., *realize, die*).
2. Accomplishment (telic event ) – that which has some duration but has a single clear inherent end point (e.g., run a mile, make a chair, build a house).
3. Activity – that which has duration, but with an arbitrary end point, and is homogeneous in its structure (e.g., *run, sing, play, dance*).
4. State – that which has no dynamic and continues without additional effort or energy being applied (e.g., *see, love, hate, want*).

## Semantic features for the four categories of inherent lexical aspect

	Lexical aspectual classes			
Semantic features	States	Activities	Accomplishment	Achievement
Punctual (no duration, instantaneous)	—	—	—	+
Telic (inherent endpoint)	—	—	+	+
Dynamic	—	+	+	+

# Cross-linguistic differences: Japanese vs. English

Lexical aspect		English	Japanese
State	-----	love, contain, <u>know</u>	aru, iru, omou
Activity	~~~~~	run, walk, play	hashiru, aruku, asobu
Accomplishment	~~~~X	make a chair, walk to school	isu-o-tsukuru, furo-o-wakasu
Achievement	X	die, drop, win the race	shinu, ochiru, katsu, <u>shiru</u>

*Semantic distribution of 100 verbs in Japanese  
and English (Nishii & Shirai, 2005)*

	English	Japanese
state	24	8
Activity	22	25
Accomplishment	7	4
Achievement	47	63

# *Meanings of Japanese -te iru and English -ing*

Verb type	Japanese	English
Activity	Progressive	Progressive
Achievement	Resultative	Process leading up to an end point

- Japanese marks a state with an achievement verb + *-te iru*; English does with adjectives.

mise ga ai-te iru      aku      te iru  
店が開いている      開く (achievement) + ている ⇔ The store is open.

# Assignment for class 6

- Read Sugaya & Shirai (2007), pp. 1-7 to get some ideas about tense and aspect.