The syntax of events

Nick Riches

Newcastle University

February 6, 2019

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Here be dragons!!

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No tense

Here be! dragons!!

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Here be crocodiles!!

Here be chocolate cravings!!

Here be politicians!!

Here be dragons!!

Here be liberals!!

Here be conservatives!!

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Verb forms can be either finite or non-finite

Finite forms express **tense**

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Verb forms can be either **finite** or **non-finite**

Finite forms express tense

e.g. laugh-ed

Non-finite forms do not have tense, e.g. e.g. He loves to laugh/laughing

Finite forms

Finite forms often have rich **inflectional morphology**.

	Singular	Plural
First person	l talk	We talk
(refers to speaker)	Yo hablo	Nosotros hablamos
Second person (refers to	You _{sing.} talk	You _{pl.} talk
conversational partner)	Tu habl as	Vosotros habl aís
Third person (refers to third	He/she/it talk s	They talk
party)	El / ella habla	Ellos ellas hablan

Finite forms

	Singular	Plural
First person	l talked	We talked
(refers to speaker)	Yo habl é	Nosotros hablamos
Second person (refers to conversational partner)	You_{sing.} talked Tu hablaste	You_{pl.} talked Vosotros hablastaís
Third person (refers to third	He/she/it talked	They talked
party)	El / ella habl ó	Ellos ellas hablaron

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Present participle, e.g. She is laugh-ing

Past participle, e.g. She has $\begin{cases} dropped \\ broken \\ lost \end{cases}$ it

Infinitive form, e.g. You must { go now! be quiet! come quickly!! }

Infinitive	Regular / irregular	Present participle	Past simple	Past participle
be	Irr.	being	was/were	been
have	Irr.	hav ing	had	had
go	Irr.	go ing	went	gone
take	Irr.	tak ing	took	taken
wake	Irr.	wak ing	woke	woken
teach	Irr.	teach ing	taught	taught
meet	Irr.	meet ing	met	met
swim	Irr.	swimm ing	swam	swum
laugh	Reg.	laugh ing	laugh ed	laugh ed
rob	Reg.	robb ing	robb ed	robb ed

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Infinitive = bare form or base form

Identical to present tense (NOT third person singular)

Be is the only irregular form

I want to go home (to-infinitive)

You can't go home (bare infinitive)

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3rd person test...

Lean run fast \Rightarrow he can run-s fast

No -s, therefore run is the (bare) infinitive

(we need the infinitive after can)

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Are the verbs in **bold** present simple or the infinitive? Use the "third person singular" test.

- 1. Can we **have** spaghetti for dinner?
- 2. I don't know whether they like meat

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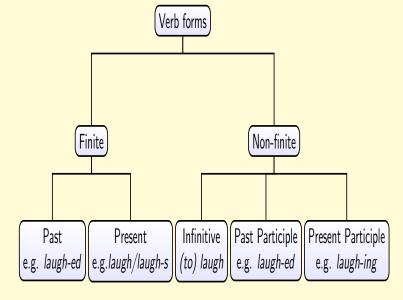
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In English, tense is marked by the third person singular present tense ending (he go-es)

... or a variety of regular and irregular past forms (dropped, gave, left).

With a few exceptions, sentences in English must have tense.

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Further realist 43

In English, tense is marked by the third person singular present tense ending (he go-es)

... or a variety of regular and irregular past forms (dropped, gave, left).

With a few exceptions, sentences in English must have tense.

- (1)*I going home
- (2)*He go home

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What are the past simple and past participle forms of the following verbs?

- consider
- put
- take
- ► look
- make
- speak

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What are the past simple and past participle forms of the following verbs?

- consider , considered, considered = REGULAR
- put
- ▶ take
- ► look
- make
- speak

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What are the past simple and past participle forms of the following verbs?

- consider , considered , considered = REGULAR
- ▶ put , put, put = IRREGULAR
- ► take
- ► look
- make
- speak

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- ▶ put , put, put = IRREGULAR
- ▶ take , took, taken = IRREGULAR
- ▶ look
- make
- speak

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- consider , considered, considered = REGULAR
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- make
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- look . looked. looked = REGULAR
- make , made, made = IRREGULAR

speak

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- consider . considered . considered = REGULAR
- put , put, put = IRREGULAR
- take . took. taken = IRREGULAR
- look . looked. looked = REGULAR
- make . made. made = IRREGULAR
- speak , spoke, spoken = IRREGULAR

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Marked using participles

Progressive aspect (INTERNAL perspective on the event) is expressed using the present participle

Perfective aspect (EXTERNAL perspective on the event) is marked using the past participle.

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In addition to using the participle, we need to use an appropriate auxiliary verb which must "agree with" the participle.

The present participle selects **be** as the agreeing auxiliary verb

(3)Zachary is eating

and the past participle selects **have** as the agreeing auxiliary verb, e.g.

(4)Julia has eaten The syntax of events Nick Riches

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1. Mark aspect on the *rightmost* verb and insert an appropriate *auxiliary verb*

- 2. Repeat last rule if necessary
- 3. Mark tense (plus "the future") on the *leftmost verb*

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(5) Zachary eats

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*Zachary eating

Zachary eats

(5)

(6)

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(5)Zachary eats

(7)

(6) *Zachary eating

Zachary is eating

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(8) Anna falls

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Anna falls

(8)

(9)

*Anna fallen

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(9) *Anna fallen

Anna falls

(8)

(10)

Anna has fallen

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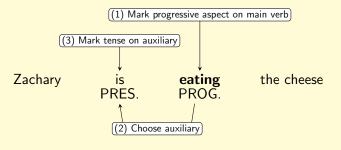
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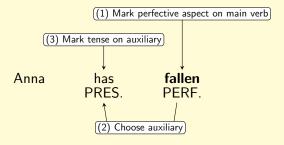
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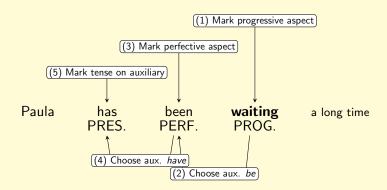
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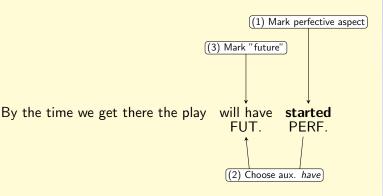
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When we build the sentence we go backwards

When we describe the tense-aspect combination we go forwards



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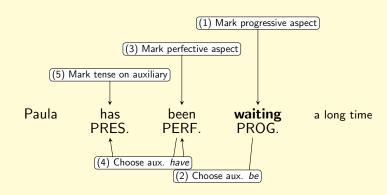
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Meanings are built up compositionally

ASPECT expresses 'viewpoint' (internal or external)

TENSE expresses temporal location of viewpoint (past, present, future)

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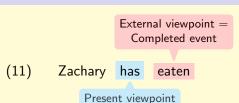
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A completed event with a viewpoint located in the present.

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A completed event with a viewpoint located in the present. So what's the difference between the following?

- (12)Zachary has eaten
- (13)Zachary ate

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Internal viewpoint =
Ongoing event

(14) (When I arrived) Janice was cooking spaghetti

An ongoing event with a viewpoint located in the past

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External viewpoint = completed event

(15)By this time next week, I will have eaten the cheese. Future Viewpoint

A completed event with a viewpoint in the future

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COMPLETED event

(16)When he got home she had already done the cleaning past viewpoint

A completed event with a viewpoint in the past

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Auxiliary verbs are chosen to **support** the main verb (an auxiliary = a helper).

They are *servants* of the main verb.

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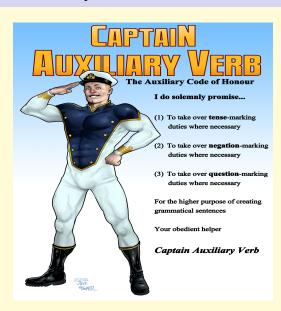
Further rea331443

Auxiliary verbs are chosen to **support** the main verb (an auxiliary = a helper).

They are *servants* of the main verb.

The main (non-modal) auxiliary verbs are have, be, and do

What are auxiliary verbs?



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*John broken his watch (17)

(17)

(18)

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*John broken his watch

✓ John has broken his watch

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*John broken his watch

✓ John **has** broken his watch

*Amy singing in the shower

(17)

(18)

(19)

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(18)✓ John **has** broken his watch (19)*Amy singing in the shower

*John broken his watch

√ Amy **is** singing in the shower

(17)

(20)

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*I like not this food

(21)

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(21)*I like not this food

(22)I do not / don't like this food

Negation-marking duties

*I like not this food

I do not / don't like this food

The negative particle is always attached to the first auxiliary

She has₁n't been₂ coming here long

(21)

(22)

(23)

in the sentence:

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(24)

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She has done it?

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She has done it?

Aux. movement

Has she t done it?

(26) He is doing it?

(24)

(25)

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(24) She has done it?

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(25) Has she t done it?

(26) He is doing it?

(27)

Is he t doing it?

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If there is no auxiliary, we have to create one (do/does/did);

(28)Does he like it?

(29)Did he like it?

(30)I didn't like it

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If there is no auxiliary, we have to create one (do/does/did);

- (28) Does he like it?
- (29) Did he like it?
- (30) I didn't like it

The process of adding *do/does/did* to express either negation or interrogative mood is sometimes called **do support**

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Does he do it?

(32) He did **n't** do it

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(33) I have Aux occasionally seen V shooting stars

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I have Aux occasionally seen v shooting stars (33)

(34)Jake is Aux really motoring v down the home straight

(35)Helen has Aux sometimes been Aux seeny downing Bloody Maries in the Frog and Bucket

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Why are the following sentences incorrect? Can you correct them?

- 1. I no like this book!
- 2. You had a good time at the party?
- 3. Mary been studying hard lately
- 4. You've seen Janet recently?

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1. I don't like this book!

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- 1. I don't like this book!
- 2. Did you have a good time at the party?

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- 1. I don't like this book!
- 2. Did you have a good time at the party?
- 3. Mary has been studying hard lately

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- 2. Did you have a good time at the party?
- 3. Mary has been studying hard lately

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