TEMPORALITY AND ITS PECULIARITIES IN THE STRUCTURE OF ENGLISH SENTENCES

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Abstract

The present article investigates the category of temporality in the English language and demonstrates the ways of its expression in English sentences. The author enumerates types of adverbial modifier of time and enlightens the problem of expression of temporality in the structure of English sentence.

Keywords: category of temporality, temporal, preposition, adverbial modifier of time, transformation, syntaxeme, sentence.

Actuality of the theme of the research is vivid in deep investigation of the category of temporality in the English language system. Temporality was partially studied by some linguists but till the present time there is no exact conception on this problem. Such linguists as V. Jigadlo, I. Ivanova, L. Iofic left very important theoretical issues concerning parts of sentences expressing temporality.

In the present article we are interested in adverbial modifier of time which express the category of temporality. If we make deeper analysis of temporality, we can find some types of it:

1. Pure temporality. He visited us on Monday. This element can be replaced by adverb then: He visited us on Monday → He visited us then

2. Identificator of temporality: Today is Christmas holiday. In this sentence the element today can be replaced by the adverb now but it can’t be replaced by adverb then: Today is Christmas holiday → Now is Christmas holiday.

3. Temporal ablative syntaxeme: I hope you return from the war... In this sentence instead of the preposition from temporal preposition after can be used: ... you return from the war → you return after the war

4. Temporal terminal (limited in time): The suspension until January 2 still stands. To prove that in this sentence temporal terminal syntaxeme is used, we can apply to the following method of experiment: The suspension until January 2 still stands → to suspend until January 2 → to suspend till January 2 → to suspend to January 2.

5. Temporal manner syntaxeme: Television was left on from morning till night. To prove that this sentence really has the element of manner of action, we’ll use the method of transformation-interrogation (with the help of: in what way, how, thus): Television was left from morning till night → In what way was television left on? → How was television left on? → Television was left from then on → Television was thus left on.

So, temporality can be expressed in various ways, each of them should be deeply investigated.

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Russian linguists A. N. Gvozdev gave the following classification of temporal relations [1, p. 123]:

1. The action is done in a definite period of time or at a definite time: He has done his research in three years. He worked here from January till May. She drops at this café in the morning.

2. The action is done in limited time with demonstration of beginning or end: He began earning money from the age of eleven. I will do this work till 5 p.m.

3. The action is done in the time which doesn’t match the pointed in the sentence time: They left till sunrise. In an hour before the working day he had a habit of sitting on a bench and reading a morning newspaper.

Quirk R. Greenbaum S., Zeech G., Svartvich J. have their own point of view on the problem of adverbial modifier of time: “Time adjuncts can be divided into four main semantic classes:

1. when-point of time (today); boundary of time (afterwards);
2. duration-length of time (briefly); from some preceding point in time (since);
3. frequency-definite period (daily) or number (twice); and indefinite-usual occurrence (usually); continuous (always); high (often); low or zero (occasionally, never).
4. other relationship (already) ” [2, p. 209-210].

The interesting fact is vivid in simple English sentences when temporality can be expressed by the predicate of the sentence:

1. He was in prison for ten years.
2. He has been in prison for ten years

In both sentences there is adverbial modifier of time for ten years but in the first sentence it can be replaced by adverb then because the action is in the past and it is finished: He was in prison for ten years → He was in prison then. We can even continue the idea of this sentence: He was in prison for ten years but he is out now.

As for the second sentence, the adverbial modifier of time for ten years can’t be replaced by the adverb then because the action is not finished and is going on: He has been in prison for ten years ↔ He is still there.

If we investigate the category of temporality due to the time of action, we can conclude that:

1) If the action is done in the past tense, the following temporal syntaxenes are used:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{I saw him} & \rightarrow \text{yesterday / evening} \\
& \rightarrow \text{last night / last Monday} \\
& \rightarrow \text{a week ago / a month ago} \\
& \rightarrow \text{in the morning} \\
& \rightarrow \text{on Wednesday, in June} \\
& \rightarrow \text{at four o’clock} \\
& \rightarrow \text{the other day}
\end{align*}
\]

2) If The present perfect tense is used in the sentence the following temporal syntaxemes are used:
The past Indefinite or the present perfect is used the following temporal syntaxemes can be used:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{saw} \\
&\text{I have seen} \\
&\text{today} \\
&\text{this week, this month, this year} \\
&\text{recently} \\
&\text{or} \\
&\text{He always / never forget} \\
&\text{He has always / never forgotten} \\
&\text{My wife’s birthday}
\end{align*}
\]

As we see, the English language is very rich in the ways of temporality expression and it is defined by asking question *when*?:

1. Tomorrow is a Saturday.
2. The term starts at the beginning of February.
3. The match takes place on Thursday.
4. He retires next month.

Most prepositions such as *at, on, in, during* play important role in temporality formation: at 10 o’clock, at 6.30, at noon; on Sunday, on the following Sunday; in the morning, in April, in spring, during the morning, during April, during spring etc.

References: