

On the Interaction of Tense and Aspect – Merging Kites

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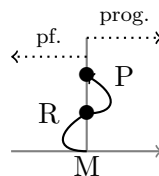
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As illustrated in [1, p. 333], a past-oriented binary choice [$\pm R$ (*etroject*)] followed by a future-oriented binary choice [$\pm P$ (*roject*)] suffices to distinguish the four basic finite tense types of English: present [$- R, - P$], future [$- R, + P$], past [$+ R, - P$], conditional [$+ R, + P$].

name	example	Tense1	Tense2	Aspect1	Aspect2
		past ($\pm R$)	fut ($\pm P$)	perf	prog
simple pres	works	-	-	-	-
simple fut	will work	-	+	-	-
simple past	worked	+	-	-	-
simple cond	would work	+	+	-	-

In our talk, we shall first review the evidence that these two choices form an asymmetric ordered pair $\langle \pm R, \pm P \rangle$, with the *past* oriented binary choice $\pm R$ linearly before and vertically higher in the syntactic structure than the *future* oriented binary choice $\pm P$. This state of affairs parallels the asymmetrical *earlier to later* iconicity that characterizes path expressions such as spatial *from Brussels to Paris* or temporal *from 2 to 5*, where the temporally prior source expression precedes — and its phrase structurally arguably includes — the temporally later goal expression.

That the $\langle \pm R, \pm P \rangle$ -asymmetry might well be relatable to the source-goal asymmetry of path expressions is reinforced by the equally and similarly fixed relation between the two aspectual binary features [\pm *perfect*] and [\pm *progressive*]. The perfective aspect restricts the situation expressed by the root verb *work* to a finite past-oriented time-segment starting *before* and leading up to the point P. The progressive (or continuous) aspect, for its part, restricts the situation expressed by the root verb to a future-oriented time-segment that includes P, but is longer and stretches to some finitely distant point *after* P. This is what creates the still-going-on effect in *John is working*.



And here too, what is involved is an ordered pair: $\langle \pm \textit{perf}, \pm \textit{prog} \rangle$. Though the two aspectual choices involve finite time-segments rather than jumps to tense reference points, they are characterised by the same *source-goal* or *before-after*-asymmetry as $\langle \pm R, \pm P \rangle$, witness the only possible order of the perfective and progressive auxiliaries in the tense forms below.

name	example	past (R)	fut (P)	perf	prog
pres perf prog	has been working	-	-	+	+
fut perf prog	will have been working	-	+	+	+
past perf prog	had been working	+	-	+	+
cond perf prog	would have been working	+	+	+	+

While the tense-pair $\langle \pm R, \pm P \rangle$ has been analysed in terms of a connected pair of Jacoby-Sesmat-Blanché-hexagons, the aspectual pair will be shown to involve a similar connected double-kite grafted onto each of the four basic tense vertices in the kite-representation provided in [1, p. 135, Fig. 12], more specifically the A- and Y-corners of each of the two connected kites.

References

- [1] Jaspers, D. “The English Tenses, Blanché and the Logical Kite”. In: A. Koslow & A. Buchsbaum (eds.), *The Road to Universal Logic, Volume 2*, 319–337, (2015).