A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF TENSE AND ASPECT IN ELEME AND ENGLISH LANGUAGES

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Abstract
The study is a contrastive analysis of tense and aspects in Eleme and English language. The theoretical framework adopted in this work is the contrastive analysis propounded by Lado in 1957. This is because it appropriately suits this work as the psychological foundation of contrastive analysis is transferred theory. Thereby transferring the first language influence to the second language by the learner. It assumes that the elements that are similar in the native language will be simpler to the learner and those that are different will be difficult. The study asserts that tense determines the form of the verb in a sentence with respect to change in time, the aspect is about the manner in which a verbal action is experienced. It also observes the morphological changes in the verb with respect to discourse time for a past tense in English language, the EkāEleme is by super-segmental tone (by a higher tone) to mark past. Just like in English language, the Eleme is categorized into past and non-past (present), yet if the tense locus is taken as fundamental reference point, an event may be before the speech moment, coincide with the speech moment or after the moment of speaking, this means future tense. Therefore tense is categorized as present, past and future. In the same vein, aspect is viewed as; durative, habitual, inceptive/inchoative, punctual, progressive, perfect and frequentative/ iterative aspects. Another significant issue is that the future tense are used when we want to say that an event or action has not taking place but will happen after the moment of speaking. The most common ways of showing futurity is the use of auxiliary verb like shall, will, etc and it will co-occur with the base form of the main verb.

Keywords: Tense, Eleme, English Language.

INTRODUCTION

An important attribute that has made man unique is language. All other animals squeak while man speaks. Language is an important feature of humans that has made us distinct from other animals that speak. With human language, it is possible for man to communicate the past, the present and also about the future. Animals do not possess this attribute; hence the study of human language is very important. The scientific study of language is known as linguistics. This is because languages differ in meaning, phonetics and phonology, morphology and syntactically.

Human languages differ in many ways. As it is mentioned above, many features, characteristics and pattern has led scholars into the study of language. In this work, we shall discuss tense and aspects in English and a comparative analysis of Eleme language by the native speaker.

Tense and aspects are amongst the three grammatical categories that are associated with verb. Mood would have been equally discussed alongside others but for wider discourse, we shall narrow it to only tense and aspects. This work is a contrastive analysis of tense and aspects in Eleme and English language. English is our lingua Franca, while Eleme language is an Endo-European language with the researcher as a native speaker.

In this lecture note, we shall use the descriptive theoretical frame work as this appropriately suits this discourse. Hence we shall never hesitate to define the words; tense and aspects, in doing so time is very common but sinequanon. It is a non-linguistic phenomenon with three phases known as: present, past and future, which has eased human difficulty in defining state of affairs following duration, frequency and chronological order. We shall treat these subsequently.

The People of Eleme and their Language

Eleme is a distinct minority group in the Ogoni nation. Ogoni nationality includes four tribes of six kingdoms: Babee, YorKhana, Ken-Khana, Eleme, Gokana and Tai kingdom respectively. Each of these four tribes is a local government are in the present Rivers state political structure. Eleme is peculiar among the Niger Delta people of Rivers State courtesy of the presence of Federal Multinational Companies like; Port Harcourt Refinery Company, Petro-Chemical Company Limited, NAFCON, Sa Ports (FLT and FOT), Intel Services Nigeria Limited and many others. Eleme has more than three hundred (300) companies cited in the area. Hence it is known as the 'Heart-Beat' of the nation's economy. Eleme is also blessed with rich cultural heritage as well as interesting language which shall be studied in this lecture note.

Linguistic Classification of Eleme

Eleme is one amongst the Ogoni Group of languages. It has cognate languages as; Tai (Tee), Khana, Gokana and Ban. According to Yul-Ifode (2001:65) cognate languages are those that show similarities or correspondence in lexical terms.

Cognate Language

Gloss	Tee (Tai)	Eleme	Gokana	Khana	Ban
Fly	ãã	Ãã	ãã	ènè	Ãã
Basket	kùù	okũ̀	Kun	Kùù	Kun
Eat	dé	Dè	dé	dè	dê-nu
Day	dee	Àdé	dee	dée	Dé

Yul-Ifode (2008:116)

The world languages are grouped into four phyla (phyhum-singular) we have: Afroasiatic, Nilo-Saharan, Niger-Kordotonian and Khoisan. Eleme is located under ketgboid, a sub group of cross river language. From Williamson, Kay (1989), cross river belongs to BenueCongo, a daughter language of Niger-Congo, a branch of the present phylum –NigerKordotanian. The linguistic classification of Eleme is represented here below:

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Linguists and stakeholders interested in language and its functions now stress the significance of language description and documentation. Many languages, especially the major languages have benefited from this patronage. Yet more needed to be done in the description of "small" languages like that of Eleme where there has been no significant description and documentation. Several aspects of Eleme grammar are yet to be explored particularly in the area of syntax. In this discourse, there is an attempt to fill this gap and specifically investigate the problem raised by tense and aspects in Eleme such as the morphological composition of tense and aspect in Eleme.

AIM/OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to analyze tense and aspects in Eleme and English language. The objectives include to:
1.   *Identify the syntactic features of tense and aspects in Eleme and English language;*
2.   *Identify the changes in the internal structures of tense and aspects in Eleme and English;*
3.   *Examine the functions of tense and aspects in Eleme and English language;*
4.   *Account for the distinctions of tense and aspects in Eleme and English.*

Research Questions
1.   *What are the syntactic features of tense and aspects in Eleme and English language?*
2.   *What are the changes in the internal structures of tense and aspects in Eleme and English?*
3.   *What are the functions of tense and aspects in Eleme and English?*
4.   *What are the distinctions of tense and aspects in Eleme and English?*

Significance of the Study

This discourse is significant in four distinct areas: theory, pedagogy, policy and practice.
1.   *In theory, this study is an addition to the evidence of Quirk and Green Baum (1973:40) which attests to the fact that tense and aspects are purely descriptive investigations.*
2.   *Pedagogically, this discourse shows a contrastive analysis in a second language learning setting it shows comparative differences in the structure of certain thematic features of the clause such as past, present and future.*
3.   *In terms of language planning and policy, the idiosyncratic features of tense and aspects structures in Eleme proves that every language has its complex grammatical structure (despite the speech population) and contributes immensely to theory. Hence it is necessary to include even 'small' languages in a co-ordinated language planning policy.*

4.   *In practice, the grammatical features of tense and aspects described in this study contribute to the documentation of the overt knowledge of the language which is useful in both oral and written communication in the language.*

From the study, it indicates that language documentation experts, researchers, language curriculum planners and educationists could find this research a useful material.

Scope of the Study

This research treats verbal categories and is restricted to tense and aspects alone. Its geographical scope covers Eleme language and used in Eleme local government area as well it shows the contrast between Eleme language and English. No dialectal differences in Eleme have been attested. Lexical and phonological variations may be significantly very minimal.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted in this work is the contrastive analysis theory propuned by Lado in 1957. It was first developed by Charles Fries in 1945 as an integral component of the methodology of foreign language teaching.

According to Lado (1957:158) "The basic premise of contrastive analysis hypothesis is that language learning can be more successful when two languages – the native and the foreign – are similar". Contrastive analysis theory has proved to be one of the most significant studies ever made in describing systems of languages. It contributes to a better understating of the acquisition process of second language structures. It is an offspring of mid-century behaviourism and American descriptivism.

In learning a foreign language, the learner tended to bring with him the knowledge of the first language and suggested that this should be taking into consideration in teaching the second language. The psychological foundation of contrastive analysis is transferred theory. This means substituting the first language for the prior learning and the second language for the subsequent learning. It is based upon a scientific description of the language to be learnt, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner. It assumes that element (languages) that are similar to the native language will be simpler to the learner and those that are different will be difficult. Hence the contrastive analysis of tense and aspects in Eleme and English language as here under.

Tense, Aspects and its Taxonomy
Conceptual Review

It is important to study in detail the tense and aspects in any language, knowing too well that language is an important factor that creates the difference between man and other creatures. Hence, the need for distinctions that leads to future tense. Many grammarians / linguistics have taken their time to investigate and define the term 'tense' and 'aspects' as stated hereunder:

Ndimele (1993 : 81).. "Refers to a grammatical category which determines the form of a verb in a sentence with respect to change in time". He said tense distinctions are often marked on finite verbs. Again tense that are based on the moment of speaking (MS) are called "tense locus" (the present). He said the situation may be after (future tense) or before speaking (past tense).

Huddleson (1988:39) state that "the primary use of the past and present tense is to locate in the past and present time respectively the state, action, process or whatever described in the clause". In his reference he made this example:

Kim lived in Berlin (Past tense, past time) vs Kim lives in Berlin (present tense, present time)" This has shown the distinction between past and present tense.

Radford (1988: 287) "English can be said to have a binary (ie way) tense contrast between present and past tense forms (in finite clauses, obviously)"

Strong (1969:82) said "the system of tense is involved, which English is two term, past and non-past". According to Quirk and Greenbaum (1973: 40), he described aspect as "the manner in which the verbal action is experienced".

Ndimele (1993:82) "aspect is a grammatical category which designates the internal temporal organization of the situation described by the verb"

Huddleston (1988:77) states that "Aspect is widely used both for a grammatical category of the verb and for the type of meaning characteristically expressed by that category". He further explained that there is no distinction between tense and time in aspect.

Tense

Tense is referred to a grammatical category which determines the form of the verb in a sentence with respect to change in time. Tense is concerned with the morphological changes in the verb with respect to

discourse time. Tense is categorized into past and non-past (present). If the tense locus (speech moment) is taken as the fundamental reference point, an event may be before the speech moment (past) or overlap/ coincide with the speech moment (present), or after the moment of speaking (future). Therefore time is practically experienced in communication as; past, present and future tense. Hence the illustration below:

Before MS/TL	MS / TL	After MS / TL
Past	Present	Future

Past Tense

This is a situation whereby the morphological change of the verb refers to the time before the time of action. This situation may be located before the time of speaking, for tense to indicate time, there must be relativity to the reference point. Tense and time differ, its distinction are often marked on finite verbs. For example:

	Present	Past
a (i)	'walk'	'walked'
(ii)	'work'	'worked'

In the above, the change in the structure by adding the inflection 'ed' refers to the time before the time of action.

Present Tense

This is a situation that overlaps with the time or moment of speaking. In this case the time of action coincides either the speech moment. For example:

b (i)	'walk'	He walks down the road
(ii)	'work'	She works for me, before I pay her.

Future Tense

According to Quirk (1972:87) "There is no obvious future tense in English". That notwithstanding, the future tense occurs in a situation whereby the change refers to the time after the speech moment. It takes verbs like; shall, will, be, etc.Weuse future tense when we want to say that an event or action has not taken place but will happen after the speech moment or will be in progress after the speech moment.
Will, shall, be, etc for example:

c. (i)	'will'	He will come here tomorrow
(ii)	'shall'	We shall win the game to lift the trophy.

Aspects

Aspect is different ways of viewing the internal temporal situation or constituency of a construction. Quirk and Green baum (1973:40) said it is "the manner in which a verbal action is experienced". It may be viewed as terminated or completed (perfect or completive aspect), as its beginning or initiation phase (inceptive aspect) or continuing through time with the beginning, middle and end overlapping into each other (durative or progressive aspect). Some major aspects of expressing aspects are as below:
Durative Aspect: Expresses the state of affairs which is perceived as lasting for a certain length of time. E.gThey will be singing till 4.p.m the following day.
Habitual Aspect:refers to events that occur repeatedly without limitation on their extension into the past and the future. E.g. Abel used to pray.
Inchoative /Inceptive aspect: This informs the beginning of an action e.g. the baby has started walking
Punctual aspect: it is referred to a momentary event or state of affairs which is confined to a particular instant of time without temporal duration. E.g. at last he came first.
Progressive aspect: This refers to an event that is continuing till the time of report and will continue after the time of report or speech. E.g. Jack is playing music
Perfect aspect: This is aspect that expresses a state resulting from an earlier event. E.g. James has eaten
Frequentative/Iterative aspect: This indicates that an action of the verb is repeated more than one time. E.g. she kept signing the register.

METHODOLOGY

In this section, we present the research methodology adopted in this study.

Research Design

This study employs the survey research design. It is difficult to present and analyse tense and aspects in the language. Thus, our data in this study represents a sample of possible tense and aspects in the language.

Population of the study

This research is on Eleme, a language spoken in Eleme Local Government Area of Rivers State. According to the National Population Commission census of 2010, the population of Eleme people is about 541 216 persons. The number of indigenous and non-indegenous speakers of Eleme is estimated as 726 015. The variety of Eleme spoken by these numbers of persons is represented by the institution of the researcher as a native speaker of Eleme.

Sources of Data Collection

1. Personal interviews: The researcher interviewed native speakers on the subject matter of discourse. By this, facts were recorded which were analysed in this study.
2. Library Materials: Another source was the library works from scholars in form of books and articles on tense and aspects. These were gathered and examined in our analysis
3. Researcher's Intuitive Knowledge: The researcher's intuitive knowledge of the language as a native speaker was the major source of data.

Method of Data Collection

Firstly, face-to-face direct oral interview was conducted with language collaborators to generate data for this study in addition to the researcher's intuitive knowledge. Secondly, data was also drawn from journals, books, and other available library materials.

Method of Data Analysis

In this study, the data was described in the light of how they are used by native speakers in real language situations, using the descriptive method of morpheme-to-morpheme glossing. The data was analysed within the framework descriptive grammar.

Results and Discussion

Data Presentation and Analysis

The work data is presented and analysed in this section, the results and findings that emanate from the discussion and analysis are also stated.

Past Tense

This is a situation whereby morphological change of the verb refers to the time before the time of action. In Eleme, past is called "węęwęę" or 'ntõre-apǔr. In English we show past by insertion of '-ed'/ '-en' or change in the structure, while in Eleme it is by asupra-segmental tone. A rise in the tone to a higher tone.

Past	węęwęę/ ntõre-apǔ
Ate	'dé'
Came	'jú'
Prayed	'lěyá'
Shot	'tã'
Heard	'dã'

Just as it is in English, past in Eleme is located before the time of action.

Present Tense

This is a situation that overlaps with the speech time or moment of speaking. That which occurs after speech moment is known as the 'future tense'. Present tense in Eleme is called 'érèrǐ'. For example:

Present	érèrǐ
Come	'jù'
Eat	'dè'
Pray	'lèyá'
Shoot	'tã'
Hear	'dã'

In comparative analysis of past and present markers in English and Eleme, we shall place them side by side to point out certain interesting distinctions as indicated here under:
Examples are as shown here under

C	Present (érérî)		Past (Węwęę/pǔr)	
(i)	dè	"eat"	Ădé/dé	"ate"
(ii)	jù	"come"	Ăjú/jú	"came"
(iii)	leyá	"pray"	Ăléyá/leyá	"prayed"
(iv)	tã	"shoot"	Ătã/tã	"shot"

From the gloss presentation in English as well as Eleme, one can find the distinction in past and present tense English language change in the structure of words or an addition of the morpheme '-ed'/ '-en' the end of

the construction while in Eleme, is by supra-segmental tone. In most cases, the present tense takes a lower tone while the past is dictated by a high tone as shown above.

Again, not all languages are with tense tripartite form. All the tense system depends on the moment of speaking as the fundamental reference point. A situation may be located before the speech moment and the reference point.

Example

(d)   Òlákòábéréchãpǔ /Òlákòchãpǔ
         Òlákò already walked past
         Òlákò walked past

This is a past tense, because the walking took place before the time of speech. In another development, the action may be at the speech time:

Example

(e)   Òlákòchã
         'Òlákò walks'

This example shows that the action occurred at the speech moment. It is a present tense. It anticipates a current action. Subserviently, we can progress as we talk about future. Human beings are dynamic. They are unique; having the potential of an imaginary thought which have boasted man's intelligence.

Example

(f)   Òlákòdộsẹ̀ be chãã
         Òlákò will be walking
         Òlákò will walk

This event will take place subsequently to the speech moment. It is anticipating that the action will take place later (i.e. in future). This leads us to exophoric or absolute tense and relative tense or relation time reference.

Exophoric / Absolute Tense

Exophoric tense is the tense which relates the time of situation to the time/moment of speaking.

Example

(g)   MmáãbérédãláòdénjáwẹwẹwéÒsaroaju
         Mmá had started to eat past then Òsaro come
         'Mmá had started eating before Òsaro come'

'Mmá had started' is a subordinate clause, which is located prior to when Òsaro came' the verb 'to come' is located to the speech moment.

Here the tense refers to the past (as reference past).

Relative Tense / Relative Time Reference

This is a situation where time is being related or located to some other time or situation in a higher clause or discourse instead of relating to the time of speech another term for relative tense is "endophoric tense".

         Let us revisit this illustration:

(h)   MmáãbérédãláòdénjáwẹwẹwéÒsaroaju
         Mmá had started to eat past then Òsaro come
         'Mmá had started eating before Òsaro come'

When one action is more remote than the other, the situation is called a relative tense, relative time reference or endophoric tense – in this case, the forms:

         (i)   Mábérédãlá   'had started'
         (ii)   Mábérébûì   'have read'
         (iii)   Réwábérébûì   'we have read'

They all indicate verb tense. They are past perfect tense and locates a past situation to some other situations. For example:

(j)   RéwábérédãláèJéwệwệwéOkakaâjù
         We have started dance past then Okaka came
         'We have started dance when Okaka came'

The clause 'we have started' is an endophoric clause. Again, it is important to note that endophoric tense can also occur with future. One can have auxiliary tense locating a situation to some other situation in the future.

Example

(k)   wệwệwéOkakakãjú, Agbákábăná
         Past then Okaka will come, Agba will wait
         'Before Okaka will arrive, Agba will have waited'.

Here, 'before Okaka will arrive' is a simple future tense, while 'Okaka will arrive' is the future perfect. Hence we have the simple future tense and the future perfect tense. Therefore endophoric tense is any tense that does

not take its speech moment. Endophoric, relative tense or relative time reference occurs in two clear context, such as: (1) indirect discourse / indirect reported speech and (2) non-finite participial construction.

Indirect Discourse / Indirect Report Speech

Here a verb in the past tense is the main clause attracts the following verb to the past tense no matter what notional time the verb in the subordinate clause indicates.

Example

    (l)   Àmásikóòsākábāãrú

                Àmási said sickness is entering him/she

                'Àmási said he is ill'

Investigating the above sentence, it is obvious that the event took place or occurred before the report. That is, the report did not coincide with the speech moment. He may be ill or well before the time of report. The verb 'ill' in the main clause, attracts that of the subordinate clause 'said'. Hence it will be forced to align with that of the main clause.

Non-Finite Participial Construction

Here the time is located in the main verb

Example

(m)   Ntọríngasíechii, mpuãotọọNgozi

            When I am go market, I always past house Ngozi

            'When going to the market, I often past Ngozi's house'.

Example

(n)   Ntọríngasíechii, mpuãotọọNgozi

            When I am go market, I always past house Ngozi

            'When going to the market, I often past Ngozi's house'

From the sentence above, 'when going to market' is a participial construction, hence it is timeless. In the other hand, the two clauses or construction, 'I often pass Ngozi's house (present) and 'I past Ngozi's house' (past).

In terms of tense in the above is endophoric or exophoric. This means that he disitnictiosn between the two is timeless and the other with time.

Let us see this example: the situation pay "kpẽ" may be described differently as in:

            (o)   Ngozikákpẽ

                     Ngozi will pay

            (p)   Ngoziăbérékpẽ

                     Ngozi has already pay

            (q)   Ngozikpẽ´

                     Ngozi pay

                     'Ngozi paid'

Example 'o' shows that the action is in progress. It is between the beginning and the end. 'P' is a completed action, while in (q) the entire action is presented on a single analysable whole with the beginning, middle and the end in a roll. This brings to mind what we call punctual aspect.

Future Tense

This is a situation whereby it occurs after the speech moment. In Eleme, it occurs as auxiliary verbs like ká, 'will', nga 'shall', be'bé' etc along with the main verb. For example

    (i)   re   ka   jú   onni

            we   will   came   here

            'we will   come   here'

The future tense uses the auxiliary verbs like "ká", "nga", etc along with past marker of the main verbs.

In addition, not all the languages are with tense tripartite form. All the tense system depends on the moment of speaking as the fundamental reference point. A situation may be located before the speech moment and the reference point.

Aspect

        Aspect is the different ways of viewing of the internal temporal structure or constituency of a construction.

Events take place through time, with its duration as in the beginning or initiation phase (inceptive aspect), another to its termination or completed phase (perfective or completive aspect). Events' duration have beginning, middle and end or terminal phases.

Durative Aspect

An event may also be viewed at as contravening through time that is, it may be view two times). This is between the initiation and the termination part called the 'durative aspect'.

Habitual Aspect
This refers to expression which refers to events that occurs repeatedly without limitation on their extension into the past and the future. For example:

Ogborŭ wăá   giné
Ogborŭ drinks   giné
'Ogborŭ drinks   gin!'
Wăá – 'drinks' in the clause shows that it is a present continuous aspect. It is habitual.

Inchoative / Inceptive Aspect
This expresses or shows the beginning of an action. For example:

Ochira   dálá   e tó
Ochira   start (pst)   a cry
'Ochira   started   crying'
The word dálá 'started' in the clause is an inceptive word.

Punctual Aspect
This refers to a momentary event or state of affairs which is confined to a particular instant time with no temporal duration. For example:

Ntená   węę   Osaro   jú
After   sometime   Osaro   Came
'At last   Osaro   Came'

Progressive Aspect
Is a single event that is continuing from the past to the speech moment and sometimes after the speech moment. For example:

re	ka	tõ-ã	a	érérĩ		we	gwã	osõ
We	will	stay	from	present	up	to	tomorrow	
'We	will	stay	from	now		till	tomorrow'	

Perfect Aspect
This expresses a state resulting from an earlier event. For example:

Obe a beredé é nu
Obe he started (pst) eat (pst) a thing
'Obe has eaten'

Frequentative Aspect
It indicates that an of the verb is repeated more than one time. For example:

e	kara	dǫrŭ	wẽẽ	obǫ	ẹkẽ	nsa
she	just	still	put	hand	under	paper
'She	kept signing the register'					

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations
Summary of Findings
In this work, we have analysed tense and aspects in Eleme. We have also examined the morphological changes that occur in morphemes to mark past or future. In English, there are structural changes or insertion of 'ed' / -en suffix at the end of the construction but in Eleme it is by a supra-segmental tone (dictated by tone). The structure does not change but rises to a higher tone to mark its past. Eleme tense have two inflectional categories, the past and non-past tense just like English language. All the tense system depends on the moment of speech as the fundamental reference point. The situation that locates time before the speech moment and the reference point is the 'past tense', while the situation that overlaps with the speech moment is known as the 'present tense'. It coincides with the speech moment. The EkãEleme (Eleme Language) has tripartite form of tense expressions; 'The present', 'past' and 'future'.

'Future tense', has made human language very unique by their potentials of imaginary thought. This has boasted man's intelligence, future tense shows that a particular event will subsequently occur this leads to exophoric or absolute tense and relative tense or relative time reference. There is future tense in EkãEleme (Eleme language). Also future tenses in Eleme have durative aspect, inceptive aspect, perfect aspect, iterative aspect, habitual aspect, progressive aspect and punctual aspect. Another significant issue is that the future tense (auxiliary verbs) co-occur with the main verbs

In aspect, it is referred to the different ways of viewing the internal temporal structure of a construction. Actually, every event takes place through time. Its duration may be thought of having the beginning (initial phase or inceptive) or terminal point / aspect. Every event has the beginning and the terminal aspect. We have the durative aspect and inceptive aspect in ekãEleme just like in English language.

CONCLUSION

The work concluded that since there is no existing study on the tense and aspects in Eleme language, this work contribute to the evidence, showing past and present marker in Eleme and it contrast from the English version.

While there is morphological change in the verb structure and an inflection 'ed' in English to mark past, Eleme is dictated by tone marking. Tense in EkãEleme shows only past and present tense.
We also have aspects in ekãEleme as durative aspects, punctual aspect, progressive aspect, habitual aspect and inceptive aspect like in English language. Every event takes place through time. Its duration may be thought of having inceptive or terminal point or aspects.

RECOMMENDATION

The study recommends that further research be done in the analysis of tense and aspects in other Ogoni languages in order to ascertain whether there are past and present markers, how their past and present are marked and other necessary distinctions that can be observed.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to the understanding of the structural changes, features and functions of tense and aspects in Eleme language, showing the distinctions between the Eleme and English tens and aspects.

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