



**FUNCTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF TEMPORAL AND
ASPECTUAL DEVICES IN EXPRESSING EVENT SEQUENCING IN
NARRATIVE DISCOURSE (A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ENGLISH
AND UZBEK)**

G.N. Berdiyeva

PhD, English Teacher

Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages

Nalibayeva Saragul Mashbekovna

Lecturer, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Kazakhstan

Abstract: This article examines the functional and semantic characteristics of temporal and aspectual devices that organize event sequencing in English and Uzbek narrative discourse. The study focuses on the linguistic mechanisms used to express temporal relations, event progression, duration, and completion within narrative texts. Through a comparative analysis of English and Uzbek, particular attention is paid to the ways in which tense and aspect contribute to the coherence, continuity, and interpretability of narratives. The findings reveal that grammatical tense and aspect forms play a dominant role in English, whereas syntactic and analytical constructions serve as the primary means of expressing temporal and aspectual meanings in Uzbek. The results confirm that temporal and aspectual semantics are among the most significant factors ensuring textual coherence and the logical progression of events in narrative discourse.

Keywords: narrative discourse, temporal semantics, aspectual semantics, event sequencing, tense category.

Narrative discourse is one of the most important forms through which human beings perceive reality and represent it by means of language. Every narrative text consists of a chain of events connected through temporal relations and logical links, which together create a coherent and meaningful whole. Consequently, temporal and aspectual semantics occupy a central position in narrative discourse and play a crucial role in the organization of narrative meaning. Through these semantic categories, speakers and writers indicate when events occur, how they develop over time, and how they ultimately reach completion. One of the defining characteristics of narrative texts is the representation of events in a sequential order. Readers construct meaning by arranging narrated events along a mental timeline and interpreting the relationships between them. Therefore, establishing event sequence is among the primary functions of narrative discourse. Such sequencing is largely



achieved through temporal devices that indicate chronological progression and causal relationships among events. In linguistic studies, temporal semantics refers to the representation of temporal relations between events, including their location in time and their relationship to the moment of speech. Temporal meaning enables speakers to distinguish between past, present, and future situations while also establishing relations of simultaneity, anteriority, and posteriority. In narrative discourse, temporal semantics functions as a framework within which events are organized and interpreted. English employs a highly grammaticalized tense system to express temporal relations. The Past Simple tense, in particular, serves as the primary grammatical means for representing event succession in narratives. Consider the sentence: “He opened the door, entered the room and sat down.” In this example, three separate actions occur in a clear chronological sequence. The grammatical form allows readers to reconstruct the order of events with little ambiguity. In Uzbek, the same meaning is expressed as: “U eshikni ochdi, xonaga kirdi va o‘tirdi.” Although both languages preserve the sequence of events, English relies more heavily on verbal tense forms to signal temporal progression, whereas Uzbek often depends on contextual interpretation alongside grammatical markers.

Temporal markers also play an important role in establishing narrative continuity. In English, lexical items such as then, after that, later, finally, and suddenly indicate the progression of events and guide readers through the narrative structure. Their Uzbek counterparts include keyin, so‘ng, shundan so‘ng, nihoyat, and birdan. These expressions strengthen temporal and logical connections between events, thereby enhancing textual coherence and facilitating comprehension. Alongside temporal semantics, aspectual semantics performs a vital function in narrative discourse. While temporal devices specify when events occur, aspectual devices describe how events unfold internally. Aspect concerns the duration, completion, repetition, continuity, or resultative nature of an action. Consequently, aspectual meaning contributes significantly to the representation of event structure and narrative dynamics. For example, in the sentence “She was writing a letter when the phone rang,” the action of writing is presented as an ongoing process, while the ringing of the phone appears as a punctual event interrupting that process. The Uzbek equivalent, “Telefon jiringlaganida u xat yozayotgan edi,” conveys the same aspectual relationship. In this case, aspect serves to establish a hierarchy between events, distinguishing background activity from foreground action. Such distinctions are fundamental to narrative organization because they allow readers to identify which events are central and which merely provide contextual information. The expression of duration and continuity is particularly important in narrative texts because it enables writers to separate background scenes from main events. In



English, Continuous forms frequently function as descriptive background devices. Consider the example: “The wind was blowing and the rain was falling heavily.” Here, the Continuous forms create an atmospheric setting and establish the circumstances under which subsequent events occur. The following sentence, “Suddenly a tree fell across the road,” introduces a foreground event that interrupts the ongoing situation. A similar semantic relationship can be observed in Uzbek: “Shamol esayotgan, yomg‘ir yog‘ayotgan edi. Birdan daraxt yo‘l ustiga qulab tushdi.” In both languages, aspectual distinctions contribute to narrative tension and help structure the flow of information.

Aspectual semantics is equally important in expressing completion and resultative meaning. English Perfect forms are commonly used to indicate that an event has been completed and that its result remains relevant. For example, in the sentence “They had finished the project before the deadline,” the Past Perfect form signals that the project was completed prior to another reference point in the past. The Uzbek equivalent, “Ular loyihani muddatdan oldin tugatib bo‘lishgan edi,” conveys a similar meaning through an analytical construction. The expression bo‘lishgan edi strengthens the sense of completion and emphasizes the resulting state. Such constructions demonstrate how aspectual devices contribute not only to event description but also to the representation of outcomes and consequences. Comparative analysis of English and Uzbek narrative texts reveals that temporal and aspectual devices operate in close interaction. Temporal semantics establishes the position of events on a timeline, while aspectual semantics specifies their internal development and structure. Together, these categories ensure the logical progression of narratives and facilitate the interpretation of event relationships. Without temporal markers, readers would struggle to determine the chronological order of events. Without aspectual markers, it would be difficult to understand whether actions are ongoing, completed, repetitive, or resultative. Thus, both categories are indispensable components of narrative organization. From a functional perspective, temporal and aspectual devices also perform important pragmatic and stylistic functions. Authors frequently manipulate tense and aspect to accelerate or slow down the pace of narration, direct readers’ attention to specific events, and enhance emotional impact. Continuous forms often slow down narrative progression by focusing on description and atmosphere, whereas simple and perfect forms tend to move the storyline forward by emphasizing completed actions and their consequences. Consequently, temporal and aspectual devices function not only as grammatical categories but also as powerful stylistic resources that shape narrative effect. The significance of temporal and aspectual semantics extends beyond grammar



and discourse organization. From a cognitive perspective, these categories reflect fundamental mechanisms through which humans conceptualize experience. Individuals perceive events not only in terms of when they occur but also in terms of how they unfold, whether they continue, repeat, or reach completion. The existence of temporal and aspectual distinctions across languages suggests that they are rooted in universal cognitive processes. Nevertheless, the specific linguistic means used to express these distinctions vary according to the typological characteristics of individual languages. The comparison between English and Uzbek highlights both universal and language-specific features of temporal and aspectual representation. English employs a highly grammaticalized system of tense and aspect, including Simple, Continuous, Perfect, and Perfect Continuous forms. Uzbek, by contrast, relies more heavily on analytical constructions, auxiliary verbs, participial forms, and contextual interpretation. Despite these structural differences, both languages effectively organize event sequences and maintain narrative coherence.

In conclusion, temporal and aspectual devices constitute the principal semantic mechanisms responsible for organizing event sequencing in English and Uzbek narrative discourse. Temporal semantics determines the chronological placement of events, while aspectual semantics expresses their internal developmental characteristics. Working together, these categories ensure coherence, continuity, and communicative effectiveness within narrative texts. English primarily relies on grammatical means for expressing temporal and aspectual meanings, whereas Uzbek demonstrates a stronger dependence on analytical and syntactic devices. These differences reflect the typological characteristics of the two languages. Comparative investigation of this issue contributes to the advancement of narrative linguistics, discourse analysis, functional semantics, cognitive linguistics, and translation studies by providing a deeper understanding of how languages represent temporal experience and event structure.

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