

ENDURING POWER OF WORDS: EXAMINING DICTIONARY USE IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Jizzakh branch of the National University of Uzbekistan named after Mirzo Ulugbek
The faculty of Psychology, department of Foreign languages
Phylology and foreign languages

Supervisor: **Abduraxmanova Zilola Yakubjanovna**

Student of group 401-22: **Yakubova Niginabonu Jumaniozovna**

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14619556>

Annotation: This article provides a comprehensive overview of the primary challenges in English lexicography and this opening paragraph lays the groundwork for the article, defining tenses and highlighting their crucial role in communication.

Key words: Tenses, grammar, time, communication, present tense, past tense, future tense, perfect tenses, progressive tenses, accuracy, mastery, practice, context, grammar guide.

Tenses are the grammatical tools that allow us to express when an action or state of being occurred. They act like time machines, transporting us back and forth through the timeline of events. Understanding tenses is essential for clear and accurate communication, ensuring our listeners or readers comprehend the timing of our message.

A Glimpse into the Time Machine:

Let's start with the basics. English has three main tenses:

- * Present Tense: Describes actions happening now or actions that are habitual or general truths.

- * Example: "The sun shines brightly today." (Present simple)

- * Example: "I am studying English." (Present continuous)

- * Past Tense: Refers to actions that have already happened.

- * Example: "Yesterday, I walked to the park." (Past simple)

- * Example: "She was reading a book when the phone rang." (Past continuous)

- * Future Tense: Speaks about actions that will happen in the future.

- * Example: "We will visit our grandparents next week." (Future simple)

- * Example: "I am going to cook dinner tonight." (Going to future)

The Changing Role of Dictionaries

Dictionaries, for most people, are pillars of the English language; they support usage and define the convention of a language. Dictionaries are like the vertical lines that people draw around a page. People pull out dictionaries to only know and understand how to use words in changing contexts. However, Stamper's book suggests that dictionaries exist not to police the use of language, but to record it. Dictionaries, as the world changes, track the journey of language as we know it today. And that there is an adventurous prospect to this thick, dusty reference book. Dictionary-making is pivoted by two schools of thought: prescriptivism, that states that dictionaries ought to be about setting certain boundaries about usage; and descriptivism, that is concerned with recording the trajectory of the language. Historically, most dictionaries have been prescriptive – setting out strict rules about not including certain types of words because they were considered offensive, distasteful or controversial.

Beyond the Basics:

Beyond these core tenses, English also features several variations that add nuance and complexity to our understanding of time:

- * Perfect Tenses: Combine the past, present, or future with the concept of completion.
- * Example: "I have finished my homework." (Present perfect)
- * Example: "They had already left by the time we arrived." (Past perfect)
- * Example: "We will have finished the project by next month." (Future perfect)
- * Progressive Tenses: Express ongoing actions or states of being.
- * Example: "I am working on a new project." (Present progressive)
- * Example: "She was sleeping soundly when I called." (Past progressive)
- * Example: "He will be playing the piano tomorrow." (Future progressive)

The Importance of Accuracy:

Mistakes with tenses can create confusion and misinterpretations. For example, saying "I ate dinner yesterday" instead of "I will eat dinner tomorrow" completely alters the intended meaning.

Tips for Mastery:

- * Practice makes perfect: Engage in conversations, read texts, and write regularly to strengthen your understanding and use of tenses.
- * Focus on context: Pay attention to the specific time references used in a sentence to determine the appropriate tense.
- * Consult a grammar guide: Utilize resources that explain the various tenses and provide examples.

Owning a dictionary implied some things: an ambition to speak and write correctly; that you thought about language. Maybe you suspected your neighbors mispronounced certain words or used them incorrectly. And you may have played the game Dictionary – someone selected a word from the dictionary and supplied the right definition while everyone else made up definitions, and then the person whose turn it was had to figure out which definition was correct. Points to the writer of a fake definition, if selected; points to the one who selected the word, if the correct definition is overlooked. Other people played Yahtzee-not that there's anything wrong with that – but Dictionary players were a breed apart. A big dictionary on the shelf implied that you read books with words so hard you might need to look them up; or that you were a reader in search of nuance that only a big dictionary could supply.

After World War II colleges and universities nationwide required that new students buy the American College Dictionary or the Merriam -Webster.

Mastering tenses is like mastering the art of time travel in language. It allows you to express your thoughts accurately and effectively, ensuring your message is understood clearly and efficiently. In nineteenth century dictionaries of English began to attempt to cover the whole vocabulary of the language and in the twentieth century they became still more inclusive, covering types of language that had not previously been considered appropriate, for example slang, regional words or technical jargon.

In conclusion, owning a dictionary is a commitment to language and communication, emphasizing precise expression. Its evolution, from comprehensive works to the inclusion of slang, mirrors our changing relationship with words. Engaging with a dictionary expands our

vocabulary and fosters connections through shared understanding. Ultimately, it is more than a reference tool; it's a gateway to self-expression and cultural richness. In a world where clear communication is vital, mastering language through dictionaries is invaluable.

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