

THE COMPARISON OF GRAMMATICAL SYNONYMS IN TENSE FORMS OF MODERN ENGLISH AND AZERBAIJANI

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ABSTRACT: *The matter of synonyms in languages is an interesting part of the subject "Lexicology". However, this topic can be and has been investigated from different aspects: grammatical, syntactical, stylistic ones. Synonyms, especially, grammatical synonyms can be confused with "variation" or "variants". The article touches on this matter, alongside with the comparison of grammatical synonyms in tense forms of English and Azerbaijani. So, past, present and future tense forms and the grammatical forms creating these tense forms of both languages are compared here and some nice examples taken from literature are given to illustrate the investigated matter.*

KEY WORDS: synonyms, grammatical synonyms, category of tense, tense forms, past tense, future tense.

INTRODUCTION

In western linguistics references the term "grammatical synonyms" is not used. However, it doesn't mean that they don't investigate the problems relating to "grammatical synonyms". The language units called "parallel constructions" or "equivalents" have been investigated by western and Russian linguists. The analysis of the research works on the investigation of the use of parallel syntactical constructions proved that, western English language investigators accept the phenomenon of "syntactical synonyms" in a wider plan based on the similarity of meaning and function. Such constructions which are used parallelly can be observed in H.Sweet and H.Poutsma's works. The term "Grammatical synonym" is initially used in "Essentials of the English grammar" of O.Jespersen. However, he didn't define that term and didn't show the criteria for syntactical synonymy. As an example for syntactical synonymy O.Jespersen used the following sentences [Jespersen, 2007, p. 219]:

Entering the room he greeted everybody most kindly.

On entering the room he greeted everybody most kindly.

When he entered the room, he greeted everybody most kindly.

In the examples by O.Jespersen, in the 1st and 2nd sentences present participle and gerund are used in the function of time adverbial, while in the 3rd one, subordinate clause of time is used. Among these sentences, the time clause is supposed to be dominant, since it contains information which is rich and covers the context.

METHODOLOGY

The research is carried out by comparing the language elements of two languages, English and Azerbaijani, which belong to different language groups. The former is a Germanic language and analytical, the latter is a Turkic language and synthetic. So, the comparison of the synonymy of tense forms in both languages is investigated and compared in the given article.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

It should be noted that, though some western linguists have recently tried to define the linguistic variation and situative context as a main criteria for synonymy, they haven't achieved it enough. Most linguists differentiate two types of synonymy – morphological and syntactical. Firstly, let's clarify morphological variants (doublets) and morphological synonyms, both of which are similar phenomena.

Morphological variants are two forms of the word having one grammatical meaning. E.g.:

He is more handsome. // He is handsomer. "O, daha yaraşıqlıdır".

Here, *more handsome* and *handsomer* express degrees of comparison of the adjective, i.e. the two forms of the same grammatical meaning.

It is evident that, in English some adjectives form the comparative and superlative degrees both analytically (by adding the elements **more**, **most**) and synthetically (by adding suffixes to the root of the word).

The main difference between morphological synonyms and morphological variants is that, compared to morphological variants, morphological synonyms don't express the same grammatical meaning, they just express close or similar grammatical meanings. Relating to this, G.M.Birkenhoff writes:

"Morphological synonym – is the form of the word having similar grammatical meaning" [Birkenhoff, 1964, p. 70].

Dealing with the morphological synonyms, Y.I.Shendels rightly notes that synonymy is closely connected with grammatical polysemy. The author relates the types of synonymy with two types of polysemy in grammar: the 1st type is potential polysemy. What makes the essence of it is that, one grammatical form (structure) can express different meanings in different situations [Shendels Y.I., 1959, p. 75].

E.g.:

a) *He is always at home on Sundays. "O, bazar günləri həmişə evdə olur".*

b) *He is likely to come soon. "O, gərək ki, (yəqin, çox güman ki) tezliklə gələcək".*

In both of these examples the grammatical form of "**is**" is present tense form of the verb "**to be**". In the first sentence "**is**" shows that the situation refers to the present, while in the second one, it is used in a different meaning. This verb has the meaning of future tense form. In other words, as the situation is different, the meaning also has changed. Y.I.Shendels notes that, among these different meanings, it is necessary to differentiate main and additional (secondary) meanings. According to the author, if the two grammatical forms of the element constitute to main grammatical meaning of the element, it can be considered a synonym. Y.I.Shendels offered to call these synonyms "system synonyms", since the grammatical forms of the both compared elements are linked to the language system with synonymic

relations. Alongside with the system synonyms, there exist such synonyms that the grammatical form of one of them constitutes to the main or additional (secondary) grammatical meaning of the other. Such kind of synonyms are contextual synonyms and are mostly used in speech, in concrete context, as a result of context.

The essence of the second type of polysemy is that one grammatical form can, at the same time, express two or more grammatical meanings. E.g.: suffix **-s/-es**. It can be used as the suffix of plurality and the 3rd person singular form of the verbs in the present tense form.

DISCUSSION

Synonymy in tense category

The time concept is expressed by different means (lexical, morphological, syntactical) in modern English and Azerbaijani. In both languages there exists a stable categorical indicator to express any tense form, which has a specific meaning. However, despite this stability, sometimes formal features remain as an indicator, and express a new meaning under the influence of a context, situation, and become a synonym of quite different a form existing in a language.

Past tense form

An action, process happened according to the speech act in the past, is expressed by means of past tense form suffixes. The past tense form in English is expressed by the suffix **-d/-ed**. However, as an exception, some irregular verbs don't accept this suffix, changing from the root, like **steal – stole – stolen**, or having another suppletive form, like **to be – was/were – been**. So, there is no other suffix to substitute **-d/-ed** in English.

In Azerbaijani the past tense form at present, as well as in the past, is realised by 3 grammatical forms having different structures: **-dı⁴, -ib⁴, -miş⁴**. All the three forms, link the action expressed by the verb to which they are joined. That's why the similarity of these suffixes from the point of view of meaning shows that there is grammatical synonymy among them. Such kind of synonymic relation among grammatical forms is called "system synonymy". The past tense form suffixes **-dı⁴, -ib⁴, -miş⁴**, which are considered to be "system synonymy" make synonymic row. As it is known, a word among lexical synonyms is called dominant, i.e., for its usage and sphere of influence one word in synonymic row differs from the others. As grammatical forms change for the sphere of usage and context, the same cannot be done among morphological synonyms.

It has been mentioned in Indo-European languages that there is synonymic relation among the different past tense forms having different phonetic structures. V.N.Yartseva writes, dealing with the synonymy of the morphological units of the German language:

"The both forms (proterit, perfekt) are the means of expression of the past action; their main grammatical meaning in tense is the same"[Yartseva B.N, 1958, p. 31]. So, this rule should be applied to the English language. As, in English, the (present) perfect tense form has the meaning of past and completeness. Thus, logically, Past Simple and Present Perfect can express the action which happened in the past, but both have a bit different shades of meaning. In English linguistics these tense forms

are not considered to be homonymous formally. However, semantically, they can be accepted as synonyms.

A.A.Akhundov writes dealing with the narrative past tense form (nəqli keçmiş):

“Narrative past tense form is formed in two ways in Azerbaijani - by the suffixes **-miş, -miş, -muş, -müş**, and by the suffixes **-ib, -ib, -ub, -üb**” [Akhundov A.A., 1961, p. 58].

In other words, in Azerbaijani, narrative past tense form (nəqli keçmiş) is grammatically forms in two ways. However, in a language system there is such a **regularity** that for a longer period of time, in a language there cannot be two grammatical forms expressing the same meaning. During the development history of a language, one of these grammatical forms either goes out of use, or changes its function. If grammatical forms with closer meanings remain in use in a language, it means that, there is a difference between them, even a slight one.

I.Mammadov in his book “Grammatical Synonymy in the Azerbaijan Language” writes that, discussing the topic of grammatical synonymy, mentioned:

“Grammatical synonymy is a very multi-featured notion compared to the lexical synonymy. If in Lexicology the semantic appropriateness among lexical units - words is studied, in Grammar appropriate to its branches, synonymic relations among the word forms, word forming suffixes, word combinations, different sentence types, constructions and subordinate sentences are investigated”.

Rightly, he writes: “There are the following differences among language units:

- 1) The difference in grammatical menaing;
- 2) Both the difference in grammatical menaing and stylistic difference;
- 3) Only stylistic difference” [Mammadov I., 1985, p. 53].

I.Mammadov notes that without these distinctive features, when the grammatical content of forms become quite identical, two cases emerge:

- a) One of the forms lose its former meaning and becomes stable for a new function.
- b) One of the forms leaves the language as an extra element, without bearing competition, passes to its passive fund [Mammadov I., 1985, p. 53].

The author considers suitable to divide grammatical synonymy into three parts:

1) morphological synonymy (the synonymy of grammatical suffixes). E.g. the meaning of narrative past tense form is formed in two ways from the grammatical point of view: **-miş, -miş, -muş, -müş** and **-ib, -ib, -ub, -üb**;

2) syntactical synonymy (the synonymy of word combinations, sentences, constructions and subordinate clauses). E.g.,

Xəstə olduğundan o, evdə qalmalı oldu (*Being ill, he had to remain at home*) (*construction*).

O, evdə qaldı, **çünki xəstə idi** (*He stayed at home, because he was ill*) (*subordinate clause of cause*).

3) lexical-grammatical synonymy (synonymy of word forming suffixes and synonymy of secondary parts of speech). E.g. *sənin üçün* - *sənə* (*for you* - *to you*) [Hasanov H., 1978, p. 6].

While investigating grammatical synonymy, the author comes to a conclusion that homogenous forms should make synonymic row. E.g. the synonymy among word combinations, synonymy between construction and subordinate clause, the synonymy between grammatical suffixes and so on. The opposite of this, i.e., the forms being in synonymic realtions cannot consist of non-homogenous language

units. For instance, the synonymy between word-building suffix and participial construction. E.g.:

*traktorçu Əli (tractorist Ali) – traktor sürən Əli (tractor driving Ali),
duzlu xörək (salty meal) – duzu çox olan xörək (meal with a lot of salt) və s.*

H.Mirzazade writes that, on our ancient monuments the suffix **-ib⁴** was normally used, even it was prefferably used more than the suffix **-miş⁴** [Mirzazade H., 1962, p. 237]. The suffic **-miş⁴**, which was before used as a participle, later began to be used to express the psat tense form. It is not difficult to notice the difference between these two suffixes. Thus, the suffix **-ib⁴** is used in the colloquial branch of a literary language, and shows the finished action with the result before our eyes, while the suffix **-miş⁴** is mostly used in our written language [Afandiyeva-Hajiyeva T., 1961, p. 10].

In the Azerbaijani language, it is possible to group the synonymy between the additional meaning of past tense suffixes and the main meaning of the other grammatical forms:

1. The additional meaning of the suffix **-dı⁴** is synonymous with the main meaning of the objective future tense form. E.g.

*Əgər inanmasaq, öz gücümüzə
Bir də görərsən ki, çayın ordusu
Qayanı qopardı, bəndi qopardı,
Hər şeyi, hər şeyi yuyub apardı (167).*

2. The additional meaning of the suffix **-dı⁴** is used as a synonym to the main meaning of the absolute future (qəti gələcək) tense form suffix **-acaq⁴** [Afandiyeva-Hajiyeva T., 1961, p. 9].

It should be noted that this meaning of the suffix **-dı⁴** is very often used in spoken language. E.g.

*“Sağ ol, getdim yatmağa” (Bye, I go/am going to bed), “Getdim (I go/am going)”,
“uçdum ee (I fly/am flying)”, etc.*

3. The additional meaning of the suffix **-dı⁴** is synonymous with the main meaning of the suffix **-sa/-sə** and expresses the meaning of conditional mood. This synonymic realtion is realised in conditional sentences. E.g.

Birdən o, gəlmədi, sən nə edəcəksən?(If she shouldn't come, what will you do?)

4. The additional meaning of the suffix **-dı⁴** is synonymous with the main meaning of the conditional mood (wish/intention form). The realisation of the wish/ intention which is expressed by the help of this form is supposed. E.g.

*Bəlkə bu il bəxtimiz açıldı. Ərbabın su pulunu verdim, uşaqlara əyin-baş düzəldib,
bir çərək torpaq aldım Probably, we will be lucky. I paid arbab's water payment,
made clothing for children, bought a part of land [Ibrahimov M., 1981, 102].*

5. The suffux **-dı⁴** is used with the interrogative particle **-mı⁴** and becomes the synonymous with the subjunctive mood (conditional sentences). The condition content expressed by this form differs from the suffix **-sa/-sə** for its special shade of meaning. Here, the condition and the action arising from it happen one after another. The time instancy (*zaman aniliyi*) between the condition and the action connected with the condition depeens a bit the content sphere of the forms **-dı⁴**, **-mı⁴**. E.g.

*Bu yerdə cövləna Xəzri gəldimi
İydələr durardı igidlər kimi [Khazri N., 1987, 122]*

Present tense form

The present tense form, which plays the function of the starting point of the action in determining the content of the past and future tense forms, is performed at the moment of speech. Present tense forms in modern English are considered to be Present Indefinite, Present Continuous, Present Perfect, Present Perfect Continuous. So, all these tense forms are used to express some present actions but with different shades of meaning.

I write a book – Mən kitab yazıram.

I am writing a book – Mən kitab yazıram/yazmaqdayam.

I have written a book – Mən kitab yazmışam.

I have been writing a book for a month – Mən bir aydır ki, kitab yazmaqdayam.

Consequently, they cannot substitute each-other mostly. Besides, for present tense there is just one formal sign in English: **-s/-es** for the third person singular, nothing more.

In Azerbaijan A.A.Akhundov determined the present tense form as follows:

“The present tense form is a tense form a part of which is past, the other one is future” [Akhundov A.A., 1961, p. 122].

This characteristics of its gives bases to the use of the suffix **-ir⁴** in grammatical synonymy relations with the other tense forms. So, the suffix **-ir⁴** is grammatically synonymous with the following tense forms:

1. The additional meaning of the suffix **-ir⁴** which expresses present tense form, is grammatically synonymous with the action happened in the past and reviving in front of our eyes. We should note that in linguistics literature this meaning of the present tense is called “historical-present tense”, “narrative-present tense”, “descriptive-present tense”. This meaning of the present tense form is mostly used in literature-fiction to revive the actions happened in the past. E.g.:

O, içəri daxil olur, hər kəsi salamlayır, sonra keçib bir küncdə əyləşir (He enters, greets everybody, then passing sits in the corner).

2. Being used in the meaning of future tense, the suffix **-ir⁴** is used with the future time adverbials. E.g.

Haradasan? İndi (bir azdan) gəlirəm. (Where are you now? I'm coming now (in some time)).

3. As it is mentioned, **-ir⁴** form for the present tense form shows that the action is going on at the moment of speaking. However, the present tense form shows the general tense form, which is repeated sometimes, and happens always. E.g.

O, həmişə gəlib valideynlərinə baş çəkir. O, elə hey deyir. (He always comes to see his parents. He is always grumbling.)

4. One of the forms when the suffix **-ir⁴** is used as a grammatical synonym is the condition form of the verb in Azerbaijani. So, in this case, the suffix **-ir⁴** replaces the suffix **-sa²**. E.g.:

İstəyirsən sənin üçün texnikuma girim, istəyirsən lap elə bu bazarı bağladım sənin üçün (Do you want me to enter teknikum, do you want me to close this bazaar for you).

It should be noted that, in the semantics of the suffix **-sa/-sə**, there is no the present or past meaning. Compared to it, being used wider and being richer, the suffix **-ir⁴**

expresses the condition meaning not only in the future tense form but also in the present and past tense forms.

Future tense form

In modern English the future tense form can be expressed by several means. Formally, for making Future Simple the helping verb **shall/will** is used, which is considered to be an analytical form.

I shall/will call you later – Bir az sonra sənə zəng vuracam.

In order to express future action, it is also possible to use Present Simple, Present Progressive tense forms in English. For instance, for planned actions (timetabel, schedule) Present Simple can be used, while for personal arrangements and plans we can use Present Progressive.

The train arrives at 5 – Qatar saat 5-də gələcək/gəlir.

We are leaving for Moscow this week-end – Biz bu həftəsonu Moskvaya yola düşürük/düşəcəyik.

If we say ***We will leave for Moscow***, it shows the determination and the action will be carried out without any doubt.

In Azerbaijani the Future tense form can be absolute and non-absolute. [Akhundov A.A., 1961, p. 125]

1. The non-absolute (qeyri-qəti gələcək) future tense form expresses the general tense concept in the context. The suffix **-ar/-ər** in this meaning becomes synonymous with the main meaning of the past tense form and with the main and extra meanings of the present tense form. For this reason, some concrete adverbs are used (**həmişə - always, ta əzəldən – since birth, hərdən – sometimes, occasionally**). E.g.:

Adam var günü gəzməklə keçər, ortada yeyib, qıraqda gəzər. (There is a person who spends his time walking, who eats together with everybody and walks around).

2. The future tense form suffixes expressing the conditional meaning in some cases becomes synonymous with the suffix **-sa/-sə**. Compared to the suffixes **-sa/-sə**, the condition meaning expressed by the help of the suffixes **-ar²** and **-acaq⁴** belongs to the future from the grammatical point of view, however, the context pushes the form from the main meaning partially. E.g.:

Sol qabırğamın birisi əzilmişdi. Nəfəs ala bilmirdim. İndi yaxşıyam. Deyirdim ki, ölərəm, canım qurtarar [Ibrahimov M., 1981, 116].

3. The extra meaning of the absolute future (Qəti gələcək) becomes synonymous with the main meaning of the main meaning of the present tense form. In this case, in spite of the fact that the verb being expressed by means of the future tense form, it becomes evident from the context that the action began in the past and is still in the progress at the moment of speaking. E.g.:

Elə də yaz. Xalq orada canından keçəcək. biz də burada qarpız-yemiş yeyib, dama dönəcəyik. [Abulhasan A., 1954, 69].

4. The extra meaning of the future tense form is used synonymously with the main meaning of the imperative form (mood) of the verb. The synonymous usage of the future tense form to the main meaning of the imperative form (mood) is conditioned with three factors:

1) the influence of the context;

2) the verb's imperative form (mood) accompanying another verb, helps the realisation of the emaning which that verb is going to express;

3) the pronunciation of the future tense forms with a special intonation. Thus, the imperative form expressed by the future tense forms is milder and denotes that the fulfillment of the action is not done by ordering (commanding), but by recommending. E.g.:

Yeyərsən qaz ətini, görərsən ləzzətini (atalar sözü). (You, eat the goose meat, and you, see its taste - proverb).

CONCLUSION

Our speculations on grammatical synonyms, especially, grammatical synonyms on tense forms of English and Azerbaijani can be summarized as followings:

Gramamtical synonyms being a complicated language phenomenon, reveals in different language levels. In order to understand the essence of gramamtical synonyms, to find its boundaries, two factors should be paid attention to:

a) The forms, which considered to be gramamtical synonyms, should differ in phonetic form and constitute to each-other for their meaning).

b) There should be concrete semantic and stylistic difference between/among the forms, which are consdiered to be gramamtical synonyms.

The researchers in both languages, who investigate the phenomenon of “gramamtical synonyms” are divided into two groups:

a) 1st group think that grammatical forms express the meanings of each-other and accept is as a stylistic category.

b) 2nd group think that this is a phenomenon that belongs to the grammatical structure of the language.

It should also be noted that there is, generally, nothing subjective in the structure of a language. The substitution of grammatical forms obeys the language system. If the substitution of grammatical forms didn't obey the language system by serving the exact expression of different notions of the objective reality, didn't obey the comonness of grammatical rules, then, all sorts of substitution of forms would be possible, and then, a language would lose its position to serve as a means of communication.

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