Grammar G: Tense and Aspect

■ Aspect

Aspect refers to a group of expressions of the "aspect" of movement, such as continuative. Basically, aspect concerns only verbal predicates.

A narrower definition of aspect discusses whether the situation in question is a state or a movement. Morphologically, whether to use the unmarked *suru* form or the *shite iru* form, which describes state, is at the core of aspect. (*Shite aru* and *shitsutsu aru* also describe state.) In addition, compound verbs, such as *shihajimeru*, may describe the beginning and ending aspects of an event, and also the *te*-form, such as *shite kuru*, describes temporal aspects of movements, such as the development of a movement. Aspect includes these expressions that describe the temporal aspect of situations themselves. To distinguish such a usage from others, this usage is sometimes called "aktionsart."

Aspect also concerns the temporal relationship of events, such as "before and after," and is considered to exist side by side with tense. In *sudeni sono toki ni wa x shite iru* 'already will have done x by that time,' for instance, the validity of the fact that there has been a prior movement has to be described by a stative expression. This type of expression is called perfective. Perfective is usually discussed within the framework of aspect, but it is also related to tense. In general, components referring to past time do not collocate with the *ru*-form, but in perfective expressions using the *teiru* form, as in *kyonen shinde iru* 'died last year,' past adverbs may collocate with the *ru*-form. In this particular example, *kyonen* indicates the time of the event, which expresses that the history of a preceding event is in effect in the present.

(Reichenbach (1947) proposes a system by which to explain such structure of time using the point of speech (S), the point of reference (R), and the point of event (E).)

→スル・シテイル形の意味 Meaning of *Suru* Form and *Shite iru* Form (2G), アスペクトの複合動詞 Compound Verbs Describing Aspect (2-G), テオク・テアル *Teoku* and *Tearu* (2-G)

● References

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