

PRACTICAL VALUE OF USING STATIVE VERBS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

The given article focuses on the practical aspects of teaching dynamic and stative verbs and recommends some pedagogical implications that can help teachers of English language to build up effective methods for improving learners' competence in studying these verbs. The root cause of the problem which is mentioned above is the lack of grammatical and practical skills in English language. The findings show that errors frequently appear in the choice of defining verbs that can be used as stative and dynamic, depending on the context they appear in the groups of verbs of appearance; verbs, describing mental processes and verbs of senses. The information outlined in this work can be handy for comprehension of linguistic features of stative verbs which might be easier to master.

Key words: *stative verbs, dynamic verbs, grammatical features, aspectual classes, semantic meaning.*

INTRODUCTION

Teaching English verbs has always placed a great importance on the interrelation between grammar and meaning in the structure of language. The way in which this interconnection can be explained is through an analysis of the lexical units that expresses activities and states. Most course books and grammar books in English do not focus on specific characteristics of stative verbs and the difference between active and stative verbs. They put an emphasis on rare occurrences in the progressive form of stative verbs as they represent a state which does not involve a notion of movement toward completion. These verbs are presented in contrast to active verbs, which are syntactically non-stative and which involve a certain activity by the subject. Being part of the denotation, a process or a state, therefore, belongs to the semantics of a verb. In particular, stativity is a purely semantic notion.

MAIN PART**Ways of teaching stative verbs**

While teaching verbs in English, it stands obvious that majority among students lack knowledge about dynamic and stative verbs. Furthermore, they make errors when using them. When they are asked to differ the form of the verbs students are not confident to choose between the simple and the progressive form as in the following example:

The flower **smells** / **is smelling** good.

In the first sample, the speaker reports on what is perceived, i.e. the subject is not a perceiver. In order to make it clear we want readers attention to be drawn to the difference between the three groups of verbs as follows:

Dynamic verbs: listen, look, touch, etc.;

Stative verbs: understand, know, believe, own, etc.;

Both dynamic and stative verbs: feel, smell, sound, taste, think, have, etc.

Previous research in this field

Vendler (1957) was the first one to group verbs along the lines of event structure. He classified them into *activities, accomplishments, achievements* and *states*. The basic idea underlying this classification is how an event proceeds in time. For example, activity verbs such as *pet the cat* or *smile* have an actor who is doing something (i.e. *petting the cat* or *smiling*) for an unbounded time interval. Similarly, states such as *know* or *love*

don't include an endpoint in their basic denotation. In contrast to activities, states have no agent who is doing something (that is, there is no active *knowing* or *loving*). Achievements and accomplishments, on the other hand, include an endpoint. For example, an achievement like *reach the top* is not homogeneous like a state such as *love*. It denotes a sudden change from a state in which the subject is not at the top to a state in which the subject is there.

Michael Vince one of the most famous linguist describes a state as a situation in which “something stays the same” (1998, p. 7). Examples are here; *know*, *believe*, or *understand*. These verbs can be used in simple and perfect tenses. However, they are not used in any progressive form. This makes these verbs a little more difficult for students, which means that practice is essential. It should be note that verbs of senses should be modified by adjectives.

Consider the following examples:

- A. Even from a distance, Ethan's pace **looked quick**.
 B. *Even from a distance, Ethan's pace **looked quickly**. (Wrong)
- A. This soup **tastes delicious**.
 B. The soup **tastes deliciously**. (Wrong)

Samples mentioned above usual case for native speakers of English, the impulse to pair verbs of perception with adjectives is instinctive; adverbs sound completely wrong in their place, while foreign learners, who are constantly reminded that grammar rules in English require verbs to be modified by adverbs in most cases, find it difficult to pair perception verbs with adjectives.

Another interesting finding mentioned by Jim Miller pointing out those stative verbs “cannot be used to answer the question “What happened?”” (2002, p. 143).

The following examples clearly show that:

- a. What happened? Susan **went** into the station and **bought** a ticket
 b. What happened? *They **believed** his parents.
 c. What happened? *They **were** very happy.

The answer to the question in (a) contains the verbs *went* and *bought*, which are dynamic and describe actions. *Believed* in (b) and *were* in (c) both relate to states and are not dynamic but stative. Stative verbs cannot occur in WH questions, that is cannot be used as following:

What she did **was know** this theory.

Another characteristic of stative verbs is that this type of verbs is rarely used in the imperative as in the following examples:

- a. **Belong!**
 b. **Love me!**

McArthur (2009) notes out that (a) is not acceptable but example (b) is occasionally acceptable.

RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

N	CLASSIFICATION OF ERRORS	TOTAL NUMBER	PERCENTAGE OF ERRORS
1	APPEARENCE	3	17.6%

2	EXISTENCE	2	14,6
3	FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS	3	17,6%
4	MENTAL PROCESS	4	23,5
5	POSESSION	4	23,5
6	VERBS OF SENSES	5	27,5

The table drawn above shows that errors frequently appear in the choice of using verbs that can be used as stative and dynamic, depending on the context they appear in the groups of verbs of appearance; verbs, describing mental processes and verbs of senses. These verbs require more practice as they seem to be the most challenging to learners as there is no strict grammar rule. Students need to consider each situation in detail. However, by paying careful attention, they can learn to use these verbs correctly, thus avoiding errors.

Errors made by the students are as follows:

I. Verbs with different meanings.

Students make mistakes failing to notice the different meanings of the respective verbs. Consider the following examples:

- A. She's having fun. (to have fun = to enjoy oneself)
- B. She is having a party at her flat on Saturday. (to have a party = to organize a party)
- C. They've been seeing each other for a month. (to see = to date)
- D. I'm seeing two politicians for a meeting tomorrow. (to see = to have an appointment with)
- E. He is seeing his doctor next week (to see = to visit, consult)

II. Verbs which are used to talk about a short period of time or describe something temporary as in:

- A. Diana is being very tired this evening. (*to be* is used as a dynamic verb expressing a temporary state)
- B. Stop doing that, Bill! You're being very silly. (=You are behaving badly / you are acting badly at the moment.)

III. Verbs which express an activity or process.

- A. My little daughter is smelling the flowers. (activity)
- B. Why are you smelling the soup? (activity)
- C. It smells awful.
- D. I'm tasting the meal. (activity)
- E. This sandwich tastes delicious (=it has a delicious flavour).

The sentences indicate that the subject is performing the action. The examples put an emphasis on the fact that the verbs of senses when used in their progressive form describe a volitional process. On the other hand, in

15(b) and 16(a) the verbs *smell* and *taste* describe the person’s awareness of the quality of what is smelled or tasted. Regarding *smell*, “the two types are based on the verbs *smell* (inhale an odour) and *emit* (smell

IV. Verbs used to emphasise something

A. I’m liking it! = I’m (really) enjoying it. (emphasis)

The last example (not very common in British English) demonstrates only 2 errors made by the learners and is included in the study simply because learners often ask about the use of this verb in the advertising slogan of a well-known fast food chain. **Conclusion**

The information outlined in the article can facilitate the comprehension of the linguistic peculiarities of dynamic and stative verbs in English. The theoretical aspect provides a brief, comprehensive classification of the types of verbs. The analysis show the different meanings that the verbs express and the ways in which they change according to the specific context and the concepts associated with them.

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