

The Systematic Elements Underlying the Expression of Futurity in English: An ESL Perspective

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy at Macquarie University,

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7 July, 2017

Abstract

The acquisition of the English Tense/Aspect (TA) system has long been identified as a source of ongoing difficulty for students of English as a Second Language (ESL). It is particularly complex where futurity is concerned, given the ten or more means of conveying eventualities in this temporal zone. A review of ten ESL grammar texts indicates that students are often led to believe that some futurity forms are interchangeable. A further problem is seen in the common 'silo' approach that fails to distinguish between the meaning/s and use/s of forms, thus allowing a confusing degree of implied overlap to remain unaddressed.

The goal of this theoretical research is to explicate and disambiguate six futurity forms by means of a set of ten criteria aimed at creating an individual profile for each structure. These are meaning/use, temporality, modality, context/genre, aspect, schedulability and pre-determinability, agency, locus of control, register, and the possible requirement of a temporal adverbial. The findings here indicate that no two futurity forms are interchangeable.

Moving beyond the notion that temporal location and grammatical rules can account for the range of forms available, central to this discussion is the primacy of speaker perspective. In other words, the speaker brings a perspective to any utterance, which allows for a degree of structural choice. Given the inherently unactualised nature of the future, they have a range of available viewpoints on any propositional content, e.g., ranging from strong epistemic force to weak prediction, or from a sense of personal control to one of externally imposed agency. This research claims that an understanding of English tense and aspect must address the concepts underlying the system as a whole, most especially those not easily discernible from input.

The purpose here is ultimately to ease students' learning load by creating six individual futurity-form profiles, so that ESL students can disambiguate these structures and move beyond the common belief that *will* + V is the default means of communicating future propositions. It is hoped that this will contribute towards enabling learners to create and access future temporal meaning accurately and effectively, i.e., assist them in taking possession of the English language and expressing their own meaning.

Keywords: tense, aspect, futurity, temporality, agency, perspective, modality, ESL, context

Statement of Candidate

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled *The systematic elements underlying the expression of futurity in English: An ESL perspective* has not previously been submitted for a degree, nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also submit that the thesis is an original piece of research and that it has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been appropriately acknowledged.

In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.



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7 July, 2017

Acknowledgements

I would firstly like to thank my Principal Supervisor, Associate Professor Rosalind Thornton, and my Second Supervisor, Distinguished Professor Stephen Crain. Their perspective from the sphere of linguistics (as opposed to mine from applied linguistics) enriched my approach. Additionally, their support in endeavours to broaden my PhD experience enabled me to attend an international linguistics summer school in 2013 and an international conference in 2016. On that score, I am also very grateful to Macquarie University and the Department of Linguistics for the generous funding which enabled these valuable experiences.

It is also vital to acknowledge the work of the Macquarie University Library staff. As a distance student, I was reliant on their assistance in locating and dispatching texts relevant to my research. In this task they were unfailingly helpful and prompt.

My very deep gratitude goes to my mother, Clare O'Byrne, whose enthusiasm and support for this undertaking have been profound and unflagging. I believe my initial interest in linguistics was sparked by her lifelong love of the rules of syntax, which resulted in my likely being the only child in my primary school class aware that gerunds take the possessive case and that the verb *to be* takes the nominative case before and after. The journey continues.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The initial task of this thesis is to identify and explicate the principal elements underlying the English Verb Tense and Aspect (TA) system.¹ The analysis will examine the TA system broadly, with a view to identifying the systematic elements at its core. The outcomes of this investigation will then be applied to a focus on the expression of futurity in English, which is the primary undertaking of this thesis. The ultimate goal of the research is to contribute towards the creation of a more effective approach to the acquisition of futurity in the TA system, by adult learners² of English as a Second Language (ESL). As chapter 2 will illustrate, the manner in which the future is depicted and conveyed in texts can add to the already-heavy learning load of ESL students. It is believed that by identifying potentially systematic elements within the English TA system, the burden of both students and teachers can be reduced.

To expand on these central reasons for seeking to establish this proposed system of elements: firstly, it is suggested that such an underlying system would alleviate at least to some degree the strain and lack of clarity imposed on the learner by the conventional ‘silo’ approach to tenses and aspects. This approach is commonly seen in grammar textbooks for ESL speakers or teachers, in their general tendency to treat each individual tense or aspect as a separate entity. This also commonly applies to the variety of ways in which one tense or aspect structure can be used. An example of the latter can be seen in the *Collins COBUILD English Grammar* (2011, pp. 207-209), which outlines nine different uses of the Simple Present tense form, without offering an all-encompassing principle for this tense. The Present Progressive form (a distinction will not be made here between this term and ‘Present Continuous’) is then outlined in terms of four different uses. In each of these two discussions, the same heading, ‘Habitual Actions’, is employed. While the focus on the respective uses of these forms of the present can be very helpful to students, the issue of overlap and boundaries between the two forms can be

¹ The definition of core terms such as *tense* and *aspect* will be a matter of substantial discussion in chapter 3. For that reason, the use of these terms prior to that stage will appeal to reader intuition.

² This is due to the complexity of the cognitive concepts, plus the more sophisticated eventualities addressed here. Brief mention of its possible use for children is made in chapter 6, but this is not the principal focus of this research.

a source of confusion, particularly when it is unacknowledged. Each form remains in its silo and is not presented in unambiguous contrast or connection with others.

This thesis will explore whether each futurity TA form can be seen as having a core meaning and whether each form can be seen as part of the 'big picture' which is underpinned by certain identifiable elements. As Binnick (1991, p. 126) states, "we must at some point ask ourselves in what way tenses mean, have meaning". However, this must be approached in such a way that the TA system of a language is not implicitly depicted as being chaotic, as "obviously there are principles underlying tense and aspect" (Binnick, 1991, p. 130). Neither should students be given the impression that certain forms are generally interchangeable, which unfortunately is an implication not uncommon in texts (as again seen in chapter 2).

The second rationale for the identification of a system of elements is that the ways in which time is framed in English are more often than not presented only implicitly in texts as a given, or a norm. This may be useful or at least adequate for students whose first language has a similar (but never identical) time framework, as do many Indo-European languages. In fact, the use of a time framework in itself can be a given for such speakers. As Binnick (1991, p. 126) comments, speakers of most European languages would find it difficult to imagine a language which does not mark tense. However, for speakers of vastly different languages, particularly those which have no marked tense, this implied norm can exacerbate the level of difficulty of the task, as many factors are not made salient and are left unexplained. It would surely be useful to make explicit the fact that languages differ in the viewpoints on time which they select (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000, p. 211); in other words, different languages can grammaticalise different kinds of meaning. So "not only do the formal tense/aspect marking devices available to individual languages vary, but also the systems of temporal contrasts realized by the totality of such devices within a given language" (Deo, 2012, pp. 156-7). It would appear that in at least the majority of textbooks, the English time paradigm is presented from within, rather than from an external perspective, which would more readily enable access. However if, for example, students were made aware that one of the core elements of the English TA system is the contrast between completion and incompleteness of a state or event, this could provide an essential component of a framework to which they could progressively add and appeal. As Deo

(2012, p. 157) further explains, “we need to determine the nature and organization of the temporal/aspect pie and how it may be cut”. This could then be conveyed to students in a manner appropriate to their level.

In the light of the above, this thesis will move beyond the identification of a form, meaning and use for each tense or aspect. It seeks to classify the elements underlying the English TA system as a whole, so as to facilitate its acquisition by ESL students and its conveyance by teachers. This aligns with the belief outlined by Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca (1994, p. 1) that it is not tenable to take a structuralist position which entails that “each language represents a tidy system in which units [of language] are defined by the oppositions they enter into”. The English TA system does not consist of a clearly delineated and salient group of discrete items. From the perspective of the language learner, it can appear ‘messy’ and confusing. To illustrate this: English is usually presented to second language (L2) learners as having a tripartite tense system that is split clearly into past, present and future time. (Morphologically, however, it is most commonly viewed by linguists as a binary system involving past or non-past (Brisard, 2004, p. 30), i.e., present and future seen as non-past). But students ultimately need to grapple with the fact that many tense forms can in fact refer to any of the three time frames, i.e., present, past or future, as illustrated below:

SIMPLE PRESENT FORMS	TIME REFERENCE
Corrupt politician resigns.	Past
He works in the city.	Past, Present & Future
Elephants have trunks.	Past, Present & Future
The express train to Darwin leaves at 23:00.	Past, Present & Future
I can’t meet you in the morning – my plane leaves at 9:00.	Future
A man walks into a bar and sees a pig seated at a table.	Past
PRESENT PROGRESSIVE FORMS	TIME REFERENCE
What are you doing in the kitchen?	Present
I’m writing a book at the moment.	Past, Present & Future
She’s meeting him tomorrow.	Future
She’s always losing her keys.	Past, Present & Future
So I’m coming home yesterday and I’m feeling pretty good.	Past
SIMPLE PAST FORMS	TIME REFERENCE
She flew to Melbourne yesterday.	Past
If he were the prime minister, he’d be popular.	Present
If she became the CEO, she would dominate the next AGM.	Future

Table 1-1 Multi-time reference of TA forms

As can be seen, tense does not equate neatly with time. However, non-core usages of a particular form are often ignored in linguistic analyses, or their usage is explained in ways that overlap with that of other forms. This research aims to give optimal coverage to the complete range of future TA forms – not, as Brisard (2004, p. 30) laments, just “a subset of theoretically sanctioned usage types”. Rather than conducting a futile search for a neatly delineated TA system, it will be assumed that “ambiguity seems to be the norm in tense semantics, rather than the exception” (Brisard, 2004, p. 30). However this does not relieve researchers of the task of attempting to identify a core, differentiated meaning for each TA structure.

Chapter 2 will proceed by exploring the approaches to the teaching and learning of the expression of futurity in English, via a literature review of ESL grammar textbooks. It asks ten questions of ten selected texts, with the aim of ascertaining the current ‘state of play’ in representations of the future, in order to then identify gaps and issues in need of attention.

As a basis for the analysis of the English TA system, chapter 3 will address the issues of time, tense and aspect, plus related matters. These will provide the framework for how English conceptualizes and differentiates between tense and aspect, which determines how states and events are allocated a place on a timeline, or whether indeed this is possible.

Chapter 4 explores issues of futurity in the English TA system. As Deo (2012, p. 156) observes from a cross-linguistic perspective, “[r]eference grammars of languages abound in descriptions of morphemes and constructions that indicate pastness, ongoingness, futurity, anteriority, completedness, durativity, iterativity, habituality, inchoativity, and so on”. But only in some languages are these obligatorily expressed. The elements selected by English for obligatory and grammatical encoding will be identified and illustrated here mainly in the past and present tenses, primarily for the sake of salience and simplicity. These will then contribute to a framework for the discussion of futurity in chapter 5, which will inevitably beg the question as to whether other elements are also at play in the future. These elements will then contribute to the creation of an individual profile for each future structure.

As such, chapter 5 embodies the main contribution of this research. More often than not, the linguistics literature states that English has no future tense, a claim based on the lack of a distinctive set of morphological markings for futurity. However, the discussion will dispute

this assertion, firstly on the grounds that a discussion of tense and aspect must go beyond morphological considerations. Secondly, from a pedagogical standpoint, the claim that English has no future tense is of little use to ESL students, who are faced with a choice of at least ten verbal means of expressing futurity. Added to this, some of these ten or so forms embody multiple uses.

Chapter 6 will outline the implications of the research and offer some comments on possible future directions in ESL teaching and learning. It is hoped that an understanding of the underlying elements in the English TA system and the use of these elements to identify a core meaning plus uses for each form will allow for a more effective, efficient and accurate understanding of the expression of futurity in English. This discussion will then be followed by some concluding remarks in chapter 7.

Although this research is ultimately aimed at benefitting ESL speakers, it does not draw on their knowledge or understanding of the English TA system in its analysis. Rather, it focuses on native-speakers' and linguists' implicit knowledge about the semantic elements underpinning the system (Deo 2012, p. 157), as utilised in theoretical and reference texts. In other words, it will depict the knowledge that first language (L1) speaker-hearers of English have (Chomsky 2007, p. 37), which allows them to use the TA system accurately, meaningfully and relevantly for their own purposes. But it attempts to move beyond a reliance on intuition and, through the identification of underlying elements, to establish external criteria aimed at meeting the learning needs of the ESL learner. These needs are perhaps most succinctly expressed by Binnick (1991, p. 131) when he states that "a semantic theory is required, one in which linguistic expressions can be systematically defined in terms of their relationships to aspects of reality". In terms of futurity, this research aims to assist ESL students in their task of encoding and decoding depictions of reality.

Before progressing, it would be useful to further delineate the focus of the discussion, firstly by stating the aim to discuss English in the most global sense possible, i.e., in what is commonly referred to as Standard English. This will mean, in the words of Merriam-Webster (Standard English, 2014):

the English that with respect to spelling, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary is substantially uniform though not devoid of regional differences, that is well established by usage in the formal and informal speech and writing of the educated, and that is widely recognized as acceptable wherever English is spoken and understood.

As Trudgill and Hannah (2013, p. 1) further explain, “[t]his type of English is called ‘standard’ because it has undergone standardization, which means that it has been subjected to a process through which it has been selected, codified and stabilized, in a way that other varieties have not”. In essence, this research will refer to the form of English that has intuitively (but perhaps not willingly) been accepted as ‘globally recognised’. Where relevant, divergences from this implicit convergence will be identified.

Secondly, attention will be focused on the use of each TA form as represented in matrix clauses only, in sentence or short-dialogue form. The issues not addressed in depth here include:

- Non-standard varieties of English or heavily ‘marked’ uses
- Non-matrix clauses
- Interclausal relations
- Aktionsart (lexical aspect)
- Negation
- Indirect Speech
- Counterfactuality (Irrealis)

The discussion will now proceed with a literature review of ten ESL grammar texts and the ways in which they depict futurity. Its ultimate purpose is to build a rationale and foundation for this discussion in subsequent chapters, as well as to ascertain the degree to which underlying elements of the English language TA system are identified for students, potentially assisting in their acquisition of the system with optimal effectiveness and efficiency.

Chapter 2: Literature review of ESL texts

2.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of a review of a selection of texts produced for adult ESL learners. It focuses only on the segments of these texts which address the TA system, specifically the future. It seeks to gauge the current state of this literature in terms of how futurity is presented and explained to learners.

The task facing L2 students of English entails addressing at least ten possible ways³ of expressing futurity, as shown in Table 2-1 below:

He flies tomorrow.
He's flying tomorrow.
He's going to fly tomorrow.
He will fly tomorrow.
He will be flying tomorrow.
This time tomorrow, he will have flown for three hours.
This time tomorrow, he will have been flying for three hours.
He is about to fly.
He is to fly tomorrow.
He is due to fly tomorrow.

Table 2-1 Ten means of expressing English futurity

Hence the task of the grammarian is firstly to either select the most salient forms or to present all forms; and secondly, to differentiate between them. As will be seen, this is a highly complex task, particularly as in contrast to past and present forms, future forms cannot be as clearly delineated and do not fit as neatly into matrices.

Ten texts were selected according to the following criteria. Each text:

³ Also possible are lexical/semantic future expressions, e.g., *hope to* or *want to* (Bardovi-Harlig, 2017, p. 31) and forms such as *be off to* + V.

- was published in a country in which English is the/an Official Language
- was published in or after 2003
- was written for adult learners of ESL
- is a dedicated ESL grammar book (rather than an integrated skills text)
- focuses on Standard English
- is at an immediate or advanced level (enabling analysis of a broad range of forms).

Along with adherence to these criteria, an attempt was made to select volumes that are seen as prominent and relatively current texts in the field of ESL. However, two texts not fitting this description (although current) were also chosen, firstly as a means of avoiding a total Western bias and secondly, in order to allow for consideration of the contribution of content from a more minor publication. Hence the following ten texts were selected:

Text 1:	Azar, B. S., & Hagen, S. A. (2009). <i>Understanding and using English grammar</i> . White Plains, NY: Pearson Education.
Text 2:	Swan, M., & Walter, C. (2011). <i>Oxford English Grammar Course: Basic</i> . Oxford: OUP.
Text 3:	Swan, M. (2005). <i>Practical English Usage</i> . Oxford: OUP.
Text 4:	Bourke, R. (2006). <i>Verbs and Tenses: Pre-intermediate</i> . Oxford: OUP.
Text 5:	Murphy, R. (2012). <i>English grammar in use: a self-study reference and practice book for intermediate learners of English</i> . 4 th ed. Cambridge: CUP.
Text 6:	Davidson, G. (2003). <i>Verbs and Tenses</i> . Singapore: Learners Publishing.
Text 7:	<i>Collins COBUILD English Grammar</i> (2011). London: Collins COBUILD.
Text 8:	Thewlis, S. H. (2007). <i>Grammar Dimensions 3: Form, meaning, and use</i> . 4 th ed., Boston: Heinle.
Text 9:	Frodesen, J., & Eyring, J. (2007). <i>Grammar dimensions 4: Form, meaning, and use</i> . Boston: Heinle.
Text 10:	Hewings, M. (2013). <i>Advanced grammar in use: a self-study reference and practice book for advanced learners of English</i> (3 rd ed.). Cambridge: CUP.

Table 2-2 Ten texts selected for analysis

The next step in this process was to establish a set of criteria which would enable a comprehensive analysis of the ways in which each text represents futurity. After several trials,⁴ these were established as the following:

1. Does the text include a definition of tense?
2. How are ways of talking about the future organised?
3. Is the future defined as multi-formal? (i.e., not only *will* + V)?
4. Are all forms for talking about the future in English included?
5. Is a context provided?
6. Is the role of speaker perspective included?
7. Is the role of register included?
8. Is each form distinguished from others in terms of a core meaning and use/s which are explained?
9. Is overlap with other forms acknowledged and explained?
10. Are multiple uses of one form explained and distinguished from each other?

Table 2-3 Ten criteria for text analysis

The ten texts will be discussed under each criterion, e.g., Criterion 1 will address the way in which each text defines tense and time, if at all. Longer excerpts from any texts will be framed by a border.

2.2 Criterion 1: Does the text include a definition of tense?

For students whose L1 marks tense, defining the concept itself may seem superfluous. However, these same students may not have had occasion to make explicit the ways in which their own language marks and 'organises' time. Personal teaching experience has shown that they can experience confusion if it becomes apparent that English has a different framework for talking about time. The task which presents itself to students with a non-tensed L1 likely becomes far more complex, as they need to grapple with the concept of tense itself, i.e., it will not be the given that ESL educators often assume (Duan, 2011, p. 173). For this reason, the first

⁴ These were also shaped by many years of dealing with ESL student questions regarding futurity.

criterion in this research asks whether each selected text defines the concept of tense in a way that may be helpful to students.

Of the ten texts, half give a definition of tense. Interestingly, Hewings (2013) does not use the term at all in explaining the different time frames, etc. From the start, he refers to ‘the present continuous’, ‘the present simple’, etc.⁵ In his glossary, he defines *verb*, but not *tense*. However, in doing so, he invokes the use of the word *tense* (Hewings, 2013, p. 209): “verb: A finite verb has a tense (e.g., *She waited*; *She is waiting* for you)”.

In a back section of this book, entitled ‘Study Planner’, the first part includes exercises which review tenses (Hewings, 2013, p. 210), yet again the term is not defined. This may not be problematic in itself for students, but this section entitled ‘Tenses’ is followed by another completely separate one called ‘The future’ (Hewings, 2013, p. 211). Hence learners may be forced to consider why this is the case, without being provided with an explanation.

In not referring to tense, Bourke (2006) takes the same approach overall by not defining the term. Yet in introducing futurity, she starts by stating that “English doesn’t have a future tense” (2006, p. 41). It could perhaps be inferred that these two authors had decided not to encumber students with issues about tense and aspect, although this is somewhat surprising in the Hewings text, which is aimed at advanced learners.

Beyond not utilising the term *tense*, the most minimalistic approach is that of Swan and Walter (2001, p. ix), who simply exemplify tense forms, rather than defining the term: “*She goes, she is going, she went, she was going, she has gone* are different tenses”. Typical of most definitions is Swan (2005, p. xix), who says that tense is “a verb form that shows the time of an action, event or state”. In the same Language Terminology section, he differentiates between tense and aspect, explaining that the latter expresses “other ideas besides time (e.g., continuity, completion)” (p. xvii). However, he adds that for the sake of simplicity in this text, the term *tense* is used for both concepts. Disappointingly, the concepts of continuity and completion are not defined and do not feature significantly in the main text’s explanations of future forms.

⁵ Examples of tenses and aspects in English are given in Appendix A.

More simply, Murphy (2012, Grammar words, p. 8) explains tense as “a verb form that shows time”, adding that “English verbs have two main tenses, present and past. Present and past tenses can be simple or continuous”. Having said this, he further clarifies the fact that present tenses are used to talk about the future, along with *will* and *(be) going to* (Murphy, 2012, Grammar words, p. 3). The usefulness to students of this statement may be queried, and the presentation of the future as ‘other’ is left unexplained. However, it may be that in presenting the future, authors are unwilling to generate ‘cluttered’ tables which lack a sense of order and uniformity, when compared to verb forms expressing present or past time. After all, ways of expressing futurity do not fit neatly into morphologically organised tables, as will be seen.

In *Verbs and Tenses*, Davidson (2003, p. 47) defines *tense* as meaning *time*. He then further explains (2003: 47) that:

the tense of a verb shows whether the action⁶ of the verb happened in the past, the present or the future, whether it is a single action or a repeated action, whether the action is completed, and so on.

Hence Davidson presents to the student three elements of significance in English tenses: time as past, present or future; repetition of an action; and completion of an action. The latter two are constructive in that they allude to the role of aspect in the system, but they are inadequately defined and are not illustrated. Furthermore, “and so on” at the end of the definition is unhelpful. Yet Davidson’s claim that tense shows whether an action happened in the past, present or future is inaccurate or at the very least incomplete. For example, the Simple Present often makes no reference to a particular time, which is in fact indicated in Davidson’s own examples under the heading of “The Simple Present Tense” (2003, p. 47):

Cows **eat** grass.
I **like** pop music.

⁶ States are not mentioned.

This may not be as confusing for many Indo-European L1 speakers whose languages function in a similar way. But for speakers of unmarked-tense languages, this would seem to be at odds with the concept that they are attempting to acquire. The Simple Present is in fact the tense that is least strongly marked in English: it is sometimes referred to as temporally neutral (Carruthers, 2012, p. 307), as is shown in the above examples. Hence defining tense as always depicting a point in time only confounds the picture, as it is a position from which teachers and texts must ultimately retreat in their exploration of tense. It is on this point that an explanation of aspect has the potential to be clarifying and constructive (as will be discussed in chapter 3).

Without defining tense, Azar and Hagen (2009) speak of past, present and future time. They create a tripartite framework of simple, progressive, and perfect aspect (referred to by the authors as ‘tenses’). The Progressive is defined as giving “the idea that an action is in progress during a particular time”. The [progressive] tenses say that an action “begins before, is in progress during, and continues after another time or action” (p. 3); the Perfect, as giving “the idea that one thing *happens before* another time or event” (p. 4). But the simple aspect (p. 2) is not explained at all. (Perhaps confusing for students is the inclusion of both *will* and *going to* in the Simple Future: ‘simple’ tenses are conventionally defined as having a one-word verb or auxiliary).⁷ There is a laudable attempt to establish important underlying concepts here in terms of aspect, but it fails in the execution, due to a lack of clarity.

In the opening of its chapter entitled “Expressing time: tenses and time adverbials”, Collins COBUILD (2011, p. 206) defines tense as “a verb form that indicates a particular point in time or period of time”. They alone highlight the significant role played by time adverbials, doing so at the forefront of their discussion (2011, p. 206):

When you are making a statement, you usually need to make it clear whether you are talking about a situation that exists now, that exists in the past, or is likely to exist in the future. There are different ways of expressing time: **tense** is one; the use of **time adverbials** is another.

⁷ The use of this term is pervasive and hence infrequently defined. However, Hewings (2013, p. 16) illustrates it via a contrast between sentences featuring ‘simple’ forms and ‘continuous’ forms.

This focus is potentially very useful, particularly where a speaker uses the Present Progressive to describe a current action, as contrasted with the same verb form employed to make a statement about an arranged plan for the future, e.g.:

Present Progressive [action currently occurring]: *She's playing tennis now.*

Present Progressive [for a future arrangement]: *She's playing tennis tomorrow.*

However, this opportunity is not seized; nor is the actual point illustrated. In other words, no example is given of one statement requiring an adverbial and another being complete without one. The three example sentences all include an adverbial (2011, p. 206):

Sometimes the point in time is clear from the tense of the verb, and no other time reference is required. However if you want to draw attention to the time of the action, you use a **time adverbial**.

She's moving tomorrow.

He was better after undergoing surgery on Saturday.

Record profits were announced last week.

Apart from experiencing confusion, a student might easily infer that all statements require an adverbial. And the supposedly distinct functions of tense and adverbials are not illustrated.

Not untypically of grammar texts in general, Frodesen and Eyring (2007, p. 2) conflate the concepts of verb and tense, saying that verbs express the ways in which events take place in time. It is worth noting again that no distinction is made between events and states. In contrast, Murphy (2012, p. 8) defines a verb as “a word for an action (*go, eat, work*), a happening (*rain, find, die*) or a state (*be, know, want*)”. However, the reason for differentiating between actions and happenings is not explained, even though it is lexically accessible.

In a similar vein to Azar and Hagen (2009), Frodesen and Eyring (2007, p. 2) further explain that verb tense forms convey two main types of information, namely, a time frame and an aspect:

[A time frame tells us] when the event takes place: now, at some time in the past, or at some time in the future. Aspect [is] the way in which we look at an action or state: whether it occurs at a certain point in time (for example, *stop*) or lasts for period [*sic*] of time (for example, *study*)

Again the authors allude to aspect, but in a manner that crosses into Aktionsart, i.e., situation type or lexical aspect⁸ (Klein, 2009a, p. 18). However, it still has more clarity than the definition of aspect in Thewlis (2007, 2):

Aspect tells us **how** the verb is related to that time, or gives some other information about the quality of the action.

In a comprehensive table, Frodesen and Eyring (2007, p. 2) then illustrate the 12 ways in which time frame and aspect combine in English. To exemplify:

Aspect	Time Frame		
	Present	Past	Future
Simple (at that point in time)	<i>stop/stops</i> <i>study/studies</i> (simple present)	<i>stopped</i> <i>studied</i> (simple past)	<i>will stop</i> <i>will study</i> (simple future)
Progressive (in progress at that point in time)	<i>am/is/are stopping</i> <i>am/is/are studying</i> (present progressive)	<i>was/were stopping</i> <i>was/were studying</i> (past progressive)	<i>will be stopping</i> <i>will be studying</i> (future progressive)
Perfect (before that time)	<i>has/have stopped</i> <i>has/have studied</i> (present perfect)	<i>had stopped</i> <i>had studied</i> (past perfect)	<i>will have stopped</i> <i>will have studied</i> (future perfect)
Perfect Progressive (in progress before and during that time)	<i>has/have been stopping</i> <i>has/have been studying</i> (present perfect progressive)	<i>had been stopping</i> <i>had been studying</i> (past perfect progressive)	<i>will have been stopping</i> <i>will have been studying</i> (future perfect progressive)

The future is represented in terms of *will* only, but a note below the table explains that “there are many ways to express the future time frame in English” (Frodesen & Eyring, 2007, p. 2); it then directs the reader to the relevant section. (This will be discussed further under Criterion 4.)

⁸ Aktionsart, meaning ‘kind of action’, is a lexical rather than grammatical category which concerns the type of temporal structure indicated by a verb (Binnick, 2009, p. 269). These can be divided into somewhere between two types, i.e., states and events (Carlson, 2012, p. 828), or as many as 17 types (Noreen, 1923, in Klein, 2009b, p. 60.) The most commonly-used classification is perhaps still Vendler’s four sub-groups: activity, accomplishment, achievement and state (Klein, 2009b, p. 60).

This framework is perhaps clearer for the reader than the approach taken by Murphy (2012, Grammar words, p. 8), who illustrates the verb forms in “the two main tenses”, adding that they can be simple, continuous or perfect:

present	past
<i>I walk</i> (present simple)	<i>I walked</i> (past simple)
<i>I am walking</i> (present continuous)	<i>I was walking</i> (past continuous)
All of these can also be perfect (with <i>have</i>):	
<i>I have walked</i> (present perfect simple)	<i>I had walked</i> (past perfect simple)
<i>I have been walking</i> (present perfect continuous)	<i>I had been walking</i> (past perfect continuous)

But even more so than in Frodesen and Eyring, Murphy treats the future as a distinct entity, providing a comprehensive table of future forms in a separate entry (also to be discussed under Criterion 4).

In all, texts which define tense tend to invoke a tripartite division into past, present and future time. Some give equal attention to each of these, while others build a model based on morphology, which holds that English has two main tenses, namely, past and present. None of the ten texts suggests that present time is not neatly represented by tensed forms which focus only on ‘now’, which is also not defined. For example, the Simple Present is commonly used to express ‘timeless truths’, but the apparent contradiction here between tense and time is only minimally addressed in the texts. This is problematic, as can be seen above in Frodesen & Eyring’s (2007, p. 2) depiction of the Simple Present as representing a point in time (likewise in Thewlis, 2007, p. 14). Collins COBUILD clarifies this to a degree by explaining and exemplifying as below (2011, p. 208):

If you want to talk about a settled state of affairs that includes the present moment but where the particular time reference is not important, you use the present simple.

My dad works in Saudi Arabia.

He lives in the French Alps near the Swiss border.

However this is potentially problematic in that similar comments could be made in regard to the Present Perfect. For example, the statement, “He has lived in Tokyo since he was born”,

encompasses a settled state of affairs, includes the present moment, and gives no particular time reference (except the entailment of a present focus).

Perhaps the clearest illustration of the Present Simple occurs in Murphy (2012, p. 6):

Present simple (I do)

I do

<-----|----->

past now future

- Water **boils** at 100 degrees Celsius.
- Excuse me, **do** you **speak** English?
- It **doesn't rain** very much in summer.
- ...

We use the simple present for permanent situations:

- My parents **live** in London. They have lived there all their lives.
- Joe isn't lazy. He **works** hard most of the time.

It might be argued again that this could exacerbate confusion between the Simple Present and the Present Perfect, but aside from that, the explanation and exemplification are instructive.

Regarding this criterion overall, it can be said that tense is either not clearly defined or not defined at all and is most commonly linked to time. The latter is defined as past, present or future, with a small number of texts focusing on morphology, stating that English has only two tenses. Where aspect is concerned, the texts either do not address it (i.e., labelling all forms as tenses); alternatively, they simply give the names of tenses and aspects as headings for sections; or they clearly define it as simple, progressive or perfect. (In the case of Thewlis (2007, p. 2), a fourth aspect, Perfect Progressive (e.g., *will have been studying*), is added). But in the discussion of aspect, although the execution is problematic in most cases, the approach can still be viewed as a positive one in introducing students to the concept of underlying elements which go beyond past, present and future time.

2.3 Criterion 2: How are ways of talking about the future organised?

An overview of the ten selected texts shows that they present three main ways of organising a discussion of verb tenses for the purposes of ESL instruction, i.e., form, time and function,⁹ with form being by far the most common principal mode of organization. Function is also utilised, but only as a subheading under the respective forms.

In the texts, form is used as a means of organisation in one of two ways: either the elements of the verb itself (e.g., *will be -ing*) or the name of the tense/aspect (e.g., Future Continuous) appears as a heading. Some texts use a combination of the two (as in Murphy 2012). Where time is an organising factor, headings such as “The present” and “The past” are employed (e.g., Collins COBUILD, 2011, p. 207, 211). Table 2-4 below indicates the chosen mode of each text:

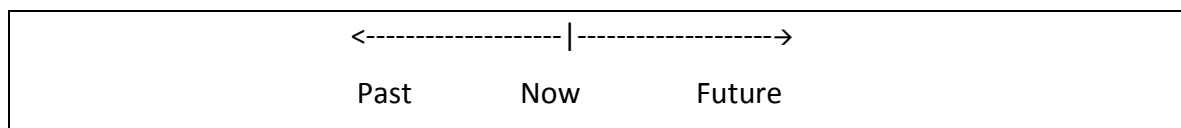
TEXT	FORM	TIME
Azar & Hagen	Globally: 3 times & 3 aspects; Future: form-based structure (<i>will vs be going to</i> ; Future Progressive)	
Swan & Walter	✓	
Swan	✓	
Bourke	✓	
Murphy	✓	
Davidson	✓	
Collins COBUILD		✓
Thewlis	Globally: 3 times & aspects globally; Future: form-based structure (<i>will, be going to, etc.</i>)	
Frodesen & Eyring	Globally: 3 times & 4 aspects; Future: form-based (<i>will, be going to, Present Progressive etc.</i>)	
Hewings	✓	

Table 2-4 Text organisational approach

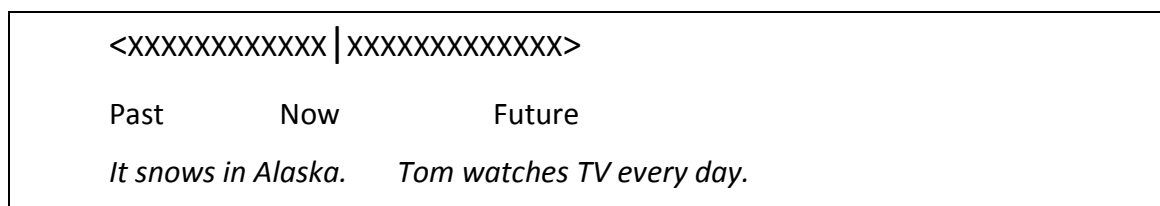
⁹ Form = structure, e.g., an auxiliary plus lexical verb. Function = the role performed by a form in a language, e.g., inviting or offering.

Significantly, Azar and Hagen (2009), Frodesen & Eyring (2009) and Thewlis (2007) use a time-and-aspect matrix approach when presenting the Verb Tense System on a global scale, in which the future is generally represented by *will*. But all three texts abandon their matrix approach in units devoted to the future, where the approach is form-based (e.g., *will*, *going to*, the Present Progressive etc.). This can be seen as tacit recognition of the fact that the future must be treated differently and cannot be neatly segmented into the same paradigm as the present and past, with non-conforming means of expressing futurity as inconvenient ‘add-ons’.

As illustrated above, Azar and Hagen (2009) take a strong time- and aspect-based approach to tenses in their text overall. They divide aspect into Simple, Progressive and Perfect, all referred to as tenses and depicted in forms (simple, progressive (*be* + *V -ing*) and perfect (*have* + past participle)). To illustrate: the simple tenses are discussed in terms of past, present and future. Each group of aspects begins with a diagram based on a timeline (Azar & Hagen, 2007, p. 2):



Of benefit is the authors’ clarification of the use of the Simple Present in terms of its ‘timeless’ meaning (2007, p. 2):



They further explain that this tense “expresses events or situations that exist *always, usually, habitually*; they exist now, have existed in the past, and probably will exist in the future” (Azar & Hagen, 2007, p. 2). Although this is not a comprehensive explanation, it is a positive break away from the usually erroneous definition which refers to a point in time.

While Azar and Hagen introduce the simple, progressive and perfect aspects in terms of the tripartite division, the future is later addressed in ways that move beyond *will*. But perhaps confusingly, *be going to* is included alongside *will*, with the implicit suggestion that they are interchangeable. (Again, this most likely results from the constraints of the matrix approach.) This ambiguity continues throughout the introductory chapter, called Overview of Verb Tenses, and is not addressed until chapter 4, where a form-based approach continues, with section headings such as “Simple Future: *Will* and *Be Going To*”; “Using the Present Progressive and the Simple Present to Express Future Time”; or “Future Perfect Progressive” (Azar & Hagen, 2007). Hence as in the other nine texts, students cannot have as a starting point a meaning which they wish to express; rather they must process the forms in order to identify the one relevant to their meaning.

The presentation of three aspects is advantageous, as again it conveys to students the ways in which events, actions and states can be situated in English, i.e., as a completed entity (simple); an action/event in progress at a particular time (progressive); or one thing preceding another time or event (perfect) (Azar & Hagen, 2007, p. 4).¹⁰ Yet where the simple aspect is concerned, no explanation is given, even though it is illustrated diagrammatically (see above). The progressive aspect is more carefully explained, while the account of the perfect fails to identify which of the two times/events is the focus point and which the background, for example in the illustrative sentence, “Tom *will* already *have eaten* when his friend *arrives*” (Azar & Hagen, 2007, p. 4).

In many ways that are similar to Azar and Hagen’s approach, Davidson (2003) organises his discussion of tenses around form (but by giving the tense name, rather than the elements of the form as a unit, e.g., p. 51). He covers the simple tenses first, saying that English has two of these, i.e., the present and the past. So, unlike Azar and Hagen, he appears to take the stricter understanding of simple tense (in fact, aspect) as meaning a one-word verbal component (e.g., *walk*, *walked*). Again in the same vein as Agar and Hagen, he refers to all tenses and aspects as ‘tenses’, including the future, which is exemplified in terms of the *will* form only. In what is a common approach, the future is outlined as *will*, followed by an asterisked sentence or a note

¹⁰ Aspect will be discussed in greater depth in chapter 3.

below the main table, indicating that other ways of talking about the future will be discussed at a later stage (Davidson, 2003, p. 48). Similarly, Collins COBUILD (2011, p. 216) talks about “Expressing future time” in terms of *will/shall*, followed by the heading, “Other ways of talking about the future”. This can well be imagined as a source of puzzlement to most readers. If the future is a tense, it must be asked why its various forms, apart from *will*, are listed almost as addenda. This can have the undesirable effect of conveying to students the idea that these other forms are unnecessary and that the future can adequately be expressed by *will + V*.

Both Swan and Walter (2011) and Swan (2005) use forms in their section headings to talk about the future. In the former, “Present Progressive” is a heading in a section entitled “Talking About the Future” (p. 38), while Swan (2005, p. 189) in a similar vein uses “Future (4): present progressive”. However, no mention is made of the possible anomaly in using a present form to express futurity. Akin to this is Murphy (2012, p. 38), who uses headings such as “Present tenses (I am doing/I do) for the future”; and Hewings (2013, p. 20), whose unit titles include “Present simple and present continuous for the future”.

Bourke (2006) uses a similar approach, but combines an element of function in her organisational headings: “The future (1) *Going to or will?* Making predictions and talking about future facts” (p. 41). As is implied, however, the forms tend to be conflated in their uses within these functions.

As can be seen, form dominates as a way of organising discussions of the future. But this is not necessarily a useful starting point, particularly for students whose L1 does not mark tense. It appears that authors have neglected the fact that for learners, a common starting point in their need to express themselves is meaning or function, rather than form.

2.4 Criterion 3: Is the future defined as multi-formal? (i.e., not only *will + V*)?

As seen in Table 2-5 below, all texts cover future forms beyond *will + V*, but some are more limited than others in the range of both the forms and functions that they feature.

TEXT	<i>will</i> + V	OTHER FORMS
Azar & Hagen	✓	✓
Swan & Walter	✓	✓
Swan	✓	✓
Bourke	✓	✓
Murphy	✓	✓
Davidson	✓	✓
Collins COBUILD	✓	✓
Thewlis	✓	✓
Frodesen & Eyring	✓	✓
Hewings	✓	✓

Table 2-5 Coverage of *will* + V and other future forms

Significantly, Murphy (2012) addresses the Simple Present, Present Continuous and *be going to* before *will* as means of expressing futurity, presumably because he believes that they are more commonly used. Hewings (2013, p. 18) leads with a juxtaposition of *will* and *be going to*, as does Bourke (2006, p. 20).

Extending this approach further, Thewlis (2007, p. 246) opens his discussion of the future with a comparison of three forms, namely, the Simple Present, the Present Progressive, and modals (*should* and *will*). Swan and Walter (2011, p. 35) also lead with three forms, i.e., *be going to*, the Present Progressive, and *will* + V. Azar and Hagen (2009, p. 60) extend this even further with an opening exercise that contrasts *be going to*, Present Continuous, *will* + V, and the Simple Present. While Swan (2005, p. 186) begins his discussion of the future with *will* + V, he prefaces this with a statement which explains that there are several ways to talk about the future.

The remaining two texts, Collins COBUILD (2011, p. 216) and Davidson (2003, p. 176) lead with *will* + V. Surprisingly, Collins COBUILD, given its corpus-driven approach, only mentions the Present Continuous in a seemingly cursory way, as it is buried at the tail-end of its discussion of the future (2011, p. 218), under the heading of “Time adverbials with reference to

the future”. Under its main organisational approach of time, it is very strictly form-based. Ways of talking about the future are listed in terms of all *will*-related uses, followed by the Future Progressive (*will be* + *V-ing*), the Future Perfect (*will have* + *V-ed*) and the Future Perfect Progressive (*will have been* + *V-ing*). The next featured forms are *be going to*, *be due to*, and *be about to*. Last to appear are the Present Simple and finally, the Present Progressive. This is unexpected, e.g., given the latter’s degree of relative frequency in everyday use over *be due to*.

In all, the majority of texts do not imply that *will* + *V* alone is sufficient as a means of expressing futurity, which is a positive trend in conveying the expression of futurity to students. In this vein, the occasional prominence given to common forms such as the Present Progressive and *be going to* is constructive, particularly as a means of correcting the earlier overemphasis on *will* + *V*. However overall, the precedence given to respective forms and their functions does not at times represent their frequency and salience (see Tables 5-1, 5-2, 5-6, 5-19, 5-20). Criterion 4 continues this discussion in greater depth.

2.5 Criterion 4: Are all forms for talking about the future included?

TEXT	BASE FORM	<i>be -ing</i>	<i>going to V</i>	<i>will</i> + <i>V</i>	<i>will be -ing</i>	<i>will have -ed</i>	<i>will have been -ing</i>	<i>be about to + V</i>	<i>be to + V</i>	<i>be due to + V</i>
Azar & Hagen	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X
Swan & Walter	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X
Swan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	X
Bourke	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X
Murphy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	X
Davidson	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X
Collins COBUILD	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Thewlis	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X
Frodesen & Eyring	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X
Hewings	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X

Table 2-6 Future forms covered in the ten texts

A broad sweep from left to right in this table indicates that all ten texts cover what are considered to be the four 'key' future forms, i.e., the Simple Present; *be -ing*; *be going to + V*; and *will + V*. This suggests a strong degree of unanimity, which is not unexpected. By the same token, the lack of coverage of the ninth and tenth forms, *be to + V* and *be due to + V*, is not surprising, as these may commonly be perceived as relatively old-fashioned, or at least non-essential forms. The eighth form, *be about to + V*, is unlikely to be considered outmoded, but is not as well covered perhaps due to its lower rate of frequency, or what could be seen as its non-essential nature. Of more concern here is the absence in some texts of the middle three forms here, namely, *will be + V-ing*, *will have + V-ed*, and *will have been + V-ing*, particularly in those texts which purport to give a comprehensive coverage of the English TA system.

Swan and Walter (2011) and Bourke (2006) discuss the smallest number of forms (four), but this is in keeping with the fact that they address learners at a lower level than that found in the other texts.

The degree to which each of these forms is discussed will be explored in Criterion 8.

2.6 Criterion 5: Is a context provided?

Even though the ten texts were published in the last 10 to 15 years, the use of context ranges from minimal to non-existent. This is somewhat remarkable, as the essential place of context in grammar teaching has been accepted for several decades. For example, according to Nunan (1998, p. 102), if students are not provided with ample opportunities to see grammatical forms in context, they will fail to see the purpose and role of alternative forms and how these can convey different meanings. He further explains (1998, p. 102) that "[i]n genuine communication beyond the classroom, grammar and context are often so closely related that appropriate grammatical choices can only be made with reference to the context and purpose of the communication".

Nunan (1998, p. 102) goes on to add that only a small number of grammatical rules can stand alone, without any contextual constraints. Where tenses are concerned, Zagana (2013, p. 749) advances this argument, referring to an approach which states that tenses are similar to personal pronouns, in that their reference is contextual (as will be seen in section 3.3). However, in most of the texts analysed, it is commonplace for a verb form to be explained in

two or three sentences, typically followed by an exemplification consisting of several single-sentence examples without a context. This pattern of explanation + exemplification is seen in Davidson (2003) and Hewings (2013). It is also applied in Swan (2005, p. 190), as below:

We can sometimes use the simple present to talk about the future. This is common when we are talking about events which are part of a timetable, a regular schedule or something similar.

The summer term starts on April 10th.

What time does the bus arrive in Seattle?

My plane leaves at three o'clock.

Are you on duty next weekend?

The sun rises at 6:13 tomorrow.

Will is also usually possible in these cases.

As in most other texts, no context is given for the sentences and more confusingly, it is implied that the two forms (Simple Present and the *will* + V future) are interchangeable. Readers are informed that the *will* form is 'usually' possible here, but they are not told when this is not the case. In regard to the Simple Present form, this conflation is particularly misleading. As previously mentioned, the Simple Present can be temporally neutral, which means that it is strongly context-dependent (Fleischman, 1990, as cited in Carruthers, 2012, p. 307). Hence in these texts, opportunities to exploit context in order to explain meaning and differentiation are bypassed. Nunan alludes to precisely this issue (1998, p. 102):

Learners are given isolated sentences, which they are expected to internalize through exercises involving repetition, manipulation, and grammatical transformation. These exercises are designed to provide learners with formal, declarative mastery, but unless they provide opportunities for learners to explore grammatical structures in context, they make the task of developing procedural skill - being able to use the language for communication - more difficult than it needs to be.

To return to Swan's examples (2005, p. 190): it is suggested here that the two forms, Simple Present and *will* + V, are not in fact interchangeable and that the interpretations on the right are possible:

<i>The summer term starts on April 10th.</i>	an already-scheduled event
<i>The summer term will start on April 10th.</i>	announcement of a newly scheduled event
<i>Are you on duty next weekend?</i>	a scheduled event
<i>Will you be on duty next week?</i>	an enquiry about a yet-to-be-announced event
<i>What time does the bus arrive in Seattle?</i>	a scheduled event
<i>What time will the bus arrive in Seattle?</i>	a request to predict a future event

Table 2-7 Simple Present vs will + V: possible differentiations

Texts such as Azar and Hagen (2009, p. 65) go some way towards redressing this problem of context, occasionally using five/six-sentence dialogues which are illustrative:

Complete the sentences with **be going to** if you think the speaker is expressing a prior plan. If you think she/he has no prior plan, use **will**. Use **won't** if you think the speaker is expressing refusal.

5. A: How about getting together for dinner tonight?
 B: Sounds good. Where?
 A: How about Alice's Restaurant or the Gateway Café? You decide.
 B: Alice's Restaurant. I meet you there around six.
 A: Great. I see you there.
 B: It's a date.

The dialogue is also constructive in that it invites the learner to identify with the speaker's perspective and to appreciate the role that this plays in expressing intended meaning.

This is of far greater assistance than the approach taken in Azar and Hagen's initial explanations of a form, one example of which is as follows (2009, p. 73):

4.6 Future Perfect and Future Perfect Progressive

NOTE: These two tenses are rarely used compared to the other verb tenses.

- (a) I will graduate in June. I will see you in July. By the time I see you, I **will have graduated**.
 (b) I will go to bed at 10:00 P.M. Ed will get home at midnight. At midnight I will be sleeping. I **will have been sleeping** for two hours by the time Ed gets home.

No context for either of these two groups of statements is provided. And given their rather stilted tone, it is difficult to imagine a context in which they would sound natural. Adding to the

likely confusion is the note above the two examples, i.e., that the “two tenses are rarely used compared to the other verb tenses” (Azar & Hagen, 2009, p. 73). However, no explanation is given about when they are in fact used, or about a context in which their use is in fact required.

Surprisingly again for a volume that stresses its authenticity through corpus-based examples, Collins COBUILD (2011) is almost context-free and follows the common explanation + exemplification model of a two/three-sentence explanation plus isolated sentence examples. But a discussion of context is necessary in an explanation of any feature of the TA system: it could further be argued that the complexity involved in expressions of futurity demands it.

Bourke (2006) takes a “Test it, fix it, review” approach throughout her text. This entails starting each unit with a test consisting of several exercises focused on the target grammar element. “Fix it” notes follow, typically consisting of one sentence explanations of each form. The student is then given Review notes, which consist of slightly lengthier explanations and illustrative sentences. In one section on the future, a dialogue approach is attempted, but no context is given for each example and in fact a variety of answers is possible in some of these interactions. In this task, students are instructed to choose between *going to* and *will* (Bourke, 2006, p. 42):

a	LIA	OK, so I see you in the café later then.
	TOM	No, I play tennis after class. See you tomorrow.
b	SID	I’ve had a headache all day. I lie down now.
	NICKY	OK. I bring you some aspirin in a minute.
c	CAROL	Wehave a party next Saturday.
	HELEN	Brilliant. I come and help you with the food.
d	LUKE	I pick up Sue’s DVD player on the way home, OK?
	LIZ	Yes, that’s fine. I ring her this afternoon anyway, so I can tell her then.

In example (a), Tom could reply, “I’m playing tennis after class”, which is far more likely, as this would imply having made the necessary arrangements. Example (b) is clearer and captures the essence of the two forms in an instructive way, i.e., the expression of an intention that has involved prior thought (*going to*), followed by an on-the-spot offer (*will*). As with the first dialogue, in example (c), “We’re having a party next Saturday” is a more probable option,

because again this would convey the necessary arrangements with a second party. Example (d) also requires a context, as it is not clear whether Luke is making an on-the-spot offer or if he had a prior intention. While students are not being forced into an absolute error here, they are learning something which they will need to ‘unlearn’ at a later stage. (A similar approach to this is taken in Swan and Walter (2011).)

Murphy (2012) makes a greater attempt to establish a context, particularly when comparing two forms. For example, he contrasts *be going to* (when used to express arrangements or decisions) with *will* through the following scenario (p. 46):

Sarah is talking to Helen:
 Sarah: Let's have a party.
 Helen: That's a great idea. We'll invite lots of people.

will ('ll): We use *will* to announce a new decision. The party is a new idea.

A horizontal timeline with a vertical line at the center labeled 'now'. To the left of the line is 'past' and to the right is 'future'. Above the line, the text 'decision' and 'now' are aligned with the vertical line. A grey box containing 'We'll ... →' is positioned on the line, with an arrow pointing to the right towards the 'future'.

Later that day, Helen meets Dan:
 Helen: Sarah and I have decided to have a party. We're going to invite lots of people.

(be) going to: We use **(be) going to** when we have *already decided* to do something. Helen had already decided to invite lots of people *before* she spoke to Dan.

A horizontal timeline with a vertical line at the center labeled 'now'. To the left of the line is 'past' and to the right is 'future'. Above the line, the text 'decision' and 'before' are aligned with the vertical line. A grey box containing 'We're going to ... →' is positioned on the line, with an arrow pointing to the right towards the 'future'.

This combination of illustrative dialogues and diagrams which contrast the two forms in a context is of greater benefit to students than a short explanation accompanied by decontextualized sentences, as is seen in Hewings (2013, p. 18):

We use **will** when we make a decision at the moment of speaking and **be going to** for decisions about the future that have already been made. Compare:

- **I'll** pick him up at eight. (an offer; making an arrangement now) *and*
- **I'm going to** collect the children at eight. (this was previously arranged)

On first appearances, Thewlis (2007) sets out to establish a context for the respective future forms. However the extent to which the execution assists learners remains questionable. His approach of presenting the tense system in the form of a matrix of time frames (past, present and future) and aspects (simple, progressive, perfect and perfect progressive) has benefits, but the implementation is at times unclear. One reason for this is that it excludes future forms such as *be -ing* and *be going to* + V. As a result it yields some example sentences that do not always sound native-like, e.g., *I hope we will be playing games at Charley's party next week* (Thewlis, 2007, p. 5). Secondly, the explanation given for the simple aspect is that it indicates a point in time. But as has been seen, this is not always the case with the Simple Present (e.g., in statements such as "Elephants have four legs"; Water boils at 100°C.).

As with the previous text, Frodesen and Eyring (2007) group verb forms via a matrix of times and aspects. But where the aspects are contrasted in terms of past, present and future, no context is given for each. Therefore it is at times difficult to see why other verb forms could not be used, as can be seen in the excerpt below, which is the fifth segment of a table (p. 14):

Simple tenses include the simple present, simple past, and simple future. They have the following uses:		
TIME FRAME	EXAMPLES	USE
Present	The environmental agency reports that new evidence has been gathered about global warming.	To establish the time frame and the moment of focus.
Past	When the United States passed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, 100,000 Chinese were living in the United States.	
Future	Phyllis will call you Thursday morning; I hope you will not have left for Omaha by then.	

The first entry reflects the influence of genre (i.e., news media) rather than the establishment of a time frame and could sound odd in everyday conversation. Hence the lack of an appropriate context is particularly misleading here. The third is also misleading in that it strongly implies the selection of *will* whenever a future time is invoked. Again, it seems that the use of a matrix clause forces a contrived uniformity of use that is confusing and at times inaccurate. But regardless of this, a context would have made a significant contribution to clarity here, particularly where the use of the Simple Present is concerned, as its meaning is strongly determined by context (Bybee et al., 1994, p. 275).

The failure to address context and to utilise it so as to maximise understanding can be seen as a weakness to varying degrees in most - if not all - of these texts. It implies to students that rules governing verb forms can be learned in the abstract and then applied unproblematically. To ignore the rich and instructive pragmatics entailed in the TA system in English is to increase the burden on learners, even though on the surface, it appears to lighten their load. As Kiefer (2009, p. 179) states, pragmatics “relates linguistic structure to contextual phenomena, which include time, location, social setting and participants’ roles, on the one hand, and the interlocutors’ strategies, plans, goals and intentions, on the other”. The second element, concerning the speaker, is the focus of the next criterion.

2.7 Criterion 6: Is the role of speaker perspective included?

This, by the way, is one of the reasons why it is often difficult to answer learners' questions about grammatical appropriacy: in many instances, the answer is that it depends on the attitude or orientation that the speaker wants to take towards the events he or she wishes to report (Nunan, 1998, p. 102).

Speaker perspective is an element of the English verb tense system that is not regularly considered in student texts, as has become evident from this analysis. Even though this will be further discussed in chapter 3, it is worth defining briefly here, for the purposes of the current review. It is additionally relevant in terms of how an understanding of perspective can contribute to a distinction between verb forms that are described in many texts as interchangeable, when in fact they are clearly distinguishable, partly through an understanding of speaker perspective.

Klein and Li (2009, p. 3-4) see speaker perspective as the speaker's mental representation. They stipulate that the temporal properties of an event, state or process are clearly distinct from the speaker's mental representation of it. Significantly, they go on to say that the latter is the crucial element in the expression of time. And since events in the future cannot be asserted with absolute certainty, their realisation requires an attitude on the part of the speaker (Bohnenmeyer, 2009, p. 109).

One element of speaker perspective is evidentiality, i.e., the indication of the source of information or evidence being conveyed by a speaker (Speas, 2008, p. 940). This may specify whether this evidence is visual or non-visual, or inferred by or reported to the speaker (Speas, 2008, p. 941). By way of example:

If I ask you, "Did Joe go fishing?" you could answer, "Yes, at least I heard that he did," or "Yes, I know because I saw him leave," or "Yes, or at least I suppose he did because his boat is gone." The difference between Pirahã is that what English does with a sentence, Pirahã does with a verbal suffix (Everett, 2008, p. 196).

So in languages wherein evidentiality is highly grammaticalized, it is expressed by obligatory morphemes such as words, suffixes or particles (Speas, 2008, p. 940). Although no such morphological system exists in English, evidentiality can still be expressed by means of "parenthetical phrases, epistemic modals, adverbs, and speech or attitude predicates" (Speas, 2008, p. 941). For example, there is a difference in epistemic strength between "Peter will be in London now" and "Peter is in London now" (Jaszczolt, 2009, p. 154). For the student, it is important that the concept of evidence or, more broadly, perspective, is acquired, particularly as it is indicated in a relatively implicit manner in English. As mentioned above, this is an essential means of distinguishing between various future forms.

As Fleischman (1982, pp. 20-21) points out, grammar writers tend to focus mainly, if not exclusively, on how events are sequenced in time, while ignoring the crucial role played by speaker perspective. As she stresses, even though the future cannot be expressed in objective terms of reality, the speaker can convey, for example, a conviction that the event in question will at some stage become reality. Depending on their level of certainty, speakers can treat the future as known, regardless of their epistemic warrant for doing so (Fleischman, 1982, p. 20).

Tynan and Delgado Lavin (1997, as cited in Jaszczolt, 2009, p. 90) also endorse this, claiming that tenses can express epistemic meanings in terms of the nature and strength of the evidence on which they base their utterance. Jaszczolt (2009, p. 99) brings these strands together effectively in regard to the future, noting that “the availability of alternative temporal expressions for describing one and the same situation can be directly related to the modal detachment pertaining to the speaker’s particular construal of reality”.

So it can be seen that there are grounds for regarding speaker perspective as a fundamental element of the TA system. In the fuller discussion of this element in chapter 3, it will be claimed that it plays perhaps the most wide-ranging and nuanced role where the future is concerned.

To return to the opening point in this discussion of Criterion 6, the element of perspective can and must be invoked as a means of distinguishing between future forms that are commonly referred to as having the same or similar meanings, when they can in fact be differentiated. In terms of the ten texts, this distinction occurs in a relatively small number and only to a minor degree.

One of these texts is Swan’s *Practical English Usage* (2005): aspects of speaker perspective feature, but usually at an implicit level, rather than with the sense that this is a significant element of the verb tense system. The overall organization of Swan’s discussion of the future is functional, i.e., how to give instructions, commands and refusals, etc. Speaker perspective is not identified and defined, and rather confusingly, terms like ‘present reality’ are used for describing occasions when the Present Progressive is used for future actions and events. (It is also combined with the *be going to* + V future, with the implication that the two forms are interchangeable as regards this function.) The concept of ‘present reality’ does not distinguish this structure from others (e.g., *I’m having lunch / I’ve just had lunch / I have lunch every day at this time.*)

But helpfully, Swan uses a type of speaker perspective in distinguishing between *will* + V and *be going to* + V, using the former to convey what we believe (internally), as opposed to *be going to*, which relies on external evidence. The following is an excerpt from his explanation, along with two of his examples (Swan, 2005, pp. 191-192):

In predictions, we use *going to* when we have outside evidence for what we say ... We prefer *will* for predictions when there is not such obvious outside evidence - when we are talking more about what is inside our heads: what we know, or believe, or have calculated. (When we use *will*, we are not showing the listener something; we are asking him or her to believe something.) Compare:

- *Look out – we’re going to crash!* (There is outside evidence.)
- *Don’t lend him your car. He’s a terrible driver – he’ll crash it.* (the speaker’s knowledge)

It is valuably instructive for learners to see that talking about a situation is not simply determined by an objective, pre-determined rule, but that their stance or position in relation to the future event is significant. So the above statement, “When we use *will*, we are not showing the listener something; we are asking him or her to believe something” enables speakers to see the effect of their selected form on the hearer. This also conveys the crucial point that there is not just one sanctioned way of talking about an event: rather, the way in which speakers perceive the event in relation to themselves and to their current knowledge of the event can determine the form chosen and hence shape the meaning received by the listener. Some other texts touch on this point of seeing evidence or having certain knowledge. However, not many position the speaker as directly determining the effect on the listener.

In this vein, it could be argued that Swan’s clearest explanations entail positioning the speaker as central to choices being made, in contrast to others he provides which employ a more depersonalized approach. For example:

A ‘depersonalised’ explanation (Swan, 2005, p. 192):

1. differences between *will* and *shall*

Will and *shall* are not only used for giving information about the future. They are also common in offers, promises, orders and similar kinds of ‘interpersonal’ language use. In these cases, *will* (or *’ll*) generally expresses willingness or wishes (this is connected with an older use of *will* to mean ‘wish’ or ‘want’). *Shall* expresses obligation (like a more direct form of *should*).

A more ‘speaker-focused’ explanation (Swan, 2005, p. 192):

2. announcing decisions: *will*

We often use *will* when we tell people about a decision as we make it, for instance if we are agreeing to do something.

OK. We’ll buy the tickets. You can buy supper after the show.

Hence, focusing on the role of speaker perspective, as well as explaining the use of certain forms from the starting point of the speaker, can contribute to and deepen students' understanding. However, it must again be stated that Swan does not make explicit the fact that the speaker plays an active role in framing the way in which the future (and other times) are expressed and that this adds to the meaning conveyed to the hearer.

Murphy (2012, p. 40) seeks to make similar distinctions between future verb forms, but as with Swan (2005), he does not explicitly identify speaker perspective as a key element of the English TA system. Rather, it occurs quite incidentally:

I **am going to do** something = I have already decided to do it, I intend to do it:
 'Are you **going to eat** anything?' 'No, I'm not hungry.'
 We use **I am doing** (*present continuous*) when we say what we have *arranged* to do – for example, arranged to meet someone, arranged to go somewhere:
 What time **are you meeting** Anne this evening?
 I'm **leaving** tomorrow. I've got my ticket.

Interestingly, as mentioned in Criterion 4, Murphy presents the Simple Present, *be -ing* and *be going to* forms first, ahead of *will* forms. This reflects frequency of usage, as the so-called 'present' forms are used on a more regular basis in everyday language.

Far more problematic are some of the explanations in Thewlis (2007), firstly in that vague descriptions of events are often the focus of why a particular form is used. Or uses are conflated, so that speaker perspective appears to be redundant where it could have contributed to clear delineations. One example is as follows (Thewlis, 2007, p. 247):

Present Tenses for Future Planned Events	
EXAMPLES	EXPLANATIONS
(a) The conference starts on a Sunday next month. (b) The futurist is presenting his findings next week. (c) Next year is the fifth annual conference on global warming.	Use simple present and present progressive tenses to describe future activities that are already scheduled or planned to take place in the future.
(d) We will examine the data if they can get it to us in time for the conference. (e) There might be a surprising announcement.	For future events that are not already scheduled , use <i>will</i> or other modals of prediction (<i>may, could, might</i>).

No distinction is made between the use of the Simple Present and the Present Progressive. Speaker perspective could have been employed here, with an explanation of whether the speaker was considering the proposed event from a detached position that emphasises the impersonal aspect of the scheduling, rather than from the more personal viewpoint of the arrangement having been made between two parties. Yet this is not identified. In addition, a lack of context is given in both this explanation and the exercises which follow, such that the student is not aware of whether or not the speaker is aware of and focusing on the scheduling.

In an equally confusing vein, Frodesen and Eyring (2007, p. 4) explain that “[v]erbs can describe events that happen at a point in time (for example, *last night, three weeks ago*) or an event that lasts a period of time (for example, *all night long, three weeks*). We call this the **moment of focus**.” They then go on to give examples of this in the past, present and future time frames, the future entry being:

	POINT OF TIME	PERIOD OF TIME
Future	(e) On Saturday morning, they <i>will leave</i> for their trip.	(f) In the decades to come, computer technology <i>will continue</i> to change our lives.

No context is given for these sentences. Yet in a subsequent section, the following two entries are given in a table entitled “Summary: Future Time Frame” (Frodesen & Eyring, 2007, p. 32):

FORMS	EXAMPLES	USES	MEANINGS
Present Progressive	(d) The family is spending the Christmas holidays in Boston.	scheduled events that last for a period of time	already planned or expected in the future
<i>BE GOING TO FUTURE</i>	(h) They are going to travel in India next summer.	future plans	at a certain time in the future

Again, no context is given and no mention is made of the potentially distinguishing feature of speaker perspective, e.g., knowledge held by the travellers and their state of planning; or the speaker’s understanding of the travellers’ arrangements.

In contrast, Hewings (2013, p. 18) mentions speaker perspective in terms of conveying an opinion or experience:

We use **will** rather than **be going to** to make a prediction based on our opinion or experience:

- Why not come over at the weekend? The children **will** enjoy seeing you again.
- 'Shall I ask Lamar?' 'No, she **won't** want to be disturbed.'

Although speaker perspective is not specifically identified as an element, it is implied as playing a role in the choice of forms in expressing futurity. Hewings (2013, p. 18) clearly foregrounds speaker perspective again when he explains:

We use **will** when we make a decision at the moment of speaking and **be going to** for decisions about the future that have already been made. Compare:

- I'll pick him up at eight. (an offer; making an arrangement now) *and*
- I'm **going to** collect the children at eight. (this was previously arranged)

As has been illustrated, some sources of confusion or ambiguity could be removed from the expression of the future if speaker perspective were invoked as a significant element in the English TA system. Again, this will be discussed further in chapter 5.

2.8 Criterion 7: Is the role of register included?

By far the majority of the selected texts do not address the issue of register in their focus on ways of expressing the future. Register as discussed here as a variety of language that is "typical of a particular situation of use" (Schiffrin, 2006, p. 190). More comprehensively, Yule (2006, pp. 210-211) states that a "register is a conventional way of using language that is appropriate in a specific context, which may be defined as situational (e.g. in church), occupational (e.g. among lawyers) or topical (e.g. talking about language". On this topic, where expressing futurity in English is concerned, issues emerge which are not encountered in speaking about the present and past, in that choices can be made regarding degrees of formality, affecting the form to be selected, as well as pronunciation.

Three of the selected texts (i.e., Swan, 2005, p. 189; Azar & Hagen, 2009, p. 61; Thewlis, 2007, p. 248) refer to register in terms of pronunciation. Illustrative is the example below from Swan:

In informal speech, *going to* is often pronounced /gənə/. This is sometimes shown in writing as *gonna*, especially in American English.
*Nobody's **gonna** talk to me like that.*

However, in regard to distinguishing the use of one structure from another, some supposed ambiguity between forms described as having the same meaning could be removed by addressing the element of register. For example, in Azar and Hagen (2009, p. 61), the following statements are (erroneously) described as having the same meaning, i.e., expressing predictions about the future, when one difference, apart from meaning, is that the formality of the first could be contrasted with the personalized nature of the second:

Anna **will** come tomorrow around 5:00.
Anna **is going to** come tomorrow around 5:00.

In contrast, two texts do explain and exemplify this distinction. Swan (2005, p. 194) addresses register in terms of personal and impersonal fixed arrangements, rather than as degrees of formality, making a clear and important contrast:

Will is often used, rather than present forms, in giving information about impersonal, fixed arrangements – for example official itineraries. Compare:
*We're **meeting** Sandra at 6.00.*
*The Princess **will arrive** at the airport at 14.00. She **will meet** the President at 14.30, and **will then attend** a performance of traditional dances.*

Even more clearly, Davidson (2003, p. 205) addresses register directly and gives a context to support it. In discussing differences between the Simple Present and the Present Continuous, he notes that the former is used in more formal situations:

For example, an official announcement might use the simple present tense (*This store **reopens** for business on 6 June*) whilst in general conversation it would be more normal to use the present continuous (*I hear the shop **is reopening** next week*).

Somewhat confusingly, Hewings (2013, p. 18), attempts a similar comparison, but focuses on the amount of detail included in the more formal statement:

However, in a formal style, we use **will** rather than **be going to** to talk about future events that have been previously arranged in some detail. Compare:

- Are you **going to** talk at the meeting tonight? *And*
- The meeting **will** begin at 9 am. Refreshments **will** be available from 8:30 onwards.

No context is given or implied; neither is it clear what difference is made by the ‘detailed’ information. (Details could be offered in the first example, with the continued use of *going to* + V, e.g., *They’re going to serve refreshments before it starts*.) In addressing the use of *be to* + V, Hewings (2013, p. 24) also mentions its use in formal or official arrangements, however he does not explain if or how it differs from the use of *will*:

The European Parliament **is to introduce** a new law on safety at work.

The most common issue addressed in regard to register is the contrast of *will* and *shall*, mentioned in seven of the texts. Thewlis (2007, p. 250) explains that in American English, *shall* is not commonly used, as it “sounds quite formal and old-fashioned”. In a similar vein, Swan and Walter (2011, p. 39) include a note which states:

NOTE: After *I* and *we*, some people say *shall* instead of *will*. The meaning is the same; *will* is more common in modern English.

Rather than possibly attributing the less frequent use of *shall* to its formality, Hewings (2013, p. 26) merely says that “it is more common to use *will*”. (*Will* vs *shall* is discussed in detail in chapter 5 here, particularly in terms of meaning.)

Murphy (2012) discusses *shall/will* in greater detail, but without mentioning the issue of register. He explains its use with first-person pronouns in asking questions to make an offer or a suggestion, or in making statements. He also states that the negative form of *shall* is *shall not* or *shan't*. Where the first-person is concerned, *will* and *shall* are shown as interchangeable. This is also the case in an appendix which charts some differences between British and American English, where again, no mention is made of register (Murphy, 2012, p. 300):

BRITISH	AMERICAN
<p>Will or shall can be used with I/we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I will/shall be late this evening. <p>Shall I ...? and shall we ...? are used to ask for advice etc:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which way shall we go? 	<p>Shall is unusual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I will be late this evening. <p>Should I ...? and Should we ...? Are more usual to [<i>sic</i>] ask for advice etc:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which way should we go?

Given that this is a British publication, it is perhaps less surprising that *shall* is still seen as conventional, rather than as formal or even anachronistic. This is very much the case with Swan (2005, p. 188), who explains the two terms in even greater detail, generalizing their use more broadly (Swan, 2005, p. 192):

differences between *will* and *shall*:

Will and *shall* are not only used for giving information about the future. They are also common in offers, promises, orders and similar kinds of 'interpersonal' language use.

Swan does not illustrate how *shall* is used "for giving information about the future", but on the positive side, register is implied in the mention of impersonal language use. He also goes on to state that questions with *shall* are used in both British and American English (2005, p. 193):

Questions with *shall/will* are used (in both British and American English) to ask for instructions or decisions, to offer services, and to make suggestions. *Will* is not used in this way.

- ***Shall I open a window?*** (NOT ~~*Will I open a window?*~~)
- ***Shall I carry your bag?***
- ***What time shall we come and see you?***
- ***What on earth shall we do?***
- ***Shall we go out for a meal?***
- ***Let's go and see Lucy, shall we?***

Davidson (2003, p. 220) mentions *shall* as being interchangeable with *will*, further commenting that the former is less commonly used. But he subsequently omits this rider (p. 223):

Will and ***shall*** can also be used to talk about what is expected to happen in the future, but in this case the events being described are not expected to be in the near future and have no direct connection with what is happening at present.

Yet in the scores of examples given in this unit, only one sentence features *shall*. The explanation says little of substance about use, presents the two forms on an interchangeable footing, and refers to events not happening in the ‘near future’. There is little here to guide students in their understanding of futurity, let alone its participating elements in the TA system.

Collins COBUILD (2011, p. 216) take a similar stance in their explanation of the use of *will*, saying:

If the subject is *I* or *we*, the modal *shall* is sometimes used instead of *will* to talk about future events.

The authors make no mention of the occasions when *shall* is ‘sometimes’ used, but they do go on to note that “this is not common in modern American English” (Collins COBUILD, 2011, p. 216).

As can be seen, the issue of *shall* vs *will* alone is illustrative of the array of divergent explanations which ESL students encounter when attempting to learn how to express futurity in English. In terms of register, it seems that opportunities to distinguish between *will*, *be going to* and *be –ing* in particular are squandered in many texts, as degree of formality could have been cited as one deciding factor.

2.9 Criterion 8: Is each form distinguished from others in terms of a core meaning and use which are explained?

Criterion 9: Is overlap with other forms acknowledged and explained?

Due to the interconnectedness of these two criteria, they will be addressed together in this section.

Criterion 8 focuses on the issues of form, meaning and use which underlie most discussions of the TA system. As Nunan (1998, p. 102) states, L2 students must have opportunities to see “the systematic relationships that exist between form, meaning, and use”, as this affords them greater access to the TA system. Of the texts surveyed, Swan (2005, p. xix) is the only author to define grammar itself, stating that it covers “the rules that show how words are combined, arranged or changed to show certain kinds of meaning”. However, as has previously been shown, the extent to which meaning is a significant focus in discussions of verb tenses can be minimal at best.¹¹

What is entailed in each of these three terms? *Form* indicates the structure of the expression (e.g., *will* + V; *be* + V-*ing* participle). *Meaning*, as discussed here, indicates the semantic contribution made by a verb structure when it is used (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999, p. 4). As Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman stress (1999, p. 111), “[i]f students are able to develop a feel for the meanings conveyed by components of the [TA] system, they will have a tremendous advantage in learning to cope with the boundary problems”. Thirdly, *use* focuses on the pragmatic choices made by speakers in selecting a particular form (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999, p. 5), e.g., in selecting for the appropriate register or speaker perspective. An example of this distinction between form, meaning and use can be illustrated as below, with the Present Continuous for the future (Murphy, 2012, p. 38, 40; Copley, 2014, p. 76):

FORM	MEANING	USE
<i>be + ing</i>	a future plan	an informal way of indicating that a plannable arrangement has been made with a second party

¹¹ As Everett (2008, p. 211) observes more broadly, “Many linguists and philosophers since the 1950s have characterized language almost exclusively in terms of mathematical logic. It is almost as if the fact that language has meaning and is spoken by human beings is irrelevant to the enterprise of understanding it”.

However, in the TA system in English, it can be difficult to distinguish between meaning and use (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999, p. 123). This is indirectly echoed by Bardovi-Harlig (1992, p. 253):

The task of all language learners is to match *form* and *meaning*. To acquire a language is to learn how to use its available linguistic devices to express a range of semantic distinctions. Grammatical well-formedness and appropriate *use* of forms do not necessarily develop simultaneously, however [emphasis added].

For the purposes of this discussion, a delineation between meaning and use is not of the utmost importance. More significant is the possibility that both elements are conveyed to the optimal degree. This is by no means a peripheral point, despite its apparent neglect in the literature. As de Brabanter, Kissine and Sheaifzadeh (2014, p. 4) state, an issue lurking in the background is whether tense markers are monosemous or polysemous. They further comment that “although the answer to this question is bound to greatly affect one’s understanding of particular tense systems, it is rarely asked explicitly” (2014, p. 4). As previously mentioned, however, the multi-functional properties of some markers are far more commonly discussed.

To this end, the question will be asked as to whether a particular form has an essential core meaning that is conveyed by the form itself, rather than being expressed in tandem with adverbials or other lexical forms.

As can be seen in the excerpts below, it is rare for authors to identify a core meaning and use/s which delineate the structure from all others. For example, Swan and Walter (2011, p. 38) state that the Present Progressive is used “with a future meaning when we talk about plans for a fixed time and/or place. Two of the subsequent practice exercises are as follows (2011, p. 38):

1 Make sentences with the present progressive:

1. I / play baseball tomorrow
2. I / go / to Canada next year
3. we / stay / with Paul and Lucy next week

3 A friend of yours is going on holiday soon. Write questions:

- when / leave When are you leaving?

- take / your sister	<u>Are you taking your sister?</u>
1 where / go
2 why / go there

Yet on a previous page, an exercise featuring “*going to* to talk about intentions - things that people **have decided** (not) to do” (Swan & Walter, 2011, p. 36), includes sentences such as the following excerpts, which imply the necessity of arrangements:

2 Make questions with <i>going to</i> .
4. Ethan / play football / tomorrow
8. Your mother / come and stay with us

3 Lindsay is talking about her holiday next week. Look at the pictures and complete the sentences.
do any work drive to Italy fly learn some Italian read English newspapers
stay in a nice hotel swim a lot take photos visit museums write postcards

Again, a common expectation would be that some of these activities (e.g., flights and accommodation) require arrangements, particularly for a holiday in a week’s time. Adding to the confusion is the use of similar contexts for both markers (e.g., talking about holidays, sport and accommodation). Much of this ambiguity could be removed by explaining differences in meaning and by invoking speaker perspective as determining pragmatic choices here.

Indeed, Table 2-8 below indicates that no text makes an absolute distinction between two forms such that each is presented in terms of a core meaning and use. There are some attempts to address and clarify overlap with other forms, but two forms are not uncommonly described explicitly or implicitly as interchangeable. Murphy (2012) is the only author who, to a degree, allows Criteria 8 and 9 to be answered in the positive, accomplishing this with four forms in terms of use and at times meaning:

TEXT	CRITERIA 8 & 9	BASE FORM	<i>be</i> + V-ing	<i>be</i> going to + V	<i>will</i> + V	<i>will</i> <i>be</i> + V-ing	<i>will</i> <i>have</i> + V-ed	<i>will</i> <i>have</i> <i>been</i> + V -ing	<i>be</i> about to + V	<i>be</i> to + V	<i>be</i> due to + V
Azar & Hagen	8	✓	X	X	X	X	X	✓			
	9	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Swan & Walter	8	✓	X	X	X						
	9	X	X	X	X						
Swan	8	X	X	X	X	X	✓				
	9	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Bourke	8	X	X	X	X						
	9	X	X	X	X						
Murphy	8	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓				
	9	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X				
Davidson	8	X	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	X		
	9	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Collins COBUILD	8	X	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X		X
	9	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Thewlis	8	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
	9	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Frodesen & Eyring	8	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
	9	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Hewings	8	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	9	X	X	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X	

Table 2-8 Forms which are distinguished and Overlap which is explained

As mentioned, no writer indicates a core meaning for any one form. (The extent to which this is possible will be the focus point of the discussion in chapter 5.) It has already been indicated that it is more common for writers to invoke use as a means of explanation and perhaps differentiation. For example, Swan (2005, p. 190) says:

We can sometimes use the simple present to talk about the future. This is common when we are talking about events which are part of a timetable, a regular schedule or something similar.

The summer term starts on April 10th.

*What time **does** the bus **arrive** in Seattle?*

*My plane **leaves** at three o'clock.*

Yet this is followed by the statement, “*Will* is also usually possible in these cases.” Hence, overlap is not addressed. It will be suggested in chapter 3 that speaker perspective could be invoked here to indicate an impersonal, fixed schedule that reflects no interpersonal arrangements.

Davidson (2003, p. 205) explains the Simple Present for the future with greater clarity, again in terms of use, saying unequivocally that it “is used to refer to events that are part of a fixed or agreed schedule, for example in timetables and programmes” (followed by examples). Likewise, Swan and Walter (2011, p. 41) treat the Simple Present in a more distinctive way, devoting a single exercise to it and saying that it can be used “to talk about timetables, cinema/theatre programmes and dates”. However, to imply that the Simple Present is used to make statements containing dates is misleading, as this can be done with the majority of the future forms under discussion. But again, no conception of an underlying meaning that could unite all of these uses is suggested.

On this topic of time references such as dates, perhaps one of the greatest sources of confusion is Collins COBUILD (2011, p. 220). The explanation begins accurately, stating that an adverbial - rather than a verb form itself - often conveys the time reference in a statement:

In many statements, it is the time adverbial rather than the verb form that carries the time reference.

For example, a common use is to put time adverbials that normally refer to future time with the present simple or the present progressive when it is used to refer to future actions ...

The company celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

After all, you’re coming back next week.

...

The adverbs *now*, *today*, *tonight*, and expressions involving *this* refer to a period of time that includes the present moment. They are used fairly commonly with all verb forms. This is because an event can be located before, during, or after the time specified by the verb form.

I was now in a Scottish regiment.

Your boss will now have no alternative but to go to his superiors and explain the situation.

...

I will ski no more today.

...

He won't be able to fight this Friday.

I'm doing my ironing this afternoon.

The main focus here is on the use of an adverbial, but no explanation is given for the use of the respective forms, which again are implicitly depicted as interchangeable. To select one example: the statement, "I will ski no more today" conveys a different speaker perspective and register from "I'm not going to ski any more today".

The pervasive ambiguity in some texts is compounded by the fact that in practice exercises, learners are often told which form to use, or are given the choice of two forms. Naturally this does not reflect real-life usage, but gives the appearance of being helpful, when in fact it can mask avoidance of the key issue of differentiation. This occurs in Bourke (2006, p. 44), e.g., in the following two practice-exercise excerpts, where students are told to choose between *be going to* and *will*:

1. I go swimming later on. I'm leaving at two.

2. We visit my uncle later today. The train goes at 2.00.

The second sentence in sequence 2 is not explained in terms of the use of the Present Continuous and students are forced into a contradiction between an intention and an arrangement. Likewise, the context of the second sequence strongly suggests an arrangement. This confusion is perhaps compounded by an explanation on a previous page (Bourke, 2006, p. 41) which states: "You use *will* ('ll) and *won't* to talk about things that you know about the future, or to ask questions about the future." Yet this advice is (necessarily) contradicted in subsequent exercises, one of which is presented below (Bourke, 2006, p. 47):

2 Write sentences. Use *going to* or the present continuous.
e You / stop / working / soon?

More helpfully, Azar and Hagan touch on a core meaning of the Present Progressive for the future, i.e., the element of 'plannability' or 'arrangeability', when they explain that a "verb such as *rain* is not used in the present progressive to indicate future time, because rain is not a planned event" (Azar & Hagan, 2009, p. 69). Murphy (2012, p. 38) is more explicit with his explanation of this form, differentiating its meaning and use from that of other forms by stating that it is used when decisions and arrangements have been made. Yet in a later explanation of *will be -ing*, he simply states that it is similar to *be going to* (Murphy, 2012, p. 48).

Significant overlap is presented and left unexplained in both Thewlis (2007) and Frodesen and Eyring (2007). As previously discussed, the explanations presented in both of these volumes are perhaps constrained by the use of a matrix clause based on aspect (Simple, Progressive, Perfect and Perfect Progressive). The future is often ignored; or worse, rather infelicitous attempts are made to enable it to fit the paradigm. For example, in a matrix clause featuring the 'Simple Tenses' (Thewlis, 2007, p. 16), the author states that *will* is used "to express general ideas, relationships, and truths", as well as "to express possession or logical relationship". The overlap here with other forms is considerable, despite an attempt to offer a meaning and use for each.

Finally, although Hewings (2013) focuses mainly on outlining a range of uses for each form, he does make some clear, meaning-based distinctions between some forms. For example, the *will be + V-ing* form is acknowledged as difficult to distinguish from the Present Progressive for the Future and *will + V* (to the extent that it is often overlooked). Hewings suggests simply that the two *-ing* forms are similar in use. However, he very helpfully explains that the *will be + V-ing* form lacks the element of willingness, intention and invitation that can be implied through *will + verb* (Hewings, 2013, p. 22):

For example, if guests have stayed longer than you wanted, and you don't know when they are leaving, you might ask:

- **Will** you **be staying** with us again tonight? (asking about their plans) *rather than*
- **Will** you **stay** with us again tonight? (they might think that this is an invitation)

Crucially, this inadvertently touches on the ‘matter-of-course’ meaning often attributed to the *will be* + *V-ing* form (Lewis, 1994, p. 119), implying that the speaker is relatively detached from the arrangements, at least at the moment of speaking. Hence, speaker perspective is invoked, albeit indirectly. Hewings’s point about plans could have been extended so as to highlight the fact that the *will be* + *V-ing* form implies a decision or plan that has already been made, rather than indicating an on-the-spot decision, as in the example below (Lewis, 1994, p. 118):

<p>I’ll be writing to her tomorrow. I’ll write to her tomorrow.</p>

As shown, despite implied or direct claims to the contrary, most of the texts under analysis take a strongly form-based approach which focuses on enumerating the different ways in which a form may be used, but without attempting to identify a meaning underlying these seemingly disparate uses. This will be further illustrated in the tenth and final criterion.

2.10 Criterion 10: Are multiple uses of one form explained and distinguished from each other?

The forms *will* + *V*, *be going to* + *V*, and *will be* + *V-ing* are the three means of expressing futurity which have significantly different uses. In other words, one structure can be used in multiple ways. For example, *be going to* + *V* is commonly seen as having two distinct uses:

<i>I’m going to watch tv tonight.</i>	I have this intention, but I have most likely made no arrangements with another party.
<i>I’m going to be sick!</i>	This is inevitable. I’ve just eaten something that makes me feel sick (which is evidence that this will happen).

Additionally, as has been shown, *will* + *V* has multiple uses, but in grammar texts these are not usually grouped together with the implication that they could have a core meaning that differentiates them from other forms (or that they are possibly a type of ‘default’ future). Furthermore, the multiple uses of *will be* + *V-ing*, are generally not clarified. The number of uses identified in the texts for each of the three forms is as follows:

FORM	AZAR & HAGEN	SWAN & WALTER	SWAN	BOURKE	MURPHY	DAVIDSON	COLLINS COBUILD	THEWLIS	FRODESEN & EYRING	HEWINGS
<i>will</i> + V	4	4	15	7	10	13	5	11	6	16
<i>will be</i> + V-ing	1	0	3	0	2	2	1	1	5	4
<i>be going to</i> + V	2	2	3	5	2	3	1	5	4	3

Table 2-9 Number of uses for main multi-use forms

The multiple uses of one structure in these texts tend to be presented in a silo form, with no core meaning implied (if the latter in fact proves to be possible). Commonly, each is presented as an alternative to other forms, but with no distinctive differences outlined. Table 2-9 above indicates that the range of uses identified by individual texts may be bewildering to students. For example, the uses of *will* + V vary from four in two texts to 16 in another, while enumerated uses of *will be* + V-ing range from none (i.e., the form is not addressed) to five. In a similar vein, between one and five uses of *be going to* + V are indicated in the respective texts. It is claimed in this research that the greater the number of uses outlined, the more urgent is the need for the possible identification of a core meaning.

As seen in Table 2-9, there are forms which are either not featured or which are covered only to a minimal degree. An example of marginal coverage is Frodesen and Eyring (2007), who mention four uses of *be going to* + V, but do so only in a summary table at the end of their futures units. But the mere itemisation of more uses does not necessarily produce clarity. This is evidenced in Bourke (2006), who enumerates many uses for both *will* + V (seven) and *be going to* + V (five), but with significant overlap. For example, Bourke states that both are used to express predictions and decisions. As has hopefully been demonstrated in this discussion so far, professed overlap is a major issue in the expression of futurity.

From another perspective, some of Murphy's (2012) ten uses of *will* + V (Table 2-10) are unnecessarily detailed. It is possible that some uses could be subsumed under the one broader concept: e.g., 'on-the-spot decisions' could include offers, promises, requests and refusing. This is also the case with Swan and Walter (2011). The matter has been addressed more effectively in Azar and Hagen (2009, p. 63), who list "a decision the speaker makes at the moment of speaking" as a use.

TEXT	USES IDENTIFIED	<i>WILL</i> + V (AS DESCRIBED IN EACH TEXT)
Azar & Hagen	4	Predictions; Plans; Willingness; Decisions in the immediate present moment
Swan & Walter	4	Predictions; Deciding; Refusing; Promising
Swan	15	Information about the future; Undecided possible future events; Intentions; Attitudes towards other people; Offers; Requests; Threats; Promises; Announcements of decisions; Predictions; Orders; Refusals; Instructions; Information about impersonal, fixed arrangements; Certainty
Bourke	7	Predictions; Information about facts in the future; Decisions; Guesses; What you know about the future; Asking questions about the future; Sudden decisions
Murphy	10	On-the-spot decisions; Offers; Agreeing; Promises; Requests; Refusing; Probability; Predicting; <i>I hope</i> + <i>will</i> ; Sometimes used to talk about now
Davidson	13	Requests; Willingness; Predictions; Decisions; Intentions; Wishes; Instructions; Orders; Invitations; Probability; Expectations; General facts; Criticism
Collins COBUILD	5	Plans; Likelihood; General truths about the future; Expectations; Vague reference to future time
Thewlis	11	General Ideas; Relationships; Truths; Requests; Describing future time; Events not already scheduled; Willingness; Promises; General Truths; Predictions; Certain time in the future
Frodesen & Eyring	6	Probable future events; Willingness; Promises; Predictions; Relationships; Possessions
Hewings	16	Planned future; Future likelihood; Predictions; With <i>I expect</i> , <i>I hope</i> , <i>I imagine</i> , <i>I reckon</i> , <i>I think</i> , <i>I wonder</i> , <i>I'm sure</i> ; On-the-spot decisions; Offers; Requests; Promises, Ability; Formal announcements of plans

Table 2-10 Number of uses of *will* + V form explained in the text

TEXT	USES IDENTIFIED	<i>BE GOING TO</i> + V (AS DESCRIBED IN EACH TEXT)
Azar & Hagen	2	Predictions about the future; A prior plan
Swan & Walter	2	A future that we can see in the present/that has a present reality; Intentions
Swan	3	Planned events; Events that we can see are on the way; Commands and refusals
Bourke	5	Predictions about the future; Predictions about the future due to present evidence; Making decisions about the future; Plans for the future; A general plan for the future
Murphy	2	A decision or intention (perhaps not arranged); A present situation makes it clear that something will happen in the future
Davidson	3	What someone intends to do in the future; What someone thinks will happen in the future, especially soon and as a result of a present occurrence; Warnings
Collins COBUILD	2	An intention that something will happen; Immediate evidence that something will happen fairly soon
Thewlis	5	Intentions; The immediate future; Plans that have been made earlier; Predictions; Introduction of a topic
Frodesen & Eyring	4	Probable and immediate future events; Strong intentions; Predictions about future situations; Future plans
Hewings	3	Informal contexts; Making a prediction based on present evidence; Decisions about the future that have already been made

Table 2-11 Number of uses of *be going to* + V explained in the text

Interestingly, as seen in Table 2-10, the range of meanings/uses (15) covered by Swan (2005) for *will* + V would seem to cover the whole gamut of expressions of futurity. The confoundingly vague label of ‘information about the future’ can seldom be anything but exasperating to L2 students (and teachers). The other identified uses, covering maximum uncertainty (undecided possible future events; predictions) to maximum certainty (information about impersonal, fixed arrangements; certainty), not to mention what lies in between, can again give the erroneous impression to students that *will* + V is the only form necessary for expressing futurity.

Other meaning/uses of *will* + V can also be misleading in some of these entries. For example, Davidson (2003) says that *will* + V is used to express wishes, when in fact the verb *wish* is generally followed by a past form, e.g., “I wish I were an astronaut”. Davidson also states that *will* + V expresses instructions and orders. However, “You will hand me that book” has a very different tone and speaker perspective from “Hand me that book” - a fact that is unacknowledged here. Furthermore, it is difficult to know what is encompassed by the categories of Criticism and General Facts about the Future. Similarly, Collins COBUILD’s (2011, p. 218) mention of ‘vague reference to future time’ is as difficult to divine.

Across the ten texts, the presentation of *be going to* + V is clearer and more uniform in the uses covered. With the exception of Azar and Hagen (2009), all texts cover the two uses outlined at the beginning of this discussion of Criterion 10. Different terminology is used (as seen in Table 2-11), but the two concepts of intentions and an inevitable future based on present evidence are identified. However, regarding the latter, Thewlis (2007, p. 248) defines this only as “the immediate future” and makes no link to a present situation. He also states that *be going to* + V “usually introduces a topic”, adding that subsequent sentences “often use *will* and other one-word modals” (2007, p. 248). However, his example of this use would suggest that this is an overgeneralised and perhaps rather contrived ‘rule’ which could lead to student errors:

(j) I’m going to paint my apartment. First, I’ll get the paint and some brushes. Then I’ll get to work. I might paint the walls green, but I haven’t decided yet.

Again however, despite a number of such anomalies, there is far greater unanimity across the discussion of *be going to* + V in the ten texts.

Whereas students are commonly presented with a somewhat disparate range of meanings/uses for both *will* + V and *be going to* + V, the third form discussed here, *will be* + V-ing, frequently receives cursory attention or none at all (see Table 2-12). This is perhaps the most complex form of the future, in that its meaning is particularly difficult to encapsulate. Two illustrative examples of its main meaning/uses are as follows (based on Azar & Hagen, 2009; Swan, 2005; Murphy, 2012; Davidson, 2003; Thewlis, 2007; Frodesen & Eyring, 2007; Hewings, 2013):

<i>This time next week, I'll be lying on a beach.</i>	I will be engaged in an ongoing activity at a particular time in the future.
<i>I'll be seeing Tom next week. I'll tell him about the job then.</i>	An arrangement has previously been made for the future, but I am not focused on the arrangement itself at the moment of speaking.

Seven of the selected texts (Azar & Hagen, 2009; Davidson, 2003; Frodesen & Eyring, 2007; Hewings, 2013; Murphy, 2012; Swan, 2005; Thewlis, 2007) cover common ground which is to a certain degree accurate and clear, describing the first use, i.e., an action that will be in progress at some time in the future. Thewlis (2007, Appendix A4) is most succinct in his explanation, focusing on this use exclusively and explaining that it is used to express “future events in progress”. Similarly, Azar and Hagen (2009, p. 71) give a limited but accurate understanding of this first use, saying that it depicts an action that “will be in progress at a particular time in the future”. However, they then cloud the issue by saying that at times “there is little or no difference between the future progressive [*will be* + V-ing] and the simple future [*will* + V], especially when the future event will occur at an indefinite time in the future” (Azar & Hagen, 2009, p. 71). This is problematic in that firstly, the authors do not explain what this minimal difference might be. And secondly, they could lead students to conflate the uses of the future progressive and the simple future, which can have significantly different meanings, as seen in Table 2-12:

TEXT	USES IDENTIFIED	<i>WILL BE + V-ING</i> (AS DESCRIBED IN EACH TEXT)
Azar & Hagen	1	An action will be in progress at a particular time in the future
Swan & Walter	0	-
Swan	3	Something will be in progress at a particular moment in the future; Events that are fixed or expected to happen; Not decisions: things that will happen anyway
Bourke	0	-
Murphy	2	Someone will be in the middle of doing something at a particular time in the future; Complete actions in the future
Davidson	2	Something that will happen in the future over a period of time rather than as a single action or event; Things that have been planned or can be expected to happen because they normally do (either single or continuous actions)
Collins COBUILD	1	Something will happen because arrangements have been made
Thewlis	1	Future events in progress
Frodesen & Eyring	5	Actions that are in progress or uncompleted at a future time; Events that will be in progress in the near future; Temporary situations in the future; Future events that will last for a period of time; Actions at the moment of focus in contrast to habitual actions
Hewings	4	Something that is predicted to start before a particular point of future time, and that may continue after this point (often the result of a previous decision or arrangement); A future activity that is part of the normal course of events or that is one of a repeated or regular series of events; Arranged activities or events in the future; When we don't want to indicate willingness, intention, invitation, etc.

Table 2-12 Number of uses of *will be + V-ing* explained in each text

Indeed, there is common overlap with other futures forms, but the main point in terms of this criterion is that the second defined use of this form is not clarified for learners.

To further illustrate the differences between these uses of *will be* + V-ing and *will* + V:

<i>This time next week I'll be lying on a beach.</i>	The time now is 10:00. Next week before 10:00 I will have lain down on a beach and I will still be lying there at 10:00 and most likely beyond that time.
<i>This time next week I'll lie on a beach.</i>	The time now is 10:00. Next week at 10:00 I will lie down on a beach.

Not only are these two scenarios quite different, but the second suggests a somewhat comical picture, which learners would presumably want to avoid. Azar and Hagen (2009, p. 71) state that there is very little difference between the two, “*especially* when the future event will occur at an indefinite time in the future” [emphasis added]. But this cannot be guaranteed (otherwise “*especially*” would be redundant here). Furthermore, as Azar and Hagen (2009) do not explain the second use of *will be* + V-ing, students are likely to overgeneralise the authors’ advice, when in fact a difference also exists between this second use and *will* + V. For example:

- Can you tell Tom about the job? - Ok, I'll be seeing him next week.	I agree to tell Tom about the job, as I have already arranged to see him next week.
- Can you tell Tom about the job? - Ok, I'll see him next week.	I agree to tell Tom about the job. In order to do that, I will now arrange to see him next week.

Hence, the *will be* + V-ing form here connotes a pre-existing arrangement, whereas *will* + V implies an on-the-spot decision to make an arrangement.

On a related point, the form distinction that begs attention here is that between the *will be* + V-ing form and *be* + V-ing (or Present Progressive for the future), both of which are referred to as expressing arrangements for the future. For example:

- (a) I'm seeing Tom next week.
- (b) I'll be seeing Tom next week.

In addressing this use of *will be* + V-ing, Swan indirectly alludes to what Lewis (1994, p. 119) terms the “the future as a matter of course” form (discussed in Criteria 8 and 9), by saying that “the future progressive form is useful if we want to show that we are not talking about making decisions, but about things that will happen anyway” (Swan, 2005, p. 195). Collins COBUILD (2011, p. 217) touches on this relatively clearly, defining only one use for *will be* + V-ing, but saying that “something will happen because arrangements have been made”. It could be suggested that this form focuses on decisions already made, where the emphasis is not on the arrangement itself, but rather on a connection to this future event or to the consequences of this arrangement. For example, in the same two sentences, the following interpretations are possible:

<i>I'm seeing Tom next week.</i>	Tom and I have arranged to meet next week. We are having lunch at 12:00, followed by a movie at 2:00.
<i>I'll be seeing Tom next week.</i>	Tom and I have arranged to meet next week. That will give me a chance to ask him to return your book.

The first statement places a focus on the arrangement itself and what it entails, while the *will be* + V-ing utterance focuses on a consequence of this arrangement, here an opportunity afforded by the arrangement. As previously stated though, differentiation is difficult, as this is an extremely subtle distinction and a native speaker could well use the first construction to indicate the second meaning. The fact that this dilemma is not generally acknowledged in grammatical texts (within and beyond the ten selections) is not helpful, but perhaps unsurprising.

While Hewings (2013, p. 22) similarly fails to clearly distinguish this form from the Present Progressive for the future, e.g., by stating that it is used to indicate arranged activities or events in the future, his text alone among the ten (as already mentioned) explains the important use of *will be* + V-ing in conveying speaker perspective:

When we don't want to indicate willingness, intention, invitation, etc., we prefer to use the future continuous instead of **will**. For example, if guests have stayed longer than you wanted, and you don't know when they are leaving, you might ask:

- **Will** you **be staying** with us again tonight? (asking about their plans) *rather than*
- **Will** you **stay** with us again tonight? (they might think this is an invitation)

In this way, he is perchance invoking the matter-of-course use in the sense that the speaker of the first utterance is focusing not on the arrangement itself but on its consequences.

In all, the *will be* + *V-ing* form is not strongly presented in terms of its putative two main uses, the first of which has adequate coverage, which then overlaps considerably with other forms. More problematically, the second receives either a cursory mention or none at all.

None of these three forms - *will* + *V*, *be going to* + *V*, and *will be* + *V-ing* - has a treatment that comprehensively outlines its multiple uses. Furthermore, in connection to Criterion 8, these different uses are not related to a potential core meaning of the form. A more common approach is to differentiate some uses from those of other forms (e.g., *will* + *V* vs *be going to* + *V*). However, as has been shown, this is not always successfully managed.

2.11 Conclusion

The analysis of the ten selected grammar texts according to ten criteria has yielded several main conclusions. Firstly, no core meaning is given for one form: rather, a variety of discrete uses is commonly identified. The result of this is a tendency to construct the grammar of verb tenses as a type of 'vocabulary list' which must be memorized. This is particularly the case with *will* + *V*, but applies throughout, to differing degrees. And most importantly, it adds unnecessarily to the learning load of ESL students.

Despite their claims to the contrary, the texts have a major emphasis on form, both as an organising principle and as a focus for the creation of meaning. This is significantly exacerbated by three factors: the lack of a context for explanations and examples; the lack of focus on the individual perspective that a speaker brings to any interaction; and the minimal reference to register, which is a significant factor in the choice of form, again in particular where *will* + *V* is concerned. Furthermore, in some texts, particular forms are not mentioned or are dismissed as occurring only rarely, suggesting that they are practically redundant, which in reality is not the case.

Notwithstanding the considerable strengths in many texts, the litmus test applied here entails addressing the question which distills all of the ten criteria, i.e., could a student consult any one of these texts and be provided with a comprehensive and accurate account of the expression of futurity in English? The answer must be a decisive 'no'. And could a student

consult all ten of these texts and come away with a comprehensive and accurate account of the expression of futurity? The answer again is decisively and to a greater degree in the negative.

Aside from the aforementioned omissions, this research finds that the biggest problem is the amount of overlap between the uses proffered for each form. Structures are frequently presented as ‘usually’ interchangeable, with no explanation of when this is not the case. Yet there are always occasions on which this supposed interchangeability is not possible (if at all).

In fairness, it must be asked whether absolute distinctions between all uses can in fact be made. As Bybee et al. (1994, p. 44) point out, identifying discrete boundaries between particular uses is most likely not possible. (Nevertheless, that is the ultimate aim of this research, which believes it to be achievable.) But of equal significance here is the general omission of certain elements in these texts (e.g., speaker perspective and register), which means that the opportunity to convey the subtlety required for differentiating between the meanings and uses of future forms has been squandered. It is suggested that ESL grammar texts tend to present a ‘variation on a theme’ (i.e., on the approach, or indeed, self-declared improvement on, that taken by preceding texts), rather than using learners’ communication needs as a starting point. As Ellis (2006, p. 89) notes on this issue, “it is safer to follow what has been done before”.¹²

As stated in chapter 1, this research seeks to identify the principal elements underlying the English TA system, with the ultimate aims of firstly analysing the degree to which these are applicable in the expression of futurity in English; and secondly, of potentially identifying other factors which may need to be invoked in order to understand and convey to ESL students the meaning/s and use/s of the various future verb forms.

As the next stage in proceeding with this topic, a discussion of one of the first issues arising in this chapter will now be presented in chapter 3, i.e., the nature of time, tense and aspect. This is seen as possibly contributing to an underpinning framework for how English conceptualizes time and then how this is reflected in its TA system.

¹² On this point, it must be asked whether so-called ‘bad’ language learners are sometimes simply at the mercy of inadequate or poor materials supplied to them. My thanks to Professor Tony McEnery for this observation.

Chapter 3: Concepts of time, tense and aspect

3.1 Introduction: Time, language, and the expression of temporality

In the previous chapter, the terms ‘tense’, ‘aspect’ and ‘time’ were used in such a way as to imply a broad consensus regarding their respective meanings. But as the forthcoming discussion will illustrate, there are limited grounds for such unanimity. Chapter 2 showed that many grammar texts still tend to discuss tense-related matters in morphological terms only, referring to the “affixes, auxiliary verbs, or periphrastic¹³ constructions” (Stowell, 2012, p. 184) which occur in English. Stowell (2012, p. 184) further notes that it is rare for descriptive grammars to attempt a universal definition of tense. Rather, they commonly appeal to what are presumed to be universally semantic concepts, expressed in morphological terms (for example, how the past tense is constructed in a particular language). But in highlighting the paucity of this appeal to shared intuition, Descles and Guentcheva (2012, p. 124) declare that no TA universals have yet been identified. As hopefully will be shown here, however, a concept of time is central to a semantics of both tense and aspect (de Brabanter et al., 2014, p. 2).

This chapter discusses time, tense, aspect and related issues. The topic is dauntingly large and incorporates many sub-topics, most of which are interwoven. Section 3.2 focuses on tenselessness, reflecting the view of Lin (2012, p. 670) that it is not possible to understand tenselessness without an understanding of tense, and the current research believes that the converse is also true.

Chapter 2 emphasised the major importance of meaning in grammar, along with the way in which particular structures are used. Section 3.3 addresses the topic of semantics and pragmatics, asking how they can – or should – be differentiated from each other for ESL instruction purposes. It then highlights their role in what is conveyed by tenses, exploring the move beyond temporal reference.

Section 3.4 will focus on a pivotal aspect of the current research, i.e., speaker perspective. As has been emphasised, meaning and perspective are central to choices made by

¹³ Periphrastic constructions are formed by a combination of words, e.g., an auxiliary and main verb, rather than through the inflection of a single morpheme; they are also referred to as analytic constructions.

language users. In other words, grammatical rules are of the essence, but the choices made by a speaker in order to convey meaning are also fundamental.

This is followed by an issue that is addressed to varying degrees in the TA literature and to a lesser degree in ESL texts: namely, the claim that the Simple Present is not a tense. The main idea underlying this assertion is that the Simple Present typically represents not a point in time, but a period that spans the past, present, and future. Section 3.5 endeavours to examine the relevance and applicability of this theory.

Lastly, the main topics of tense and aspect will be addressed, with the aim of establishing a working definition of each for the subsequent discussion of the future. Even though the expression of futurity will not be covered in this chapter, the issues addressed here will ultimately ask whether the principles underlying the TA system in the past and present are transferrable to or sufficient for an analysis of the future.

As a first step though, it is necessary to identify these underlying TA concepts, both in general and from the viewpoint of the English language, so that common ground can be established for further analysis.

Although the ontology of time will not be a focus here, discussions of time in the literature more often than not commence with reference to a philosophical understanding of this dimension, accompanied by an allusion to the lack of consensus on the topic. Santos (2012, pp. 363-364) identifies the complexity of focusing on time and tense as follows:

Time is a notoriously difficult concept to pin down, and throughout history (and language contact) languages have created, included and internalized a whole set of implicit and unconscious details about repetition, durativity, direction, typicality, rule-like behavior and the like, that can be mined from lexical items and prefixed to grammatical tenses and to narrative expectations.

Such an analysis must focus on the precise encoding and decoding of intended meanings which incorporate time, and on how these are achieved. The investigation of a TA system necessitates an examination of what aspects of time are encoded and how a system enables this morphologically (Deo, 2012, p. 155) or otherwise. As de Brabanter et al. (2014, p. 2) note, despite the fact that finding a definition of time is work usually ascribed to philosophers and

physicists, language students cannot completely avoid the task. In other words, they require a concept of time in order to deal effectively with TA semantics.

Regarding the nature of time itself, explorations typically feature the posing of rhetorical questions such as those put by St Augustine of Hippo (397-400/2009, Book 11, Chapter 14) in the fourth century CE:

For what is time? Who can easily and briefly explain it? But what in speaking do we refer to more familiarly and knowingly than time? ... What, then, is time? If no one ask of me, I know; if I wish to explain to him who asks, I know not. Yet I say with confidence, that I know that if nothing passed away, there would not be past time; and if nothing were coming, there would not be future time; and if nothing were, there would not be present time.

Three pervasive concepts related to time are indicated here: its elusive, seemingly indefinable nature; our nonetheless evident ability to express temporality in language; and the 'natural' tripartite division of time into past, present and future.

For at least two millennia, theories of time have emerged across many disciplines, e.g., in anthropology, biology, linguistics, philosophy, physics and psychology (Klein, 2009a, p. 6). As Klein (1994, p. xi) notes, "it would be surprising, indeed, if a category so fundamental to human cognition as time had not found adequate expression in language". In fact, Boroditsky (2011, p. 334) reports that it is so central to English-language culture that *time* is the most common noun in English, with *day* and *year* also featuring in the top ten nouns. The concept of temporality has been formally explored since at least the fourth century BCE with the writings of Aristotle, addressing the expression of temporality in languages, asking what temporal notions are expressed and how they are encoded in natural languages (Klein, 2009a, pp. 6-7). Over two millennia after Aristotle, philosophical attempts to define time continue, with Jaszczolt (2009, p. 67) saying that "the past is the remembered 'now'; the future is the anticipated 'now'". Yet, as she explains in terms of grammar, defining 'now' or 'the present' is a complex task.

However, in what has proven to be an enduringly restrictive element in this exploration of TA, for Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle, a verb was solely an indicator of time (Hewson, 2012, p. 507). As such, the concepts of tense and time have long been conflated.

Indeed in Latin, the word *tempus* denotes both ‘time’ and ‘tense’, hence seeing tense as the primary means of expressing time (Klein, 2009a, p. 7). Furthermore, Latin grammarians reflect the human propensity to experience the world in three times:

the *present*, that which is before our eyes, as it were (Latin *praesens* means ‘being before’); the *past*, that which has *passed* or gone by (from Latin *praeteritum* ‘gone by’ comes from the name of the *preterite* or simple past tense); and the *future* (*futurum*), ‘that which is to be’ (Binnick, 1991, p. 6).

This way of viewing the world and language, i.e., in three times and with a tense to reflect each, became the convention in Western grammar tradition and has by and large remained its central organising principle. Thus the task of the grammarian has long been seen as the labelling of each tense and identification of the time to which it refers (Binnick, 1991, p. 126). A typical depiction in pedagogical grammar texts is as follows (Binnick, 1991, p. 8):

PAST	PRESENT	FUTURE
loved	love(s)	will/shall love
went	go(es)	will/shall go
had	has/have	will/shall have
was/were	as/is/are	will/shall be

Table 3-1 Tripartite tense paradigm in English

This equation of tense with time has been further strengthened by a tendency in the linguistics literature to discuss tense exclusively in terms of syntax and morphology, while almost or completely ignoring semantics.¹⁴ As previously mentioned, Stowell (2012, p. 184) explains that “[d]escriptive grammars generally discuss tense in terms of the usage of the particular affixes, particles, auxiliary verbs, or periphrastic constructions that occur in the language they are describing”. But in returning to the main issue of tense, Stowell adds that descriptive grammars tend to conduct these discussions without attempting to define tense in a

¹⁴ This can perhaps be traced back to Chomsky’s (1966, p. 106) statements to the effect that “[g]rammar is best formulated as a self-contained study independent of semantics. In particular, the notion of grammaticalness cannot be identified with meaningfulness”. This is not necessarily problematic in itself, but its application in the domain of ESL has at times produced a restricted discourse.

universally relevant way. Rather, these texts call upon each reader's putatively implicit semantic notions (an even more problematic issue in the L2 learning context), illustrating concepts such as past tense in terms of the morphology by which it is typically represented (Stowell, 2012, p. 184), rather than illustrating possible meanings and contexts of use, or an explanation of how the use of one form contrasts with that of others.

One of the significant influences in defining tense stems from Chomsky, who analyzed it in terms of present and past only, by looking at the distribution of tense (and aspect) morphology in English sentences (Stowell, 2012, p. 200). The creation of this paradigm focusing exclusively on present and past contributed to the template for much of the subsequent discussion of tense in English, and was imported into the ESL context with a high level of influence, at least until relatively recent times.

An illustrative example of this is the approach of Haegeman and Gueron (1999, p. 2), in their work in the Chomskyan tradition of generative grammar. They adhere to a past/present paradigm, discussing grammatical principles that could be considered universal and not peculiar to English. They explain their concentration on "principles that distinguish possible English sentences from impossible ones" (Haegeman & Gueron, 1999, p. 2). Stating that the structure of the clause is their object of enquiry, they compare tensed forms in terms of argument structure, for example (Haegeman & Gueron, 1999, p. 38):

The addition of *have* in (b) [Thelma **has** bought a new bicycle] apparently does not change the argument structure of the clause – still two arguments. So a verb like *have* does not assign any thematic roles – it doesn't introduce a participant in the event of buying: rather, it forms the Present Perfect. The present perfect is formed of the element *have* (itself in the present tense) associated with the past participle. It is a form which indicates that the action of buying precedes the present moment and bears some connection to it.

The nature of the connection to the present is not explained and there is no reference to how this utterance might differ in meaning from *Thelma bought a new bicycle*, i.e., in the Simple Past. Haegeman and Gueron (1999, p. 38) go on to say that "[i]n a way, the role of the element *have* is like that of a tense inflection".

With this approach, sentences tend to be judged as grammatical or ungrammatical in terms of whether they are formed in accordance with the rules of the grammar of a language (Haegeman & Gueron, 1999, p. 18). They are not analyzed or distinguished in terms of semantic or contextual appropriateness. Chomsky's focus on the Simple Present and Simple Past tense morphemes "was adopted by most subsequent generative analyses, including those that emerged within the research tradition of formal semantics" (Stowell, 2012, p. 185).

This is not to say, of course, that this approach is invalid or irrelevant in its original context. The problem lies in its having driven much of the way in which tense and aspect have been considered in the L2 pedagogical and theoretical literature (historically, at least), i.e., in terms of the dominance of properties of morphology and distribution. This is only part of the knowledge required by L2 speakers, whose primary need is to create and access meaning. Having tenses illustrated on a timeline can assist learning to a significant degree, but tenses are in fact not merely "indicators of *times* in the real world" (Hewson, 2012, p. 508). Yet the historical view persists to some degree in pedagogical texts, as seen in chapter 2, and in reference grammar texts: e.g., Madden and Ferretti (2009, p. 217) state that tense markers cue listeners to interpret a situation "as occurring before, during, or after some point on a timeline". This thesis will subsequently argue that this is an important but insufficient element of a definition of tense, given its restriction of meaning to temporal issues (and only to those which can be plotted on a timeline).

The consequence of this focus on morphology is that it led to the erroneous presumption that "morphological forms constitute the verbal system" (Hewson, 2012, p. 509). This of course easily engendered the silo approach described in chapter 2. As Hewson (2012, p. 509) further illustrates, this behaviorist approach dictated that only the observable was relevant, hence morphology was the verbal system itself. By way of an alternative, he appeals to Saussure's analogy between the game of chess and grammatical meanings. This involves seeing chess not merely as a set of chess pieces (i.e., grammatical elements), but as the set of possible moves that these pieces can make. As such, a tense or aspect could be seen as a conceptual system (Hewson, 2012, p. 509). It is perhaps more appropriate to say that meaning does not reside in the morphology, but rather is triggered by it (Brisard, 2009, p. 8).

Morphology aside, it is a common observation that humans endeavor to understand time through the use of metaphors, e.g., seeing it as “an arrow whose flight carries it from the past, through the present, into the future” (Rowlands, 2008, p. 204). Yet again, the crucial question here is whether this is actually reflected in language. Intuitively it would seem that if there are three times, then language would express this in three tenses. Binnick (1991, p. 6) observes the ‘naïve’ belief that as language is used to speak about the world, it must at least to a degree reflect it.) As discussed previously, however, tense does not equate to time in real language. Stowell (2012, p. 185) also debunks this myth by saying that “Comrie (1976) defined tense as ‘the grammaticalization of location in time,’ a simple characterization that has considerable intuitive appeal”. Yet it is in fact this intuitive appeal that is problematic. Speaking broadly in terms of Indo-European languages, Binnick (1991, p. 127) notes that “if time is naturally divided into three segments and language makes reference to those segments, it generally does not do so in any simple or universal fashion”.

According to the morphological approach, English has no morphologically distinct way of representing the future, as this is formed not by modifying the verb inflectionally, but through the use of auxiliary verbs. Again, it is on this basis that English is commonly described as a language with only two tenses, i.e., present and past (Binnick, 1991, p. 127; Leech, 2006, p. 111).

Some texts, (e.g., Collins & Hollo, 2000, p. 64, 71), are careful to state that English has two ‘inflectional’ tenses, while Huddleston and Pullum (2002, p. 125; 2005, p. 44) clarify further by stating that in English there are two primary tenses, each marked by inflections. On a distribution level, Binnick (1991, p. 8) builds on this, suggesting that not only are there no morphological grounds for considering three distinct tenses in English: neither do semantic grounds exist, as, for example, future forms can convey present events or states (*That’ll be him now*) and so-called timeless truths (*Boys will be boys*).

In contrast, however, Declerck (2006, p. 24) strongly disputes any claims to a two-tense system based on verb-ending morphology, stating that “there is no a priori reason for assuming that tense can only be expressed morphologically, and not also by the use of auxiliaries”. He further explains that in what he calls ‘complex tenses’ (e.g., *is going, has gone, was going, will*

have gone), the morphology of the first auxiliary is in either the present or past, with *would* seen as the past form of the present *will* (Declerck, 2006, p. 24, 147). This may well be more accessible to ESL students, to whom a two-tense system can be confusing and at best meaningless.

Despite Declerck's strongly-grounded claims that the two-tense statements about English are fallacious, he does agree that the English tense system reflects a mental conception that time is divided into past and nonpast (Declerck, 2006, p. 147). His evidence for this is the fact that all tenses – synthetic¹⁵ or analytic¹⁶ – use either a past or nonpast morpheme, along with the fact that there is no specific future morpheme in English. In other words, he states that there is “a conceptual division of time into two ‘time-spheres’: the present time-sphere and the past time-sphere.” (Declerck, 2006, p. 147). But he still conceives of a system that is multi-tensed.

The segmentation of time into past, present and future is further problematic in that the definition of the present is contentious. Is it a point in time that separates the past from the future, or does ‘now’ refer to an interval of time? And with either concept, how long is the point or interval? In terms of language, situations occurring now are most likely to have been occurring for some time in the past, and continue to do so for at least some time in the future; likewise with current truths (Binnick 1991, p. 126). As Binnick further explains (1991, p. 129), a tense may not in fact convey a definite time at all. Where ‘timeless truths’ are expressed in what are commonly labeled ‘gnomic’ tenses, situations or events are not linked to a particular time. Binnick (1991, p. 129) again illustrates this through the use of the Past, Present and Future (respectively) to express three ‘timeless truths’: *men were deceivers ever; two and two make four; the poet will go to any end to make a rhyme*. (The issue of the present moment will be further analysed in section 3.5.2.)

So in what way, if any, is this area of analysis useful to ESL learners in their need to accurately create and access meaning? Hewson (2012, p. 509) sees grammar as “where marker and meaning, form and function, meet”; the process of analyzing the tense system in a

¹⁵ Synthetic verbal constructions are formed by a single inflectional morpheme (e.g., *paint, paints, painted*).

¹⁶ Analytic verbal constructions consist of more than one word (e.g., *is coming, has come, will be coming*). They are also referred to as periphrastic constructions.

language is a matter of identifying both the system of concepts and the system of markers, then pinpointing the ways in which they relate to each other (Hewson, 2012, p. 509). Crucially though, he remarks that this does not necessarily mean that the system of morphosyntactic markers itself will be coherent (Hewson, 2012, p. 509), in the sense of a three-columned paradigm for past, present and future, each with salient, easily distinguished morphemes, and a one-to-one match for each concept.

Explicating the way in which verb system markers relate to concepts rather than just times can contribute to lightening the load of the ESL learner. One considerable benefit of this is the fact that different systems of markers in two given languages can convey similar concepts. This means that students might already have the relevant concept in their L1, which simply needs to be identified and then connected to the L2 paradigm. Therefore, copious explanations and illustrations of a concept may be redundant in such cases; indeed, they can add to the learning load, as the student may only need to recognize a tacitly-understood concept in its new guise.¹⁷ At the same time though, actual concepts of time which differ between a student's L1 and English can be a significant learning obstacle. Hinkel (1992, p. 557) refers to a survey of 130 ESL students to note that this can occur at a very immediate level. In the survey, students whose L1 was Arabic, Japanese, Chinese, Korean or Vietnamese were asked to define English tense meanings, drawing on how these were presented in their grammar texts. The results indicated that speakers of these languages had different concepts of terms such as *present*, *right now* and *past* from those of native-speakers of English. As she concludes (Hinkel, 1992, p. 557), "[a]n implication of this finding is that grammar teaching that utilizes descriptions of time accepted in English-speaking communities to explain usages and meanings of English tenses can produce a low rate of learner comprehension".

In addition, students need an awareness not only of the distinctions that *can* be made in a language, but also of whether that language demands that these distinctions be made (Binnick, 1991, p. 127). Not all temporal properties have a morphological marker in every language, but semantic properties are more likely to be universal, yet perhaps uninstantiated in

¹⁷ This can be seen, for example, in the relationship between the Simple Past form in English and the Present Perfect form in German.

a given language, i.e., they may be rendered lexically or through discourse (Deo, 2012, p. 155). For example, the Past Perfect may be used to indicate a sequence, e.g., *When Mary arrived, John had left for work*, but this could also be conveyed lexically, e.g., *John left for work before Mary arrived*. Hence students need to be equipped with an understanding of how temporal information either can or must be structured and conveyed in a language, as a lexical equivalent is not always available.

In this sense of the distinctions which need to be marked in a language, it would therefore seem crucial to identify the principles at play in the temporal system of a language. As Binnick (1991, p. 130) notes, the concepts that underlie any language system may be complex, but they are never chaotic. In this research, it is hoped that through the identification of these underlying elements in the English TA system, teachers and students will be able to work with a temporal framework which incorporates a semantic understanding and extends beyond temporality. The discussion here subscribes to the view that “the choice of grammatical markers of time is motivated by semantic factors” (Brisard & Patard, 2011, p. 3). As such, it will seek to investigate the concepts which are encoded, along with the ways in which these encodings occur in English (Deo, 2012, p. 157). It will place a strong emphasis on speaker¹⁸ meaning, with the sense that when the grammar of a statement is altered, its meaning also changes (i.e., a change in TA form produces a change in meaning). A related tenet of the discussion will be a strongly speaker-oriented view (Brisard & Patard, 2011, p. 3) which reflects the belief that speakers make choices from among the forms available to them in order to reflect their perspective on a situation.

In continuing the lead-up to defining tense and aspect, this research will now focus on tenselessness. As mentioned, it is perhaps not possible to discuss tense without an understanding of tenselessness (Lin, 2012, p. 670) and vice versa. The following section will address the issue of tenselessness - a concept foreign to speakers of many Indo-European languages – and to ask whether there are any commonalities between tensed and tenseless languages.

¹⁸ This thesis will focus principally on spoken interactive English, usually in short exchanges entailing a non-expansive utterance time, typically featuring one-to-two sentences. The term *speaker* will be used broadly to mean the producer of language in either spoken or written form.

3.2 Tenselessness

In discussing the English tense system in 1924, Jespersen (1933, p. 230) stated:

It is important to keep the two concepts time and tense strictly apart. The former is common to all mankind and is independent of language; the latter varies from language to language and is the linguistic expression of time-relations, so far as these are indicated in verb-forms.

As well as making a crucial distinction between tense and time, Jespersen implies an awareness that not all languages employ verb forms to locate the temporality of an utterance. But for speakers of Indo-European languages, the concept of tenselessness can seem counterintuitive. After all, it is surely the role of verbs to mark tense and thereby make any requisite distinctions between times. Hence given that it was only in the early twentieth century that western linguists ‘discovered’ non-Indo-European languages, the concept of tenseless languages is relatively new to Western linguistics (Binnick, 1991, p. 126-127, 131). Yet a diachronic analysis shows that in their early stages, many tensed languages lacked tensed markers, and that languages such as Biblical Hebrew did not feature the same level of tense as seen in today’s Indo-European languages (Binnick, 1991, p. 128, 130).

In a review of 318 languages, Velupillai (2016, p. 110) found the following:

NUMBER OF LANGUAGES	NUMBER OF TENSES
77	0
26	1
73	2
142	3

Table 3-2 World languages and number of tenses

As can be seen, by far the majority of languages feature tense, i.e., approximately 75%, while just under 25% were deemed tenseless. Naturally though, the emphasis shifts when one

considers the number of speakers in the world whose L1 is tenseless, with Mandarin¹⁹ contributing towards a tip in the balance in favour of tenseless language speakers.

Regardless of the existence or level of tense in a language, speakers of every tongue have the resources to talk about time and to express duration, sequence and simultaneity (Klein, 2009a, p. 18). Carlson (2012, p. 828) states that “[l]anguage describes two things: events and states”, and these can be conveyed in the past, present and future. A variety of devices is employed in order to convey information about the range of temporal properties entailed in these states or events (henceforth to be termed ‘eventualities’²⁰). According to Deo (2012, p. 155), these devices include:

grammaticalized markers of location in time (tense) or temporal structure (aspect), temporal adverbials of location (e.g., *last year, now*) or frequency (e.g., *always, rarely*), lexicalized descriptions of events and their temporal structures (*Aktionsart* or lexical aspect), and discourse principles, which relate the ordering of discourse to the temporal order of events.

To this list, i.e., tense, aspect, temporal adverbials, lexical aspect (eventuality types denoted by a verb, e.g., *arrive* vs *work*) and discourse principles, Klein (2009, p. 41) adds temporal particles, which express aspect in languages such as Mandarin.²¹ Klein (2009b, p. 41, 43) further states that of these six devices, tense and aspect are the only ones not to occur across all languages, a fact which leads him to describe them as potentially superfluous.

In exploring this line of argument, Ogihara (2011, p. 1463) believes that it can be difficult to identify precisely how much tense morphemes actually contribute to the semantic content of an utterance, given their interaction with temporal adverbials. In fact he states that temporal adverbials, rather than tense morphemes, tend to carry temporal information (Ogihara, 2011, p. 1463), which marks out common ground with tenseless languages.

¹⁹ The estimated number of Mandarin speakers in 2015 was 900 million, the single biggest number of native speakers of a language (Ethnologue, 2015).

²⁰ In this discussion, ‘eventuality’ will include events and states of any type, as in Binnick, 2009, p. 268; Copley, 2009, p. 5; and von Steutterheim, Carroll, & Klein, 2009, p. 195).

²¹ Aside from Mandarin, other examples of tenseless languages include Yucatec (Bohnenmeyer, 2009, p. 102, Thai (Smith, 2007b, p. 232) and Kalaallisut (Lee & Tonhauser, 2010, p. 307).

This possibility that tense is surplus to requirements notwithstanding, in tensed languages, tense is denoted by an obligatory verbal morpheme such as an inflection or auxiliary, which assigns a temporal location to an eventuality (Declerck, 2006, p. 94; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002, p. 116; Smith, 2007a, p. 420). In contrast, tenseless languages feature no overt tense morphemes and use discourse principles, temporal adverbials and temporal particles to convey temporal information (Klein, 2009b, p. 41; Smith, 2007b, p. 228; Yang & Huang, 2004, p. 52).

An important distinction between tensed and tenseless languages is the previously mentioned obligatory nature of verb morphology (including periphrastic forms) in every clause in the former. So, English speakers are obliged to mark time, whereas Mandarin speakers are not. In Standard English, the depiction of any situation is usually positioned in time, such that the situation and the positioning cannot be separated. Hence it is not possible for a matrix clause to include a non-finite utterance, e.g., **Anne go there* or **He be helpful* (Klein, 2009b, p. 39).

Both a past-tense marker and a past-denoting adverb indicate an eventuality time preceding Speech Time, but the adverb cannot be called a tense (Lin, 2012, p. 670). Tense indicators are morphologically bound into the grammar of a language and are obligatory, even though they are not actually necessary for the interpretation of an utterance, as seen in *John cried yesterday* (Lin, 2012, p. 670), where *John cry yesterday* would convey the same meaning. In contrast, temporal adverbials are not grammaticalized and are not mandatory in every matrix clause of a language. So a distinction must be made in terms not only of the means by which temporality is indicated, but of whether or not these markers are obligatory – an important consideration for ESL students whose L1 is tenseless.

Hence, regardless of the respective means adopted by tensed and tenseless languages, and of the contribution made by their temporal indicators, the point remains that all languages can indicate all time-related matters precisely without morphological inflections (Binnick, 2009, p. 268; Lin, 2012, p. 669; Santos, 2012, p. 335). Aside from purely temporal matters, it is believed that all languages are able to relate all relevant conceptual distinctions, regardless of whether this is achieved through linguistic or pragmatic means, or a combination of both

(Bohnmeyer, 2009 p. 123; Gabbay & Rohrer, 1979, p. 15). But significantly, the degree to which the same nuances are available within each language does not appear to have been documented. And it is these nuances, presumably peculiar to individual languages or groups thereof, which are often a matter of concern for students of a particular language. Irrespective of whether temporal location is wrought via adverbials or verbal inflections, “the novelty or the abstractness of a new mode of expression (or a blend of both) can pose a difficulty for L2 students” (DeKeyser, 2005, p. 5).

In relation to this array of possible nuances: it can be surprising for students to see the available range in an unfamiliar language which marks grammatically an element hitherto unknown to them. In other words, not all languages grammaticalise the same kinds of meaning (Deo, 2012, p. 156).

For example, as mentioned in chapter 1 (criterion 6), some languages feature evidential markers, i.e., morphemes such as affixes or whole words which identify the source of the information or evidence communicated by a speaker (Speas, 2008, p. 940). Some examples are as follows:

LANGUAGE: MAKAH	ENGLISH TRANSLATION	EVIDENCE
wiki-caxa-w	It's bad weather	directly experienced
wiki-caxa-k-pid	It looks like bad weather	inference from physical evidence
wiki-caxa-k-qad'i	It sounds like bad weather	inference from auditory evidence
wiki-caxa-k-wa.d	I'm told there's bad weather	report from second party
LANGUAGE: QUECHUA	ENGLISH TRANSLATION	EVIDENCE
wañu-nqa-paq-mi	It will die	I assert
wañu-nqa-paq-shi	It will die	I was told
wañu-nqa-paq-chi	It will die	perhaps
LANGUAGE: TIBETAN	ENGLISH TRANSLATION	EVIDENCE
K'ong gis yi-ge bri-pa-red	S/he wrote a letter	it seems
K'ong gis yi-ge bri-pa-song	S/he wrote a letter	I saw it happen

Table 3-3 Examples of evidential markers in three languages (Davis, Potts, & Speas, 2007; Speas 2010, p. 127))

Obviously, the concepts conveyed above can be expressed lexically in other languages, for example, in English, by *apparently*, *according to*, *I've heard* or *I'm sure*. Yet English does not

demand that this evidence be morphologically marked. An awareness of examples such as these (at an appropriate stage in students' learning) can enable L2 students to see that languages select the elements which they make salient through grammaticalization (Deo, 2012, p. 156; Speas, 2008, p. 940) and that these markers are obligatory.

This concept of evidentiality is also seen in conceptions of past and future time. One illustrative example is Aymara, a Native American language, which sees the past as in front and the future as behind (Kosecki, 2016, p. 87; Majolino & Paykin 2015, p. ix; Vet, 2015, p. 4). As Aymara is a language featuring evidentiality, this is significant, as the past offers proof of occurrence, afforded by a 'witnessed' view 'in front of' the speaker.

Again, when faced with learning a second language, students can implicitly assume that all concepts marked in their own language are given equivalent treatment in others. Learners with a tensed L1 may regard as anomalous any language without tense morphemes, while those with a tenseless L1 may well wonder at the supposed redundancy of tensed morphemes, when adverbials or other means already make any necessary indications of time. As DeKeyser (2005, p. 8) notes, students can perceive grammatical markers such as those for tense or aspect as redundant when they are semantically unnecessary, i.e., when their meaning has already been expressed by another item in the utterance, e.g., **I going there now* or **She see him yesterday*. This perception of redundancy can in turn hamper acquisition of these markers (DeKeyser, 2005, p. 4, 8; Hinkel, 1992; p. 558).

Jaszczolt (2009, p. 82) looks at the question of the necessity of tense from another perspective, saying first of all that it is not necessary, in that both tenseless and tensed languages can produce tenseless utterances (e.g., *Elephants have four legs*). Moreover, she adds that tense is not even sufficient, because tensed languages still have a heavy reliance on adverbials (Jaszczolt, 2009, p. 82). This can be illustrated by the distinction between present and future respectively in *I'm working at the moment* and *I'm working on Tuesday*; or *He'll be there now* and *He'll be there on Tuesday*.

Tenseless languages can perhaps best illustrate this interplay of grammatical, pragmatic and lexical (i.e., adverbial) factors in the expression of time, given that temporal morphology is absent as an indicator. This is important from an ESL perspective, in that it can enable teachers

and learners to identify ‘givens’ that are present or otherwise in both the L1 and L2. Indeed, an awareness of students whose L1 is tenseless may remind teachers and text-writers to at times avoid the practice of always supplying the ‘crutch’ of adverbials when developing students’ use of tenses in English. As Yang and Huang (2004, p. 66) explain, Hong Kong English textbooks tend to accentuate the use of adverbs of frequency (e.g., *always*, *usually* and *every day*) when illustrating the Simple Present tense, in order to convey the idea of habit or recurrence. Likewise, when eliciting a Simple Past form, temporal adverbs such as *yesterday*, *in 2000*, or *last year* are employed. Yang and Huang (2004, p. 66) cite the sample sentences below [emphasis added]:

Where are Tony and Jenny <i>now</i> ? Where were they <i>at 8.00</i> ? Tony cleans his room <i>every day</i> but he did not clean it <i>yesterday</i> .

While these are conceptually important in the early stages of learning, a continuing reliance on adverbs in these contexts may result in a reduced focus on tensed forms, with students feeling that the adverb itself has accounted for the required temporal information and that the tensed form is superfluous.

To conclude: perhaps the biggest contribution to be made by an awareness of tenselessness is that teachers and students can both address the ‘unnaturalness’ (Binnick, 1991, p. 128) of a tensed language as experienced by native speakers of tenseless languages. Tense morphology can easily be regarded as a negligible appendage which makes no contribution to meaning. As such, it is crucial for students to gradually grasp the semantic content of different forms and how they relate to each other, as well as the ways in which they can be used to construct meaning.

The contribution to tenses made by semantics, along with that of pragmatics, will be the topic of the following section.

3.3 Semantics and pragmatics

A discussion of semantics in the domain of grammar immediately flags several dilemmas, not least among them being where to position the demarcation line between semantics and pragmatics. The literature on the English verb system employs a variety of definitions of TA semantics. These range from tense as indicating temporal reference or deixis (Binnick, 2009, p. 268; Declerck, 2006, p. 119; Leech, 2006, p. 94; Portner, 2006, p. 154); tense as denoting actions or events (Radford, 2004, p. 2); and tense as playing a functional role, for example, *will* possibly expressing a command or an offer (Collins & Hollo, 2000, p. 3).

At times, grammarians discussing the tense system define semantics explicitly, but in many cases, a definition must be inferred or assumed. The range of semantic approaches presented above reflects the fact that overall, the most common definitions relate tense to temporal reference. For example (Binnick, 2009, p. 268):

In a referential theory, tense is taken to be deictic in the sense that a tense denotes the temporal relation of the time E of an eventuality – event or state – expressed in an utterance to the time S of the speech act of producing that utterance.

As also seen above, other approaches associate semantics with either verbal or lexical aspect, while still others have a functional basis. A functional approach does not tend to view a verb form as primarily dependent on its semantics, but rather on the discourse function that it performs (Binnick, 2006). For example, the Simple Present may be seen as an exponent for greeting, thanking, eliciting or providing information, offering, requesting, introducing and identifying, amongst other functions (Swan, 2007, p. 7). As can readily be observed, this is crossing into the domain of what other theorists view as pragmatics, i.e., the study of language in use (Löbner, 2013, p. 6).

A standard definition sees pragmatics as related to the use and interpretation of utterances in particular contexts. Pragmatics is able to highlight the ways in which a statement featuring a word or form may vary in its message, depending on the context in which it is made (Gerhardt & Savasir, 1986, p. 501; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002, pp. 3-4, 34). Portner (2006, p. 157, 163) identifies three elements in the pragmatic process: sentence meaning, speaker meaning and context, which Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999, pp. 4-5) see as triggering

the choices that speakers make when communicating. Swan (2007, p. 1) says simply that pragmatics deals with all language use, looking at anything beyond what is actually encoded in language. More comprehensively, Löbner (2013, p. 6) states that “it is important to separate what is actually *said* from what is only inferred. The investigation of such inferences, their role in communication and how they are related to the utterance meaning of what is actually said, is an important part of pragmatics”.

In the light of this research’s focus on L2 learning, what does all of this mean for ESL students? It can most easily be argued that Swan’s (2007, p. 1) definition is perhaps the easiest to convey, in that contrasting dictionary meaning (i.e., semantics), with possible usage meanings (i.e., pragmatics) may be the most accessible dichotomy to draw. Moving momentarily away from the domain of verb tenses, this can be exemplified by looking at an expression such as *of course*. If one is to utilise a form/meaning/use paradigm, it can be explained that *of course* has the form of preposition + noun and its ‘dictionary’ meaning is “certainly; obviously” (Of course, 2015). But in terms of usage, students can be surprised to learn of the way in which the meaning can alter. First of all, in the context of a request for help, *of course* has a positive meaning:

- These books are very heavy. Could you help me?
- Of course.

But in a different context, e.g., being asked to confirm factual information, the same expression can convey rudeness and perhaps disdain:

- Do you come from Australia?
- Of course.

In this sense, the idea of a core meaning needs to be seen in terms of a range of usages: i.e., what is encoded vs what can possibly be decoded.

In looking at this idea of what is and is not encoded, Carston (1998, p. 1) states that speakers must always activate two cognitive processes: one of decoding and another of making inferences. The former involves the identification of a linguistic output representation (or semantic representation) of an utterance. The second cognitive process is pragmatic inference, which integrates the linguistic representation with other accessible information (e.g., relevance

and context), so as to gain an interpretative hypothesis about the proposition which the speaker intends to convey (Carston, 1998, p. 1, 7).

However, another dilemma emerges from this dichotomy of decoding and inference, in terms of what is and is not encoded in language. The literature varies widely on this point. Most broadly speaking, there is agreement that grammar and meaning are to some degree intertwined (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002, p. 33). Wagner (2012, p. 459) is categorical on this point, stating that tense and grammatical aspect contribute independent information to the meaning of a statement, beyond what is lexically conveyed. But crucially, the question must be asked as to whether these verbal forms contain inherent, stable meanings that can be identified as part of their semantics (Carston, 1998, p. 5). Likewise, consideration must be given to whether each of these meanings changes according to how it is used in various contexts.

These questions are examined by Binnick (1991, p. 454), in his discussion of meaning and use of the Present Perfect. He states that there is a range of beliefs among semanticists as to the number of meanings embodied in the Present Perfect, with some suggesting that it has one basic meaning but numerous uses, and others claiming that it has multiple meanings which are based on an underlying concept (Binnick, 1991, p. 455). He further explains that not only is it difficult to explain all uses in terms of one or more meanings, but that both the reconciliation and distinction of these two elements must be central to any tense theory. And thirdly, he notes that the element of context cannot be overlooked in determining how tense forms are used (Binnick, 1991, p. 455).

On this point, Partee (1984, p. 244) explains that a context may not even refer directly to a particular time, but that a time may still be inferred. In her oft-cited illustration, she notes that the utterance of the sentence, *I didn't turn off the stove*, whilst driving along a freeway, would unproblematically be interpreted as referring to a time immediately prior to leaving home. As such, she states that tenses have pronominal properties, in that interlocutors or readers depend on contextually salient times (Partee, 1984, p. 244). She further explains that the use of the Simple Past is like that of a third-person pronoun: e.g., when looking at holiday photos, a past time is made contextually salient to the interlocutors (Partee, 1984, p. 245). Taking this analogy further, she notes that a temporal use of the present tense can be seen as

indexical, in the same manner as is a first-person pronoun, in that it refers to the immediate time of utterance (Partee, 1984, p. 245).

So it would appear from this viewpoint that despite having stable, inherent meanings, pronouns are dependent for their interpretation on pragmatic considerations, as is claimed for tenses. Ludlow (2012, p. 64) echoes this interpretation, saying that a reference point indicating an implied time in the past that is contextually available to interlocutors constitutes a temporal anaphora that is typical of tense.

While the distinction between meaning and context is clear in the case of pronouns, it would appear that there is no currently available resolution to the question of what is ascribed to meaning and what to pragmatic use in verb tenses, along with any clear isolation of the role of context. But more significantly, it could be argued that from the perspective of L2 students, the search for a dividing line between the semantics and pragmatics of verb tenses may be not only fruitless but also ineffectual. Little evidence is available to suggest that students conceptualise tenses in terms of this dichotomy. Perhaps it is simply essential to ensure that semantic and pragmatic issues are in fact incorporated in an optimally holistic approach.

In support of this position is Swan's (2007, p. 3) claim that the concept of grammatical structures as having two types of meaning, i.e., semantic and pragmatic, is flawed. He bases this on a belief that there is at best a limited understanding of what pragmatics actually does. As he explains, "[a]lthough the term 'pragmatics', relating loosely to the study of 'how we do things with language,' is pervasive in discussions of language teaching, it can be very hard to pin down exactly what people mean by it, or how it relates to syntax, lexis and semantics" (Swan, 2007, p. 3). He further describes the distinction between semantic and pragmatic meaning as artificial and at times opaque (Swan, 2007, p. 6), citing as an example the use of the Simple Past form to convey either a completed past eventuality or a hypothetical one:

For another example, take the past tenses in the following sentences:

1. I *saw* Oliver yesterday.
2. Only 18? I thought you *were* older.
3. If I *had* time I'd do a lot more reading.
4. I think it's time we *went* home.
5. If you *had* a moment, I wouldn't mind a bit of help.

6. How much *did* you want to spend?

We can if we wish describe the tense in 1) as having a "literal meaning," referring as it does simply to past time, and the tense in 6) as involving a "pragmatic use" of the past form for polite distancing. But what about the others? It seems difficult to assign the various intertwined nuances of time reference, hypotheticality, and interpersonal indirectness to one or other.

This excerpt again questions the potential helpfulness to ESL students of a distinction between semantics and pragmatics. It would seem more relevant to learners' needs to outline the possible meanings and uses - as one unit - which past forms can have (and ideally, why – e.g., invoking remoteness), in terms of the factors which can be invoked in the TA system, e.g., those deriving from aspect or perspective (which in the case of the above past forms, could entail completion or irrealis respectively).

Based on the idea that a linguistic expression can have a multi-faceted meaning, not all elements of which are triggered in each usage, De Wit & Brisard (2014, p. 55) endorse Langacker's rejection of a sharp distinction between semantic and pragmatic knowledge. They further explain that different "usage types may be conceived of as instantiations of a semantic core arising in interaction with elements in the context and linked to one another by cognitively motivated categorizing relationships" (De Wit & Brisard, 2014, p. 55).

As evidenced above, this needs to go beyond a sole focus on temporal reference. For example, futurity in English can be expressed by at least ten forms, which overwhelmingly suggests that elements other than temporal reference are also at play (e.g., speaker perspective, epistemic warrant and speaker attitude), particularly where multiple verbal forms can make precisely the same temporal reference. The question then arises as to whether these elements are semantically embedded in the forms themselves, or are framed pragmatically in a range of contexts. Differences arise again among writers here, with most seeing semantics as independent of context (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002, p. 33; Portner, 2006, p. 139).

The putative distinction between semantics and pragmatics is described by Culpeper and Haugh (2014, p. 6) as at times an effort

to get pragmatics to 'rescue' other more formal areas of linguistics theory. This is especially true of scholars whose main interest is not pragmatics: they can dispose of

problematic areas into the 'pragmatics dustbin', leaving their theories unsullied by contextual ambiguities, indeterminacies, and the like.

This is often the case where tense is concerned, when semantics is commonly seen as invoking temporal location, while other issues are consigned to the realm of pragmatics (or, more often, context). Conversely, the field of pragmatics can tend to treat tense as a matter of grammar and 'therefore' not of pragmatic relevance. For example, in her book, *Pragmatics and grammar*, Ariel (2008) makes no mention at all of tense systems and pragmatics. This could simply reflect the complexity and perhaps impossibility of attributing the meanings and uses of verb tenses to either semantics or pragmatics.

Above all, though, the question remains as to what L2 students can gain from any such distinction. As Binnick (1991, p. 131) states, it is essential that "linguistic expressions can be systematically defined in terms of their relationships to aspects of reality". So if semantic and pragmatic realities are invoked, it could be claimed that there is little value in attributing the creation of meaning exclusively to one field. It remains paramount that L2 students are provided with the means of conveying meaning and of expressing reality (or irrealis), temporality and speaker perspective appropriately through any form, polysemous or otherwise.

To return to Carston's (1998, p. 5) earlier-noted questions as to whether verbal forms contain inherent, stable meanings that can be identified as part of their semantics: Ariel (2008, p. xiv) notes in the introduction to her text on pragmatics and grammar that

Part I splits linguistic acts into separate grammatical (encoded) and pragmatic (inferred) components. Part II presents evidence for an intimate association between the two. Finally, part III brings codes and inferences back together, as we consider interface levels where codes and inferences combine.

Ariel (2008) then queries what pragmatic inference does that grammar cannot do, in fact asking what elements of an utterance can be attributed to pragmatics rather than to semantics. But overall, her definition of grammatical components as having encoded meaning is significant.

Yet on the other hand, the idea of an encoded semantics is not available for all verb tense forms in the sense of a dictionary meaning. With the exception of the auxiliary *will*, tenses do not feature significantly in dictionary entries. For example, the *Longman dictionary of*

contemporary English (Will, 2003, p. 1888) gives several meanings of *will*. But other verbal forms, such as *be going to*, are not defined. (See Table 3-4 for a more comprehensive listing of dictionary excerpts.) Another example is the *Macquarie dictionary*, which offers approximately 20 meanings or functions of *will* (Will, 2015a), many of which can also be conveyed by other forms such as *be going to*, or lexemes other than *will* (e.g., *wish*). This dictionary also offers one meaning of *going to* (Going to, 2015), noting that it expresses intention and futurity. But again, this is not distinguished from uses of other future forms. A third form defined is *(be) about to* (Be about to, 2015), which is more clearly illustrated in terms of temporal proximity. A final dictionary example is the *Oxford English dictionary* (Will, 2015b), which offers six meanings of *will* in a mainly functional approach (e.g., expressing requests, intentions, desires, facts, probability, inevitability, expectations, capacity and annoying behaviours). But no attempt is made to disambiguate these uses from those of *be going to*, which is defined as follows (Be going to be, 2015): “Intend or be likely or intended to be or do something (used to express a future tense)”.

As such, it would seem that dictionary meanings of these forms are neither distinctive nor comprehensive, particularly due to the lack of context and of speaker perspective, along with the absence of a contrastive analysis. So a treatment of verb tenses on this level of semantics is likely to be unhelpful, to say the least.

FUTURE FORM	DICTIONARY	MEANING/S
<i>will + V</i>	<i>Longman dictionary of contemporary English</i>	determination; legality; desire; willingness; requests; general truths; possibilities; beliefs; giving orders; offering/inviting; negative habits
<i>will + V</i>	<i>Macquarie dictionary</i>	simple futurity; likelihood or certainty; willingness; requirement or command; intention; customary or habitual action; capacity or ability; probability or expectation; wish; desire; resolution on the part of the speaker; willingness or desire; compulsion, as in commands; capacity or ability; probability or expectation; customary practice or inevitability; desire, usually in polite requests; willingness to do what is requested
<i>will + V</i>	<i>Oxford English dictionary</i>	expressing requests; intentions; desires; probability; facts; inevitability; expectations; capacity; annoying behaviours
<i>going to + V</i>	<i>Macquarie dictionary</i>	intention; futurity
<i>going to + V</i>	<i>Oxford English dictionary</i>	intend or be likely or intended to be or do something (used to express a future tense)
<i>be about to + V</i>	<i>Macquarie dictionary</i>	almost ready to; planning to; Intending to do something imminently or in the near future; ready to, on the verge of

Table 3-4 Examples of dictionary meaning of *will + V*

In the light of the above, this research will claim that for ESL students, a categorical distinction between semantics and pragmatics is often unproductive, given speakers' primary need to convey and access meaning. Therefore the subsequent discussion will tend to conflate the fields of semantics and pragmatics, focusing instead on facilitating students in their endeavours to 'say what they mean'. From this point, categorical distinctions will not be drawn between the semantic or pragmatic contribution of a particular form, except when those distinctions call for such an elaboration, e.g., with issues of register and context involved with the use of *will*. In light of the putative polysemy of *will*, this will be an ongoing discussion in chapter 5, along with the proposition that *will* is even more context-dependent than other verbal forms.

In terms of semantics and pragmatics then, this discussion will hold that except where distinctions are required – and as such will be indicated – a verb form will be discussed as a semantic and pragmatic entity, polysemous or otherwise, depending on factors such as context and register. This does not mean that the critiqued silo approach in chapter 1 will be implemented. Rather, the discussion will look at the meaning/s and use/s of a form in the light of the underlying principles it evokes, and of how it contrasts with other forms. Again, this approach aims to assist L2 students in identifying the meanings/uses which they wish to understand or convey, and to understand the role of perspective in this process. The facets of perspective are the topic of the following section.

3.4 Tense and perspective

3.4.1 Introduction

Time is a component of space-time and this space-time can be construed in a variety of ways ... [W]e see the universe in a certain way because we exist in it in a certain way, with the properties and abilities we have (Jaszczolt, 2009, p. 73).

For students in the process of learning their first L2, one of the issues with which they must grapple is the fact that their L1 represents only one possible perspective on the world. As mentioned in the previous discussion of tenselessness, this is particularly pertinent when they focus on the way in which another language establishes a framework for speaking about time-

related matters. Hopefully such a focus generates an understanding that no single language offers a ‘perfect fit’ which is universally applicable. As Everett (2008, p. 225) notes, “[P]erception is learned. We perceive the world ... according to our experiences and expectations, not always, perhaps even never, according to how the world actually is”.

When discussed in the context of TA systems, viewpoint or perspective typically refers to aspect, as contrasted with tense. The role of aspect in the English verb system will be discussed in section 3.7, but suffice to say here that it represents the range of possible viewpoints on an eventuality, as distinct from the time of its occurrence (Patard, 2011, p. 285), with the speaker choosing whether to present all or only part of a given situation (Smith, 2007b, p. 229). This can be seen, for example, in *He kicks the ball* or *He kicked the ball*, as opposed to *He is kicking the ball* or *He was kicking the ball*, where the speaker selects whether to focus on a complete or incomplete eventuality, regardless of its location in time. In other words, aspect depicts the ways in which a language can represent the internal temporal structure of a situation (Madden & Ferretti, 2009, p. 220). But as will be illustrated here and elsewhere, speaker perspectives on an eventuality in time go far beyond aspectual matters.

This section looks firstly at the nature of speaker perspective itself and then highlights some ‘given’ perspectives on languages other than English. Next, it regards perspective in terms of choices available to individual speakers of English regarding tense, relative temporal focus, and attitude. It ends by looking at the dictates of context and how these can shape or constrain expression by both speakers and interlocutors.

3.4.2 The nature of speaker perspective

The languages of the world, as far as is known, have common ground in that issues of time are pervasive. However, they can also differ enormously in how these temporal matters are linked to ways in which languages choose to represent knowledge (Santos, 2012, p. 335). Each language, regardless of whether it is tensed or tenseless, offers a set of options for the communication of temporal information. Zagana (2013, p. 746) explains that tense connects a time interval with an external time, and that the latter is the speaker’s context, or Speech Time. For English then, the starting point is the speaker and his/her time of utterance, which then relates to an eventuality at typically a preceding, simultaneous, or subsequent time.

This underscores the egocentricity of tensed languages, as they relate an eventuality to the *now* or present of the speaker, which becomes the pivotal point of the system (Majolina & Paykin, 2015, p. xi; Vet, 2015, p. 4, 9). Klein sees the speaker as an observer who forms a relationship between two or more times. As he notes, (Klein, 2009a, p. 24), “this observer cannot be an instrument which measures time, such as a clock. No chronometer, precise as it may be, distinguishes past from future. To this end, [a human] observer is needed who identifies a timespan as ‘being now’”. Smith (2007a, p. 420) supports this, stating that “time requires an orientation point or landmark for location. The speaker is the canonical center of linguistic communication, the basic temporal orientation point in language being the speaker’s time”, or Speech Time. The speaker then makes a (usually unconscious) subjective decision as to how to view and hence express the focus eventuality (Binnick, 2012, p. 77), by selecting the relevant form, e.g., to couch a situation in terms of predictability (*She’ll work hard*) or intentionality (*She’s going to work hard*).

As seen then, a proposition can be conceived and depicted in more than one way, referred to by Langacker (2011, p. 46) as a ‘construal’. As he further observes, “[e]very expression incorporates a particular way of construing the conceptual content it evokes. Construal is an essential aspect of linguistic meaning, part of the conventional semantic value of lexical and grammatical elements” (Langacker, 2011, pp. 46-47). Again, this sense that the speaker has a choice of alternative expressions in construing and portraying a situation highlights the point that the creation of temporal meaning entails more than locating an eventuality in time. Fundamentally, speaker perspective reveals the relationship between the speaker and the proposition (Zagona, 2013, p. 758).

3.4.3 Perspective in other languages

Beyond this language-internal perspective, though, students and teachers can unconsciously assume that their L1 has the default perspective on time, in terms of past, present and future, and how these are expressed. L1 speakers of Indo-European languages and of many others would not tend to query the arrow-of-time model that sees time moving from past to present and then on to the future. This view holds that the past lies behind the observer and the future in front: the future is anticipated as something that lies ahead, while in order to see the past,

speakers must look back. This is reflected in English expressions which anticipate what 'lies ahead' or which advise people to 'move forward' and not to 'look back' (Jaszczolt, 2009, p. 28).

However, for New Zealand Maori, the past is envisaged as in front of the speaker, and hence able to be seen, as is the case with the South American language, Aymara (Boroditsky, 2011, p. 336). In the Maori language, an expression referring to the past, 'ngara mua', means 'the days in front' (Jaszczolt, 2009, p. 28). Conversely, the future is behind and therefore not yet visible (Jaszczolt, 2009, p. 28). This is also a feature of Hausa (West Africa), where Tuesday precedes Monday, as it is 'in front of it', meaning therefore that Monday follows Tuesday (Jaszczolt, 2009, p. 29). Hence the arrow of time still flies, but the speaker's perspective on it is reversed.

These conceptual matters, apart from being of intercultural interest, can impact on students' learning of an L2: how their respective L1s conceptualise time and systematise grammatical temporal markers can influence their acquisition of the English TA system (Hinkel, 1992, p. 557). This can begin with individual concepts which are not normally defined, as they are taken as 'given'. For example, in English-speaking cultures, each day is defined as beginning at midnight. However, Hinkel (1992, p. 557) observes that in non-secular Jewish and Muslim cultures, this occurs at sunset, while for Japanese speakers, the day begins at sunrise. Hinkel (1992, p. 564) further notes that in a study of intercultural concepts of temporality, when differentiating between present and past, Japanese students conceived of a particular number of days prior to 'today' as belonging to both temporal zones. But it would not seem necessary to most teachers and students to confirm a common understanding of the meaning of 'today'.

Along with an ambiguity in meaning, there can be the absence of an equivalent concept in a language. For example, there is no word for 'year' in Amondawa, a Brazilian language; rather, time is divided into seasons, i.e., wet and dry, and observed by changes in the environment and weather (Sinha, da Silva, Zinken, & Sampaio, 2016, p. 166). But ambiguity arises in regard to the definition of a 'day'. Amondawa has no word for the western concept of a 24-hour day: instead, the equivalent term refers only to the daylight hours, having the meaning of 'sunlight' (Sinha et al., 2016, p. 167).

Finally, gestural and conceptual indications of temporal sequence in languages can vary. English-speakers have a tendency to graphically mark the progression of time on a linear scale, with past, present and future moving from left to right on a horizontal scale. For many Mandarin speakers, however, the same progression is indicated on a vertical linear scale, whereby past, present and future – or earlier and later eventualities - proceed along a vertical line from higher to lower levels (Kosecki, 2016, p. 87).

This implies a uniformity among speakers of one language in their indication of temporal sequencing. However, Casasanto (2016, p. 68) observes that while English speakers use lateral gestures when plotting time on a scale, spoken English reflects a sagittal axis (i.e., proceeding between front and back). In this sense, the future is in front or ahead, while the past lies behind, the latter often indicated by a hand pointing backwards, over a shoulder. But this metaphorical orientation differs when speakers are in the process of sequencing eventualities. As Casasanto (2016, p. 68) further explains: “[W]hen English speakers produce co-speech gestures spontaneously, they use the lateral axis (left/right) overwhelmingly more often, gesturing leftward for earlier times and rightward for later times (Casasanto and Jasmin 2012; Cienki 1998; Cooperrider and Nunez 2009).”

Hence left-right temporal mapping appears to reflect calendric and graphic progressions in time in English-speaking communication, but this is not present in speech sequencing metaphors. Left-right mapping of time is consistent with the flow of time on calendars and graphs in English-speaking cultures, but is absent from spoken metaphors. Problematically for anthropological/cultural linguists, therefore, the tacit spatial concept of time in a language may not be available in the language itself (Casasanto, 2016, p. 68).

Globally, it is likely that the majority of L2 students of English do not encounter stark conceptual challenges of this nature, but unconscious assumptions of equivalent temporal conceptualisations can still easily be made and remain unchecked.

3.4.4 Tense perspective in English

Regardless of the scale of such intercultural differences in temporal conceptualisations, students and teachers must still retreat from the ‘givens’ of their L1 temporal system in order to grapple with the ‘otherness’ of the choices available to them in the target L2. And aside from

the necessity of identifying and implementing the L2 temporal system, their task is further compounded by the fact that this system is not entirely fixed in all of its applications. For example, the speaker's base reference point of 'now' is dynamic, as the focus eventuality can recede into the past (Binnick, 1991, p. 128), which means that the speaker's perspective may need to change in tandem. This is exemplified in the reporting of news. When a recent event is first reported – despite being in the past – the headline typically utilises the Simple Present, e.g., *Nixon resigns*, to convey a sense of immediacy. The story then commonly leads with the Present Perfect (e.g., *President Nixon has resigned*). This strongly evokes the recency of the event, which then modulates to the Simple Past, as accompanying facts and temporal locations are added to the account:

Richard Milhous Nixon announced last night that he will resign as the 37th President of the United States at noon today (Kilpatrick, 1974).

As such, the speaker's perception of the immediacy of an event, followed by its gradual movement into the past, is reflected in the choice of tense forms.

A different example of this choice of perspective can be drawn from Latin, illustrating the speaker's task in selecting the appropriate or relevant 'now' reference point. In this case, the writer of a letter manipulates the temporal point at the time of writing, so as to align it with the recipient's experience of reading the letter. Whereas current English speakers most commonly write from the perspective of the writer, the Romans wrote from that of the reader. So instead of saying, *I am writing this letter to you*, a Roman correspondent typically wrote, *I was writing this letter to you* (Binnick, 1991, p. 250).

An reverse illustration of this can be seen in English with the use of the Present Historic (also referred to as the Narrative Present), which uses a present tense to report a past event (Williams, 2002a, p. 1248), usually in informal contexts such as the telling of jokes (e.g., *A man walks into a bar with a pig under his arm* (David & Cheronos, 1992)) and anecdotes (e.g., *Yeah, yeah, then all of a sudden this guy pulls out a gun* (Charles & Cheronos, 1994)). This transporting of the past into the present lends a vivid or dramatic hue to the speaker's report (Carruthers, 2012, p. 307; Declerck, 2006, p. 130), giving the unfolding event a more immediate perspective and thus serving to heighten suspense (Fludernik, 2012, p. 84). The device allows

the 'now' of the past event to be viewed from the perspective of the present, as selected by the speaker. The aim of such a shift in temporal perspective indicates the speaker's wish to represent an event as though it lies in a different time zone (Declerck, 2006, pp. 129-130), here the present.

In this sense, the task of the L2 student of English is not just to acquire the temporal system as a whole. This undertaking can be rendered even more difficult by virtue of the fact that the TA system allows for the representation of a single event via different temporal forms. This is seen in the choice of perspective afforded by the Simple Past and the Present Perfect, as exemplified below:

(a) John had lunch at 12:00.

(b) John has had lunch.

The use of the Simple Past in (a) suggests that the speaker mentions John's having had lunch as a fact only, perhaps reporting on John's day. It conveys the fact that the event is finished and disconnected from the present: perhaps John engaged in other activities after having lunch. A speaker's choice of the Present Perfect in (b) brings a different perspective to this same event. Whereas (a) focuses on the past, (b) speaks of the relevance of the past event to the present. The speaker may be implying that John does not require lunch now, or that he is no longer expected to be in the cafeteria. So there exists a current situation which is a consequence of John's having already had lunch. The time and the details of the past event are not relevant: of interest is its impact on the present, which is the temporal focus of the speaker.

It can be seen from the above examples that temporal reference points are not fixed – even the supposedly objective, default position of 'now' is movable. The semantics of the English tense system does not impose an inflexible viewpoint on the speaker, as the selection of tense is not 'given in nature' and instead is chosen according to one's viewpoint (Binnick, 1991, p. 128). The system has a dynamism wrought by what Brisard (2004, p. 28) refers to as "psychological notions of perspectivisation", which exist beyond the domain of TA rules. It is how a speaker chooses to represent an event, rather than the event per se, which is crucial in expressing time (Klein & Li, 2009, p. 4). For example, a speaker may choose to foreground an event, as in the matrix clause of (a), or background it, as in (b):

- (a) After training for ten years, Anne won three gold medals.
- (b) Anne had won three gold medals before she became famous.

In (a), the matrix clause indicates a focus eventuality that is situated as principal to the non-finite phrase, “after training for ten years”. However, in (b), the situation of Anne’s winning three gold medals (in the matrix clause) is situated *before* a subsequent eventuality.

Klein (1994) captures this distinction by focusing not on a situation time, but on a ‘topic time’, saying that the latter expresses a connection between a speaker’s utterance time and a time about which he/she wishes to make an assertion (Klein, 1994, p. 24). The situation time and topic time are related, but not necessarily interchangeable, as the topic time is often a subinterval of the situation time, particularly where states are concerned. Klein’s frequently-cited example concerns a deceased cat: *Eva’s cat was dead* (Klein, 1994, p. 22; Klein & Li, 2009, p. 46). With such an utterance, the speaker wishes to make a statement about a particular time during which Eva’s cat was dead. Obviously this is one subinterval in the entire state of the cat’s being deceased, which continues beyond this topic time (Patard, 2011, p. 284). Hence explanations of the Simple Past as being used to describe a finished eventuality (e.g., *Eva’s cat died*) are not a perfect fit for the state featured here. Rather, the speaker’s perspective alights on one segment of an ongoing state (for example: *By the time the vet arrived, Eva’s cat was dead*). In addition, this perspective differs from another possibility for the speaker, i.e., stating that *Eva’s cat is dead*, which focuses on a present truth rather than on a past subinterval or fact.

For students anticipating an immutable set of rules, this element of semantic choice between different verb forms representing distinctive perspectives on the same event (Brisard, 2004, p. 34) can add an extra layer of complexity to their learning load, with the realisation that tenses can in fact move beyond the communication of fixed temporal information. Not only does the speaker select a perspective for a particular utterance, but as Landman (1992, p. 31) notes, perspective can alter within the one piece of discourse, so that many different temporal viewpoints are covered, for example (Fauconnier, 1998, p. 263):

Max is 23. He has lived abroad. In 1990, he lived in Rome. In 1991 he would move to Venice. He would then have lived a year in Rome.

These temporal viewpoints can be described as below:

SENTENCE	TEMPORAL VIEWPOINT
Max is 23.	Present
He has lived abroad.	Past until present
In 1990, he lived in Rome.	Remote past (not linked to present)
In 1991 he would move to Venice.	Future seen from a past viewpoint
He would then have lived a year in Rome.	Past seen from a (past) future viewpoint

Table 3-5 Varying viewpoints within the one statement

In terms of alternative options, rather than choosing a perspective of the past looking toward a subsequent and presumably significant focal point in the past (i.e., 1991), the speaker could also have shifted the perspective so that two of these statements were viewed entirely from the present, looking back at the past:

In 1990, he lived in Rome and then moved to Venice in 1991.

So, a choice of focus time and reference point is at the disposal of the speaker, permitting, e.g., foregrounding and backgrounding.

3.4.5 Attitude

Thus far, this discussion of perspective has focused on temporality and the way in which one eventuality may be differently represented, most particularly in relation to the present or to other eventualities. Another aspect of perspective centres on the speaker's attitude to the proposition itself. For example, if in the context of a conversation about movies the subject of *Titanic* arises, an interlocutor may contribute one of the utterances below:

(a) I didn't see *Titanic*.

(b) I haven't seen *Titanic*.

Both statements contain the same propositional content about not having seen *Titanic*, but given the 'remoteness' of the Simple Past form, (a) could imply that the speaker currently has no intention of seeing the movie in the future. (It could also invoke a sense of Klein's topic time,

as discussed above, in that the speaker is focusing only on the period during which *Titanic* was screening in local cinemas.) In contrast, (b) includes a connection to the present, which may imply that the situation of not having seen the movie may change in the future, as the speaker may still intend to see it. Hence the speaker's attitude could be inferred here, in relation to present or future possibilities. So overall, the speaker has a choice as to whether an eventuality will be presented as contiguous with the time of utterance or remote from it (Gvozdanovic, 2012, p. 791).

This idea of attitudinal perspective, as opposed to temporal perspective, is most readily seen in expressions pertaining to the future. As will be discussed in chapters 4 and 5, making any kind of statement about the future entails subjectivity or epistemic force, as predicated eventualities cannot be described in terms of absolute certainty. Since only beliefs, rather than knowledge, can be expressed about the future, speakers can only make predictions or express intentions about future eventualities or states (Kiefer, 2009, p. 204). So utterances about future plans, for example, illustrate the strength of the speaker's conviction that they will constitute reality at a future time. And speakers can in fact *treat* the future as though it is known, whether or not they have an epistemological justification for doing so (Fleischman, 1982, p. 20).

In another sense, this perspective on the future could still be seen as pertaining to statements across all times – past, present and future - in that speakers encode a state of affairs so as to match it with their concept of reality at the moment of speech (Brisard & Patard, 2011, p. 2). It is in this sense that Fleischman (1982, p. 20-21) laments the fact that in discussions of time and tense, “all too often ... the focus is exclusively on a sequence of eventualities in real time, while the crucial role of speaker's perspective is neglected”. Brisard (2004, p. 28) also questions this concept of tenses as exclusively temporal forms, particularly in the perspectival contrasts available to speakers when focusing on one time frame. As mentioned above, this can be illustrated in terms of the speaker's sense of certainty or probability about a future situation. For example:

- (a) The bus leaves at 4:00.
- (b) The bus is leaving at 4:00.
- (c) Anne is working in Spain next year.

(d) Anne is going to work in Spain next year.

In each pair of sentences ((a) and (b), then (c) and (d)), the temporal location of each event is identical. The contrast lies in the speaker's expression of certainty regarding the outcome (stronger in (a) and (c)). This will be discussed in chapter 5, but a brief explanation involves the amount of knowledge that the speaker brings to the situation in regard to the preparations and arrangements made in each case, plus the level of authority behind each statement. As such, beyond being merely temporal indicators, verbal forms can convey a speaker's judgement regarding the likely actualisation of a situation (Patard, 2011, p. 292). So again, perspective at least partly determines the speaker's choice of form.

In similar regard to the expression of futurity, the following excerpt illustrates this concept of speaker and interlocutor judgement of possible actualisation and the level of planning or commitment underlying the proposition. The decoding of a message by a fictional character alerts him to a lower-than-desired level of commitment on the part of the encoder (Rahman, 2014, p. 498):

At three in the afternoon, just two hours before my flight, at the last moment an email could have reached me, I found a message from her.

I'll leave for London tomorrow, she wrote.

And I wondered, as I often did, how else the note might have been written: *I'm leaving for London tomorrow*.

The character's interpretation indicates disappointment, as he has inferred from his partner's use of the *will* + V form a sudden, relatively uncommitted decision, in lieu of *I'm leaving for London tomorrow*, which would have conveyed a sense of commitment and prior arrangement. And as implicitly acknowledged by the speaker, the temporal location of the event is identical in each rendition.

3.4.6 Context

A further issue related to speaker perspective on a situation, be it past, present or future, is context. As L2 learners ultimately need to be aware, a statement cannot be considered correct or incorrect (erroneous formations aside) if removed from its context. For example, the

statement, *She has never been to Dubbo*, could be considered grammatical in that it is well formed; and when uttered in reference to a living woman who is capable of travel, it is unproblematic. However, in the context of a discussion about Cleopatra of Egypt, it would be infelicitous, as an opportunity for her to travel to Dubbo no longer exists. Hence the statement would need to be amended to *She never went to Dubbo*. Hence, context and knowledge of the world or of a situation have a significant bearing on the choice of a verb form.

The fact that a trip to Dubbo by Cleopatra is no longer viable is beyond contention, given her death over two millennia ago. But a different issue exists with ‘past-until-now’ statements such as the following, both temporally viable, where the Present Perfect is used to indicate a past situation which has current relevance (Brisard, 2004, p. 28; Wilson & Sperber, 1998, p. 11):

(a) I have had breakfast.

(b) I have been to Tibet.

Wilson and Sperber (1998, p. 11) explain that utterances of this type are semantically open as regards their time intervals, but are pragmatically narrowed so as to match logical expectations. In both sentences, the semantics only indicates that the respective events occurred at a particular time during a period which stretches back into the past from the time of utterance (Wilson & Sperber, 1998, p. 12). But pragmatically, the hearer invokes “logical relations of entailment” (Brisard, 2004, p. 28), or what Wilson and Sperber (1998) refer to as optimal relevance, in order to make sense of each utterance. The Present Perfect itself suggests no appropriate time interval for utterances: rather, the hearer depends on context, world knowledge and logical entailment (Brisard, 2004, p. 28) in order to make sense of the linguistic content of an utterance (Binnick, 2009, p. 271). So in (a), the speaker indicates having eaten breakfast on the morning of the utterance (perhaps within the previous few minutes or hours), rather than having eaten breakfast at some stage in her life. Conversely in (b), the speaker is unlikely to be indicating a return trip to Tibet that morning; rather, knowledge of the world dictates that he is referring to a time from the beginning of his life until the present. And finally, both statements invoke the Present Perfect as a means of expressing relevance to the current

moment, in that the speaker in (a) is perhaps refusing an offer of breakfast, while the speaker in (b) may be announcing his credentials for commenting on travelling in Tibet.

3.4.7 Conclusion

Aside from acquiring the at-times complex rules of the English TA system, L2 students must engage with aspects of perspective in order to communicate effectively. Accompanying this must be an awareness that their implicit concepts of time may not align neatly with those of native English speakers. Ultimately though, they need to embrace the fact that speakers have responsibility for the representation of an eventuality in time; that the speaker is the starting point from which eventualities are projected; and that speakers have a certain amount of leeway in the viewpoint selected. They can foreground or background an eventuality, make it directly relevant to the present, and in communicating about the future in particular, convey an attitude as to the likelihood of eventuation. Not only are they not totally restricted by an inflexible verb system, but their perspective can alter within and between utterances in the one speech event. And all the while, they must take account of both the contextual constraints on their choice of forms, and of pragmatic limitations on interpretations.

Taken in total, these matters underscore Johanson's (2000, p. 34) claim that "what a tense situates on the time-axis is the *perspective on the event* rather than the event itself". This can be a daunting realisation for students, particularly for those whose language learning has hitherto been based on an approach which presupposes an imposed, unchanging, rule-based language system.

As will be shown by the end of chapter 3, language learning must convey to students the fact that languages allow speakers to describe situations not merely in the way that these objectively exist (if this were indeed possible). Rather, the one situation can be communicated in ways which encompass different conceptual distinctions (Löbner, 2013, pp. 164-165). In other words, speakers have at their disposal a variety of ways in which they can cast their own interpretation of reality, i.e., their own perspective.

3.5 Can the Simple Present be regarded as a tense?

3.5.1 Introduction

The conclusion to the previous section identified Johanson's claim (2000, p. 34) that speakers place their perspective on an eventuality, rather than the eventuality itself, on a timeline, as it were. This will be explored more broadly here in terms of asking whether, regardless of speaker perspective, it is in fact possible to place all tensed items on a timeline.

It is a commonly accepted axiom of temporality that tense locates an eventuality on a timeline before, during or following Speech Time²² (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000, p. 10; Binnick, 1991, p. 126; Brisard, 2002, p. 253; de Brabanter et al., 2014, p. 2; de Swart, 2012, p. 752; Fludernik, 2012, p. 77; Jespersen, 1933, p. 230; Madden & Ferretti, 2009, p. 217; Rathert, 2012, p. 247; Smith, 2007a, p. 231; von Stechow, 2009, p. 131; Wagner, 2012, p. 459). But while it is possible to neatly conceptualise the past and future as occurring pre-present and post-present respectively, the present itself is problematic, for example, in terms of how long it lasts, what 'the present' or 'now' actually means, and of how situations can be placed on a timeline when they stretch across past, present and future time. The majority of depictions of the present convey an interval of time, rather than merely a point, "since things that are now true or are happening now have been true or will be true, or have been occurring or will be occurring, for some time past and some time to come" (Binnick, 1991, p. 126). Of course, reference to an expanse of time can also occur in the past and future, but the crucial difference is that respectively, each of these implies an endpoint (pre-present) or starting point (post-present). This depiction of a present interval of time denoting past, present and future time can be seen in utterances such as the following:

- (a) The sun rises in the east.
- (b) She drives to work.
- (c) The giraffe has a long neck.

Despite this issue, for most grammarians, the fundamental fact about tense is still its deictic nature, as "a tensed proposition will necessarily contain a reference to some point or period of time ... which cannot be identified except in terms of the zero-point ... of utterance"

²² This deictic paradigm is, of course, also available with temporal adverbials (Klein, 2009b, p. 40).

(Fleischman, 1982, p. 11). In addition, these propositions are expected to be self-contained, with an initial and final endpoint (Smith, 2007a, p. 231). But where the present is concerned, this is far from straightforward or commonly not possible.

Its capacity to defy ‘well-ordered’ temporal categorisation would at least initially seem to exclude the Simple Present from being classed as a tense, particularly where possible placement on a timeline is concerned. But the identification of the present is essential to the expression of time in all known languages,²³ given its role as a temporal anchor point (Klein, 2009a, p. 25, 29). Klein (2009a, p. 28) refers to this present as “the time of present experience” (or in his terminology, the *origo*), explaining that while it does not feature in physical or biological time, it is fundamental to the linguistic encoding of temporality. And it is an understanding of this element of temporal encoding which L2 students must develop. As mentioned in section 2.2, humans appear to have an intuitive (but not homogeneous) understanding of past, present and future time, but how a range of TA systems harnesses this is another matter.

For L1 speakers of tensed languages, the concept of tenses as referring to a point or period of time may be uncomplicated. However, when a language is presented as temporally tripartite, learners can reasonably expect clear boundaries between the past, present and future. Yet the present and past are commonly illustrated as follows: “In English, *John loves Mary* (present) and *John loved Mary* (past) show a difference in tense” (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000, p. 10). These utterances are indeed marked differently for tense, but issues in the Simple Present statement hinder claims to an exclusive, corresponding relationship with time. As seen above, present-tense propositions are necessarily tied to the time of utterance, or the ‘now’. But as this is typically seen as a point in time, with no duration, analysing the expression of durative situations in the present is complex (Madden & Ferretti, 2009, p. 233), prompting questions as to the nature of the present itself.

²³ Yet it is interesting to note the claim that Ancient Hebrew has no present tense (Koval, 2010, p. 144).

3.5.2 Measuring the present moment

Clearly, the above distinction between past and present cannot be represented by two discrete entries on a timeline. With the Simple Present utterance, *John loves Mary*, questions arise as to whether John loves Mary beyond the time of utterance – both before and after, which is presumably the case. A broader application of this can be seen in statements such as *Australia is in the southern hemisphere* or *Dogs have four legs*, which have a similar sense of pervasiveness. In this sense, the Simple Present tense denotes situations which extend beyond the present time-sphere (Bertinetto & Lenci, 2012, p. 857). As this still leaves unresolved the question regarding the duration or breadth of this present time-sphere, Higginbotham (2007, p. 174) is more precise in defining the Simple Present as expressing “a temporal overlap between (the actual time of) an event and (the actual time of) the speaker’s utterance”.

Clearly this is the nub of the issue, or part thereof. Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1985, p. 175) suggest that the tripartite distinction between past, present and future be reconfigured, so that the present is seen as an inclusive, rather than exclusive, timeframe. In other words, something can be regarded as occurring in the present simply if it has existence ‘now’, allowing for this eventuality (e.g., state, characteristic, habit or iterative event) to stretch into the past and future (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 175). This is the case with utterances such as *Australia is in the southern hemisphere* – a state whose past and future existence is incalculable. Similarly, Declerck (2006, pp. 148-149) observes that the timespan of the non-punctual present includes Speech Time and extends in either temporal direction for varying amounts of time, as dictated by the propositional content of the utterance. According to Langacker (2011, p. 45), the Simple Present can be unproblematically analysed as indicating present time, given its coincidence with Speech Time. But importantly, this coinciding segment is typically only a representative ‘slice’ of a homogeneous stative situation which coincides with Speech Time (De Wit & Brisard, 2014, p. 65). This more aspectual qualification is a distinctive feature of the Simple Present: the imperfectivity of non-punctual events reflects the anterior and posterior extension of an eventuality. (The issue of the Simple Present and aspect will be further discussed in section 3.5.5.)

3.5.3 Context and the Simple Present: Temporality and duration

Measuring the length of a present segment of time or ‘now’ relies on the hearer’s use of context to identify the correct temporal location (Binnick, 1991, p. 249; Declerck, 2006, p. 129). Interlocutors imply or infer the length of this timespan according to their understanding of the situation at hand. Additionally, the inferences drawn from the Simple Present form are dependent on lexical semantics (Bybee et al., 1994, p. 175), e.g., the timespan invoked by *to love* versus *to leave*. As such, interlocutors identify a current timespan as encompassing the present (Klein, 2009a, p. 24), with their perspective, world knowledge, lexical knowledge and experience accounting for how far into the past and future the present timespan is likely to extend.

In terms of what facilitates this practice, Carruthers (2012, p. 307) contends that the capacity for temporal relocation “relies on an analysis of the present as the least strongly marked – even temporally neutral – tense”. This temporal neutrality naturally entails a strong context dependency, with the Simple Present being the most context-dependent of all tenses. To illustrate:

EXAMPLE	SIMPLE PRESENT PROPOSITION	REFERENCE TIME
1	He wins the race!	present
2	He wins every time he plays poker.	past, present & future
3	So she wins his money and says she has to leave.	past
4	Tom leaves at 9:00 on Thursday.	future

Table 3-6 Temporal locations of the Simple Present

As seen, this structure can express a punctual event, iterativity, a past sequence of events and futurity,²⁴ and context can be key to identifying which use is at play (e.g., is example 3 a narrative in the past, an excerpt from a present commentary, or a habitual practice?). In example 3, the temporal neutrality – or elasticity – of the Simple Present is particularly salient

²⁴ From a different angle regarding the use of the Simple Present for the future, Jespersen (1933, p. 281) attributes “the extensive use of the present tense in speaking of the future” to syntactical ease, in much the same way, in his view, that *will* eventually predominated over *shall* (Jespersen, 1933, p. 280) as a contracted auxiliary.

in the use of the Present Historic in its recounting of past events as though they are occurring in the present, predominantly for dramatic effect. Further examples are seen in *Henry is crowned king and everyone cheers; A man walks into a bar; and So he pulls out a knife and threatens me*. Declerck (2006, p. 27) defines this use as metaphorical, in that a specific time is represented as though it were another. But this is now a common use of the Simple Present, seemingly increasing in frequency of occurrence. Above all, though, it is the *fact* that the Simple Present has such a range of uses which is significant, rather than the actual number of uses (Binnick, 1991, p. 249). Or, more to the point is the issue of what actually allows for such a diversity of uses.

In contrast to the pervasiveness seen in earlier generic and habitual illustrations, some events portrayed by the Simple Present – as seen in the Present Historic - may be shorter than the utterance time. This is commonly observable in sports commentary (NRL, 2015) [emphasis added]:

Johnathan Thurston *makes* a mistake, Gillett *picks* it *up* ... He *goes* through, *gets* it to Jack Reed, he *goes* over the line and *scores*.

Hence the ‘now’ of the utterance may have a longer duration than the event itself, with the latter concluding before the statement is completed. Klein (2009a, p. 33) illustrates this further: “From *now*, it is precisely four seconds until *now*”, where the speaker denotes two distinct ‘now’ moments, each of which is shorter than the utterance time.

Significantly for L2 learners, the process of re-interpretation of temporality embodied in the Simple Present incurs a processing cost (Madden and Ferretti, 2009, p. 234), even to an L1 interlocutor (i.e., they need to consider the idea that an eventuality ostensibly situated in the present may in fact have occurred in the past). Additionally, some L2 processors may not be aware of the form’s ‘non-standard’ use in the Present Historic, of what triggers this usually informal spoken register, or of the need to check for context cues which could yield an alternative interpretation.

3.5.4 The Simple Present as an ‘unmarked’ tense

As discussed, the Simple Present’s afore-mentioned temporal flexibility or incompatibility with Speech Time permits other uses to be coerced (Madden & Ferretti, 2009, p. 234). But this is due

more, perhaps, to factors beyond neutrality and duration, as it can be claimed that temporal location is not actually a primary function of the Simple Present. Declerck (2006, p. 176, 178-179) addresses the form's context-dependency, declaring that "the present tense is the unmarked tense in the English tense system, i.e., the tense with the simplest semantics and forms". And it is this very neutrality which facilitates the range of temporal and aspectual applications of the tense (Carruthers, 2012, p. 307), for example, in jokes (*A horse walks into a hotel and the bartender says, "So, why the long face?"*), photo captions (*Mayor opens new bridge*), news headlines (*Cyclone destroys coastal homes*) or cartoon captions. It is reasonable to claim that the choice of the Simple Present is motivated by its unmarkedness, in that these genres do not demand explicit temporal location (Declerck, 2006, pp. 179-180; Quirk et al., 1985, pp. 176-177), as seen in the cartoon caption below (Rubin, n.d., as cited in Sullivan, 2012, p. 29):



The eventuality represented by *runs into* is unrestricted by the need for temporal location; i.e., it does not elicit enquiries as to its temporal location.

To draw these threads together: aside from occasions on which an utterance endures beyond an event time (e.g., with performatives or sports commentary), the present can more frequently be understood as an interval which may extend into both the past and future, rather than just as a moment (Jaszczolt 2009, p. 11; Klein, 2009a, p. 28), or it can be temporally

neutral. In a speech act, the 'now' moment denotes a timespan which includes, but is not restricted to, the moment of utterance (Klein, 2009a, p. 25). Crucially though, it is not a loose aggregate of disparate past, present and future times. Rather, this perceived present is

a short unit during which the experience has the status of an entity, a whole, ... [with] a characteristic feature of being extended in time, with earlier and later parts. In other words ... humans are aware, at every moment, not only of the very present moment but also of what is immediately before and after it, as long as these past and future parts are one and the same experience (Jaszczolt, 2009, p. 11).

In the light of all of the above then, the Simple Present can with justification be called the "most general and unmarked" tense in English (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 176), given its temporal flexibility and elasticity. It is therefore unsurprising that the homogeneity and length of duration perceived in this form are subjective, shaped by the speaker's experience, perception, or knowledge of the world. Hence, it can be claimed that there is in fact no real, external, objective 'now', but rather that the present has an internal, conceptual status (Jaszczolt, 2009, p. 11).

Relatedly, Brisard (2002, p. 263) sees the temporal function of the Simple Present as less important than the epistemic certainty which it contributes to an utterance, borne of the conceptual status mentioned above by Jaszczolt. He proposes that this structure conveys a sense of immediate or present 'givenness' regarding a situation, arising either from what speakers directly perceive in their environment, or from their knowledge of the world and how it is structured or constituted (Brisard, 2002, p. 263; De Wit & Brisard, 2014, p. 62). In other words, the unmarked nature of the Simple Present can impart a concept of temporal pervasiveness - a sense that 'this is how the world is' across time.

Weight is added to Jaszczolt's and Brisard's conceptualizations of the present by the fact that in some uses of the Simple Present, the focus eventuality might not hold true or be actualised at the moment of utterance, however long. This can be exemplified by the statement, *John sings* (Binnick, 1991, p. 247, 249), in which the speaker conceives of a present in which John is known to sing; but there is an understanding that he is not necessarily singing at a specific moment. Declerck (2006, p. 35) illustrates this with the statement, *We take a walk*

after breakfast, which can be uttered at any time of day to describe a habit. Although the activity may not be in effect at the time of utterance, it represents a state that is an accepted reality. As such, Declerck (2006, p. 35) defines states as homogeneous, meaning that “they hold at every time in the course of their existence”.²⁵ This homogeneity is permissible via the imperfectivity of the Simple Present in these uses (to be discussed in section 3.7.4).

This point about pervasiveness is not always clarified in ESL texts, but it was identified by Jespersen in 1933: “If the present tense is used, it is because the sentences are valid now; the linguistic tense-expression says nothing about the length of duration before or after the present moment” (Jespersen, 1933, p. 238). He further states that as a point with no dimension, the present is of little practical value and that circumstances dictate its duration (Jespersen, 1933, p. 237).

So, rather than demanding a revision of the definition of tense, the present itself requires a broader definition, so that coincidence with speech time can be seen as perfective, e.g., in punctual events, or as imperfective, i.e., as a representation of one subsection of an eventuality or its existence. It is the neutrality of the Simple Present that can coerce this range of eventualities and temporal locations.

3.5.5 The Simple Present and aspect

As indicated, the Simple Present can operate not only across all times, but also across two aspects. It can communicate past, present and future time, conveying ongoing states, recurring events, habitual actions, punctual events, single entity actions, universal (or gnomic) truths, descriptions and performative utterances. The supposed incompatibility at the heart of this coercion lies in the dual grammatical aspects available in the Simple Present, according to the nature of the situations being portrayed. The Simple Present is traditionally defined as describing situations from a perfective aspect, i.e., one in which the whole situation, from onset to endpoint, is seen as a complete and commonly iterative entity (Madden & Ferretti, 2009, p. 233). Perfectivity is also entailed in the Simple Past, but that tense does not invoke equivalent coercion, as it typically expresses an explicit relationship between the moment of speech and

²⁵ States can of course also exist in the past, e.g., *I used to play tennis*), but these differ in that they necessarily entail an endpoint, as opposed to those in the present. Similarly, future states have an identified or implicit onset.

the time of the eventuality, which by definition occurs before the former.²⁶ For example, *Mary drove a vintage car* implies either one past, complete driving eventuality, or an ongoing but now finished habitual situation, at least where the focus or topic time is concerned. In other words, clear endpoint (and sometimes onset) markers can be determined, creating no conflict between the aspect of the situation and the tense.

But this is not the case with the Simple Present, as has been seen, given its capacity to demand not only perfective interpretations but also imperfective interpretations (Madden & Ferretti, 2009, p. 233). As Bybee et al. (1994, p. 152) observe, the lack of explicit temporal meaning in the Simple Present enables it to absorb a range of meanings from different contexts. This also enables it to stretch across temporal boundaries and to exercise aspectual flexibility. As stated in section 3.5.2, it is perhaps best to regard the present in the Simple Present as inclusive, rather than exclusive (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 175). And rather than discounting the Simple Present as a tense due to its lack of a natural fit on a timeline, one needs to question the limitations of the timeline itself.

3.5.6 Conclusion

For a form deemed to be the simplest and most unmarked structure in the English TA system, the Simple Present embodies a significant degree of complexity. But the following descriptors can be proffered as differentiating it from other tenses:

- It is inclusive of Speech Time.
- Temporal location is secondary and largely context-dependent.
- It can span across past, present and future time zones or be coincident with Speech Time.
- It can embody perfectivity or imperfectivity.
- It typically represents a subsection or 'slice' of an imperfective situation and hence homogeneity.

²⁶ This is the case when the Simple Past form is used to indicate past time, not when the same form is used to express current irrealis, as in the Second Conditional: e.g., *If Mary drove a vintage car, she'd be very happy.*

Many of these criteria may be a stumbling block for students, given the name of this tense. The Simple Present is aberrant in terms of the conventional definition of tense. This is also the case with the more common restriction of a structure to one grammatical aspect. But the complexity of aspect in regard to verb forms is by no means restricted to the Simple Present, as will be seen in the following section.

3.6 Defining tense

3.6.1 Introduction

In addressing the task of defining tense, this discussion will begin with a broad definition of language as describing two things, namely, states and events, in the past, present and future (Carlson, 2012, p. 828). An inextricable part of conveying these eventualities is tense, to the degree that it is almost impossible to make an utterance without making any reference to a time of occurrence (Klein & Li, 2009, p. 1).²⁷ Yet despite the ubiquitous nature of time reference, defining tense is what Lin (2012, p. 670) describes as “a notoriously difficult task”. As has already been discussed, the negotiation between the recognised morphological categories of tense (i.e., inflections and auxiliaries) and the range of expressible semantic notions is an ongoing matter of debate in the use of tenses (de Brabanter et al., 2014, p. 2; Deo, 2012, p. 156).

But paramount to the current discussion is a move beyond morphology to the domain of meaning. Brisard (2004, p. 25) focuses on a notional domain possibly underlying the structural properties of tense, asking if it might be more appropriate to refer to this domain as ‘grammatical time’. This may indeed be preferable to a definition of tense as simply a means of coding temporal information (Smith, 2007b, p. 227): the degree to which tense has a meaning beyond temporal location is a key focus of this research.

3.6.2 Tense and temporal location

As a starting point, tense can be defined as “a grammatical category whose main function is to locate ‘eventualities’ (events or states) in time” (de Brabanter et al., 2014, p. 2), in relation to a

²⁷ In the light of the previous section’s discussion of the Simple Present, ‘almost impossible’ must be stressed here.

time of utterance. This is a widely-held and uncontroversial view, as also seen in Deo, 2012, p. 116, 158; de Swart, 2012, p. 752; Fleischman, 1982, p. 11; Klein, 2009b, pp. 40, 42-43; Patard, 2011, p. 285; Smith, 2007a, p. 420; Velupillai, 2016, p. 94; Wagner, 2012, p. 459; and Zagona, 2013, p. 746, 753. The deictic feature of tense refers to its role in relating the time of an event to a time of utterance, so that the event time typically precedes speech time (past), is simultaneous with it (present), or follows it (future) (Klein, 2009b, p. 43). The deictic nature of tense, along with its capacity to establish a chronological ordering of eventualities (Zhao & Li, 2009, p. 241) distinguishes it from aspect, which conveys information internal to a given event (Wagner, 2012, p. 459), e.g., whether it is in progress or completed. Furthermore, there is an important distinction to be made between an eventuality itself and the way in which it is portrayed by a speaker (von Steutterheim, Carroll, & Klein, 2009, p. 195). For example, speakers' conceptualisations of an eventuality can place them at close or distant proximity to a situation²⁸ (Gvozdanovic, 2012, p. 791). As such, deixis is not fixed.

It is claimed that human beings are incapable of processing situations atemporally, and that every eventuality is perceived as occurring at a particular time and for a particular duration. Hence, referring to time in language is regarded as inescapable (Madden & Ferretti, 2009, p. 217). In tensed languages, this putatively unavoidable provision of temporal information is syntactically mandatory, in that every matrix clause must include a tense morpheme, rendered via an inflection or an auxiliary (Bittner, 2005, p. 342; Smith, 2007a, p. 420; Smith, 2009, p. 161) which is deictic (Zagona, 2013, p. 753).

This discussion so far has reflected a broad consensus that tense is concerned with temporal location and deictic reference. Yet, particularly in the relatively recent literature, there is some degree of equivocation as to firstly, whether these are indeed its only roles; and secondly, whether it always in fact performs these functions, as seen with the Simple Present in section 3.5. The above definition of tense given by de Brabanter et al. (2014, p. 2) describes the *main* function of tense as the temporal location of eventualities. This of course gives rise to questions as to the other role/s it may play. In this vein, Deo (2012, p. 116) states that “the

²⁸ This is seen, for example, in utterances such as *I've seen John* vs *I saw John* (Present Perfect vs Simple Present) or *If I get the job, I'll be happy* vs *If I got the job, I'd be happy* (1st vs 2nd Conditional, or present real vs hypothetical conditionals).

basic or characteristic meaning [of tense] ... is to locate the situation, or part of it, at some point or period of time” [emphasis added], and de Swart (2012, p. 752) notes that verbal tense “*commonly* serves in natural language to anchor the situation described by the sentence to the time axis” [emphasis added]. Klein speaks variously of tense “in its classical understanding” (2009a, p. 32); “in its traditional understanding (2009b, p. 40); “in its received understanding” (2009b, p. 42); and in terms of “the classical notion of tense” (2009b, p. 44), seemingly allowing for subsequent revisions to the absolutism of many definitions. In effect then, these writers’ comments serve to flag a broadening of the scope of tense and its function/s.

3.6.3 Number of tenses in English

The above discussion indicates a not-insignificant degree of equivocation regarding a definition of tense that is limited to temporal location. Klein (2009b, p. 44) indicates this firstly in regard to the number of tenses purported to exist within the one language, saying that depending on how tense is defined, German is said to have from one to twelve tenses. Looking at English through the same lens, Declerck (2006, p. 95) states that each tense form expresses a specific temporal meaning, and that each of these tense structures represents a tense. He names at least eight tenses, noting that there are others which have no name (Declerck, 2006, pp. 96-97). By way of illustration, he notes that “in English, *does, has done, had done, will do, will have done*, etc. are all verb forms expressing different tenses. Tenses represent a pairing of a morphosyntactic form and a meaning, [the meaning being] the specification of the temporal location of a situation” (Declerck, 2006, p. 94, 95).

Needless to say, this is a substantial departure from the rather pervasive view that English has only two tenses, i.e., present and past, or that there is one tense each to match past, present and future time. Klein (2009b, p. 44) declares that the classical notion of tense is significantly problematic, not least because of the many ‘non-canonical’ uses of tense forms, as has been discussed (e.g., non-temporal functions such as the Simple Past form used to indicate irrealis (Klein, 2009b, p. 45) and the use of the Simple Present to represent ‘timeless truths’).

Much of this debate stems firstly from the adequacy or otherwise of definitions of tense, and relatedly, from the not-uncommon rejection of the future as a tense. Instead, the future is variously regarded as being conveyed via a modal form (through the use of *will*); an

analytic form (headed by an aspectual element such as *be going to* + V); or a Simple Present form cast in a future context. The related concept of a binary tense system consisting of the past and non-past (Hamm & Bott, 2014; Hewson, 2012, p. 528) has long held sway in the literature and is not without its merits, as will be seen anon. Yet despite its prevalence, this view has not always been universally embraced. In 1805, the grammarian, Lindley Murray, wrote:

Grammarians who limit the number [of tenses] to two or three, do not reflect that the English verb is composed of principal and auxiliary; and that these several parts constitute one verb. Either the English language has no future tense, (a position too absurd to need refutation,) or that future is composed of the auxiliary and the principal verb. If the latter be true, as it indisputably is, then auxiliary and principal united, constitute a tense (Murray, 1805, p. 84).

As Murray (1805, p. 84) goes on to say, apart from the ‘absurdity’ of rejecting the existence of a future tense, there are no grounds for discarding the notion of a whole as consisting of several parts, e.g., of principal and auxiliary verbs. In support of this, he invokes the earlier work of James Beattie, who lamented in 1783 that

[s]ome will not allow anything to be a tense, but what, in one inflected word, expresses an affirmation with time; for that those parts of the verb are not properly called tenses, which assume that appearance, by means of auxiliary words (Beattie, 1783, p. 385).

He then ponders whether, if taken to its ultimate conclusion, this would mean that English had only two tenses in the active voice, and none at all in the passive voice. However, he concludes that this “needless nicety” would only lead to confusion in “the grammatical art” (Beattie, 1783, p. 385).

Far from regarding the English tense system as binary, Murray (1817, pp. 80-84) stipulates that it has six tenses: Present, Imperfect (including the Simple Past and Past Progressive), Perfect (Present Perfect), Pluperfect (Past Perfect), First Future (*will/shall*) and Second Future (Future Perfect). In addition, he notes that each of these tenses is in essence different in its meaning from the other five. (Yet he does not define the nature of these meanings, leaving the reader to perhaps infer temporal location.) Finally, he clearly restates his

earlier point that “[g]rammarians who limit the number to two, or at most to three ... do not reflect that the English verb is mostly composed of principal and auxiliary; and that these several parts constitute one verb” (Murray, 1817, p. 84).

In pursuing the origin and longevity of claims for a purely synthetic, morphological basis for two tenses in English, de Brabanter et al. (2014, p. 5) surveyed approximately 12 English grammar texts written between 1600 and 1900, and were unable to identify even one claim that English does not have a future tense. As they explain (de Brabanter et al., 2014, p. 5), “for 300 years, most grammarians simply took it for granted that English had a future tense, every bit as much as it had a past and present tense”. To further support their argument, they cite the fact that tenses in many languages are periphrastic (de Brabanter et al., 2014, p. 14).

More recently, a movement away from the two-tense theory appears to have gained momentum, albeit cautiously. As noted in section 3.1, a number of more contemporary grammarians tend to make qualified statements, e.g., that English has two ‘inflectional’ tenses (Collins & Hollo, 2000, p. 64, 71) or ‘primary’ tenses (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002, p. 125; 2005, p. 44). Moving a significant step beyond this, Deo (2012, p. 156) advocates treating the domain of morphology broadly, so as to include all grammaticalised tense and aspect markers, rather than focusing solely on word-formation processes.

But perhaps one of the strongest voices on this issue is Declerck (2010, p. 273), who argues against what he refers to as the “commonplace in mainstream linguistics to reject the existence of a ‘future tense’ in English”. He also rejects claims that the future is a mode rather than a tense, stating instead that it is a tense with an aspect of modal meaning, the latter unsurprising given that all reference to post-present eventualities is “not-yet-factual at a given time” (Declerck, 2010, pp. 273-4). Arguing against the two-tense stance, he explains that “there is no *a priori* reason for assuming that tense can only be expressed by bound (= inflectional) morphemes and not by free morphemes (viz., tense auxiliaries)” (Declerck, 2006, p. 100). He further explains that the same meaning can be expressed morphologically in one language and analytically in another (Declerck, 2006, p. 101). By way of further illustration: in English, the definite article is represented by a free morpheme, but by a suffix in Swedish. And likewise, a preposition in English may be rendered by a suffix in another language (Declerck, 2006, p. 101).

Hence, as Declerck asks, why should we not accept the idea that some tenses can be expressed by inflectional morphemes while others are represented by analytic constructions (Declerck, 2006, p. 101)?

In moving beyond the two-tense claims, Declerck (2006, p. 100, 101) suggests that English in fact has two sets of tense: the past and nonpast, with the latter including the present and future. His key point here is that in English, the distinction between the past and nonpast is more significant than that between the present and future (Declerck, 2006, p. 101). This is supported by Quirk et al. (1985, p. 177), who state that the semantic tripartite division of past, present and future can be seen as subdivisions of two categories, i.e., past and non-past. They illustrate their claim via the use of a present form in expressing both a current eventuality (e.g., *I'm doing the shopping now*) and a future one (*I'm doing the shopping tomorrow*); but this present form cannot be used in the past (i.e., **I'm doing the shopping yesterday*). Likewise with the present form of a modal auxiliary: *I can help you today / I can help you tomorrow / *I can help you yesterday* (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 177). But again, this in itself does not lend support to claims that there are only two tenses in English.

The basis for Declerck's (and others') claim of more than two tenses lies in his definition of tense, which he sees as the various verb forms in a language which correspond to the numerous ways in which a speaker can choose to locate the actualization of an event in time (Declerck, 2006, p. 94). In short, he sees the semantics of a tense as "the structure of temporal relations expressed by the tense in question" (Declerck, 2010, p. 272). This theory of tense, applicable to the past, the present and the future, will be adopted here.

3.6.4 Reichenbach and Declerck: Theories of temporal relations

The current research bases its depiction of temporal relations on the work of Reichenbach (1947), with his theory that there are three points involved in how a situation is viewed: Speech Time, Event Time and Reference Time (Klein, 2009b, p. 45; Ludlow, 2012, p. 65; Stowell, 2012, pp. 185-6). Speech Time (ST) relates the utterance to the here-and-now of its production;²⁹ Event Time (ET) identifies the point/period at which the eventuality takes place; and Reference

²⁹ However, the utterance may in fact have been produced at a time prior to its immediate decoding, e.g., in pre-recorded radio programs or road signs (Williams, 2002b, p. 31).

Time (RT) indicates the main focus time of the speaker, which may or may not coincide with Event Time.

This ternary structure allows for two possible relationships between each of these three times in all tenses: either simultaneity or precedence (Zagona, 2013, p. 751). These can be illustrated in the six examples in Table 3-7 below (with symbols based on Zagona, 2013, p. 751), where ‘,’ indicates simultaneity and ‘_’ denotes precedence.

TIMES	TENSE	RELATIONSHIP EXPLAINED	EXAMPLE	IDENTIFICATION OF THREE TIMES
S, R, E	Present	Three times are simultaneous.	He <u>lives</u> in Perth.	S = Present E = Present R = Present
R, E_S	Past	Reference time and Event times are simultaneous and precede Speech time.	He <u>moved</u> to Cairns in 2000.	S = Present E = 2000 R = 2000
S_R, E	Future	Speech time precedes Reference time, which is simultaneous with Event time.	He <u>will move</u> to Darwin in 2018.	S = Present E = 2018 R = 2000
E_S, R	Present Perfect	Event time precedes Speech time, which is simultaneous with Reference time.	He <u>has lived</u> in Perth for 17 years.	S = Present E = last 17 yrs R = Present
E_R_S	Past Perfect	Event time precedes Reference time, which precedes Speech time.	Before he moved to Cairns in 2000, he <u>had lived</u> in Perth for 12 years.	S = Present E = 1988 - 2000 R = 2000
S_E_R	Future Perfect	Speech time precedes Event time, which precedes Reference time.	In 2020, he <u>will have lived</u> in Darwin for two years.	S = Present E = 2018-2020 R = 2020

Table 3-7 Exemplification of Reichenbach’s Theory of Time

A number of grammarians have adapted this approach to their own specifications, prompted by dissatisfaction of various kinds, firstly with the terminology (e.g., Declerck, 2006; Hatav, 2012; Klein, 1994, 2009b; Steedman, 2012); with the lack of definition of key terms, e.g., ‘point of reference’ (Klein & Li, 2009, p. 45), which Klein claims must represent the duration of an assertion, rather than a specific point in time (Gvozdanovic, 2012, p. 785); with a failure to incorporate aspect and mood into the theory (Binnick, 1991, p. 131; Musan & Rathert, 2011, p. 1); with a neglect of non-temporal issues such as lexical semantics and counterfactuality, which

means that temporal semantics are hard to define in isolation (Steedman, 2012, p. 103); and with a failure to distinguish between periphrastic representations of the future, amongst others (Binnick, 1991, p. 252) - a matter of particular significance to the current research.

Whereas for Reichenbach all tenses are ternary structures involving ST, ET, and RT (Zagona, 2013, p. 752), for Declerck's temporal framework, there are two or more significant times, the minimal two being the Temporal Zero Point (t_0), which usually corresponds to utterance time, and a Situation Time. Others are referred to as Orientation Times. These constitute a tense structure, which Declerck (2006, p. 95) defines as expressing "the temporal relation(s) between the situation time and one or more orientation times", one of the latter being the Temporal Zero Point. Every tense structure then has a matching tense, which may be expressed via analytic or synthetic forms.

To describe every tense structure as a tense is a notable break from the conventional two-tense view. As previously stated, Declerck (2006, pp. 24-5, 96-7) identifies eight common tenses in English, using their traditional names:

TENSE		EXAMPLE SENTENCES
Present tense	Absolute Tenses	I live here. I am living here.
Past tense		I lived there. I was living there.
Future tense		I'll go there. I'll be going there.
Present Perfect		I've lived here. I've been living here for ages
Past Perfect	Relative Tenses	I had lived there. I had been living there for ages.
Future Perfect		I will have left by then. By then she will have been living in London for some time.
Conditional		We would soon find out. The next day he would be working on his thesis.
Conditional Perfect		She would have left by then. By then she would have been living in London for some time.

Table 3-8 Declerck's Eight Common Tenses

The first four of these tenses are termed ‘absolute’, which means that they have a direct temporal relationship with the Temporal Zero Point: in Reichenbachian terms, they relate a Situation Time (or an event) on a timeline to Speech Time (Declerck, 2006, p. 148-9; Hamm & Bott, 2014; Velupillai, 2016, p. 97). Tenses of this nature are located in one of the Absolute Time Zones, which are seen on the macro-level as either past or present:

TIME ZONE (1)	TIME ZONE (2)	TENSE	EXAMPLE
Past	Past	Preterite (Simple Past)	John was happy.
Present	Pre-present	Present Perfect	John has been happy.
	Present (=Non-past)	Present	John is happy.
	Post-Present (= Future)	Future(s)	John will be happy.

Table 3-9 Declerck's Absolute Tenses

So, in Declerck’s terminology, the structure of the Future Tense entails two Orientation Times, namely, the Temporal Zero Point and the Situation Time. In terms of the temporal relation, the Situation Time is posterior to the Temporal Zero Point (Declerck, 2006, pp. 24-25).

Although Declerck (2006, p. 97) lists one absolute past tense, he states that English actually has two past tenses, the second of which is a relative tense, namely, the Past Perfect. Along with a Temporal Zero Point and a Situation Time, relative tenses also incorporate an Orientation Time, which relates to the Situation Time and is either anterior to, simultaneous with or posterior to this Situation Time. So to illustrate through the use of the Past Perfect: *Yesterday I met Mary, whom I had never seen before*: the Temporal Zero Point is the time of utterance; the Situation Time, represented by the Past Perfect, *had seen*, is anterior to the Orientation Time, which is the past, *met*. (This is akin to Reichenbach’s Speech Time, Event Time and Reference Time respectively.) As such, relative tenses feature a Situation Time which has a temporal relation with an Orientation Time other than the Temporal Zero Point (Declerck, 2006, p. 25).³⁰ (Given the main purpose of this research, i.e., the analysis of futurity, relative tenses will not be further discussed in detail.)

³⁰ In addition to the above eight ‘common’ tenses nominated by Declerck, there are what he refers to as tenses with no traditional name, described as complex relative tenses. These are illustrated by the verb forms *had been going to sack*; *will be going to do*; and *have been going to pay* (Declerck, 2006, p. 97).

There is a degree of complexity illustrated in temporal frameworks such as those of Reichenbach and Declerck, to name but two. It will be claimed here that one of the advantages of Declerck's approach is that he views each tense structure as representing a separate tense. It has already been argued that ESL students by and large do not see the necessity of a distinction (in naming) between tenses and aspects in many, if not most cases, and that the Declerck system may fit more comfortably with their need for an overall tense framework. But as it is felt that the terminology embodied in Reichenbach's approach may be more accessible and self-explanatory to students, this approach to time names will be adopted here. So, in sum, allocating a temporal location to a situation in time means taking a known point in time (usually utterance time, referred to by Declerck as the temporal zero-point or by Reichenbach as Speech Time) and then temporally relating the eventuality to this point. As per Reichenbach's ternary approach, the third point in time, Reference Time (or in Declerck's terms, Orientation Time) will also be incorporated in the subsequent discussion of each futurity form in chapter 5, contributing one element to the creation of an individual profile for each futurity structure to be considered.

Frameworks of this type are useful in helping students to see the sequence of events expressed by a tense in relation to the utterance point, e.g., in how the Simple Past, Present Perfect and Past Perfect differ from each other. But as already noted, they are of minimal use where aspect is concerned, as can be seen in any distinction between the Past Perfect and the Past Perfect Continuous.³¹ Two further points significant to the current research are that firstly, these approaches offer temporal information only, and as such do not capture information related to speaker perspective, attitude or epistemic force. Secondly, the temporal information available for depicting the future is restricted almost entirely to indicating utterance time and post-present time only, seemingly without the capacity to distinguish between the many available forms for expressing futurity. This will be explored in far greater depth in chapter 5, but it is important here to note Brisard's (2004, p. 27) observation that significant information can be missing from tense forms (e.g., clausal sequence), as they "hardly encode anything

³¹ For example, *She had driven 50 kms when I saw her* vs *She had been driving all day when I saw her*.

directly ‘conceptual’ at all”.³² This will be borne out in chapter 5’s analysis of six futurity structures.

Where the expression of futurity is concerned, something substantially beyond a temporal framework is required, namely, a framework that conveys enough information to allow L2 learners to make the kinds of distinctions available to native speakers, through their semantic intuitions (Stutterheim et al., 2009, p. 214). As Klein and Li (2009, p. 45) readily assert, “the tense system isn’t just a matter of a temporal relationship between a situation and the time of utterance”. Rather, it makes complex demands that move far beyond the traditional delineations between past, present and future.

This complexity requires an appreciation among L2 students that indicating tense appropriately is more than a ‘finishing touch’ or a morphological nicety. Rather, its properties are linked closely to meaning (Zagona, 2013, p. 747), which can alter both between and within single structures (Brisard, 2004, p. 31). On this topic, Brisard (2004, p. 30, 31) states that ambiguity seems to be the norm in tense semantics, rather than the exception, with in effect all tense forms featuring substantial polysemy.³³ He then goes on to lament the treatment of temporal and nontemporal (e.g., modal) meanings of tenses as derived from the same semantics system which confers on each a temporal and distinctive meaning, despite the fact that “each and every tense form can refer to practically all of the notional time frames – past, present, and future” (Brisard, 2004, p. 30). As was commonly found to be the case in the review of ESL grammar texts in chapter 2, Brisard (2004, p. 30) states that “[i]n the worst case, all of these diverging usage types are simply excluded from formalist analysis”. It has hopefully been shown that this adds weight to the need for a semantics of tense that moves beyond temporal relations and morphology.

³² An example of conceptual information in tense could include an analysis of the Simple Past beyond temporality. Noting that the Simple Past can denote past time, hypotheticality and politeness, Widdowson (2003, p. 139) suggests that at the core of this structure is not simply past time, but a means of distancing speakers from their propositional content.

³³ Or, one meaning with multiple uses, as will be debated in chapter 5.

3.6.5 Conclusion

Given all of the above arguments regarding the number of acknowledged tenses in English, it is now necessary to step back yet again and ask, in the light of the current research context of ESL learning, of what relevance or validity this might be to L2 students. Declerck's (2006, p. 101) overview of the English tense system, which claims that the contrast between past and non-past is more important than that between present and non-present, is useful in explaining the dual use of many present and future forms. On the other hand, the issue of whether the future can justifiably be labelled a tense is unlikely to be vexatious to students or obstructive to their learning. It is suggested here that an explicit understanding of the future as not-yet-factual is more likely to assist in their appreciation that speakers need access to a range of epistemic nuances when communicating about future eventualities. As Rowlands (2008, p. 216) states, no one can define time; rather, the crucial factor in temporal matters is each person's experience of it. In L2 learning, theoretical complexities about whether a tense is inflectional or periphrastic are likely of little consequence in how a person's experience or perspective is encoded in language.

Yet looking beyond this morphological dilemma, the claim that each tense form represents a different tense, i.e., a temporal location with its own meaning, may be problematic, unless qualified. In this research, the future tense is discussed in terms of having multiple forms, in accordance with the definition of tense adopted here. To note again: in terms of futurity, a speaker can indicate the same temporal location in a variety of ways:

- (a) I'm to see him on Tuesday at 2:00.
- (b) I see him on Tuesday at 2:00.
- (c) I'm seeing him on Tuesday at 2:00.
- (d) I'm going to see him on Tuesday at 2:00.
- (e) I'll see him on Tuesday at 2:00.
- (f) I'll be seeing him on Tuesday at 2:00.

But most significantly here, conventional theories of tense do not account for differences in speaker intention, commitment, agency, perspective, register, meaning and usage. If different tense forms exist, it must surely be allowed that they can convey a different

meaning, or one or more different uses of the one core meaning. This research, in its focus on the future in English, asserts that multiple elements other than temporal location must be incorporated into any definition of tense, even though it could still be claimed that this is its primary function. This will be the focus in chapter 5.

But immediately prior to that, it is necessary to address an area conventionally seen as distinct from tense, i.e., aspect. Unsurprisingly, a delineation may not be as clear as is often presumed. As Fleischman (1982, p. 11) explains, the term ‘tense’ is often seen purely as a means of deictic location, but in many approaches it covers “a range of other time-related distinctions which linguists now tend to subsume under aspect”. The degree to which any demarcation line can be drawn, plus the potential helpfulness of this to ESL students, will be the topic of section 3.7. Suffice to say in completing this discussion of tense thus far, that although it typically entails temporal location, other factors such as speaker perspective, attitude, commitment and context are at play, to name but a few; and that the degree to which tense is completely separable from aspect and other considerations is contentious.

3.7 Aspect

3.7.1 Introduction

Binnick (1991, p. 135) likens the exploration of aspect to “a dark and savage forest” replete with “obstacles, pitfalls, and mazes which have trapped most of those who have ventured into this much explored but poorly mapped territory” (Macaulay, 1978, p. 417). Less forebodingly, von Steutterheim et al. (2009, p. 214) declare aspect to be a challenging temporal category, despite the multitude of studies on its definition, nature and workings. In fact, they go so far as to say that declaring a certain language to be an ‘aspect language’ hides more problems than it answers.

In the light of this somewhat daunting counsel, it may be best to start by defining aspect in the broadest possible terms. Perhaps the most uncontentious statement to be made is that as with tense, aspect is encoded both periphrastically and morphologically (Wagner, Swensen & Naigles, 2009, p. 224); but then again, this is not completely uncontroversial, as will be shown. Beyond that, Binnick (1991, p. 209) notes that before considering how aspect can be

represented in a grammar of English, it is necessary to identify what is known by speakers of an aspectual language that is not known by a learner. As Smith (1983, p. 479) states, “[k]nowing a language includes knowing what perspectives are available for talking about different types of situations”.

This has long been a focus of study, with grammarians identifying between two and at least six different types of aspect in English: e.g., state and dynamic aspect (Yang & Huang, 2004, p. 52); progressive, imperfective, habitual, iterative, continuative and frequentative aspect (Bybee et al., 1994, p. 125); plus imperfective and perfective aspect (Löbner, 2013, p. 150).

3.7.2 Tense and aspect as interwoven

Central to part of this issue is the oft-assumed clear distinction between tense and aspect. Yet such a dichotomy is not necessarily available – or at least, a clear demarcation is accessible only in certain cases (e.g., in most uses of the Present Simple vs the Present Progressive). Rather, a common view holds that while tense and aspect are independent of each other, they interact (Löbner, 2013, p. 157). Indeed, an increasingly prevalent understanding is that tense and aspect are very closely interwoven, to the point that one cannot be discussed to any degree of satisfaction without the need to invoke the other (Binnick, 1991, p. 456; Brisard & Patard, 2011, p. 3; Smith, 2009, p. 163; Yang & Huang, 2004, p. 52). For example, the Simple Past is conventionally seen as combining past tense and perfective aspect (Boogaart & Trnavac, 2011, p. 226).

However again, there is no unequivocal consensus on this matter. For example, Klein (2009b, p. 40) states that “tense and aspect should be independent from each other, i.e., the same aspectual contrast could be found in all tenses”. He adds that with a small number of exceptions, this is predominantly the case in English. But this question needs to return to a focus on ESL students: to what extent is it helpful for them to regard tense and aspect as separate? Textbooks typically – and not without good reason - teach the Present Progressive, Past Progressive, Present Perfect, Present Perfect Progressive, etc., as separate entities.

On the one hand, it will be argued here that students need to be aware of the principles involved in aspect vs tense, e.g., perfective vs imperfective. But to interrogate the above claim

by Klein regarding the same aspect being found in all tenses: it can equally be argued that one aspect, e.g., the imperfective, behaves differently when coupled with different tenses. To illustrate: the Past Progressive typically introduces a past ongoing action that is ‘interrupted’ by a single entity action, e.g., *Yesterday I was cleaning the house when my brother phoned*. But the Present Progressive does not carry the same sense of an interrupted action (i.e., *I’m mowing the lawn*). There exists an underlying commonality of an ongoing action that is interruptible, but it is deployed for different reasons. An additional confounder is the use of the Present Progressive to denote an arranged event in the future, e.g., *I’m playing tennis on Saturday*. So the common ESL approach as represented here is generally supported in this research as relevant, but with considerable caveats, as will be indicated in chapter 5. The reasons underlying the use of the imperfective in such cases will also be more deeply interrogated.

Another example of the impracticality of applying aspect identically across different temporal zones is the use of the perfect (whose status as an aspect or tense will be discussed in section 3.7.7). The Present Perfect is commonly defined as denoting a past event or state which has an impact on the present, with the speaker’s focus being on the latter. Löbner (2013, p. 155) goes further, stating that the Present Perfect represents predications which express a resultant condition, i.e., of a past event or state, on the present. In this sense, he believes that there is not only a temporal but also a causal relationship between the past event and the resultant state (Löbner, 2013, p. 155). Yet this is not necessarily true across all times. For example, the Future Perfect might not represent causality at all, but simply the measurement of time until a certain point in the future (which is the temporal focus):

We moved here in 2010. Next month, we will have been here for five years.

Likewise with the Past Perfect: it is not mandatory for the first event to have a causative relationship with the more recent one:

Yesterday I saw a James Bond movie. I’d never seen one before.

In fact, Löbner’s claim is not always applicable to the Present Perfect:

Have you travelled much?

I’ve been to France three times.

These issues will be further addressed in section 3.7.7.

At this stage, this simply adds further credibility to the common approach of ESL texts to address different combinations of times and aspects individually (e.g., Simple Past, Past Progressive, Present Progressive, Present Progressive for the Future). But the qualification still remains that a silo approach represents an inefficient mode of learning and that an awareness of underlying principles in the TA system can aid in learning.

With this in mind, sections 3.7.3 to 3.7.8 will comprise the following areas of discussion: firstly, a definition of aspect will be sought, followed by an outline of the major kinds of aspect identified by grammarians, with a view to defining the most salient ones for students of ESL. The two subsequent sections then focus on two elements commonly conveyed via aspect, namely, speaker perspective, plus the foregrounding and backgrounding of eventualities. Section 3.7.7 will address the contentious matter of whether the Present Perfect should be regarded as a tense or an aspect, hopefully encapsulating one of the crucial differences between tense and aspect in English. Prior to the conclusion, section 3.7.8 then addresses an issue indirectly suggested here, i.e., that morphology is an unreliable indicator of aspect in English.

3.7.3 Defining aspect

In defining this element, Declerck (2006, p. 28) states that “aspects are different ways of viewing the internal constitution of an actualizing situation”. In most definitions, the word ‘view’ is key: as Binnick (1991, pp. 135-6, 456) explains, aspect first appeared in accounts of the English tense system in 1853, imported from the Russian ‘vid’, from Slavic grammar studies, meaning ‘view’ or ‘vision’.

In distinguishing aspect from tense, theorists commonly observe that aspect has no deictic function, and as such does not locate an eventuality on a time line (de Swart 2012, p. 753). This is because it is seen as representing “the internal temporal nature” of an eventuality (Levin, 2013, p. 187), whereas tense refers to the time that deictically contains the eventuality itself (Hewson, 2012, p. 511; Löbner, 2013, p. 151). In a Reichenbachian sense, this means that tense focuses on the relationship between Speech and Reference Times, while aspect looks at the relationship between Event and Reference Times (Deo, 2012, pp. 162-163; Patard 2011, p. 285) and how they relate or potentially encompass or overlap each other. For example:

Yesterday when I was walking the dog, I witnessed an accident.

The event of walking the dog is not referred to in its entirety; rather, the speaker is focusing on a 'slice' or segment of it. Likewise, in a future sense:

Tomorrow, when I am walking the dog, John will give me the book that I lent him.

Again, the walking of the dog will be 'interrupted' by John's action. In both cases, Event Time and Reference Time are interacting, regardless of temporal location.

This concept is embodied in the theory of Comrie, one of the first linguists in modern ESL grammar to use the term 'aspect'. He defines it as denoting "different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation" (Comrie, 1976, p. 3). In line with many mainstream approaches, Comrie (1975, pp. 2-4) refers most saliently to a distinction between complete or incomplete situations, i.e., perfective vs imperfective, further defined respectively as viewing the situation from the outside (as a complete or whole event) or inside (as partially completed or in progress) (Binnick, 2009, p. 268; Deo, 2012, p. 161; Löbner, 2013, p. 150; Patard 2011, p. 285; Pfaff, Bergs & Hoffman, 2013, p. 218; Smith, 2007b, p. 422; Zagona, 2013, p. 763).³⁴ This can be seen in the following contrast:

(a) Bill wrote a letter.

(b) Bill was writing a letter [when I arrived].

In (a), the interlocutor understands that Bill started, progressed through, and completed the writing of a letter. In contrast, in (b) it is understood that Bill started and progressed through the process to some degree, but was interrupted by the arrival of the speaker. Whether or not Bill completed the letter is of no consequence to the interlocutor. Hence (a) presents a completed action, in contrast to the incomplete action in (b), of which only the phase coinciding with Reference Time is portrayed (Pfaff, Bergs & Hoffman, 2013, p. 219).

In examining this idea of completion vs incompleteness in a similar vein, Zagona (2013, pp. 746, 775) states that aspect implies the identification of the "topographical features" of an event, such as its beginning point, internal process stage, and end point. She exemplifies these with the following (Zagona, 2013, p. 775):

³⁴ Löbner (2013, p. 151) questions – with good reason – the usefulness of this contrast between outside vs inside, stating that it is more accurate to say that the imperfective predicates about a given time and the status of an eventuality during that time.

- (a) John crossed the street
- (b) John was crossing the street.

In (a), the speaker includes all three stages, so the event is depicted as whole or complete, i.e., perfectly, while (b) focuses solely on the internal stage, excluding both the beginning and end points. In other words, (a) includes the boundaries of the situation, whereas (b) does not (Boogaart & Trnavac, 2011, pp. 220, 225-226; Gvozdanovic 2012, p. 781; Musan & Rathert, p. 2011, p. 1). Indeed in (b), it cannot be assumed that an end point was ever reached (e.g., in the event that John reversed direction, due to having forgotten something). On this note, Löbner (2013, p. 151) states that the imperfective predicates about a contextually-defined time and a situation which exists at that time. The imperfective says nothing about the eventuality either before or after this Reference Time, and has no concern with whether or not the situation was completed (Löbner, 2013, p. 151).

As will be seen in the chapter 5 analysis of futurity forms, this is a crucial element of the imperfective, as it conveys the sense that completion of the proposition is not guaranteed and is therefore susceptible to change (Williams, 2002a, p. 1235). This vulnerability to change is further advanced by the internal view of the eventuality available to the speaker, as opposed to the viewing of a complete eventuality, which necessitates an external perspective.

With further regard to the contrast between depicting a whole eventuality or part thereof: in the former, when speakers incorporate its beginning, middle and end via means of a perfective aspect (e.g., the use of the Simple Past to denote a dynamic event, as in *He saw a movie*), the stages are heterogeneous, with the three normally differing from each other. By contrast, an imperfective aspect conveys neither the beginning nor the end of an event, instead focusing on a point or extended period of time during its processing (Löbner, 2013, p. 150). The crucial ingredient in this chosen point or period of time is that the process indicated during the selected time does not change: in other words, it must be homogeneous. Löbner (2013, p. 150) refers to this as the “presupposition of indivisibility”. It is in this sense that he likens a point in time to a period of time: regardless of the length of either, there is no sense of division from one second to another. To illustrate:

- (a) When I lived in France, President Mitterrand was in power.

(b) I saw John while he was crossing the street.

In (a), at all times during this stative period of living in France, President Mitterrand was in power. And in (b), if John's crossing of the street were to be sliced into subintervals, each segment of this dynamic eventuality would be identical. So with no inception or completion included, there is a consistent feeling of uniformity from moment to moment.³⁵ And it is this uniformity which is interrupted, with the interruption being the speaker's main focus point. Either way, then, English forces speakers to present any eventuality as a situation type (i.e., a state, ongoing action, habitual action, etc.) (Smith, 1983, p. 480; Williams 2002b, p. 42), meaning that aspect is obligatorily marked in English.³⁶

3.7.4 Two main aspects in English

One of the dilemmas facing the ESL grammar theorist, teacher or learner is the fact that aspect can range from being a complex issue, due to the number of aspectual types identifiable in English, to being a simple matter of perfective vs imperfective, the latter form being most saliently represented by *V-ing*. But as illustrated above, even the perfective/imperfective dichotomy is far from simple when different tenses are invoked. This discussion will continue with a brief overview of these issues, seeking to identify the optimal approach for L2 students.

With this goal in mind, it is timely to remember that while theorists and teachers may expend considerable energy on analysing the minutiae of this issue, the majority of L2 students across the world are not linguists and for the main part are seeking an operational knowledge of L2 grammar. In this sense, in the search for a feasible and accessible solution, a field of the complexity of aspect begs the application of Ockham's razor.

There is a level of agreement among current grammarians that although many types of aspect can be identified in English, the most significant issue is the contrast between perfective

³⁵ This contrast between perfectivity and imperfectivity has been seen by some grammarians as the aspectual equivalent of count nouns and mass nouns (van Hout, de Swart & Verkuyl, 2005, p. 5; Vet, 2015, p. 7). This occurs in the sense that any one part of a mass item, e.g., water, is the same as any other part, and can still be considered as that item overall. In other words, one litre of water and one ocean of water are still defined as water, as is the case with one slice of an imperfective situation. But with count nouns, e.g., a chair, one part of the item (e.g., a leg) is not regarded as a chair – as is the case with eventualities (Van Hout, De Swart & Verkuhl, 2005, p. 5), which must incorporate the trajectory of a beginning, middle and an end.

³⁶ In contrast, Copley (2009, p. 61, 69, 90) claims that some forms have no aspect, an idea that is rejected here.

and imperfective (Declerck, 2006, p. 29; Klein, 2009b, p. 52). Given that the perfective refers to a whole situation, from beginning to middle to end, it is seen as a single, unified event, which in turn means that it does not typically embody simultaneity to the moment of speech. However as will be shown, this is disputed by numerous theorists. Others (Caudal, 2012, p. 272; Declerck, 2006, pp. 28, 30; Klein, 2009b, p. 52; Patard, 2011, p. 285; Zagana, 2013, p. 776) simplify this distinction between imperfective and perfective somewhat, saying that the former presents a situation as ongoing (e.g., *Mary was writing a book*), with the beginning point assumed and the end point disregarded, whereas the perfective presents a situation as complete (e.g., *Mary wrote a book*). This dichotomy of ‘complete’ vs ‘incomplete’ would be easily accessible to most L2 learners and is the approach adopted here.

By way of support for this, in Declerck’s (2006, p. 28, 29, 33) use of the terms ‘non-progressive’ and ‘progressive’, in lieu of ‘perfective’ and ‘imperfective’, he explains that in imperfective situations, the speaker can choose to focus on the beginning (ingressive), middle (progressive) or end (egressive) phases of a situation. But as only the middle stage can be represented grammatically in English (i.e., *be + V-ing*), Declerck concludes that progressive and non-progressive are the only true aspects in the language: e.g., *He was writing a novel vs He wrote a novel*.³⁷ (Ingressive and egressive phases can only be depicted lexically, rather than grammatically, e.g., *He started writing a novel*, or, *He finished writing a novel*.) In the ensuing discussion, the terms ‘perfective’ and ‘imperfective’ (given their predominance in the literature) will be used interchangeably with ‘non-progressive’ and ‘progressive’ respectively, but the main focus of meaning and use will be on the latter pair.

ESL students typically first encounter this aspectual dichotomy in learning to speak about present time. This is perhaps fortunate, as the grammatical distinction between the Simple Present and the Present Progressive may in fact illustrate aspect at its greatest clarity (Croft, 1998, p. 69) or semantic transparency. The distinction can be illustrated in the here-and-now, and therefore at its most meaningful. For example, the non-progressive (Simple Present) can be illustrated by the teacher as *I feed my dog every morning*. This can then be contrasted

³⁷ Matters related to the ‘imperfective paradox’ have a bearing on this contrast, but lexical aspect is not addressed in this research.

with the progressive: *I'm not feeding my dog now – I'm teaching English*, which is true at the moment of speech. Hence a habitual action is contrasted with a current activity.

Yet beyond this dichotomised clarity, it can soon be observed that there are what students might consider to be 'grey areas'. These can be attributed to the individual speaker's perception of permanent vs temporary meaning, expressed through a non-progressive or progressive form respectively. The former denotes a habitual meaning, often accentuated through the inclusion of an adverb of frequency (Declerck, 2006, p. 35):

I don't usually drive to work. I take the bus or walk.

These uses of the Simple Present, accepted as true at the time of utterance, carry a sense of a lack of time restriction, such that they convey a long-term habit. In contrast, the use of a progressive form in similar contexts conveys a sense that temporal restrictions apply to a current habit, a meaning which is often underscored by the inclusion of an adverb of duration (Declerck, 2006, p. 35):

(a) We aren't eating any beef these days because pork is exceptionally cheap.

(b) She's sleeping on the veranda while this hot weather lasts.

For students of English, depending on their circumstances, this contrast may be meaningfully conveyed by the following:

(a) I live in Brisbane. [I have settled in Brisbane and plan to stay for the foreseeable future.]

(b) I'm living in Brisbane. [I'm studying in Brisbane, but will leave on completion of my course.]

This distinction is based on a stative verb, *to live*. In this sense, permanence vs temporariness can easily be contrasted in terms of temporal restrictions. But other distinctions between perfective and imperfective can be made where different verb types are concerned (e.g., dynamic verbs). As an example, Binnick (1991, p. 248) focuses on the statement, *John dates redheads*. He explains that a habitual reading of this statement understands that it is not necessarily the case that John is dating a redhead at the moment of speech (Binnick, 1991, p. 248, 249): it is simply understood that this is a habit or frequent occurrence where John and dating are concerned. Conversely, *John is dating a redhead* implies that this is currently true of

John, but it carries no implication that this is his habitual practice: in fact, it may be a unique occurrence in his life. Hence, the temporary vs permanent pattern still applies.

Adding to the complexity here is the fact that the propositional truth of the statement lies in the temporary state, rather than in the chance that John is on a date with a redhead at Speech Time. This is non-problematic in English. However, depending on an ESL student's L1, this use of the Present Progressive may be confusing if it appears to mirror the equivalent aspect in their own language, but in fact does not. Bybee et al. (1994, p. 135) conclude that the English Present Progressive "is used in a wider range of contexts than progressives in other languages". They explain that Dutch is one such example, in that its Present Progressive is used only to convey activities that are actually ongoing at the time of speech (Bybee et al., 1994, p. 137). Hence, 'happening now' has a much narrower interpretation in Dutch, whereas English allows for a broader, extended interpretation which denotes a characteristic or feature of a period of time and does not require that the particular activity be ongoing at Speech Time. So, *He's writing a novel about chickens* may be uttered by a writer not engaged in that process at utterance time (Bybee et al., 1994, p. 137).

But significantly, this distinction (as with the situation of living in Brisbane) is not subject to objectively-imposed time restrictions: what one student might experience as temporary could seem long-term to another, depending on the respective interpretations of the situation. Again, it is the speaker's perspective that comes into play here. As explained earlier, 'aspect' indicates that the same eventuality could be viewed perfectly or imperfectly. So it would be possible to say either of the following (Binnick 1991, p. 136):

(a) The other day I visited Aunt Martha and saw your picture.

(b) The other day I was visiting Aunt Martha and saw your picture.

Each sentence describes the same event, with one viewing it from the outside as a single, complete entity, and the other seeing the visit from the inside as a progressive, incomplete action which was 'interrupted' by the sighting of the picture (Binnick, 1991, p. 136).

It can be argued in the above case that in (b), the speaker "zooms in" (Langacker, 2001, p. 259) on the action of visiting Aunt Martha, heightening the sense of immediacy and perhaps the intensity of interrupting an action (Dewaele & Edwards, 2003, p. 247; De Wit & Brisard,

2014, p. 81). This sense of intensity can carry emotional overtones, particularly in negative observations, such as *She's always losing her keys*. As Dewaele and Edwards (2003, p. 233) further observe, the progressive can intensify the impact of a statement:

(a) Smoking kills 400,000 people each year.

(b) Smoking is killing 400,000 people each year.

The authors also stress that such an effect is triggered by context and is not part of the semantics of the form (Dewaele & Edwards, 2003, p. 233).

Naturally, these attitudinal matters would be concerns for more advanced students. But for L2 speakers in general, this binary construct of progressive and non-progressive offers a seemingly workable and accessible approach. However, as will be shown in section 3.7.5, further complications need to be addressed which further illustrate the fact that the terms 'perfective' and 'imperfective' are not always interchangeable with 'progressive' and 'non-progressive'.

3.7.5 Perspective

As seen, speakers make choices about possible ways in which to talk about the world. In selecting an imperfective or perfective aspect, they are not merely indicating the way in which things are generally to be found in the world, or observing some kind of ontological truth: rather, the speaker's viewpoint on the event dominates its depiction. The fact that aspect offers the speaker different ways of presenting one and the same situation takes ESL students beyond a straightforward, rule-based grammar from which they can expect to retrieve an absolute decree dictating how to encode any eventuality.

For example, a news broadcaster can frame a story as recently broken and therefore influential on an audience's current state, as in the use of the Present Perfect, e.g., *Bradbury has won gold!* The same eventuality can subsequently be depicted as familiar to listeners/readers, having lost its sense of recency and been given a temporal location, e.g., *Bradbury won gold last night*. Likewise as discussed above, students may regard themselves as temporary or permanent residents of a city. A further example entails conditional utterances:

(a) If she passes the exam, she'll feel great.

(b) If she passed the exam, she'd feel great.

Both conditional expressions refer to the future, the only difference being the speaker's perspective on the likelihood of actualisation, with (b) conveying a more remote sense of expectation. So again, speakers choose to focus on a particular time and event in a specific manner, depending on their perspective, attitude or sense of proximity regarding actualisation. This optionality is observed by Declerck (2003, p. 86) in an article entitled, "How to manipulate tenses to express a character's point of view":

My parents did not join the climbing party yesterday because the mountain was too steep for them.

Through this statement, Declerck stresses the significance of the experiencer's point of focus, explaining that while *is* could easily have replaced *was*, the speaker's choice of perspective was the time at which his parents made their decision regarding the steepness of the mountain (Declerck, 2003, p. 86). It would be obvious to any interlocutor that the mountain would not have ceased to be too steep in the time subsequent to this statement: rather, the point of view of the speaker dictates the choice of tense. Hence the stative situation is viewed as imperfective, as it focuses on a past sub-interval, while conveying the implication that the situation continues to be true at the time of utterance (Declerck, 2003, p. 89). This is also illustrated by Lakoff (1970, p. 839):

The animal that you saw *was* a chipmunk: see, there he is running up a tree.

The animal continues to exist as a chipmunk at Speech Time, but in the first clause the speaker was focusing on the sub-interval of the interlocutor's initial sighting of the animal.

In this way, the core of aspectual theory is evoked, in its definition of aspect as representing the internal constitution of an eventuality. This imperfectivity is commonly the case with *to be* and holds in expressions of futurity as well, as further illustrated by Lakoff (1970, p. 839):

That thing rustling in the bushes over there *will* no doubt *be* a chipmunk: let's wait till it comes out.

Again though, the lexical choice is significant in the determination of aspect, e.g., in the past (Lakoff, 1970, p. 840). It is pragmatically impossible to say:

*The animal you saw *used to be* a chipmunk: see, there he is running up a tree.

As can be seen, the key component of durativity is lacking in the change of verb to *used to be*.

For these reasons, it is potentially confusing to explain to students that perspective is only invoked where aspect (e.g., perfectivity and imperfectivity) is concerned. The concept of speaker perspective in any utterance will become an increasingly significant part of this research, as it will be suggested that a substantial number of speaker decisions involve subjective perspective and are not as such limited to aspectual considerations.

3.7.6 Foregrounding and backgrounding

Perspective in the form of the perfective/imperfective contrast also affords the possibility of foregrounding and backgrounding different elements in a conversation/text. In the genre of narrative, this can mean using the perfective to mark the main route through a story (Bardovi-Harlig, 2012, p. 239; Bybee et al., 1994, p. 90), with the occasional addition of background information (in the imperfective) that is relevant to the narrative but not essential to its momentum. The main narrative route is seen as foreground information, usually represented by perfective forms, most typically the Simple Past (Bardovi-Harlig, 2012, p. 239; Williams, 2002a, p. 1240; Williams, 2002b, p. 36). An illustration of this is as follows, with the main, foregrounded elements in the Simple Past underlined, and the backgrounded elements in the Past Progressive dot-underlined:

I was mowing the lawn last weekend when I heard a knock on the door. As I was approaching the house, I noticed a vehicle parked outside, near the front door. People were unloading furniture from the trunk. I approached them and asked what they were doing.

As can be seen, it is the Simple Past forms which give momentum to the narrative, by conveying an eventuality in its entirety and with no focus on its internal temporal composition (Williams, 2002b, p. 31). In English, there is a strong connection between the Simple Past and perfective aspect, due to its use in this narrative function (Bybee et al., 1994, p. 90, 126, 151). On the other hand, conveying an ongoing activity that was ‘interrupted’ dictates the common use of the imperfective, particularly in the past, to convey background information, descriptions or scene-setting. Again, this applies to both states and progressive forms, e.g., *She was in the car* and *He was looking for a book* (Van Hout et al., 2005, p. 8).

A further element in this distinction is illustrated by Löbner (2013) through the use of a fairy tale excerpt. Along with identifying progressive actions as background, he highlights the use of state verbs to denote ongoing past states as background, using the term ‘imperfective’ (ipf) to include both types, and ‘perfective’ (pf) to convey narrative momentum (Löbner, 2013, p. 152):

One fine evening a young princess put on her bonnet and clogs (pf), and went out to take a walk by herself in the wood (pf); and when she came to a cool spring of water (pf), that rose (ipf) in the midst of it, she sat herself down to rest a while (pf). Now she had a golden ball in her hand (ipf), which was her favourite plaything (ipf); and she was always tossing it up into the air (ipf), and catching it (ipf) as it fell (pf). After a time she threw it up so high (pf) that she missed catching it again (pf) as it fell (pf); and the ball bounded away (pf), and rolled along upon the ground (pf), till at last it fell down into the spring (pf).

As Löbner explains, the perfective forms narrate the complete events which occur during the timeframe established at the beginning of the tale, i.e., one fine day. This can be seen in the version below, from which the imperfectives have been extracted (based on Löbner, 2013, p. 152), so that only the series of dynamic events remains:

One fine evening a young princess put on her bonnet and clogs, and went out to take a walk by herself in the wood; and when she came to a cool spring of water, she sat herself down to rest a while. After a time she threw [the ball] up so high that she missed catching it again as it fell; and the ball bounded away, and rolled along upon the ground, till at last it fell down into the spring.

The contrast can be observed in the sentences below, which contain only the imperfective statements:

[A cool spring of water] rose in the midst of [the wood]. Now she had a golden ball in her hand, which was her favourite plaything; and she was always tossing it up into the air, and catching it.

Information referring to the location of the water, the ownership of the ball, and a past habit contributes static background of an ongoing nature, rather than narrative momentum. Added

to that, the timespan of the existence of the spring, of the ownership of the ball, and of the habit are of no direct relevance to the tale. Rather, as Löbner (2013, p. 152-3) explains, “what matters is the state of the world in the situation described”. So again, neither the inception nor the completion of the action or state is featured.

A definition of the perfective as describing complete dynamic events is straightforward. But as flagged at the conclusion of section 3.7.3, it is important for students to understand that the imperfective can also describe a static situation: i.e., the imperfective in English does not always denote an ongoing activity. Henceforth, this discussion will assume that the imperfective can be rendered by both progressive and state verbs, a point which will be further addressed in section 3.7.7.

3.7.7 Present Perfect: Aspect or tense?

The previous section identified the fact that the perfective lends momentum to a narrative, whereas the imperfective typically gives background of an ongoing nature. The same issue can arise regarding the Present Perfect, i.e., whether it conveys momentum or background – or neither. In its experiential sense (e.g., *I’ve never been to Paris*), it does not tend to propel a narrative forward. But in its sense of a recent occurrence (or the ‘resultative’) which impacts on the present (e.g., *I’ve just seen the president!*), a case could be made that a change or effect has been or is about to be wrought. As Collins and Yao explain (2014, p. 517), the precursor to the Present Perfect in Old English focused on the present: “*I have my work finished* in Old English would express ‘I have or possess my work in a done or finished condition’”. So the Present Perfect actuality could herald an action to be taken as a result of a past eventuality or state, signalling the triggering of a present or future actualisation.

As can be seen, the Present Perfect combines elements of both the present and past (Williams, 2002b, p. 34). Collins and Yao (2014, p. 517) refer to it as a construction used for referring to situations prior to the time of speech. Its function is commonly described as expressing ‘current relevance’, a connection between a past situation and the present moment (Quirk et al. 1985: 190), by contrast with the preterite, which refers to a past situation unconnected to the present moment.

Even though this definition aptly captures the notion of present and past combined to indicate current relevance, its description of the Simple Past as being ‘unconnected’ to the present is challenging in its precise interpretation. Much as it is temporally remote from the present when compared with the Present Perfect, this is perhaps cognitively puzzling to learners and is surely a matter of subjective perception. For example:

- Have you heard about Tom? He’s been really sick.
- Yes, I saw him yesterday and he looked terrible.

The second speaker’s statement is by no means semantically unconnected to the present situation. Rather, given that the speaker has temporally located the eventuality via a past adverbial, there is no choice but to abandon the Present Perfect. Declerck (2006, p. 150) submits that an emphasis on the temporal focus chosen by a speaker is more important than the notion of ‘current relevance’. Hence, it could still be suggested to students that the first speaker’s use of the Present Perfect lends a greater sense of immediacy to his/her statement.

In the light of the above discussion then, a more satisfactory definition can be found in Bowie, Wallis and Aarts (2013, p. 323):

[T]he present perfect presents a situation as occurring within (or even continuing through) a time span beginning in the past and leading up to the present.³⁸ It also typically involves a focus on the present repercussions of the situation (often labelled ‘current relevance’), and generally resists co-occurrence with expressions indicating a specific time reference (such as ‘last year’).

This more extensive definition includes the importance of the focus on the present, the fact and nature of which highlights the debate as to whether the Present Perfect is an aspect or a tense. Much of the mainstream linguistics literature still sees no grounds for deliberation, regarding it unequivocally as an aspect, but more recent claims beg to differ.

To consider the more mainstream approach first: as previously discussed, English is commonly seen as having two main types of aspect, namely, progressive and non-progressive (or imperfective and perfective). However some theorists argue for a third aspect, namely, perfect (Caudal, 2012, p. 272; Madden & Ferretti, 2009, p. 220; Musan & Rathert, p. 2011, p. 1;

³⁸ The variability of this timespan was discussed in section 3.4.6.

Ogihara, 2011, p. 1464). These writers claim that the resultative viewpoint is a third aspect which focuses on the state resulting after an eventuality. The perspective of the speaker indicates a result produced by an anterior eventuality, or one which indicates the relevance to the Reference Time of an anterior situation³⁹ (Declerck, 2006, p. 37). Hence the statement, *I've just had lunch*, could explain the fact that the speaker does not currently require any food, with the focus being on the present time. Again, the function of the Present Perfect here is to denote current relevance, by connecting a past eventuality to the present moment of speech.

Despite his explanation above, Declerck does not accept that the perfect is an aspect in English. Rather, he believes that the existence of a specific temporal focus, i.e., Speech Time (in the Present Perfect) or the Reference Time (in the Past Perfect or Future Perfect) means that this is a question of tense rather than aspect (Declerck, 2006, p. 38). This is still not an uncontroversial stance, but it has support from a surprising source again, i.e., Lindley Murray (1817, p. 80), who in the early 19th century regarded both the Present Perfect and Past Perfect as tenses in their own right.

Additional support, albeit inadvertently, comes from an account of the perfect aspect given by Löbner (2013, p. 154), who defines it as yielding “a state predication *about a given time*” [emphasis added], the state resulting from a previous event. He adds that “[t]he sentence predicates about the present time that it is located in the state resulting from a past event”; that “reference is primarily to the time predicated about”; and that the event from which the current state results occurred before the Reference Time (Löbner, 2013, p. 154). This can be illustrated with the sentence, *I have cooked dinner*: the reference is to the current state, which results from the previous event of completing the cooking of dinner (e.g., the speaker is informing others that they can now eat).

Löbner discusses this under the heading of Perfect Aspect (2013, p. 154), yet his explanation makes it clear that deictic temporal reference occurs. This matches with his definition of tense as “locat[ing] the situation expressed in time” (Löbner, 2013, p. 157). Added

³⁹ Typically, all ‘perfect’ subtypes, i.e., the Past Perfect, Present Perfect and Future Perfect, express anteriority, in the sense that they denote a prior situation relative to a past, present or future Reference Time, respectively (Bowie et al., 2013, p. 318).

to this, he states categorically that tense, not aspect, locates a situation in time (Löbner, 2013, p. 157).

Given the rationale provided, the practice of seeing the perfect as beyond aspect will be continued in this research. In other words, the current discussion supports the view that as tense is defined as a means of temporal location, the Present Perfect will be regarded as a tense rather than as an aspect, as its primary focus is on a temporal location, i.e., the present.

A source of confusion for learners can be the fact that the Present Perfect is conventionally included in textbooks among 'ways of talking about the past'. It is suggested here that given the considerable number of errors made in the use of the Present Perfect by L2 speakers, it would be beneficial to locate it among 'ways of talking about the present', one of which in fact it is. This might reduce the tendency of ESL speakers to include a past temporal adverbial with Present Perfect structures (e.g., **I have been to the beach yesterday*). And as Willis (2003, p. 100) suggests, the fact that the auxiliary verb in this form is in the present (i.e., *have/has*) underscores the fact that the Present Perfect is a present tense. The final word here goes to Declerck (2006, p. 150), who states that "[s]ince tense is the grammaticalization of locating a situation in time by means of a verb form, adverbials of past time are incompatible with the present perfect".

3.7.8 Morphology as an unreliable indicator of aspect

As mentioned in chapter 1, Aktionsart (or lexical aspect) will not be discussed as a separate category in this thesis. Suffice to say though that it is an issue which can 'muddy the waters' in how students learn to represent time. In short, the lexical meaning of a verb can encapsulate a notion of time (Vendler, 2005, p. 21) and therefore dictate the way in which it is depicted aspectually. The most immediate problem for learners lies in the fact that lexical aspect lacks the relative transparency of grammatical aspect, and is "more opaque, less rule-governed, and relatively unsystematic" (Binnick, 1991, p. 170).

On that score, it is important to note that in English, morphology alone does not dictate grammatical aspect, despite the fact that it is commonly defined in these terms. For example, Madden and Ferretti (2009, p. 220) say that "[t]he grammatical category of aspect captures the different ways language refers to the temporal structure of situations through

grammaticalization in the morphology”. In a similar vein, de Swart (2012, p. 753) states that the progressive construction “is a grammatical aspect marker, as it is a part of the verbal inflection system of English”. But as has been demonstrated above, this is not always the case, and does not necessarily hold in the same way where the Present Progressive is used to convey futurity, or where past state verbs denote imperfectivity. The reality is that the English inflectional system is remarkably poor at conveying aspect reliably, where auxiliaries plus aspectual verb forms are concerned (Declerck, 2006, p. 37). This can then be more demanding on the interlocutor, as it means that aspect is not always clearly signposted by morphology (Declerck, 2006, p. 37).

So in English, not only does morphology not reliably indicate a perfective/imperfective contrast: adding to this complexity is the fact that ‘simple’ tenses can often denote imperfectivity. This is despite the fact that the terminology used to label tenses and aspects suggests otherwise: the word ‘simple’ (as in Simple Past or Simple Present) is used in contrast to ‘progressive’ or ‘continuous’ (as in Past Progressive or Present Progressive), with the former implying a single word (e.g., *went* or *go*) and the latter a periphrastic construction (e.g., *was going* or *is going*). This highlights the commonly-held belief that tenses coupled with morphologically progressive aspect denote imperfectivity, while ‘simple’ tenses in the past, present or future are perfective.

A further issue of some consternation to L2 students can be the ‘non-temporal’ nature of the Simple Present (as discussed in section 3.5). When confronted by utterances conveying universal or gnomic truths, which include habits and permanent characteristics (or generic truths), learners must grapple with propositions that are not confined to the present, but rather pertain to all times (Bybee et al., 1994, p. 126; Declerck, 2006, p. 130, 131), e.g.:

- (a) The sun rises in the east.
- (b) Horses do not eat meat.
- (c) Anne walks to work.
- (d) Dogs pant to cool off.

Carlson (2012, p. 841) categorises utterances featuring this gnomic imperfectivity as the following distinctive types:

IMPERFECTIVITY TYPE	EXAMPLE UTTERANCE
Habits	Tom smokes.
Universal laws	Hot air rises.
Rules of games	Bishops move diagonally.
Moral ideas	A truly good man helps those in need.
Customs	Carols are sung at Christmastime.
Occupations	Harry works counting money at the bank.
Dispositions	Sugar dissolves in water.
Functions	This valve stops water from leaking out.

Table 3-10 Types of gnomic imperfectivity

It would be difficult to make a case for having students identify each of these types. Rather, illustrations such as the above can serve to convey the concept of present imperfectivity as broadly as possible. Many of these types of imperfectivity could be explained as recurring events or actions. As such, students should be reminded that habitual actions in particular are commonly expressed across all times, e.g.:

(a) Harry walked to work when he lived in Perth.

(Also: Harry used to walk to work when he lived in Perth.)

(b) Harry walks to work these days.

(c) Harry will walk to work when he sells his car.

Löbner (2013, p. 154) labels these habitual predications in the imperfective as serial states, noting also that they occur across all times.

It is sometimes postulated that the uses of the Simple Present as seen in Table 3-10 are special, or somehow aberrant. But Declerck (2006, p. 130, 131) disputes this, saying that gnomic and habitual utterances in the Simple Present are not atypical or special, as they represent homogeneity in their characteristics, and a characteristic is a state, which is by definition homogeneous. Secondly, reference to this state or characteristic is made at Speech Time, which can be considered a representative sub-interval of the full situation (Declerck, 2006, p. 130). Bybee et al. (1994, p. 141) concur, explaining that states can be seen as in effect

at the time of speech. They further add that gnomic situations may on the one hand be viewed as timeless, but are nevertheless seen as in effect at a particular utterance time (Bybee et al., 1994, p. 141).

To illustrate the concept of sub-intervals further: if for three years Harry walked to work, then the habit of walking to work is true not only for the whole of the three-year period, but also for any and all sub-intervals of that time, no matter how big or small. This interpretation is possible because we naturally understand a state to be homogeneous and unchanging (Declerck, 2006, p. 131).

Put succinctly, Bybee et al. (1994, p. 126, 152, 175) state that the present covers “various types of imperfective situations with the moment of speech as the reference point”. They also argue that in these uses, “present tense is really the same as present imperfective” (Bybee et al., 1994, p. 151), which lends weight to the earlier categorization of the imperfective as denoting both states and progressive eventualities.

Yet this does not tell the full story of the Simple Present, as it excludes other significant uses. The single-entity action, e.g., as heard in sports commentary, is a strongly perfective use of the tense (as mentioned in section 3.5.3):

Johnathan Thurston *makes* a mistake, Gillett *picks* it up ... He *goes* through, *gets* it to Jack Reed, he *goes* over the line and *scores* (NRL, 2015) [emphasis added].

These bounded actions are seen in their totality, in a type of semelfactive use (Williams, 2002b, p. 138) and are at least perceived as occurring at the moment of speech, i.e., a single, complete action simultaneous with utterance time. To sports commentary, Carlson (2012, p. 833) adds stage directions, e.g., *Re-enter Bigot and Attendants, who bring in King John in a chair* (Shakespeare, 1951, p. 444). This is a non-deictic use the perfective Simple Present, imparting the sense that something enacted on a stage is in the audience’s ‘present’ (Williams, 2002b, p. 159). The Present Progressive is also seen in denoting a situation already underway when the performance proceeds: *The service is over. Guests are milling about* (David & Seinfeld, 1998, p. 207).

As seen in section 3.5.4, another typical usage is found in news headlines (Declerck, 2006, p. 180):

Two gangsters escape from the Old Bailey.

This is likewise the case in news photo captions (Declerck, 2006, p. 179), where a complete event is perfectly ushered into the present to emphasise its immediacy:

(a) Carter meets the Irish Prime Minister in Dublin.

(b) The Queen visits Saint Mary's college in 1991.

Williams (2002b, p. 142) comments that it is as though the particular moment depicted in the photograph has been frozen, enabling it to be portrayed as the instantaneous present.

Finally, performative speech acts are another typical example, whereby the mere utterance of a perfective statement is seen as performing the act itself. Common to these is the restricted duration of the event, which allows it to be represented as punctual and simultaneous with the moment of speech (Declerck, 2006, p. 174):

(a) I wish you a merry Christmas.

(b) I pronounce you man and wife.

Hence, as has briefly been illustrated above, despite the punctuality of utterance time, the Simple Present can be seen as encoding both imperfective aspect, wherein gnomic situations incorporate speech time, and perfective aspect, in which speech time is simultaneous with the focus event (Deo, 2012, p. 160). Bybee et al. (1994, p. 151, 152) see the imperfective as the default interpretation of the Simple Present, presumably given its more common rate of occurrence. They define it by its core meaning of "tell[ing] of the way things are", in its imperfective aspect denoting universality or habituality.

So despite both the Simple Present and Simple Past being morphologically defined as 'simple' tenses, their default use of aspect highlights a major difference. As seen, the Simple Past can denote both perfectivity and imperfectivity. But whereas the Simple Present finds its most common use in the imperfective (in universality, habituality and iterativity), the Simple Past is most characteristically perfective, in its regular narrative use, which invokes a temporal relation of beginning, proceeding and ending prior to utterance time (Deo, 2012, p. 160). But in particular where imperfectivity is concerned, morphology can be a misleading indicator of aspect.

3.7.9 Conclusion

In bringing this chapter to a conclusion, this discussion will embrace the following definition of aspect (Löbner, 2013, p. 157), i.e., that “[t]he aspect of a verbal predication concerns the way in which the situation expressed and the time referred to are related to each other”. As such, aspect conveys whether an utterance depicts an event in time as completed (perfective), or as relating to another situation (imperfective). But crucially, it cannot locate any event or state in time: this is the function of tense (Löbner, 2013, p. 157).

Furthermore, perfective aspect sees an eventuality in its entirety and therefore from an external perspective, while imperfectivity entails an incomplete eventuality, viewed internally. This in turn means that an incomplete, internal perspective allows for interruptability or change, whereas an eventuality depicted as complete and viewed externally does not permit this. This point will be crucial to the analysis of futurity in chapter 5.

Additionally, contrary to the claims of many ESL grammars and student texts, aspect does not always feature explicit morphological marking (Löbner, 2013, p. 156). For example, *She caught the bus* could relate a particular and completed event (i.e., past perfective), but it could also depict a habitual event (i.e., a past habit). This can be further complicated by Aktionsart-related concepts, as dictated by lexical choices.

These issues are central to any discussion of tense and aspect, as the two domains are usually presented as dichotomous. Typically, a verb form is seen as either tense-related or aspect-related (conventionally, a simple form as perfective and a progressive form as imperfective). But as has been illustrated, every form invites some type of aspectual interpretation (Löbner, 2013, p. 157) and for the purposes of this discussion, these will be designated as either perfective or imperfective, relating to a particular time designated in an utterance or context. It has also been shown that when used in conjunction with particular tenses, an aspect is not transparently uniform in the meaning deployed. Therefore, the interweaving of tense and aspect can result in a semantic concept’s being shaped by pragmatic factors or by speaker perspective.

It is hoped that the above contributes towards addressing the question posed by Binnick (1991, p. 209) in the introduction to this section, regarding what is known by native speakers of

an aspectual language that must be acquired by learners. As this discussion now turns to the key purpose of this research, i.e., futurity, it will also be seen that the issues discussed here have a significant bearing on the ways in which futurity is constructed in English.

Chapter 4: Matters of futurity

4.1 Introduction

When making an utterance, a speaker selects from the means available within a language in order to shape the utterance. This choice depends first of all on the speaker's awareness of all available means, plus an accurate knowledge of their meaning/s and use/s. It is argued here that in the context of the English TA system, these choices emerge from and reflect the concepts underlying this system, such as complete vs incomplete, anterior vs posterior, past vs non-past, and tense vs time, to name but four. It is further argued that an understanding of these concepts or principles must underpin ESL instruction, so as to avoid the traditional silo approach taken by many texts. This is not to dismiss any methodology which focuses on a tense or aspect in isolation; rather, it will be contended that the successful acquisition of each form can be more effectively and efficiently achieved when based on a foundation built from an awareness of these elements.

While it is maintained here that the identification and presentation of these elements to L2 students is crucial, other questions arise and must be borne in mind. For example, do these same elements exist in a student's L1? Is it the case in most languages that a future form locates an eventuality in post-present time (Declerck, 2006, p. 358)? Secondly, if so, do the related elements in each language behave identically? As seen in section 3.7.4, for example, the imperfective aspect operates differently in Dutch from in English. Hinkel (1992, p. 568) also makes mention of the difficulty experienced by Spanish speakers in differentiating between English TA morphemes and false cognates in their L1 system. And thirdly, when identified, will some of these elements be too broad or abstract to be of any constructive assistance?

In this vein, Willis (2003, p. 99) fittingly laments the lack of an explicitly unifying system in the classification of English TA. He suggests that one remedy would be to explain that "all continuous forms can signal interruptedness" (Willis, 2003, p. 99). This has significant merit, but the use of 'can' here is so often confusing to students: i.e., when can this occur and when not? Additionally, in the use of the Present Progressive to signal futurity (e.g., *I'm meeting her*

tomorrow), interruptedness is not the most salient concept entailed. (But as will be illustrated in chapter 5, the possibility of its occurrence does in fact underlie the structure as a whole.)

The strong recommendation here to include underlying TA elements in any L2 instruction comes with two provisos: firstly, that they be consistently illustrated and secondly, that they be accompanied by a reminder that these elements may not operate identically across languages. Additionally, this research claims that while there are indeed underlying principles, these are often differently nuanced across the TA system (e.g., Past Progressive vs Present Progressive and Present Progressive vs Present Progressive for the Future exhibit subtle differences in use). However, these shades of difference within the one element do not preclude the building of a cohesive TA system - a “conceptual semantic map” (Descles & Guentcheva, 2012, p. 148), in lieu of the learning of 15 or so TA constructions in isolation.

4.2 Future forms and meanings: Background

The possibly overwhelming nature of this task may not be limited to L2 students. Indeed, it is still the case that significant works in the TA literature omit discussion of the future, sometimes due to a claimed (and presumably genuine) lack of space in the text (e.g., Binnick, 2012, p. ix), but more often without any acknowledgement that it has been ignored. To cite three examples of the latter: de Swart’s chapter on Verbal Aspect (2012, pp. 752-780) makes no mention of futurity, focusing exclusively on the past and present. There is a similar case in Levin’s (2013, pp. 187-216) text, “The progressive verb in modern American English”. And in an exploration entitled “L2 tense and time reference”, Hinkel (1992, p. 561) explains research involving a questionnaire, in which “the students were asked to describe four sentences for each of the 8 English tenses *excluding future*” [emphasis added].

The multiplicity of future forms in English is not an anomaly where many other languages are concerned (Bardovi-Harlig, 2004, p. 116). In fact, in their crosslinguistic survey of forms expressing futurity, Bybee et al. (1994, p. 243) found the future to be “the most widely distributed meaning in the languages of the sample”. More specifically, they add that “forty-nine of the seventy languages have two or more futures, and of these, sixteen have three, three have four, four have five, and three have six such forms” (Bybee et al., 1994, p. 243). Still, it would appear that in comparison with many other European languages, English is endowed

with a wide range of forms (Depraetere & Williams, 2010, p. 161). One can only imagine the possible dismay which this might occasion in learners with a tenseless L1.

This diversity is generally ascribed to the range of lexical sources from which future forms can originally derive. They generally arise “from constructions involving movement verbs, from markers of obligation, desire, and ability”, as well as from present tense forms (perfective or imperfective) (Bybee et al., 1994, pp. 244, 267-268; Fleischman, 1982, p. 128). This derivation most commonly springs from the verb equivalents of *to go* and *to come* (i.e., ‘movement toward’ in both space and time), modal forms, and the Simple Present and Present Progressive.

An additional layer of complexity for L2 students emerges from the fact that a number of these future forms, including those most commonly used, not only have multiple uses, as is the case in many other languages (Brisard, 2004, p. 30), but they can refer to other times, most commonly the present (Willis, 2003, p. 100). Indeed, Deo (2012, p. 159) notes that it is questionable whether any form indicating futurity can be regarded as exclusively future, i.e., non-present and non-past. This is at times an additional but questionable explanation proffered in some grammar texts for a lack of analysis of the future. Moreover, it is sometimes claimed that as the choice of future form has very little impact on the expression of futurity, then the forms can be utilised almost interchangeably. The following example (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 217) is illustrative:

While it is valuable to note differences of meaning between different future constructions, these differences should not be exaggerated. There are occasions where the choice of one construction (say *will* + infinitive) rather than another (say *be going to* + infinitive) has a scarcely perceptible effect on meaning. At the same time, there are differences of acceptability and usage which should not be ignored. Particularly, regarding the choice between *will* and *be going to*:

(a) *Will* is usually preferred to *be going to*

(b) *Be going to* tends not to be repeated in a text referring pervasively to the future. Thus a weather forecast may run as follows:

Tomorrow *is going to* be another cold day. There *will* be snow on high ground, and many mountain roads *will* be impassable ...

At best, this information could resonate with the intuition of L1 speakers of English, but it is unlikely to be of operational use to L2 students. No semantic distinction is offered; the role of speaker perspective, context and register is unacknowledged; and unhelpfully, the overall focus is limited to style. A criticism of much of the linguistics literature made here is this tendency to rely on native-speaker intuition, rather than offering a set of distinctive features for each form. It is the aim of the current research to address this gap in order to facilitate ESL learning.

In a similar vein to the above example, Haegeman (1989/2008, p. 292) suggests that while *be going to* vs *will* in English reputedly causes major problems for L2 learners, “an inappropriate use of *be going to/will* cannot usually be said to lead to ungrammaticality, rather, as is suggested by most authors, it leads to a certain un-Englishness, and this is often seen as illustrating a lack of idiomaticity”. As will be illustrated chapter 5, this difference is indeed meaningful, going beyond the ‘un-Englishness’ referred to (but not defined). To illustrate but one difference:

(a) Would you like some coffee? I’ll make some.

(b) Would you like some coffee? I’m going to make some.

In (a), the speaker implies that the making of coffee is contingent upon the interlocutor’s reply. In contrast, it is clear in (b) that the speaker has already decided to brew some coffee, regardless of the listener’s wishes. As can be seen, this distinction is meaningful and cannot be attributed to a lack of idiomaticity.

In addressing these facets of complexity, this chapter seeks to identify the underlying elements relevant to TA forms as discussed thus far, with a view to constructing a set of distinctive concepts for each of six futurity forms to be analysed in chapter 5.

Even given a comprehensive set of underlying elements, students must still grapple with the degree of transparency in the forms depicting them. DeKeyser (2005, p. 3) states that grammatical difficulty is determined by three main factors: “complexity of form, complexity of meaning, and complexity of the form-meaning relationship”. But crucially, he adds that it is the degree to which the form-meaning relationship is transparent which governs the effort involved in acquisition (DeKeyser, 2005, p. 3). One could also question whether and at what stage the

student is in fact aware of the available range in expressing futurity. But this type of form-meaning transparency can only be aided by the identification of the underlying elements.

Contributing to this issue is the depiction of tense exclusively as a marker of temporality, a limited concept which can easily lead students to assume that the addition of an adverbial will overcome any potential confusion or ambiguity with tense structures. Yet this is particularly inadequate where futurity is concerned and can result in the notion that selection of a particular futurity form is by and large redundant, as each simply marks agreement with a meaning which has already been conveyed by the presence of an adverbial. Hence learners can easily treat as interchangeable the following utterances: *I go there tomorrow; I'm going there tomorrow; I'm going to go there tomorrow; I'm to go there tomorrow; I will go there tomorrow; and I'll be going there tomorrow*. It will subsequently be shown that each of these structures embodies a distinctive profile.

4.3 Is the future a tense?

A preliminary obstacle to a comprehensive, system-building approach in TA exists in the rejection of the future as a tense, as discussed in previous chapters. This stance has given licence to many subscribers to this view to ignore future forms and how they relate to and arise from the system as a whole – implicitly consigning futurity to the ‘too-hard basket’. As Comrie (1989, p. 51) observes:

In the literature on time reference and its linguistic expression, perhaps no issue has aroused more controversy than the identification of future tenses. If we look at accounts of the tense system of English, German, or Dutch ... we find discussions of future time reference ranging from the acceptance of the existence of a future tense as something self-evident to denial of the very existence of a distinct future tense.

While English (along with many other languages, e.g., German and Russian) does not feature a future tense equivalent to that in Latin, Greek or the Romance languages (Binnick, 1991, p. 8), it is also true that languages with a set of forms used exclusively to express futurity are relatively rare⁴⁰ (Comrie, 1989, p. 52). Future-tense ‘denialists’ by and large base their

⁴⁰ Comrie (1989, p. 52) offers Hua, a language of Papua New Guinea, as one example of such a language.

arguments firstly on this lack of a dedicated future morphology and secondly, on the fact that present forms are also used to express future time.

The first argument most commonly claims that futurity is expressed via the modal auxiliary *will* (whose modality ties supposedly disqualify it from holding tense status). One example of this view is as follows:

Morphologically speaking, English has only two tenses: a present tense with only the *-s* ending for the third person and a past tense with the *-ed* ending. English has no future tense in the sense that there is no ending to express future time in English; future time is expressed by the combination of an auxiliary, *shall* or *will*, and an infinitive. The auxiliary itself is inflected for either present tense (*shall/will*) or past tense (*should/would*) (Haegeman & Gueron, 1999, p. 571).

Apart from ignoring the use of periphrastic forms, as above, it is common for linguists holding this view to speak of future ‘time’, as opposed to future tense. Another illustration of this is below:

There is no obvious future tense in English corresponding to the time/tense relation for present and past. Instead there are several possibilities for denoting future time. Futurity, modality, and aspect are closely related, and future time is rendered by means of modal auxiliaries or semi-auxiliaries, or by simple present forms or progressive forms (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 47).

The rationale given for this stance is often unclear, usually relying on an historical and morphological perspective:

I will avoid calling *will* and *be going to* and their counterparts in other languages future “tenses,” for pre-theoretic as well as theory-internal reasons. ... In addition, I will not be analyzing these items as tenses. For lack of a better word, I will call items like *will* and *be going to* simply “futures” (Copley, 2009, p. 60).

Or from Quirk et al. (1985, p. 176) again:

Some grammarians have argued for a third, ‘future tense’, maintaining that English realizes this tense by use of an auxiliary verb construction (such as *will* + infinitive): but we prefer to follow those grammarians who have treated tense strictly as a category

realized by verb inflection. In this grammar, then, we do not talk about the FUTURE as a formal category: what we do say is that certain grammatical constructions are capable of expressing the semantic category of FUTURE TIME.

What is felt to be the lack of a strong justification here is surprising and it is only compounded by the same linguists' tending to agree that tense is defined in terms of temporal location. For example, Quirk et al. (1985, p. 176) follow their explanation above with the following statement: "The terms PRESENT TENSE and PAST TENSE have this justification: that the tenses they name typically have reference to present and past time respectively". Yet, in expressions of futurity, temporal location is the most common purpose (Declerck, 2006, p. 102; Salkie, 2010, p. 196; Depraetere & Salkie, 2016, p. 358, 359; Velupillai, 2016, p. 101).

It is posited here that the above justifications regarding past tense/time vs future tense/time would most likely not be deemed strong by L2 students. Experience has shown that the array of available futurity expressions is commonly perceived as part of an onerous learning load, rather than as a dispute between future tense and future time.

As observed above, a second argument submitted against a future tense is the fact that present forms are used to express futurity, i.e., the Simple Present and Present Progressive, usually accompanied by an adverbial. (This was discussed in chapter 3, particularly in terms of the fact that all tenses in English can be used to express all times.) Basing this argument on morphology cannot negate the fact that these forms are used for temporal location. This simply underscores the perspective taken by many linguists (e.g., Declerck, 2006, pp. 100, 147; Hamm & Bott, 2014), that English has not two tenses, but two sets of tenses, i.e., past and non-past. Declerck explains that English regards the division between past and present (or past and non-past) as more significant than that between present and non-present (i.e., present vs past and future) or between future and non-future⁴¹ (i.e., future vs present and past). He adds that this preference in distinction is reflected in English morphology, but he goes on to stipulate that the expression of futurity is part of the tense system, i.e., the non-past set of tenses (Declerck, 2006, p. 100). Fludernik (2012, p. 91) for the most part reflects this view in saying that "the

⁴¹ Declerck (2006, Footnote 5, p. 101,) cites Hopi and Dyirbal as two examples of future vs non-future languages.

future tense belongs to the present tense system”: i.e., she identifies the future as a tense belonging to the same morphological category as the present.

Added to the fact that all verb forms can be used for all tenses in English is a strong argument against the claim that a tense can only be regarded as such if it has an exclusive set of morphemes denoting one time only, e.g., present, past or future. Salkie (2010) illustrates this with past-tense morphology, exemplifying how it can commonly be used to express modal remoteness,⁴² e.g. (Salkie, 2010, p. 188):

- (a) If he arrived tomorrow, would he be too late?
- (b) I wish I had a secure job.
- (c) I wondered whether I could see you for a few minutes.

These support his argument that if past tense forms can be used to denote remoteness in the present or future, then why do future-tense ‘denialists’ not revoke the status of the past as a tense (Salkie, 2010, p. 188)? In other words, why does this argument apply exclusively to future forms?

It appears at times that the impossibility of sorting English tenses into three clearly distinctive and exclusive columns, as is often the case with the presentation of Latin tenses, has resulted in the judgement that English has somehow failed the morphology test and hence been denied a future tense. A previous allusion has been made in this research to the probability that L2 students are not as fundamentalist in their attitude to tense and morphology - their main interest being justifiably pragmatic, i.e., how to express and interpret futurity accurately and meaningfully.

As Williams (2002b, p. 17) notes, “although languages are all rule-based ... they are such multifaceted phenomena that any attempt to squeeze them into a particular theoretical framework based on formalism is bound to be, at best, only a partially successful enterprise”; and, one must ask, for what purposes other than a sense of order? Apart from that, there seems to be no reason why temporal reference in any one language should not be effected both periphrastically and non-periphrastically (Comrie, 1989, p. 55).

⁴² Remoteness is defined here as “a grammatical device for coding the degree of proximity or remoteness to the deictic centre on a timeline” (Velupillai, 2016, p. 100).

This research will proceed according to the belief that the future is a tense in English and that it can be expressed in many ways, most of which are periphrastic. As Salkie (2010, p. 189) reminds us, the conception of tense as purely morphological is a narrow one, especially given the considerable number of languages which use periphrases to denote it. He adds that crosslinguistic studies of tense (e.g., Dahl (1985) and Comrie (1985)) make no such presumption, and that non-inflectional forms are still grammaticalised (Salkie, 2010, p. 189).

Further, the future is expressed periphrastically in many languages: in their world-wide, crosslinguistic survey, Dahl and Velupillai (2013) found that just over 50% (112 of 222 languages) did not mark inflectionally for future vs non-future. Yet morphological tense is often given implicit recognition as an *a priori* basis for tense status, when in fact there appears to be no truly legitimate rationale for this. As is commonly recognised (e.g., Declerck, 2006, p. 102; Williams, 2002b, p. 34), the development of periphrastic futures results from historical factors which do not disassemble the semantics of tense in any way or diminish the sense of futurity.⁴³

The ways in which these periphrastic forms have developed diachronically has long been the focus of linguistic analysis. The predominant theory is that lexical items undergo ‘semantic bleaching’, which is seen as the partial or total loss of the original semantic content of an item, which then generally becomes more abstract (Dahl, 2000a, p. 8; Traugott, 2006, p. 117). Indeed, some changes move beyond bleaching to a shift in meaning, exemplified most notably in the context of futurity by the loss of original meaning, as seen where *will* (as an auxiliary rather than a lexical verb) has gradually shed its link with *willan* (‘to want’), from German (Dahl, 2000a, p. 10).

Another example of bleaching is *be going to*, which springs from a progressive verb that originally had a sense of spatial movement (Collins & Yao, 2014, p. 513). This was a crucial

⁴³ This change has not been met with universal acceptance by linguists through the years. Karl Vossler (1932, p. 60, 62) claimed that in Latin, “[t]he downfall of the future tense was fraught with the gravest consequences”, which led to periphrastic forms in Latin and modern Romance languages. He attributed this change to the thought processes of the ‘common man’, whose “attitude towards things is always that of willing, wishing, hoping, and fearing rather than that of imagination, thought or knowledge” (Vossler, 1932, p. 61). The ordinary man, he felt, lacked the philosophical attitude and temperament of greater, educated minds, necessary for avoiding the “modal spheres of fear and hope, of the wish, and of uncertainty”. The common man was prey to “feverish religious hallucinations and the passionate dullness of the plebs” (Vossler, 1932, p. 61), expressed through vulgar periphrastic future forms.

development in periphrastic futurity in English, as the physical sense of movement in space was gradually eroded, i.e., bleached, so that it became a marker of future intention or imminent occurrence. In other words, movement from one spatial location to another was converted into temporal movement between two points (Chilton, 2013, p. 252).

Unsurprisingly, movement verbs are a key source of futurity indicators, with those descending from verbs *to come* and *to go* most prominent, as they convey both spatial and temporal movement into the future (Bybee et al., 1994, pp. 266-267, 268; Dahl, 2000b, p. 313). Crucially for the development of periphrastic futures embodying the imperfective, there is the sense here that the speaker is moving on a path towards an intention or goal. In terms of bleaching, this then means that *be going to* ultimately lost its spatial sense and evolved towards a meaning of temporally fulfilling an intention (Bybee et al., 1994, pp. 268-269).

It is estimated that this development of *be going to* as a future marker began in the 1400s, its first documented use in this sense of intention being in 1482 (Williams, 2002b, p. 41), and its frequency only increasing since then. Prior to this (in Old English), future time was expressed primarily by the Present Simple plus an adverbial, e.g., *We arrive tomorrow* (Tagliamonte, 2013, p. 146). This future temporal use of *be going to* has not been uniformly celebrated in terms of linguistic analysis, with Tagliamonte (2013, p. 147) identifying it as a “grammar curmudgeon”.

As has been noted, periphrastic future forms have developed diachronically, and despite the range of sources and the lack of inflectional forms, there is no doubt that the semantics of futurity has not been lost during this process. Part of this semantics is, of course, the unknowability of the future: it belongs in the realm of irrealis, where even the best-laid plans or the firmest predictions may not eventuate (Comrie, 1989, p. 54; Dahl, 2000b, p. 309; Fleischman, 1982, p. 20; Wagner, 2012, p. 474). This is core to the belief in many quarters that futurity is therefore modal, as future propositions generally entail a lower degree of certainty than those situated in the past or present. As such, it might be said that there is no such thing as ‘future reality’ and that this concept is an epistemological paradox (Fleischman, 1982, p. 20)

or a contradiction in terms.⁴⁴ When a speaker makes an assertion, poses a question, or indicates a presupposition regarding the future, a modal attitude is implied (Bohnenmeyer, 2009, p. 109). This concept of a modalised future is characteristic of Germanic languages, which use modal auxiliaries to reflect the imaginary or realm-of-possibility nature of the future. It is also typical that these would use the non-past to represent both the present and the future (Hewson, 2012, p. 528).

Yet even these claims must be interrogated from the point of view of the speaker. The uncertainty of the future may well be an ontological fact, but to what degree does this affect speakers' actual perception of the knowability of the future? This may of course vary across languages and cultures, and as Salkie (2010, p. 189) observes, the irrealis nature of futurity may be a fact about the world, but not necessarily a fact about language and speaker perceptions. For example, if a speaker makes the utterance, *The sun will rise at 5:57 tomorrow*, he/she may feel confident that this will indeed come to pass; and more confident perhaps than in making certain statements about the past, e.g., *Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone*. As Gosselin (2013, p. 100) points out, the dichotomy of the certainty of the past vs the unknowability of the future begs questioning, in that "we hold as temporal that which is certain, proven, known, asserted, but as modal that which is uncertain, potential, considered, unasserted". In fact, uncertainty and irrealis can be indicated in any time zone, seen below in past, present and future irrealis:

(a) If I had seen you, I would have waved.

(b) If I saw you, I would wave.

(c) If I see you, I will wave.

In this sense, it is reasonable to claim that modality should be regarded as an indicator of speaker perspective towards an eventuality, regardless of its temporal zone. Furthermore, it can again be claimed that all temporality entails not only a temporal but also a modal meaning (Gosselin, 2013, p. 101).

To return to the utterance, *The sun will rise at 5:57 tomorrow*: the speaker is referring to a temporal location in the future, which fulfills the requirements of a definition of tense. Its futurity means that it is nonfactual, and therefore 'modal', but as Declerck (2006, p. 102) notes,

⁴⁴ It is perhaps this abstract or detached quality of futurity which accounts for the fact that children tend to acquire future forms later than they do the present or past (Fleischman, 1982, p. 22; Jaszczolt, 2009, p. 61.)

the primary use of *will* + V is future temporal location, which again, justifies its tense status. Salkie (2010, p. 196) argues even more strongly for this position, saying that corpus studies indicate that the temporal use of *will* accounts for over 90% of the usage of this form. He concludes that this must then be seen as the core meaning of *will* + V, with other uses regarded as relatively marginal. Moreover, he declares that the far greater frequency of use of *will* (than other modal auxiliaries) is “unsurprising if *will* is basically a tense” form (Salkie, 2010, p. 197). Any meaning of *will* which expresses volitionality can be seen as a semantic relic that has for the most part been bleached in its modern use, but which is triggered in certain contexts. Hence it is still an integral part of one and the same tense form (Salkie, 2010, p. 188, 212).

Finally, Salkie makes the argument that just because *will* + V shares many morphosyntactic properties with other modal forms, this does not restrict its meaning to modality. He bases part of his argument on Huddleston and Pullum’s (2002) identification of several morphosyntactic properties shared by *be* and *have* (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002, p. 108, 111, 113), noting that these eight shared properties in no way imply shared semantic properties⁴⁵ (Salkie, 2010, p. 195).

In the light of the above points, this discussion will continue to proceed on the basis that the future is a tense in English. It will also claim that this tense consists of temporal, aspectual and modal elements – as is the case for all tenses (Gosselin, 2013, p. 101), with the second and third of these indicating perspectival stance on the part of the speaker.

4.4 Futurity

Modality will be regarded here as encompassing “all possible ways the speaker positions herself vis-à-vis the propositional content, that is, including presenting the eventuality as merely true” (Gosselin, 2013, p. 101). As this definition illustrates, such a statement can be made about past, present and future time. However, the indeterminate nature of futurity leads more uncontroversially to the conclusion that all futurity is semantically based in modality (Jaszczolt, 2009, p. 56; Jaszczolt, 2014, p. 15; Stowell, 2012, p. 198). But this discussion will proceed in the light of previous statements to the effect that all tenses - not just futurity - indicate modality,

⁴⁵ Some of these properties include primary verb negation, subject-verb inversion, emphatic polarity, *do*-exclusion, and negative forms (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002, p. 108).

from the standpoint that temporal semantics designates the ways in which utterances *represent* eventualities (Gosselin, 2013, p.104) from the perspective of the speaker.

The future can be defined in many ways, but at its core is an understanding that it is not actualized at the moment of speaking (Brisard, 2001, p. 253) and refers to a point in time subsequent to the present or the time of utterance (Binnick, 1991, p. 455). It shares with the past an assumed temporal displacement from the here-and-now (Bardovi-Harlig, 2004, p. 115), but differs from the past in its perceived lack of factuality or reality, which necessitates the more salient sense of modality inherent in statements about the future. In this way, time can be conceived as “degrees of commitment founded on the (often subconscious) assessment of certainty of states of affairs, and hence on perception of the *now*, memory of the past, and anticipation of memory of the future” (Jaszczolt 2009, p. 36). But as will be shown in chapter 5, this putative detachment of the future from the past and present is not as clinical as is conventionally assumed.

The sense of a comparatively wide range of possibilities regarding future actualisation accentuates the futile nature of a quest for formal symmetry in the English TA system. The ability to express intentions, predictions, desires, obligations or plans demands a range of structures (e.g., modal forms, periphrases, or adverbials such as *perhaps*, *possibly*, or *probably*) (Deo, 2012, p. 159; Jaszczolt, 2014, p. 12). Whichever structure is selected, the most common form of modality expressed is epistemic (Copley, 2002, p. 24), in that when making assertions, predictions, etc., about the future, speakers demonstrate their degree of commitment to the likely actualisation of their claim. (A small percentage of expressions of futurity are deontic, as will be seen in section 5.7.2.) Expressions of futurity are made from the actual, present world and these make reference to an irrealis or possible world, necessitating an expression of modality in order to create this shift (Stowell, p. 2012, p. 198). It is the contention of this research that discussing all futurity as modalised will streamline the approach to the structural choices available to L2 students, so that the modality content in all future forms such as the following is recognised:

- (a) He is to arrive tomorrow.
- (b) He is about to arrive.⁴⁶
- (c) He arrives tomorrow.
- (d) He is arriving tomorrow.
- (e) He is going to arrive tomorrow.
- (f) He will arrive tomorrow.
- (g) He will be arriving tomorrow.

Suffice to say at this stage that these statements differ according to the assumptions, beliefs, knowledge and reasoning of the speaker regarding one and the same eventuality.

As will also be seen, the statements all contain tense, aspect, and modal elements, as is typical of expressions of futurity (Dahl, 2000b, p. 310; Fleischman, 1982, p. 24, 153). The nature of these elements varies according to whether the utterance expresses temporal location, perfectivity, imperfectivity, “likelihood, characteristic behaviour, attenuation, indignation ... supposition or inference, lack of knowledge, wishes and desires, intention and volition, obligation and command” (Fleischman, 1982, p. 129), imperativeness, or prediction. For example, *John will buy the present* differs in modal content from *John will like the present* and *You will buy the present*. Likewise, these exhibit a higher modal than temporal content, the latter only being implied here. The same difference in content can be seen periphrastically in the intentional *I’m going to see a movie tomorrow* and the deontic tone of *You’re going to do as I say*.

As well as differing in the choices available to individual speakers of one language, it must also be remembered, as discussed in section 3.4, that the speaker’s epistemic warrant can vary in nature from culture to culture, e.g., whether the future is deemed to lie ‘in front of’ or ‘behind’ the speaker. For example, in Ancient Greece, the past was seen as known, therefore visible, and therefore ‘in front’ of the speaker, while conversely, the future was not yet knowable, therefore not yet visible, and therefore ‘behind’ the speaker. Hence the speaker’s mental orientation was towards the known and visible past (Moore, 2014, p. 134). Likewise, in

⁴⁶ The absence of a temporal adverbial here is discussed in Appendix B.

the Aymaran culture, knowledge (or the epistemic warrant) is based on vision, i.e., having witnessed the past, and is therefore 'in front'. Again, this may be an area of difference for a minority of ESL students, but it is a significant reminder of the concept of the epistemic warrant, of the possibly varying degrees of evidence required for a future statement from two speakers of a language, and of its fluidity between cultures. More broadly speaking, both teachers and students must be cognisant of the fact that for speakers of different L1s, there may not be a workable match or reference point between a particular L1 and the target language in terms of TA matters and conceptualisations of time. This can be more opaque where there appears to be a direct morphological counterpart in the L2, but in fact this is not the case (e.g., the imperfective in English and German), which results in the ESL student unconsciously representing an unintended perspective.

This concept of subjectivity within and between languages will be a further focus in the following section, which looks at how speakers position themselves when creating and responding to utterances expressing futurity.

4.5 Futurity and perspective

The concept of no fixed, universal perspective on language underscores the choices available to speakers within the one language, i.e., the fact that they have a range of forms from which to select in order to express their particular perspective. In the linguistics literature, perspective is often limited to the context of aspect, i.e., whether the speaker chooses a perfective or an imperfective viewpoint. But as seen in section 3.4, perspective influences choice of form from a range of other viewpoints, two among them being evidentiality and attitude. Certain languages insist on evidentials which disclose how the speaker received the information under discussion, e.g., whether the event was witnessed first-hand or reported by another. English does this in a non-morphological way through adverbials such as *apparently*, *reportedly*, or *seemingly*, or through its indication of the epistemic warrant required by a speaker in order to make a particular claim, e.g., *according to X*.

Yet this factor is often neglected in ESL instruction. It is strongly contended here that epistemology is a core part of communication in English, particularly in the expression of futurity; indeed, it is a fundamental part of the semantics of the TA system. The selection of

grammatical TA markers is triggered by semantic factors, and not merely by ‘objective’ temporal features (Brisard & Patard, 2011, p. 3). It is fundamental to the current argument that the ESL literature (in particular, student texts) has either ignored or significantly downplayed the influence of non-temporal factors in the function of TA forms, and that these factors are not extraneous, but rather, key to the expression of futurity.⁴⁷ Further, the perspectival overtones embodied in a particular form are an integral part of the sociopragmatic competence necessarily acquired by L2 students (Dewaele & Edwards, 2003, p. 233). The early explanation of this fact can contribute significantly to dispelling students’ confusion over the multiple means of referring to the same temporal location of a future eventuality. Learners need to absorb the fact that modality is tied to speakers’ perspectives on the propositional content of a speech event, e.g., in how assumptions, attitudes, beliefs, wishes, desires, suppositions, hopes or promises are cloaked in an utterance (Fleischman, 1982, p. 13).

One of these beyond-temporality elements is the speaker’s level of confidence in the actualisation of propositional content. This can be illustrated through the distinction available to English speakers between a predicted and an inevitable event, e.g., *It’ll rain this morning* and *It’s going to rain this morning*. The latter implies recognition of current evidence that rain will occur during the morning, implying a closer connection and commitment to this eventuality, as opposed to the subjectively-construed remoteness of the *will* form here.

A further example of this is the choice of temporal focus, which allows a speaker to relate an event to the past, present or future. As seen in section 3.4.5, this is possible through situating an event in the past (through the use of the Simple Past), as in *I saw that movie*, as opposed to creating a present focus (embodied in the Present Perfect), as in *I’ve seen that movie*. In other words, one can choose remoteness over recency (Botne, 2012, p. 546). In the expression of futurity, this choice of temporal focus involving the same eventuality can be illustrated as below. Example (a) indicates a current need for a stamp, whereas in (b), the speaker focuses on a future time prior to the posting of the envelope (Declerck, 2006, p. 546):

(a) I need a stamp for this envelope.

⁴⁷ On the other hand, as Brisard (2004, p. 34) notes, “we are still in need of an instrument to analyze the perspectival nature of grammatical markings of time, i.e., the fact that different tense forms may present distinct viewpoints on the same time interval”.

(b) I'll need a stamp for this envelope.

A similar shift in temporal focus is seen in the utterances below, referring to the 'prediction' of a current eventuality. In this situation, an approaching car is heard:

(a) That's Peter's car.

(b) That'll be Peter's car.

In (a), the speaker situates the arrival of the car in the present, due to a high degree of certainty that the car belongs to Peter, e.g., a sighting or a recognition of the sound of the car. In (b), the speaker shifts the focus to the future, conveying the idea that when he/she goes to the door, it will be obvious that the propositional content uttered at Speech Time has indeed actualised (Declerck, 2006, p. 546).

A further example of this pragmatic shift is in the domain of politeness, where the move from a present to a future temporal focus can serve to remove pressure from the interlocutor:

(a) I look forward to receiving your reply.

(b) I'll look forward to receiving your reply.

The relative remoteness of (b) removes the immediate expectation of a reply, placing it at a post-present stage, thereby pragmatically reducing any perceived pressure on the interlocutor to produce a response. This sense of remoteness vs proximity thus effects a shift in register, with the latter being considered more polite and formal in its minimalisation of pressure.

These types of usage must be part of ESL learners' sociopragmatic development. And given that these uses are a systematic and embedded aspect of English communication (Dewaele & Edwards, 2003, p. 249), they should not be dismissed as secondary or negligible quirks of language. Rather, they can play a crucial role in deploying or interpreting a speaker's perspective on or attitude towards an eventuality.

A final example is presented below, in the context of the closing stage of a job interview, when the applicant has just been advised that he/she will be contacted after a decision has been reached:

(a) When will I start?

(b) When would I start?

The use of (a) would most likely indicate an unattractive level of hubris, given its implication of *realis*, whereas (b) situates the possibility of success in a remote realm, thereby attenuating the level of expectation on the part of the speaker. Such a distinction can have a considerable influence on the outcomes of human communication and should be incorporated into language learning as a vital sociopragmatic component, so that students gain an understanding of how the TA system incorporates attitudinal categories (Nuyts, 2006, p. 17), as well as temporal location. As Fleischman (1982, pp. 20-21) notes, “all too often in attempts to reconcile time and tense the focus is exclusively on a sequence of events in real time, while the crucial role of speaker’s perspective is neglected”. In tune with this, Brisard (2004, p. 35) suggests that tense be seen not as a matter of time, but of temporality, i.e., ‘lived time’, so that the subjective nature of the human experience is not deemed secondary to an objective sense of time. Jaszczolt (2009, note 7, p. 99) echoes this by stating that speakers model a ‘represented event’ as opposed to an actual one, a view based on Langacker’s (2001, pp. 268-9) claim that what matters most in language is not the manner of the actual occurrence of an event, but the interpretation of this event, as created by the speaker’s perspective.

In this vein, even the ‘now’ of Speech Time is contestable, in the sense that each speaker brings to it a personal perspective or experience. There is no scientifically- or socially-unanimous agreement on what constitutes ‘now’, as seen in section 3.5. Speakers of English can implicitly assume a universally fixed frame of reference as regards this point (Chilton, 2013, p.248), but this does not exist. For example, one speaker may refer to ‘now’ as the exact moment of speech, i.e., a period of seconds, whereas another may be denoting a span of years, in the sense of ‘nowadays’, often mentioned in contrast to a bygone era. This is yet another case where subjectivity in communication must be acknowledged and context clues interrogated, with speaker perspective able to be accurately expressed and identified.

4.6 Conclusion

By way of introduction to chapter 4, some concluding comments will be made here, the main purpose of which is to look at the elements of the TA system so far discussed, and then to address any changes that need to be made, so that they are optimally suited to the task of analysing futurity forms, that being the core purpose of this research.

The following chapter will examine six means of expressing futurity in English:

- *be to + V*
- base verb (Simple Present)
- *be + V-ing*
- *be going to + V*
- *will + V*
- *will be + V-ing*

This will be conducted according to a set of ten criteria which have evolved from the elements discussed in the first three chapters. These are listed in the left-hand column in Table 4-1 below. However, in trialling this original set with the six selected futurity forms, it was found that some were immediately applicable and that others required revision, while others needed to be merged under a different element heading. Still further it was found that other elements were required which had not emerged during the process of analysing predominantly the past and present in chapter 3, namely: Schedulability and Pre-determinability, Agency (external or internal) and the requirement or otherwise of a Temporal Adverbial.

One of the elements identified in chapter 3 was Foregrounding vs Backgrounding, e.g., with the Simple Past and Past Continuous, or the Simple Past and Past Perfect respectively. However, attempts to apply these to futurity proved problematic, as each of these earlier examples entailed one temporal zone only, i.e., the past, whereas, as will be illustrated, futurity normally encompasses at least two temporal zones, i.e., present and future. For this reason, the element of Temporal Zones replaces Foregrounding vs Backgrounding, which is now rendered as primary and secondary temporal focus. The Reichenbachian approach to identifying these will still be employed.

Finally, with regard to perspective, it was decided that this was represented by multiple elements (e.g., aspect, modality, and agency). The revised set of elements is listed in the right-hand column in Table 4-1:

ORIGINAL ELEMENTS	REVISED ELEMENTS
Meaning/Use	Meaning/Use
Speech Time, Event Time & Reference Time	- Speech Time, Event Time & Reference Time - Temporal Zones (including primary and secondary focus)
Foregrounding or backgrounding	
Context	Context & Genre
Register	Register
Aspect (perfective vs imperfective)	Aspect (perfective vs imperfective)
Modality	Modality (epistemic or deontic)
Speaker perspective	Speaker perspective subsumed by elements above; no longer a separate element
Speaker knowledge	
Speaker attitude	
	Temporal Adverbials
	Schedulability or pre-determinability
	External or internal control
	Agency

Table 4-1 Original and revised elements for analysis

A significant part of the discussion will centre not only on the meaning/s and use/s of each form, but on what permits a present form - analytic or synthetic - to express futurity. As will be seen, this coercion does not bestow a separate meaning on the alternative temporal location, but rather, it triggers elements already embodied in the structure.

The revised elements as listed above will now be employed as criteria for differentiating between each of the nominated six forms. As has been seen in traditional, tripartite approaches to tense, a strictly morphological methodology is most certainly more orderly, especially given its ability to allocate tenses and times to discrete columns indicating past, present and future, with one form per column, and aspect often treated as an 'add-on'. But this is a flawed approach, as successful expression and comprehension depend on the selection of appropriate

structures, or on exclusion of inappropriate forms.⁴⁸ The following chapter looks at how even though a more multifaceted approach may initially appear to be ‘messy’, a methodology based on systemic principles can ultimately yield a more constructive, accurate, and effective approach, as befits the complexity of the task, in accordance with the level of the learner. As Hinkel (1992, p. 568) notes, “the teaching of English conceptual notions of time, its divisions, and the relationships between these divisions can underlie or even precede the teaching of the tense system and its morphological references”.

The ultimate outcome of chapter 5 will be a set of descriptors aimed at enabling learners and teachers to distinguish between the six nominated forms, so that each can be seen in isolation from the others, according to its individual profile, but also as part of an integrated TA system.

⁴⁸ Additionally, in the experience of this researcher, it is not uncommon for teachers to take a putatively benevolent approach to futurity in the TA system by simplifying it (e.g., “I just tell the students to use *will*”). Such short-term, erroneous measures can only contribute to ensuring that grammar remains what Widdowson (2003, p. 39) calls “a sort of shibboleth”.

Chapter 5: Futurity forms

5.1 Introduction

As explained in the closing remarks in chapter 4, the task here is to analyse six futurity forms according to ten elements which will serve as criteria in differentiating between them. The forms are listed below:

1. *be to* + V
2. Simple Present futurate (base form)
3. Present Progressive futurate (*be* + *-ing*)
4. *be going to* + V
5. *will* + V
6. *will be* + V-*ing*

It must be noted here that the review of ten ESL texts undertaken in chapter 2 focused on ten futurity forms (see criterion 4), the other four being:

7. *will have* + V-*ed*
8. *will have been* + V-*ing* + V
9. *be about to* + V
10. *be due to* + V

Will have + V-*ed* and *will have been* + V-*ing* (i.e., the Future Perfect and Future Perfect Progressive) were omitted firstly because of space limitations and secondly, due to the fact that there is no other futurity form which needs to be disambiguated from either of these, even though differentiating them from each other can be challenging for L2 learners. On the other hand, despite a relatively low frequency of occurrence, as seen in Table 5-1 below (CQP American English 2006; CQP British English 2006), *will be* + V-*ing* has been included, as there is a need to disambiguate it from *will* + V, the difference relating to more than just an aspectual matter of completion vs incompleteness and creating a significant difference in speaker-perspective matters.

FORM	OCCURRENCES
<i>will + V</i>	16,822
<i>will be + V-ing</i>	1,008

Table 5-1 Frequency of use of *will + V* and *will be + V-ing*

The third and fourth of these structures, *be about to + V* and *be due to + V*, were eliminated from further discussion, firstly owing to their infrequency of occurrence in the texts: two texts covered *be about to + V* and only one of the ten featured *be due to + V*. Additionally, it was felt that some of the issues raised with the latter form would already be addressed in the discussion of *be to + V*, which has a greater frequency of occurrence than *be about to + V* and *be due to + V*, according to the British National Corpus (British National Corpus (BYU-BNC), 2015), as seen below:

FORM	OCCURRENCES
<i>be to + v</i>	34,771
<i>be due to + V</i>	1,689
<i>be about to + V</i>	989

Table 5-2 Frequency of use of eliminated forms

The *be about to + V* structure also revealed an unexpected issue, in that further analysis here raised doubts as to whether it could be fact be considered an expression of futurity, despite conventionally being treated as such. Appendix B contains a brief discussion of how this conclusion was reached.

Turning now to the six forms to be analysed: the reviewed elements of the TA system, as finalized at the end of chapter 4, are repeated below (Table 5-3). As discussed, they will be used as criteria for creating an individual profile of each futurity form. For each structure, the ten criteria are invoked, but not necessarily in the same order, at similar length, or with a comparable level of significance. These will vary according to the demands of each form and the degree to which they have hitherto been explained in connection with other structures or elements. Additionally, the headings in each area indicate main topics, but each section may

include other subtopics requiring reference, depending on prior coverage or comparative relevance.

Meaning/Use
Temporality: - Temporal Focus Points - Primary Temporal Focus - Speech, Event & Reference Times
Modality
Context/Genre
Schedulability & Pre-determinability
Aspect
External or Internal Control
Agency
Register
Temporal adverbial

Table 5-3 Elements (criteria) for analysis

A brief overview of this chapter indicates that following the introduction, the first form, *be to* + V will be analysed, so as to establish the main approach while working with one of the less broad and complex structures. Next, the concept of futurities will be outlined (section 5.3), followed by a discussion of the two forms belonging to this category. Section 5.6 focuses on *be going to* + V, after which the two *will* structures (the most complex forms) are examined. On completion of the analysis of each structure, a table listing the ten criteria will be used to create a summary of each form, contributing to the ultimate aim here, i.e., to disambiguate each form and to dispel the claim that some forms are interchangeable. A conclusion bringing the most substantial themes together will close the chapter.

As per convention, grammatically incorrect utterances will be preceded by the ‘*’ symbol. But a further marking is required here to indicate utterances gauged as infelicitous in terms of aspect, context and pragmatics. For this purpose, the symbol ‘#’ will be utilised.

The first futurity structure to be considered here, *be to* + V, will now be discussed.

5.2 *be to* + V

5.2.1 Introduction

Be to + V is sometimes referred to as a quasi-auxiliary form (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 217), due to its non-conventional auxiliary structure, i.e., *am/is/are to* + V. It features commonly in statements such as news headlines:

Rory McIlroy and Caroline Wozniacki announce they are to be married (Murray, 2014).

On the one hand, it is commonly and accurately described in grammar texts as a less common future form (Leech & Svartvik, 1994, p. 78). But this can mask the fact that it features quite routinely in two particular contexts, i.e., news headlines and sports commentaries. This restricted range of styles and registers (Bergs, 2010, p. 218, 226) contributes to its reduced frequency of occurrence. There has also been a diachronic decline in its use, with frequency decreasing in the last three centuries (Declerck, 2010, p. 272), perhaps due to its perceived level of formality. The latter also explains its higher rate of occurrence in legal pronouncements, as illustrated in Table 5-5.

5.2.2 Agency and modality

During this same time period of the last 300 years or so, the use of *be to* + V in the first-person singular has also fallen (Nesselhauf, 2010, p. 178), as seen in the data (British National Corpus, 2015) below:

<i>BE TO</i> + V	OCCURRENCES
<i>am to</i> + V	252
<i>are to</i> + V	5,850
<i>is to</i> + V	28,669

Table 5-4 Frequency of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd person in *be to* + V

The form's underlying tone of officialdom or authority derives from its common use in the issuing of orders or prohibitions, as well as in the announcement of official or formal arrangements (Leech & Svartvik, 1994, p. 78; Quirk et al., 1973, p. 50). The latter of these can be seen in the following:

(a) British Prime Minister David Cameron is to resign Wednesday, paving the way for Home Secretary Theresa May to take the reins (Dewan & Isaac, 2016).

(b) Prime Minister David Cameron is to step down by October after the UK voted to leave the European Union (BBC News, 2016b).

These also convey the strong connotation that the necessary arrangements have been decided or organised by an external, authoritative agent (Declerck, 2006, p. 360) and that they arise from established, rule-based procedures. This is borne out by a comparison of data from the Corpus of US Supreme Court Opinions (n.d.), with a comparison of the formal *be to* + V with the more informal *be going to* + V:

FORM	OCCURRENCES
<i>be to</i> + V	38,481
<i>be going to</i> + V	589

Table 5-5 Frequency of *be to* + V and *be going to* + V in a formal context

In this research, an agent will be defined as an entity (animate, inanimate, or a force of nature/universal law) with the ability to schedule or pre-determine eventualities. In other words, an agent has control over actualisation (Copley, 2002, p. 57; 2009, p. 42), which also includes the power to change or cancel eventualities. As will be further discussed, the grammatical subject of a clause is not necessarily the agent. A distinction will be made between internal and external agency: with the former, the grammatical subject is typically the agent, while with external agency – as seen above with *be to* + V – the agent is commonly a figure of authority. It can also be a force of nature. So external agency usually denotes the lack of control by the speaker or the participants in the eventuality.

The *be to* + V form fits the definition of external agency in an unproblematic way, given its sense of authority and officialdom, as exemplified in (a) and (b) above. This still applies in relatively ‘unimposed’ cases such as that below, with perhaps an implication that the couple involved has delegated the necessary arrangements to external parties, or is conveying the sense that the plan has been sanctioned by the relevant authorities:

We are to be married soon (Quirk et al., 1973, p. 50).

This connotation of imposition is much stronger in orders or prohibitions, where it carries associations of compulsion:

(a) You are to be back by 10 o'clock (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973, p. 50).

(b) I have told him he is not to go near the family (Declerck, 2010, p. 278).

Given the use of *be to* + V to issue orders and convey authority, it stands to reason that agency must belong not only to a human, but to one capable of exerting control, as will be illustrated in section 5.2.4.

Owing to these undertones, *be to* + V embodies varying degrees of deontic modality (Jaszczolt, 2009, p. 54), given the externally imposed agency, as opposed to an internally volitional perspective. In this way, *be to* + V is distinctive from most other futurity forms in that the grammatical subject of the clause is commonly not the agent, i.e., the speaker is often conveying the strong imposition of an order by an external agent or – less strongly - announcing a 'contractual agreement' between two parties. The uses described above have been effectively incorporated under the one heading of 'necessity' by Declerck (2010, p. 272), with different uses entailing varying degrees of compulsion and external imposition.

5.2.3 Temporality and modality

This structure entails two possible temporal focus points, i.e., present and future. When the focus is on the present, as in the headline below (with this genre's customarily reduced verbal form), the speaker is announcing the recent agreement for this event to take place, the future time or actualisation (i.e., Event Time) of which is as yet secondary or unknown:

Colin Firth to star in Russian submarine disaster film Kursk (Child, 2016)

The introductory section of the accompanying article retains this focus on the present:

Oscar winner Colin Firth is reportedly to star in the submarine disaster movie Kursk for Far from the Madding Crowd's Thomas Vinterberg, Variety reports. Based on Robert Moore's 2002 book A Time to Die: The Untold Story of the Kursk Tragedy, the film is being produced by France's EuropaCorp (Child, 2016).

So in Reichenbachian terms, Speech Time and Reference Time are in the present, with Event Time in the future.

In cases such as *Colin Firth to star in Russian submarine disaster film Kursk* (Child, 2016) above, there is more emphasis on the present arrangement or agreement having been made, i.e., it does not carry the deontic force of compulsion illustrated above in *You are to be back by 10 o'clock* (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973, p. 50) or *I have told him he is not to go near the family* (Declerck, 2010, p. 278). This modal force sees a stronger emphasis on current enforcement, rather than future actualisation. The latter case occurs in headline statements such as:

Obama to announce supreme court [*sic*] nomination on Wednesday morning (Holpuch, 2016)

This headline carries no deontic force, but rather a focus on current, official arrangements for future actualisation, as further demonstrated in the first line of the accompanying article:

Barack Obama will announce his supreme court [*sic*] nominee on Wednesday morning, setting the stage for a showdown with the Republican-controlled Senate (Holpuch, 2016).

These two examples also highlight the fact that *be to + V* can be used with or without a time adverbial, which distinguishes it from forms such as the Simple Present or the Present Progressive, when these are used to express futurity.

The two temporal focus points are seen in the core use of *be to + V*, i.e., to convey the imminent future actualisation of a past arrangement, as outlined in a present announcement (Williams, 2002b, p. 133). As will be seen in subsequent sections, it is not uncommon for future forms to span past, present and future time.

As mentioned, another genre which features the structure is sports commentaries, e.g.:

Federer to serve for the match.

This type of utterance is usually made immediately prior to the actualisation of the event, as indicated by present conditions, e.g., Federer returning to the court or making movements which indicate an imminent serve. The proximity of such an event in sport is usually much closer – often seconds away - than that entailed in news headlines, where the eventuality may be hours, days or weeks away, or even longer, as dictated by situational conditions.

5.2.4 Schedulability and pre-determinability

A further important component of the meaning of *be to* + V, as seen in the news headlines and sports commentary examples above, is that the eventuality in question must be enforceable or predictable according to conventions or rules. Enforceability is invoked in two earlier examples, repeated here:

(a) You are to be back by 10 o'clock (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973, p. 50).

(b) I have told him he is not to go near the family (Declerck, 2010, p. 278).

The speaker in each case has invoked what is presumed to be an official authority that enables him/her to issue these commands. Regarding schedulability, the events mentioned in the headlines above all indicate current arrangements for future actualisation, e.g., the making of a movie or the announcement of Supreme Court appointments:

(a) Colin Firth to star in Russian submarine disaster film *Kursk* (Child, 2016).

(b) Obama to announce supreme court [*sic*] nomination on Wednesday morning
(Holpuch, 2016)

There is also a strong degree of pre-determinability here, in that following the decision to produce a movie, the announcement of the major actors involved is anticipated. Likewise with Supreme Court decisions: a vacancy and the subsequent speculation usually herald the announcement of a replacement nominee.

These three elements of enforceability, schedulability and pre-determinability are bound up in the rules or conventions of individual sports. In the earlier example, *Federer to serve for the match*, the commentator's utterance is based on a knowledge of tennis rules and a presumption that these will direct proceedings - in this case, the fact that when a certain score has been reached, the player ahead in the score serves, with the potential to win the match.

These three elements being mandatory, *be to* + V cannot be used to indicate unenforceable, unschedulable or unpre-determinable events. For example, the following utterances are infelicitous, as they cannot carry an entailment of deontic modality, strong or weak:

(a) # You are not to cry for the next 24 hours. [Addressing a baby]

(b) # The roof is to fall in!

(c) # It is to rain at 3:00.

As seen, *be to* + V denotes pre-determinability, particularly in an official or rule-based sense. Sentences (b) and (c) also underscore the fact that only human agents can exert this enforceability, plannability and predictability, which does not extend to forces of nature (e.g., rain) or beings whose behaviour is not always controllable (e.g., babies).

5.2.5 Aspect

Matters relating to aspect in this discussion of futurity centre on a choice between perfectivity and imperfectivity. Aspect in English was defined in section 3.7 as conveying whether an utterance depicts an event in time as completed (perfective), or as relating to another situation (imperfective) and viewed internally. In seeing an eventuality in its entirety, perfective aspect views it from an external perspective. This then means that the speaker or agent has no access to the type of control that allows for ‘tampering’ with the eventuality. In other words, actualisation is perceived as pre-ordained and uninteruptible. In contrast, imperfectivity, in connoting incompleteness, places the speaker ‘inside’ the eventuality, which then allows for interruptability or change.

On the face of it, *be to* + V appears to depict an eventuality in its entirety. But an aspectual test that will be applied to each of the six forms in this chapter involves casting the future eventuality into the past and gauging whether changeability is permissible (based on Copley, 2002, p. 54), as in (b) below. As noted by Williams (2002b, p. 97), “all continuous forms can be used to signal interruptedness”. So in terms of *be to* + V, this is demonstrated as follows:

(a) Mark is to go to Sydney.

(b) Mark was to go to Sydney, but he changed his mind.

As can be seen, there is nothing impermissible about (b). The contrast can be seen in the use of the Simple Present futurate:

(a) Mark goes to Sydney on Wednesday.

(b) # Mark went to Sydney on Wednesday, but he changed his mind.

So as can be seen, actualisation of *be to* + V is cancellable, whereas this is not possible in the Simple Present futurate.

With *be to + V*, this is particularly surprising – and semantically opaque - given the strong sense of authority and control embedded in the form. This then poses the question: from where does this sense of interruptability arise? The answer lies in the fact that although *be to + V* refers to a future eventuality, the focus is in fact on the present arrangements – or rules – which afford actualisation. As discussed in section 5.2.3, Reference Time is the present, which means that the main focus is on the currency of situations/rules which facilitate an authoritative approach.

So again, despite its connotations of unimpeachable authority, *be to + V*, due to its principal focus on present temporality, connotes imperfectivity – which means allowing for interruptability or changeability.

To summarise the use of the form *be to + V*:

FORM	<i>be to + V</i>	<i>The prime minister is to visit Brisbane today.</i>	
MEANING/USE	- Imminent actualisation of a future event indicated in present arrangement - Eventuality must be enforceable, plannable, or predictable according to conventions or rules. - Connotations of obligation or compulsion		
TEMPORALITY	TEMPORAL FOCUS POINTS: Present and Future		
	PRIMARY TEMPORAL FOCUS: Present or Future, depending on whether emphasis is on present arrangements or a future outcome		
	SPEECH TIME: Present	EVENT TIME: Future	REFERENCE TIME: Present
MODALITY	Either strong deontic modality (in the issuing of orders or prohibitions) or weaker with the perception of ‘contractual agreement’ (in the announcement of official or formal arrangements)		
CONTEXT/GENRE	Official; Remote; Commentating, especially in sporting contexts; News headlines		
ASPECT	Imperfective		
SCHEDULABILITY & PRE-DETERMINABILITY	Must be schedulable and pre-determinable		
EXTERNAL OR INTERNAL CONTROL	External		
AGENCY	Animate (human only; one capable of exerting authority)		
REGISTER	Formal, official		
TEMPORAL ADVERBIALS	Optional (general futurity can be conveyed); Imminence is implied.		

Table 5-6 Features of *be to + V*

5.3 Futurates

The two forms to be discussed here are the futurity uses of the Simple Present (referred to in chapter 2 as ‘Base Verb’) and the Present Progressive (previously *be –ing*), both nowadays commonly referred to in the literature as ‘futurates’⁴⁹ (Binnick, 1991; Copley, 2009; De Wit & Brisard, 2014; Moens & Steedman, 1988; Salkie, 2010; Smith, 1997), i.e., present forms used to

⁴⁹ Futurates are also referred to as ‘futurish’ forms by Declerck (2006, p. 163), who similarly defines these as combining “some sort of reference to the present with the location of a situation time in the post-present zone”, with a lesser focus on the future than on the present.

indicate futurity.⁵⁰ Broadly speaking, both futurates convey the existence of a plan, schedule or arrangement for a future eventuality (Copley, 2009, p. 15). Importantly therefore, they are not considered as “pure future” (Declerck, 2006, p. 337), which has both primary and secondary temporary focus located in the future. In other words, in Reichenbachian terms, only pure futures have both Reference Time and Event Time in the future.

Due to their core present semantic basis and their lack of overt futurity marking, it is not surprising that futurates are most typically used in conjunction with a temporal adverbial (Declerck, 2006, p. 185; Salkie, 2010, pp. 189-190). This is in fact mandatory, unless futurity is already implied by the context, in order to disambiguate these utterances from their present-time use:

UTTERANCE	MANDATORY ADVERBIAL	MEANING
(a) We're watching a movie.	X	Present Progressive denoting current activity
(b) We're watching a movie tonight.	✓	Present Progressive futurate denoting a future arrangement
(c) We go skiing.	X	Simple Present denoting a current habitual behaviour
(d) We go skiing next week.	✓	Simple Present futurate denoting a future scheduled plan

Table 5-7 Present forms vs futurate forms

A closer look at (a) and (c) shows that as present forms, these two structures focus on one temporal zone only, i.e., the present. In (a), this is the immediate present, while in (c) it is the extended present. Regardless though, each sees the eventuality overlapping with the present moment.

For both futurate forms, as seen in (b) and (d) above, two temporal zones are invoked, i.e., the present and the future (leading Huddleston and Pullum (2002, p. 133) to coin the label, “future in the present”). These can be seen respectively as a preliminary stage or current vantage point (the present), and as future actuality (Salkie, 2010, p. 190; Smith, 1997, p. 189),

⁵⁰ This raises the question as to whether *be to* + V should be considered a futurate, as it uses what appears to be a present form to indicate futurity. But given its atypical auxiliary structure (*to be*), plus the important fact that it does not include a present Event Time, there is not a strong argument for this.

the nature of which is expressed by the lexical verb. However, given the present-tense origins of futurate forms, the main temporal focus is on the present. In Reichenbachian terms then, Event Time, as indicated by the temporal adverbial, is in the future, but Speech Time and Reference Time are both in the present, the latter focusing on the current licence to make a statement about the future. So in the sentence, *We go skiing next week*, Event Time is next week, but Speech Time and Reference Time are in the present, which is when the grounds for making this statement are evaluated, e.g., through knowledge of booking arrangements. The speaker is concerned less with whether this plan comes into being than with the grounds on which the statement has been licenced (Smith, 1997, p. 190), which affords considerable epistemic force for the assertion. In short, then, the meaning conveyed by the futurates is that there exists a current plan which is the speaker's main focus. The difference between the ways in which these two forms achieve this is the focus of the next two sections.

In general, the fact that a futurity statement can be made on the grounds of a present plan or schedule grants to the speaker a strong epistemic warrant regarding actualisation. As Copley (2014, p. 82) notes, futurates embody a presupposition that an event is able to be arranged. Hence, this warrant is strengthened by the knowledge that an arrangement for the future has been made in the past and is now being anticipated in the present (Jaszczolt, 2009, p. 140), where some kind of evidence is at least implicitly invoked. In this sense, futurates treat a future eventuality as though it were a present one (De Wit & Brisard, 2014, p. 73; Declerck, 2006, pp. 181, 182; Jaszczolt, 2009, p. 140), due to its strong focus on current arrangements. The nature of this evidence, mainly in terms of locus of agency, is a distinguishing factor between the two futurates, as is the nature of the agent, i.e., whether it is human, non-human or a force of nature.

Again, the fact that both futurates entail a prior arrangement or schedule contrasts them with the less-restricted *will* + V form, or 'pure future'. In this vein, it is not possible to speak of unschedulable or un-pre-determinable actualisations such as *Mary feels happy on Tuesday* or *John triumphs tomorrow*.

Finally, when considering these two futurates, it is important to consider aspect, which will be further discussed anon. Briefly, the Simple Present futurate denotes a sense of

completion, in the sense that no change is permissible, whereas the Present Progressive futurate conveys the possibility of interruption or change (Williams, 2002a, p. 1236). As seen previously with *be* to + V, this can again be tested when future plans are backshifted into past reported (indirect) speech:

- When does Steve leave?
- (a) John said that Steve was leaving tomorrow.
- (b) # John said that Steve left tomorrow.

The Present Progressive, when converted into past reported speech in (a), allows for changeability. For example, it would be possible to say, *John said that Steve was leaving tomorrow, but he might change his mind*. But in (b), there is no such allowance. This in turn contributes to the stronger sense of epistemic force ascribed to the Simple Present futurate, regarded as one of the strongest and most irrefutable expressions of futurity.

The contrasts indicated above should not be taken as indicating a difference in core meaning, however, between these two forms. They both embody pre-arrangement and schedulability, which is then conceptualised in varying ways, according to elements such as agency and aspect - a process referred to by Chilton (2013, p. 238) as ‘perspectivising’, meaning that speakers can manipulate the core meaning underlying these present tense structures in order to present their perspective on an eventuality.

Further such discussion continues below, where the Simple Present futurate will be analysed.

5.4 Simple Present futurate

5.4.1 Introduction

It has been argued in this research that all temporality in language is modal (Jaszczolt, 2009, p. 2), with past, present and future entailing varying degrees of certainty. But of these three temporal zones, the present has an elevated status in English, given its connotations of certainty in terms of direct validity and evidentiality (Brisard, 2001, p. 283). In short, “languages generally combine the indication of time location relative to ‘now’ with modal representation of degrees of certainty” (Chilton, 2013, p. 240). It is non-controversial to state that the future is

seen with less confidence regarding actualisation than are the past or present: indeed this may at least partially explain the diachronic development of a range of forms beyond the Simple Present futurate and *will* + V, to express the possible permutations and combinations of speaker perspective regarding futurity.

Again, the choice of an expression of futurity goes beyond merely temporal factors to entail modal elements, e.g., the strength of the assertion made, the level of evidence available, and the degree of speaker commitment to the actualisation of an eventuality (Jaszczolt, 2014, pp. 12-14). This modal component in all futurity must be stressed to ESL students, given that modality - as traditionally depicted via modal auxiliaries and adverbials, such as *perhaps*, *definitely* and *possibly* - is not overtly indicated by futurate structures and is not commonly indicated in ESL texts on futurity where non-modal-auxiliary verb forms are concerned.

5.4.2 Agency, modality and meaning

In the sense of external control, the Simple Present futurate is regarded as having the strongest epistemic warrant of futurity expressions, on a par with that usually accorded to past and present eventualities. This element of certainty is key to the Simple Present futurate. It is seen most simply in utterances regarding calendric matters (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973, p. 49), which are pre-determined and non-negotiable, e.g., *Tomorrow is Monday, 18 July*. The speaker here declares this not from a perspective of prediction, but as a matter of accepted truth, due to the fact that responsibility for actualisation is not determined by an individual human agent and hence is not perceived as subject to change. Rather, actualisation here is in the hands of non-human agency and unfolds according to laws of nature - the most external and authoritative of all forms of agency. The same perception of non-changeability is seen in timetabled events or schedules. Leech and Svartvik (1994, p. 78) illustrate this effectively in their contrast of the Simple Present futurate with the use of *will* + V:

(a) When do we get there? (e.g., according to the timetable)

(b) When will we get there? (e.g., if we travel by car)

In (a), the sense of external agency, and therefore the lack of control over actualisation by a particular individual, such as the speaker, lends a perception of the eventuality's being beyond regulation by participants and therefore unalterable. But in (b), the *will* + V future implies a

degree of personal control by the speaker. As such, the agent in the Simple Present futurate is frequently not the grammatical subject of an utterance. There is an implicit belief on the part of the speaker that an authoritative entity, or even a set of irreversible circumstances, has pre-determined the eventuality (Declerck, 2006, pp. 185-186) and that the speaker can have no influence over actualisation. Further examples of this can be seen in statements such as the following, which though directed by human forces, are perceived with a sense of personal detachment:

(a) The semester ends on 22 June.

(b) The movie starts at 2:10.

(c) The plane leaves at 10:00.

This also explains why the Simple Present futurate, although used in general discourse, is preferred in more formal contexts in lieu of Present Progressive Futurate, to denote objectivity and formality.

In a similarly official vein, Declerck (2006, p. 183) illustrates the authoritative role of the Simple Present futurate below, where it is used with inanimate agents, in contrast to the perception of animate agents expressed via *will* + V. Here, the gallery (i.e., its staff) and the artist are viewed as animate agents, as opposed to the 'show', which is seen as inanimate and official, when coupled with the Simple Present futurate:

[During the summer 2003 the gallery will host an exhibition of pen and ink drawings by New York artist Elisabeth Condon.] The show *opens* on Friday, June 20th at 6:30 p.m. [The artist will give a slide show and lecture at 7:30 p.m.]

This example also highlights an essential element of the Simple Present futurate, i.e., that the event must be schedulable and pre-determinable. A very significant point of difference here with other expressions of futurity is that when the Simple Present futurate is used, there is a presupposition that a plan or schedule known to both speaker and hearer is already in existence: i.e., that the speaker is alluding to this plan, along with a belief that it will be actualized (Copley, 2002, p. 43; 2009, p. 35).

While the Present Progressive futurate and *be to* + V also denote arrangements, they do not entail this presupposition. This means that a distinguishing feature of the Simple Present

futurate is that this form cannot be used to announce a plan anew. To take the context of elections as an example:

- (a) Voters will go to the polls in July.
- (b) Voters are to go to the polls in July.
- (c) # Voters go to the polls in July.

When an election plan is first announced, (a) or (b) would typically be used, as the propositional content is new. However, only when this information has achieved the status of an already-existing plan known to interlocutors, can further details such as the timing then be expressed using the Simple Present futurate, as in (c), which is contextually limited because of this presupposition. Here, the plan is necessarily presupposed, due to its pre-existence, while the temporal location is now being asserted. So there is now a commitment to the plan, its actualisation, and to the newly announced time (Copley, 2009, p. 42). Without this commitment to actualisation, use of the Simple Present futurate is precluded.

To return to the types of agency entities deemed to be in control of these presupposed plans: Simple Present futurate agents can be either animate or inanimate - e.g., *We leave at 8:00* or *The bus leaves at 8:00* respectively - or lawlike forces of nature, as previously illustrated. For example, one can say, *The sun rises at 5:28 tomorrow*, but not # *It rains at 5:28 tomorrow*. This is because unlike in *The sun rises at 5:28 tomorrow*, the latter is not pre-determinable (Comrie, 1989, p. 56; de Saussure, 2013, p. 57; Declerck, 2006, p. 182; Smith, 1997, p. 190). The rising of the sun can be pre-determined by the laws of the universe, but such laws do not apply to the falling of rain.

This concept of pre-determinability also applies to animate and inanimate entities, with the former illustrated below:

- (a) Federer plays Nadal tomorrow.
- (b) # Federer beats Nadal tomorrow.

Sentence (a) announces a scheduled game, but in the normal run of events, (b) is not pre-determinable, unless match-fixing is being openly acknowledged. Hence the Simple Present carries a strong presupposition that an event can be and has been pre-determined. In turn, the

Simple Present futurate presupposes that a plan already exists before Speech Time and actualisation time; it simply contributes a time of occurrence (Copley, 2002, p. 43).

As has been seen, the elements of external agency and the certainty conveyed by this form in its present usage licence the strong epistemic force imbued in the Simple Present futurate. It has been suggested that this also entails a deontic modality (de Saussure, 2013, p. 57), in the sense that the presupposed plan has consequences for subsequent actions or conditions for the present, i.e., prior to the actualisation of the eventuality. The epistemic element of inevitability carries a commitment to actualisation and a deontic sense that preparations of some kind should therefore be made (de Saussure, 2013, p. 57). An example can be seen with the utterance, *The plane leaves at 5:00am*. This could imply the need to rise early or to pack luggage the previous day. It could also anticipate the fatigue to result from rising early, necessitating an early night; or the fact that as traffic will not be a problem, the drive to the airport will be shorter. A similar scenario can be attached to statements such as *The sun sets at 5:10pm*, which might necessitate the taking of outdoor photographs earlier than desired or the provision of external lighting. Again, both epistemic and deontic modality are entailed. But this factor is perhaps non-essential to the purposes of ESL learners in acquiring this futurity structure.

5.4.3 Temporal adverbials

In terms of adding a time of actualisation, a temporal adverbial is mandatory with the Simple Present futurate, where it is far more necessary than with non-futurate forms, for the purposes of disambiguation from the present. To illustrate:

- (a) Elizabeth Taylor gets married!
- (b) Elizabeth Taylor gets married.
- (c) Elizabeth Taylor gets married on Saturday.

Sentence (a) exemplifies the news-headline genre, announcing a recent event with a sense of excitement and immediacy. In (b), the Simple Present futurate implies habituality, conveying the view that Elizabeth Taylor gets married with a degree of regularity. The addition of a future time adverbial in (c), a more formal or media-based announcement, constitutes a Simple

Present futurate connoting a past, already-announced arrangement for a future eventuality, with the time of actualisation being revealed here.

The presupposition of a pre-existing plan also underlies the use of the Simple Present in commentating utterances (as discussed in section 3.4). A commentator describing a current cooking demonstration or official function, for example, can anticipate every step of the eventuality due to prior knowledge, i.e., a familiarity with proceedings (Brisard, 2013, p. 225). In that sense, the speaker is in control of events, due to their predetermined nature. All that remains is the timing of the next stage in the sequence.

5.4.4 Aspect

The Simple Present futurate embodies the sense of an objective evaluation of a future, externally-controlled eventuality, based on a detached sense of certainty (De Wit & Brisard, 2014, p. 84) and a strong degree of commitment to the truth of the proposition. An integral part of the sense of certainty embodied in the Simple Present futurate springs from its perfective aspect, in contrast to imperfectivity, which tends to imply a susceptibility to change (Williams, 2002a, p. 1235) or interruption.

This strong sense of modality implicit in the Simple Present futurate is licenced by its sense of ‘immediate givenness’ or ‘immediate reality’ (Brisard, 2002, p. 263; Brisard, 2013, p. 216), which allows it to ground statements about futurity in the present. The level of certainty arising from its use is attributable to two components. Something is seen as present firstly, if speakers perceive or experience it directly and therefore recognise it as wholly given; or secondly, if what speakers perceive matches with their knowledge of the world (Brisard, 2002, p. 264, 265; Copley, 2014, p. 76, 77). In other words, this sense of immediate certainty can be attained due to a situation’s being directly present in the temporal sense, or to being ‘virtually’ present but outside of time, due to being accepted as a structural part of world knowledge (Brisard, 2002, p. 265) and implying a generic truth (Copley, 2002, p.70; 2009, p. 70). In neither sense is it contingent on circumstances or contextual factors: it is a given reality, immediate in either of these two senses, or in what Brisard (2013, p. 227) refers to as a structural necessity. Its temporal proximity underlies the “unmediated” (Brisard, 2002, p. 268) nature of information couched in the Simple Present. As such:

[t]he virtual plane evoked may contain representations of events which the speaker expects will happen, knows to have happened, or otherwise has some form of epistemic control over. To the speaker, in other words, these events are necessarily part of reality, and at any time she can choose to evoke them as if they were the case at that moment (Brisard, 2013, p.226-227).

It stands to reason then, that anything in the here-and-now, i.e., the spatially or temporally proximal, will be perceived as more real to the speaker (Chilton, 2013, p. 241). This factor lends an immediate reality to propositions couched in either futurate form (i.e., the Simple Present or Present Progressive), a sense that is not available with *will* future forms, which, as will be shown, have the future as their primary temporal focus. By contrast, the primary focus of the Simple Present futurate is the present, with Speech Time and Reference Time in the present and Event Time in the future. To evaluate the propositional truth of an utterance in the Simple Present futurate, speakers do not focus on the future adverbial in order to ascertain the truth of an eventuality: rather, they evaluate the present evidence, which affords them the necessary epistemic warrant (Lin, 2012, p. 689; Smith, 1997, p. 190).

Earlier allusion has been made here to the fact that this strong component of immediate reality precludes mention of the unexpected in the Simple Present. One of the nearest provinces of the surprising or unexpected is the Present Progressive futurate, which will be illustrated in section 5.5. Suffice to say here that the Simple Present cannot express experiences that have not been anticipated in reality (Brisard, 2002, p. 265), as they carry a presupposition that a plan or arrangement is already in place – thus effecting immediate reality. As such, it would be infelicitous to say the following:

(a) # Guess what? We get married!

(b) # Guess what? We get married in June.

But the equivalent utterance using the Present Progressive futurate would be entirely permissible: *Guess what? We're getting married* or *Guess what? We're getting married in June*. By contrast, *As you know, we're engaged. Things are so busy: we get married in June and then move to Thailand July* is entirely felicitous, as the interlocutor is already aware that the impending wedding is to take place.

This key factor of pre-accepted reality can be attributed in part to the exclusively perfective nature of the Simple Present (Brisard, 2013, p. 234). An eventuality expressed in the Simple Present is anticipated in the present in its entirety and, given the use of the Simple Present to express generic truths, it denotes a high level of certitude (Chilton, 2013, p.249, 250). There is no sense here of the dynamism or changeability attached to imperfective aspect, the absence of which in the Simple Present futurate lends a strong sense of stability to the anticipated eventuality. This stability indicates the perception of non-susceptibility to change that is an integral part of this form.

5.4.5 Conclusion

In short then, the elements of perfective aspect and external agency produce the certainty and unalterability conveyed by the Simple Present futurate, creating the strong level of modality embodied in this structure. The attributes of the Simple Present futurate, as discussed in this section, are presented in the table below:

FORM	Simple Present futurate		<i>The train leaves at 10:00am.</i>	
MEANING/USE	Objective evaluation of a future, externally controlled eventuality, based on a detached sense of certainty and a strong degree of commitment to the truth of the proposition. Strong sense of immediate reality. Presupposition of a pre-existing plan or lawlike natural occurrence; Plan is presupposed and time of actualisation is asserted.			
TEMPORALITY	TEMPORAL FOCUS POINTS: Present and Future			
	PRIMARY TIME FOCUS: Present			
	SPEECH TIME: Present		EVENT TIME: Future	REFERENCE TIME: Present
MODALITY	Strong epistemic modality (plus secondary deontic modality, implying action to be taken)			
CONTEXT/GENRE	General (but often adopted to indicate formality)			
ASPECT	Perfective			
SCHEDULABILITY & PRE-DETERMINABILITY	Must be schedulable and pre-determinable.			
EXTERNAL OR INTERNAL CONTROL	External control or perception thereof			
AGENCY	All types: Animate, inanimate or force of nature)			
REGISTER	General; Also used in more formal contexts in lieu of Present Progressive Futurate, to denote objectivity/externality			
TEMPORAL ADVERBIALS	Obligatory (if not contextually available or implied)			

Table 5-8 Features of the Simple Present futurate

5.5 Present Progressive futurate

5.5.1 Introduction

At some stage early in their ESL learning experience, L2 students are taught that the *-ing* form in English denotes the progressive, i.e., a situation in progress. This entails the concept of an action in progress, a type of zooming in (Langacker, 2001, p. 259) on a situation, the initial and final boundaries of which are unseen. This inner portion is rendered as a homogenized snapshot of the broader eventuality (Brisard, 2013, p.220); in other words, it is a 'stative' slice of an action in progress.

However, when students are at some stage introduced to the Present Progressive futurate, confusion can ensue, as at the immediate level, there is nothing obviously progressive

about the use of this form. Diachronically, the progressive aspect has advanced beyond its roots and ultimately conveys far more than its aspectual origins (Bybee et al., 1994, p. 135; Smith & Leech, 2013, p. 90). With the Present Progressive futurate, the typical sense of progression does not hold, but as will be seen here, it remains aspectually imperfective.

Generally speaking, in the TA literature, discussion of the progressive in English centres on aspect, conceptualised as the internal temporality of an eventuality (Levin, 2013, p. 187). However, the case of the Present Progressive futurate demands a ‘resetting’ of the nature of this internal perspective, so that essential features of its meaning can be captured. Similar to the Simple Present futurate, it strongly embodies the sense of a pre-existing plan or arrangement for the future. Likewise, it contains two temporal focus points, with the present being the primary and the future the secondary focus. So while Event Time is in the future, both Speech Time and Reference Time are in the present. Additionally, both futurates evoke issues of commitment and control, but as will be seen, the nature of each of these varies in the Present Progressive futurate. The essential core of this difference is the factor referred to earlier as “susceptibility to change” (Williams, 2002a, p. 1235).

5.5.2 Temporal adverbials

In common with the Simple Present futurate, the Present Progressive futurate typically requires a future temporal adverbial (Bergs, 2010, p. 224), given its lack of future morphology marking and hence possible temporal ambiguity. As with other forms though, temporal location can at times be gleaned from the context. This is seen in the following, an utterance commonly made before Christmas: *I’m spending Christmas with my family*. As Christmas falls on a commonly known date, the listener assumes that this arrangement refers to the coming Christmas. But if an equivalent proposition is expressed in the Simple Present futurate without an adverbial, then habituality is implied: *I spend Christmas with my family*.

Equally implied futurity can be seen in the following announcements, but with differing degrees of specificity:

(a) We’re getting married!

(b) Ten signs you are marrying the wrong person (Radwan, 2006-2015)

In (a), unless the couple is commentating during their wedding, the listener infers that this announcement conveys an agreement between the two parties for this event to take place at some time in the future. In (b), barring the possibility that a wedding guest is attempting to impart advice during the ceremony, this utterance is assumed to be referring to a future arrangement which may appear ill-advised and which is the topic of current concern. So, the primary temporal focus is on the present, with a future temporal location as yet unavailable, but implied.

5.5.3 Agency and modality

Broadly speaking, like the Simple Present futurate, the Present Progressive futurate refers to a future eventuality which has been planned in the past and is anticipated from a current perspective (De Wit & Brisard, 2014, p. 74; Declerck, 2006, p. 183; Leech & Svartvik, 1994, p. 77; Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973, p. 48; Quirk et al., 1985, p. 215; Wada, 2013, p. 405). For example:

- (a) We're staying at a farm this weekend.
- (b) They're taking the students to the museum today.
- (c) I'm moving interstate to start a new job.

But as distinct from the Simple Present futurate, whose emphasis is on an externally authoritative agent with responsibility and agency for actualisation, the semantic essence of this form is "contingency in reality" (De Wit & Bisard, 2014, p. 53, 86). This sense of current reality in the speaker's perspective is due to an implicit sense of direct control over actualisation, as typically, the speaker was involved in making the arrangement which is expressed, meaning that she/he therefore has agency (Declerck, 2006, p. 183). So whereas the Simple Present futurate denotes certainty and unalterability, the Present Progressive futurate expresses a lesser degree of epistemic force, despite the fact that the involvement of a second party lends an air of relative certainty. This contrast is seen in the following, in the scheduled – and therefore unalterable - nature of (a) and the personal - hence alterable - arrangement conveyed in (b):

- (a) The plane leaves at 12:00.
- (b) We're leaving at 12:00.

Not only does the proposition in (a) connote unalterability, but the eventuality will also actualize regardless of the actions of the non-agentive speaker, i.e., the plane will leave with or without the speaker, who cannot alter the schedule. In (b), however, the speaker can choose to either adhere to or alter the plan, usually in conjunction with the person/s with whom the arrangement has been made.

This element of internal control over changeability also dictates that the agent must be human. To say *The sun is rising at 5:28* implies that the speaker was involved in the arrangements, which is, of course, not possible. Non-human but animate beings can also be depicted as agents, but human agency is implied e.g., *The moose is having an operation tomorrow*. In such cases, it is assumed that the necessary arrangements on behalf of the moose have been made by a human agent, so as to enable actualisation.

The above factor regarding a second party to the arrangement is often highlighted in ESL grammar texts, but generally ignored or underemphasized in the linguistics literature (e.g., in Binnick, 1991; Copley, 2002; Copley, 2009; and Declerck, 2006). A key component of the Present Progressive futurate is connection with a second party by the agent. So most significantly, the arrangement is not made in isolation. In (a) below, an interlocutor would more strongly infer a prior arrangement with a second party, e.g., with an airline or a family member, than in (b), which implies a personal intention that does not (yet) involve a second party:

(a) I'm having Christmas in Melbourne.

(b) I'm going to have Christmas in Melbourne.

This matter will be discussed in further depth in section 5.6 (*be going to* + V), where it will be seen that this distinction is crucial. The fact that in Present Progressive futurate forms, an arrangement is already underway entails a greater certainty of actualisation than the *be going to* + V form, as the latter is more subject to change on a whim, given that matters involving a second party do not need to be considered.

This sense of personal control over actualisation must be addressed not only from an angle of alterability, but also from one of ability to implement the plan (Copley, 2002, p. 41). In this sense, a commercial flight passenger is more likely to say (a) than (b), whereas the owner of a private jet is entitled to utter (b):

- (a) The plane leaves at 12:00.
- (b) The plane is leaving at 12:00.

A different lack of power to plan or control actualisation can be seen in the contrast below:

- (a) Federer is playing Nadal tonight.
- (b) # Federer is losing to Nadal tonight.

Utterance (a) merely indicates an arrangement between the necessary parties for Federer to play a match against Nadal tonight, while match-fixing notwithstanding, (b) expresses the outcome of an arrangement which cannot be planned or controlled, i.e., the speaker has no power to implement the plan (Copley, 2009, p. 15; de Saussure, 2013, p. 57). As previously noted, futurates entail a past plan for a future eventuality which is anticipated in the present. (For the same reason, it is not possible to say, *It is raining at 3:00*, as such an eventuality cannot be scheduled or controlled.) In contrast, the following prediction is perfectly felicitous: *Federer will lose to Nadal tonight*. This is due to the fact that *will* + V futurity uses do not always demand a past plan.

A point regarding register is also frequently overlooked in the literature regarding this issue of speaker responsibility and power to implement. There are occasions such as in (a) above, *Federer is playing Nadal tonight*, in which the speaker has no control, responsibility or power to implement. Rather, the speaker is conveying an arrangement in an informal, more conversational manner. Following a tennis match outcome, a media outlet would typically announce the same plan as *Federer will play Nadal tonight*, which would sound overly formal in everyday conversation. The Present Progressive future allows the speaker to convey an arrangement in a less official and more conversational tone. Hence the common error made by ESL students – e.g., *I will meet my friend tonight*, in lieu of *I'm meeting my friend tonight* – can carry an overly momentous tone.

On the subject of agency, it was explained in section 5.2.4 that the grammatical subject of an utterance is not necessarily the agent of the plan or arrangement. This is typically the case when an external source of authority is in control:

- (a) I have a job interview at 11:00 on Thursday.

(b) I have a flight at 10:00 tomorrow.

Hence in these examples, the prospective employer and the airline company respectively (rather than the grammatical subject, *I*) are the agents, as they are perceived as having a greater ability to actualize, cancel or alter this arrangement, and the commitment to do so. This situation is unsurprising in the use of the Simple Present futurate, given that it typically features agency external to the speaker.

Use of the Present Progressive futurate, however, typically assigns agency to the grammatical subject of an utterance, due to its internal locus of control, e.g.:

(a) I'm meeting Sally on Monday.

(b) He's going to Japan next year.

But agency is not always attributable to the grammatical subject, as seen below (Watterson, 1992, p. 40):



In the final embedded clause in panel 1, *you're going out tonight*, Calvin is addressing his mother, who is both the grammatical subject of the embedded clause and the agent of the plan. However, in the embedded clause of the final sentence in panel 2, *I'm staying at home*, Calvin is the clausal subject, but rather than having agency, he is the 'victim' of others' plans. In other words, he is expressing the agent's plan as an arrangement that has been imposed on him. So in this sense, he has no power to halt its implementation. This would seem to suggest the possibility of his saying, *I stay home tonight*, so that external authority is conveyed. But this is not possible, the reason for which was discussed in section 5.4.3, which explains that the Simple Present does not allow for surprising or sudden revelations of information unknown by

both the speaker and the interlocutor. Suffice to say here that Calvin certainly considers his situation as aberrant and not in keeping with the way in which the universe should unfold.

This issue of predictability springs from the present-time use of the Present Progressive and Simple Present, most readily observable in the genre of commentary. Section 5.4.3 stated that as the Simple Present entails the presupposition of a pre-existing plan, it cannot express unexpected occurrences. As such, were an unforeseeable event to occur during an eventuality, the commentator would typically change to the Present Progressive form. For example:

(a) One of the fans is running across the pitch and four policemen are chasing him.

(b) # One of the fans runs across the pitch and four policemen chase him.

(adapted from Williams, 2002a, p. 1243)

(c) [P]erhaps even more significantly though, England are putting in young Willy Johnson to bowl the ball towards the Australian batsman (Cricket Commentary, 2015).

(d) In comes Sachin Tendulkar to launch the Indian attack. (Live cricket commentary, 2013).

In (a), the use of the Present Progressive represents the unexpected nature of this occurrence. To frame it in the Simple Present, as in (b), would imply that the eventuality was foreseen as a normal part of the game procedures. In (c), the advent of Johnson was not anticipated with any sense of certainty, but in (d) the next player was either expected or already announced. In this sense, the proposition in (d) is pre-determined, meaning that the speaker retains a sense of control over commenting the proceedings, as they are unfolding as per the rules or as already anticipated.

So, in both present and futurate uses of the Simple Present, eventualities must be both schedulable and predeterminable. But both present and futurate uses of the Present Progressive feature only schedulability.

To return to the topic of predeterminability and the inability of the Simple Present futurate to convey unanticipated eventualities: this sense of a presupposed plan is core to that form. So in the mention of an eventuality about which the interlocutor was previously unaware, only temporality can be newly asserted in the utterance; it must be possible for the plan itself to be presupposed (Copley, 2002, p. 43).

A means of illustrating this further is to use interrogative forms and then to create hypothetical responses to them:

(a) - Does Mary move to Darwin next year?

- No, that's next month.

(b) - Is Mary moving to Darwin next year?

- No, she's moving to Cairns.

The Present Progressive futurate question in (b) interrogates the content of the planning proposition itself rather than just its timing, while the Simple Present futurate in (a), which includes the pre-supposition that there already exists a plan to move, the speaker only wishes to confirm the temporal location of actualisation.

This was seen in section 5.4.3 from another perspective, as below (Copley, 2002, p. 43; 2009, pp. 35-36):

(a) Guess what? We're getting married in June.

(b) # Guess what? We get married in June.

As both the content and the timing of the plan in (b) are new, this utterance is infelicitous, as knowledge of the content of the proposition is not shared by both parties. So again, this is why the Simple Present itself cannot be used to communicate unanticipated propositions. On the other hand, this sense of novelty, dynamism and changeability are central to the Present Progressive futurate.

5.5.4 Aspect

Along with agency, another basis for the principal distinction in meaning between the two futurates can be traced to aspect. The Simple Present futurate springs from a perfective source, specifically the generic (Copley, 2002, p. 58, 70) or single-entity use. This embodies an event in its entirety, bounded at both ends, with a strong degree of certainty typically attached to its observed repetitive occurrence or possibility thereof. The Present Progressive futurate, by contrast, can trace its sense of susceptibility to change or 'interruptability' to its imperfective aspect, which entails a note of uncertainty regarding temporal issues such as duration; and it typically has an unwitnessed beginning and end. Hence these two aspectual sources underpin the respective levels of epistemic force embodied by each futurate.

Related evidence for these concepts of certainty vs changeability comes through a contrast of perfective and imperfective aspect backshifted into the past, as previously tested with *be to* + V and the Simple Present futurate:

(a) Jack was travelling to Perth next week, but this plan was changed.

(b) # Jack travelled to Perth next week, but this plan was changed.

In (a), prior to the change in plans, the utterance *Jack is travelling to Perth next week* was made. The equivalent original in (b) is *Jack travels to Perth next week*, a much stronger proposition. The fact that progressive forms can be invoked in the past tense in this fashion, while simple forms cannot (Copley, 2009, p. 39), contributes to the different modal force entailed in the two aspects. The former, as in sentence (a), illustrates changeability or incompleteness (i.e., imperfectivity), while (b) can only be regarded as a completed eventuality, because of its perfective nature.

Due to the stronger epistemic warrant in the Simple Present futurate, which carries a sense of ‘givenness’, it can embody an accompanying sense of deontic modality, as is the case with ‘*be to* + V. This same deontic nature is not commonly inferred with the Present Progressive futurate, owing to the lack of external imposition and certainty of actualisation. It was also explained in section 3.7.5 that the imperfective does not tend to propel the action of a narrative forward (Williams, 2002a, p. 1239). Rather, a greater sense of momentum is provided by perfective forms.

As dictated by its imperfective aspect then, the Present Progressive futurate has at its core a sense of current “ongoingness” (Brisard, 2002, p. 271) that distinguishes it from the other two forms discussed so far. First of all, the concept of a situation being in progress, i.e., progressing from a past plan to present anticipation of a future eventuality, emerges from this embodiment of the imperfective aspect. As Williams (2002b, p. 217) further explains, any progressive situation, whether in the past, present or future, contains “a piece of the past”, in that the focus situation entails an initial stage of existence that is not observable. For example, in the statement, *I’m reading this book [at the moment]*, the beginning of the reading process is not seen, as is the case in the past, with *I was reading this book [when he arrived]*. The futurate use of the Present Progressive proceeds with this sense of continuity along equivalent lines, but

with two significant yet ‘matchable’ differences. The left boundary, i.e., the starting point, begins at the time of arrangement (rather than at the beginning stage of the eventuality), but no importance is attached to the time at which this past occurrence was instantiated. It proceeds from this past, unmentioned arrangement, to present anticipation of this already-existing arrangement, to secondary temporal reference to future actualisation, the propositional content of which is indicated by the lexical verb.⁵¹ The right boundary ends not with any implied final stage of the eventuality, but with the commencement of future actualisation - if indeed this occurs. The latter is not observable and is therefore secondary in focus. This relates to the fact that in using the Progressive Present futurate, the speaker is focusing on the existence of an actual plan or arrangement in the present, rather on whether or not it actualises (Copley, 2009, p. 23). This contrasts with the Simple Present futurate, which has no sense of changeability or interruptability and envisages full actualisation of the arrangement.

So this primary focus on present arrangements, the secondary focus on future actualisation, and thirdly, the connotations of changeability, all contribute an element of contingency (Brisard, 2002, p. 282) to the anticipated eventuality, evoking a sense that plans are susceptible to change. This is distinct from the sense of ‘structural necessity’ or ‘given reality’ underpinning the Simple Present futurate, even though both futurates locate situations in an immediate sense of reality (Brisard, 2013, p. 227). Whereas statements made using this latter, morphologically unmarked structure match the structural reality of the world, in terms of either the speaker’s knowledge or experience, the morphologically marked Present Progressive form denotes eventualities which happen to occur in the present, but were not foreseen. This explains the use of the progressive form to express surprises, which also necessitates direct perception at utterance time, rather than received knowledge. As a result of their ‘incidental’ status, these events are foregrounded (Brisard, 2002, p. 266) and therefore temporary, which contributes to their relatively dynamic nature, as seen in the following:

- (a) The boat is leaking!
- (b) It’s raining.

⁵¹ This is perhaps more poetically expressed by T. S. Eliot (1963, p. 189) in a non-grammatical context: “Time present and time past / Are both perhaps present in time future / And time future contained in time past.”

(c) You're being silly.

These three represent situations that are not a permanent part of life or the world and entail an understanding that following their completion, conditions will return to normal. To take one example: (c) implies that the current silliness does not represent typical behaviour on the part of the addressee and is merely temporary. But this sense of violating norms (Levin, 2013, p. 193) is absent in the perfective, *You're silly*, which conveys givenness, such that this behaviour is neither surprising nor temporary.

Relating this then to the future, the Present Progressive futurate produces a less consolidated level of epistemic force than does the Simple Present futurate. Additionally, its heightened sense of immediacy lends a more subjective and personal tone to Present Progressive futurate utterances, resulting in its greater frequency of use in more informal registers (Smith & Leech, 2013, p. 88). This also reflects the fact that the Present Progressive futurate represents internal control, usually on the part of the speaker (but still involving a second party), rather than control by an external, typically more authoritative entity.

5.5.5 Conclusion

It can be gleaned from this discussion that the meaning and use of each of the futurates stems from their original use in denoting present tense eventualities. The conclusion can be reached that each form is not polysemous (Chilton, 2013, p.238), but rather carries its essential meaning of immediate reality, prior arrangement, and schedulability into the representation of different event types and perspectives on these. This uniformity of meaning is effectively demonstrated under the “deletion of identity” rule, where utterances with the same clausal subject can span both present and future times (Binnick, 1991, p. 250):

(a) I'm working on the first chapter now, and on the fourth tomorrow (Binnick, 1991, p. 250).

(b) I live in Tokyo now but move to Beijing next year.

Were the respective forms to embody different meanings when moving from the present to the future, such utterances would be impossible.

The features of the Present Progressive futurate as discussed above are summarised in Table 5-9 below:

FORM	Present Progressive futurate	We're meeting at 10:00 tomorrow.	
MEANING/USE	A pre-existing arrangement for the future; Contingency in reality; Arrangement may be actualized, altered, interrupted, or cancelled. The involvement of a second party in the arrangement is mandatory.		
TEMPORALITY	TEMPORAL FOCUS POINTS: Present and Future		
	PRIMARY TIME FOCUS: Present		
	SPEECH TIME: Present	EVENT TIME: Future	REFERENCE TIME: Present
MODALITY	Epistemic (strong, but less so than the Simple Present futurate and <i>be to</i> + V), due to element of changeability		
CONTEXT/GENRE	General, but most common in everyday discourse		
ASPECT	Imperfective		
SCHEDULABILITY & PRE-DETERMINABILITY	Must be schedulable; Not pre-determinable; Plan is asserted, but not presupposed.		
EXTERNAL OR INTERNAL CONTROL	Internal control or perception thereof		
AGENCY	Human (or implied)		
REGISTER	General, but tending more towards informal discourse (e.g., not common in academic or official discourse)		
TEMPORAL ADVERBIALS	Obligatory (if not contextually available or implied)		

Table 5-9 Features of the Present Progressive futurate

5.6 *be going to + V*

5.6.1 Introduction: Meaning/Uses

As has been illustrated so far in this chapter, each futurity form highlights a selection of elements of futurity (Bergs, 2010, p. 218; Brisard, 2001, p. 253). The *be going to + V* form is perhaps the least constrained structure, in its ability to function with or without temporal adverbials (Bergs, 2010, p. 224) and with all types of agents.

To an increasing degree, it is acknowledged that *be going to + V* has for some time been usurping the primacy of *will + V* as the principal expression of futurity in English (Brisard, 2001, p. 254; Fleischman, 1982, p. 153). As explained in section 4.3, the form was identified as a marker of futurity in the latter part of the 1400s and has gradually risen in prevalence since that time (Brisard, 2001, p. 278; Tagliamonte, 2013, p. 146). The following sections will examine the ways in which this has manifested itself in terms of aspect, agency, modality, and meaning.

Be going to + V has two main uses, the core meaning from which these stem being the concept of determining conditions having already been met (Binnick, 2012, p. 87). This expresses itself in two primary uses, i.e., intentionality and inevitability.

Regarding the first: as Williams (2002b, p. 53) illustrates, statement (a) could be paraphrased as (b):

(a) At the next meeting I'm going to complain about the new secretary.

(b) At the next meeting I intend to complain about the new secretary.

And where inevitability is concerned, likewise, (c) can be paraphrased as (d):

(c) The Democrats are going to win the next election.

(d) I believe/declare that the Democrats will win the next election.

It must be stressed that in (d), the speaker is not making an idle prediction: rather, this statement is based on strong, already-existing evidence that lends an air of inevitability to this actualisation. In both sentences, there is a very strong sense of connection between the future eventuality and the present.

This difference between a prediction made using *will* + V and an expression of inevitability conveyed by *be going to* + V is effectively illustrated by Comrie (1976, p. 64):

(a) Bill is going to throw himself off a cliff.

(b) Bill will throw himself off a cliff.

As Comrie (1976, pp. 64-65) explains, if it transpired that Bill did not throw himself off a cliff, then the speaker in (a) could not be accused of having been in error. Rather, the utterance only communicates Bill's *intention* to harm himself, which was presumably true at Speech Time. Comrie (1976, p. 65) states that this statement arises from "the already present seeds of some future situation". On the other hand, if the eventuality does not actualise, then the speaker in (b) was wrong, as facts did not unfold according to his/her prediction. (As will be seen in section 5.7, this is because *will* + V does not share this or previous forms' temporal focus on the present.) In this sense, even though *be going to* + V is strongly grounded in present conditions, there is still the sense that actualisation could be obstructed by future intervening factors (Fleischman, 1982, p. 88), particularly where intentionality is concerned. This will be further explained in the next section.

5.6.2 Aspect

In the sense of an eventuality progressing from current reality to future actualisation, the aspectual component of *be going to* + V is imperfective, i.e., indicating ongoing movement towards an eventuality, as is accentuated by the allative⁵² component encoded by *to* (Bybee et al., 1994, p. 11, 268). This is the case for both of the meanings which it embodies, i.e., intentionality and inevitability: from the speaker's perspective, a present reality is evolving towards future actualisation. But this actualisation is not the primary focus: the eventuality may or may not occur. The focus instead is on the currently available conditions that licence the intentionality or inevitability.

Be going to + V is therefore significantly differentiated from the Simple Present futurate, whose perfective aspect denotes a systematic, structural reality. This form, embodying intentionality/inevitability, denotes nothing of the Simple Present's sense of general validity, or the future projected as the anticipated result of a given or structural reality. So, rather than reflecting premises about how the world works, *be going to* + V suggests contingency on currently existing circumstances, which cannot be generalized to other equivalent situations (Brisard, 2001, p. 270). Rather, the scope of a *be going to* + V statement is specifically deictic in the light of currently available conditions. In contrast, the Simple Present futurate and the *will* + V future evoke perfective aspect, in terms of general validity regarding the way in which the world works. In this vein, statements (a) and (b) below are felicitous, whereas (c) is not (Brisard, 2001, p. 270):

(a) Water boils at 100°C.

(b) Water will boil at 100°C.

(c) # Water is going to boil at 100°C.

As with the treatment of all previous forms, perfectivity or imperfectivity can be tested here by backshifting a *be going to* + V form into the past, in order to see whether completion is valid or not. For these purposes, the following statements are considered, using each of the uses of *be going to* + V:

(a) I'm going to travel to Machu Picchu next year.

⁵² *Allative* indicates direction towards something.

(b) It's going to storm.

When backshifted, these statements can be expressed as follows:

(c) I was going to travel to Machu Picchu next year, but I ran out of money.

(d) It was going to storm, when the black clouds suddenly disappeared.

As seen, there is nothing infelicitous about these statements – a fact which strengthens the concept of imperfectivity and its susceptibility to change or interruptability.

As with other imperfective forms, *be going to* + V is generally associated with a more informal register, while *will* + V tends to prevail in more formal genres (Bergs, 2010, p. 218). This is also seen in the increasingly prevalent use of *be gonna/gonna* + V in spoken forms. In formal announcements of plans and other decidedly formal genres, however, *be going to* + V is still relatively uncommon.

5.6.3 Spatial-to-temporal movement

In the present temporal domain, *be going to* (in the Present Progressive) typically expresses a spatial transition from one point to another, e.g.:

- Fancy running into you here! Would you like to have a coffee?

- Sorry, I'm going to the cinema. [i.e., Sorry, I'm on my way to the cinema.]

How did this transition from the Present Progressive (*be going to*) to the future form, *be going to* + V occur? Diachronically, it entails a transition from a spatial-movement lexeme to a form denoting temporal movement from present to future, having lost most, if not all, of its original lexical meaning. Previous discussions in this research have alluded to the gradual expansion of expressions of futurity beyond the Simple Present futurate and *will* + V. Bybee et al. (1994) have documented the grammaticalization of spatial-transition expressions into temporal ones, noting that spatial “movement towards” (Bybee et al., 1994, p. 5, 268), as expressed in forms such as *be going to* + V, can gradually move from spatial and physical movement towards a destination, to a temporal transition from the present into the future. This happens by way of equating an agent's being spatially “on a path toward a goal” (Bybee et al., 1994, p. 268; Collins & Yao, 2014, p. 513) with temporal movement towards a goal. As Bybee et al. (1994, p. 269) further explain:

When one moves along a path towards a goal in space, one also moves in time. The major change that takes place is the loss of the spatial meaning. Here again the function of expressing intention comes into play. When the speaker announces that s/he is going somewhere to do something, s/he is also announcing the intention to do that thing.

Hence, the starting point in both the spatial and temporal meanings is the present - the spatial and temporal here-and-now. Next, integral to any intention to move spatially and/or temporally forward is a rationale or motivating force, i.e., a reason for doing so. This is embodied by both a past plan and the means of actualizing it (Wada, 2013, p. 405), which imbue the expression of futurity with a considerable level of certainty. There is the sense that “something is already currently ongoing towards the occurrence of the main situation in the future” (Wada, 2013, p. 405). As such, the potential for movement verbs to develop into future constructions involves the agent moving on a path toward an intention or goal, i.e., in progress towards an outlined endpoint.

Diachronically then, *be going to* + V has moved from the original connotations of movement in a certain direction (Krug & Schützler, 2013, p. 161), with an important component of ‘movement towards’ something, to a meaning incorporating futurity, intentionality, immediacy and inevitability. However, a point sometimes lost in the literature is that when *be going to* + V is discussed, there is not a sufficient distinction between the Present Progressive form, i.e., *I’m going to the shop* - in which the speaker describes spatial transition from a starting point to an endpoint – and the future construction, *be going to* + V, which usually dissolves the spatial component and embodies future actualisation only. That a distinction exists is evidenced by the use of *gonna* in the futurity use only, indicating the significantly different role played by *to* in each:

- (a) I’m going to go to the shop.
- (b) I’m gonna go to the shop.
- (c) *I’m gonna the shop.

On another point of temporality, it must also be explained that although the sense of temporal movement from one point to another can invoke a sense of imminence (Brisard, 2001, p. 265), e.g.,

(a) I'm going to ask him a question

this is not always the case, as seen in the following exchange:

(b) - I'm retiring tomorrow.

- Oh, I'm going to retire one day.

The use of *one day* by the second speaker in (b) implies that this is not necessarily an imminent occurrence, but simply a present intention or desire. The notion of imminence relates to the speaker's perceived degree of certainty at Speech Time regarding actualisation, rather than to the precise time interval between Speech Time and Event Time (Jaszczolt, 2009, p. 65). (This observation can forestall L2 students' queries as to the length of time which can lapse between Speech Time and Event Time in the use of this construction.)

Before concluding here, it must be noted once again that not all speech communities comply with a universal sense of a time/space relationship. For example, Izutsu and Izutsu (2016, p. 210) point out that English speakers' understanding of temporal issues is based mainly on a figurative conceptualisation of motion in space. But as Su (2016, p. 197) indicates, despite the commonly perceived metaphor of time and space, equivalent Chinese expressions reveal an association of water – rather than space – with time:

This is evident in expressions such as *si-shui-nianhua* 'fleeting years are like the flow of water,' *wangshi ru chaoshui* 'past events are like tides,' and *shijian-chongdan de youqing* 'friendship that is diluted with the passing of time,' all of which make use of the TIME IS WATER metaphor to express the passing of time (Su, 2016, p. 197).

So, while for English native speakers, a sequence of events is commonly perceived as proceeding through space, for many Chinese speakers, it is the case that sequences flow through time as does water. Again, L1 speakers of English (and teachers in particular) must be aware of the non-universality of some of their implicit conceptualisations.

The next section will discuss the fact that part of the source of speakers' perceptions of certainty is their construal of agency and how it operates on the trajectory from present reality to future actualisation through *be going to* + V.

5.6.4 Agency

As noted in section 5.6.1, *be going to* + V is perhaps the freest of futurity forms in its incorporation of a range of agency types. This is particularly relevant to the expression of futurity, which demands attention to agency and epistemology (Bybee et al., 1994, p. 280) like no other tense in English. In brief, this structure allows for animate beings, inanimate entities and forces of nature to take the role of agent. Part of the core meaning of *be going to* + V is a perception of imminence - subject to the perspective of the agent - whether through intentionality or inevitability. The former was more strongly influential in the developmental path from spatial to temporal meaning, the latter following through this link to a strong commitment to an expressed outcome on the part of the speaker, with both uses entailing full subject agency (Brisard, 2001, p. 278).

This sense of movement towards actualisation can be strengthened by the sense that an animate or inanimate agent, or a force of nature, is already on a path towards fulfilment of an eventuality. For example:

- (a) I'm going to win a medal – I'll show you.
- (b) She's going to have a baby. It's due in October.
- (c) It's getting late. The sun is going to set soon.
- (d) Move away from the roof – it's going to cave in!

Where inanimate agents or forces of nature are concerned, one cannot claim that they 'intend' to move towards actualisation: rather, the speaker perceives them as signals, rather than causes (Brisard, 2001, p. 255), of anticipated eventualities for which conditions have already been determined. Again, the unifying element is the speaker's perception of and commitment to an imminent or inevitable outcome. Suffice to conclude here that the subjects of sentences (a) – (d) above reflect the range of agents possible with *be going to* + V – the broadest available to any futurity form in English.

5.6.5 Temporal adverbials

Another aspect of the relatively unconstrained nature of *be going to* + V is the fact that it does not necessarily require a temporal anchor. This is partly attributable to the sense of imminence

in its meaning of inevitability, but also to its ‘one-day’ intentionality or inevitability, along with its lack of futurate constraint – i.e., its form does not need to be disambiguated from *be going to*, i.e., a use situated in the present. This lack of a mandatory future temporal adverbial can be seen in each of the following:

(a) Look at those black clouds – it’s going to rain.

(b) I’m going to talk with Sue about that.

What matters in both cases is the reality of the present conditions or of the present intention.

Additionally, these could also be expressed with an adverbial, as seen below:

(a) Look at those black clouds – it’s going to rain soon.

(b) I’m going to talk with Sue about that tomorrow.

This comparatively unrestricted nature of *be going to* + V highlights a significant point of difference from the *will* + V form, which requires either a temporal adverbial or a contingency (i.e., a stated or implied condition). By way of illustration:

(a) It is going to snow.

(b) It will snow.

Utterance (a) implies that current conditions are in place, such that snow is imminently expected (Declerck, 2006, pp. 351-352). A statement such as this does not necessarily elicit a response of *When?* from the listener. In contrast, utterance (b) seems incomplete, in the sense that an interlocutor would likely request a temporal location. (This is a trait shared by the ‘absolute’ past, i.e., the Simple Past, and the ‘absolute’ future, i.e., *will* + V.) Without a temporal adverbial or a condition (e.g., *It will snow tomorrow*; *It will snow if the temperature drops*), statements such as (b) have a sense of incompleteness. Hence, an essential part of the meaning of *be going to* + V is that it is a singular utterance complete in itself.

5.6.6 Dual temporal zones

As with the Simple Present and Present Progressive futurates – in fact, with all forms discussed so far in this chapter, the *be going to* + V form embodies two temporal zones, with the primary focus being on the present.

This is in contrast with the *will* + V form, which entails the expression of future eventuation, e.g., *It will rain soon*, rather than actualisation based on present evidence

(Haegeman, 1989/2008, p. 305; Vet, 2015, p. 15). So in Reichenbachian terms, *be going to* + V sees Speech Time and Reference Time in the present, with Event Time in the future, as is the case with *be to* + V and the futurates. This grounding in the present, accentuated by a present auxiliary (*am, is* or *are*), is identical to the Present Progressive futurate, but whereas the latter embodies a pre-fixed arrangement with a second party, the *be going to* + V futurate is based on evidential or individual intentional knowledge in the present (Chilton, 2013, p. 253) and on pre-existing circumstances (Williams, 2002b, pp. 53-54), with the lexical verb referring to the future eventuality. It evokes a sense of reality arising from the epistemic force granted to the present in English (Brisard, 2001, p. 283). In short, this allows for the speaker's strong sense of commitment to future actualisation of a proposition.

This actualisation cannot depend on the fulfilment of future conditions. There is a very strong entailment that the eventuality is possible because of presently-existing conditions, for which the speaker has evidence. It operates from a perspective of the speaker believing that nothing in the current set of circumstances can intervene to preclude actualisation. In other words, it is unconditional in terms of present time (Brisard, 2001, p. 257), as, for example, in (a) below, in contrast with *will* + V, as in (b):

(a) Don't go near that bird! It's going to attack you!

(b) Don't go near that bird! It'll attack you!

The difference between these two utterances highlights the present Reference Time of the *be going to* + V form and the entailed condition implicit in the speaker's utterance. Utterance (a) conveys the sense that the bird already has the intention of attacking, and that such an eventuality will actualise at any given moment. But utterance (b) suggests that such an outcome is conditional on the listener's approaching the bird, i.e., a future, currently non-existing condition: *If you approach that bird, it will attack you*. Stated another way, in (a), the attack of the bird does not rely on the future fulfilment of conditions (Brisard, 2001, p. 256, 352; Quirk et al., 1985, p. 214; Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973, p. 48); rather, conditions are currently in place which dictate actualisation. As such, *will* + V denotes open conditions (Declerck, 2006, p. 352), whereas with *be going to* + V, conditions are closed, in the sense that all conditions necessary for actualisation are present in current reality (in the world or in the

speaker's mind). There is no entailment of further preparatory conditions to be fulfilled in the future (Brisard, 2001, p. 264), as all necessary conditions are deictically available in the present context, either as recognition of an intention or awareness of the current environment. Hence if a speaker were to say the following, the listener would require no further information:

(a) *That bird is going to attack you!*

However, this is not the case with the utterance below:

(b) *That bird will attack you!*

In the latter situation, the listener is likely to ask for temporal information (*When?*) or conditional information (e.g., *If I get too close?*), as neither of these is accessible in the current, immediate context.

5.6.7 Modality

5.6.7.1 Introduction

The semantics of *be going to* + V can be seen first in terms of a singular concept, i.e., of present reference to future fulfilment of an eventuality, as discussed in section 5.6.1. The structure is strongly rooted in the present, its core implicature being that all essential conditions for future actualisation are in place (Binnick, 2012, p. 75; Declerck, 2006, p. 352, 358; Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973, p. 48), with the speaker's epistemic warrant being based on current evidence, knowledge or intentionality (Brisard, 2001, p. 251, 265, 283; Declerck, 2006, p. 339, 350; Haegeman, 1989/2008, p. 305; Leech & Svartvik, 1994, p. 76). Because of this, the speaker assumes a strong epistemic warrant for any claims, as the source or cause of future actualisation is evident in the present, thus removing any perceived doubt that it will occur. In a sense, the eventuality is seen as being "already on the way" in the present (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973, p. 48). In common with the other forms thus far discussed, *be going to* + V invokes the past, present and future. For example:

(a) Look at those black clouds! It's going to rain soon. [Current evidence]

(b) I'm going to report the theft to the police. [Intentionality]

(c) This invention is going to change the way in which people work.

[Knowledge; current evidence]

The basis for this epistemic warrant is a mandatory implicature that the speaker has prior evidence for the propositional content.⁵³ This underscores the strong sense of a present time focus entailed in *be going to* + V. Significant evidence, knowledge or a predetermined intention must be available at least at the moment of speech, but most commonly as a prior given.

It has already been mentioned that the roots of this certainty regarding future actualisation are of two types, usually seen as the more specific meanings of *be going to* + V: intentionality and inevitability. These will now be analysed, but can initially be illustrated respectively as below:

(a) I'm going to vacuum today.

(b) Oh no! I'm going to faint.

In (a), the speaker has already decided to vacuum today and is referring to this past decision in the present. His/her awareness of this intention forms the epistemic basis for assuming that this event will actualize. Utterance (b), on the other hand, expresses an objective prediction (Bergs, 2010, p. 224) based on prior knowledge of or familiarity with the experience of fainting. This grants the strong epistemic warrant for the prediction, thus presented more as an inevitable occurrence than as an abstract prediction. In both (a) and (b), the speaker has a present awareness based on past eventualities (i.e., the making of a decision, or knowledge of how the world or the body works). This “experiential contact with evidence” (Chilton, 2013, p. 253) and knowledge that any prerequisite circumstances are already in place both licence the strong assertion of future actualisation.

This can also be observed when *be going to* + V is contrasted with the *will* + V form. The implicature of a prior intention in the former is readily visible:

- Can someone give Mary a lift to the party?

- (a) I'm going to pick her up.

(b) I'll pick her up.

⁵³ This evidence can also have made an unanticipated appearance very immediately before Speech Time, e.g., *He's pulled out a gun – he's going to fire it!*

The speaker's response in (a) entails a prior intention or offer to give Mary a lift, whereas utterance (b) suggests an on-the-spot offer or decision involving no consideration prior to the request.

5.6.7.2 Epistemic vs deontic force

The discussion of *be going to* + V and modality has so far centred on epistemic force. This is the structure's main expression of modality: according to Brisard (2001, p. 263), 77% of uses are epistemic, with the remaining 23% deontic. The latter are most typically seen in statements expressing an order, e.g., *You're going to find that missing money, no matter how long it takes*. Here, the speaker's sense of determination is projected onto the hearer through deontic force, imparting a sense of inevitable and imminent action, as a result of a command. (This can be seen epistemically in another context, e.g., *I know you're going to find that missing money, no matter how long it takes*.)

Despite the modal connotations associated with *be going to* + V, given the speaker's strong sense of commitment to actualisation, it must be remembered that this sense is, in fact, based on the speaker's perspective and interpretation, i.e., it is not an objective assessment of reality. For example, two people could see someone approaching an injured person at speed, and utter either of the following:

(a) She's going to rob him!

(b) She's going to help him!

In another scenario, two people watching the one performer in a competition could say either of the utterances below:

(a) He's definitely going to win.

(b) He's definitely not going to win.

In other words, one person's concept of reality could be another's delusional thinking. As Brisard (2001, p. 265) notes, "intuitions or irrational premonitions can serve as the basis of predictions about which the speaker feels, despite everything, quite certain". (So the *be going to* + V future lacks the sense of immediate givenness or structural reality of the Simple Present, as explored in section 5.4.3.) Likewise, one person's epistemic modality can for another have

deontic force, especially in written language, with prosodic features unavailable: *You're going to help me, aren't you?*

So, in sum, apart from these minority uses of deontic imperative, the modality of *be going to* + V is predominantly epistemic, in the sense that statements about futurity are based on present evidence – visibly or cognitively accessible (Brisard, 2001, p. 269) - of actualisations resulting from intentions or a sense of inevitability.

5.6.8 Schedulability and pre-determinability

This implicature of pre-existing conditions or knowledge highlights an attribute shared by the Present Progressive futurate, i.e., the sense of a set of circumstances already being in position (Williams, 2002b, p. 53). However, as mentioned, the crucial difference with *be going to* + V is that it does not carry the implication that an arrangement has been reached with a second party. In the case of intentions, *be going to* + V has an implicitly internal connotation that a decision regarding an activity can be made without input from another party. In the statements below, the second speaker in (a) has formed an intention, but not made any travel arrangements:

- (a) - Have you decided what to do after you retire?
 - I'm going to take a trip on the Trans-Siberian Railway.
- (b) - Have you decided what to do after you retire?
 - I'm taking a trip on the Trans-Siberian Railway.

Implicit in the utterance of the second speaker in (b) is the fact that fixed arrangements have been made with the relevant parties, giving them an added, external authority. The intention in (a) can be reported by another party aware of the speaker's decision, e.g., *Anne is going to take a trip on the Trans-Siberian Railway after she retires*, but this does not connote the making of arrangements. Rather, the speaker is merely noting an awareness of Anne's intention.

To return briefly to the earlier examples of the two main uses of *be going to* + V: these further highlight another difference between this form and the Present Progressive futurate:

- (a) I'm going to vacuum today.
- (b) Oh no! I'm going to faint!

Intentional eventualities such as that in (a) are both schedulable and pre-determinable. Utterance (a) could also be expressed in the Present Progressive futurate, i.e., *I'm vacuuming today*, if, for example, a vacuum cleaner is to be delivered by a second party for an agreed amount of time; or perhaps an arrangement has been made with other team members as to who will dust or scrub today. In other words, an intention can unproblematically become a fixed arrangement, once a second party has become involved.

However, this is not possible with the second use of *be going to* + V, i.e., inevitability. The implausibility of saying, *I'm fainting today*, highlights the notion that inevitable eventualities cannot be arranged, scheduled or pre-determined, and therefore appear commonly without a future adverbial. Rather, they are foreseeable but unavoidable in the sense that the existing circumstances are under control, and the speaker's perspective is one of powerlessness to influence proceedings. As such, the sense of an inevitable eventuality's being 'already on the way' is grounded not in an intention or an arrangement, but in the tacit acknowledgement that circumstances external to the speaker are directing actualisation. This use differs from that of intentionality, but at the same time, the meaning of present circumstances in place still prevails.

The 'powerless-to-intervene' factor also gives *be going to* + V a point of commonality with the Simple Present futurate. Given the often-immediate sense of inevitability, *be going to* + V entails a strong sense of commitment – albeit subjective – to the truth of a proposition from the perspective of the speaker. However, the Simple Present futurate demands the use of a temporal adverbial (so as to distinguish it from its present-time use), whereas *be going to* + V, not being a futurate, does not. And as indicated above, its second use, the expression of inevitability, commonly precludes the use of such an adverbial, given the heightened sense of immediacy and focus on the present. This also differentiates this structure from the Simple Present futurate in the sense that inevitable occurrences cannot usually be scheduled or pre-determined, despite their tendency to actualise in the end.

5.6.9 Conclusion

Significant contrasts have been made in this section between *be going to* + V and *will* + V. The latter will be the topic of analysis of the next section. This is a particularly weighty item, given

that ESL students are often taught that *will* + V is the default expression of futurity in English. Experience nominates this as one of the greatest obstacles in ESL instruction on tense.

A summary of the ten elements as represented in *be going to* + V are presented below:

FORM	<i>be going to</i> + V future		<i>I'm going to phone him tomorrow.</i> <i>It's going to rain.</i>
MEANING/USE	A generalized conception of imminence and/or predictability; The post-present actualization of a situation underway in the present, where all determining conditions have already been met; Contingency in reality: (i) Intentionality (ii) Inevitability (i) Intentionality: a pre-existing, individual plan for the future; the eventuality can be actualized, altered or cancelled. (ii) Inevitability: the eventuality is perceived to be on an inexorable path.		
TEMPORALITY	TEMPORAL FOCUS POINTS: Present and Future		
	PRIMARY TIME FOCUS: Present		
	SPEECH TIME: Present	EVENT TIME: Future	REFERENCE TIME: Present
MODALITY	Epistemic (perceived as strong, but less so than the futurates and <i>be to</i> + V); Deontic in imperatives or quasi-imperatives		
CONTEXT/GENRE	General, but most common in informal and spoken discourse		
ASPECT	Imperfective		
SCHEDULABILITY & PRE-DETERMINABILITY	(i) Intentionality: schedulable and pre-determinable; (ii) Inevitability: neither schedulable nor pre-determinable		
EXTERNAL OR INTERNAL CONTROL	Either		
AGENCY	All Types: Animate, inanimate, or force of nature		
REGISTER	General, but tending more towards spoken/informal discourse (i.e., not commonly used in academic or official discourse)		
TEMPORAL ADVERBIALS	Optional, but less likely with inevitability statements.		

Table 5-10 Features of *be going to* + V

5.7 *will* + V

5.7.1 Introduction

“The more members a set has, the more features are required to distinguish the members from one another” (Binnick, 2012, p. 109).

Binnick’s comment above is very much the case with futurity in English. Depending on one’s perspective, it is a language either blessed or cursed with a plethora of means of expressing eventualities which have not yet actualised. Adding to the complexity, the uses of one form can vary widely, as is the case with *will* + V.

Mention has previously been made in this research of the practice in some ESL and linguistics texts of describing two particular verb forms as interchangeable or at least not adequately different to warrant significant attention. This is often the case with *be going to* + V and *will* + V (e.g., in Azar & Hagen, 2009, p. 6, 61, 62, 63; Frodesen & Eyring, 2007, p. 32; Haegeman, 1989/2008, p. 292, 295, 305; Hewings, 2013, p. 18; Swan & Walter, 2011, p. 42)⁵⁴. Yet, as has consistently been claimed in this thesis, no two verb forms can be described as interchangeable. Therefore, assertions of putative substitutability are unhelpful to L2 students and ultimately demand future ‘unlearning’.

It can legitimately be suggested that when explaining to L2 learners the range of futurity forms available in English, one efficient approach is to outline the use of the Simple Present and Present Progressive futurities, the *be going to* + V form (and at a more advanced level, *be to* + V), and then to assign most other uses to the *will* + V form. However, given the fact that *will* + V constitutes the oldest expression of futurity in English, it demands a full treatment of its own, rather than being identified merely as the ‘leftovers’ form; and as students advance, its meaning/uses must be contrasted with those of *will be* + V-ing. Furthermore, its analysis indirectly sheds light on the development of alternative futurity forms over the years, which have eventually usurped parts of the role of *will* + V. It is suggested here that this diachronic development has contributed to the understandable impression that the domain of this form is

⁵⁴ One such example is from Azar & Hagen (2009, p. 61): “(a) Jack **will finish** his work tomorrow. (b) Jack **is going to finish** his work tomorrow. **Will** and **be going to** express future time and often have essentially the same meaning. Examples (a) and (b) have the same meaning.”

scattered and seemingly contradictory. This can be seen in six of its most common uses (from Collins COBUILD, 2011; Hewings, 2013; Murphy, 2012; Swan, 2005), as exemplified below:

MEANING/USE	EXAMPLE
Predictions	I think she'll get the job.
Offers	Shall ⁵⁵ /will I carry that for you?
On-the-spot/immediate decisions	It's cold in here - I'll close the window.
Formal announcements of plans or schedules	The CEO will address the media at 3:00.
Commitments/Promises	I will take care of you for the rest of my life.
Volition	The doctor will see you now.

Table 5-11 Common meaning/uses of *will* + V

To take some examples from this table: there is something instinctively incongruous about one form expressing both formal announcements and on-the-spot decisions, as well as both commitments and predictions. Such diversity of uses might at first glance suggest a language designed by a committee, but the multifarious range can be explained through the origins of the form, as will be discussed.

As in preceding parts of this chapter, this section will now look further at *will* + V in terms of the ten criteria applied to previous forms. It will seek to reach at least a degree of clarification regarding this form, which can include a dozen or so seemingly disparate usages. (As seen in chapter 2, criterion 10, the number of meanings/uses listed in the ten selected texts ranges from four to sixteen, with half of the texts listing ten or more.) The discussion will illustrate the gradual development of the form away from its roots in volitionality and also endeavour to identify any underlying elements common to its range of uses.

5.7.2 Temporality and modality in *will* + V: A historical perspective

As stated above, *will* + V is the earliest verbal expression of futurity, from Old and Middle English (Collins & Yao, 2014, p. 514), with *would*, *will* and *woll* representing the past, present and future forms respectively (Copley, 2002, p. 77). In many ways, *will* + V is regarded as a

⁵⁵ The issue of *will* vs *shall* is discussed in section 5.7.6.

controversial marker of futurity, particularly given the difficulty in distinguishing between modal and tense uses (Bergs, 2010, p. 222). Opinions still vary as to whether *will* is a modal form, whether it carries tense and modal ambiguity, or whether it is primarily a tense form (Jaszczolt, 2014, p. 6).

There is, however, a growing degree of convergence on the idea that over the centuries *will* has emerged primarily as a marker of temporal reference (Collins & Yao, 2014, p. 514; Salkie, 2010, p. 196). This is unsurprising from a diachronic perspective, given that as a future form becomes grammaticalised, its temporal component tends to dominate its modal aspect (Dahl & Velupillai, 2008, chapter 67). According to Salkie's (2010, p. 196) corpus research, the temporal use of *will* + V accounts for over 90% of its usage in both speech and writing.

Unanimity appears to exist regarding obligation or willingness as the original wellspring from which this expression of futurity arises (Bybee et al., 1994, p. 18). But irrespective of this single source of meaning, it is a fact that because the future is uncertain, it is by definition modal, regardless of morphosyntactic or semantic modes of expression (de Brabanter et al., 2014, p. 4; Del Prete, 2014, p. 70). In plain terms therefore, the future can be seen as "a heterogeneous assembly of all possible states of affairs that are not yet in existence" (Brisard, 2001, p. 252). As such, any reference to the post-present involves modality, because the proposition entailed is as yet unrealized and, to varying degrees, embodies subjective judgement regarding the likelihood of occurrence, as reflected in the speaker's epistemic force (Chilton, 2013, p. 238; Declerck, 2006, p. 102, 359; Declerck, 2010, p. 273). Even more categorically, Jaszczolt (2009, p. 55) states that "[t]here is no one, default way of expressing futurity that relies on the flow of time and does not rely on modal detachment". This is certainly the approach underpinning the current discussion.

However, the literature varies widely on the strength of epistemic modality invoked by *will* + V, with Wada (2013, p. 400) describing it as expressing a high likelihood of occurrence, while others (e.g., Jaszczolt, 2009, p. 54) see it as a weak form of futurity in terms of certainty.

Any sense of 'weakness' regarding the meaning of *will* + V is traceable to its Old English roots of volition, or *to want*. In this sense, a speaker in the Old English era would most likely have been indicating an intentional present which lacked a sense of futurity (Jaszczolt, 2009, p.

59). This legitimates to a degree claims that all expressions involving *will* denote volitionality.⁵⁶ Yet still, epistemic force here is a matter of interpretation: speaker volitionality can denote strong intentionality, which can be interpreted as strong probability (Jaszczolt, 2009, p. 59), depending on one's understanding of personal volition. Again though, it can be seen as merely expressing desire or aspiration.

Before proceeding any further, it is important to bring this issue back to the domain of ESL learning: this research claims that for the most part, it is of little consequence to L2 students whether *will* + V is classified as a temporal marker, a modal, or a combination of both. If it is problematic for linguists to create an absolute distinction between the two, then it is questionable as to whether the majority of students would be receptive to such attempts or, more importantly, whether such endeavours could assist in their learning. Rather, an awareness of the origin of *will* may be more beneficial in terms of explaining its temporal and modal elements.

5.7.3 *will* + V in 'non-future' uses

In Reichenbachian terms, the difference between the futurates and *be going to* + V on the one hand and the *will* + V future on the other is that the former have their Reference Time in the present and Event Time in the future, while *will* + V locates both of these in the future. Naturally, this removes a sense of perceptual, cognitive or temporal proximity and immediate reality⁵⁷ (Chilton, 2013, p. 241; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002, p. 211). The present Reference Time of the futurates also means that this is when evaluation of the likelihood of actualisation occurs. It is generally accepted with *will* + V, however, that the propositional truth of an utterance is evaluated in the future (usually at or around eventualisation), due to the lack of focus on current evidence.

⁵⁶ This is not the case, however, with uses such as the formal announcement of plans, e.g., *The president will visit Berlin next week*. It is possible that the older form, *will*, rather than the Present Progressive futurate, has connotations of formality and is therefore preferred in these contexts. This matter is further discussed in 5.7.5.

⁵⁷ The anchoring of *be going to* + V in immediate reality is suggested as an explanation for why children acquire this version of the future before the *will* future or its equivalent (in all languages which feature both structures). It is assumed by some that this later acquisition of *will* is due to its conceptually abstract nature and lack of present relevance (Fleischman, 1982, p. 99).

In the light of these observations regarding Reference Time and Event Time, one of the problems in the recognition of *will* + V as a temporal expression of futurity, as opposed to an expression of modality, stems from its possible use in conveying non-future temporal reference. This is illustrated by de Brabanter et al. (2014, p. 4):

- (a) Oil will float on water. [generic use]
- (b) In winter, Mary will always wear a green coat. [habitual/dispositional/volitional use]
- (c) Mary will be at the theatre now. [epistemic modality use]

Clearly, these instances of *will* + V do not make a conventional expression of future temporality. But it can be claimed that the generic use in (a) also has future overtones. The same proposition can be expressed in the Simple Present, i.e., *Oil floats on water*. But rather than indicating a universal truth about the behaviour of oil in the past, present and future, the speaker in (a) denotes the sense that, judging from past experience or knowledge of this truth, whenever oil is poured onto water in the future, it will float. A similar overtone exists in (b), with a focus on Mary's habit of wearing a green coat projected as being instantiated in future winters. In the light of this analysis, therefore, can it be claimed that there is any modal use of *will* + V which does not imply a temporal location, no matter how general?

Example (c) invites further discussion of this particular use. In the literature, it is referred to via different labels, e.g., 'epistemic *will*' (Wada, 2013, p. 394), 'predictability' *will* (Declerck, 2006, p. 105), 'epistemic future' (de Saussure, 2013, p. 60) and 'epistemic modality' (de Brabanter et al., 2014, p. 4)⁵⁸. It is felt here that the term 'predictability' *will* enables a better distinction from the other three terms, as all expressions of futurity can be described in terms of epistemic modality. On the other hand, the term "putative future" (Chilton, 2013, p. 253) is perhaps most distinctive, but the word *putative* itself could be an obstacle in ESL learning and hence less accessible.

As true futurity denotes eventualities not yet actualised, in the utterance, *Mary will be at the theatre now*, there is an intuitive clash arising from the juxtaposition of *will* and *now* – i.e., between future and present time. The inclusion of *now* invites the question as to whether

⁵⁸ Utterances such as *That'll be the postman* (e.g., on hearing a whistle) are also expressed at times in American English by *That's gonna be the postman* (de Saussure, 2013, p. 60).

'predictability' *will* can actually be regarded as a true futurity form, as in this use, both Reference Time and Event Time appear to be located in the present.

However, this demands further investigation. A sentence such as *Anne will be in her office now* suggests that if the speaker or interlocutor investigates post-utterance, he/she will discover Anne to be in her office. The statement then focuses not so much on Anne's current presence, but rather on the 'guaranteed' future discovery of Anne in her office (Comrie, 1989, p. 62).

It is argued here that 'predictability' *will* thrusts a situation - the propositional content of which is assumed to be true in the present - into a hypothetical time of future evaluation. This future focus time is most significant, as future acknowledgement of propositional truth takes precedence over assumptions of current veracity here. Such utterances do not signify an event which has not yet occurred: rather, they shift evaluation time to the future, when observation would most likely confirm veracity (Declerck, 2003, p. 91; Declerck, 2006, p. 105-106). So, while Speech Time and Event Time are positioned in the present, it is suggested here that Reference Time, ostensibly 'now', actually refers to a future Evaluation Time, i.e., a hypothetical time when veracity can be evaluated. At the same time, such an actual evaluation is not implicit in this usage. Therefore, 'predictability' *will* can be said to share future evaluation with other uses of *will* + V, but in this use, it is suggested that Reference Time includes a hypothetical future Evaluation Time.

The future focus in 'predictability' *will* can be seen in the contrast below, which further underscores the legitimacy of regarding it as a future form:

(a) Anne will be in her office now.

(b) Anne is in her office now.

The sense of future evaluation in (a) is absent in (b), due to its present focus, which implies a witnessed account of Anne's presence in her office by the speaker. But when this is not licenced, the epistemically distancing effect of *will* from the present must be invoked.

This type of contrast can also be seen in the case of making an introduction, e.g., of a guest to a group of diners: *Everyone will know Mary*. The speaker here wishes to mark the fact that he/she cannot claim with absolute certainty that those present already know Mary. Hence

‘predictability’ *will* marks this reduced epistemic force by acknowledging that future confirmation is required; hence, use of the Simple Present, i.e., *Everyone knows Mary*, is not licenced.

The same applies, of course, to utterances such as *Mary will be at the theatre now*: the speaker’s epistemic warrant does not licence him/her to say, *Mary is at the theatre now*, thus claiming Mary’s current presence at the theatre as a fact. Rather, the speaker appeals to *will* + V to distinguish between present knowledge and future acknowledgement, owing to a lack of current evidence. So ‘predictability’ *will* enables a future Evaluation Time, which entails a reduced epistemic force when compared to the use of the Simple Present, but one that is still strong.

To return to the three illustrative utterances used near the beginning of this section:

- (a) Oil will float on water.
- (b) In winter, Mary will always wear a green coat.
- (c) Mary will be at the theatre now.

The claim regarding a future Reference Time (or Evaluation Time) can be tested as follows:

- (a) [If you pour oil on water, you’ll see that] oil will float on water.
- (b) [If you see Mary in winter] Mary will always wear a coat.
- (c) [If you look for Mary now, you’ll see that] Mary will be at the theatre now.

5.7.4 Temporality and modality: Tense vs modal forms

Various linguists see these supposedly aberrant occurrences of *will* + V as pragmatic uses that vary from its core temporal meaning: i.e., its modal connotations are perceived as pragmatic effects (Brabanter et al., 2014, p. 5). In this view, the core semantics of *will* + V are temporal, while its modal overtones are not part of these semantics, but rather, an outcome of pragmatic effects. In this sense, *will* + V “acts semantically as a tense, not as a modal” (Del Prete, 2014, pp. 70-71). Arguments as to whether *will* + V indicates modality or temporality, whether these two co-exist as its basic semantics, or whether the form is monosemous or polysemous are the subject of ongoing debate, for legitimate reasons. But again, one has to question the practical contribution that this can make to learning at the ESL coalface and whether it might simply lead to further confusion.

Hence again, this research takes the position that the future itself is inherently modal, given its uncertainty, and that *will* + V is one expression of futurity, therefore encompassing both temporality and modality. But still, the form tends to be used primarily to indicate a temporal location (Declerck, 2006, p. 102), which qualifies it as a tense. This concurs with Comrie's (1989, p. 59) belief that even when *will* + V carries primarily modal undertones, the element of future temporality is still present. And lastly, Declerck (2006, p. 102, 340) refers to the future as a 'modalised tense', a view mirrored in the current approach.

An allusion was made in section 5.7.2 to *will* + V's origins as a historically default future (Brisard, 2001, p. 254). It can be seen diachronically that other forms such as the futurates gradually subsumed some of *will* + V's domain, e.g., in conveying schedules, arrangements, intentions or inevitability. In contrast with these forms, *will* + V reflects its broader origins, capable of expressing a less restricted range of eventualities or perspectives. It is also less constrained in that it does not require grounding in a present situation or arrangement, as do the futurates, *be going to* + V and *be to* + V.

The origins of *will* + V and its gradual loss of some uses in favour of other forms may also shed light on its seemingly random and contradictory uses, e.g., strong personal commitment, subjective prediction, on-the-spot offers, invitations, orders, and the formal announcement of plans. In addition, *will*'s slightly-outmoded use as a lexical verb, e.g., *I will you to do this*, or its nominal form, *It is my will that you do this*, both still reflect the origins of the form. But as Salkie (2010, p. 212) claims convincingly, in accounting for volitional meanings/uses of *will*:

[it is] proposed that willingness is a semantic relic from an earlier meaning of the word.

There is no need to treat *will* as a modality marker to account for its other non-temporal uses: all of them can be derived from its basic future time sense.

Accordingly, *will* + V can be regarded as a marker of future temporality, with "some residual elements of volitional meaning that are activated in the right contexts" (Salkie, 2010, p. 188).

As discussed, the concept of *will* + V as a default marker of futurity is seen in its frequent description as a 'pure', 'neutral' or 'colourless' future (Declerck, 2006, p. 103, 337, 340; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002, p. 211; Jaszczolt, 2014, p. 3; Leech & Svartvik, 1994, p. 76; Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973, p. 47). However, regardless of claims of neutrality, it must again be said that

as true futurity denotes eventualities not yet actualised, no expression of futurity can be purely temporal (Declerck, 2006, p. 103) and as such, any expression of futurity entails a degree of modal force. This being the case, there are still strong grounds for claiming that at least some uses of *will* + V involve only a low level of subjectivity, thus allowing it to be referred to as the ‘pure’ future (Declerck, 2006, p. 103), albeit with a residual modal meaning. This is seen, for example, in utterances such as *The exam will commence at 11:00* or *Parliament will reconvene in October*. Yet again though, the usefulness of this to L2 learners is unconvincing, particularly given the subjectivity of the terms ‘neutral’ and ‘colourless’. It could be argued, for example, that the use of the Simple Present futurate to express scheduled eventualities is more colourless or neutral.

Moreover, claims of colourlessness and neutrality are belied by the capacity of *will* + V to invoke a range of temporality and modality, or a comprehensive sense of temporal and modal gradation, which is one of its most significant traits and a source of its breadth and complexity. It is claimed here that *will* + V has a wide-ranging scope historically traceable to its default futurity status and its erstwhile ability to denote most, if not all, futurity. So claims of neutrality in one use may only result in a further muddying of the waters. Hence *will* + V incorporates a range of degrees of certainty, commitment, predictability or probability regarding a proposition: as Jaszczolt (2014, p. 8) indicates, “[c]ommunicating temporality by means of *will* can be intended very strongly, less strongly, or to various other degrees culminating with very weak ‘temporality’ intention”. This can be seen below:

MEANING/USE	EXAMPLE
Prediction	(a) The Earth will become warmer in the future.
Formal announcement of an arrangement	(b) The president will visit Melbourne tomorrow.
On-the-spot offer	(c) You can’t find your phone? I’ll help you to look.
Statement of commitment	(d) I will find my long-lost uncle, regardless of cost.
Epistemic certainty	(e) This time tomorrow, I will be on a plane.

Table 5-12 Different meaning/uses of *will* + V

Each of these examples varies in terms of certitude, epistemic warrant and volitionality. The same is true where temporality is concerned. While (b) and (e) specify a temporal location and a sense that the requisite arrangements have been made, (a) indicates an open, indeterminate time in the future. Additionally, (c) and (d) indicate a time starting with the present and extending into the future, for an unspecified duration, and connote an immediate sense of commitment. Thus with *will* + V, temporality and modality occupy a gradational range, which again underscores its less restricted scope when compared to other expressions of futurity.

5.7.5 Meaning/uses of *will* + V: Subcategorisation

In speaking of *will* as having both temporal and modal uses, some linguists divide these into a number of categories. For example, Willis (2003, pp. 102-103) sees them as falling into two classifications, namely, volitional and predictive. In lieu of the term 'volitional', Copley (2009, footnote 20, p. 86,) prefers *dispositional*, which she contrasts with predictive uses⁵⁹. For example, *Mary will tell lies* could mean that Mary has a general tendency or disposition towards telling lies. On the other hand, it could be taken as a prediction that in a particular situation in the future, Mary will tell lies. Needless to say, due to the afore-mentioned broad scope of *will* + V, context is highly significant. This contrasting of volitional and predictive uses is also workable in that on-the-spot offers or decisions can viably be seen as expressions of volition, e.g., *I'll help you* or *I'll have a coffee, thanks*, as making an offer can indicate a willingness to fulfil any requirements entailed therein (Copley, 2009, footnote 20, p. 86) and responding to an offer is an acceptance of this willingness.

But such a division of labour, i.e., between volitional and predictive uses, is effective only to a degree. In many discussions of *will* + V, its use in formal, impersonal announcements of plans (e.g., *The prime minister will visit Perth tomorrow* vs *The prime minister is visiting Perth tomorrow*) is frequently neglected. A second problem is the use of *will* + V primarily to express temporal location, e.g., *The exam will commence at 10:00* or *The premier will open parliament at 2:00*. Neither of these cases is predictive or significantly volitional: rather, each implies a strong epistemic warrant.

⁵⁹ Copley (2002, 2009) also contrasts dispositional with generic uses.

With these matters in mind, a different categorization of three main uses of *will* + V is proposed here: Pure Temporal, Predictive, and Dispositional, as illustrated in Table 5-13 below:

MEANING/USE	EXAMPLE
Pure Temporal	(a) The concert will commence at 7:30pm.
	(b) The president will visit Thailand next year.
Predictive	(c) I think the opposition will win the next election.
	(d) The storm will hit at around 5:00.
	(e) Bill will be in Paris now.
Dispositional	(f) Lonely dogs will howl.
	(g) Oil will float on water.
	(h) Sue will always help people.
	(i) Can I help you?
	(j) Can you help me?
	(k) Will you stay for dinner?
	(l) The phone's ringing – I'll get it.
	(m) I will love you all the days of my life.
	(n) You will stay here until the job is finished.

Table 5-13 Three categories of meaning/uses of *will* + V

Given the broad range of *will* + V, it is readily acknowledged that this is but one possible subcategorisation. To explain these groupings and their rationale: the Pure Temporal grouping embodies those utterances made primarily to indicate future temporal location. These are most commonly the formal or impersonal announcement of plans or schedules, as seen in examples (a) and (b). It is suggested that the older origins of *will* lend an appropriately more formal tone to the context of these uses. The lack of imperfectivity also contributes to the formal register here: e.g., in casual conversation, the proposition in (b) would be expressed as *The president is visiting Thailand next year*, with the imperfective *-ing* appropriate in a more informal register. This air of formality is underscored by the fact that the contraction, *'ll*, is less commonly used in

these instances: of 439 occurrences of *'ll + V* in the *CQP British English 2006* and the *CQP American English 2006*, all were found to be of an informal nature, including conversational, threatening, intimate, soothing or profane utterances. By far the majority used the first or second grammatical person. This varied significantly from the 1,000 occurrences of *will + V* perused in the same two corpora – 500 from each – where the tone was predominantly more formal, in utterances mainly in the third person.

The second grouping, Predictive, includes both direct predictions, as in (c) and (d), and expressions of epistemic necessity, termed 'predictability' *will + V* in section 5.7.3), as in example (e).

The third grouping, Dispositional, is closest to what are elsewhere referred to as volitional uses. However, this term is not used here, as it tends to imply animate agents only. 'Generic' was also rejected, mainly to prevent confusion with this term when it is used to refer to equivalent uses in the Simple Present (e.g., *Horses eat grass*). However, the Dispositional category here includes generic uses: the category includes behavioural characteristics or tendencies, as in (f), (g) and (h); offers, requests and invitations, as in (i), (j) and (k); on-the-spot decisions, as in (l); commitments, as in (m); and orders, as exemplified in (n), which entail the less common deontic modality of *will + V*. It is felt that connotations of disposition or volition in all of these uses legitimates their common classification. And given the volitional origins of *will*, it is not surprising that this grouping consists of the largest variety of meanings/uses. The form's origins also underpin its connotations of subjectivity, especially when compared with the Simple Present futurate. For example, *Sue will always help people* could also be expressed as *Sue always helps people*. The latter is communicated as a 'truth universally acknowledged' whereas *Sue will always people* embodies the sense of a personal guarantee on the part of the speaker.

Whether or not ESL students actually require this – or any - form of categorization can be debated, but it is suggested here that it would be useful in reducing a sense that *will + V* is unsystematic or contradictory, should such questions arise. The three groupings in Table 5-13 can also chart - in reverse order - the development of *will* from its volitional roots to its more grammaticalised, temporal uses, making them seem less randomised.

So ultimately, this subject must be addressed in terms of how any grammatical form can be accurately and effectively presented to ESL learners, without either oversimplifying the concepts entailed or adding unnecessarily to students' learning load. Language learners without a background or interest in linguistics perhaps consider the concept of time on a largely quotidian level, rather than approaching it from a viewpoint of philosophy, ontology or theoretical linguistics. On the other hand, however, a universally-accessible 'everyday' approach is not always a straightforward possibility, given that learners bring to the task the tacit representations of time inherent in their respective L1s. This only serves to underscore the importance of presenting these matters in a manner that is optimally explicit and accessible.

Before proceeding to discuss *will* + V in terms of aspect, it is important to address the differences between *will* and *shall*, particularly as this matter addresses some issues at the heart of future temporality and modality.

5.7.6 will vs shall

It is generally agreed that the use of *shall* + V is dwindling, perhaps to the eventual point of extinction. For example, in American English, *shall* has largely been replaced by *will* (Bybee, 1994, p. 8) or *should*. So rather than asking, *Shall I open a window*, a speaker of American English may enquire, *Should I open a window*? Whereas both *shall* + V and *will* + V spring from a volitional meaning (Declerck, 2006, p. 342, 348), the nature of this volition varies. The case of *shall* + V is more akin to obligation or externally imposed 'volition', rather than willingness. So when *shall* + V makes a suggestion or an offer, it embodies a sense of service or obligation: there is an entailment of external imposition (Bybee et al., 1994, p. 16) which typically seeks to address a perceived need or volition on the listener's part. In this sense, (a) is more felicitous than (b):

(a) Shall I fetch the doctor?

(b) Will I fetch the doctor?

This can vary according to grammatical person (Celle & Smith, 2010, p. 260). As Bybee et al. (1994, p. 16) explain, *shall* features in first-person questions due to its sense of obligation

implying an external imposition.⁶⁰ The speaker is seeking confirmation from the listener as to whether the speaker should follow through on the stated responsibility or offer. So, in the first person, *shall* + V denotes a lower level of personal volition - in favour of obligation - while *will* + V can entail a stronger degree of volitional meaning, e.g., in expressing commitment, orders and promises (Celle & Smith, 2010, p. 260) or indeed, prediction. There is a sense that *will* + V merely asks for information or expresses unpremeditated intention or volition (Declerck, 2006, p. 342, 348).

By way of further explanation, the above two examples are repeated here:

(a) Shall I fetch the doctor?

(b) Will I fetch the doctor?

Even though (b) is nowadays more likely, the difference between the two forms is still instructive in the light that it sheds on their uses. Utterance (b) conveys the impression that the speaker is enquiring as to the likelihood of his/her fetching the doctor, or in other words, asking the listener to predict or guess whether or not the speaker will carry out this action. This highlights an important aspect of the meaning of *will* + V, i.e., dispositional typicality (Celle & Smith, 2010, footnote 18, p. 256). In the predictive interpretation of (b) above, the speaker is asking the interlocutor to predict whether the former is likely to fetch a doctor in the present situation, based on the listener's knowledge of the speaker's disposition.

The form *shall* + V does not share this dispositional meaning. In *Shall I fetch the doctor?* there is no focus on the speaker's predicted behaviour in the light of his/her disposition: rather, it enquires as to the volition of the hearer and the readiness of the speaker to oblige – and to perform an obligation. This contrast can be seen more starkly in the following:

(a) # Water shall boil at 100°C.

(b) Water will boil at 100°C.

⁶⁰ This embodiment of a sense of obligation implying an external imposition explains why *shall* has been retained in many forms of legal documentation or pronouncements, e.g., “The agreement shall continue in force for a period of five years from the date it is made, and thereafter for successive five year terms unless and until terminated by one year prior notice in writing by either party” (Corbett-Jarvis & Grigg, 2014, p. 40).

The proposition in (b) is based on ‘dispositional’ knowledge of water, whereas the use of *shall* + V in (a) is inappropriate, as it implies that the speaker is enquiring about the volitional readiness of water to oblige by boiling at 100°C.

Regarding animate – specifically, human - agents, Declerck (2006, p. 343) exemplifies this effectively through the comparison below:

(a) What time will I be in Leeds? (e.g., if I take the 6:33 train)

(b) What time shall I be in Leeds? (i.e., what is your preference?)

Whereas the speaker in (a) is asking for information based on the ‘dispositional’ or conventional running of trains, in (b) there is a request regarding the volition of the hearer and an implicit offer to comply with this (Declerck, 2006, p. 342). In American English (and quite arguably, beyond), a speaker may use *will* + V in both situations, or substitute *should* for *shall*, i.e., *What time should I be in Leeds?* But again, despite the above demonstrated differences, the use of *shall* + V is still deemed to be on the road to extinction.

5.7.7 Register

Apart from the difference in the meaning/use of *shall* + V as highlighted in section 5.7.6, there is still a perception that due to its perhaps old-fashioned nuances, it suggests a more formal register. The register of *will* + V is sometimes labelled as neutral (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002, p. 211), but this fails to account for its ability to span across registers, both formal and informal. For example, its use in on-the-spot decisions, e.g., *The phone is ringing – I’ll answer it*, connotes informality. On the other hand, it can convey a strong sense of formality in utterances of commitment, e.g.:

- Will you take this man to be your husband?

- I will.

This use is typical in ceremonial contexts, and similar uses are seen in academic as well as official contexts, as illustrated respectively below:

(a) In this chapter some of the most widely-discussed changes that have been observed in the course of the development of expressions of modality will be outlined (Traugott, 2006, p. 107).

(b) Commencement exercises will take place on the Dartmouth Green on Sunday, June

11, 2017 (Dartmouth College Commencement, 2016).

Mention was made in section 5.7.5 of the use of *will* + V for the announcement of formal or impersonal plans, as in (a) below, particularly in contrast with the more conversational use of the Present Progressive futurate, as seen in (b):

(a) The president will visit Thailand next year.

(b) The president is visiting Thailand next year.

Two suggestions were made about the reasons for this difference in register: the older origins of *will* + V and the lack of the imperfectivity of the *-ing* form. The latter focuses on aspect, which will be discussed in the next section.

5.7.8 Aspect and temporality

5.7.8.1 Introduction: A comparison of three forms

In the domain of aspect, *will* + V shares some common ground with the Simple Present futurate. Much of this similarity stems from the two forms' embodiment of perfective aspect, but there are also relevant differences. A comparison and contrast between these two structures forms a significant portion of this section, along with further discussion of related temporal matters on which they vary. Where relevant, ongoing comparisons will also be made with *be going to* + V.

The use of *will* + V to indicate habituality or characteristic behaviour (referred to in section 5.7.3 as 'dispositional' *will* + V) can be dated back to Old English (Bybee et al., 1994, p. 157) and seen in Modern English in statements such as *Oil will float on water* or *Jim will do anything for food*.⁶¹ As indicated in section 5.7.3, these statements can also be expressed via the Simple Present, i.e., *Oil floats on water* and *Jim does anything for food*. Although the propositional content here is identical, there is a difference in nuance wrought by temporal

⁶¹ As explained in chapter 1, Aktionsart is not addressed in this thesis, unless immediately relevant. But it is important to note that the dispositional use of *will* + V is constrained by the choice of verb, i.e., it is only possible with dynamic verbs (Carlson, 2012, p. 834). For example, one cannot say the following in any sense of noting characteristic behaviour:

(a) # Anne will be a teacher.

(b) # Horses will have four legs.

These 'individual-state' verbs do not lend themselves to this use, as there is no sense of habituality entailed. Rather, these utterances have only a future reading and lack an episodic reading (Carlson, 2012, p. 834).

focus and the nature of the epistemic force entailed in each utterance. Both versions embody strong epistemic modality, but *will* + V statements of this dispositional type include an element of predictability focusing on future actualisation. Hence, while both dispositional *will* + V and the generic Simple Present focus on dispositional behaviour, *will* + V lacks the fuller epistemic force conveyed by the Simple Present, due to its focus on future actualisation.

This sense of an awareness of dispositional behaviour in *will* + V is based on past experience or knowledge of past actualisations, rather than on present evidence that a situation will eventuate. Brisard (2001, p. 270) terms this “a prediction on the basis of known premises”, which he explains as indicating “instances of past experimentation or experience on whose basis highly probably predictions can be made”.⁶² A key point of difference here between *will* + V and the Simple Present futurate is the element of prediction: the former structure focuses on the projection of a future reality which is based on past experience/knowledge, rather than on present and currently available conditions. So, whereas the Simple Present futurate connotes a structural reality or givenness (Brisard, 2013, p. 227) arising from a continuum between the past, present and projected future, *will* + V bases futurity statements on past knowledge or experience, evoking a sense of a ‘short-circuiting’ between the past and the future, due to the lack of the Simple Present’s sense of “temporal proximity [underlying] the ‘unmediated’” (Brisard, 2002, p. 268), as explained in section 5.4.4. This then means that while both forms entail significantly strong epistemic modality, *will* + V lacks the more ‘absolute’ licence of the Simple Present futurate.

Regarding immediate reality, there is a comparable point of contrast here between *will* + V and *be going to* + V. The latter form focuses on the current evidence or intention which licences future actualisation. This difference from *will* + V can be seen below:

(a) I promise you - Anne will be on time.

(b) I promise you - Anne is going to be on time.

The prediction in (a) is typically licenced by the speaker’s knowledge or past experience of Anne’s characteristic behaviour, rather than on the availability of any present indications. But in (b), the statement likely arises from current evidence of Anne’s progress in reaching the

⁶² It is also important to remember that the possibility of present actualisation is not excluded (Carlson, 2012, p. 834).

destination (e.g., the speaker has just seen her entering the building) or from knowledge of arrangements made for a timely arrival. This is also conveyed by the imperfective aspect embodied in *be going to* + V, which embodies a sense of ongoingness, springing from the commencement of evidential circumstances or intentions. But this evidence does not arise from a sense of structural reality matching with a broader knowledge of the world, as with the Simple Present futurate.

This focus on current evidence is illustrated again in the following, where the intention to paint a house is connected to current activity:

- What are you buying so much paint?
- I'm going to paint the house.

But below, the response featuring *will* + V is incongruous, as the apparently on-the-spot decision has in fact been preceded by a premeditated, preparatory action:

- What are you buying so much paint?
- # I'll paint the house.

As such, unlike the Simple Present futurate, *will* + V embodies neither structural givenness (Brisard, 2013, p. 216) in the temporal sense, or, as entailed in *be going to* + V, current evidence or intention. With *will* + V, the speaker does not perceive evidence of actualisation in the present, but rather, typically uses past experience to project into the future. This is further illustrated as follows:

- (a) Sam will win the race.
- (b) Sam is going to win the race.

Sentence (a) is a prediction based on past knowledge of Sam's running prowess: the race is not occurring at present and no evidence is accessible in the immediate environment. The prediction in (b) is based on current evidence, e.g., the speaker is aware of the weak field of competitors, or Sam is now leading the group of runners and is fast approaching the finish line. Again, *will* + V does not ground statements about future actualisations in the present.

This difference between *will* + V and *be going to* + V highlights further common ground shared by *will* + V and the Simple Present futurate. That is, their epistemic strength lies in the fact that they each entail perfective aspect, as mentioned earlier. This means that eventualities

expressed in either form are seen in their entirety, which bestows a high degree of certitude (Chilton, 2013, pp. 249, 250). This commonality is most clearly illustrated by dispositional *will* + V, where, in common with the Simple Present futurate, it expresses genericity.

Furthermore, perfective aspect entails a sense of completion: it connotes un interruptibility and unchangeability (Williams, 2002a, p. 1236). This then lends a stronger level of epistemic force, conveying stability in regard to actualisation. The perfective aspect possesses none of the dynamism or changeability of imperfectivity.

This entailment of completion in *will* + V can be illustrated via present predictions (as in (a) below), represented as reported in the past (as in (b)):

(a) President Kennedy will be assassinated.

(b) President Kennedy would be assassinated.

These utterances illustrate the perfectivity of *will* + V in that due to the unchangeability or un interruptibility of the perfective aspect, (b) cannot support the following addition:

President Kennedy would be assassinated, but thanks to an alert bodyguard, he wasn't.

The equivalent propositions expressed with *be going to* + V entail present predictions of inevitability as reported in the past. Here, imperfective aspect allows for a change in the processes of actualisation, meaning that non-actualisation is still possible:

(c) President Kennedy is going to be assassinated.

(d) President Kennedy was going to be assassinated.

And changeability is entirely acceptable in the utterance below:

(e) President Kennedy was going to be assassinated, but thanks to an alert bodyguard, he wasn't.

5.7.8.2 Conditionality and temporal anchoring

However, the unchangeability of perfective aspect must be qualified with *will* + V when a conditional element is introduced. For example:

(a) President Kennedy will be assassinated.

(b) President Kennedy will be assassinated, unless his bodyguards become more alert.

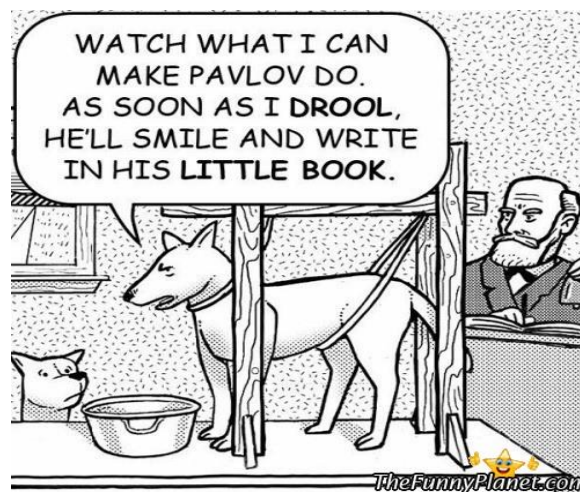
But perfectivity is not lost here, as can also be illustrated through the test of backshifting in (b):

(a) President Kennedy will be assassinated, unless his bodyguards become more alert.

(b) President would be assassinated, unless his bodyguards became more alert.

To apply Ogihara's (1996, p. 33) ruling: utterance (a) places the assassination at a time subsequent to his birth, whereas (b) locates it after the original Speech Time. In other words, the backshifted *would* is evaluation-time sensitive, whereas utterances involving *will* + V are speech-time sensitive (Ogihara, 1996, p. 35). This then means that *would* + V can assess changeability more demonstrably than can its *will* + V counterpart.

So, this addition of a condition still means that evaluation of the likelihood of actualisation is located in the future. Unlike the Simple Present futurate, where all conditions for actualisation must already be in place, actualisation here depends on the fulfilment of a future condition. This can be further illustrated through the cartoon below (TheFunnyPlanet.com, n.d.):



As the dog explains in the second sentence, Pavlov's writing in his book is contingent on the canine's drooling and cannot eventualise without fulfilment of this condition.

The issue of a conditional clause being attached to a *will* + V matrix clause also relates to the structure's need of a 'temporal anchor', given the fact that without this, it simply locates an eventuality at an unspecified future time (Declerck 2006, p. 358). This contrasts with *be going to* + V, which is grounded in present relevance. Again, for example, saying *That bird is going to*

attack you presupposes that the bird is already looking menacingly at the listener or flying aggressively towards him/her, as part of current reality. But the statement, *That bird will attack you* is likely to produce a response of *When? Or Why?* This arises from the generalizability of *will* + V utterances, as opposed to the deictic nature of *be going to* + V, which limits its scope of relevance to the context in which it is spoken (Brisard, 2001, p. 270).

Vet (1994, p. 53) illustrates this effectively through the following:

(a) He looks like a man who is going to die.

(b) He looks like a man who will die.

The remote sense of actualisation entailed in (b) arises from this sense of generalizability in *will* + V and conveys no immediacy. But the use of *be going to* + V in (a) generates a sense of imminence or even urgency based on current conditions, which might prompt the summoning of a doctor (Vet, 1994, p. 53). As such, Brisard (2001, p. 270) categorises *will* + V as a “projected reality” (i.e., projected into the future) and *be going to* + V as “evoked reality” (i.e., evoked in the present).

The temporal anchoring of *will* + V utterances is most commonly rendered by either a conditional clause, as seen previously and in (a) and (b) below, or by a temporal adverbial, as in (c) and (d):

(a) That bird will attack you if you go near its nest.

(b) The dog will howl unless you feed it.

(c) The movie will commence in five minutes.

(d) This shop will open again at 9:00 tomorrow.

These two types of temporal anchoring function in different ways: the conditional clause does not suggest a particular time of actualisation, but still locates it at a time following fulfilment of the condition expressed (Declerck 2006, p. 358). So in (a) above, if the condition of going near the bird’s nest is fulfilled, the matrix clause’s eventuality will occur at or soon after that time. But until that time, the circumstances for actualisation are not present. Fundamental to this point is that utterances featuring *will* + V tend to demand some kind of temporal location, whether achieved conditionally or adverbially, due to their future focus times and lack of grounding in the present.

5.7.8.3 Non-premeditation: Offers and requests

Will + V utterances expressing offers, requests and invitations do not require a temporal anchor, as they are usually an unpremeditated response to an utterance or situation in the immediate environment, or are deliberately framed in such a manner. There is typically an understanding that an offer or request relates to a current situation, or to one whose temporality is either unfixed as yet or available from the context.

Offers, requests and invitations further illustrate the temporality elements of *will* + V when they are contrasted with *be going to* + V. Their customary lack of premeditation (Declerck, 2006, pp. 346, 347-348; Fleischman, 1982, p. 89) is a factor shared by on-the-spot decisions, e.g.:

- (a) Will you have some tea?
- (b) Will you help me?
- (c) Will you come to our party?
- (d) The light is flickering – I'll change the bulb.

While offers, requests and invitations are more commonly expressed nowadays via alternative modals or expressions (e.g., *would* + V, *could* + V, *would you like to* + V, *how about* + V-ing), on-the-spot (unpremeditated) decisions still typically employ *will* + V.⁶³ As seen in example (d) above, these typically involve a decision made in response to a present and often sudden eventuality or the announcement of circumstances:

- (a) Look - someone's breaking into that house! I'll call the police.
- (b) The dog has escaped. I'll look in the usual places.

The significance of this lack of premeditation is highlighted when *will* + V is replaced by *be going to* + V, particularly with offers or requests. For example:

- (a) - My car has broken down.
- I'll give you a lift.
- (b) - My car has broken down.

⁶³ In the case of invitations, it is likely that premeditation on the part of the speaker has occurred, but the invitation is conveyed to the listener as a spontaneous offer. But given the tendency for invitations to be conveyed via other structures, as listed above, they will not be discussed further here.

- I'm going to give you a lift.

The implied premeditation in (b) could give the impression that the responder had perhaps played a part in the car's demise or had at least been anticipating this opportunity – both of which could cause alarm in the first speaker.

A similar negative effect is illustrated in the request below, where the use of *be going to* + V in (b) implies a criticism that the listener has not already sprung into action. This is due to the entailed premeditation on the part of the speaker:

(a) My car has broken down. Will you phone the garage?

(b) # My car has broken down. Are you going to phone the garage?

So once again, the imperfective aspect in *be going to* + V entails an ongoingness of longer duration than mere seconds, while the perfectivity of the *will* + V offer means that it arose as a complete, immediate and unpremeditated response to the current situation.

To continue in this vein before returning to the subject of offers and requests: the concept of *will* + V utterances' being based on past knowledge also comes into play in regard to the announcement of the surprising or unexpected. This matter was discussed in section 5.4, where it was explained that the Simple Present futurate cannot be used to make these types of utterances. The same would appear to be the case with *will* + V: its entailment of past experience or knowledge means that announcements of the unexpected are precluded where this information is not shared by the interlocutors.⁶⁴ Otherwise, they can assume the aura of on-the-spot ideas or a sudden, unpremeditated rush of volition. For example, the following utterances would be irregular, as their propositional content is unanticipated:

(a) # Guess what? We will get married!

(b) # Get this: Peter will move to Melbourne!

(c) # Mary will have a party.

In contrast to the above examples, however, most formal announcements of plans do not generally contain the unexpected:

(a) The president will hold a press conference at 10:00.

(b) The concert will commence at 8:00.

⁶⁴ In the previously-mentioned 1,000 occurrences from the *CQP British English 2006* and the *CQP American English 2006*, none were identified as announcements of surprising or unexpected news.

These types of utterances bear the requisite connection with the past, as there is an implicit understanding that arrangements have been made prior to the announcements, i.e., the eventuality is anticipated and not surprising in nature. But in terms of aspect, a sense of pre-accepted reality can well be attributed to the perfective nature of both the Simple Present futurate (Brisard, 2013, p. 234) and to a lesser degree, the *will* + V future. Hence another form, e.g., the Present Progressive futurate or *be going to* + V, is generally employed, as these are used unproblematically to convey the unexpected.

The use of *will* + V to make on-the-spot offers or requests might at first blush seem to flout this rule of not announcing the unexpected. But it is claimed here that past experience or knowledge can inform a speaker making an offer that a particular and present situation indicates a certain need. For example, if two people known to each other need to travel to a common destination and one of them has no transport, then experience or cultural knowledge can inform the speaker with transport that it is acceptable to offer a lift to the other. To illustrate: if John knows that he and Peter are both attending a staff function, but that Peter does not have transport, he might say, *I'll give you a lift*. So John's existing knowledge (recent or otherwise) of both Peter's lack of transport and the cultural appropriacy of offering a lift is the trigger for the offer.

By contrast, if already-existing knowledge of these circumstances does not exist, an offer would be incongruous and most likely inappropriate. For instance, if, following the announcement of the same meeting, John immediately turned to Mary, an unknown co-worker, and said, "I'll give you a lift", this offer would not be based on any prior knowledge and would ignore the fact that Mary might already have access to a functioning vehicle. Secondly, it would most likely lack the cultural appropriacy of the previous situation, given that the two speakers are strangers to each other.

In closing this section on aspect and temporality, the suggestion is made that aspect may indeed be one way in which the seemingly randomized uses of *will* + V are unified. The claim is therefore made that the Pure Temporal, Predictive and Dispositional uses of the form, as outlined in Table 5-13, section 5.7.5, all embody perfective aspect. These are repeated separately here and discussed briefly in turn:

Pure Temporal	(a) The concert will commence at 7:30pm.
	(b) The president will visit Thailand next year.

Table 5-14 Pure Temporal uses of *will* + V

These two examples of Pure Temporal use do not convey connotations of arrangements having been made between at least two parties, as is the case with the Present Progressive futurate, and suggests an entity unto itself. There is an impersonal, formal sense of detachment and certainty which suggest officialdom and unchangeability. Additionally, there is nothing surprising or unexpected about the propositional content in each.

Predictive	(c) The opposition will win the next election.
	(d) The storm will hit at around 5:00.
	(e) Bill will be in Paris now.

Table 5-15 Predictive uses of *will* + V 1

An important qualification about unchangeability and uninterruptibility must be made where the Predictive use is concerned. Lacking the sense of unmediated reality imbued in the Simple Present, this use can still impart a sense of certainty. This is not because actualisation is completely guaranteed to transpire as envisaged: rather, the use reflects the speaker's perception of actualisation as certain, licencing him/her to select this form. In other words, the speaker is communicating from a perspective which indicates no expectations of changeability or interruptability, seeing the eventuality as a bounded whole which is certain to unfold.

Dispositional	(f) Lonely dogs will howl.
	(g) Oil will float on water.
	(h) Sue will always help people.
	(i) Will/Shall I help you?
	(j) Will you help me?
	(k) Will you stay for dinner?
	(l) The phone's ringing – I'll get it.
	(m) I will love you all the days of my life.
	(n) You will stay here until the job is finished.

Table 5-16 Dispositional uses of *will* + V

To address the third and final subcategory above: the genericity and unpremeditated nature of these utterances entail perfectivity, as previously discussed. But for now, it remains to be said that the perfectivity of *will* + V will be seen in a contrastive sense in section 5.8, where *will be –ing* + V is analysed.

5.7.8.4 Agency

As mentioned earlier, the Simple Present futurate has the strongest form of futurity agency, due in part to its external agency and hence strongest form of detachment. Native speakers of English tacitly place greatest confidence in a non-human form of agency (e.g., laws of nature) followed by a certainty in eventualities scheduled by organisational authorities. In contrast, *will* + V does not convey the same epistemic force, but importantly, it can convey a perception of certainty regarding actualisation. However, it cannot compete with the present or immediate sense of reality embodied in the Simple Present futurate. This was demonstrated in section 5.4.2, in the examples below, with (a) making reference to an authoritatively determined timetable and (b) connoting participant control:

(a) When do we get there?

(b) When will we get there?

To reprise earlier discussions of agency: this concept has been defined here as entailing the ability to schedule or pre-determine eventualities. Copley (2002, p. 57; 2009, p. 42) explains

it as an entity with the ability to see that a plan actualises and a commitment to seeing that this occurs. In other words, an agent has control over actualisation, which entails the power to change or cancel an eventuality. It was also seen in section 4.2.4 that the grammatical subject of an utterance is not necessarily the agent of the plan or arrangement. With internal agency, the grammatical subject typically has power over actualisation (e.g., as in the Present Progressive futurate), while external agency (e.g., laws of nature or an authoritative figure) conveys the sense that an entity beyond the participants in the making of the utterance has control over actualisation, meaning that these participants have no power over actualisation or change.

Due to its multifaceted nature, *will* + V is not a straightforward form to codify, as has implicitly been illustrated. Given that this one structure is used to express both orders and offers, predictions and commitments, plus genericity and temporality, it is unsurprising that complexity is also the case with agency. Referring back to the three semantic subcategorisations proposed in section 5.7.5, i.e., Pure Temporal, Predictive and Dispositional: an analysis of agency for each group supports the further subdivision of the Dispositional subcategory into Generic and Volitional, as seen below in Table 5-17. The other two groupings are respectively uniform in locus of agency and in whether or not they can be scheduled and/or pre-determined. However, the Dispositional group splits into two regarding both of these elements.

MEANING/USE OF <i>WILL</i> + V	EXAMPLE	INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL AGENCY	SCHEDULABLE OR PRE-DETERMINABLE
1. Pure Temporal	(a) The concert will commence at 7:30pm.	External	Sched. & Pre-det.
	(b) The president will visit Thailand next year.	External	Sched. & Pre-det.
2. Predictive	(c) The opposition will win the next election.	External	Neither
	(d) The storm will hit at around 5:00.	External	Neither
	(e) Bill will be in Paris now.	External	Neither
3. Dispositional			
3(i) Generic	(f) Lonely dogs will howl.	External	Pre-det.
	(g) Oil will float on water.	External	Pre-det.
	(h) Sue will always help people.	External	Pre-det.
3(ii) Volitional	(i) Will/shall I help you?	Internal	Neither
	(j) Will you help me?	Internal	Neither
	(k) The phone's ringing – I'll get it.	Internal	Neither
	(l) Will you stay for dinner?	Internal	Neither
	(m) I will love you all the days of my life.	Internal	Neither
	(n) You will stay here until the job is finished.	Internal	Neither

Table 5-17 Agency of *will* + V

Most uses of *will* + V denote external agency, the exception being the Volitional use, as its name would suggest. The Pure Temporal use in many ways mirrors the external agency of the Simple Present futurate, even though the latter conveys a stronger sense of definite actualisation. But the Predictive use of *will* + V differs from the Simple Present futurate, in that *will* + V can express non-schedulable eventualities in the natural world, or other types of non-schedulable outcomes, as below. It must be stressed though that (a) and (c) only hold in a Predictive context, as they entail natural-world occurrences which are unschedulable. Thus they are infelicitous in the Pure Temporal, Generic and Volitional senses.

(a) It will rain at around 5:00 tonight.

(b) # It rains at around 5:00 tonight.

(c) The opposition will win the election next year.

(d) # The opposition wins the election next year.

Also in contrast with the two futurates, *will* + V does not demand a prior plan or scheduling, except in the Pure Temporal meaning/use: hence the permissibility of (a) and (c). This is seen in further contrast in the pairs below:

MEANING/USE	FUTURATES: PRIOR PLAN DEMANDED	<i>WILL</i> + V: PRIOR PLAN DEMANDED IN PURE TEMPORAL ONLY
Temporal	(a) Federer plays Nadal tonight.	(b) Federer will play Nadal tonight.
Temporal	(c) Federer is playing Nadal tonight.	(d) Federer will play Nadal tonight.
Predictive	(e) # Federer loses to Nadal tonight.	(f) Federer will lose to Nadal tonight.
Predictive	(g) # Federer is losing to Nadal tonight.	(h) Federer will lose to Nadal tonight.

Table 5-18 Plannability of futurates and *will* + V

As such, both the futurates and the Pure Temporal use of *will* + V can only be used in contexts where a prior plan/scheduling is assumed – known or unknown to the interlocutor in the two forms respectively - meaning that the eventualities involved must be both schedulable and pre-determinable. This existence of a plan thus conveys a sense of non-susceptibility to change, which is, however, still stronger in the Simple Present futurate.

Predictive *will* + V presents a more complex case, in that the speaker most likely makes an utterance from a perceived position of strength. But this lacks the forcefulness of the Simple Present futurate, due to its lack of current evidence, which disallows an appeal to immediate reality. Hence it is suggested here that while the Predictive form does not entail schedulability or pre-determinability, there is a perception of epistemic force by the speaker. However, the lack of control over actualisation allows for conditional limitation. To illustrate: in the examples below, a case of ‘predictability’ *will* + V, the speaker may be basing this utterance on access to Bill’s itinerary, but there is an underlying ‘rider’ suggesting that something could perhaps occur to prevent actualisation, e.g.:

(a) Bill will be in Paris now, if there have been no glitches in his plans.

(b) Bill will be in Paris now, unless he has run out of money.

As claimed above, the discussion of agency in the third and final category, Dispositional *will* + V, mandates a split into two subcategories, i.e., Generic and Volitional. Given the sense of universal truth embodied in the kinds of utterances made in examples (f), (g) and (h) (Table 5-17), they must by nature entail external agency and pre-determinability, based as they are on past knowledge/experience. In contrast, volitional utterances must be internally controllable. Because of being typically unpremeditated, these utterances do not demand determinability or schedulability: they can in fact involve predeterminability, particularly in the cases of invitations and commitments, but their illocutionary force⁶⁵ implies spontaneity and immediacy.

To continue a thread running through this discussion, despite the complex and wide-ranging nature of the *will* + V structure, its underlying elements suggest unifying elements.

5.7.9 Conclusion

The attributes of the *will* + V future, as discussed here, are presented in the table below:

⁶⁵ Illocutionary force is defined here as the act performed by an expression (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014, p. 160).

FORM	will + V		The exam will commence at 9:00.	
MEANING/USE	Strong perception of certainty regarding actualisation, predominantly based on past experience/knowledge. No plan necessary, except for Pure Temporal; otherwise, the planning process is not the chief focus. Three main categories of use: Pure Temporal, Predictive and Dispositional.			
TEMPORALITY 1: ‘PREDICTABILITY’ WILL + V	TEMPORAL FOCUS POINTS:		Future	
	PRIMARY TIME FOCUS:		Future	
	SPEECH TIME: Present	EVENT TIME: Present		REFERENCE TIME: Future Evaluation Time
TEMPORALITY 2: ALL OTHER USES	TEMPORAL FOCUS POINTS:		Future	
	PRIMARY TIME FOCUS:		Future	
	SPEECH TIME: Present	EVENT TIME: Future		REFERENCE TIME: Future
MODALITY	Mainly epistemic modality, but deontic in expression of orders. Level of epistemic force varies from strong (in making commitments) to weak (in making predictions based on personal opinions). Not as strong as Simple Present futurate, but perceived as strong.			
CONTEXT/GENRE	Broad range (e.g., conversational, formal, academic, ceremonial, official)			
ASPECT	Perfective			
SCHEDULABILITY & PRE-DETERMINABILITY	Schedulable and pre-determinable in Pure Temporal; Pre-determinable in Dispositional (Generic only)			
EXTERNAL OR INTERNAL CONTROL	External (Pure Temporal, Predictive & Generic) or Internal control (Volitional)			
AGENCY	All types: human, non-human, inanimate or force of nature			
REGISTER	Broad range from formal to informal; Can replace Simple Present futurate, Present Progressive futurate and <i>be going to</i> + V in more formal contexts			
TEMPORAL ADVERBIALS	Obligatory (if not contextually available or implied, or if a conditional clause is attached)			

Table 5-19 Features of *will* + V

The attributes of *will* + V will now be compared and contrasted with those of *will be* + *-ing* – a form with three major uses, one of which is at times ignored in ESL texts.

5.8 *will be* + V-*ing*

5.8.1 Introduction

It was submitted previously that the various uses of *will* + V could be divided into three subcategories, namely, Pure Temporal, Predictive (including predictability) and Dispositional (further subdivided into Generic and Volitional). At first glance, *will be* + V-*ing* would appear to

be merely the imperfective equivalent of *will* + V - a perception commonly imparted to learners. But closer inspection shows that agency in *will be* + V-*ing*, amongst other elements, has a complexity which warrants further exploration.

To begin with a broad-brush description: *will be* + V-*ing* shares some common ground with the categories of *will* + V above. That is, both forms have a pure temporal and predictive (including predictability) meaning/use, but perhaps most surprisingly, *will be* + V-*ing* does not embody dispositionality, in either the generic or volitional sense. This latter point is a primary distinction between the two forms, as will be seen. And despite the common ground in pure temporal and predictive uses, the two forms are by no means interchangeable.

5.8.2 Meaning/uses of *will be* + V-*ing* (including aspect and temporal focus)

5.8.2.1 Introduction

Three main uses of *will be* + V-*ing* can be identified. In the review of ten ESL texts in chapter 2, Criterion 10 revealed that two texts do not discuss this structure; two others explain one meaning/use; and the remaining six identify between three and five meanings/uses. Of the ten texts, none covers the third type to be discussed here. The two texts covering one meaning/use (namely, Azar & Hagen, 2009 and Thewlis, 2007) focus exclusively on the most obviously aspectual use, i.e., that of a situation in progress at a given time in the future:

- (a) Tom will be sleeping when we arrive (Azar & Hagen, 2009, p. 3).
- (b) 100 years from now, Roberta will be living on the moon (Thewlis, 2007, p. A-4).

This section will now explore what have been identified as three types of uses of *will be* + V-*ing*. But before proceeding, it is interesting to note that despite Type 1 being the most semantically transparent in terms of its progressive form, it occurs - according to the *CQP Web British English 2006* and *CQP Web American English 2006* corpora - far less frequently than Type 2 and on a par with Type 3:

CORPUS	TOTAL OCCURRENCES	<i>will be</i> + V- <i>ing</i> TYPE 1	<i>will be</i> + V- <i>ing</i> TYPE 2	<i>will be</i> + V- <i>ing</i> TYPE 3
<i>American English 2006</i>	29	0	29	0
<i>British English 2006</i>	55	1	53	1

Table 5-20 Occurrences of *will be* + V-*ing* three types

5.8.2.2 *will be* + V-ing Type 1

Contrasting the first use of this form, e.g., *Tom will be sleeping when we arrive* (Azar & Hagen, 2009, p. 3), with *will* + V highlights the ongoing nature of the eventualities in these types of utterances, thus necessitating the imperfective aspect. By contrast, *Tom will sleep when we arrive* implies two discrete activities: firstly the arrival of the speaker and interlocutor/s, followed by Tom's immediate falling asleep. So there is a lack of overlap here, such that causation could be implied. In common though, both forms have Speech Time in the present, and Reference and Event Times in the future.

Another contrast with *will* + V can be seen below:

(a) It's 10:00. This time next week, I'll be lying on a beach.

(b) It's 10:00. This time next week, I'll lie on a beach.

While (a) conveys the idea that the speaker will already have lain down on the beach before 10:00 and will continue to lie there past that time, (b) connotes a less likely scenario, suggesting that the speaker will be standing or walking on a beach and, mindful of the time, suddenly lie down at 10:00.

In common with *will* + V, Type 1 *will be* + V-ing has as its main temporal focus future actualisation, rather than a current plan. So in the sentence, *This time next week, I'll be lying on a beach*, there is no focus on current plans to achieve this: rather, the primary focus is on the eventuality of lying on the beach. In other words, lying on the beach will have started prior to 10:00 next week and will continue beyond that point. So this is one slice out of a situation which began prior to and will continue after the nominated future temporal point. As per usual with the imperfective, it places the focus 'inside' or 'in the middle of' the eventuality, according to the perspective chosen by the speaker. The fact that the action begins prior to the main focus time is crucial to this form, as will be seen throughout this discussion. For now though, it is important to note that the use of Type 1 embodies a "piece of the past" (Williams, 2002b, p. 217), in that the eventuality has begun – and was planned - before the future focus time.

Type 1 is by far the most straightforward use of this form, given that its aspectual requirement of an action in progress at a particular time is to the fore. As mentioned, it typically places the speaker 'inside' an eventuality, with neither the beginning- nor end-point

boundary seen. In this sense it is uncontroversial and requires little other analysis (Williams, 2002b, p. 90). But as illustrated, the aspectually-foregrounded sense of progressivity in Type 1 is not the most common use of this form: in fact, it has become increasingly marginalized (Celle & Smith, 2010, p. 262; Smith & Leech, 2013, p. 87). This then adds an additional layer of importance to the task of identifying the other uses.

5.8.2.3 *will be* + *V-ing* Type 2: Introduction

Although Types 1 and 2 share a present Speech Time, future Reference Time and future Event Time, there is a substantial aspectual difference between Type 1 and Type 2 *will be* + *V-ing* – or so it would appear at first glance. Examples of Type 2 include the following:

- (a) I'll be seeing Tom on Thursday.
- (b) The board will be meeting next month.
- (c) The theatre will be closing in ten minutes.

The fact that this type of eventuality depicts a bounded situation in its entirety (Williams, 2002b, p. 50) - and hence lacks conventional progressivity - means that it appears to flout the key principle of imperfectivity. For this reason, it is at times seen as a use which is 'eccentric' (as noted by Celle & Smith, 2010, p. 248) or 'special' (Declerck, 2006, p. 344; Leech & Svartvik, 1994, p. 78; Wada, 2013, p. 391). However, it will be shown here that a core element of progressivity underlies the three uses of this structure (as claimed by Williams, 2002b, p. 110).

5.8.2.3.1 *will be* + *V-ing*: Progressivity

The imperfectivity of *will be* + *V-ing* is a complex issue which can at first impede the recognition of a core aspectual meaning underlying the three uses. Therefore, before proceeding with Types 2 and 3, it would be advantageous to revisit progressivity, so as to see how it emerges in the uses of this structure. The current research supports the view of Williams (2002b, pp. 50-52) that there is in fact a common core of imperfectivity underlying all three uses, namely, a future event - seen either in its entirety or otherwise - based on present circumstances which arise from past planning. Whereas Types 1 and 3 are typically depicted as incomplete, Type 2 is seen as a complete eventuality, as will be further discussed.

The seemingly contradictory sense of imperfectivity in a bounded event is explained by Williams (2002b, p. 51) firstly in terms of the connection between its dual temporal focus, i.e., a future eventuality based on present circumstances or knowledge. This is common to other future *-ing* forms, e.g., *be going to* + V and the Present Progressive futurate. In both the present and future, progressive forms convey a situation which has already originated in some way before Speech Time. As Williams (2002b, p. 105) explains, “progressive forms with future time reference ... contain something of the past as well as something of the present”. To revisit one form: this is the case with the Present Progressive futurate, e.g., *I’m moving next week*, where the situation already underway is not that denoted by the lexical verb, but the arrangement to move, which was made before Speech Time.

Whereas *will be* + V-*ing* Type 1’s imperfectivity focus is on an eventuality perceived to be in progress at a particular time in the future (but still having been planned in the past), in Type 2 the imperfectivity relates to an already planned, arranged or intended eventuality that is yet to be enacted at a particular time in the future. The proposition embodied in the lexical verb is not projected as being in progress: rather, it is the speaker’s belief or knowledge that a situation will actualise, based on a currently-existing state of affairs that is in progress (Williams, 2002b, p. 51). With progressive futures, there is the sense that all prerequisite conditions for actualisation are already in place. Thus, they can be seen as “two situations rolled into one” (Williams, 2002b, p. 116), the first being the current plan and the second, the future actualisation of the eventuality conveyed by the lexical verb. So there is a sense of progression from the moment when the prerequisite conditions for actualisation came into existence to at least the commencement of the future proposition. As Williams (2002b, p. 51) further contends, it is this ‘wider’ situation, already existing at Speech Time, “which is still evolving and which has not yet been completed” (or, in the sense of actualisation, begun), and is hence seen internally, rather than externally and objectively as a discrete entity.

This sense of containing a pre-Speech Time element, or “a piece of the past” (Williams, 2002b, p. 217) can be seen when *will be* + V-*ing* Type 2 utterances are contrasted with those containing *will* + V. For example:

(a) I’ll pick you up tomorrow.

(b) I'll be picking you up tomorrow.

(c) Will you help John to pack?

(d) Will you be helping John to pack?

In (a) and (c), the speaker is communicating a proposition which was developed 'on the spot', with no evidence of prior thought (or at least a decision not to convey this). However in (b), the speaker conveys the sense that he/she is reminding the listener of prior arrangements made and in (d), is asking about putative plans or a lack thereof. Because of this implied 'wider situation', (b) and (d) lack the sense of immediacy and potential pressure embodied in the *will* + V form (Williams, 2002b, p. 218).

A final point regarding imperfectivity and *will be* + V-ing Type 2 relates further to the factor of boundaries. Imperfective eventualities do not normally make endpoints visible, but this form can embody a different concept of boundaries. As an arrangement must exist prior to Speech Time, this beginning point is unavailable, but the endpoint may or may not be accessible. This still signals imperfectivity, however, in the relationship between the 'piece of the past' and actualisation, typically the beginning point of the eventuality.

To illustrate: in saying, *I'll be working in Melbourne from Tuesday to Friday this week*, the speaker clearly outlines an endpoint. But the situation is still imperfective in that no beginning point can be determined (i.e., the point at which the arrangement came into being) and there is a concept of incompleteness existing between this time and the eventual completion time. In other words, the speaker is in the midst of the wider situation, which came into being at a prior, undetermined time and will remain incomplete until Friday (Williams, 2002b, p. 108, 216). The same conditions exist in statements such as *This train will be leaving in five minutes*: the prior time of scheduling is unknown, but the termination point is clearly defined.

The above concept of a wider situation coming into play is highlighted by a particular use of *will be* + V-ing Type 2. This use is typically marked by a phrase such as *the next thing you know*, or at least *next*, and is seen in utterances such as these:

(a) We have to stop the tuition increase! The next thing you know, they'll be charging \$40,000 a semester! (Nizor Project, n.d.)

- (b) This is my recommendation to you – take just one small step in the right direction, then another, and the next thing you know, you'll be crossing the finish line (The LEEP Shoutout, 2016)!
- (c) If you're interested in performing at the mic, it's super easy. Just arrive, put your name on a slip of paper in a beer pitcher, and next thing you know you'll be onstage (Jamaica Plain News, 2016)!
- (d) Although summer is just getting started, the days will start to get shorter from here on out. The next thing you know, you'll be trading in your sunblock and shorts for scarves and hand warmers (DiLonardo, n.d.).

There is a strong implication that the envisaged eventualities in this 'next' usage are perceived as rather unlikely, or even ludicrous (Williams, 2002b, p. 206) – or may at least be seen as so at the time, by the listener or reader. This is most dramatically evident in (a) above, but (b), (c) and (d) still connote an impression that the target eventuality had not previously been contemplated by the reader, and might initially seem surprising or unattainable.

Lexical propositions of this type are generally seen in their entirety, as in (a) to (d) above. But more significantly, there is an implicit understanding that the eventuality is seen as a potential development of a wider situation already in progress at Speech Time (Williams, 2002b, pp. 206-207). There is nothing out-of-the-blue here: rather, it suggests a future incremental development of an already-existing situation which may well achieve its hypothesized fulfilment. As Williams (2002b, p. 2007) explains, a paraphrase of this use of *will be + V-ing* Type 2 is "If things carry on the way they have been doing so far, I predict that the next thing that will happen is as follows". Hence a situation already in play at its earlier stages could well progress to the imagined outcome.

For example, in (b) above, it is explained to readers that after taking one step, then another, they will progress to fulfilling the desirable goal of crossing the finishing line. Or in (c), the steps of arriving and registering one's name are potentially developmental steps towards going onstage. These illustrate the underlying concept of imperfectivity embodied by *will be + V-ing*, here triggering the idea of proceeding from a past plan towards as-yet unfulfilled actualisation. The Type 2 usage further prompts a sense of detachment (to be discussed in the

following section), connoting the idea that the participants are not directly involved in the planning of the ultimate eventuality and are contemplating a hypothetical scenario, the progression of which may well unfold according to arrangements or recommendations outlined by a third party.

Following this review of progressivity, the discussion now returns to *will be* + *V-ing* Type 2 and the other elements entailed in it.

5.8.2.3.2 *will be* + *V-ing* Type 2: Five elements of meaning/use

There are five distinctive elements at the heart of this usage, namely, predetermination, volition-neutrality, non-agentivity, matter-of-courseness and normality, plus progressivity (Celle & Smith, 2010, p. 248; Declerck, 2006, p. 344). Following the preceding coverage of progressivity, the other four elements will now be discussed.

To address the first of these: pre-determination applies to both Types 1 and 2 (Celle & Smith, 2010, p. 253). This is shown in the ambiguity of a statement such as *Thomas will be waiting for you when your plane arrives*. This utterance could mean either that Thomas will be waiting for the listener prior to and on his/her arrival (Type 1) or that due to pre-determined arrangements, Thomas will meet the interlocutor at the airport (Type 2).

The essentialness to *will be* + *V-ing* of pre-determination is seen in the incongruity of the following Type 2 propositions, none of which can be pre-determined, as opposed to predicted, particularly where (a) and (b) are concerned:

- (a) # It will be raining at 3:30 this afternoon.
- (b) # They will be having a disagreement next week.
- (c) # She will be winning the lottery in ten years from now.

Likewise, none of the above are schedulable, whereas schedulability is an entailment of *will be* + *V-ing*.

These are in contrast with those mentioned previously, all of which are pre-determinable:

- (a) I'll be seeing Tom on Thursday.
- (b) The board will be meeting next month.
- (c) The theatre will be closing in ten minutes.

This element of pre-determinability in Type 2 lends a sense of detachment to the utterance: e.g., in *Thomas will be waiting for you when your plane arrives* above, there is an undertone of, for example, ‘so you don’t have to worry about that’ communicated to the interlocutor. The second, third and fourth elements above, namely, volition-neutrality, non-agentivity, matter-of-courseness and normality also come under this umbrella of detachment. These will now be discussed in turn, despite tending to be interwoven in the use of this structure.

The use of *will be* + *V-ing* allows the speaker to avoid conveying a sense of volition, insistence (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973, p. 49), responsibility or intention. The examples below (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973, p. 49) illustrate this via a contrast with *will* + *V*:

(a) He’ll do his best.

(b) He’ll be doing his best.

In (a), the speaker could be making a prediction or conveying a sense of volition on the part of the grammatical subject, whereas through the use of *will be* + *V-ing* in (b), the speaker is making a prediction about the subject’s future behaviour based on knowledge of already-determined circumstances, generating a sense of detachment from any form of volition, intentionality or responsibility. This creates a shift in the speaker-hearer relationship, in that the speaker is not seeking the interlocutor’s acceptance of the propositional content and is distancing him/herself from any responsibility for it (Celle & Smith, 2010, p. 254).

This entailment of dissociation from the information source is seen in the following media headlines, which communicate the fact that the eventualities were arranged and will take place independently (Celle & Smith, 2010, p. 255) of the news source:

(a) The fashion trend you’ll be seeing everywhere next season (Kocharekar, n.d.)

(b) [There's a reason why] we Michiganders will be seeing a lot of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump (Lessenberry, 2016)

(c) Su'a Cravens Won't be Speaking to His Mother This Week, [sic] She's a Cowboys fan (12up, 2016).

There is a sense in these examples that the speaker in each case is detached from the planning, intentionality or future actualisation of each eventuality. Again, this can be illustrated most

effectively by replacing *will be + V-ing* with *will + V*, e.g., in (a): *The fashion trend you'll see everywhere next season*. One can envisage this utterance being made by, for example, a fashion designer responsible for the trend, or by marketers outlining their advertising plans – i.e., by people with intentionality, volition and responsibility regarding actualisation.

The sense of detachment in *will be + V-ing* also evokes the impression that the situation is not debatable or negotiable (Celle & Smith, 2010, p. 254), particularly with the speaker. Therefore, the fashion trend or Clinton's and Trump's visits will actualise regardless of the wishes of the reader, who realises implicitly that he/she cannot influence events via the news source. This explains why the form is commonly used to deliver information that may be unwelcome to the listener/reader, e.g., *I will be suspending further payment until a decision has been reached*. This 'actualisation regardless' tone also carries a sense that the speaker cannot be called upon to justify his/her decision or action (Celle & Smith, 2010, p. 254).

This absence of volition, intention or responsibility therefore conveys the lack of speaker agency implicit in this form. With the *will be + V-ing* structure, the focus is on the relationship between the speaker and the proposition itself, rather than on the relationship between the grammatical subject and the lexical verb (Celle & Smith, 2010, p. 251). In (b) above, volitionality is not assumed by 'we Michiganders', i.e., the grammatical subject; rather, the speaker is conveying the proposition from a non-agentive position.

The case mounted here can be further strengthened by a contrast with the equivalent utterance using *will + V*:

(a) The book will be waiting for you when you get to the library.

(b) # The book will wait for you when you get to the library.

While (a) implies that arrangements have been made regarding the book, (b) conjures up images of an agentive book, e.g., evoking images of tapping fingers or a decision to abandon the wait should the addressee be late. Statement (a) also indicates that grammatical subjects in *will be + V-ing* can be animate or inanimate, as agency lies elsewhere.

The remoteness of agency in *will be + V-ing* can additionally be seen in the following (Celle & Smith, 2010, p. 252):

(a) He can't drive.

(b) He can't be driving.

(c) He won't drive.

(d) He won't be driving.

In (a), the grammatical subject's ability is being described and in (c), his volitionality is in focus. So with *will* + V, there is a direct relationship between the grammatical subject and the lexical verb. But utterances (b) and (d) raise different questions, posed by the speaker's assessment of the proposed eventuality, which outweighs the grammatical subject's agency. In other words, speaker perspective regarding the proposition itself takes precedence over that of the direct participants (Celle & Smith, 2010, p. 252). So, whereas (c) relates the grammatical subject to the activity of driving, (d) indicates the speaker's evaluation of the likelihood of driving being performed by the subject. In order to make such epistemic pronouncements, the speaker must have indirect evidence or knowledge available through a prior situation.

The principal elements discussed in this section are encapsulated in the following conversation between Calvin and Hobbes (Watterson, 1989, p. 41):



In frame 3, Calvin's statement, *We'll be roughing it! [We'll be] living off the land!*, indicates firstly, his non-agentivity in this pre-determined plan formulated without his input; and secondly, his non-volitionality, as he was not consulted regarding his participation. Despite his sense of enthusiasm at this stage, he has a sense of detachment from the proposed eventuality. In the final frame, when he intuits his father's true intentions, his lack of negotiating and debating power has no doubt become evident.

5.8.2.3.3 *will be + V-ing* Type 2: Matter-of-courseness

The remaining element of *will be + V-ing* identified earlier is matter-of-courseness and a sense of normality. The term ‘matter-of-course’ is frequently attributed to this structure. It can be defined as “occurring or proceeding in or as if in the logical, natural, or customary course of things; expected or inevitable” (Matter-of-course, n.d.).

This applies only to Type 2 usages, where again, its underlying lack of agency on the part of the speaker/s conveys the lack of volitionality, intentionality and responsibility embodied in this structure (Celle & Smith, 2010, pp. 253-255; Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973, p. 49; Smith & Leech, 2013, p. 87). There is usually the sense that the eventuality “will actualise as a matter of routine or as part of what is (or is expected to be) the normal ‘course of events’” (Declerck, 2006, p. 344). For example:

(a) When will Harry be moving?

(b) I’ll be seeing Mary and John on Saturday.

(c) You’ll be hearing from my solicitors (Swan, 1995, p. 218).

(d) It’s autumn. The leaves will soon be falling from the trees (Williams, 2002b, p. 93).

In (a), if it is known that Harry has recently bought a new residence, it is to be expected that he will move there in the near future, as a matter of course. Utterance (b) may carry the implication, for example, that the speaker sees Mary and John every Saturday, as part of a longstanding arrangement. In sentence (c), it would follow as normal that if the speaker is taking steps to sue someone, then the latter will hear from the relevant solicitors as the normal next stage in the process. Finally, in (d) the normal course of events in autumn is the basis for this utterance.

Hence there is a strong sense of pre-determination embodied in this use (Celle & Smith, 2010, p. 253), whether this is rendered by a prior arrangement or through knowledge of an accepted process. As opposed to one use of *will + V*, there is nothing ‘on-the-spot’ in these situations, i.e., no sense of immediacy in decision-making. Therefore, the prerequisite conditions for actualisation must already be present prior to Speech Time.

The necessity of pre-determination can be seen when it is lost through the use of *will + V*. For example, in (d) above, if the future progressive is replaced by *will + V*:

It's autumn. The leaves will soon fall from the trees

the speaker appears to be making a prediction about an eventuality which is not a common occurrence or is unknown to the listener. Leech (2004, p. 68) further demonstrates this incongruity in the two utterances below:

(a) # Margot will be poisoning her husband when he gets home.

(b) # We shall be blowing up the Houses of Parliament tonight.

The author goes on to explain that statements expressing “abnormal or sudden or violent events” (Leech, 2004, p. 68) such as these, which could not be considered as occurring in the realms of normality, cannot be expressed using *will be* + *V-ing*, as they do not communicate a sense of events unfolding according to accepted norms.

In a similar vein, *will be* + *V-ing* is not typically used to announce unexpected or surprising news, e.g.:

(a) # Guess what? The queen will be abdicating next year!

(b) # Have you heard? Mark Zuckerberg will be giving *all* of his money to charity!

The necessary basis in – and shared awareness of – a situation or knowledge which has been established prior to Speech Time is absent here, meaning that using *will be* + *V-ing* to announce information which has not as yet sprung into existence in some manner, or whose way has not been paved, is not viable.

This matter-of-course element and its sense of normality, customary occurrence and assumption of prior knowledge underscore the humour in the following dialogue, from the situation comedy, *Get Smart* (Brooks & Henry, n.d.). The Chief of Control is explaining details about a highly dangerous, top-secret mission to one of his agents, Maxwell Smart (Agent 86):

Chief: 86, your mission is simple: find Kaos and destroy it, get Mr Big, rescue Professor Dante, and bring back the Inthermo.

Max: This may run into a little overtime, Chief.

Chief: Max, you realize you'll be facing every kind of danger imaginable.

Max: And [I'll be] loving it!



The jocularity with which Max reacts to the restatement of the enormity of his mission, as well as to the high level of danger entailed, indicate his attitude to work-related peril, i.e., that it is a matter-of-course part of his job.

5.8.2.3.4 *will be* + *V-ing* Type 2: Politeness

The sense of detachment in *will be* + *V-ing* also raises a point about the politeness and tactfulness that it can afford (Celle & Smith, 2010, p. 253; Leech & Svartvik, 1994, p. 78; Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973, p. 49), due to its lack of volition and intentionality, and its matter-of-course nuances. This can best be seen when the progressive is contrasted with the non-progressive simple future form:

(a) When will you be phoning John?

(b) When will you phone John?

Utterance (a) communicates a detached, matter-of-course effect that removes pressure from the interlocutor, in contrast with (b), which connotes a sense that the listener needs to make an immediate commitment to the speaker. A similar contrast can be seen in the following:

(a) Will you be leaving tomorrow?

(b) Will you leave tomorrow?

Again, utterance (a) enquires about the inference of a pre-existing plan based on stated or perceivable circumstances (Williams, 2002b, p. 204). In the context of posing this question to a long-staying house guest, utterance (a) deliberately (and most likely, strategically) implies that the guest may already have made plans to leave. This diverges significantly from the relative bluntness embodied in (b), which implies a direct request, hence putting more pressure on the listener to announce an imminent departure. This is aspectually rendered by the fact that non-progressive *will* does not carry connotations of plans, arrangements or intentions prior to Speech Time, as opposed to the imperfective *will be* + *V-ing*. There is also the implication that as the interlocutor has already made a decision, the speaker is not trying to influence his/her plans (Williams, 2002b, p. 204) and is merely making an enquiry about them.

As shown, the lack of volitionality or responsibility in *will be* + *V-ing* can render a situation more neutral and therefore less offensive to an interlocutor. To illustrate further via the following exchange:

- Will you help me to move on Saturday?
- I'm sorry, but I'll be going to Canberra this weekend.

This response can therefore imply that possible assistance is out of the hands of the second speaker, thus avoiding any connotations of reluctance to help the speaker. The same can be seen in customer relations (Wada, 2013, p. 210), in conversations such as the following:

- Can I talk to someone about a home loan?
- I'm sorry, sir, but we will be closing in five minutes.

The detached, less immediate, and hence less personal tone wrought by *will be* + *V-ing* contrasts with the equivalent utterance featuring the Present Progressive futurate, *I'm sorry, sir, but we are closing in five minutes*, which has undertones of speaker involvement in the arrangement and therefore the possibility of negotiation or appeal. This can be seen again in the more extended discourse below:

If you will be attending please email me now and confirm. Can you also please advise when you will be making payment (Carroll, 2007).

If *will be* + *V-ing* is replaced by *will* + *V* in the final clause, e.g., *Can you also please advise when you will make a payment*, this would bring to bear a different experience for the reader, who may feel more bluntly pressured to take action, due to the volitionality embodied in *will* + *V* but lost in *will be* + *V-ing* Type 2.

To conclude here before moving on to Type 3: in Type 1, the original sense of imperfectivity that foregrounds progressivity is still salient. In Type 2, the loss of the original sense of volition and intention on the part of the speaker – through the processes of grammaticalisation – is foregrounded, with responsibility for actualisation being implicitly transferred to an external agent. However, imperfectivity in Type 2 still remains, in the progression from a plan to its actualisation.

5.8.2.4 *will be* + *V-ing* Type 3

Type 3 *will be* + *V-ing* has one particular usage element in common with Type 1, that being the salient expression of imperfectivity. However, there is a significant difference between the two regarding temporal focus. While Type 1 refers to a situation in progress in the future (as in *This time next week, I'll be lying on a beach*), Type 3 focuses primarily on the present. This is marked

by the common use of a present adverbial, typically *now* or *by now* (Celle & Smith, 2010, p. 256), which indicates that Speech Time, Event Time and Reference Time appear to coincide. (The adverbial is also redeemable from the context, as in (a) below.) This is seen in cases such as the following:

- (a) I'll check her office. She'll probably still be working.
- (b) The surgeons will be preparing for the operation now, so you won't be able to speak to them for several hours.
- (c) Don't phone him now - he'll still be having dinner.

As such, Type 3 *will be* + V-ing can be defined as "an epistemic use referring to a current, ongoing situation" (Wada, 2013, p. 394)⁶⁶ or an epistemic depiction of present eventualities (Williams, 2002b, p. 204). Its progressivity is in line with that of Type 1, in that a situation is depicted as being in progress at a focus time, having begun prior to this time and continuing beyond that into the future.

But as mentioned, there is an important difference in this focus time, with Type 1 (and Type 2) being situated in the future and Type 3 with primary focus on the present. This is the imperfective equivalent of 'predictability' *will*, as discussed in section 5.7.3, where Speech Time and Event Time are in the present, and Reference Time was posited to be in the future, as a hypothetical evaluation time. The evocation of futurity via *will* creates the required epistemic distance not available if (a), (b) and (c) above were converted to a present form, i.e.:

- (d) I'll check her office. She's still working.
- (e) The surgeons are preparing for the operation now, so you won't be able to speak to them for several hours.
- (f) Don't phone him now – he's still having dinner.

These all suggest that the speaker is giving a direct, witnessed account of the subjects in each statement. As illustrated in section 5.7.3 with 'predictability' *will*, (a), (b) and (c) above are presented below with the future Reference Time (evaluation time) demonstrated:

⁶⁶ Wada (2013, footnote 2, p. 391) notes that *shall be* + V-ing cannot be used epistemically when referring to the present. Therefore, it cannot be substituted for *will be* + V-ing Type 3 – a point echoed by Celle & Smith (2010, p. 256).

- (a) [If I check in her office soon, I'll see that] she'll probably still be working.
- (b) [If you check on the surgeons soon, you'll see that] the surgeons will be preparing for the operation, so you won't be able to speak to them for several hours.
- (c) Don't phone him now. [If you see him soon, you'll see that] he'll still be having dinner.

As with Types 1 and 2, speakers using Type 3 have no direct access to the actual eventuality represented by the lexical verb, so they create an epistemic representation of it (Celle & Smith, 2010, p. 256). Due to this lack of direct access, these utterances typically feature a third-person grammatical subject.

The ability of Type 3 *will be* + *V-ing* to align a speaker's mental depiction of a currently progressing eventuality with how it is presumed to be unfolding extends beyond temporal simultaneity. As well as being used to convey a conceptualised representation of an inaccessible situation, this form can also act in an 'interpretive' capacity when the speaker is in fact immersed in the focus situation. By way of illustration, Celle & Smith (2010, p. 257) cite an example from *Family and friends*, a novel by Anita Brookner:

In the drawing room, Hal glances unobtrusively at his watch, computing some timetable of his own. 'Yes,' says Sofka, who has followed his glance. 'You will be wanting to get back' (Brookner, 1985, p. 118).

As the authors explain, rather than creating a mental representation from a non-witness viewpoint (Celle & Smith, 2010, p. 257), the speaker here conveys an interpretation of her interlocutor's behaviour, i.e., glancing at his watch, as a means of understanding his present frame of mind. However, a distance of politeness, rather than physical remoteness, is still maintained, as her utterance, if modified to *You want to get back*, would seem relatively impolite and inappropriately direct, representing as it would his agency and sense of responsibility for his action. (This is the equivalent of the use of Type 2 *will be* + *V-ing* to convey politeness, as discussed earlier.)

As was indicated with the case of 'predictability' *will*, it is claimed here that Type 3 *will be* + *V-ing* has its Speech Time in the present, Event Time in the present, and Reference Time as a hypothetical evaluation time in the future. With the 'interpretative' use above, this could be

construed as a time when Hal (i.e., the man consulting his watch) may or may not confirm this interpretation. In the physically remote sense, e.g., in *Don't phone him now - he'll still be having dinner*, a hypothetical evaluation time may be when the listener chooses to override the speaker's advice and phone regardless.

To return to *will be* + *V-ing* in general: a point must be noted here regarding *will be* + *V-ing* Types 1, 2 and 3. Despite the three different uses, there is only one underlying meaning. As was illustrated in section 5.6, Binnick's (1991, p. 250) "deletion of identity" rule, where utterances with the same clausal subject can span both present and future times, highlights the core meaning underlying Types 1, 2 and 3. This can be seen through the utterance, *He'll be talking to her now and again next week*, which incorporates a Type 3 followed by a Type 2. The two verbs refer to present and future situations respectively, which would be impossible if they signified different meanings. This is also true in regard to Types 1 and 2, which both refer to future actualisation, e.g., *This time next week I'll be working on my article and arriving in London*. The first clause refers to Type 1, an ongoing activity deemed to be happening at a certain point in the future; the second refers to a punctual actualisation, viewed in its entirety.

So, to conclude this section: *will be* + *V-ing* Types 1, 2 and 3, despite differences in temporal focus and overt imperfectivity, embody the same core meaning, but use this in different ways to communicate future ongoingness, future actualisation of an arrangement in its entirety, and current simultaneity with an unwitnessed or 'interpreted' event. Furthermore, it appears that the discussion of imperfectivity to date has produced evidence enough to claim that imperfectivity can be linked to informality in English: that is, *be to* + *V*, the Simple Present futurate (overall), and *will* + *V* tend to express more formality than *be going to* + *V*, the Present Progressive futurate, and *will be* + *V-ing*. To further illustrate this by means of a contrast between *will* + *V* and *will be* + *V-ing*: data from the *Corpus of Us Supreme Court Opinions* (n.d.), illustrative of a more formal genre, offers the following:

FORM	OCCURRENCES
<i>will</i> + <i>V</i>	65, 255
<i>will be</i> + <i>V-ing</i>	272

Table 5-21 Occurrences of *will* + *V* and *will be* + *V-ing* regarding formality

So it seems that there is evidence enough to claim that in all forms discussed, imperfectivity denotes a comparatively informal register, while perfectivity conveys greater formality.

5.8.2.5 *will be* + *V-ing* Types 1, 2 & 3: Susceptibility to change

Another point of difference between progressive and non-progressive forms, as discussed in earlier sections, is the susceptibility to change entailed in *-ing* forms. This was previously discussed in regard to perfectivity and *will* + *V*, in sections 5.8.8.1 and 5.8.8.2. A contrast between *will* + *V* and *will be* + *V-ing* indicates that due to its imperfectivity, the latter - despite its matter-of-course tone - is still liable to change or cancellation. As outlined in earlier sections of this chapter, much of this is traceable to the 'inside' perspective of progressive forms, which lack the sense of objective, external control of non-progressive forms. For example:

(a) Peter will be arriving in Longreach on Monday.

(b) Peter arrives in Longreach on Monday.

If a condition is added to each, as seen below, (c) is acceptable, while the objective, authoritative representation of an eventuality in its entirety in (d) does not allow for change in regard to actualisation:

(c) Peter will be arriving in Longreach on Monday, unless the weather turns bad.

(d) # Peter arrives in Longreach on Monday, unless the weather turns bad.

The same observation regarding susceptibility to change applies to Types 1 and 3, as illustrated below, with Type 2 repeated for the purposes of clarity:

WILL BE + V-ING TYPE	EXAMPLE	PRIMARY TEMPORAL FOCUS
Type 1	This time next week, Peter will be arriving in Longreach, unless the weather turns bad.	Future
Type 2	Peter will be arriving in Longreach on Monday, unless the weather turns bad.	Future
Type 3	Peter will be arriving in Longreach now, unless the weather has turned bad.	Present

Table 5-22 *will be* + *V-ing* and susceptibility to change

The previously-mentioned difference in temporal focus is highlighted here. Types 1 and 2 focus on future actualisation of current conditions and therefore require a change in these conditions

prior to actualisation. However, given Type 3's focus on present actualisation, changes are only permissible if they have occurred prior to Speech Time, as denoted by the Present Perfect.

5.8.3 Conclusion

Overall, *will be* + *V-ing* Types 1, 2 and 3 are unified by a sense of imperfectivity, which emerges in ways that vary between the three. Across all three, however, there is the sense of past planning extending towards present consideration of an eventuality, whether actualised in the future (Types 1 and 2) or in the present (Type 3). An internal sense of progression from plan to actualisation of an eventuality in play at a particular future time underscores Types 1 and 3. Types 1 and 2 have a future Event Time and Reference Time, whereas it is suggested here that Type 3 features a present Event Time which could hypothetically be evaluated at a future Reference Point.

The attributes of the *will be* + *V-ing* future, as discussed in this section, are presented in the table below:

FORM	<i>will be + V-ing</i>		<i>This time next week, I'll be lying on a beach. The board will be meeting at 10:00 today. We can't phone him now – he'll be working.</i>
MEANING/USE	Three main meaning/uses: (1) A planned eventuality considered in the present as being in progress at a given time in the future; (2) An arranged eventuality considered in its entirety, conveying a sense of ongoingness from its past arrangement to present consideration of future actualisation. (3) An arranged eventuality considered to be in progress in the present, but for which there is no direct evidence; hypothetical future evaluation time		
TEMPORALITY	TEMPORAL FOCUS POINTS: Present and Future		
	PRIMARY TIME FOCUS: Future (Types 1 and 2); Present (Type 3)		
	SPEECH TIME: Present	EVENT TIME: Future (Types 1 and 2) or Present (Type 3)	REFERENCE TIME: Future (Types 1 and 2); Type 3: Hypothetical future evaluation time
MODALITY	Epistemic modality		
CONTEXT/GENRE	Frequently found in the news media; Commonly announces plans/arrangements, but with a sense of detachment from the source; also frequent in everyday speech		
ASPECT	Imperfective		
SCHEDULABILITY & PRE-DETERMINABILITY	Must be schedulable and pre-determinable		
EXTERNAL OR INTERNAL CONTROL	A strong sense of external control		
AGENCY	All types; Significant sense of non-agency on the part of the speaker; agency is depicted as being in the hands of other people or forces.		
REGISTER	General (but usually less formal than <i>will</i> + V)		
TEMPORAL ADVERBIALS	Generally necessary (if not contextually available or implied); Types 1 and 2: future adverbial; Type 3: present adverbial		

Table 5-23 Features of *will be + V-ing*

5.9 Conclusion: Summary of criteria

In the introduction to this chapter, it was stated that the aim of this research was to create an individual profile for each of the six futurity forms under discussion, such that they could be disambiguated. Part of this goal was to illustrate the fact that no two forms are interchangeable (as is sometimes claimed) and that each communicates the usually tacit perspective of the speaker. As evidenced in the summary tables at the end of the discussion of each form, despite

an overlap between particular criteria in several forms (e.g., aspect), each structure features a unique global profile.

This concluding section will now offer an overview of the most substantial matters arising from the application of the ten criteria used for the purposes of analysis.

Criterion 1: Meaning and use

In Criterion 1, which centres on meaning/use, some of the themes arising are the level of certitude about, and evidence for, actualisation. These result largely from consideration of whether potential actualisation is supported by immediate reality or whether it is viewed from a perception of remoteness. Much of this springs from the necessity or otherwise of a pre-existing plan, a sense that actualisation is already underway, or indeed whether a plan is necessary at Speech Time. A contributing factor in regard to certitude of actualisation is whether the eventuality is being contemplated as a total entity or as only a slice of the situation, the latter producing a sense of susceptibility to change.

Each structure is deemed to have one underlying meaning, from which two or more uses arise – uses that are not arbitrary, but which are enabled by this one core meaning.

Criteria 2 and 10: Temporality and temporal adverbials

Analysis of temporality has as one of its discussion points the question of whether each futurity structure has the present or the future (or the possibility of either) as its primary focus point. Three of the six forms focus mainly on the present, underscoring the significance for the speaker of groundedness in the present, and only one, i.e., *will* + V, has both its Event Time and Reference Time centred exclusively on the future. In the remaining two structures, *be to* + V and *will be* + V-ing, there is the possibility of a primary focus on either the present or the future.

These findings are of course reflected in the Speech, Reference and Event Times of each structure. All typically have Speech Time in the present, with four locating Reference Time exclusively in the present. One form, *will* + V, has both Reference Time and Event Time in the future. As seen in section 5.8, *will be* + V-ing features greater complexity here, with Event Time in either the future (Types 1 and 2) or in the present (Type 3). However, it was suggested that

this structure has a uniformly future Reference Time (being more of an evaluation time in Type 3).

Regarding the requirement of a temporal adverbial: it is unsurprising that the two futurate structures demand the inclusion of one, given the potential confusion with their uses in the present. However, this is not the case with *be going to* + V, whose structure unambiguously conveys futurity. The same applies to *be to* + V, which - despite its surface appearance of present time - is a futurity form only.

This leaves the two *will* forms, which - perhaps unintuitively - generally require the inclusion of a temporal adverbial, or a temporal anchor such as a conditional clause. Part of the reason for this may be the use of 'predictability' *will* and *will be* + V-ing Type 3, which allow for present Reference (evaluation) Time.

Criterion 3: Modality

Modality in futurity forms proves to be principally epistemic, with only two forms expressing deontic modality. The first of these is *be to* + V and the second is seen in imperative uses of *will* + V, which relies on context for denotation. The prevalence of epistemic force is unsurprising, given the innately epistemic nature of futurity itself.

Criteria 4 and 9: Context, genre and register

The main issues to arise here are whether a form is primarily limited to official or formal discourse. It emerges that only one form is principally restricted in such a way, i.e., *be to* + V. Others, such as the Present Progressive futurate and *be going to* + V tend to be used mainly in spoken or informal discourse, while *will* + V covers the broadest range of contexts and genres, ranging from formal to informal and conversational to official registers. But overall, as explained in section 5.8.2.4, perfectivity - at least predominantly - denotes a more formal register, while without exception, imperfectivity conveys informality.

Criterion 5: Aspect

A highly significant factor in the degree of certitude conveyed by a structure is aspect, in that it produces the level of epistemic force. Structures were judged to be either perfective or

imperfective based on whether they are cancellable or changeable. Four of the six forms were judged to be imperfective, the two perfective forms being the Simple Present futurate and *will* + V. Except for *be to* + V, those embodying imperfectivity align with the conventional use of progressive *-ing*, entailing a sense of ongoingness from plan to actualisation.

Criterion 6: Schedulability and pre-determinability

The nature of an eventuality primarily dictates whether or not it is schedulable and/or pre-determinable. Three of the six forms embody both elements, i.e., *be to* + V, the Simple Present futurate and *will be* + V-*ing*, with one (the Present Progressive futurate) being schedulable only. The most complex forms here are *be going to* + V and *will* + V, as the embodiment of the two elements in this criterion varies according to the particular use of the form. For example, the intentionality use of *be going to* + V demands both schedulability and pre-determinability, whereas in the inevitability use, neither of these is possible. With *will* + V, the Pure Temporal usage also embodies both elements, but within the Dispositional category, the Generic grouping is pre-determinable only.

Criterion 7: Locus of control

Another significant factor in the level of certitude created by a structure is the locus of control. Four forms were judged to entail external control, while one of the six (the Present Progressive futurate) has an internal locus of control. *Be going to* + V has both possibilities, whereas *will* + V is external in its Pure Temporal, Predictive and Generic uses, but internal in its Volitional use.

Criterion 8: Agency

Locus of control is connected to Agency, i.e., the ability to actualise, change or cancel an eventuality. Agents were discussed here in terms of whether they were animate (human or non-human), inanimate, or forces of nature. Four of the forms can invoke any type. The Present Progressive futurate permits human agency only, while *be to* + V is even more restricted, allowing only animate, authoritative agents.

Earlier chapters discussed the fact that a tense incorporates and indicates far more than mere temporality. This is particularly so with futurity, which invokes speaker perspective on a complex and wide-ranging scale. The current chapter has illustrated that at least ten different elements contribute towards the constitution of a form and its uses, affording speakers the possibility of indicating certitude, control, volitionality, intentionality, inevitability, arrangements commitment, obligation, predictions and predictability.

Other elements may well remain to be included in an analysis of futurity forms and the six structures included here would bear further enquiry, argument or contestation. As noted by Thorstein Bunde Veblen (as cited in Dallek, 2013, p. x), “[t]he outcome of any serious research can only be to make two questions grow where one question grew before”.

Chapter 6: A selection of teaching proposals

6.1 Introduction

In the light of the query posed at the end of chapter 5, it is therefore appropriate that the question of identifying the systematic elements underlying the expression of futurity in English be succeeded by that of how these elements might be incorporated into ESL teaching. This section will give a brief outline of some proposed approaches to teaching futurity, beginning with some general strategies and then looking at a number of suggested resources for two futurity expressions in English, i.e., the Present Progressive future and *be going to* + V. Each of the two structures will be discussed primarily in terms of its meaning and uses, followed by references to their profiles developed in chapter 5. The discussion also offers an illustration of some teaching suggestions which focus primarily on input. It does not outline a complete guide to introducing a futurity structure, as this is permitted neither by space nor by the defined scope of this theoretical research.

6.2 General strategies

One approach submits that along with routinely being given structures, rules of usage, tense A or B comparison options, multiple-choice options or gap-fills to complete (all of which are, of course, invaluable aids to learning), students should be asked to create utterances from a starting point of accurate meaning-making that is sensitive to the elements of meaning/use, modality, context, aspect, locus of control, agency and register. An illustration of this is the creation of a set of scenarios for which more advanced learners are asked to identify the most appropriate futurity form:

1. I want to tell someone that I'm intending to join a gym. I have been thinking about this for a while, after realizing that I am very unfit. I say, "....."
2. I have just received a message from a friend who wants to see a movie on Saturday. I can't meet him then, as I have already arranged to play tennis with my brother. I say, "I'm sorry, but I on Saturday."

3. I have just noticed someone carrying some heavy books and I want to offer to help. I say, "I"
4. My friend has just received an item in the mail. Judging from the envelope, it is a wedding invitation. I feel sure it is from Peter and Mary, who are getting married soon. Before she opens it, I say, "That from Peter and Mary."
5. I need to tell an employee that according to my manager, she has to work on a new and difficult project with me. No date has been set for the commencement of the project. As this employee is rather difficult to manage, I need her to know that this is a direct order from the manager. So I want the message to sound as formal and official as possible. She will be surprised, as she has not heard anything about this project before. I say, "Youwith me."
6. I need to tell an employee that according to my manager, she has to work on a new and difficult project with me. As she is an excellent employee, I want to sound as relaxed and unofficial as possible. I say, "You with me."
7. My cousin has just asked if I would like to come to the airport with her tomorrow, to meet our uncle. As I am quite busy, I need to know the arrival time of the plane. I ask, "When?"

Initially, the target participants or less advanced students could be given two or three options as possible responses to each scenario, as below:

1. I want to tell someone that I'm intending to join a gym. I have been thinking about this for a while, after realizing that I am very unfit. I say:
 - (a) I'm going to join a gym.
 - (b) I'll join a gym.
 - (c) I join a gym.
2. I have just received a message from a friend who wants to see a movie on Saturday. I can't meet him then, as I have already arranged to play tennis with my brother. I say:
 - (a) I'm sorry, but I play tennis on Saturday.
 - (b) I'm sorry, but I'm playing tennis on Saturday.
 - (c) I'm sorry, but I am to play tennis on Saturday.

3. I have just noticed someone carrying some heavy books and I want to offer to help. I say:
 - (a) I'll help you.
 - (b) I'm going to help you.
 - (c) I'm helping you.
4. My friend has just received an item in the mail. Judging from the envelope, it is a wedding invitation. I feel sure it is from Peter and Mary, who are getting married soon. Before she opens it, I say:
 - (a) That's to be from Peter and Mary.
 - (b) That'll be from Peter and Mary.
 - (c) That's from Peter and Mary.
5. I need to tell an employee that according to my manager, she has to work on a new and difficult project with me. No date has been set for the commencement of the project. As this employee is rather difficult to manage, I need her to know that this is a direct order from the manager. So I want the message to sound as formal and official as possible. She will be surprised, as she has not heard anything about this project. I say:
 - (a) You are to work with me.
 - (b) You'll be working with me.
 - (c) You work with me.
6. I need to tell an employee that according to my manager, she has to work on a new and difficult project with me. As she is an excellent employee, I want to sound as relaxed and unofficial as possible. I say:
 - (a) You are to work with me.
 - (b) You'll be working with me.
 - (c) You're going to work with me.
7. My cousin has just asked if I would like to come to the airport with her tomorrow, to meet our uncle. As I am quite busy, I need to know the arrival time of the plane. I ask:
 - (a) When does the plane arrive?
 - (b) When will the plane arrive?
 - (c) When is the plane going to arrive?

But ultimately, students should be expected to retrieve the most appropriate form⁶⁷ unaided, so as to develop automaticity. A key part of the activity is the requirement that participants justify their choices and explain why other possible futurity forms were rejected or why more than one is possible (plus the difference wrought by the commensurate change in perspective).

⁶⁷ If students suggest correct options which do not feature a futurity form, these must be included as part of a range of possibilities. For example, in scenario 3, apart from the target *I'll help you*, or variations thereof, alternatives include *I can help you*; *Let me help you*, etc.

Using Scenario 5 as an example: *be to* + V would be the most appropriate form, as it denotes officialdom; carries an authoritative tone; can be used to announce unexpected content (which is why the Simple Present futurate must be rejected); implies imminence; and does not require a temporal adverbial (which again discounts the Simple Present futurate). Following activities such as these, students could be encouraged to stage such scenarios or develop others of their own, so as to produce consolidating output.

For lower-level students, the abstract concept of susceptibility to change, as embodied in imperfectivity, can be difficult to grasp. But it is possible to convey it implicitly in grammatical, listening or reading activities and highlight it in discussion, so that the initial groundwork for understanding is laid. This is demonstrated in the future in (a) and (c) and the past in (b) and (d) below:

(a) I'm meeting John on Tuesday, but that could change if he has to work late.

(b) I was meeting John on Tuesday, but he had to work late.

(c) I leave on Monday, so I won't be able to see you then.

(d) I left on Monday, so I wasn't able to see you then.

Likewise, without recourse to abstract explanations, learners could be asked to consider a range of utterances in terms of agency and locus of control. In the following, they can be asked to identify which eventuality would be easiest to cancel or change, providing reasons based on agency and locus of control (or words to that effect):

(a) The concert starts at 8:00pm.

(b) John and I are having lunch at McDonald's today.

(c) I'm going to clean the house tomorrow.

So, for example, students might explain that (a) would be hardest to cancel or change, as it is organised by an impersonal company or venue and because the speaker doesn't know the organiser, making it harder for the speaker to contact this person, etc. They could add that (b) would be relatively simple, as it would only entail contacting John (and not McDonald's, given the nature of the venue); and that (c) would be the easiest to change, as the speaker is the only person involved. Hence, this task can be effectively completed without the use of

metalanguage, so that a foundation of understanding can be laid as early as possible and the systematic elements identified, albeit implicitly.

6.3 Approaches featuring *be going to* + V

The media abound with exploitable examples of grammatical structures, e.g., news headlines and stories, cartoon strips, advertisements, plus clips from television programs or movies, which can engage students' interest. One of the primary advantages here is the immediate availability of a rich context, which assists learners in identifying the motivations for a speaker's choice of structure in meaning-making. This section will employ various such resources to focus on the elements identified in *be going to* + V (section 5.6) and profiled in Table 5-10.

Exemplifications and abstract explanations must, of course, always be commensurate with students' L2 ability, particularly where English is the medium of instruction. As above though, it is felt here that even in the earlier stages of learning, the basis for building a systematic understanding of the elements underlying English TA can still be established. For example, a song for children learning ESL is *Pizza and Chips* (British Council), featuring *be going to* + V:

<p>Monday night Molly had a fright A hungry monster knocking at the window Rubbing his tummy and licking his lips <u>"I'm going to eat</u> you with pizza and chips Pizza and chips, pizza and chips <u>I'm going to eat</u> you with pizza and chips."</p> <p>Tuesday night Tommy had a fright A hungry monster knocking at the window Rubbing his tummy and licking his lips <u>"I'm going to eat</u> you with pizza and chips Pizza and chips, pizza and chips <u>I'm going to eat</u> you with pizza and chips."</p> <p>Wednesday night Wendy had a fright A hungry monster knocking at the window Rubbing his tummy and licking his lips <u>"I'm going to eat</u> you with pizza and chips Pizza and chips, pizza and chips <u>I'm going to eat</u> you with pizza and chips."</p> <p>Thursday night Thelma had a fright A hungry monster knocking at the window Rubbing his tummy and licking his lips <u>"I'm going to eat</u> you with pizza and chips Pizza and chips, pizza and chips <u>I'm going to eat</u> you with pizza and chips."</p>	<p>Friday night Freddy had a fright A hungry monster knocking at the window Rubbing his tummy and licking his lips <u>"I'm going to eat</u> you with pizza and chips Pizza and chips, pizza and chips <u>I'm going to eat</u> you with pizza and chips."</p> <p>Saturday night Sally had a fright A hungry monster knocking at the window Rubbing his tummy and licking his lips <u>"I'm going to eat</u> you with pizza and chips Pizza and chips, pizza and chips <u>I'm going to eat</u> you with pizza and chips."</p> <p>Sunday night Simon had a fright A hungry monster knocking at the window Rubbing his tummy and licking his lips <u>"I'm going to eat</u> you with pizza and chips Pizza and chips, pizza and chips <u>I'm going to eat</u> you with pizza and chips."</p> <p>[Song clip available at http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/songs/pizza-and-chips]</p>
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The song uses the target structure several times throughout to express the monster's intention of eating each child with pizza and chips. When discussing the song, teachers can help to convey the element of intentionality by pointing to their head and asking children about the monster's solitary 'plan'.⁶⁸

Along with implicit input such as this, an inductive approach can aid in the effective learning of grammar, whereby instead of presenting a rule, teachers provide students with resources featuring examples of a form and ask them to divine the rule from the data. For example, the two columns below exemplify the two main uses of *be going to* + V:

⁶⁸ With regard to pronunciation, teachers might also transition learners from *going to* to *gonna*, particularly as the online performance of the song indicates that the former is difficult to sing in the allotted musical time.

<i>BE GOING TO + V</i> USE 1	<i>BE GOING TO + V</i> USE 2
Anne's going to watch tv tonight.	Look at those black clouds. It's going to rain.
Tom's going to have lunch at McDonald's today.	They haven't studied and they went to a nightclub last night. They're going to fail the exam.
He's going to play computer chess tonight.	I've overslept – I'm going to miss the train!
I'm going to vacuum the house tomorrow.	Oh no - she's fallen over! She's going to lose the race.
She's going to travel on the Orient Express one day.	In the near future, a lot of jobs are going to be lost to robots.

Table 6-1 Inductive approach to two uses of *be going to + V*

Individually or in groups, students can be asked to analyse the two sets of data and identify the two components of intentionality and inevitability (or words to that effect). This process would, of course, be scaffolded as necessary by the teacher.

In a related vein, when addressing the differences between *be going to + V* and the Present Progressive futurate, students could be asked to indicate whether a range of situations involves either individual intentions (*be going to + V*) or arrangements (Present Progressive futurate) with a second party, such that meaning, locus of control and agency are identified (as described in Tables 5-10 and 5-9 respectively):

SITUATION	AN ARRANGEMENT WITH OTHERS OR A PERSONAL INTENTION?
1. My friend / get married / tomorrow	
2. I / wash / my car / this weekend	
3. We / go / concert / tonight	
4. He / clean / his house / Saturday	
5. Cleaners / come / my house / tomorrow	

Table 6-2 Distinguishing between intentionality and arrangements

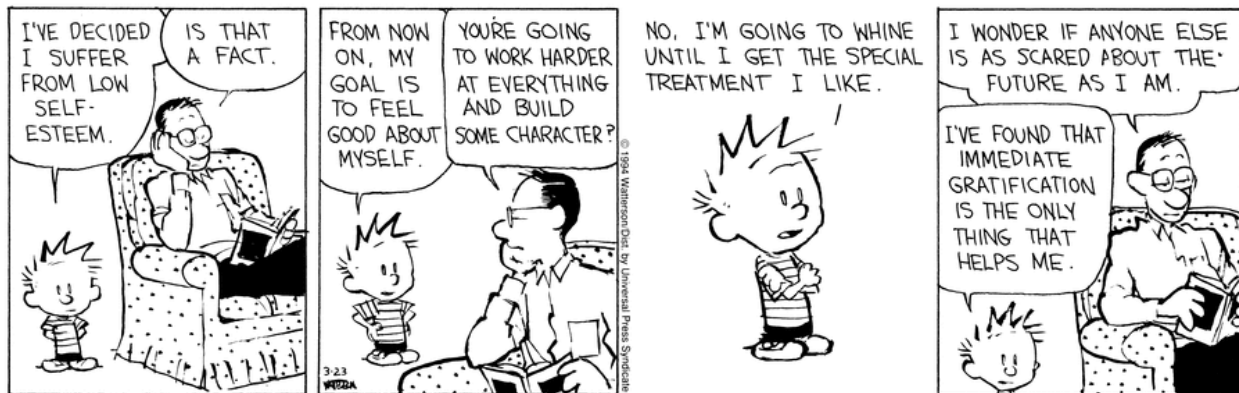
Aside from activities such as the above, the provision of plentiful input to students is crucial. More recent approaches in the teaching of ESL have sought to redress the earlier paucity of input provided to students before they were expected to produce utterances

featuring the target structure (e.g., in the earlier Presentation-Practice-Performance (PPP) method). The inductive approach and consciousness-raising activities provide language data to learners so as to initiate or increase their explicit understanding of a structure. As with *Pizza and chips*, the cartoon (Schultz, 2015, n. p.) below may be utilised as a means of consciousness-raising:



As seen, Schroeder has bought the recording on his own and now has only one intention, i.e., to listen to it. However, his interlocutor, Lucy, cannot understand that his intentions do not include her suggestions. The high rate of occurrence of one use of *be going to* + V is especially effective here in terms of consciousness-raising.

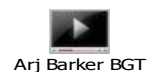
A further consciousness-raising opportunity is seen below (GoComics, n.d.), where the reality of a pre-existing, individual plan for the future, as seen above with Schroeder, is made more salient by Calvin's statement in the first frame, containing *I've decided*:



As such, Calvin is not announcing an on-the-spot decision, but rather, something which has exercised his mind before Speech Time. When in frame 3 he says, *No, I'm going to whine until I get the special treatment I like*, this is an individual undertaking, i.e., one not involving a second party. His father (alas) presumes intentionality on Calvin's part in frame 2, when he responds to Calvin's announcement with *You're going to work harder at everything and build character?*

With final regard to *be going to* + V and intentionality, in the following excerpt (Barker, n.d.), an American comedian discusses the Australian Football League and its adoption of a scarf as a club clothing item:

I was down there for the Grand Champion Finals and I think it's so progressive and New Agye that they've chosen the scarf to be the official fan wear of such a rigorous sport. 'Cause they're like, big guys. "I'm gonna go down to the stadium. I'm gonna drink a [...]load⁶⁹ of beer. And I'm gonna watch one of the most violent sports on the face of the Earth. But first I'm gonna get me scarf. I don't wanna get the sniffles.



While again, this illustrates individual intentionality, it also transitions ESL students to the commonality of *gonna/gunna*, in lieu of *be going to*, as a feature of an informal register.

⁶⁹ This was altered to remove possibly offensive language in the original recording.

These materials and the discussion of them in class convey the elements of *be going to* + V as identified in Table 5-10. As seen there, the core meaning of the structure is a generalized concept of imminence and/or predictability, depicting the post-present actualization of a situation considered to be underway in the present. In the above examples, this sense of contingency in reality is evinced in intentionality, as a result of a pre-existing, individual plan for the future. This entails two temporal zones, i.e., the present and the future, but with primary focus on the former, where the intention is being expressed. Students' attention can be drawn to the role of the present tense of the auxiliary, i.e., *am/is/are*, in achieving this focus. The imperfectivity of *be going to* + V builds in a sense of changeability regarding actualisation, e.g., Schroeder could suddenly decide not to listen to the record; Calvin may decide not to launch his plan to whine, having seen its lack of impact on his father; or the football fan could independently decide not to wear his scarf. Significantly, all of these plans can be altered without the involvement of a second person, as the locus of control is internal and the speaker has agency over actualisation, with a strong perception, at least, of an epistemic warrant. Learners can be asked whether they believe the speaker feels committed to the plan and whether it would be difficult to change or cancel it (e.g., whether anyone else would need to be consulted). Typically, no temporal adverbial is featured, as the use of the structure implies either imminent actualisation or a sense of longer-term implementation beginning post-announcement, as is the case with Calvin's resolution; and as opposed to the two futurates, this form in isolation cannot be mistaken for a present structure.

The second main use of *be going to* + V, i.e., the expression of inevitability, highlights some differences in the way its core meaning is deployed. It incorporates most of the elements above, with three contrasting factors. Firstly, in the intentionality uses above, the locus of control is predominantly internal, whereas inevitability commonly involves inanimate agents or forces of nature, both external to the speaker. Secondly, central to this inevitability use is the present perspective that a (usually imminent) eventuality is on an inexorable path to actualisation. This lends the utterance an even stronger level of epistemic modality, displaying the speaker's belief that altering the course of actualisation is impossible. The cartoon below

(Watterson, 1992, p. 38), illustrates this in the final frame, where Hobbes (the 'toy' tiger) cries, *Ooh, I think I'm going to be sick*:



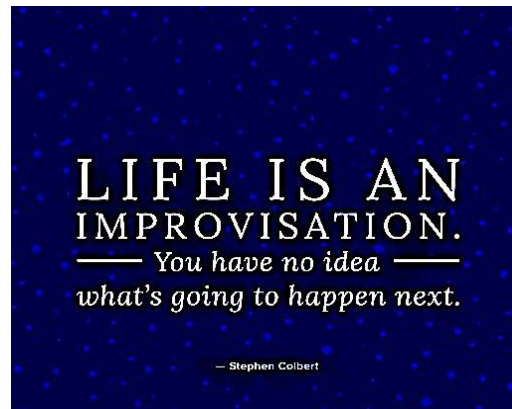
It is obvious from the tiger's facial expression and sense of dread that rather than intending to be sick, he is acknowledging an inevitable and impending biological reaction which he cannot arrest. Again, language learners can be asked to consider whether Hobbes has any control over actualisation (or words to that effect).

This same concept of inevitability can be presented more graphically to students in the photo below (Pinterest, n.d.):



Teachers can elicit from students statements such as *The fish is going to die* or, at a higher level, *The fish is going to be eaten*.⁷⁰

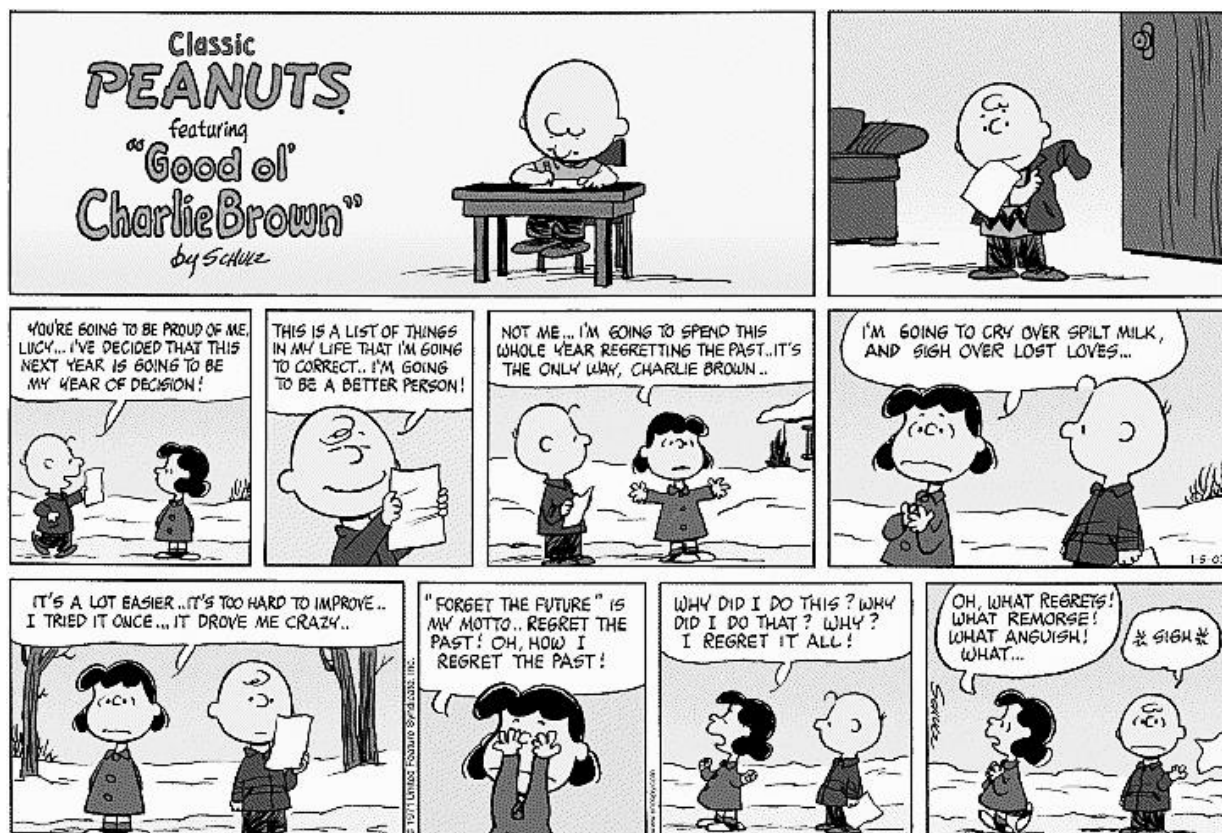
A similar discussion can be conducted on a more philosophical level regarding the statement below (Colbert, n.d.):



Students could firstly discuss how much agency (or control) the speaker appears to have here, regarding the ability to influence what is going to happen next in his life. Secondly, they could say whether they feel the same sense of an external locus of control and inability to pre-determine their lives. As noted in Table 5-10, pre-determinability is the third contrasting factor in the intentionality vs inevitability use of *be going to* + V, in that intentions are usually schedulable and pre-determinable, whereas inevitable eventualities do not allow for this level of control.

These two uses of the one core meaning of *be going to* + V both feature in the cartoon below (Schultz, n.d.). In row 2, frame 1, Charlie Brown feels it is inevitable (sentence 1) that Lucy will be proud of his intentions (sentence 2) regarding the coming year. In frame 2, he continues to express his intentions, followed by two of her own from Lucy. With *You're going to be proud of me, Lucy*, Charlie Brown is so assured of the quality of his list that he feels a positive response is inevitable. With both uses here, each speaker feels a strong sense of commitment to actualisation:

⁷⁰ Students could also suggest *The fish is about to die* or *The fish is about to be eaten*. However, the fact that a temporal adverbial is not possible with this structure should also be discussed (see Appendix B). Hence: *The fish is going to die in one second* vs *The fish is about to die*.

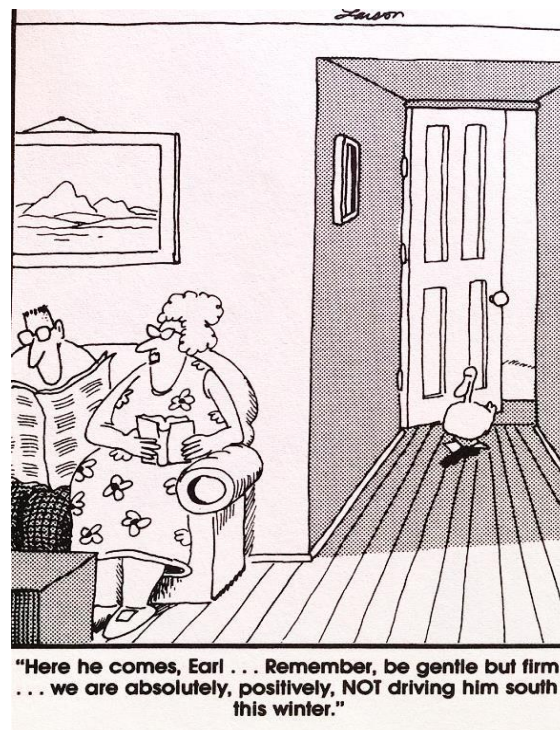
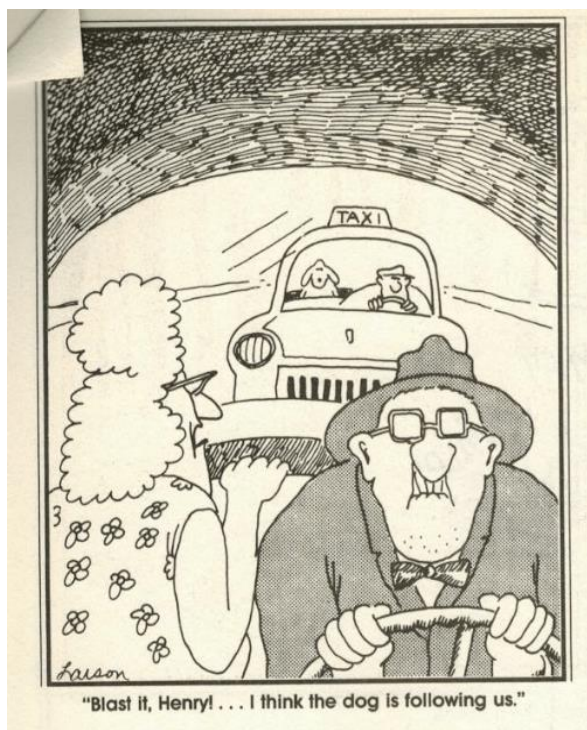


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This text-focused activity should at some stage extend to students' own intentions and perspectives on inevitability in their lives or the world, etc. It is principally via this type of output that they can 'own' structures and develop what Thornbury (2015, p. 12) terms the "psychological reality" of grammatical rules.

6.4 Approaches featuring the Present Progressive futurate

This discussion now returns to the Present Progressive futurate, as broached briefly in the previous section. When introducing learners to this structure and contrasting it with the Present Progressive, teachers can utilise cartoons such as those below, which compare the use of the Present Progressive on the left (Larson, n.d.a) with the Present Progressive futurate on the right (Larson, n.d.b):



The imperfectivity in both can be observed, i.e., the ongoingness/incompletion in the Present Progressive eventuality, and in the Present Progressive futurate, the sense of ongoingness/incompletion from the making of the plan not to drive the duck south, until (non)actualisation. In the second cartoon, the speaker's use of *remember* is an opportune reminder to students that an arrangement has been made by the couple prior to this exchange.

So, similar to *be going to* + V, the Present Progressive futurate denotes contingency in reality, but the essential difference is that this form entails the involvement of a second party in the arrangement. In other words, it moves beyond a personal intention formed by only one party – a factor reinforced here in the use of *we* to refer to the joint arrangement. As with *be going to* + V, the form's imperfectivity lends an air of cancellability, but the futurate's involvement of a second party entails a stronger sense of surety. Nevertheless, should the duck mount a persuasive counterargument, the arrangement could be altered by the couple, who have agency here with an internal locus of control and hence no need to consult an outside party.

In further reference to the elements of the Present Progressive futurate as summarised in Table 5-9: both the present form and the futurate have a primary temporal focus on the present, with Speech Time and Reference Time in the present. But with the futurate form, Event Time is in the future, as opposed to the present Event Time of the Present Progressive. This then underscores the obligatory nature of the future temporal adverbial with the futurate structure.

An extended sample of the usage of this futurate and the elements discussed above is the excerpt below (David, Seinfeld, & Ackerman, 1995), featuring multiple occurrences of the Present Progressive futurate form (in the first-, second-, and third-person singular), plus towards the end, one use of *will* + V, denoting an on-the-spot request requiring an immediate response. The situation here features one of the characters, George, phoning his parents to announce his engagement to be married.⁷¹ Learners viewing the clip can see that George and his fiancée, Susan, seated together, have already made a joint arrangement. It is also worth noting that a temporal adverbial is not used, as the context makes it clear that a future eventuality is being discussed; and it is obvious that George and Susan are not speaking about a current eventuality, as they are not presently at their wedding:

George:	Ma, guess what!
Mother:	Oh, my god!
George:	No, it's nothing bad. <u>I'm getting married.</u>
Mother:	You're what?
George:	<u>I'm getting married!</u>
Mother:	Oh, my god! <u>You're getting married?</u>
George:	Yes!
Mother:	Oh, I can't believe it. [To Frank in the next room] Frank, come here!
Father:	You come here.
Mother:	<u>Georgie's getting married.</u>
Father:	What?
Mother:	Georgie's getting married.
Father:	Get the hell out of here. <u>He's getting married?</u>
Mother:	Yes.
Father:	To a woman?
Mother:	Of course to a woman. [To George] What's she look like?

⁷¹ Prior to viewing, it must be explained to students that George's parents, who regularly argue at high volume, rarely expect good news from their son.

Father:	I'm sure she's pretty gorgeous.
George:	What difference does it make what she looks like?
Mother:	Is she pretty?
George:	Yes, she's pretty. What difference does it make?
Mother:	Oh, I'm just curious.
Father:	She's not pretty?
Mother:	Let me talk to her.
George:	[To Susan] She wants to talk to you.
Susan:	Uh, hello?
Mother:	Con-gra-tu-la-tions!
Susan:	I just want you to know that I love your son very much.
Mother:	You do?
Susan:	Yes.
Mother:	Really?
Susan:	Yes.
Mother:	May I ask why?
Father:	Okay...
Mother:	Will you stop? I'm on the telephone.
Father:	Can I talk to her, please?

Clip available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJlQjDtdygA>

Clips such as these can also be used as Listening activities, e.g., gap-fills, as a means of focusing on the form itself, when most or all occurrences are deleted. Re-enactments are also a possibility, as is the creation of similar occurrences from students' lives or those of famous figures.

The reporting of future arrangements made with a second party, expressed via the Present Progressive futurate, is further illustrated below (David & Levin, 1992). In this video clip, two of the characters, Jerry and Elaine, have met a famous American baseball player, Keith Hernandez. Jerry is thrilled to have Keith as a new friend and they have arranged to have dinner on the coming Friday night. However, he is then jealous to learn that Keith has invited Elaine (his former girlfriend) to dinner. Whereas the previous example had an implied future temporality in regard to a wedding, the situation below requires the inclusion of specific adverbials:

Elaine: So, how was your date?
 Jerry: What date – it's a guy.
 Elaine: So you know, he called me.
 Jerry: Already?
 George: Keith called you?
 Elaine: [nods]
 George: Huh, huh – this guy really gets around.
 Elaine: Do you mind?
 Jerry: No, I don't mind at all. Why should I mind? ... What did he say?
 Elaine: He asked me out for Saturday night.
 Jerry: Are you going?
 Elaine: No. I told him I was busy.
 Jerry: Oh, really.
 Elaine: So we're going out Friday night.
 Jerry: Friday?
 Elaine: Yeah.
 Jerry: He's going out with you on Friday?
 Elaine: Yeah.
 Jerry: He's supposed to see me on Friday!
 Elaine: Oh ... I didn't know.
 Jerry: We made plans!
 Elaine: Well, I'll cancel it.
 Jerry: No, don't cancel it.
 Elaine: Huh, well, this is a little awkward, isn't it?
 Jerry: Well, frankly, it is.



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The concept of a previously arranged plan between two parties is accentuated by the fifth-last line above (double-underlined), in which Jerry states, *We made plans!* The imperfectivity of these plans, arranged first by Jerry and Keith, subsequently broken by Keith, then newly arranged by Elaine and Keith, is further reflected in Elaine's offer (fourth-last line), *Well, I'll cancel it*. In other words, beyond Elaine's need to notify Keith of the cancellation, there is no outside authority to be consulted. The agency is human and context-immediate - thus not difficult to engage, given the locus of control shared by the two participants. Additionally, Keith and Jerry's plans, along with those of Keith and Elaine, are schedulable, but there is nothing in the universe that indicates them as pre-determinable.

Both the Present Progressive futurate and *be going to* + V are described in their respective profiles (Tables 5-9 and 5-10) as occurring in informal registers, most typically spoken English. It can be instructive for students to see the transformations necessary for a shift to a more formal register, e.g., changes in lexical items required in order to effect this change. To this end, the following is suggested as a consciousness-raising exercise. The first text outlines President Obama's schedule for one particular day (White House Dossier, 2015):

Today's Obama Schedule		Wednesday, September 9, 2015
10:00 am	Receives the Presidential Daily Briefing	
12:20 pm	Departs White House	
1:50 pm	Arrives Michigan	
2:25 pm	Tours Michigan Technical Education Center;	
3:40 pm	Delivers remarks on making community college free	
4:55 pm	Departs Michigan	
6:25pm	Arrives White House	
		http://www.whitehousedossier.com/obama-schedule/

Typical of its genre, the schedule features the Simple Present futurate, as profiled in Table 5-8. As with the Present Progressive futurate and *be going to* + V, its primary temporal focus is the present, which is the focus point of Speech Time and Reference Time, and Event Time is the future. But its external locus of control and perfective aspect result in a far stronger epistemic force, an objective sense of reality, plus a sense of unchangeability. So, despite the fact that President Obama is the chief participant here, agency is conveyed as external to him and each activity is seen as complete, rather than interruptible, alterable or cancellable. The objective sense of detachment evokes a strong commitment to actualisation on the part of the 'speaker', which typically demands a formal register.

As mentioned above, this formality results not just from TA forms, but also from the lexemes utilised in the discourse. In other words, TA forms alone do not create a register. In an

imagined conversation about the president's activities for the day, two White House staff members could say the following:

A:	Did you know <u>the president's going</u> to Michigan today?
B:	Oh? When's <u>he leaving</u> ?
A:	At 12:20.
B:	Do you know what <u>he's doing</u> there?
A:	<u>He's giving</u> a speech about college fees.
B:	When's <u>he coming</u> back?
A:	About 6:30.

Not only do the TA forms change from the Simple Present futurate to the Present Progressive futurate (among other possibilities), but lexemes such as *is going to* replace *arrives*; *Delivers remarks* becomes *He's giving a speech*; and *Departs Michigan* is transformed into *comes back*. Regarding formality, these changes can be analysed as below, in terms of word etymology and register. (The origins of the items in the *Word* column were obtained from Dictionary.com, n.d.)

SCHEDULE OR CONVERSATION	WORD	ORIGINS	REGISTER
Schedule	<i>depart</i>	Old French	Formal
Conversation	<i>leave</i>	Old English/ Old High German/ Norse	Informal
Schedule	<i>deliver</i>	Old French/Latin	Formal
Conversation	<i>give</i>	Old English/German	Informal
Schedule	<i>remarks</i>	French	Formal
Conversation	<i>speech</i>	Old English/German	Informal
Schedule	<i>arrive</i>	Latin/Old French	Formal
Conversation	<i>come back</i>	Middle English/German	Informal

Table 6-3 Etymology of formal vs informal words used in two futurates

As can be seen, the Simple Present futurate selections in the official *White House Dossier* are etymologically French/Latin, regarded as more formal, while the conversational equivalents in the Present Progressive futurate derive from the far more quotidian Old English/Middle English/German. This whole-of-discourse approach is important for students' mastery of English, particularly at higher levels.

Some media examples of joint arrangements expressed in a more informal register via the Present Progressive futurate are as follows:

- (a) Now that we know Bruce is coming, that just leaves one question ... (Morrison, 2016).
- (b) Hold up, are U2 coming to Singapore (Bandwagon, 2016)?
- (c) Children with painted faces that read "Obama is coming" (Forsdike, 2015).
- (d) [In regard to a forthcoming trip to Howard University, Michelle Obama said] "We're doin' a *deep dive*" ⁷² (Van Meter, 2016).

It is no coincidence that the more informal Present Progressive futurate is used in each of these. But as can be seen, the rest of the discourse elements align with this level of informality, e.g., the inclusion of *we* in (a), regarding the arrangements for Bruce Springsteen to perform in a particular city in Canada. There is an equivalent level of casual expression in the headline in (b), regarding a tour by the band, U2, highlighted by the slang term, *hold up*. In (c), the children in question obviously feel that the tour of President Obama to Kenya is a personal rather than an official arrangement; writing *Obama is to tour* on their faces would have been incongruous in this informal context. Finally, in (d), Michelle Obama was explaining (in a jocular fashion) to an accompanying journalist the aim of a tour, using a colloquialism, to which the 'dropped g' adds weight.

This consciousness-raising exercise should then lead to application: e.g., a class's plans for an excursion, as discussed among them and their teacher, can be transformed into a publishable itinerary announcement, necessitating the switch from the Present Progressive

⁷² A deep dive is an in-depth exploration.

futurate to the Simple Present futurate. As above, attention should be paid to lexical as well as verbal transformations.

So, as with all learning, following ample input, students must gradually produce more and more output, eventually using the structure to express statements about their lives, beliefs, opinions and attitudes. Having them identify further examples in the media is also a valuable activity.

6.5 Conclusion

Given the scope of this research, this is but a short outline of some input approaches for engaging with the ten elements embodied in these futurity forms. In terms of subsequent directions, it is hoped to develop these ideas into an ESL pedagogical text, using the analysis from this research to inform experience of this teaching approach's effectiveness in the meaningful acquisition of the English TA system. Whether used implicitly or explicitly, the elements identified can offer students a more systematic learning experience, based on a set of components to which ongoing reference can be made. Initially, this can occur at a simplified, implicit level, building gradually to more explicit complexity, and ultimately at a level at which learners have truly acquired an intuitive conceptualisation of each structure, through engagement with meaningful and accessible input via Listening and Reading, and then the production of equally meaningful and relevant output in both Speaking and Writing.

Chapter 7: Concluding comments

This research has focused on the expression of futurity in English, its main aim being to advance the effectiveness of teaching ESL to adult learners. It is believed that the identification of systematic elements within the English TA system can ultimately reduce the load of both teachers and students. As has been shown, futurity forms and TA forms in general do not exist in silos and even in the earlier stages of learning, the general principles underlying these structures can gradually be imparted to students over time. Furthermore, as “the use of each tense is determined by its relationship with all the other forms” (Willis, 2003, p. 117), teachers and students need to be encouraged to look at TA in terms of system building, by comparing forms to each other and identifying commonalities and differences. Care must be taken, however, in regard to aspect: chapter 5 stressed that the manner in which it operates in different tenses can be complex and opaque. For example, the element of susceptibility to change in the imperfective is deployed differently in the Present Progressive futurate from in the Past Progressive.

As noted in chapter 3, Binnick (1991, p. 209) indirectly observes the task facing L2 teachers and text writers when he asks firstly what it is that an L1 speaker knows which is not known by a nonspeaker. And secondly, he asks how this knowledge can be modelled in the teaching of grammar. In referring to a study of Vietnamese speakers and their acquisition of the TA system, Hinkel (1992, p. 568) states that “many years of exposure to L2, combined with instruction, may have a limited impact on NNSs’⁷³ perceptions of L2 deictic tense”. Length of exposure and instruction alone cannot guarantee success, particularly given the abstract concepts entailed in this sphere and the difficulty in simply inferring them from input.

It is felt here that the modelling of which Binnick speaks must harness, but venture beyond, the domain of the native speaker, and aim for engagement that is not reliant on the tacit knowledge and implicit awareness of the L1 speaker. This research has sought to make explicit the factors underlying an L1 speaker’s choice of structures, so that ESL learners can

⁷³ NNS = non-native speakers

begin from a point of creating meaning via TA forms. As Widdowson (2003, p. 42) states, this is the ultimate indication “that the language has been learnt, not just as a set of fixed conventions to conform to, but as an adaptable resource for making meaning. And making meaning which you can call your own”.

A comparison between L1 and L2 acquisition is instructive here, in regard to the tasks common to each process. Wagner (2012, p. 459) notes that “children must learn fine-grained semantic distinctions so that they can create the right system across their temporal elements”. In an analogous vein, ESL students need to work towards the building of a temporal system in English (rather than towards the gathering of isolated components) which, rather than being merely rule-based, must include these fine-grained semantic distinctions. Wagner’s discussion of L1 acquisition (2012, p. 459) also notes that children must firstly gain an implicit understanding of the concepts underlying the language’s temporal semantics, and then be able to identify real-world situations which correspond to these concepts. This is the task facing ESL learners. Wagner (2012, p. 459) further states that due to the abstract nature of these concepts (e.g., event boundedness, temporal deixis and dynamic change over a period of time), it is not easy for children to identify them in their world or experience.

Obviously, adult L2 students are not constrained by the same cognitive immaturity, but they are perhaps at a disadvantage in having already acquired a temporal paradigm, beyond which they must move so as to construct an appropriate L2 framework, with all that this entails, both semantically and pragmatically. An essential part of this process is not only the identification of concepts and then of differences, but an awareness that these exist in the first place. Hence, confronting students with an abstract, rule-based system, without paving the way to a comprehension of underlying elements and their match to ‘real-world’ situations, surely hinders their progress in the long-term. As mentioned above, Binnick (1991, p. 209) stresses the need to model this conceptual knowledge in teaching, so as to equip students to attain optimal effectiveness in their language learning. It is hoped that the current research has contributed to this process.

On this note of effective acquisition, the final observation here goes to Widdowson (2003, p. 42), who notes the following:

You are proficient in a language to the extent that you possess it, make it your own, bend it to your will, assert yourself through it rather than simply submit to the dictates of its form. It is a familiar experience when one is learning a language to find oneself saying things in a foreign language because you can say them rather than because they express what you want to say. You feel you are going through the motions, and somebody else's motions at that. You are speaking the language but not speaking your mind. Real proficiency is when you are able to take possession of the language, turn it to your advantage, and make it real for you. This is what mastery means.

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Appendix A

Names and example sentences for Tenses and Aspects in English

TENSE/ASPECT	EXAMPLE
Present Simple	You never <u>listen</u> . The sun <u>rises</u> in the east. Henry <u>kicks</u> the ball to Pires.
Present Progressive (or Present Continuous)	She <u>is playing</u> with her sister.
Past Simple	She <u>went</u> to the city yesterday.
Past Progressive	I <u>was looking</u> at the sky when it started to rain.
Present progressive for Future	I'm <u>meeting</u> my brother on Tuesday.
'Going to' + Verb Future	I'm <u>going to watch</u> tv tonight. There are black clouds in the sky. It's <u>going to rain</u> .
Future Simple (will)	The phone is ringing. I'll <u>answer</u> it. The prime minister <u>will visit</u> Brisbane next week. I <u>will</u> always <u>love</u> you. There <u>will be</u> a shortage of fresh water in the future.
Future Progressive	This time next week, I'll <u>be lying</u> on a beach.
Present Perfect	It <u>has started</u> to snow! He <u>has been</u> to Russia three times.
Present Perfect Progressive	How long <u>has</u> he <u>been studying</u> ?
Past Perfect	The children <u>had grown</u> a lot when we saw them last year.
Past Perfect Progressive	We <u>had been trying to start</u> the car before they arrived.
Future Perfect	People <u>will have destroyed</u> half of the rainforests by 2020.
Future Perfect Progressive	By 2018, I <u>will have been studying</u> for two years.
First Conditional	If you <u>pat</u> dogs, they usually <u>feel</u> happy.
Second Conditional	If I <u>were</u> you, I <u>would see</u> a doctor.
Third Conditional	If I <u>had seen</u> you yesterday, I <u>would have waved</u> .

Table A-1 Names and example sentences for tenses and aspects in English

Appendix B

Reasons for not regarding *be about to* + V as a futurity form

As explained in section 5.1, *be about to* + V was eventually eliminated from this discussion, due to doubts about its status as a futurity form. The core meaning of *be about to* + V is imminent occurrence of an event, based on a present situation⁷⁴ (Declerck, 2006, p. 356; Leech & Svartvik, 1994, p. 78; Quirk et al., 1985, p. 217). This appears quite straightforward, but an element generally ignored in ESL and theoretical linguistic texts is the fact that *be about to* + V does not occur with a future time adverbial, at least in Standard English. Hence one can say (a) but not (b) or (c):

- (a) I'm about to leave.
- (b) *I'm about to leave in ten minutes.
- (c) *He's about to arrive at 10:00.

These claims are supported by corpora research, a summary of which appears in Table B-1 below (Corpuseye, 2016):

CORPUS	TOTAL CORPUS WORDS	<i>be about to</i> + V OCCURRENCES	PRESENT TEMPORAL ADVERBIAL (E.G., <i>NOW</i>)	FUTURE TEMPORAL ADVERBIAL
<i>Corpuseye</i> (<i>Europarl</i>) Spoken English	25.7 million	638	3 1 x <i>now</i> 2 x <i>today</i>	8 <i>on 31 March; in May; this afternoon; next week; at 5:30pm; within the next couple of months; in 1999; in the next couple of days</i>
<i>am about to</i> + V		63		
<i>is about to</i> + V		247		
<i>are about to</i> + V		328		
<i>Corpuseye</i> (<i>Wikipedia B</i>) Written English	40.7 million	154	0	0
<i>am about to</i> + V		0		
<i>is about to</i> + V		112		
<i>are about to</i> + V		42		

Table B-1 Corpus data on *be about to* + V with temporal adverbials

⁷⁴ Two other expressions used in a similar manner are *be on the point of* + V-ing and *be on the verge of* + V-ing, but these will not be discussed separately in this research here, due to their comparative infrequency.

The infrequent occurrence of a temporal adverbial in the spoken corpus and its complete non-occurrence in written texts underscores the possibility that the former may be a result of performance error or last-minute inclusion by the speaker.

It is claimed here that the ‘non-futurity’ of the form can be attributed to the strong present-time focus of the form and to its embodiment of imminence focused on the moment of speech.⁷⁵ One means of explaining this further is to note the form’s closeness in meaning to expressions such *to be on the verge/point/brink of* (Be about to, 2016), which invoke images of a spatial zone as equivalent to a temporal zone. The grammatical subject occupies a space just on the edge or border of a future temporal zone but does not inhabit it, instead remaining in the present zone, where it carries the sense of “ready to, all set to, preparing to, intending to, soon to” (Be about to, 2016). It is argued here that *be about to* + V has a single temporal focus on the present and hence cannot express futurity. Its strong implicature of future actualisation perhaps justifies its labelling as an inceptive future (Bybee et al., 1994, p. 246), but the current discussion hesitates to adopt this, so as to stress the fact that it is not a futurity form.

It is further argued that the present temporal Reference Point in *be about to* + V must be immediately coincident with Speech Time and cannot stretch even slightly forward to encompass the general present. To demonstrate: examples (a) and (b) below feature utterances in their original forms, altered in (c) and (d) by the addition of an adverbial:

(a) Chromebooks are about to take over the world (Kovach, 2016).

(b) Reality check: Are 5 countries about to join the EU (BBC News, 2016a)?

(c) *Chromebooks are about to take over the world this year.

(d) *Reality check: Are 5 countries about to join the EU this month?

This indicates that the temporal focus is not durative, but focuses exclusively on immediate Speech Time. In these terms, a Reichenbachian approach shows that Speech Time and Reference Time are strongly present-focused: the ostensibly future Event Time can perhaps be seen as an implicature, rather than as an integral part of the meaning of *be about to* + V.

Finally, it is important to state that the above observations are preliminary comments only, as more analysis of this issue is required.

⁷⁵ In this sense, *be about to* + V could be regarded as a mirror image of the Present Perfect, which cannot focus on a past time, given its present Reference Time – just as *be about to* + V cannot refer forward to a future time.