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TEACHING "SIMPLE PAST" AND "PAST PERFECT", WITH NOTES ON RELATED TENSES AND FORMS, FOLLOWED BY A GRAMMAR OF THE "PAST PERFECT"

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Contents:

One Common presentation of Simple Past.

A COMMON preliminary to teaching the Simple Past form is establishment of the word *now*. This is often done with a series of sentences, like *I am putting this book on the desk. Now I am taking this book from the desk. Now I am putting it on the table. Now it is on the table.*

The word *now* may be translated, or the pupils may tumble to the meaning. Otherwise, it is difficult to see how the meaning of *now* is c o m m u n i c a t e d that is, it is difficult to see any difference between any of the sentences without *now* and the same sentence with *now* added.

It may be noted that the *now* is ambiguous. In the one sentence, *Now I am putting* ..... it means " at this moment "; in the other, *Now it is* on....., it means " during a period of time from some time in the past including this moment and extending beyond it ". At a casual glance, this ambiguity may seem inconsequential: I think it has an influence in the formation of a misconception about the past tenses, leading to substitution of Past Progressive for Simple Past; reference to this influence will be made later.

Let us take it that the word *now* has meaning, from the point of view of our being able to use this meaning for contrast. The procedure, when we have established *now*, is to move the object, and then to contrast the new position of the object and the previous one: *Now it IS in my bag: it WAS on the table.*

The first observation to make is that in the sentence *It WAS on the table* there is no word to parallel *now* in the contrasted sentence. For pupils whose mother tongues have near equivalents for *is* and *was*, this constitutes no difficulty; they perceive the analogy between mother tongue and English; but for pupils whose mother tongues have no equivalent for *is*, the interpretation of *was* is upsetting, for these same mother tongues are certain to use a word whose purpose it is to indicate past time, and the pupils interpret *was* as the equivalent past time marker in English. This interpretation is apparently confirmed by the omission of any o t h e r past-indicating word parallel to *now* in the contrasted sentence. Many pupils persist with this mistaken interpretation of *was* as a past time marker, and automatically insert it

together with the plain stem or stem+ -ed (*He was send the parcel. He was climbed the tree*) to the end of their school days, and beyond.

The presentation outlined above includes another confusing element. Immediately before the contrasted *IS* and *WAS*, representing the contrasted present and past positions (*in my bag, on the table*), we have had a series of sentences with the verb in the Present Progressive form, (*am putting, am taking*), denoting actions; and the word *now*—as has already been mentioned—has been equally associated with the *period* of time during which an object occupies a position and the *moment* of occurrence of an action. It would be too much to expect that these Present Progressives should make no impression in association with the introduction of the Simple Past; and we find that in the English of many pupils, the Past Progressive form appears as a sturdy rival to the Simple Past for expression of actions. When we have used the Present Progressive for a present action, then the Simple Present *is* for a "state" (a position), then the Simple Past *was* for a " state " (a position); I do not think we can grumble when the learners use the Past Progressive for a past action.

I have tried to show how actual confusions of form, those we discover in students' work, may be traced to the presentation of the Simple Past through a series of sentences like *I am putting the book on the desk. Now I am putting it on the table. Now I am putting it in my bag. It IS in my bag. It WAS on the table.* The next thing is to ask whether this presentation of the Simple Past form provides the kind of context in which the form usually appears. To me, this situation (change of position consequent on action) seems unrepresentative for occurrence of the Simple Past. It is, indeed, the sort of context for presenting the Present Progressive itself, the Present Perfect(referring to the recent past)—*I am closing the door. I have closed it,*—or the verb *be*+ -ed (Past Participle of occurrence, or state) —*I am closing the door. The door is closed.* If later, the Present Perfect is introduced by the performing of an action and the reference afterwards to the state of things brought about by the performance of it, we can expect our pupils to confuse the tenses; as they do.

For the Simple Past, considered from a "time" point of view, we need a distinct interval between the time of the past event and the present moment, and we need an absence of attention to the intervening period of time, that is, the absence of any bridging of the interval through a relationship-for instance, a causal relationship—between past and present. When a teacher picks up an object and puts it in one place; and then picks up the same object and moves it to another place; all in sight of the class; then there is for the pupils no gap, but a continuous bridge between past and present situations. It appears that any " situational " or " oral " presentation of the Simple Past is likely to form dubious associations.

Reviewing the presentation oft he Simple Past outlined above, we have seen that the main consideration was the association of the Simple Past form *was* with past time, that contrast was used as the simplest device for distinguishing between present and past times,and that a single context (the moving of an object from place to place), already used for presenting the Present Progressive, was used again, so that there was no real need for the use of a new tense.

Generalizing from the foregoing paragraphs, I think we might say:

1. The tenses need to be looked at as a system, so that presentation of one tense, whether that presentation is situationally "effective " or not, does not confuse later presentation of other tenses.

2. A situation in which two tenses are brought into contrast is not necessarily a typical situation for the presence of the new tense.
3. Typical usage in a situation which is typical, should have priority.
4. A new tense ought not to be taught simply because it exists in the language and therefore in a teaching programme: it ought to be taught because the need for it arises, because a new type of context occurs.

An Alternative Method of Teaching Narrative Simple Past

I do not think the forming of an association between past t i m e and the Simple Past form ought to be our primary purpose in a presentation of the Simple Past. The main, typical, use of the Simple Past form is in narrative. However, what makes a story is not past time, nor use of the Simple Past tense form; for a story may be recounted—particularly when the narrator is semi-literate—in the Simple Present tense form, or indeed as all Indian examiners know, by a succession of plain stem forms. What makes a story is the succession of events; and association with succession of occurrences is the main association to establish when we present the Simple Past. If we make this association, I do not think it is important or even necessary to demonstrate the past t i m e element at all. For teacher and pupils, what the introduction of the Simple Past form should signify is the possibility of a new kind of experience in English: story telling.

A further point to consider is that some time later in the Course the pupils will meet with the Past Perfect. If we make our primary association for the Simple Past a time association, Simple Past and Past Perfect areas are likely to get very confused.

To begin with, it is easy to see that if in our presentation, we have conveyed the impression that the Simple Past refers to recent past, then we ask for the association of the Past Perfect with distant past. In India, and elsewhere, students and even teachers firmly believe in this, and systematically use the Past Perfect as a self standing tense: *Ten years ago I had stayed in Delhi for short time. Then I had changed my residence to Lucknow* and so on.

However, even when the Past Perfect is seen as subordinate, the relationship between Past Perfect and Simple Past is easily misunderstood. It is often stated that when we have one event referred to one time and another event referred to a previous time, we are obliged to use the Past Perfect. An amusing example of inconsistency of belief and actual use is provided by the author of a popular course for teaching English to foreigners: " Suppose we want to say that Pedro *learned* English before he came to England. Then we use the Past Perfect Tense for the action that took place first..... We say 'Pedro *had learned* English before he came to England.' " The author has not realized that he has himself shown that the use he is teaching is optional: in this context, we can indeed say, as the author does, *either*: "Pedro *learned* English before he came to England " *or*: " Pedro *had learned* English before he came to England." For an understanding of the Past Perfect, its optional use is far from satisfactory as an introduction. In fact, if we narrate a series of happenings, and retain in the narration the actual order of occurrence, we need never use the Past Perfect. It is when some significance attaches to the fact that the order of events as narrated departs from the order of their actual occurrence that a Past Perfect becomes (almost) obligatory. Here then is further reason for first presentation of the Simple Past in its Nar-

rative use, not through single sentences in which past time is contrasted with the present, but in stories involving series of occurrences.

So far, I have examined a common text-book presentation of the Simple Past and tried to trace some of the random associations which devolve from this presentation; and I have suggested an alternative presentation, which aims at a sequence and not a time-association. However, the Simple Past Narrative is not the only Simple Past usage to require a place in a school English course, and other areas of Simple Past usage will now be considered. A useful approach to them is through Simple Present usage.

Simple Present and Simple Past (Iterative, Neutral, Actual)

Leaving aside the Modal use of the Simple Present, and its use in referring to future occurrence, we may follow Kruisinga[1] in distinguishing the Neutral, Iterative and Actual areas. As the names themselves indicate, in the Neutral use the verb form has no time association; in the Iterative the association is with habitual or repeated occurrence; and in the Actual the association is with the present (" actual ") moment. The verb-form frequency count undertaken at the C.I.E. showed that of 22,632 occurrences of the Simple Present form, 7,595 or 33.5% were Neutral, 1,244 or 5.5% were Iterative, and 13,034 or 57.7% were Actual.

There is much to be gained from systematic presentation of Simple Present usage, and, assuming that course design takes care of this (and does not confront the learners with jumbled *experience* of all the usage together with classroom-presentation only of the 5.5% Iterative usage), we may try to gauge how far Simple Past usage may be related with Simple Present usage.

The easiest area to dispose of is the Iterative; here Simple Past usage parallels Simple Present usage in a way which no learner has difficulty in perceiving, once it is pointed out: *She helps her mother (every day). When I was young, I helped my mother (every day).* All the same, many students struggle over reference to past habits, getting involved in *would*+plain stem, or *used to*+plain stem. Probably the Simple Past Iterative is correctly interpreted in their reading; but since their attention has not been drawn to it, they do not envisage it as a possibility in their own writing and speech. Incidentally, the use of *used to* +plain stem produces an analogous present form *use to*+stem.

Equally easy to recognize, though appearing much later in the school course, if at all, is the use of Simple Past when no time is thought of. This usage parallels Simple Present Neutral usage, and may be called Simple Past Neutral. It may appear in Grammar Books under the head, " Concord of Tense". Here are two examples from a page of " Wireless World" (Apr. 1961, p. 170): *.....he had concluded the height of the layer of ionized air at night* was 80-100 *km. Appleton showed for the first time.....that there* was *more than one reflecting layer in the upper atmosphere.* Jespersen has many quotations. *I forgot you* were *married. You discovered I* was *Irish* and so on, and comments that the ' Shifting ' of the second verb from the Simple Present form is not required logically " but is due simply to mental inertia".[2]

Kruisinga writes " it is evident that the (Simple Past form) in the subclause is not a tense at all: it does not refer to a past time in itself, but only

1. E. Kruisinga and P.A. Erades: An English Grammar, Vol. 1, Parts 1 and 2, Noordhoff, Groningen, 288, 289.
2. Jesperson: A Modern English Grammar, Part IV, 11.1(3).

insofar as the preterite in the main clause does".[1] This is only a 5% usage (as is the Iterative) and may not merit teaching; some time or other, however, it merits reference, and parallel Simple Present usage is an obvious introduction.

Of our three Simple Present usage areas, the Simple Present Actual remains. In view of its very high frequency of occurrence, we may expect that at times its reference to the actual moment is approximate: it may be tinged with a perfective implication, or be future-looking (often, of course, through lexical implication). All the same, the main time-constituent is the present, and the most applicable descriptive tag is " at this moment". It would be most reasonable and convenient for the Simple Past to show parallel usage, to which the tag "at that moment" might be attached. Such usage exists, and is frequent. Compare *walked* in *We walked to the station and waited for the train to arrive. When Joseph saw* ..... with the same verb in *As she walked past one compartment after the other, she looked carefully at each passenger* ..... *Walked* in the first sentence is one of a sequence of happenings. In the second, the walking does not precede the looking: the two are not separable in time; whichever is regarded as occurrence, the other stands as circumstance " at that moment". The usage is very frequent; indeed, in some books the number of occurrences of the Simple Past form to give context is larger than the number of occurrences as a narrative past; and understandably, for to any one statement of occurrence a writer may attach as many circumstantial statements as he feels inclined.

The usage just described (it accounted for 30.5% of all Simple Past occurrences in the Institute count) is not usually defined, and most school courses assign the function of giving contextual information to the Past Progressive form.

Reference to circumstance " at that moment " was made through Simple Past Actual on 94.7% and through Past Progressive on 5.3% of occasions in the Institute count.

Simple and Progressive Forms

It is interesting to speculate why the 5% usage should be defined and taught and the 95% usage undefined and untaught, in spite of the ease with which we can go from Simple Present to Simple Past usage. I imagine that explanation lies in part in the common practice of beginning tense work with the Progressive form: *I am getting up, I am walking to the blackboard, I am taking the chalk etc.* If such a sequence of actions is then regarded as past, we obtain as "parallel" statements, not the *formal* parallels, but the Simple Past, *I got up, walked* ..... *took etc.* Probably Course designers, teachers and pupils are all conscious of what " ought " to have been the parallel statements, and therefore feel the need to get *was getting up, was walking, was taking* categorized.

So our courses often have some statement on the lines of the following: " When the time of a past action is defined in relation to another action, the one that is a kind of background to the other is put into the Past Continuous." The statement is of course perfectly correct, except for the omission of the word " occasionally".

Readers will have noticed that with the last paragraph we came back to the sentence type with which we began: *I am putting this book on the desk. Now*

1. Kruisinga: Op. cit. 185, 1.

I am taking ..... The natural question is now, " How frequently does this form occur in native English usage?" In the materials used at the Institute (they included novels and plays and a " Conversation Reader ", so that spoken English was not unrepresented) there were 945 occurrences of the Present Progressive form and 22,362 occurrences of the Simple Present. Of the occurrences of Present Progressive, 627 referred to " now " and of the Simple Present 13,034 referred to " now"; that is, for reference to the present moment the Simple form was used on 95% of occasions, the Progressive form on 5%.

It is difficult to discover why these proportions should not be common knowledge, and to explain the predilection for the infrequent Progressive forms. It seems that when, towards the end of the last century, the pioneers of modern language teaching began to distinguish between the study of a classical language and the study of a living language, they brought the Present Progressive " tense " into prominence. They noticed that when one does things (especially slowly, as in teaching them) one tends to use this form. They used this form,and probably it has seemed reactionary to question their approach. This is the only reason I can think of.

Indeed we may agree (however not without some reservation) that *be+ –ing* is more idiomatic than the Simple Present for describing what goes on. It is still strange that it has not been observed how rarely, except in the classroom situation for teaching *be+ –ing*, the form was actually used even in their own courses. (And for the very good reason that outside such a teaching context one rarely needs to describe what one is in the process of doing, to a person who can see for himself). I have examined many courses, including some I rank very high indeed, to find out how frequently, once it has been taught, this form occurs during the *rest* of the Course, and this is a fair, more than fair, indication of its usefulness, since one expects a Course-designer to have constant recollection of what he has made a point of teaching earlier on. From this examination, I conclude that after the first bout of classroom "business", the Present Progressive can be forgotten for the rest of the course without even the designer's feeling much sense of less.

We have noted the confusion through association which learners make in the past-tense area; there is perhaps as much in the present-tense area itself. The confusion is one of usage among the better learners; with the weaker ones there is confusion of form, with stable variants (*I am go, I going*) emerging and enduring with remarkable persistence through school, and College.

Grammar (Linguistic Description) and Teaching

I do not work at the C.I.E. as a grammarian; my work is in the Methods department. I hope it will not seem presumptuous of me to comment in somewhat general terms on the work of grammarians.

The actuating mechanism of much grammar (linguistics) study is consciousness of language-contrasts. I imagine that many students of English, if they have read so far, will have noted that I have not referred to any *distinction* between Simple Present Actual and Present Progressive in their refers ence to "now". No doubt examples have sprung to their mind, sentence-in which Present Progressive is required, in which substitution of Simple Present forms would produce a *mistake:* these examples are the kind which, frequently, determine grammarians' distinctions and categories. Starting with any such distinction, between Simple Past and Past Progressive, Simple Past and Present Perfect, Simple Past and Past Perfect, between "shall" and

" will " and so on, grammarians define the characteristics of each item and especially those characteristics which bring their use into contrast. Course-designers, following the grammarians, give attention to the distinctions, assume their importance, and impose them in course-books.

It seems to me that a radically different attitude is required, at least for a grammar underlying a school course. We need not question the existence of sentences in which the Progressive is not replaceable by the Simple form, for instance; but before we are inveigled into recommending a distinction in a course we should know these things:

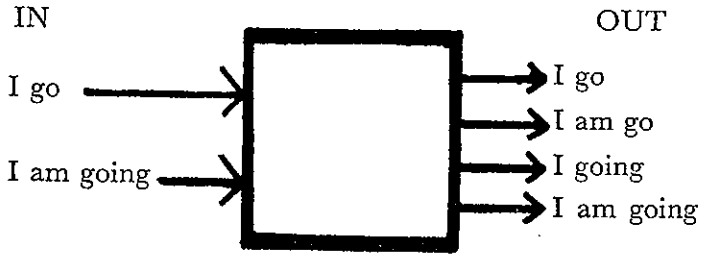
(1) What the cost (in terms of teaching and learning) will be if we have the distinction.

(2) What return we are likely to get from it.

(3) Whether the usage is approachable only by way of contrast.

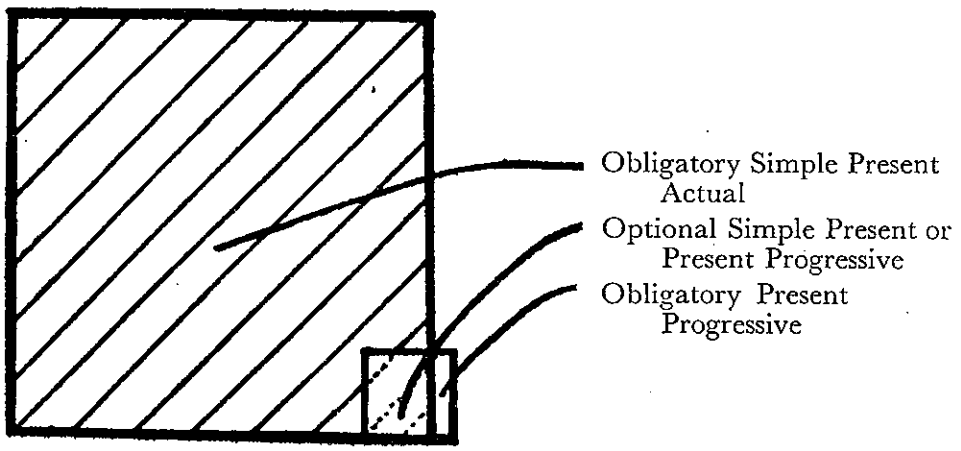
Now cost in learning effort for acquisition of two such items is not double that required for either; learning to discriminate between them being much more expensive in time and energy than learning both. As to the return we are likely to get, we have two sorts of consideration, the psychological and the factual.

The psychological may be represented at its crudest by the following diagram:



It is just this sort of associational mechanism I have been exemplifying throughout this paper. We are not necessarily defeated by such processes, but they constitute adversaries it is foolish to ignore, or arouse unnecessarily.

The factual consideration may also be represented diagrammatically:



What I have done is combine percentages and grammarians' distinction and set them down in p r o p o r t i o n.

With such two-fold awareness we can estimate what we are likely to need by way of effort if we aim at establishing both, and the difference between them; and what we are likely to gain IF our aim is realized: in this case, something like a 2% improvement in idiomatic usage. Any teacher would turn down, unhesitatingly, a proposal on these terms, because we know that the teaching itself cannot conceivably work to this standard of efficiency; incorrect use of Simple Present and Present Progressive resulting from the teaching alone will most certainly occur on more than 2% of occasions; in return for all our and our pupils' efforts we can expect a negative reward; and this is precisely what we are getting.

Diagrams such as those above can be drawn for so many " overlapping " language areas that one cannot help persisting with the question whether the usage is approachable by any way other than contrast and distinction. In any event it would not seem unreasonable to expect a grammar which purports to describe a language (1) to contain statements of proportion (2) to differentiate optional and obligatory usage, (3) to refer to a considerable bulk of genuine source material. No current grammar or text-book of linguistics satisfies all these requirements, and much contemporary work ignores them all.

The Past Perfect seeming to me an imperfectly described area, I thought I might attempt a " grammar " on the lines I have indicated. Here is the result.

A Grammar of *had* Stem+ -ed (" Past Perfect ")

Occurrence and distribution:

1. occurrence of stem+ -ed, preterite form, Narrative Simple Past, *have, has* stem+ -ed
2. occurrence of *had* stem+ -ed
3. distribution of *had* stem+ -ed

The form:

4. " originating " forms
5. Narrative *had* stem+ -ed, Modal *had* stem+ -ed, *had* Perfective stem+ -ed

Obligatory and optional uses:

6. Modal *had*
7. Narrative *had*
8. motivation to use optional Narrative *had*
9. style and motivation
10. Narrative *had* in indirect style
11. Perfective stem+ -ed

Further examples and comment:

12. occurrence in main clause

13. " shifting " of Simple Past (Actual)
14. Iterative *had* stem+ -ed
15. duplication of stem+ -ed
16. associated lexical items, adverbial
17. associated lexical items, verbal
18. associated implication
19. uncertain prediction of use

Occurrence and Distribution

1. Of every 1000 successive occurrences of verb forms, occurrences of stem+ -ed average 462. Of these 462 occurrences, 275 are of the preterite (Simple Past) form, 156 being Simple Past Narrative. The Present *have/has* followed by stem+ -ed occurs on 20 occasions.

2. The preterite *had* followed by stem+ -ed occurs on 26 occasions per 1000; the occurrences being unevenly distributed in written English, tending to cluster.

3. *Had* stem+ -ed may indicate that the ' stem ' event is being narrated at an unusual point with reference to other events also narrated. In this use, it may disclose happening, relation of which has been withheld at the moment in the narration which would have coincided with its actual place in a sequence of happenings. A good deal of English humour depends on this technique. Since Narrative *had* stem+ -ed does not usually appear in a main clause in a narrative context, its presence in such a position may imply a " reference " Narrative Past (*thought, wondered* etc.), and in modern fiction may be the clue to ' interior monologue', or indicate a shift from narrator's (author's) to character's point of view. In descriptive, and in factual (other than historical) writing, and in dialogue and conversation, the form is infrequent.

The Form

4. *Had* stem+ -ed is often thought of as Simple Past or Present Perfect " shifted " into the past.[1] This may be a useful way of drawing attention to aspects of its usage, but *had* stem+ -ed may be treated formally without reference to " originating " sentences.

5. In the form *had* stem+ -ed, the preterite *had* may be Narrative or Modal[2] (accounting for 15 and 1 occurrences respectively), or one of the perfective aspects of the stem+ -ed may be the dominant factor (10 occurrences) and then the unit *had* stem+-ed summarizes continuative activity, or experience up to or at a past moment, or indicates close relationship between a subsequent and a previous event.

1. Strictly one ought to include " shifting " of the Past Perfect itself, the " shift " in this case being zero.

2. Kruisinga: Op. cit. 197 Note 2.

Obligatory and Optional Uses

6. The modal use (1 per 1000 verb-form occurrences) is infrequent, but obligatory. Since the modal use of the Simple Past form has no reference to past time (*If I knew.....Suppose you asked .....*), a similar context with a past reference requires the use of *had* stem+ -ed, and ideas of non-fulfilment, rejected condition etc. are implicit.....*if his experimental results had been more precise.....Would that I had seen more of him..... He wished he had known the fellow's name.*

7. There have been many attempts to specify time requirements for obligatory use of " Past Perfect (Narrative) ": " an action completed before some special moment we have in mind". " serves to denote before-past time". Such statements do indeed describe conditions under which *had* stem+ -ed *may* occur, but that is all; the form often indicates that order of narration differs from order of original occurrence, but even so we have no " rule", for such specifications break down as soon as we refer to source-material.[1] In actual fact, when *had* in *had* stem+ -ed is Narrative, it is frequently an optional alternative to Simple Past, it is only in some contexts that it becomes preferable to Simple Past, or may become obligatory. We may get at the language feeling behind this through sentences in which, as forms, Simple Past and *had* stem+ -ed are interchangeable, but with meanings which are different: for instance " He told us he went to the seaside for a holiday " and " He told us he had been (gone)[2] to the seaside for a holiday." If we need narration of what happened, the form *had* stem+-ed is almost obligatory,[3] since the Simple Past form will usually be taken as Iterative. However, with the sentence " As soon as you went I wanted to see you again," (because of the phrase *as soon as*)there is no alternative to interpreting *went* as Narrative Simple Past, and " As soon as you had gone....." is an optional variant.

8. The degree of motivation to use Narrative *had* stem+ -ed when we have a past and before-past time relationship, is linked with the extent to which, in the context, the Simple Past might be ambiguous. Where ambiguity might have existed, the *had* stem+ -ed form secures the narrative interpretation. (See also 18 below).

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1. Jespersen: op. cit. 5.6(1) (2) 12.7(5) realized this, studying a series of sentences with *see* in two positions with respect to *before, after, till: I saw him before he saw me. I had seen him before he saw me. I saw him before he had seen me.* etc. and then referring to a large number of sentences from English writers. Jespersen's conclusion is that " The Simple preterit is often used for the before-past (past perfect) after the conjunctions *after, as soon as, before, until,*" and " There are cases in which it is not easy to see the reasons that have made a writer alternate between simple and expanded tenses."

2. According to the indentity of the second *he.*

3. If context makes the narrative element clear, *went* can be used also. For instance, in a group of people one person may ask another " Where did *you* go?" or " Why weren't you here?" not having heard or registered the fact that the information had already been given. A third person might then say, " He told us he went to the seaside for a holiday."

9. It follows from the above that the *had* stem+-ed form is often found in one writer's sentences where another writer would find no " need " for it; and as might be expected, the use of it on one occasion sometimes starts off a series. For example we read " When in 1685 he began.....there had been much experimenting.....these three had communicated their results to the Royal Society in November and December 1668.....Also, in 1676, Hooke had published....." and so on. The same writer has: " When he was nineteen..... ....he had shown that....."and "His father had died before he was born.....in 1656, the widow returned to Woolsthrope, and before long she had taken her son away from school....."[1]

This is a feature of the writer's method, and style. He takes, one by one, a series of topics, " Moments of Force and Inertia," " Universal Gravitation " and so on, and at some place in his exposition of each topic he selects a historical turning point in the formulation of the concept and summarizes previous theory with reference to that point. The method itself is responsible for some occurrences of *had* stem+ -ed, but the method affects the style and influences choice at points where use of *had* stem+ -ed is optional. Had the writer employed narrative throughout, one may suppose that then, at points of optional Simple Past/ *had* stem+ -ed, the Simple Past would have predominated.

10. The statement in the previous paragraph about conditions for obligatory and optional use of Narrative *had* stem+ -ed applies to use and non-use of the form in indirect style and in reported speech. A typical specification for reporting reads, " When the Simple Past, ' I saw him,' is reported in relation to the introduction ' he said that ,' it takes place notionally before the past ' said ' and must therefore be Past Perfect." The fictional nature of such statements is apparent as soon as we refer to any source material, including often, the writers' own exemplificatory and practice sentences.[2]

11. The form *have* stem+ -ed is not available as an alternative to the form *had* stem+ -ed in the same way as is the Simple Past, since it is unlikely that a present form would be able to take the place of a past form without sentence reorganization of an extensive nature. Consequently, when for instance a writer requires the resultative nature of a statement to predominate the *had* stem+-ed form is obligatory: *By that time, he had forged .....had adumbrated.....had formulated.....*

He was a good pupil and advanced rapidly—in the spring of 1835 *he had already advanced to the first class.*[3]

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1. Norman Feather: Mass, Length and Time, Pelican, 1961, p. 126 and p. 200.

2. W. Stannard Allen: Living English Structure. Of course, " He said he saw me". is as "correct" as the sentence with *had seen*. Nor do the sentences, "The archaeologist said that the glories of Tutankhamen were not at all exaggerated ", " He told me he caught a young lion and shot two others", " We were suprised to hear that she passed the examination at the age of fourteen " seem un-English, though I have not supplied " the correct " tense.

3. Robert Payne: The Gold of Troy, p. 21.

Just so. She had become attached to you both. She worked very hard for you, Henry.[1]

Further Examples and Comments

12. *Had* stem+ -ed occurs typically in subordinate clauses, but *had* in this form can stand as a main verb if the stem+ -ed element is strongly perfective, as it is in the first sentence of A. Huxley's novel " After many a Summer ": *It had all been arranged by telegram.*

    If the main verb is of this type (in the example, perfective of experience), a Narrative *had* stem+ -ed may be subordinated to it: *Before the golden age of Greek literature had come to an end, the main problem of criticism had already been stated.*

13. Generally, a Simple Past Actual is not " shifted " to the *had* stem+ -ed form even when for some reason its associated verb is in this form. In the following example, the Resultative *had* stem+ -ed sums up (and so emphasizes the bulk of) experience: *It was an admission that, all the time I* lived *with my mother I had never experienced but constraint.*

    However, Jespersen quotes the sentence: *When they* had been *little they had watched each other's plates with hostile eyes.*

14. Iterative *had* stem+ -ed is rare, but examples occur: *Unkind people asserted that everything in his apartment was for sale, and that after he* had invited *wealthy Americans to an excellent lunch one or two of his valuable drawings would disappear.* The Razor's Edge, Maugham.

15. With any kind of *had* stem+ -ed, the full form may constitute the first item of a series and subsequent items may consist of stem+ -ed only: *Had it been followed up and developed.....* *The simple festivals of Dionyus had grown and blossomed into.....* Occasionally ambiguity in interpretation is possible, as for instance in *He had seen the quatrain on the tomb of a Deccan king and regarded it as profound philosophy.* It may be preferable to consider *regarded* as Simple Past.

16. Learners are sometimes told that the meaning of *ago* precludes its use with the *had* stem+ -ed form. It is not infrequently found: " *I merely contend that it is possible in England,*" *replied Hamidullah who had been to the country long ago.*

    Incidentally, *now ago here this tomorrow* and so on never change simply through being reported: if their context is unaltered, they remain unaltered too: *He said he would see us here tomorrow morning.*

    The word *now,* in the sense of *on the next occasion* or *at a subsequent time,* can form the time contrast with Narrative *had* stem + -ed: *The thought of death and corruption which she had savoured the previous night.....was now.....*

1. Shaw: Pygmalion.

Here is an unusual example of *now* linked, grammatically, with *had* stem+ -ed. The verb is followed by two objects, the first object having an (iterative) -ing adjunct, and the second having as adjunct a participle of state qualified by a *now* which is in contrast to a *once* related to the iterative -ing: *Since my boyhood I had seen land slipping out of cultivation into pasture, and glens where once a dozen hearths smoked* now *inhabited only by a shepherd and a dog.*

17. The words *discovered, found,* and the like are in frequent association with *had* stem+ -ed: *When I joined the firm in the Autumn of* 1906 *I found that he had changed very little.* Occasionally the discovery is implied.....*but when he returned to the house for it Mahmoud Ali had drifted away*.....

18. Perhaps because of the association with unfulfilled condition (*If he had done this*, implying that he has not done this) the *had* stem+ -ed form seems easily to suggest non-fulfilment, in the sense that the native reader probably has it as a possible interpretation, given the least lexical hint. Foreign students do not always see more than the literal statement in expressions such as *It is true that there had been*.....Here is an interesting passage in this respect: *The lengthening slide had long been known as the most essential part of the trombone;.....A tentative effort had been made to apply the slide mechanism to the horn, but nothing came of it, probably because stopping had already given as good results as the slide* ..... The last *had* stem+ -ed is straightforwardly perfective, and the writer goes on to a parallel reference to another instrument, using Simple Past throughout: *These drawbacks did not stand in the way of adapting the slide to the trumpet; stopping was ineffective on that instrument*[1].....

A similar feeling may, on occasion, be behind the selection of Narrative *had* stem+ -ed in preference to Simple Past: the writer may feel that *had* stem+ -ed produces readiness for contrast with the literal statement: *One night when Farmer Oak had returned to his house*.....(we are half ready for the return to prove vain) *believing that there would be no further necessity*..... (we now know that Farmer Oak will not be able to remain at home).

19. From the foregoing examples, it is clear that the *had* stem + -ed area is a particularly difficult one to dogmatize about. Indeed, if a passage from an English writer, with occurrences of both Simple Past and *had* stem+ -ed, is copied out, with Simple Past and *had* stem+ -ed alternatives presented for choice at each point of occurrence of either, other Englishmen are likely to choose a large number of Simple Pasts, but are unlikely to make choices identical with each others' or with the writer's choice.

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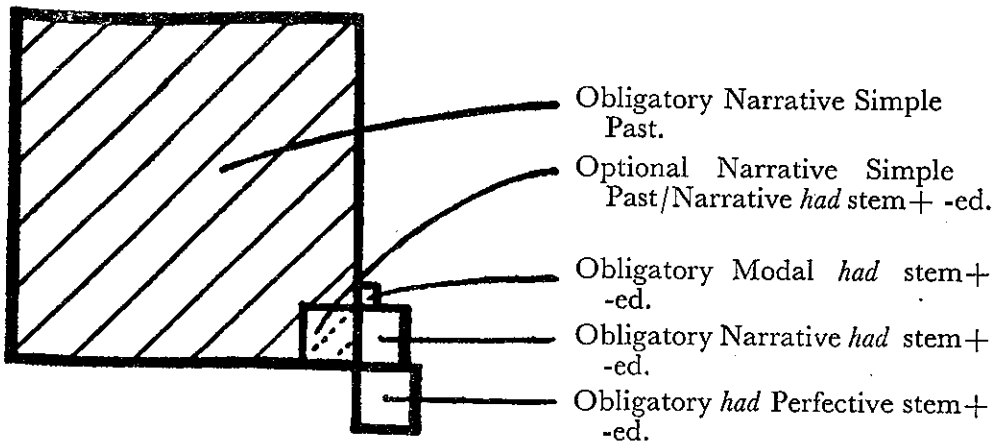
1 Adam Carse,: The Orchestra from Beethoven to Berlioz, Heffer, 1958, p. 410. " stopping " means closing holes with the fingers.

A teaching strategy for *had* stem+ -ed

A teaching strategy is now possible. A diagram will help:



Unless the School course is long, and well taught, it seems unwise to require active use of *had* stem+ -ed. In most six-year (1000-hour) courses, there is need for persistent discipline in writing planned narrative and no time to lose on adjustment to a confusing element.

Time-wasting (and fictitious) " rules " for transforming sentences to " indirect speech " specifications, and the tiresome exercises that go with these rules, receive no justification from the facts represented in our " grammar", and such " rules " got by heart and exercises performed by rule are unlikely to improve the total English of even the best school children.

On the other hand, receptive awareness of *had* stem+ -ed is required if (and when) school children become able to read fluently in a fairly freely written English. From the diagram, it would seem unwise to approach the form by contrasting Narrative *had* stem+ -ed with Simple Past Narrative. If Resultative Present Perfect is understood, this should be a safe introduction. No " tense " need be named, since we would be dealing with known use both of *had* and of the participial -ed. Lexical context might be illustrated—*by that time* for instance—but no undue emphasis should be given to this.

Though modal *had* stem+ -ed occurs infrequently I think it should be explained carefully. On the other hand, I do not think foreign learners should be called on touse modal *had* stem+ -ed—until they themselves feel confident to do so.

The 1961 issue of the Bulletin included an Interim Report on a verb-form frequency count being carried out at the Institute.

This count is now concluded, and a full report, complete with separate figures for various types of English, is now available as a *Monograph of the Central Institute of English, Hyderabad.* It may be obtained from the Institute, price two rupees including inland or foreign postage and registration. (One rupee is 1s. 6d. or $ 0.20)