



"FUTURE: FORMS AND MEANINGS"

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Abstract

The future is the indefinite time period after the present. Its arrival is considered inevitable due to the existence of time and the laws of physics. Due to the nature of the reality and the unavoidability of the future, everything that currently exists and will exist can be categorized as either permanent, meaning that they will exist for the whole of the future or temporary, meaning that they won't and thus will come to an end.

We express future time using will and be going to make predictions about the future or to say what you think will happen in the future. "will" is used also for a predication (what we think will happen) "Be going to" is used for a predication based on the present situation (what we can see is going to happen).

1- Means of expressing futurity in English:

1.1. Will and shall

Will or 'll +infinitive in all persons

Shall + infinitive (in 1st person only; chiefly BRE).

I will /shall arrive tomorrow.

The future can hardly be separated, but shall and, particularly, will are the closest approximation to a colourless, neutral future will for future can be used in all persons throughout the English speaking world . Whereas shall is largely restricted in this usage to southern BRE (Quirk et al, 1973).

According to Parrott (2000:169) will ('ll, won't) we use these forms with the bare infinitive of the main verb.

I'll go soon.

I won't let the children bother you.

We form questions by inverting the position of will ('ll; won't) and the subject.

Will you wait?

We tend to choose the full form will when we are writing or speaking formally, and often in informal speech after nouns and noun phrases (as opposed to pronouns) .

In informal speaking and writing we use 'll after:

Pronouns in affirmative sentences

-She'll; we'll

-Question words

When'll; who'll

If students choose the full form will when they're speaking, we need to be careful that they don't stress it as this can suggest a degree of obstinate insistence.



1.1.1 Shall (shan't)

After I and we, we can choose between will and won't and shall and shan't.

We use shall and shan't with the bare infinitive in exactly the same way as we use will ('ll; won't).

I shall go soon.

I shan't let the children bother you.

Will (often reduced to 'll) or sometimes shall <rather formal> (with a first person subject) can express the neutral future of prediction:

Temperatures tomorrow will be must the same as today.

We shall hear the results of the election witching week.

- But with personal subject, will/shall can also suggest an element of intention:

I'll see you again on Tuesday.

They'll make a cup of coffee if you ask them.

It is particularly common in the main clause of a conditional sentence.

If the book has real merit , it will sell.

Wherever you go, you will find the local people friendly (Leech, Svartvik, 1994:79).

1.1.2 shall and will together.

It is reasonable to follow the traditional grammarians in treating the forms will and shall together. But, as we have already seen, we cannot re-establish the old 'future paradigm'

I shall, you will.

Note:

(i) That both will and shall occur with 'I' and 'we' in what appears to be free variation.

(ii) That I shall, no less than 'I' will is normally reported speech as he would (Palmer, 1965:114).

1.1.3 Shall/will + infinitive, The most common way of expressing futurity is the construction of will or 'll with the infinitive:

- He will be here in half an hour.

- No doubt I'll see you next week.

- Will you need any help?

Shall is also sometimes used with the infinitive (especially in southern BRE) to indicate futurity with a 1st person subject:

- No doubt I shall see you next week (Quirk, Greenbaum 1973:57).

According to Quirk (1973:58) the construction of 'will / shall' with the progressive may indicate a future period of time within which another situation occurs:

- When you reach the end of the bridge, I'll be waiting there to show you the way.

Another use denotes future as a matter of course.

(It avoids the interpretation of volition, intention, promise, to which 'will', 'shall', and 'be going to' are liable).

-We'll be flying at 30,000 feet.



2.1.4. Will and shall + infinitive in simple future tense are used to describe as action that will take place at a certain date in the future.

- I shall travel to London next year.
- You will be tried soon (Aziz,1972: 82).

1.1.5 Shall/will + have +participle (future perfect) are used to describe an a action that will be completed before a certain time in the future.

-Before and by usually accompany this tense we shall have finished this book by May.

They will have come back before eight o'clock(Aziz 1972:28).

1.1.6. Will/affirmative statements.

She will arrive next week.

It'll arrive next week.

1.1.7. Negative statements

She will not arrive next week.

It won't arrive next week (Badalament, andHenrer-standing 2000:325).

1.1.8.Using probably with 'will'

- Ann will probably go to the park tomorrow.
- Bob probably won't go to the park tomorrow.
- Formal: Bob will probably not go to the park tomorrow.
- People often use probably with will.
- Probably comes between willand the main verb.

In a negative sentence, probably comes in front of 'won't', or more formally, between will and not(Azar,1992:50) .

1.2. Be Going To:

Be going to and will are used to express future time.

-forms with will

Statement: I will come tomorrow.

Negative: I will not (won't) come tomorrow.

Question: will I come tomorrow?

- I am going to leave at nine this morning.
- I will leave at nine tomorrow morning(Azar, 1992:50).

2.2.1.Will and Be going to

- He will go to the ball.
- He is going to go to the ball.

In (sentence No.1)future action is indicated by will, and in (Sentence No.2) it is indicated by going to in the same sentence (Cowan, 2008:36).



**1.2.2. Be Going to + infinitive (past)(often with the sense of unfulfilled intention)
you were going to give me your address.**

-The police were going to charge her, but at last she persuaded them she was innocent (Biber et al, 1985: 281).

1.2.3. Be going to + infinitive this construction denotes future fulfillment of the present.

Looked at more carefully. 'Be going to' has two more specific meanings, of which one, future of present intention; is used chiefly with personal subjects:

-When are you going to get married? The other meaning is future of present cause, which is found with both personal and non-personal subjects:

-She's going to have a baby.

-It's going to rain.

Both of these that the event is already on the way.

'Be going to' is not generally used in the main clause of conditional sentences, will/'ll or shall being preferred instead:

-If you leave now, you'll never regret it. (Quirk, Leech, Svartik, 1973:48)

1.2.4. Going to +INFINITIVE tends to indicate the future as a fulfillment the present. It may refer to a future resulting from a present intention:

-Are you going to put a coat on?

-She said that she's going to visit at two o'clock.

It may also refer to the future resulting from other causative factors in the present:

I think I'm going to faint (i.e. I already feel ill)

-It's going to rain (i.e. I can already see black clouds gathering)

-I'm afraid we're going to have stopped the meeting now.

In sentences like these three, be going to also carries the expectation that the event will happen soon (Leech, Svartik, 1975: 77).

According to Parrott, (1959:168) we generally refer to this form as the going to future, and teach it as be + going to +bare infinitive. It is also logical to think of this as the present continuous form of go + the full infinitive:

Affirmative: I'm going to have a wash.

Question: When are they going to leave?

Negative: We aren't going to make a fuss.

1.2.5. Affirmative statements

-She is going to leave.

-She's going to leave.

1.2.6. Negative statements

He is not going to leave

He is n't going to leave (Badalament and Henner- Stanching, 2000:324).

1.3. Present progressive.



Actions planned for the near future are often indicated by the present progressive tense (i.e. is/are+verb+ ing) the near future has to be contextualized by adverb and other time expressions, as in (sentence 1)

1-a-He's moving to phoenix this summer.

b-Susan's plane is leaving in five minutes.

The present progressive (present continuous) is formed with a present form of be (i.e. am, is or are) and present participle of the main verb.

The basic meaning of the present progressive, taught in every English language teaching textbook, is ongoing action at the time of speaking. Time adverbs such as right now emphasize the immediacy of the ongoing action, as in (sentence 1,A) which has an activity verb, and (sentence 1,B)

Which has an achievement verb? Ongoing action can be transpiring over a longer period, as the time expression in (sentence 1,C) illustrates.

A. They're studying for a midterm right now.

B. Her plane is landing right now.

C. They're putting the plan into effect in the course of this semester

(Cowan, 2008: 362).

According to Azar (1992: 61):

A. Don is going to come to the party tomorrow night.

B. Don is coming to the party tomorrow night.

Sometimes the present progressive is used to express future time (A) and (B) have the same meaning. The present progressive is used to express future time when the sentence concerns a definite plan, a definite intention.

Verbs such as go, come are frequently used in the present progressive to express future time. Such verbs express definite plans.

The use of the present progressive to express future time is common, especially with the verbs presented in the chart and other verbs that express planned activities. Some common ones are bring, build, get.

The present progressive and 'be going to' are used to talk about future events that the speaker has present knowledge of. Do you have plans for this evening, I'm watching a baseball game on TV evening (The speaker knows at the moment of speaker what his plans are for the future).

-We're going to Thailand for our Vacation (speaker's Vacation plans are a present reality.)

When the present progressive is used to express future time, usually be going to is equally possible I'm watching TV this evening and I'm going to watch TV this evening have no difference in meaning (Aziz, 1985: 36).

According to Quirk et al (1973:48) the present progressive refers to a future happening anticipated in the present. Its basic meaning is fixed arrangement, plan, or program:



-He's moving to London.

Since the progressive is used to denote present as well as future a time adverbial is after used to clarify in which meaning the verb is being used:

-They are washing the dishes now.

The present progressive is especially frequent with dynamic transitional verbs like arrive, come –go- land, which refer to a transition between two states or positions.

-The plane is taking off at 5:20.

-The president is coming to two UN this week.

1.4.Simple present

As we have already seen, the simple present tense used with a time expression can also indicate future action

-He arrives here on Thursday. On Saturday he flies back to time(Cowan,2008:361).

The use of the simple present to express future time in an independent clause is limited to relatively few verbs, ones that deal with schedules and timetables.

To help the students to understand this special use of the simple present, tell them as a general rule it is used only when the activity is one that is typically written down, as on a schedule or timetable, and will occur at a definite time(Azar, 1985:37).

The simple present is regularly used in subordinate clauses that are conditional or temporal.

-What will you say if I marry my boss?

-The guests will be drunk before they leave.

The use of the simple present in main clauses may be said to represent a marked future aspect of unusual certainty, in that it attributes to the future something of the positiveness one normally associates with present and past events. It is used for statement about the calendar: yesterday was Monday, today is Tuesday, and tomorrow is Wednesday

And to describe immutable events or fixtures:

-When is high tide?

-What time is the football match?(Quirk et al ,1973:49)

Simple present tense marking past or future time simple present tense is also used in special cases to refer to either past event or future events. The historic present tense, referring to past time, occasionally occurs in fiction to produce a more vivid description, as if the events were being enacted at the time of speech

-I could tell you a really boring joke that goes on for ages.

The above excerpt also illustrates how this function of the historic present in conversational narratives is especially common with speech-act verbs (say,go)(Quirk, R, 1999: 454).

2.5.Be about to

Be about to, Actions that are going to occur in the very near future- that is, momentarily- are indicated by be about to+ the verb.



-He's about to get into the car and leave for the airport(Cowan,2008, p:362).

1.5.1.Be about to / immediate future

-Ann's bags are packed, and she is wearing her coat.

-She is about to leave for the airport.

The idiom be about to do something expresses an activity that will happen in the immediate future, usually within five minutes(Azar, 1992:65).

The text treats 'be about to' as an idiom; that is, its meaning is not predictable from the rules of grammar or usual meaning of the constituent vocabulary elements. In other words, about followed by an infinitive has a special meaning. 'Be about to' is common inspoken English

(Azar, 1985: 38).

1.5.2.Be about to +infinitive this construction expresses near future, i. e; imminent fulfillment:

-The taxi is here and we are about to leave

'Be to' may enclose other items such as shortly or soon to provide a means of future expression; will other items again (bound, liable, certain,(un)likely),future expression is overlaid with modal meaning: He is certain to address the meaning(=It is certain that he will address.....)(Quirk et al, 1973: 50).

Be about to + infinitive (on the point of; often with the sense of unfulfilled intention)

-He was about to hit me(Biber et al, 1985: 218).

'Be (about) to' infinitive (past) is used to refer to a future arrangement or plan, a future requirement, and intention.

-Their daughter is to be married soon.

-There's to be an official enquiry.

'Be about to' + infinitive simple expresses near future;

-The train is about to leave.

-I'm about to read your essay.

The negative 'be not about to'(esp informal) may be paraphrased have no intention of (she's not about to complain)(Quirk,Green baum,1973:59).

2.6.Be to

Actions in the future can be expressed by'to + infinitive'

This form is relatively rare and is limited largely to contexts like commands:

-You are to stay here and guard this prisoner until you are relieved by Private Jones(Cowan, 2008: 362).

2.6.1. Be to + infinitive (formal);

i =was destined

ii To, = arrangement.

i)- He was eventually to end up in the bankruptcy court.

ii)- The meeting was to be held the following week (Biber et al, 1985:218).



Be to + infinitive this expresses 1) arrangement 2) command, or 3) contingent future:

- 1) We are to be married soon.
- 2) You are to be back by 10 o'clock.
- 3) If he is to succeed, he must work harder(Quirk et al, 1973:50).

2.7.Future perfect (continuous): is a verb phrase made from will + have + been = form. It emphasizes the duration of a future event or a present situation which reaches into the future. Two time expressions are essential with this tense: 1) a specific future time or event, and 2) the duration.

- In September the Allens will have been living in that house for two years.
- When he gets his degree he will have been living abroad for a long time(Pranins,1959: 215).

1.8.Perfect progressive, the future perfect progressive, formed with will + been and a present participle, expresses an action that will continue into the future up to a specific time. The duration of the action is usually specified in a time expression with for. The point at which the action will be complete often is stated in the simple present tense in a subordinate clause introduced by when or by the time (that), as in (sentence 1. A).

1-A- He will have been studying and practicing medicine for over ten years when he finally completes his residency next month.

b- By March, we will have been using the new system for a full year(Cowan,2008: 373).

1.9.Future continuous:

The future has a condign form, like the other tenses, will the same kind of emphasis.

- What are you doing now? I am studying.
- What will you be doing this time tomorrow?
- I will still be studying.
- Every day, I study from 8 o'clock till?
- It is now 9 o'clock. I am busy. I am studying(Close, 1964:143).

1.10. The pre- future will be formed by will have + the past participle,when you imagine yourself looking back from some moment in the future and when you are interested in some action performed before or until then.

What do you think of the exhibition? (Tomorrow)(close, 1964: 143).

2.Additional meanings:

In addition to expressing ongoing action, the present progressive can express a number of other meanings. As we have seen, one of these is planned, as illustrated (sentence1) A time expression that indicates when the activity will occur is necessary for this interpretation.



1-A- The new Art theater is showing the film classic Eraser head next week.

B- Tom is taking tennis lessons this summer.

C- we're climbing pikes tomorrow(Cowan,2008: 363).

The past in the future is expressed by will + perfect infinitive:

I am hoping that by the end of the month you will have finished your report.

-In three months' time, the plant will have taken root.

In subordinate clauses which allow the simple present for future time.

-The present perfect can express past in the future:

Phone me later, when you have finished your dinner(Leech, Svartik, 1975, 2994, 79).

The future in the Past

-Today I say, I will write: I promise;

Yesterday I promised I would write.

Use the future in the past (formed by would + the infinitive) when you imagine yourself looking forward from appoint of view in the past. You will only need to use this tense after the past Tense of words like say, tell someone, know, think, expect, promise. Put the following into the future in the past, beginning with

-I said, I told you, or something similar:

-It will rain. It will be a busy day. It will be a long way.

-George will be late. He will bring us a bottle of wine. We will forgive him. I will tell you the answer(close,1964 : 144).

3. Conclusion:

The most common auxiliary verbs used to express futurity are *will* and *shall*.

Prescriptive grammarians distinguish between these, preferring to express the simple future as *will* in the second and third persons and *shall* in the first person, and preferring to express obligation or determination in the opposite cases.

However, in modern English worldwide, *shall* and *will* are generally used interchangeably, with *will* being more common. See also shall and will.

"Be" to +infinitive and be 'about to' + infinitive are two other construction which are often used to refer to a future time. "Be to" is used to refer to a future arrangement or plan. 'Be about to', on the other hand expresses near future.

In grammar, a future tense is a verb form that marks the event described by the verb as not having happened yet, but expected to happen in the future, or to happen subsequent to some other event, whether that is past, present, or future.



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