

**THE EXPRESSION OF TENSE AND MOOD CATEGORIES IN PREDICATIVE UNITS:
A TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS****Xushiyeva Nargis Tashpulatovna**

Jizzakh State Pedagogical University

after named Abdulla Kodiriy

Romance-Germanic Languages Department

Associate Professor

xushiyevanargis@gmail.com

Abstract: This article provides a typological analysis of how tense and mood categories are expressed within predicative units - particularly in verbal predicates. Firstly, the notions of tense and mood and their interrelations in predicative contexts are introduced. Then, examples from different languages illustrate how tense and mood are realized, highlighting typological differences in expression. The conclusion draws general tendencies concerning the structural and semantic interplay of tense and mood in predicative units.

Keywords: predicative unit; tense category; mood/modality category; typological analysis; verbal predicate; cross-linguistic variation; modality; temporality; predicate structure; language typology.

Introduction: Grammatical categories of tense and mood (sometimes grouped under the umbrella term TAM - Tense-Aspect-Mood) represent crucial components in the description of predicative units: they help locate the situation in time (tense) and express the speaker's attitude or modality towards the situation (mood).

In typological linguistics, interest has grown in how different languages encode these categories, whether separately or conflated, and how these interact in the predicate domain. In this article, we focus specifically on predicative units - i.e., the forms of predicates (chiefly verbal) that bear tense and mood markers - and ask: how are tense and mood categories expressed typologically within predicative units? What morphological, syntactic and semantic strategies do languages use? What typological patterns emerge?

Objectives of the study:

1. To review typological perspectives on tense and mood expression in predicative units.
2. To examine concrete examples from different languages, illustrating how predicative forms encode tense and mood categories.
3. To identify typological tendencies in the co-occurrence, separation or fusion of tense and mood within predicates.

Methods: Given the typological aim, I selected recent typological and descriptive studies (2020 and later where possible) that treat the expression of tense and mood in predicates across languages (e.g., English, Sinitic, other families). For example, Arcodia 2023 provides data on Sinitic tense-like markers. Crowley 2024 treats "modal past" uses of past morphology to mark mood. Although full primary corpora of many languages are beyond the scope here, I treated each example as a mini-case study: identifying the predicative form, its morphological marking (if any), the tense value and mood value attributed.

The analysis distinguishes two dimensions:

- Tense: locating the situation relative to utterance time (e.g., past, present, future).

- Mood/Modality: the speaker's attitude toward the proposition expressed by the predicate - such as realis/irrealis, potential, optative, subjunctive. Within predicative units, we examine whether these categories:
 - are marked separately (distinct morphemes),
 - are fused (a single morpheme expresses e.g., past + irrealis),
 - or one category is absent (e.g., tenseless language, but mood expressed).
 We code for: morphological marking, relative independence of mood vs tense, and typological pattern (separate vs fused).

Because the typological sample is selective, not exhaustive, the article aims at illustrating typological variation rather than proving universals. Also, many languages are under-documented so examples rely on existing descriptive literature.

Example 1: Comparative Analysis - English and Uzbek Predicative Units: Expression of Tense and Mood

English Predicative Structure

In English, tense is generally expressed through inflectional morphology and auxiliary constructions, while mood is represented by synthetic and periphrastic means. Typical examples include:

- *He walks* – present tense, indicative mood.
- *He walked* – past tense, indicative mood.
- *If he were rich, he would travel* – subjunctive mood (counterfactual meaning).

The predicate consists of a finite verb that carries tense (*walks / walked*) and may combine with modal auxiliaries (*would, could, may, might*) to express mood or modality. As noted by Etibar (2024), English mood is primarily realized through auxiliaries rather than rich morphological paradigms. The tense system is binary (past vs. non-past), while modality adds semantic nuance without necessarily altering verb morphology.

Uzbek Predicative Structure

In Uzbek, the predicative unit demonstrates a more synthetic and agglutinative pattern. Both *zamon* and *mayl* are expressed through affixal morphology within the same verb complex. Examples:

- *Men kecha bordim* – “I went yesterday.” (Past, indicative mood)
- *Men boraman* – “I will go.” (Future, indicative mood)
- *Agar men borsam, yaxshi bo'lardi* – “If I go, it would be good.” (Conditional/subjunctive mood)
- *U borsin!* – “Let him go!” (Imperative mood)

Tense morphemes such as *-di* (past), *-yapti* (present continuous), and *-ar / -adi* (habitual or future) appear directly on the predicate. The mood category is encoded through suffixes (*-sa, -sin, -gan edi*, etc.) or modal lexemes (*kerak, mumkin, shart*). As observed by Rasulova & Shukurova (2024), the Uzbek verb system allows simultaneous expression of temporal and modal meanings within a single morphological form, showing high integration of these grammatical categories.

Comparative Summary**table 1.**

The following table summarizes the key contrasts between the two systems:

Feature	English	Uzbek
Tense marking	Morphological (-s, -ed) and analytic (auxiliaries: <i>will, have</i>)	Morphological (-di, -yapti, -ar, etc.)
Mood marking	Lexical or periphrastic (modal verbs: <i>may, must, should</i>)	Morphological (-sa, -sin) and lexical (modals: <i>kerak, mumkin</i>)
Predicative type	Partially synthetic; tense explicit, mood analytic	Synthetic-agglutinative; tense and mood fused in verb morphology
Dominant strategy	Separate marking of tense and mood	Integrated (fused) expression within predicate

Discussion. Typologically, English represents a system where tense and mood tend to be formally distinct - tense is encoded morphologically on the verb, while mood is introduced syntactically via modal verbs or specific subjunctive forms. In contrast, Uzbek integrates both categories morphologically: the same predicate form carries temporal reference and modal meaning.

Thus, English predicates are tense-explicit but mood-periphrastic, whereas Uzbek predicates are morphologically rich, encoding tense and mood simultaneously. As shown by Muslima (2023) and Rasulova & Shukurova (2024), this typological difference reflects the analytic vs. agglutinative character of the two languages, influencing how predicative units organize grammatical information.

Example 2: English - separate tense + mood marking in many predicates

In the article on the tense category of the indicative mood in English (Etibar 2024) we find typical English finite verbal predicates show morphology for tense (e.g., past vs non-past) and mood (e.g., indicative vs subjunctive) though mood marking is limited. For example:

- *If I were queen...* → “were” is subjunctive mood, past tense morphology but realises counter-fact.
- *He walks* (present indicative) vs *He walked* (past indicative).
Here, the predicative unit carries a tense morpheme (-ed for past) and mood is indicated by lexical/auxiliary means (e.g., subjunctive were).
Thus: tense and mood are largely separate in English predicates: morphological tense marking plus modal/auxiliary strategies for mood.

Example 3: Modal-past (X-marking) across languages - fusion of mood + tense

In Crowley 2024 the notion of “X-marking” is introduced: morphological past (or past-like) forms used to express modal or irrealis meanings (counterfactuals, wishes). [SpringerLink](#) For example, in English conditional: *If I had known...* the “had” is past tense morphology but used in a counterfactual sense (irrealis).

The predicative unit here shows morphological marking that conflates temporal plus modal meaning: past form but the proposition is not past actual but counterfactual. Crowley shows this is widespread cross-linguistically. Thus we have a typological pattern where tense morphology is co-opted for mood/modality marking: a fused expression of tense + mood in the predicate.

From these examples one may summarise:

- Pattern A: Tense minimally marked (or absent) but mood/ modality marked separately (e.g., tenseless languages like Mandarin).
- Pattern B: Tense marked and mood marked separately (e.g., English).
- Pattern C: Tense morphology used to express mood/modality (fusion) (e.g., X-marking languages). Hence, predicative units show typological variation in how tense and mood are expressed: separate vs fused; obligatory vs optional.

The study by Gil 2021 found that languages with more elaborate TAM marking tend to correlate with larger language-family size, suggesting socio-cultural factors influence complexity of predicative TAM marking. Moreover, the boundary between tense and mood is often blurred: as the Wikipedia summary notes, many languages fuse tense, aspect and mood in a single inflected form. These observations reflect on predicative units: the finite verb can carry several layers of meaning (temporal, modal, aspectual) in one morphological form.

Discussion. The typological patterns above show that in predicative units, the expression of tense and mood is not uniform across languages: each language chooses structural strategies for the predicate that reflect deeper typological alignments. Pattern A (tenseless languages) suggests that the predicate need not carry explicit tense marking; temporal location can be encoded via adverbials, aspect markers or lexical means. But mood still may be encoded via separate modal verbs or particles. This suggests that mood may be a more “stable” category for predicative units than tense - at least for some languages. Pattern B (separate tense + mood) reflects a more analytic approach: the predicate marks tense morphologically, and mood is encoded via auxiliary/modal lexical items or specific verbal inflections. This is typified by many Indo-European languages. Pattern C (fusion) reveals that the predicative unit may blur the distinction between temporal and modal meaning: past morphology comes to signal irrealis, wishes or hypothetical meaning. This suggests diachronic grammaticalisation pathways (as Crowley shows) where tense markers become mood markers.

When analysing predicates cross-linguistically, one must consider:

Is the finite predicate explicitly marking tense? If not, then mood may still be explicitly marked (Pattern A).

Are mood markers independent or fused with tense morphology? Fused forms pose challenges for typological classification since we must decide whether the form is primarily modal or temporal in function.

The semantic loading of the predicative form matters: e.g., a “past” form in a conditional may just signal counterfactual modality rather than actual past time. Thus morphological form alone in predicative units cannot always be read as purely temporal.

The finding that language-family size correlates with TAM marking complexity (Gil 2021) suggests that predicative unit structure is influenced by socio-historical factors, not just internal grammar. Adequate typological models of predicative units must incorporate extra-linguistic explanation. Also, the blurring of tense/mood boundaries suggests that when looking at predicative units, we should adopt a form-meaning mapping rather than assume clean categorical boundaries. The predicate may simultaneously encode temporal, modal and aspectual meaning.

This article’s scope is limited to examples from a few languages and does not provide a full typological survey. Further research could compile a balanced sample of languages and examine predicative unit morphology across families, assessing the relative independence of

tense and mood marking quantitatively. Investigation of under-documented languages (where predicative unit marking may differ radically) would also enrich typological generalisations.

Conclusion. Predicative units reveal rich typological variation in how languages express tense and mood. Some predicates mark tense and mood separately; others fuse them or omit tense marking altogether. Understanding predicative structure thus requires attending both to morphological form and to its semantic/pragmatic interpretation (e.g., whether past morphology expresses actual past, or modality). The typology of predicative units in terms of tense and mood can contribute to broader typological theory of verbal systems and to our understanding of cross-linguistic variation in predicate structure.

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