

Pastness in Past Participle

Yonghyun Kwon

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1. Introduction

The participle break into two types: present participle and past participle. The two terms *present participle* and *past participle* have been controversial as to whether *present* and *past* in them are appropriate or not. This research is concerned with *past participle*.

Jespersen mentions the controversial issue. He avoids the traditional terms. Instead, he prefers *the first participle* and *the second participle*, saying:

As we shall presently see, the time relation of the two English participles are not so simple as might be inferred from their usual names, present participle and past participle. They will therefore here be called the first participle (always ending in *-ing*) and the second participle (sometimes ending in *-d*, *-t* or *-n*, sometimes with no particular ending.). (Jespersen, 1933: 249-50)

It seems that the reason for his preference for the *first participle* and *second participle* started with the fear that the traditional terms could be misleading and confusing in regard to time relations. His fear might look reasonable at first glance, considering that the participles, whether present participle or past participle, are used in the various contexts of present, past or future.

Swan also comments on the inappropriateness of the traditional terms:

When *-ing* forms are used in certain ways, they are called 'present participles'. Forms like *broken, gone, opened, started* are called 'past participles'. These are not very suitable names: both forms can be used to talk about the past, present or future. (Swan, 1995: 401)

The reason that Jespersen (1933) and Swan (1995) do not accept the traditional term *past participle* is that the past participle can be used in contexts of present, past, and future, as in (1):

- (1) a. He has painted the house white.
- b. The house was painted white.
- c. The house will be painted by tomorrow.

In terms of tense, (1a) is a present-tensed sentence while (1b) is a past-tensed sentence. The past participle *painted* is used in a future situation in (1c). The sentences in (1) show that the past participle has nothing to do with the tense. Even so, it looks as if the *past* component in *past participle* has something to do with the *past* component in *past tense*. If the nature of the two types of past remains unidentified,

the term *past participle* itself is enough to invite confusion.

Jespersen (1933) and Swan (1995) do not distinguish pastness between past tense and past participle. The lack of distinction led to their choice of alternative terms.

However, Huddleston and Pullum supports the term *past participle*:

It is its use in the perfect construction that provides the basis for the 'past' component of the name, for the perfect is a kind of past tense. No element of pastness applies to the passive use, but it is predominantly the passive that is involved in noun-modifying constructions like [9],¹⁾ which fit the central part of the definition of participle. 'Past participle' is therefore a reasonably good name for a form with the above spread of uses. (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002: 78)

Their motivation to support the traditional term *past participle* is quite interesting. They regard the term as reasonable based on two perspectives: (i) the past participle is used in perfect, in which the past participle has the sense of pastness, (ii) the past participle functions like adjectives in that the past participle modifies nouns.

Although they point out that the element of pastness is embedded in perfect, Huddleston and Pullum deny that the element of pastness is not involved in passive. No involvement of pastness in passive is mentioned:

But there are no verbs where the form used in the passive is different from that used in the perfect. For this reason we take the perfect and passive constructions to involve *different uses*

1) The given examples in [9] are: (i) I came across a letter *written* ten years ago.
(ii) He showed me a hurriedly *written* first draft.

of the same inflectional form, not different forms. (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002: 77–8)

Even though the inflectional forms (past participle) are the same in passive and in perfect, they have not recognized that passive and perfect share some common linguistic properties in terms of the past participle. Let us consider (2):

- (2) a. They have left the child alone.
- b. The child is left alone.

The past participle *left* is used in (2a) and (2b). According to Huddleston and Pullum (2002), the perfect construction in (2a) has the element of pastness while the passive construction in (2b) has no pastness. If their observation is logical and sensible, it means that the passive construction has no good linguistic reason to employ the past participle. It amounts to saying that the combination of *be* and the past participle in passive is accidental rather than systematic. However, it is hard to deny our intuition that the temporal role of the past participle *left* in (2a) and in (2b) are somehow related to each other. Thus, a question arises as to whether it is true that the past participle in passive does not have anything to do with pastness. If it is discovered that in passive the past participle has some element of pastness, then it will lead us to a better understanding that the past participle has a reasonable linguistic motivation to be used both in passive and in perfect.

The main issues in regard to the temporal role of the past participle boils down to:

- (i) How is *past* in *past participle* different from *past* in *past tense*?
- (ii) What semantic common ground of passive and perfect allows the past participle to be shared in the two constructions?

This research will look for some common properties shared in passive and perfect, based on the assumption that there might be some common properties in the two constructions because they resort to the same inflectional form of verbs. The assumption goes back to Bolinger (1977: x): "The natural condition of a language is to preserve one form for one meaning, and one meaning for one form." Considering that passive and perfect share the past participle, there is no convincing reason to deny that the past participle shares a common temporal role in the two constructions. This assumption is in contradiction to the view of Huddleston and Pullum (2002) that the element of pastness is not involved in passive while it is in perfect. When this research identifies 'pastness' in the role of the past participle for passive and perfect, it will be clarified why passive and perfect employ the same device: past participle. While discussing pastness in the two constructions, we are going to reveal the distinction between the two types of *past* in *past participle* and *past tense*.

2. Functional and Formal Terms

2.1 Functional Terms

It has not been identified yet how *past* in *past tense* is distinct from *past* in *past participle*. The two kinds of *past* have been treated in the same way. As a result, the term *past participle* has been considered misleading or confusing. Therefore, some grammarians avoid the traditional term and prefer the alternative terms *active participle* and *passive participle* to *present participle* and *past participle*.²⁾ Among them is John Eastwood (1994). He calls the past participle the passive participle. Let us have a look at (3):

- (3) a. Although covered by insurance, Tom was annoyed about the accident.
b. I stepped on some broken glass. (Eastwood, 1994:168)

Covered and *annoyed* in (3a) are called passive participles based on the ground that *covered by insurance* comes from *he was covered by insurance*. *Broken* in *some broken glass* in (3b) is also treated as a passive participle because the phrase has to do with *some glass was broken*.

The terms *active participle* and *passive participle* have been chosen to capture the syntactic constructions for which the participles are used. Most of the time, the present participle functions to indicate the active while the past participle is chosen for the passive. Still, there are many cases in which the past participle is not relevant to the passive.

Quirk et al. (1985: 167–70) discusses three gradients of

2) The terms *active participle* and *passive participle* seem to have been favored because most of time, if not always, the present participle is used in active constructions while the past participle in passive constructions.

the passive.³⁾ One of them is pseudo-passives. Let us look at (4):

(4) The building is already demolished.

Demolished in (4) is a past participle. However, it is questionable whether *demolished* in (4) can be rightly treated as a passive participle. (4) refers to the resultant state of the demolished building at the present. That is, (4) is not the passive of the corresponding active *someone already demolishes the building*. (4) does not have its corresponding active. In this respect, *demolished* in (4) does not have a valid reason to be treated as a passive participle.

There are more serious cases in which the relationship between active and passive is impossible to imagine at all even if the past participle is used. Let us consider (5):

- (5) a. I'll be finished in a few minutes.
b. Those days are gone now.

Finished and *gone* are past participles. However, we cannot find the actives corresponding to (5). The meaning of (5a) is not related at all to *something will finish me in a few minutes*. That is, (5a) does not have the active-passive relationship. The verb *go* in (5b) has no transitive use, which clearly denies that (5b) has come from its corresponding active.

3) According to Quirk et al. (1985: 167–70), the passive is classified into three different types. The other two are: (i) central passives: *This violin was made by my father*; (ii) semi-passives: *Leonard was interested in linguistics*.

Swan also demonstrates that past participles sometimes function as an active rather than as a passive. Let us consider (6):

- (6) a. a well-read person
- b. a much-travelled man
- c. recently-arrived immigrants (Swan, 1995: 402)

Read in (6a), *travelled* in (6b), and *arrived* in (6c) are all past participles. However, they have no relevance with **the person is read well*, **the man is travelled much*, and **the immigrants are recently arrived*, respectively. Rather, *a well-read person* implies that the person has read well, *a much-travelled man* suggests that the man has travelled much, and *recently-arrived immigrants* conveys that the immigrants have arrived recently.

Quirk et al. also treats such a pattern as active rather than passive, saying, "Premodification is somewhat more common when an active participle is modified by an adverb." The relevant examples are presented in (7):

- (7) a. our recently-departed friend
- b. a soft-spoken person (Quirk et al., 1985: 1327)

Departed and *spoken* in (7) are both past participles, but they do not function as a passive but as an active. The expressions in (7) cannot be derived from their corresponding passive constructions.⁴⁾ Rather, they have much more to do

4) The possible passives might be: **our friend was departed recently*/**a person is*

with *our friend has departed recently* and *the person has spoken softly*. The treatment of the past participle in (7) as active rightly supports that the past participle does not always function as a passive.

The preference of *passive participle* to *past participle* was to avoid a confusion which could arise from the same use of *past* in *past tense* and *past participle*. That is, a distinction has not been made yet as to how *past* is different between *past tense* and *past participle*.

2.2 Formal Terms

Regarding pastness, no attempt to distinguish between *past tense* and *past participle*, is made in Palmer. He is also reluctant to use *past participle*. Instead, his terms are more faithful to the form of a verb:

For *taking* and *taken* the most suitable names are simply '*-ing* form' and '*-en* form'. The former avoids the difficulties about participles and gerunds (see 9.3.3). The latter is justified in that it uses the same kind of label. Many *-en* forms (the traditional 'past participles'), however, do not end in *-en*, but often in *-ed*. But *-en* is an ending confined to these in contrast with the past tense, and thus provides an unambiguous label. (Palmer, 1988: 13)

The quotation above clearly demonstrates that his intention to prefer the terms (*-ing* form and *-en* form)⁵⁾ is to remove some possible confusion between the two types of past in

spoken softly. But the passive sentences are not grammatical.

5) *-ing* form and *-ed* form are chosen in Leech and Svartvik (1994: 393-4). *-ing* participle and *-ed* participle are preferred in Quirk and Greenbaum (1973: 27).

past tense and past participle.

Some grammarians prefer formal terms such as *-ing* participle and *-ed* (or *-en*) participle to the functional terms dealt with in 2.1. The formal terms are neutral in regard to the linguistic function of the participles by not mentioning anything about their functions. The motivation to choose the formal terms over the functional terms is to keep a safe distance from the controversial issues which functional terms could create.

It seems that supporters of the formal terms do not fully understand how *past* in *past participle* is distinct from *past* in *past tense*. The lack of understanding led them to choose the formal terms. However, the choice of the formal terms does not contribute to the task of identifying the temporal role of the past participle, because the formal terms provide no valuable insight as to what is the semantic role of the past participle in active and perfect.

3. Historic Aspects of Past Participle

3.1 Origin and Role of Participle

It is not clear when the terms *present participle* and *past participle* came into use in English grammar. According to McArthur (1992: 751), the term *participle* was borrowed from the French *participle*. The meaning of the French *participle* is 'participate.' So the term *participle* in English grammar supposedly started to show that the participial forms of English verbs 'participate' in various syntactic functions

beyond the proper boundary of verbs. Participles take the roles of adjective, adverbs, and preposition.⁶⁾

Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 78) confirms the basic concept of participle, saying, "The central idea in the traditional concept of participle is that it is a word formed from a verb base which functions as or like an adjective." They limit the role of participles to the adjective only.

Biber et al. expands the roles taken by the participles to nouns:

Many verb forms may have roles characteristic of nouns and adjectives. Such uses are limited to participle forms (ending in *-ed* or *-ing*), originally so called because they participate in more than one word class. In these cases, verb forms tend to acquire the characteristics of nouns and adjectives. Compare *building* and *house* (nouns),⁷⁾ *exciting* and *dramatic* (adjectives), *tired* and *wearry* (adjectives). (Biber et al.:1999: 100)

The term participle is accepted as reasonable in that English verbs have expanded their verbal role to other syntactic functions.

3.2 Historical Implication of Perfect

6) Here are some examples in which participial forms function as a preposition: (i) *Regarding* the issue, we do not agree completely. (ii) I don't know anything *concerning* his past. (iii) *Given* his interest in children, teaching seems right for him. According to Cho (1990: 863), the participle is treated as verb-adjective in Curme (1935: 210), which emphasizes that the major role of the participle is adjective.

7) Interestingly enough, *building* is treated as participle rather than as gerund. The *-ing* form of that kind is usually classified as gerund. The term *gerund* is borrowed from Latin *gerundium* in the 16th century, which means 'engage in,' according to McArthur (1992: 439). In terms of the origin of gerund, gerund does not need to be separately treated from participle except that the former undertakes verbal nouns.

The historical development process of the perfect construction is mentioned in Jespersen:

These tense phrases go back to very old times. Originally *have* here had its full meaning, 'posses, hold': *I have caught the fish*='I hold (have) the fish as caught' (cp. the modern "There, I have you beaten"). Afterwards this meaning was lost sight of, and *have* came to be a mere grammatical instrument (auxiliary) to mark time-relation; thus it became possible to use it with all kinds of verbs, even those in which *have* as originally used would give no sense: *I have lost (thrown away, forgotten, seen) the key*. With intransitive verbs, too, *have* is now the usual auxiliary, but formerly *I am come, I am become*, etc., was used very extensively. (Jespersen, 1933: 237)

According to the quotation above, it is very clear that such sentences as *I am come, I am become* were used and acceptable among speakers till the perfect construction was fully established.⁸⁾ As the perfect was growing more and more established, the construction came to replace intransitive verb-based passive sentences as often as possible. As time went by, the strict distinction between passive and perfect started to develop. The historical development process strongly implies that some common linguistic property must be shared between passive and perfect while each of the two has developed its own proper areas.⁹⁾ The shared linguistic

8) It is also confirmed in Swan (1995: 419): "In older English, some present perfect forms were made with *be*, not *have* (e.g. *Winter is come*). This does not normally happen in modern English."

9) In respect to the similarity and difference, Jespersen (1933: 240) adds, "Nowadays, a distinction is made, so that the combination with *has* is a real perfect, but that with *is* is a pure present. *He is come* means 'he has come and is now here.' While *he has gone* calls up the idea of movement, *he is gone*

property naturally results from the mutual use of the same inflection whereas the differences are reflected in the different choice of *be* or *have* as their auxiliaries.

4. Pastness in Past Participle

4.1 Relative Past in Passive

Now let us investigate the temporal function which the past participle performs in the passive. As seen earlier, Huddleston and Pullum (2002) states that no element of pastness is inherent with the passive. However, it is hard to deny that the element of pastness is embedded even with the passive. Let us consider (8):

- (8) a. The window is broken.
b. The window was broken.

Broken in (8) is a past participle. The combination of *is/was* and *broken* makes a passive in (8a) and (8b), respectively. (8a) is a present-tensed sentence. (8a) talks about the present state of the broken window. The past participle *broken* suggests when the action of breaking the window happened. The action happened earlier. The earlier act of breaking the window results in the present state of the broken window. The present tense *is* refers to the present state of the window, and the past participle *broken* implies that the act of breaking

emphasizes the idea of a state (condition) and is the equivalent of 'he is absent, he is not here (there).'

window happened prior to the present state in which the window is. In this respect, the past participle indicates relative past.

(8b) is a past-tensed sentence. The sentence talks about the past state of the broken window. The past state is marked by the past tense of the verb *was*. The event of the window being broken had happened prior to the past state in which the window was broken. The past state of the broken window is revealed by the past tense of the verb *was*. The earlier event of breaking the window is marked by the past participle *broken*. The past state is represented by the past tense *was* while the earlier event is marked by the past participle *broken*. In this sense, the past participle refers to relative past.

In (8), which isate passive constructions, the past participle contains the element of pastness. Pastness indicated by the past participle is different from pastness by the past tense. The past tense points to the past time independently while the past participle refers to earlier time than the time the present tense or the past tense refers to. The time the past participle points to depends on the time the present tense or the past tense points to. In this respect, the past participle indicates relative past while the past tense denotes absolute past.

Let us examine one more:

(9) The girl was left alone.

(9) is meant to say that the girl was in the state of being

alone without her parents. The state in which the child was belongs to the past, which is clear from the past tense *was*. Her parents had left her earlier before she was put into the state of being alone. As a result of the earlier action, the child was not together with her parents now. The past participle *left* denotes that the act of leaving the child happened in the past prior to the resultant past condition. The earlier act of leaving the child leads to the child's resultant condition. The relation of act and state explains that the concept of relative past applies to (9) also.

Let us briefly examine some similarities between the passive and the perfect in (10), which is caused by the past participle they share:

- (10) a. She is murdered.
- b. *The robber murders her.
- c. The robber murdered her.
- d. The robber has murdered her.

(10a) is much closer to (10d) in terms of meaning than the other two (10b) and (10c). (10a) has the pattern of *is murdered*, which represents presentness through *is* and pastness through *murdered*. (10d) also marks both of the temporal references, with presentness through *has* and pastness through *murdered*. However, (10b) does not make any sense, and (10c) refers to what happened in the past, without mentioning her present state at all. This fact demonstrates that the past participle for passive and perfect shares the same temporal feature of relative past in the two

constructions.

In (10a), *is murdered* is a combination of present tense and relative past. But presentness and pastness are not on equal footing in the present passive construction. It is past in present, not the other way around. It means that present has a wider scope than past. Past here is not out of present. It is inside the present. The relative scope is manifested in the syntactic arrangement of *is murdered*.¹⁰⁾ Let us examine (11):

- (11) a. The robber murdered her last night.
- b. *She is murdered last night.
- c. She was murdered last night.

(11a) says that the act of murdering happened last night. However, (11b) is not correct even though the past participle *murdered* has the element of pastness. The present marked by *is* has a wider scope than the earlier past marked by *murdered*. The adverbial *last night* should be under the scope of *is*, not *murdered*. But *last night* cannot come under the scope of *is*, which leads to the incorrectness of (11b). In (11c), the past tense marked by *was* does not conflict with *last night*.

Sometimes pastness indicated by the past participle does

10) In the scope relation in English, the element with a wider scope is located on the left while the element with a narrower scope is on the right. For example, in the sentence *He did not sleep till 12*, *not* has a wider scope compared to *till 12*. However, in the sentence *Till 12 he did not sleep*, *till 12* has a wider scope compared to *not*. As a result of the different scopes, the two sentences could have different readings. If *he did not sleep till 12* is true, we can infer that he might have slept till 11. However, the same inference is not possible from *Till 12, he did not sleep*.

not stand out. At times, the feature becomes thinner. Let us consider (12):

- (12) a. His dog is killed now.
b. His dog was killed by a car yesterday.

Each of (12a) and (12b) is a passive. Each has the past participle *killed*. However, (12a) emphasizes the state in which his dog is, while (12b) is focused on what happened to his dog yesterday. In (12b), what happened to his dog is more outstanding than the condition or state in which his dog was. The reason has to do with the appearance of the agent phrase *by a car* in the passive. Because of the appearance of the agent phrase, the focus inevitably shifts from state to action. Accordingly, the state gets out of focus, which reinforces the action. When the action is in focus, relative pastness indicated by the past participle is lost to a certain degree. As a result, the degree of relative past in (12b), which is expected from the past participle *killed*, is much less, compared to (12a).

4.2 Relative Past with Adjectives

The past participles *fallen*, *advanced*, *retired* in (13) are in a position to modify the following nouns. The structures in which they are used do not fall under the passive. Comparatively speaking, they are closer to the perfect.¹¹⁾

11) The verb *fall* in (13a) is an intransitive verb, so it cannot be used in what Quirk et al. (1985) calls a central passive. (13b) is closer to *he has advanced*. It has nothing to do with the passive corresponding to *Somebody advances him*. (13c)

They are listed as adjectives in dictionaries. The concept of relative past comes into play in (13), too. Let us examine (13):

- (13) a. He picked up a fallen leaf.
- b. He is an advanced student.
- c. He is a retired general.

In (13a), the leaf was already on the ground before the person (*he*) picked it up. The past participle *fallen* suggests that the act of falling comes earlier than the act of his picking up the leaf. In (13b), the past participle *advanced* does indicate the state of being advanced, which implies that the act of advancing has already been completed before the student is in the state of being advanced. In (13c), the past participle *retired* works in the same way. When we see *a retired general*, we know that the general already retired in the past. The act of retirement happens earlier and the resultant state continues up to now.

The past participles in (13) also confirm that the past participles consistently indicate that the actions come prior to each of the states.

4.3 Relative Past in Perfect

The concept of relative past which the past participle is supposed to carry inherently is more obviously materialized in

also refers to *he has retired as a general* rather than the passive of *somebody retires him*.

the perfect. Let us have a look at (14):

- (14) a. She has painted her house white.
- b. She has lost her key.

In (14a), the act of painting the house was performed in the past, leading to the current state in which her house is white. The auxiliary *has* is followed by the past participle (*painted*). It is not known when the act of painting happened. But there is no question about the fact that the woman painted the house in the past. The pastness is represented by the past participle *painted*. The past is a relative past in that the act of painting comes prior to the present condition (*the house is white now*), marked by *has*.

The present perfect construction is a combination of present tense and relative past. In this construction also, presentness has a wider scope than pastness. So the relation is past in present, not present in past. That is why the present state is foregrounded while the earlier action is backgrounded.¹²⁾

(14b) is uttered to convey the message that the woman lost her key recently in the past and that the state of the key being lost stays up to now. The event of losing the key earlier is marked by the past participle *lost* and the current state of his having no key with him is marked by *has*. *Has lost* captures both the earlier act of losing her key and the present state of having no key.

12) The sentence *She has painted her house white yesterday* would be incorrect. The temporal adverbial *yesterday* cannot come under the scope of the present marked by *has*.

The concept of relative past is in operation in the past participle *painted* in (15) also:

(15) When her husband came home, she had painted the house.

When her husband came back home, the painting of the house had already been completed. The act of painting was prior to the time her husband returned, which is indicated by the past participle *painted*. *Had painted* in (15) expresses a combination of a past time, marked by *had*, and an earlier past time, marked by the past participle *painted*, whose action comes earlier than the point of time marked by *had* and *came*.¹³⁾

The verbs which have been discussed so far belong to dynamic verbs. Dynamic verbs are characterized by actions the verbs perform. They have the starting point and ending point of their action. For example, the verb *paint* is a dynamic verb, so the starting point of painting is clearly distinct from the ending point of painting. So in the case of the past participle of dynamic verbs, action and state are distinct. When an action is completed, then the state follows.

However, stative verbs do not involve any kind of action. So when stative verbs are used in the perfect, the past participle of stative verbs implies that the state began in the past without involving any action. The reason is that stative verbs are not involved in any type of action.¹⁴⁾ Let us have a

13) The husband came home in the past, which is marked by *came* (past tense). At that time, the house was white, which is marked by *had* (past tense). Prior to the return of her husband and the condition of the white house, the woman painted the house earlier, which is marked by *painted* (past participle).

14) Yule (1998: 66) mentions the lexical aspect of dynamic and stative verbs: "It is lexical aspect that seems to be the key in determining whether the use of the

look at (16):

- (16) a. I have been ill.
b. We have known Fred for many years.

In (16a), *been* is the past participle of *be*, which is a stative verb. *Have been* is also a combination of present through *have* and past through *been*. The person is now in the state of being ill. But the illness started earlier in the past, which is marked by the past participle *been*. The time when the person was taken ill started in the past, which is manifested in the past participle *been*, and the condition continues up to the present, which is marked by *have*.

In (16b), the verb *know* is a type of stative verb, too. No action is involved. *Have known* is a combination of present tense and past participle. The present is marked by *have* and the pastness is marked by the past participle *known*. The time when the people got to know Fred is in the past. The condition which started in the past has continued to the present.

Whether verbs are dynamic or stative, the perfect keeps the temporal role of relative past inherently carried in the past participle.

5. Conclusion

The traditional term *past participle* has been controversial

perfect implies that something is complete or not."

for a long time. The controversy has to do with the misleading suggestiveness that the *past* component in *past participle* is somehow related to the *past* in *past tense*. The confusion stemmed from no clear distinction between the two types of past.

The attempt to escape from the controversy was to choose the formal terms: *-ing* participle and *-ed* or *-en* participle. One advantage of the formal terms is that the controversy in question is avoidable. However, the formal terms do not provide any semantic insight as to the role the past participles take in both passive and perfect.

Against this backdrop, this research is concerned with the temporal role of the past participle. The past participle is employed both in passive and in perfect. The mutual use of the past participle in the two constructions suggests that there must be a common temporal role played by the same device.

This research has demonstrated that the temporal role indicated by the past participle in passive is not different from that referred to by the past participle in perfect. It is claimed here that the concept of relative past is operative in the two constructions. The passive in which the past participle is used has two temporal references. One is indicated by the tense of the auxiliary *be*, and the other is marked by the past participle, which indicates that the time the action or event happens precedes the time indicated by *be*. If the tense is present, it is in the past that the action happens. If the tense is past, the action comes earlier than the past time referred to by the past tense. The concept of

relative past applies to the perfect in the same way. In this sense, whatever the tense is, the past participle inherently carries pastness in its form, whether in passive or in perfect.

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Abstract

Pastness in Past Participle

Yonghyun Kwon

The traditional terms *present participle* and *past participle* have been controversial for quite a long time. The issue is centered around whether *present* and *past* in the terms are appropriate or not. This paper addresses the past participle, in particular. Some grammarians have claimed that *past* in the *past participle* has nothing to do with pastness. In an attempt to avoid the controversy, they even prefer other terms. The past participle is used both in passive and in perfect. Passive and perfect have different syntactic functions, but they share the same verbal inflection called the past participle. The choice of the same verbal inflection provides a motivation for us to suppose that the past participle must have the same temporal role in the two constructions. This research aims to identify the temporal role of the past participle in passive and perfect: relative past.

Key Words: past participle, passive, perfect, pastness, relative past
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이름: 권용현

소속: 성공회대학교 영어학과

주소: 서울 구로구 항동 1-1

이메일: yhkwon@skhu.ac.kr