

Some grammatical terminology

that's easily confused
with the ordinary language senses
of the same words...

(Grammatical) TENSE:

Not:

Drawn tight, stretched taut; strained to stiffness; tight, rigid: chiefly said of cords, fibres, or membranes. Opposed to *lax, flaccid*.

Figurative. In a state of nervous or mental strain or tension; strained; highly strung; excited, or excitable; keenly sensitive.

But rather:

Any one of the different forms or modifications (or word-groups) in the conjugation of a verb which indicate the different times (*past, present, or future*) at which the action or state denoted by it is viewed as happening or existing.

ETYMOLOGIES

Related to French *temps*, Spanish *tiempo*, Italian *tempo*
< Latin *tempus* “time”.

NOT Latin *tensus*, part participle of *tendere* “to stretch”.

(Grammatical) VOICE:

Not:

Sound produced by the vocal organs, esp. when speaking or singing.

But rather:

A category used in the classification of verb forms
serving to indicate the relation of the subject to the action.

Traditionally used of the opposition between active and passive.
However some languages, for example classical Greek, also have a middle voice,
and other languages have an “anti-passive”.

(Grammatical) ASPECT:

Not:

A particular status or phase in which something appears or may be regarded.
("They studied every aspect of the question.")

But rather:

The nature of the action of a verb as to its beginning, duration, completion, or repetition and without reference to its position in time.

Common grammatical aspects are things like perfect(ive), imperfect(ive), durative,

NOTE: sometimes *aspect* is merged with *tense*,
so that e.g. “Future Perfect”
is viewed as a tense rather than a combination of tense and aspect.

(Grammatical) MOOD:

Not:

A prevailing but temporary state of mind or feeling.

But rather:

A form or set of forms of a verb, serving to indicate whether the verb expresses fact, command, wish, conditionality, etc.

Typical moods are indicative, subjunctive, optative, imperative, ...

(Grammatical) PASSIVE (voice):

Not:

That makes no response or offers no resistance;
yielding readily to external force or influence,
or to the will of another; submissive.

But rather:

Denoting, relating to, or using a voice of a **transitive** verb
in which the subject undergoes the action of the verb.

In English, the passive voice usually consists of an auxiliary (frequently *be*; occasionally also *get*, *become*, etc.) plus the past participle of the verb; comparable formations are found in other modern European languages.

In passive constructions, the word which would logically be the object under a corresponding active construction functions as the grammatical subject, while the logical subject either is absent or is represented in a prepositional phrase (e.g. *the food was eaten* or *the food was eaten by them* rather than *they ate the food*).

-from the OED's definition of "passive"

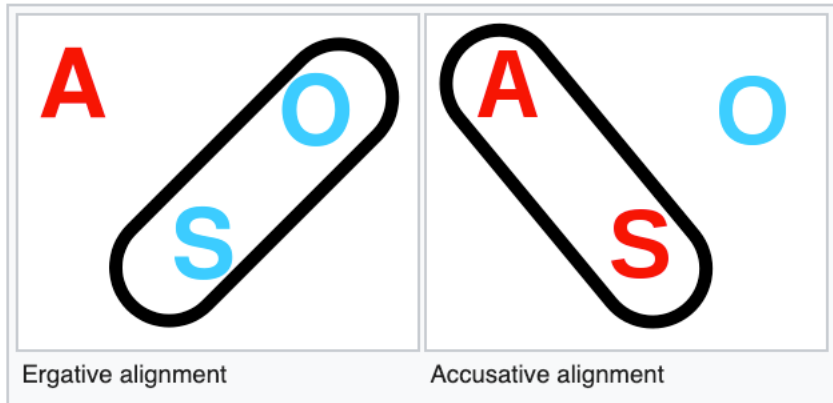
A little bit deeper into the typological weeds...

Nominative-accusative languages:

the subject of an intransitive verb is like the subject of a transitive verb.

Ergative-absolutive languages:

the subject of an intransitive verb is like the object of a transitive verb.



A = agent of transitive verb

O = object of transitive verb (also symbolized as **P** for "patient")

S = core argument of intransitive verb

Some ergative-absolutive languages:

Basque, Georgian, Mayan, Tibetan, Kurdish, ...

Some nominative-accusative languages:

English, French, Spanish, Italian, German, Russian,

English vs. Basque:

	Ergative–absolutive	Nominative–accusative
A	ERG	NOM
O	ABS	ACC
S	ABS	NOM

Sentence:	<i>Martin etorri da.</i>		<i>Martinek Diego ikusi du.</i>		
Word:	Martin- Ø	etorri da	Martin- ek	Diego- Ø	ikusi du
Gloss:	Martin- ABS	has arrived	Martin- ERG	Diego- ABS	has seen
Function:	S	VERB _{intrans}	A	O	VERB _{trans}
Translation:	"Martin has arrived."		"Martin has seen Diego."		