



## Adverbial Bounding and Imperfective Verb Forms

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### Abstract

This paper intends to explore the interaction between an aspect-marked verb form and lexical means, in this case temporal adverbials, in the bounding of representations of situations. First, the theoretical basis for the French *imparfait* as an aspect-marked verb form will be outlined, followed by the results of a corpus analysis of co-occurrences with adverbs that limit situations. The term *situation* encompasses all representable processes, states, events, or actions. Finally, some theoretical conclusions will be drawn concerning the cognitive category of bounding, using the example of aspectuality.

### Zusammenfassung

In diesem Beitrag soll die Interaktion zwischen einer aspektmarkierten Verbform und lexikalischen Mitteln, in diesem Fall temporalen Adverbialen, bei der Begrenzung von Situationsdarstellungen untersucht werden. Zunächst werden die theoretischen Grundlagen für das französische *imparfait* als aspektmarkierte Verbform skizziert, anschließend werden die Ergebnisse einer Korpusanalyse des gemeinsamen Auftretens mit Adverbien, die Situationen begrenzen, vorgestellt. Der Terminus *Situation* umfasst dabei alle darstellbaren Prozesse, Zustände, Ereignisse oder Handlungen. Schließlich werden einige theoretische Schlussfolgerungen zur kognitiven Kategorie der Limitation am Beispiel der Aspektualität gezogen.

### Keywords/Schlüsselwörter

aspectuality, aspect, adverbs, interaction, bounding

Aspektualität, Aspekt, Adverbien, Interaktion, Begrenzung

## 1 The French *imparfait* as aspect-marked verb form

Doubt has often been cast on the legitimacy of describing the Romance languages with the category of aspect (see, for example, Weinrich 1973; 1982; Rojo/Veiga 1999). While it is true that they are not aspect languages in the sense of having a grammatical aspect in the form of a correlation of perfective and imperfective verbs, they do have linguistic means to represent situations in their limitation or in their course. We assume that aspectuality is a functional category that encompasses all linguistic means that allow a bounding of situations or represent them as unbounded. In line with Bondarko (1987; cf. also Referovskaja 1984; Schwall 1991), we determine aspectuality<sup>1</sup> as a universal category which can be found in all languages, but is realized differently in them. The consideration of the means of aspectuality in French is thus not reduced to the verb forms of the past, but includes, for example, also periphrases,

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<sup>1</sup> For further conceptions of aspectuality that were incorporated into this presentation, cf. Abraham/Leiss (2008); Auwera (1998); Bache (1995); Bertinetto/Lenci (2012); Binnick (2012); (Böhm 2016); Comrie (1976); Confais (2002 [1990]); Coseriu (1976); Dessi Schmid (2014); Mitko (2000); Pollak (1988); Verkuyl/De Swart/Van Hout (2005); Verkuyl (2005).

adverbs, prepositional phrases, and lexical meanings of the verbs. In particular, external aspectuality shall be considered in the sense of Sarah Dessì Schmid (2014: 116). Accordingly, a situation is externally demarcated when it is presented in a certain interval that human perception can perceive as a time span. Externally demarcated situations are bounded by an initial point and an end point, which may also coincide. On the other hand, situations which are not bounded externally have neither an initial point nor an end point. Instead, the focus is on the course and duration, and the situation is not represented as a whole.

There are many means for expressing the representation of a situation as bounded or for setting oneself into the course. We summarize these means of expression in the functional-semantic category of aspectuality, which is grouped around the core of the verbal aspect in aspect languages:

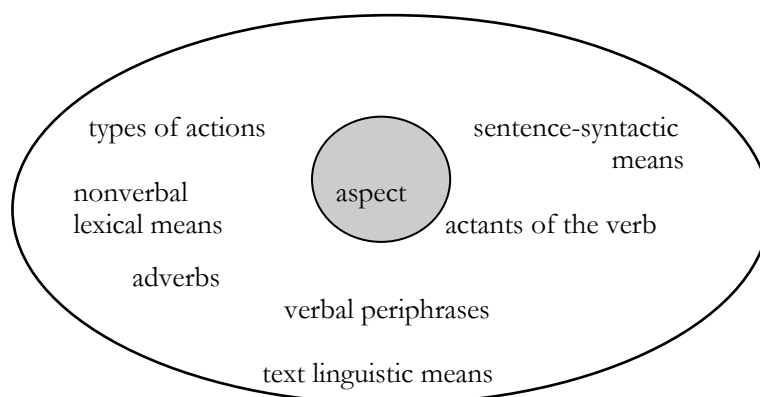


Diagram 1: Functional-semantic category of aspectuality in aspect languages

First, let us briefly explain why aspect – that is, the grammaticalized expression of aspectuality in the form of an aspect correlation of two verbs – is assigned a particular role here (cf. Haßler 2016: 181-197). In languages with a grammaticalized aspect, an aspect pair that is connected through correlation can elicit a different meaning, e.g. can by itself contain the opposition of ‘attempt’ and ‘result’. While this is possible with the Russian verb pair *сдавать* (‘deliver, hand over, pass (an exam)<sub>impf</sub>’) / *сдать* (‘deliver, hand over, pass (an exam)<sub>pf</sub>’), the use of an imperfective and a perfective verb form in the French sentence is not sufficient for this. The goal-orientation in the lexical meaning of *passer* would here superimpose the aspectual meaning of the imperfectivity, which here occurs in its special conative meaning; a meaningful statement with a conative meaning of *passait* could not be achieved:

- (1) Он сдавал экзамен, но не сдал  
 he pass.3.SG.IPFV exam but not pass.3.SG.PFV  
 ‘He took the exam but didn’t pass it.’
- (2) \*Il passait l’examen, mais il ne l’a pas passé.

Even in the absence of the grammatical category of aspect as in the Romance languages, however, it can be assumed that other means of aspectuality allow a situation to be bounded or to be rendered in its course and phases. Although the expression of aspectuality by these means is less systematic, it can also be more nuanced and more complex because of the interaction between different linguistic levels.

The above diagram should be modified for the Romance languages in that the grammatical core of aspectuality, the aspect, is omitted. Instead, verb forms are used which grammatically mark aspectuality and which stand in opposition to one another, such as the *imparfait* and the *passé simple* or the *passé composé*. However, these verb forms also have temporal

qualities and are not specialized in expressing aspectuality. Therefore, they can only be conditionally viewed as the core of the category of aspectuality:

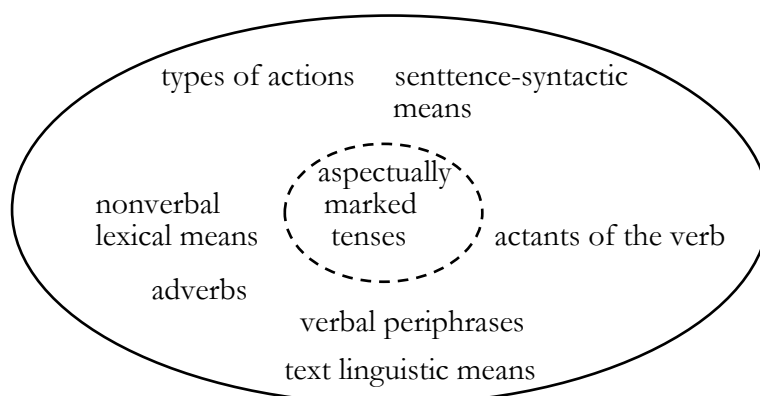


Diagram 2: Functional-semantic category of aspectuality in Romance languages

The temporal and aspectual determinability of the Romance imperfect has led to extensive discussions among linguists and grammarians which are still ongoing. By itself, the Romance imperfect cannot establish a temporal anchorage and therefore needs a temporal reference point through an adverbial determination, a temporally unambiguous verb form or the reference to the deictic reference point. The French *imparfait*, in its prototypical aspectual meaning, characterizes non-bounded situations (cf. Haßler 2016: 238-242). Through additional aspectual means of expression, however, a limitation can be achieved.

When a lexically limiting verb is used in the *imparfait* form, the situation is represented as long lasting, which follows from the meaning of the verb form. This period can be any length:

- (3) Don Cesare passa cette nuit-là ... comme il avait passé les nuits précédentes. Quand il *ouvrait* l'œil, Mariette *tombait* sous son regard. (Vailland. Referovskaja 1984: 103. 'Don Cesare spent that night ... as he had spent the previous nights. When he opened his eyes, Marietta fell under his gaze')

According to the terminology of Sarah Dessì Schmid, external bounding is implemented here by the type of action, that is, by the lexical meaning of the verbs *ouvrir* and *tomber*, while internal aspectuality is marked with the verb forms. This use is based on the fact that even the briefest and most complete action takes a certain time to be completed. The grammatical meaning of the verb form represents the action as being in process and not bounded. When it is a momentary action, the moment can be extended.

While the *imparfait* can also produce a subjectively expansive representation, its use is however obligatory and cannot be replaced by other means of imperfectivity, when no bounding of the situation is possible (Pollak 1960; Haßler 2016: 187):

- (4) *J'avais* quinze ans lorsque *j'eus* ma première frayeur. ('I was fifteen when I had my first scare')
- (5) Un jour je *voyageais* en Calabre..., quand *arriva* l'aventure que je vais vous conter. ('One day I was travelling in Calabria..., when the adventure I am about to tell you happened.')
- (6) Il se *hâtait* lorsqu'il *rencontra* un paysan. ('He was hurrying along when he met a peasant')
- (7) Nous *étions* à l'étude, quand le proviseur *entra*, suivi d'un nouveau habillé en bourgeois et d'un garçon de classe qui *portait* un grand pupitre. (Frantext M734 – Flaubert, Gustave, *Madame Bovary*, 1857: 1. 'We were in the study when the headmaster entered, followed by a new student dressed as a bourgeois and a school-boy carrying a large desk')

In some verbs, the concept of bounding is excluded at both semantic and discursive levels: *gésir* 'to lie buried', *messeoir* 'do not fit, be inappropriate' and *paître* 'graze'. These verbs are

completely durative and can only be used in imperfective contexts. This even goes so far that no composite perfective verb forms can be formed by them and their conjugation paradigm is reduced in the indicative to three tenses (Begioni 2012: 25):

## 2 Bounding adverbs and the *imparfait*: a corpus investigation

When the *imparfait* by itself cannot delimit situations, it is worth investigating its occurrence in contexts in which bounding adverbs occur. These are adverbs that mark the onset or the end of a situation, thus limiting it at the beginning or the end. In the present study we investigated the occurrence of the adverbials *soudain*, *soudainement*, *d’abord*, *tout à coup*, *enfin*, *finaleme*nt and *à la fin* in the corpus-based *Wortschatz Leipzig* ([http://corpora.informatik.uni-leipzig.de/de?corpusId=fra\\_mixed\\_2012](http://corpora.informatik.uni-leipzig.de/de?corpusId=fra_mixed_2012)) and obtained the following results:

Adverbials	Total number of occurrences	Percentage of occurrences with <i>imparfait</i>
soudain	12,809	5.8 %
soudainement	6,245	3.0 %
d’abord	185,194	3.5 %
tout à coup	119	3.4 %
enfin	176,820	2.5%
finaleme	31	0%
à la fin	1000 <i>à la fin</i> investigated of 907 305 of <i>fin</i>	1.0 %

Table 1: Bounding adverb with the *imparfait*

This low percentage of occurrences in the single-digit range of these bounding adverbials in connection with verbs in the *imparfait* show that this verb form is largely opposed to delimitation by adverbials because of its non-limiting nature. Of particular interest, however, is an analysis of the few examples of a combination of these adverbs with verbs in the imperfect, which can in no case be regarded as exceptions. First, however, we shall investigate the connection with perfective verb forms, which delimit the represented situations.

In example (8), a situation is described as ongoing, in which the strike suddenly broke out. The limitation of the beginning of the new situation is made by the *passé simple* and the adverb *soudain*, which mutually complement each other:

- (8) Tout allait bien, et *soudain*, une grève des scénaristes *éclata*. (moisson-rouge.fr, retrieved on Nov. 30, 2002. ‘Everything was going well, and suddenly a writers’ strike broke out.’)

The following example is similar, in which the moment of the cessation of writing is represented as sudden:

- (9) Puis *soudain*, et sans raison apparente, il *s’arrêta* d’écrire. (fr.wikipedia.org, retrieved on Jan. 8, 2010. ‘Then suddenly, and for no apparent reason, he stopped writing’)

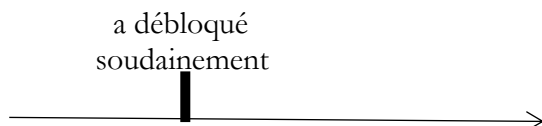
In sentences closer to spoken language, *soudain* occurs with the *passé composé* and thus marks the starting point of the situation:

- (10) *J'ai soudain été saisie de vertige.* (www.courrierinternational.com, retrieved on Oct. 30, 2011. 'I suddenly felt dizzy')

But also with verbs in the present, *soudain* marks the beginning of a new situation, whereby it is noticeable that the meaning of the verbs already suggests a limitation of the situation:

- (11) Les jeunes femmes sont heureuses d'être ensemble et d'évoquer des souvenirs quand *soudain*, un inconnu les *agresse*. (jarodalx.free.fr.txt, retrieved on Oct. 22, 2007. 'The young women are happy to be together and reminisce when suddenly a stranger attacks them')
- (12) Quand *soudain*, un des jeunes *tombe* dans l'océan. (www.clicanoo.com, retrieved on Oct. 16, 2009. 'Suddenly, one of the young people falls into the ocean.')
- (13) Le jeune mécanicien qui s'affairait à la tâche *tombe soudain*, atteint à l'épaule par une balle restée en partie nettement visible. (www.zedcom.bf, retrieved on Oct 16, 2011. 'The young mechanic who was working on the job suddenly falls, hit in the shoulder by a bullet that is still partly visible.')

The situations characterized by bounding adverbials and perfective verb forms are bounded either point by point (14) or both at their beginning and at their end (15):



- (14) Puis tout *a débloqué soudainement*. (mesnouvelles.branchez-vous.com, retrieved on August 10, 2005. 'Then everything was suddenly unblocked.')



- (15) De loin, un nuage apparut *d'abord* à l'horizon, mais plus le bateau s'en approchait se dessinait avec précision cet arc-en-ciel blanc, ou plus simplement arc blanc. (www.sur-la-toile.com, retrieved on Dec. 15, 2011. 'From a distance, a cloud first appeared on the horizon, but as the boat approached it, a white rainbow, or simply white bow, came into focus.')

In example (16), the situation of the belief that the burning object could be a sign is considered initially and then completed, thus being shown as limited:

- (16) *J'ai d'abord cru que c'était ce panneau qui brûlait.* (www.24heures.ch, retrieved on Oct. 15, 2011. 'At first I thought it was this sign that was burning')

Even in adverbs that signify the end of a situation, there is an interaction with the perfective verb forms in the same direction. The adverbs underline the final point of the situation here:

- (17) Côté blessures, j'ai *enfin* arrêté l'hémorragie. (cf.news.yahoo.com, retrieved on Aug. 15, 2008. 'As for injuries, I finally stopped the bleeding')
- (18) Pour vous ressourcer, heures et journées s'écoulent ici dans la sérénité, la douceur *enfin* retrouvée. (www.riad-selouane.com, retrieved on 30.11.2002. 'To recharge your batteries, hours and days pass here in serenity, the softness finally found.')
- (19) À la mi-juillet, la pirogue était *enfin* terminée. (www.st-barths.com, retrieved on Oct. 17, 2011. 'By mid-July, the dugout was finally completed.')
- (20) *À la fin*, les musulmans, plus nombreux, remportèrent la victoire. (fr.wikipedia.org, retrieved on Dec. 29, 2009. 'In the end, the more numerous Muslims won the victory.')
- (21) Du début jusqu'à *la fin*, Edith Piaf est montrée comme une femme tenace. (www.aujourd'hui.ma, retrieved on Feb. 15, 2007. 'From beginning to end, Edith Piaf is shown as a tenacious woman.')

The representation of the situation can also take place in the present tense in order to describe habitual actions (22) or to update the situation (23), which is bounded by the adverbial in its end point:

- (22) Certains déséquilibres économiques disparaissent *enfin*. (fr.biz.yahoo.com, retrieved on April 16, 2009. ‘Some economic imbalances are finally disappearing.’)
- (23) *À la fin*, l’arrivée d’un hélicoptère des douanes disperse les assaillants. (www.lefigaro.fr, retrieved on June 7, 2007. ‘In the end, the arrival of a customs helicopter disperses the attackers.’)

Adverbials that refer to the sudden onset of an action, are usually referred to in grammars as triggers for the *passé composé* (or in the written language for the *passé simple*) and they cannot be easily linked to the *imparfait*. Accordingly, sentence (25) is hardly acceptable:

- (24) *Tout à coup* il a vu un accident. (‘Suddenly he saw (PERF.) an accident’).
- (25) ?*Tout à coup* il voyait un accident. (‘Suddenly saw (IMPERF.) an accident’)

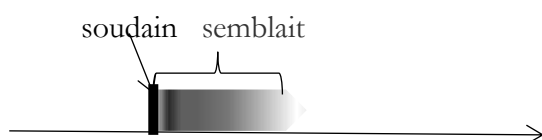
Nevertheless, such adverbs occur with verbs in *imparfait*. In contrast to the perfective verb forms, which correspond to the bounding adverbs in their limiting function, the *imparfait* retains its non-limiting character and characterizes the situation marked in its starting point as ongoing. In example (26) *soudain* initiates the taking of another path which then may be followed for a long time:

- (26) On *quittait soudain* le sentier pour une piste étroite, presque molle sous les semelles. (franseslucides.free.fr.txt, retrieved on 22.10.2007. ‘We suddenly left (IMPERF.) the path for a narrow track, almost soft under the soles.’)

Also in (27), a sudden change is introduced by *soudain*, here the speaker’s view of access to water, which then seemed to him to be rare for an indefinite time.

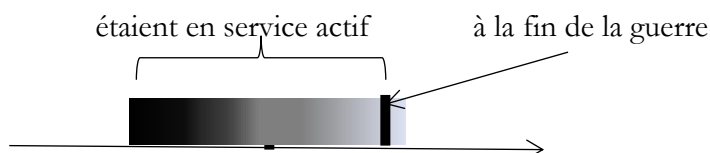
- (27) C’est la question que je commençais à m’imaginer devoir poser, à l’entrée du Tibet, tant *soudain* l’accès à l’eau me *semblait* devenu rare. (fred.ferchaux.free.fr, retrieved on Nov. 30, 2002. ‘This is the question I was beginning to imagine I had to ask, at the entrance to Tibet, as access to water suddenly seemed scarce’)

The interaction of the two markings of aspectuality can be illustrated as follows:



In some cases, there is also a marking of the completion of a period for which a previously existing situation still persists:

- (28) *À la fin* de la guerre, quatre escadrilles *étaient* en service actif. (fr.wikipedia.org, retrieved on Dec. 17, 2009. ‘At the end of the war, four squadrons were in active service.’)



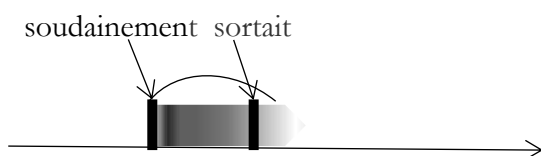
The beginning of a new situation, which then continues indefinitely, occurs most frequently during the occurrences of the bounding adverbs with *imparfait*. In example (29), the sudden fear of the light is represented as new and contrasting with the previous fear of darkness:

- (29) Elle *redoutait soudainement* la lumière, Elle qui, jusqu’à présent, avait redouté les ombres de la nuit. (agitato.free.fr.txt, retrieved on Oct. 22, 2007. ‘She suddenly feared the light, she who until now had feared the shadows of the night.’)

In other examples as well, an initial point of a new situation is set, which is not limited afterwards. However, these are verbs which by their lexical meaning suggest a limitation:

- (30) Mais *soudainement* le match *changeait* de maître. (fr.sports.yahoo.com, retrieved on Nov. 12, 2005. ‘But suddenly the game changed hands.’)
- (31) Bute cris qui *prenaient soudainement* un tout nouveau sens. (cf.news.yahoo.com, retrieved on Oct. 20, 2007. ‘Bute shouted, which suddenly took on a whole new meaning.’)
- (32) La ministre de l’Éducation, Michelle Courchesne, a invoqué, par voie de communiqué, le fait que plusieurs étudiants haïtiens se *retrouvaient soudainement* privés des revenus nécessaires pour payer leurs études au Québec. (www2.canoe.com, retrieved on Feb. 4, 2010. ‘The Minister of Education, Michelle Courchesne, said in a press release that many Haitian students were suddenly deprived of the income necessary to pay for their studies in Quebec.’)
- (33) Puis, *soudainement*, le Ghana *sortait* de son marasme offensif. (www.laliberte.ch, retrieved on July 3, 2010. ‘Then, suddenly, Ghana broke out of their attacking slump.’)

The sudden emergence from a bad standstill period is temporally limited and the verb *sortir* as such already signifies the crossing of a boundary. With the *imparfait*, however, this crossing is shown as extended. Such uses are sometimes referred to as *imparfait narratif* (Bres 2005).



Objectively, the situations described with the *imparfait* can be of shorter or longer duration. In example (34), the suddenness described with *tout-à-coup* is to be seen rather as a metaphor for the speed with which a palace was built on ruins. The *imparfait* underscores here the internal duration of the process:

- (34) Les assaillans après les plus grands efforts, & malgré la défense opiniâtre de la ville, étoient cependant vainqueurs ; la ville étoit prise, saccagée, détruite; & sur ses débris *s'élevait tout-à-coup* un riche palais à jour. (arsmagnalucis.free.fr, retrieved on Nov. 30, 2002. ‘The assailants, after the greatest efforts, and in spite of the stubborn defense of the city, were nevertheless victorious; the city was taken, sacked, destroyed; and on its debris a rich palace was suddenly erected.’)

In the following examples, the situation shown is rather brief, but is also extended by the use of the *imparfait*:

- (35) Évidemment Lagarde disait que la crise n’avait pas lieu, puis *tout à coup* qu’elle *était* dernière nous... c’était la première crise à durée négative. (blogs.lexpress.fr, retrieved on May 12, 2011. ‘Of course, Lagarde was saying that the crisis wasn’t happening, and then all of a sudden it was behind us... it was the first crisis with negative duration.’)
- (36) Malgré mon éducation religieuse, j’ignorais jusqu’à ce jour ce que la Bible me *permettait tout-à-coup* de comprendre: l’origine et le sens de la vie, le destin de l’Homme et l’œuvre salvatrice de Jésus-Christ. (www.natmark.qc.ca, retrieved on Nov. 30, 2002. ‘Despite my religious upbringing, I was unaware until now of what the Bible suddenly allowed me to understand: the origin and meaning of life, the destiny of Man and the saving work of Jesus Christ.’)
- (37) « Le sénateur Kennedy s’est distingué comme un défenseur énergique de ceux qui se *retrouvaient tout-à-coup* sans voix et sans droits », a déclaré le Haut Commissaire Antonio Guterres. (www.laliberte.ch, retrieved on Sep. 15, 2009. ‘“Senator Kennedy has distinguished himself as a strong advocate for those who were suddenly voiceless and disenfranchised,” said High Commissioner Antonio Guterres.’)

In the case of the word *enfin*, we first excluded the usages as discourse marker, which would have distorted the picture. The results then looked similar to the other adverbs. In descriptions of a state or condition, which are not limited by the meaning of the verb, the adverb marks the starting point and the situation is rendered as a continuation:

- (38) Ils *avaient enfin* du grain à moudre. (www.eurosport.fr, retrieved on Mar. 4, 2011. ‘At last they had something to grind.’)
- (39) Avant d’être un message au dictateur déchu, ce slogan *servait d’abord* à exorciser la peur des manifestants. (www.quotidien-nouakchott.com, retrieved on Oct. 15, 2011. ‘Before being a message to the deposed dictator, this slogan served primarily to exorcise the fear of the demonstrators.’)
- (40) J’ai beaucoup lu à propos des plantes et des jardins – *c’était d’abord* une chose livresque. (www.wildproject.fr, retrieved on Nov. 30, 2002. ‘I read a lot about plants and gardens - it was primarily a book thing.’)
- (41) Avant d’être un message au dictateur déchu, ce slogan *servait d’abord* à exorciser la peur des manifestants. (www.quotidien-nouakchott.com, retrieved on Oct. 15, 2011. ‘Before being a message to the deposed dictator, this slogan served primarily to exorcise the fear of the demonstrators.’)

In situations limited by lexical meanings of the verb or other situations bounded by adverbials, through the *imparfait* the focus is on the internal course:

- (42) L’idée qu’elle *arrivait enfin* à son but, la remplissait de jouissance. (www.ac-corse.fr.txt, retrieved on Oct. 22, 2007. ‘The idea that she was finally reaching her goal filled her with pleasure.’)
- (43) Préférant commencer la partie face au vent violent de Rome, les Bleus, après cinq minutes à observer les Italiens, *lançaient enfin* le jeu. (www.lefigaro.fr, retrieved on Mar. 21, 2009. ‘Preferring to start the game against the strong wind in Rome, Les Bleus, after five minutes of watching the Italians, finally launched the game.’)
- (44) Les Milanais se *reprenaient enfin* dans les dix dernières minutes. (www.rtl.fr, retrieved on Apr. 18, 2006. ‘Milan finally got their act together in the last ten minutes.’)

In addition to the already established functions of the *imparfait* in sentences with bounding adverbs, a fourth function can be found, in which the verb form assumes modal and evidential meanings. In the following example it is used in a way similar to *discours indirect libre*:

- (45) Avant de recommander d’accepter l’offre, le groupe d’investisseurs *voulait d’abord* savoir si Katz était prêt à signer une entente pour garder les Oilers dans la capitale albertaine. (www.radio-canada.ca, retrieved on Jan. 2, 2008. ‘Before recommending acceptance of the offer, the investor group wanted to know if Katz was willing to sign a deal to keep the Oilers in Alberta’s capital.’)

In example (46,) the fact that one must first find the mobilizing principle is reported as originating from a foreign source, for which the *imparfait* is also suitable:

- (46) Pour la remporter, il *fallait d’abord* trouver le principe mobilisateur. ‘To win it, it was first necessary to find the mobilising principle.’ (www.minefi.gouv.fr.txt, retrieved on Oct. 22, 2007. ‘To win it, you had to find the mobilising principle first. To win it, you first had to find the mobilising principle.’)

Moreover, the fact that the success of the team from Barcelona is based on the defense, is not reported on the basis of own experience, but rather from sports news:

- (47) Le salut barcelonais *venait d’abord* de la défense. (fr.sports.yahoo.com, retrieved on May 7, 2010. ‘Barcelona’s salvation came first from the defence.’)

It was found that, in some cases, the *imparfait* is also used in the context of bounding adverbs and that it retains its imperfective aspectual meaning. In such cases, it marks the continuation of a situation before or after a set boundary, focusing on the internal process between two boundary points or extending a point-by-point situation. In some cases, it also adopts modal qualities.

Finally, we will look at adverbs that describe the length of processes, and their behavior shall be considered in the context of perfective verb forms. Apparently, the frequency of the occurrence of adverbs expressing the extension of situations or their inner structuring with perfective verb forms depends very much on the individual case. While the adverb *fréquemment* very often occurs in passive constructions (48) the occurrence with a *passé composé* (49) is an individual case. Obviously, the accentuation of the internal aspectuality by the



adverbial indication of the frequency leads to the preference of a non-limiting verb form (50), (51):

- (48) L'encyclopédie *est fréquemment critiquée* pour l'hébergement de contenus erronés et par différents test qui montrent que ses contenus restent suspects quant à leur précision. (feeds.feedburner.com, retrieved on Jan. 16, 2008. 'The encyclopaedia is frequently criticised for hosting erroneous content and by various tests which show that its content remains suspect in terms of accuracy.')
- (49) Il est apparu *fréquemment* à la télévision et s'est montré très présent aux côtés de la présidente intérimaire Rose Francine Rogombé, chargée par la Constitution d'organiser un scrutin présidentiel. (www.quotidienmutations.info, retrieved on Oct. 11, 2011. 'He appeared frequently on television and was very present with the interim president Rose Francine Rogombé, who is constitutionally responsible for organising a presidential election.')
- (50) Notre précédent pasteur *disait fréquemment* qu'il ne serait pas celui qui fermerait une église à Trois-Rivières. (www.cyberpresse.ca, retrieved on May 25, 2006. 'He appeared frequently on television and was very present with the interim president Rose Francine Rogombé, who is constitutionally responsible for organising a presidential election.')
- (51) Les familles *préféraient fréquemment* les conserver à la maison pour s'occuper des travaux ménagers ou de l'exploitation maraîchère ou commerciale. (www.cerclealgerianiste.asso.fr.txt, retrieved on Oct. 22, 2007. 'He appeared frequently on television and was very present with the interim president Rose Francine Rogombé, who is constitutionally responsible for organising a presidential election.')

On the other hand, the observation of the occurrence of *longtemps* and *constamment* in the context of perfective verb forms yielded quite different numbers than in the inverse case of the appearance of imperfective verb forms with delimiting adverbials:

Adverb	Total number of occurrences	Percentage of occurrences with <i>passé composé</i> or <i>passé simple</i>
longtemps	179,888	32 %
constamment	24,854	10%

Table 2: *Passé composé* or *passé simple*

In the following examples, the long duration or the stopping of the situation is expressed adverbially, but a limitation is made with the verb form:

- (52) J'y ai *longtemps* réfléchi. (www.eurosport.fr, retrieved on 01.08.2007. 'I thought about it for a long time.')
- (53) En élaborant cette méthode, nous avons *constamment* cherché à respecter les styles des musiques abordées. (www.henry-lemoine.com, retrieved on 30.11.2002. 'I thought about it for a long time.')
- (54) Il reprit son volumineux fichier, l'a perfectionné et *constamment* tenu à jour. (www.jesuites.org, retrieved on 30.11.2002. 'He took over his voluminous file, perfected it and constantly updated it.')

Apparently, it can be easier to connect the representation of a characterized situation through a perfective verb form with an adverb that expresses an inner view or extends the situation than to represent this in *imparfait* through adverbial bounding.

### 3 Theoretical conclusions

As has been shown here, the verb forms in *imparfait* also maintain their aspectuality in delimiting connections with adverbs, resulting in a complex, multi-dimensional aspectuality. The comparison with the perfective verb forms, which cannot be further elucidated here,

however, makes clear that these are obviously more marked by aspect than the imperfective ones, which is why they are easier to connect with adverbs that oppose their aspectual quality.

In non-grammaticalized forms, such as lexical markers, the speaker is free to make a temporal localization or an aspectual perspective. This connection of lexical means of expressions of aspectuality to the decision of the speaker, besides the fact that these were not as deeply anchored in the system of language, was decisive for a different treatment of grammatical and lexical expressive means. This does not alter the fact that lexical expressions can make temporal and aspect markings, and even more precisely and more clearly than tenses. They can also limit or extend situations and thus express aspect. Aspectuality thus presents itself in the Romance languages as a compositional category, in which external bounding and the internal representation of a course of action or development can interact.

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